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The National Archives and Records Administration (NARA) is the nation's record keeper. Of all the documents and materials created in the course of business conducted by the United States Federal government, only 1%–3% are determined permanently valuable. Those valuable records are preserved and are available to you, whether you want to see if they contain clues about your family’s history, need to prove a veteran’s military service, or are researching an historical topic that interests you.
THE KNOW YOUR RECORDS PROGRAM consists of free events with up-to-date information about our holdings. Events offer opportunities for you to learn about the National Archives’ records through ongoing lectures, monthly genealogy programs, and the annual genealogy fair. Additional resources include an online genealogy tutorial, reference reports for genealogical research, and the newsletter Researcher News.
May 14, 2015

Genealogy:
Using Records of Artificial Limbs for Union Civil War Veterans, 1861–1927

Claire Kluskens

Claire Kluskens discusses records in the National Archives that may give information about a veteran’s medical condition and whether he received money or an artificial limb from the U.S. Government.
Genealogy:
Using Records of Artificial Limbs for Union Civil War Veterans, 1861–1927

Claire Kluskens is a projects archivist specializing in immigration, census, military, and other records of high genealogical value. She spearheaded the completion of more than 310 National Archives microfilm publications, and now works on digital projects. She lectures frequently and has published extensively in national, state, and local genealogical publications. Claire has been a National Archives staff member since 1992 and has done genealogical research since 1976.

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Artificial Limbs for Union Civil War Veterans

Claire Kluskens
Civil War Soldiers, Armory Square Hospital

Left to right:
A. J. Hutchins, Co. K, 25th Ohio Infantry
Thomas Shields, Co. G, 62nd New York Infantry
William H. McFarland, Co. B, 5th Wisconsin Infantry
S. M. Dyer, Co. I, 5th Wisconsin Infantry
V. N. Higgins, Co. H, 2nd Maine Infantry

Group of Civil War soldiers with lower extremity amputations, Armory Square Hospital, Washington, DC. Courtesy of National Library of Medicine. NLM Unique ID 101395563.
Statistics

60,000 amputations (north and south)
   40% loss of fingers or toes only

Limb removal – 5 minutes by a skilled physician

Overall survival rate, 75%

Loss of part of foot, 96% survived

Amputation at hip joint, 17% survived
Compiled Military Service Record (CMSR)

Separate index for each state
   alphabetical by name
   gives unit and rank
   available on Ancestry.com or Fold3.com

CMSR – one for each *man for each regiment in which he served*
   some available on Ancestry.com or Fold3.com
   copies can be requested from NARA for those that are not online
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Number of personal papers therein

The other side

See also

DeWitt Clinton Ayres
CMSR
Jacket
DeWitt Clinton Ayres
CMSR
Company Muster Roll
<table>
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<tr>
<th>Enclosures</th>
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<td>Final Statements</td>
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<td>Burial Records</td>
<td>Furloughs or L. of A.</td>
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<td>Discharge Certificates</td>
<td>Pris. of War Record</td>
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Other papers relating to—

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<tr>
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<td>Casualty Sheet</td>
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<td>Confinement</td>
<td>Misc. Information</td>
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<tr>
<td>Contracts</td>
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<td>Death or Effects</td>
<td>Personal Reports</td>
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<td>Transfer to Hosp'l</td>
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<td>Discharge from Service</td>
<td>Transfer to V. R. C.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Duty</td>
<td>Transportation</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
VOLUNTEER ENLISTMENT.

STATE OF
TOWN OF

I, DeWitt Clinton Ayres, born in
aged 25 years,
in the State of Pennsylvania.

Do hereby acknowledge to have
volunteered this day of December, 1863,
to serve as a Soldier in the Army of the United States of America, for the period of THREE YEARS, unless sooner discharged by proper authority: Do also
agree to accept such bounty, pay, rations, and clothing, as are, or may be, established by law for volunteers. And I, DeWitt Clinton Ayres, do solemnly swear, that I will bear true faith and allegiance to the United States of America, and that I will serve them honestly and faithfully against all their enemies or opposers whomsoever; and that I will observe and obey the orders of the President of the United States, and the orders of the officers appointed over me, according to the Rules and Articles of War.

Sworn and subscribed to, as before
this day of

I CERTIFY, ON HONOR, That I have carefully examined the above-named Volunteer, agreeably to the General Regulations of the Army, and that in my opinion he is free from all bodily defects and mental insufficiency, which would, in any way, disqualify him from performing the duties of a soldier.

EXAMINING SURGEON.

I CERTIFY, ON HONOR, That I have minutely inspected the Volunteer, previously to his enlistment, and that he was entirely sober when enlisted; that, to the best of my judgment and belief, he is of lawful age; and that, in accepting him as duly qualified to perform the duties of an able-bodied soldier, I have strictly observed the regulations which govern the recruiting service. This soldier has

Thoroughly Lauf, blue eyes, light hair, light complexion, is 5 feet 11 inches high.

RECRUITING OFFICER.
DeWitt Clinton Ayres
CMSR

Personal Papers Jacket

Reenlistment Paper
Reverse Side
CASUALTY SHEET.

Name, DeWitt Clinton Ayres
Rank, Pvt., Company I, Regiment, 101st
Arm, N.Y., State, N.Y.
Place of casualty,
Nature of casualty, Wounded.
Date of casualty, May 3, 1864

FROM WHAT SOURCE THIS INFORMATION WAS OBTAINED.


DeWitt Clinton Ayres
CMSR
Personal Papers Jacket
Casualty Sheet
CASUALTY SHEET
OF WOUNDED.

D.C. Ayres
 Pvt. Company I
10th Regiment of Pa.

Volunteers at the battle of
May 9, 1864.

DeWitt Clinton Ayres
CMSR

Personal Papers Jacket

Casualty Sheet

Reverse Side: Endorsement
DeWitt Clinton Ayres
CMSR
Personal Papers Jacket
Medical Descriptive List
(reverse side)
DeWitt Clinton Ayres
CMSR
Personal Papers Jacket
Medical Descriptive List
DeWitt Clinton Ayres

CMSR

Personal Papers Jacket

Discharge

U.S. General Hospital No. 1 – was on the grounds of the U.S. Naval Academy.

Long rows of low one-story structures were erected as hospital buildings for the reception of Northern troops wounded on the firing line and for sick men lately paroled or exchanged from the prisons of the Confederacy. The location ... was within easy rail communication from Washington and the Virginia battlefields and within convenient distance by sea from Fortress Monroe and other points where sick and wounded men could be assembled. This hospital was known as U. S. A, General Hospital, Division No.1, while in the rear of St. John's College stood a smaller hospital known as U. S. A. General Hospital, Division No.2.

Carded Medical Records
He’s in the 2\textsuperscript{nd} Division Hospital, 6\textsuperscript{th} Army Corps, immediately following the Battle of the Wilderness. Several cards like this; he’s listed on different pages, but the information is the same.

Put aboard the U.S. Army Hospital Steamer (ship), \textit{Connecticut} at Port Royal, Virginia, May 25, 1864.
The next day, May 26, 1864, he’s admitted to Lincoln General Hospital, Washington, DC

On July 26, 1864, he’s “furloughed”? Not clear whether he’s being transferred to another hospital, or what?
Admitted to Division No. 1, USA General Hospital, Annapolis, Dec. 21, 1864

Discharged from service, March 14, 1865
Pension Files

About 2 million
DeWitt C. Ayres
Pension File

Examining Surgeons' report dated 9 June 1886 – front side
DeWitt C. Ayres
Pension File

Examining Surgeons' report dated 9 June 1886 – reverse side
Detail from Examining Surgeons' report dated 9 June 1886, showing the location of amputation of left leg and gunshot wound in right leg.

DeWitt C. Ayres' pension file.
DeWitt C. Ayres
Pension File
1871

First application for commutation submitted by DeWitt C. Ayres, 9 January 1871, found in his pension file.

We learn:

“I received from the United States an artificial Leg made by Jewett, Washington, DC”

“And I now make application for commutation....”
Specialized Records in Record Group 15, Department of Veterans Affairs
List of Persons Furnished Artificial Limbs and Commutation, 1885 [sic]

RG 15, NM-23, Entry 17, NARA

Ca. 1870,
ca. 1875,
ca. 1880,
ca. 1885,
ca. 1890,
ca. 1895

DeWitt C. Ayres
and other men
Vol. 2 - 1871

Registers of Persons Furnished Artificial Limbs and Commutation, 1870-1927

Vol. 2 (4 on spine), part of index for “A” surnames

RG 15, NM-23, Entry 18, NARA

DeWitt C. Ayres and other men ordering artificial legs, January 1871.
DeWitt C. Ayres and other men ordering artificial legs, January 1871.

J. E. Hanger has a manufacturing plant in Pittsburgh, maybe 30 miles away.
Vol. 3 - 1877

Registers of Persons Furnished Artificial Limbs and Commutation, 1870-1927

Vol. 3 (5 on spine), part of index for “A” surnames

RG 15, NM-23, Entry 18, NARA

DeWitt C. Ayres and other men ordering artificial legs, March 1877.

Aust, Henry A.
Aust, Alonzo
Aust, Gustavus H.
Aust, William T.
Arnall, Charles H.
Arnall, James H.
Arney, Robert
Arny, William H.
Asbarn, Peter
Ayars, Peter B.
Aydt, Joseph
Ayres, James M.
Ayres, John E.
Ayres, De Witt C.
Azdell, James
Vol. 3 - 1877

Registers of Persons Furnished Artificial Limbs and Commutation, 1870-1927

Vol. 3 (5 on spine), p. 395

DeWitt C. Ayres and other men ordering artificial legs, March 1877.

RG 15, NM-23, Entry 18, NARA
Vol. 5 - 1881

Registers of Persons Furnished Artificial Limbs and Commutation, 1870-1927 Vol. 5 (7 on spine), index page

RG 15, NM-23, Entry 18, NARA
Vol. 5 - 1881

Registers of Persons Furnished Artificial Limbs and Commutation, 1870-1927
Vol. 5 (7 on spine), p. 431

RG 15, NM-23, Entry 18, NARA

DeWitt C. Ayres and other men ordering artificial legs, April 1881.

George R. Fuller was based in Rochester, NY
Vol. 8 - 1886

Registers of Persons Furnished Artificial Limbs and Commutation, 1870-1927
Vol. 8 (Vol. 10 on spine), p. 345 (no name index to this volume)

RG 15, NM-23, Entry 18, NARA

DeWitt C. Ayres
March 1886.

George R. Fuller was based Rochester, NY
DeWitt C. Ayres and other men ordering artificial legs, January 1891.

J. E. Hanger has a manufacturing plant in Pittsburgh, maybe 30 miles away from Ayres.
Letters Sent, 1885-1892

Letters Sent Relating to Prosthetic Appliances, Commutation, and Transportation Reimbursement, 1885-1892 (1 volume)

RG 15, NM-23, Entry 2, NARA

Name index in front
Sir: It appears from papers now in the Office that in January 1886, you applied for an artificial limb to be made by Mr. Fuller of Rochester, N.Y. that an order in compliance with your request was issued by the Surgeon General March 27, 1886 and that Mr. Fuller claims to have made and delivered the limb. It seems that through an oversight on your part the limb has not been paid for. On the 12th Mr. Fuller sent a note received from you, acknowledging the receipt of the limb and asking that it be paid for. This note however, is written in pencil and is without date. If you adhere to this acknowledgement, please write the substance thereof upon this letter, with ink, and return at once to this Office.

By order of the Surgeon General
Samuel Ramsey, Chief Clerk.
DeWitt C. Ayres - 1891


May be similar to the legs ordered by DeWitt C. Ayres from Hanger in 1891 and 1897.

Thank you for attending!

Today’s video recording and materials will remain available at
www.archives.gov/calendar/know-your-records