



National Archives and Records Administration

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Military Service during the Black Hawk War, 1831–1832

Black Hawk, a Sauk Indian who distinguished himself in battle at a young age, commanded a large confederation of tribes against U.S. forces. The Black Hawk War had two phases. The first, in early 1831, continued until March 1832. The Illinois and Missouri State Militias maintained a presence on their borders to prevent an uprising. In March 1832 hostilities started the second phase. There were only two battles before Black Hawk was defeated and captured in August 1832. During the hostilities, 5,979 troops served for the Federal Government. Of this total, 4,638 were volunteer soldiers, the majority of whom were from Illinois.

Compiled Military Service Records (CMSRs)

In the 1890s, the Department of War used numerous sources, such as muster rolls, descriptive rolls, and pay rolls, to create compiled military service records. These records generally show when a soldier joined a unit and if he was present when the unit was mustered.

___M629, *Index to Compiled Service Records of Volunteer Soldiers Who Served During Indian Wars and Disturbances, 1815–1858*. 42 rolls. DP. Arranged alphabetically. The index gives the regiment, soldier's name, rank, and state or territory from which he enlisted. Borders changed in the region; soldiers who enlisted from Green Bay, Wisconsin, are listed under "Michigan Territory."

Regular Army Service and Pension Files

For more information, see the following reference reports:

- *Officers in the Regular Army, 1789–1916*
- *Enlisted Service in the Regular Army, 1789–1914*
- *Pensions for Service in the Regular Army, 1775–1865*
- *Bounty-Land Warrants for Military Service, 1775–1855*

Pensions

A veteran's pension file can include his rank, place of residence, age or date of birth, and time of service. A widow's application can also include her place of residence, her maiden name, the date and place of marriage, the date and place of her husband's death, and the names of children under 16. A child's or heir's file contains information about both the veteran and the widow, as well as the child's place of residence, date of birth, and the date and place of the widow's death. These records have not been filmed.

Indexes

___T316, *Old War Index to Pension Files, 1815–1926*. 7 rolls. Arranged alphabetically by the claimant's surname. This series indexes claims based on disability or death primarily for regular army, navy, and marine corps service. The cards show the name of the veteran; the name and type of dependent, if any; unit; application numbers, certificate numbers, and in some cases file numbers; and the state from which the claim was made.

___T318, *Index to Indian War Pension Files, 1892–1926*. 12 rolls. Arranged alphabetically. This card index relates to service in the Indian campaigns, 1817–1898. It gives the name of the veteran, name and type of dependent, service dates, application numbers, certificate numbers for approved claims, and the state from where the claim was made.

___M1784, *Index to Pension Application Files of Remarried Widows Based on Service in the War of 1812, Indian Wars, Mexican War, and Regular Army Before 1861*. 1 roll. DP. Arranged alphabetically by the widow's surname. Widows could draw pensions for the service of two or more soldiers.

Printed Source for Volunteer Soldiers from Illinois

___Whitney, Ellen M. (Ed). *The Black Hawk War. Illinois Historical Collections*. Vols. 35–38. Springfield, IL: Illinois State Historical Library, 1970.

Volume 35 reproduces muster rolls and other unit personnel records for all of the companies that served from Illinois in the Black Hawk War. Some of the original records can be found in the National Archives, but the Illinois State Historical Library holds the majority. This volume also reproduces muster rolls for several state militia units, for which records are not available in the National Archives.

Volumes 36 and 37 reproduce orders, letters, maps, and other documents collected from state archives and private donations. Volume 38 is a comprehensive index for Volumes 36 and 37.

This publication is available in the library at the National Archives Building in Washington, DC, and the call numbers are F536.I44, v. 35; F536.I44, v. 36; F536.I44, v. 37; and F536.I44, v. 38.

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