

Footnote¹

¹ DIANE L. RICHARD TAKES AN IN-DEPTH LOOK AT THIS WEBSITE'S LATEST UPDATES

FOOTNOTE, <http://www.footnote.com>, has been very busy since I reported on it in the April/May issue of *Internet Genealogy* in my article "Are You Ready to Unlock Your Genealogy?".

It is an increasingly valuable genealogy tool and its partnership with the National Archives and Records Administration (NARA) has allowed an incredible amount of previously hard-to-find documents to become more readily available.

Before going further though, I will provide a re-cap of some key tidbits about Footnote:

- The goal of this project is to place digital versions of historical documents online.
- Membership is free and entitles you to search all titles and view any free title. These are currently, American Milestone Documents, Project Blue Book (nearly 13,000 government UFO reports) and documents from the Pennsylvania Archives, covering essential records from one of America's earliest colonies, from 1625 to 1880.
- For \$7.95 US a month or \$59.95 US annually, you can have an all-access membership, which entitles you to access all images on Footnote, save, share, download and print images, upload your own images and create

your own member pages.

- You can browse all titles to see a comprehensive list or there is a site-wide search function.
- The images are accessible via a powerful viewer and you have the option to download and print an image.
- You can annotate documents/images with either clarifying information or related information.
- Footnote has a partnership arrangement with the National Archives to digitize selected

Convention Records, Mathew B. Brady Collection of Civil War Photographs, Southern Claims Commission, Civil War Pension Index and the Investigative Case Files of the Bureau of Investigation 1908-22, Records Relating to the Various Cases Involving the Spanish Schooner *Amistad*, 1815-58, etc.

Since I last wrote about Footnote, the following larger document collections have been or are being added:

- Revolutionary War Rolls, 1775-83
- Revolutionary War Pension and Bounty-Land Warrant Application Files
- The Revolutionary War Prize Cases: Records of the Court of Appeal in Cases of Capture, 1776-87
- Case Files of Approved Pension Applications of Widows and Other Dependents of Civil War and Later Navy Veterans (Navy Widows' Certificates), 1861-1920
- Investigation and Trial Papers Relating to the Assassination of President Lincoln

I also spied a few other interesting additions (or possibly previously overlooked collections), such as mid-19th-century directories for select New England states, naturalization indices for California, Louisiana, Maryland, Massachusetts, Pennsylvania and



The Footnote website.

records from the vast holdings of NARA. When you browse the collections and choose one, these collections are noted with the National Archives logo. Select collections include: Papers of the Continental Congress, Constitutional

New York and 20th-century editions of two Halifax County, Virginia newspapers — the *Halifax Gazette* and *Gazette Virginian*.

The easiest way to find out the scope of what is currently on the website is to browse the collection and see what categories are listed and then visit the various classifications of interest to view more details on the included documents.

A new feature is a status element for each collection. Now, when you browse a collection, you will see the title, a one-sentence summary description and then a status bar showing how complete this title is. If it says “50% complete”, that means half of the collection is currently online and available for you to view. Note, though, that some grouped titles, such as city directories or naturalizations and even some individual titles, don’t have a definite number of images in them, so a completion number cannot be provided in these cases.

There is a lot of material on this website. I recommend that you only do a global search if you truly are just fishing for your ancestor and you are prepared to go through many entries. (Remember that if your ancestors Southern Claims Commission file is 30 pages long, you will see each page as a separate search result!) Otherwise, make use of the search features, such as using quotation marks, Boolean Operators and the “search within” option to narrow your search and give you more manageable results. Or, use the browse function to navigate through the menu to find, for example, the Civil War Pension card for George F Myers: Civil War (1860-1880) > Civil War Pensions Index > Kentucky > Cavalry > Regiment 3 > Company A > Myers, George F.

Now that we know something about the documents available, let’s take a look at a few of the newer collections.

REVOLUTIONARY WAR ROLLS, 1775-83

This is a collection which is almost complete, meaning that it is almost entirely online. These files are organized by state and then unit type (e.g. for North Carolina — 1st Regiment, Porter’s Company Tryon County, Troops of Light Dragoons). Once I discovered this, I decided it might be better to do a search and focus on some-

one from Wake County, North Carolina. Searching on “Wake County” within “Revolutionary War Rolls” gave me zero hits! Obviously, I needed to redefine my search parameters and/or learn more about the coverage of this collection. Opting for the latter, after several frustrating searches, I clicked on “learn more” in the browse mode and discovered that this collection encompasses NARA microfilm “Personnel, pay, and supply records of American Army units in the Revolutionary War, M246”. Fortunately, NARA often has nicely detailed information about its micro-filmed publications available online.

You can then go to the NARA page, <http://www.archives.gov/index.html>, click on “shop online”, proceed to order, click on “microfilm”, enter M246 in the search box, click on the publication title and then click on “View Important Publication Details”

and you basically are looking at an overview of this microfilm series. I learned that this series includes “The Revolutionary War rolls... of regular units of the Continental Army and of units of militia, volunteers, and others who served with them.” This explains the challenge in finding those from Wake County who served, since so many of them were associated with local Militia and not the Continental Army.

To make a long story short, I decided it was going to be easier to browse this collection since I did not have the name of someone who served in the Continental Army nor a particular Company or Regiment to research. Looking at North Carolina, I chose “Porter’s Company, Tryon County (1777)” (this is an interesting county as it had a short lifespan, 1768 to 1779). There are 36 pages to this document. I scanned through the document and found that several pages, including page 29, listed names of soldiers who

NAME	LAST RANK	ENLISTED	DISCHARGED	DATE OF PLANS	CLASS.	APPLICATION NO.	LAW	CERTIFICATE NO.
Myers, George F.	Capt. in U.S. Regular Army	1861		1861	Private	364234	a	805,938
					Minor			

REMARKS: Died Nov. 27, 1861, at Crofton, Ky.

Civil War Pension Card for George F. Myers of Kentucky.

served (see below).

The boxes around the entries indicate that these entries are annotated, in this case with the name of the individual listed. At the most basic level, like these, annotations can clarify what the document states, in this case, focusing on the names of the individuals listed, or they may also provide additional information to link individuals or share other data.

REVOLUTIONARY WAR PENSION AND BOUNTY-LAND WARRANT APPLICATION FILES

In contrast to the previous collection, which is almost completely online, this collection is only 13 percent completed,

with surnames starting only with A, B and C. The chances of finding someone specific were slim, and so I looked through those listed

for North Carolina with a surname starting with A. These are organized by state and then alphabetically by surname. I settled upon John Adair who has a multi-page pension file. You are able to now look at a copy of his original Revolutionary War Pension file.

RECORDS RELATING TO THE VARIOUS CASES INVOLVING THE SPANISH SCHOONER AMISTAD, 1815-58

This collection is completely online and it's a fascinating look at a segment of this historical event. Included are "The district and circuit court records pertaining to the claims of salvage for the Spanish schooner *Amistad*, seized in 1839 by the US Navy".

If you would like to learn more about the Amistad Case, NARA has a short educational lesson at <http://www.archives.gov/education/lessons/amistad/>

HALIFAX COUNTY NEWSPAPERS

Joining an ever increasing number of digitized newspapers online, Footnote is also working to make these valuable documents available online. There are currently two newspapers from Halifax

County, Virginia available. The *Halifax Gazette* and *Gazette Virginian* are organized by year, then issue and then sequentially by page. Like all other documents, the newspaper pages (complete with advertisements) are searchable. It's probably easiest to first narrow your search by using the dropdown menu associated with the search box to select within the newspaper of interest. Then you know that your search will be limited to just that particular newspaper. As with all other documents, you can zoom in to enlarge.

Since Halifax County is a border county, these newspapers would also be of interest to those researching ancestors in Caswell, Person and Granville Counties, all in North Carolina.

WHAT'S COMING NEXT

During the next few months, more documents will become available in these collections: Civil War Pension Files, Naturalization Records and Indexes for Pennsylvania, Massachusetts, New York, Confederate Soldiers Service Records for Alabama, Texas, Virginia, Revolutionary War Service Records and Revolutionary War Pension Files. Additionally, a new collection, Missing Air Crew Reports from WWII, will become available.

This article just scratches the surface of what you can find on Footnote and with the NARA partnership, there has been a steady stream of digital documents, previously unavailable on the Internet, becoming available. With the ability to find and download images of original documents, annotate images, post your own related images, create member pages, network with others, etc., this is a gem for the genealogy, family history or history researcher.



Example of a page from a Revolutionary War Rolls File — Porter's Company, Tryon County, North Carolina, page 29.



Diane L. Richard has been doing genealogy research for almost 20 years. She currently does professional research in NC and has never lived where any of her ancestors migrated to or from! She can be found online at www.mosaicrpm.com/Genealogy.