



THE BIRMINGHAM GENEALOGICAL SOCIETY

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<http://birminghamgenealogy.wordpress.com/>

THE PIONEER TRAILS NEWSLETTER

SEPTEMBER 2018

General Meeting for September: The Birmingham Genealogical Society will meet at 2:00 p.m. on **Saturday, September 22nd** on the fourth floor of the Birmingham Public Library (in the Computer Lab next to the Arrington Auditorium). The Board of Directors will meet at 1:00 p.m. in the same room.

Please join us as Yvonne Crumpler, former President of the Birmingham Genealogical Society and the Alabama Genealogical Society and former head of the Southern History Department of the Birmingham Public Library, presents “Searching for your War of 1812 Ancestors.” Unlike later wars, service in the War of 1812 was largely through local militias with relatively short terms of service, often only 30 days. Because of this shorter term of service, it isn’t unusual to find a man serving in more than one unit. It’s also not unusual to find men who might otherwise be considered “too old” to serve. The War of 1812 is sometimes referred to as the “Second War for Independence.” Although the Americans had won the Revolutionary War, Britain had not relinquished control of all of the lands it was supposed to per the Treaty of Paris of 1783. By winning the War of 1812, the United States secured its position as an independent country. *Please join us!*

Research & Genealogical Tips

Can’t Find Your 1850 Ancestor in 1840? If you cannot find your 1850 ancestor in the 1840 census—and you are certain he’s heading his own household—consider searching for his 1850 neighbors in 1840. Then look at their neighbors in 1840. There is a chance your ancestor is near at least one of his 1850 neighbors in 1840. And there’s also a chance that your ancestor is not the head of their own household in 1840, but is hiding in one of those tick marks for age categories. And it’s also possible he was overlooked entirely.

Service vs. Benefit Records: Records related to an ancestor’s involvement in the military may take the form of service records or benefit records. Service records were those records created during the person’s actual service and relate to their service, when they were mustered in, their physical description, when they were mustered out, where they were assigned, and other information from records created during their service. Benefit records are records typically created after service related to benefits that were given to or were due to the serviceperson as the result of their service. Those records, in the United States at least, are typically pension records and sometimes records of bounty lands that were awarded to the serviceman.

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The past is not dead. It isn't even past. --William Faulkner

Scott A. Martin, BGS Newsletter Editor

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Revolutionary War Bounty Land Grants & Reasons for Issuing Bounty Land Grants by Lloyd DeWitt Bockstruck

A land bounty is a grant of land from a government as a reward to repay citizens for the risks and hardships they endured in the service of their country, usually in a military related capacity.

In their colonial tradition, the Revolutionary governments patterned their struggle for independence from Great Britain on the principle of bounty lands. They generally offered free lands in exchange for military service, but they strategically did so on the presumption that they would be victorious in their struggle. They would not actually award the lands until the war had been concluded and the British defeated. Such a policy not only imposed no financial constraints on the war effort but also insured a degree of support for the Revolutionary cause. The Revolutionary governments were cognizant that to the victor belonged the spoils and that defeat brought no reward. Bounty lands were an effective propaganda technique for enrolling support for the war among the citizenry and preventing them from lapsing into the British fold when the tide of battle ebbed.

Those colonies with unseated lands used their advantage to enlist support for the cause with the offer of free lands. Unfortunately, some of the Original Thirteen enjoyed no such advantage. There was no bounty land policy in Delaware, New Jersey, New Hampshire, Rhode Island, or Vermont. Those states lacked enough vacant land to support such a policy. Bounty lands were a feature, however, in Connecticut, Georgia, Maryland, Massachusetts, New York, North Carolina, Pennsylvania, South Carolina, and Virginia. Administratively, these nine states selected reserves in their western domains for the location of bounty lands. Such a choice was seemingly quite logical. By placing veterans on the frontier, the states would be able to rely upon a military force which in turn would be able to protect the settlements from Indian incursions. These state governments also realized that they had to encourage the ex-soldiers to occupy their newly awarded bounty lands, so they granted exemptions from taxation ranging from a few years to life to those veterans who would locate on their respective bounty lands. Such a policy also had the effect of retarding the exodus of a state's population.

Since most of the Indian nations had supported the British during the Revolutionary War, the Thirteen States were cautious in approaching their former enemies. Populating the frontier with citizens skilled in defense offered the best prospect in enticing other settlers to join them. Veterans were knowledgeable in the use of firearms and in military strategy. Knowing that they would be defended if the need arose was reassuring to many settlers. The state governments also realized that the revenue derived from the sale of vacant lands in the west was badly needed. The extension of settlements on the frontier would, in time, also increase the tax rolls and contribute to the reduction of their Revolutionary War debts. In the aftermath of the war, the states with transappalachian claims ceded some of those claims to the federal government, but not until they had the assurance of being able to fulfill their bounty land commitments.

Accordingly, the issue of bounty lands has far wider geographical implications than the area encompassed by the nine state governments which instituted the practice. Besides the original states of Connecticut, Georgia, Maryland, Massachusetts, New York, North Carolina, Pennsylvania, South Carolina, and Virginia, the future states of Indiana, Kentucky, Maine, Ohio, and Tennessee were directly affected by the bounty land system. While the administrative records were, with one exception, the purview of the former nine, the bounty land reserves involved the five transappalachian states. The states of Georgia, Maryland, New York, Pennsylvania, and South Carolina either had no claims to transappalachian territory or relinquished their claims to the national government. Accordingly, their reserves for bounty lands lay within their own western borders. In the cases of Georgia and New York, these reserves were to be situated on the definition of their western borders as they existed in 1783. The bounty land reserves in those two states today would be described as being centrally located. The Commonwealth of Massachusetts allotted its bounty lands in the then District of Maine, which in 1820 achieved statehood status.

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While most of the states awarded bounty lands for military service, there were two exceptions. Connecticut compensated its citizenry with lands in Ohio if their homes, outbuildings, and businesses were destroyed by the British. The Nutmeg State seemingly awarded no bounty land for military service per se. Georgia also issued lands to its civilian population who had remained loyal, or at the very least neutral, to the Revolutionary cause after the British restored royal control. There were no Revolutionary War bounty land grants within the current borders of the southern states of North Carolina and Virginia. The former issued its bounty lands in its western lands which became Tennessee. The latter selected reserves for its bounty lands in Indiana, Kentucky, and Ohio before ceding its claims to the federal government.

It is important to emphasize that the Continental Congress also made use of the policy of bounty lands. The index to those claims appears in the Index to Revolutionary War Pension Applications in the National Archives (Washington, D.C.: National Genealogical Society, 1976). The federal bounty land records are included in the National Archives micropublication, Revolutionary War Pension and Bounty-Land Warrant Application Files, 1800-1900, Series M804, 2,670 rolls. Abstracts of these files appear in the four-volume work of Virgil D. White, Genealogical Abstracts of Revolutionary War Pension Files (Waynesboro, Tenn.: The National Historical Publishing Company, 1990-1992). The federal government likewise selected a reserve in the Northwest Territory where bounty land warrants could be used to locate land. The U.S. Military Tract in Ohio encompassed portions or all of the counties of Coshochton, Delaware, Franklin, Guernsey, Holmes, Knox, Licking, Marion, Morrow, Muskingum, Noble, and Tuscarawas. These records appear in the micropublications U.S. Revolutionary War Bounty-Land Warrants Used in the U.S. Military District of Ohio and Related Papers (Acts of 1788, 1803, 1806), Series M829, 16 rolls, and in Register of Army Land Warrants Issued under the Act of 1788 for Service in the Revolutionary War: Military District of Ohio, Series T1008, 1 roll. Since the federal land grants are readily accessible via these sources, they are not included in this work.

With the exception of the Commonwealth of Massachusetts, the other states permitted qualified veterans and/or their dependents to receive bounty lands from both the federal and the respective state governments. Accordingly, there may be relevant bounty land files for soldiers in the Continental Line at both the federal and state levels. While New York made some adjustments, double dipping was the norm in the other states.

Following the American victory at Yorktown in 1781, the various governments sought to implement their bounty land programs. The delay in establishing a governmental agency to fulfill the bounty land pledge holds dual benefits genealogically. Firstly, it increases the likelihood of the survival of a paper trail for proving Revolutionary War participation for many individuals who may not be mentioned in any other record. Secondly, because the benefits were still being processed as late as the 1870s in some jurisdictions, there may be a wealth of information pertaining to heirs in bounty land files.



Not only do the records locate the veteran in time and place him in a given locality during the Revolutionary War, they also do so for him and/or his dependents in the years following independence when internal migrations within the nation complicate the identification of specific individuals in their various removals. The appearance of an individual or family in the west after 1783 offers considerable challenge in learning the former domicile or in establishing filiation. A master index to the bounty land grants of the relevant state governments seemed to offer expeditious access to the records holding the potential solution to such a dilemma. While access to the federal records has long since been available in a master index, and while many localities have been treated individually by others works of varying quality, the absence of an overall index has impeded effective use of these significant records.

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Historic Avondale Park in Birmingham Reviving Bloom of Youth

Contributed by Anne Ruisi, *The Birmingham News* February 28, 2011

Back in the day, recalled J.D. Weeks of Gardendale, it was a boy's rite of passage to get thrown into the pond at Avondale Park. "The bragging factor was, how many it took to get you in there," said Weeks, 73, who grew up in North Birmingham but frequently visited the historic Southside park. Just as a pond toss was a milestone in many a Birmingham boy's life, today marks an important event in the life of Avondale Park: a \$2.88 million major renovation begins. New baseball fields, renovation of the park's amphitheater and the making of a spring-fed grotto and creek are some of the items that will be done in this major project by the city of Birmingham.

"It's going to be bringing back life to this side of town, and there's a lot of life here," said Adam R. Snyder, president of The Friends of Avondale Park, the park's nonprofit support organization. Park supporters welcome the renovation, even though it means most of the park will be closed for the next six months. The Avondale Villa event venue will remain open. Since its founding in the mid-1880s, the park in the heart of the Avondale community has witnessed a multitude of pond dunkings, baseball games, church picnics, concerts, Easter egg hunts and even free elephant rides. Yes, that's right, elephant rides. From 1913-14 until about 1934, Miss Fancy was the beloved pachyderm, delighting children who visited her in the city zoo at Avondale Park, said Catherine Greene Browne, author of "History of Avondale," a 436-page book filled with photographs, newspaper clippings, stories and family remembrances. Children saved their pennies and donated money to buy the elephant her food. And Miss Fancy seemed to really like the children -- she'd let them ride on her back. Barbara Edmonson grew up in Avondale, and while she is too young to have known Miss Fancy, the 75-year-old heard plenty of tales about her. Her aunt once told her that in the 1930s, the elephant would join the children in the wading pond. The elephant's trainer liked to take Miss Fancy for walks on Sixth Avenue South and 41st Street South (then known as Spring Street). On one of those walks, Edmonson said, the police were about to haul the trainer, who had been drinking, off to jail and return Miss Fancy back to the park. They couldn't because the elephant wouldn't budge. "Who's going to take Miss Fancy home?" the trainer taunted the police.

He and the elephant were soon on their way. The park was always a favorite spot for young couples. Tennis, concerts in the amphitheater, baseball games and strolls were popular for dates. The rose garden made a romantic setting for marriage proposals, as it did when Edmonson's late husband, Robert, proposed in the summer of 1959, she said. "It was always important to us," Edmonson said of Avondale Park.



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Did you know **Avondale** was a company town built around the Avondale Mills east of Birmingham, Alabama in Jefferson County. The town was incorporated on March 18, 1887.^[1] The city was annexed into Birmingham in 1910 and is now divided into three separate neighborhoods, North Avondale, East Avondale and South Avondale. The first residents of the area were clustered around "Kings Spring" on the slopes of Red Mountain, now the site of Avondale Park. There was once a small skirmish near the spring when Confederates fired on Union soldiers watering their horses. The wife of Jefferson County sheriff Abner Killough was struck in the breast by a stray shot while sitting on her porch. Her wound is believed to have been the only blood spilled in the county during the war. The park was the largest in Birmingham until Ruffner Mountain Park was dedicated. It was known for the spring-fed grotto pool, an extensive rose garden, athletic fields, a secluded pavilion called "The Villa", and a large amphitheater that hosted a spectacular pageant in celebration of Birmingham's 50th anniversary in 1931. The park was also one-time home of the Birmingham Zoo, which at the time consisted mainly of non-exotic species with the exception of "Miss Fancy", an erstwhile circus elephant purchased by the Birmingham Advertising Club as a promotional novelty and then donated to the city. The spring emerged from a cave, now sealed off and proceeded to flow through the center of Spring Street (now 41st Street), the primary commercial center of Avondale. Source: [https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Avondale_\(Birmingham\)](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Avondale_(Birmingham))

AGS (ALABAMA GENEALOGICAL SOCIETY) FALL WORKSHOP

DATE: October 13, 2018

TIME: 8:30 a.m. – 3:30 p.m.

LOCATION: Alabama Department of Archives and History, Montgomery, AL

WEBSITE: <http://algensoc.org/main/seminars.html>

Speaker Mark Lowe will speak about the following topics: "Alabama Records & Migration— From Waldo Semon to Rosa Parks to Tallulah Brockman Bankhead"; "Selling Spirituous Liquor without a License and Other Wonderful Court Records"; "Finding Uncle John by Talking to Neighbors"; and, "Dower, Dowry, and Detinue—Women and their Men's Property." Please see our website for more information.



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