



State of Tennessee
Department of State
Tennessee State Library and Archives
403 Seventh Avenue North
Nashville, Tennessee 37243-0312

**CONFEDERATE SOLDIERS HOME
RECORDS, 1890-1940**

RECORD GROUP 2

Revised by:

Ted Guillaum
June 1998

Index by:
Robert A. Greene

Archives & Manuscript Unit
Technical Services Section

MICROFILMED

INTRODUCTION

Record Group 2, Confederate Soldiers Home Records, contains the records of the state-funded retirement home for Confederate veterans of the Civil War. The record group is arranged in two series. Series one consists of nine Hollinger boxes of applications for admission to the home and are arranged in alphabetical order. Included with the applications are petitions and correspondence relating to the individual making the application for admission. There is an index to series one that is included in this finding aid.

Series two consists of the seven bound volumes of record books: The first two record books consist of a register dated 1890-1916 and a register book dated 1918-1940; two other volumes are of financial records dating from 1901 through 1919; and the fifth is a volume of the minutes of the trustees of the Confederate Soldiers Home from 1904 through 1918. Sometime after the collection was reprocessed, two other volumes were found that had become separated from the collection which consist of a volume of Trustee minutes, 1897-1904, and a Roll of Inmates, January 1910-July 1913.

In June of 1998 the collection was re-processed, placed in acid free materials, and re-microfilmed in order to include documents that were evidently added to the record group after the collection was originally microfilmed.

The Tennessee Confederate Soldiers Home (1996) is a book by Judith A. Strange that includes biographical references and an index, that used this record group as source material. This book also contains a history of the home and information from other sources that may be helpful, including photographs showing one of the original eight cottages and the 1892 home.

This record group has been microfilmed and the original documents have been maintained. There are no restrictions on the use of materials in this record group.

AGENCY HISTORY

In 1888, a confederate veteran's association called *Cheatham's Bivouac*, proposed to use the state owned Hermitage property as a retirement home to care for veterans. The property had been purchased in 1856 from Andrew Jackson, Jr., for \$48,000.00. The institution was to provide housing, care for the poor and disabled veterans of Tennessee, and in the process be a self-sufficient working farm.

In 1889, the General Assembly passed legislation that established "The Confederate Soldiers Home." It was established in accordance with an act passed by the Tennessee Legislature in 1866. Under this act, four hundred and seventy-five acres of the Hermitage farm was turned over to the uses of the Home for twenty-five years. Ten thousand dollars was appropriated for constructing facilities.

On May 17, 1889, the legislature gave the Confederate Soldiers Home all the land, except the twenty-five acres that encompassed The Hermitage and Andrew Jackson's tomb. At the same time the state laid out a burying ground for those inmates who might die at the Home. In 1911, the legislature was asked to appropriate funds for a monument and headstones to mark the graves of those buried in this cemetery.

The trustees had agreed to build eight cottages to house the inmates. By 1890, two cottages were complete and The Tennessee Confederate Soldier's Home officially opened. There were ten inmates housed in the cottages with applications waiting for nearly fifty more. In 1892, the cottage system was abandoned by the trustees when they decided to build a facility large enough to house 125 men. There were 126 inmates housed by 1901.

In order for a veteran to gain admission, he first had to qualify for a pension. This required proof of six months service in the Confederate Army. If the veteran was accepted, his pension was awarded to the Home. Upon admittance, the veteran had to agree to abide by the rules and regulations set forth by the Home's Administrator. If he did not comply, he would be dishonorably discharged. The Home records and rosters give many references to this type of behavior. Any inmate had the right to leave the Home voluntarily. Inmates were frequently furloughed from the home for periods of time, and while most returned, some did not.

Patrick G. Smithson was the first Commandant of the Home who served there until his death in 1897. Captain R. C. Hardison served as the second Commandant of the Home, assisted by his wife, Nannie.

The actual Home facility was a two story brick structure with a double front porch and portico. There is a good description in the April 24, 1899, *American* newspaper article. *The Nashville Banner* newspaper article of December 8, 1953, states that the building was partially torn down in 1935-1936 and that the remaining building was in the process of being completely torn down. The bricks were to be used to construct a new souvenir shop at The Hermitage. The expense of operating the Home escalated in later years due to the decline in the number of inmates who were older, in poor health, and incapacitated. By 1923, the acreage belonging to the Home was no longer needed. The veterans were

getting too old and few to work it, so it was turned over to The Ladies Hermitage Association. In 1933, most of the remaining twenty-five inmates were transferred to the Tennessee Industrial School. A boy's dormitory was converted into a hospital to care for the aging and sick. The remaining men who were capable of taking care of themselves, resided in one of the cottages until 1937. The last location for the veterans was a private, twelve room home located at 3824 Nolensville Road. The home closed after the death of the last inmate in 1941.

Source: *The Tennessee Confederate Soldiers Home: "Marching out of the Mist into the Light"* by Judith A Strange, 1996.

SCOPE AND CONTENT

The Confederate Veterans Home, Record Group 2, consists of records related to Civil War veterans who applied for admission and were accepted to the Confederate Veterans Home that began operating in 1889, and the institution's own records. Series one includes the applications for admission to the home. These personnel files are often accompanied by correspondence stating reasons why the individual deserved to be admitted. Veterans were required to submit applications for admittance to a review board. These files often include an account of the applicant's service during the war. Occasionally, an original parole document is included to show proof of service. Discrepancies relating to service during the war may be encountered since these accounts were sometimes transcribed for the applicant. Various factors, including failing memory of the applicant could also account for errors.

Series two includes five bound volumes of record books. Volumes 1 and 2 consist of the financial records of the home from 1901 through 1919. Volume 3 is a register that begins with a transcription of the Acts of Tennessee from 1889 that created the Confederate Soldier's Home. This is followed by a listing of the Board of Trustee members. The register in Volume 3 begins in 1890 and lists the inmate's name, date received, date of birth, state and county of birth, Confederate Army enlistment date, rank, company, regiment, number of times wounded, capture date, release date, discharge date, parole date, rank at close of war, present address, occupation, discharge date from Confederate Soldiers Home, reinstatement date to Home, date of death, and remarks. The last year recorded for a death in this volume is 1916. Volume 4 is a record book of inmates beginning in 1918. The last entry in this volume is dated March 5, 1940. This register contains information similar to Volume 3 relating to military service. Also included in this volume is a record of the date of an inmate's death and location of where the inmate was buried. Volume 5 contains the minutes of the trustees of the Confederate Soldiers Home from 1904 through 1918. The last entry is dated March 1, 1919, and lists the deaths and discharges for the previous month as well as the number of inmates remaining.

NOTE:

As mentioned in the introduction, during reprocessing of Record Group 3, Confederate Pension Records in March 2004, two volumes were discovered that belong in Record Group 2, Confederate Soldiers Home. These two volumes are: Minutes-Trustees, 1897-1904; and Roll of Inmates, Jan. 1910-July 1913. These two volumes were added to the end of the collection and are found in Series #2, Box 13, and on microfilm roll #6.

CONTAINER LIST

Series Number: One

Series Title: Applications

Microfilm Roll #1

| Box Number: | Description |
|--------------------|--------------------|
| 1. | Adams-Byrum |
| 2. | Cable-Davidson |

Microfilm Roll #2

| | |
|----|--------------|
| 3. | Davis-Fry |
| 4. | Fuchs-Howard |

Microfilm Roll #3

| | |
|----|----------------|
| 5. | Howell-Lewis |
| 6. | Lincoln-Murphy |

Microfilm Roll #4

| | |
|----|------------------|
| 7. | McAlister-Ringer |
| 8. | Rhodes-Suttle |

Microfilm Roll #5

| | |
|----|---------------|
| 9. | Sweeney-Young |
|----|---------------|

Series Number: Two

Series Title: Volumes

| Box Number: | Volume #: | Description: |
|--------------------|------------------|------------------------------|
| 10. | 1. | Register, 1890-1916 |
| 10. | 2. | Register, 1918-1940 |
| 11. | 3. | Financial Records, 1901-1915 |
| 11. | 4. | Financial Records, 1915-1919 |
| 12. | 5. | Minutes-Trustees, 1904-1918 |

Microfilm Roll #6

| Box Number: | Volume #: | Description: |
|--------------------|------------------|--------------------------------------|
| 13. | 6. | Minutes-Trustees, 1897-1904 |
| 13. | 7. | Roll of Inmates, Jan. 1910-July 1913 |

Not Microfilmed

Box Number:

| | |
|-----|--------------------------|
| 14. | Visitor's Log, 1892-1904 |
| 15. | Visitor's Log, 1904-1920 |