

Indiana Civil War Soldiers Database
Indiana State Digital Archives
Introduction

The recent completion of a database of soldiers who served in Indiana's volunteer units during the American Civil War (1861-1865) took several years of dedicated hard work, skill, and experience by many staff of the Indiana State Archives and volunteers recruited by the Friends of the Indiana State Archives, Inc. Years of diligent data entry and careful fact-checking have produced an important tool for research. Their work will have a big payoff for historians, genealogists, and other researchers who desire information on Indiana's Civil War soldiers. We extend many thanks to the staff and volunteers who contributed to the project.

However, the effort to collect information on Indiana's Civil War soldiers has a long history, pre-dating the recent data entry efforts. Previous efforts to compile information on the soldiers grew from state government's need to have accurate information to allow government leaders to make informed decisions, as well as to furnish Indiana's citizens complete information.

Nearly a century ago, in 1913, the Indiana General Assembly passed legislation appropriating \$4700 to the office of the Adjutant General of Indiana to compile a card file index of the soldiers who served in Indiana's Civil War volunteer units. For years the Adjutant General's office had fielded questions from Indiana citizens and others inquiring about the Civil War service of soldiers who served in Indiana volunteer infantry, cavalry, and artillery units. Staff of the Adjutant General's office had always referred to the original muster rolls and descriptive rolls of Indiana companies and regiments deposited in the A.G.'s office. These rolls, listing the soldiers who enlisted in the units, had been compiled during the Civil War. They were original copies of the rolls created at the formation of the volunteer regiments and batteries, as well as when those units mustered out of service either at the end of the war or whenever the units' terms of service expired. These rolls duplicated those collected by the U.S. War Department (now Department of Defense) and held by the Adjutant General of the United States Army. In later years those muster rolls and other records came under the care of the National Archives and Records Administration in Washington, DC, where they are today. The wear and tear on the original muster rolls from constant reference undoubtedly prompted state authorities to begin the card file index project.

The office of the Adjutant General of Indiana hired staff to copy the information found on the muster rolls and other records in their custody onto small, compact index cards, 3 inches by 5 inches in size. The cards have these fields:

Name [last, first, middle initial], rank, company, regiment, term of service [i.e., 3 months, 1 year, 3 years, etc.], place of enlistment, date of enlistment, enlistment officer, muster-in place, date of muster, mustering officer, age at enlistment, nativity [i.e., where the recruit said he was born], height, hair color, eye color, occupation, and information of separation from service: either muster-out date or date of discharge, date of death, killed in action, desertion, etc.

It is estimated that roughly one third of the cards compiled from the original muster rolls contained information in all the above data categories. Most only had information on name, unit, age, and enlistment and separation dates. This is because the entries on the original muster rolls are incomplete.

The project took longer than originally anticipated, and the Indiana General Assembly passed additional appropriations for the project in its 1915, 1917, and 1919 sessions. The General Assembly appropriated a total of \$12,039.07 for the project, not an inconsiderable sum in the early-twentieth century.

The Indiana State Archives microfilmed the completed card file in later years to save wear and tear on the cards and to ensure they were not lost or misplaced.

The database contains the following data fields: name [last, first, middle initial]; age; date and place enrolled; regiment; company; type of unit [cavalry, infantry, artillery]; discharge date; and notes [could include dates of death, transfer, desertion, or other information].

To obtain a copy of the index card with all the fields noted above, please contact the staff of the Indiana State Archives.

The database contains entries only for Indiana volunteer units raised by the State of Indiana during the American Civil War. It includes the 28th United States Colored Troops regiment and 4th Heavy Artillery USCT, primarily raised in Indiana. It does not contain records of soldiers from Indiana who enlisted in the “regular” United States Army, United States Navy, or in volunteer units raised and organized by other states. However, soldiers who transferred from Indiana volunteer regiments into regular army units before that practice was abolished will have their transfer noted.