

Finding Civil War Photographs

Daniel H. Reigle, *Ohio Civil War Genealogy Journal*

Excerpted from the Ask-the-Experts column in the *Ohio Civil War Genealogy Journal (OCWGJ)*, a quarterly publication of the Ohio Genealogical Society. More information on the journal is available at <http://www.ogs.org/publications/ocwgj.php>, or by email to ocwgj@ogs.org.

Those of us not fortunate enough to own photographs of our family members who served in various capacities in the Civil War may despair at ever finding such photographs. The good news is that there are thousands (millions?) of Civil War photographs in existence; the bad news is that many are in private ownership with no public record, and many are not identified. With that caution in mind, there are two major directions to take in searching for a photograph: methods to search general collections of Civil War photographs, and methods to search the specific materials related to the unit, including the major engagements in which it participated and the unit members who are most likely to have left collections behind that included photographs. The latter requires searching local historical collections, descendants of the unit's members, and well-known veterans of the unit. This brief article will attempt to list many of these potential sources as starting points for a search. It is possible to locate and identify Civil War and post-war photographs of individuals and units, but it often requires extensive work to do so.

OGS and OCWGJ Resources:

- OGS Library collections.
- *OCWGJ* indexes by subject and surname are available on the OGS website.
- Roster of the members of Society of Civil War Families of Ohio (SCWFO), for members whose relatives served in the unit of interest.
- Other OGS publications, including *Ohio Records & Pioneer Families*, *Ohio Genealogical Quarterly* (formerly *The OGS Report*), and *Ohio Genealogy News*.
- Advertisements placed in *OCWGJ* or *OGN* to determine if there are members or subscribers who may have sources or suggestions.

General Civil War Photograph Collections:

- Library of Congress: <http://www.loc.gov/rr/print/catalogabt.html>, and the *American Memory* collection, at <http://memory.loc.gov/ammem/>.
- National Archives Archival Research Catalogue: <http://www.archives.gov/research/arc/>.
- the U.S. Army Military History Institute, at <http://www.carlisle.army.mil/AHEC/USAMHI/PhotoSearch.cfm> has a very large photograph collection, some of which can now be viewed online. Diane Gagel's database, published in *OCWGJ* in the four issues of 2002, extracted all Ohio-related photographs from the USAMHI Civil War collections.
- *Ohio Memory* online catalogue at Ohio Historical Society: <http://www.ohiomemory.org/>.
- *American Civil War Research Database*, www.civilwardata.com. Although not a photo collection per se, this database includes nearly 20,000 Union and Confederate photographs linked to an individual's service record.
- Published collections related to the unit of interest or its engagements, which may lead to collections or collectors that hold photographs related to the unit. Examples include:
 - *Buckeye Blood: Ohio at Gettysburg*, Richard A. Baumgartner, Huntington WV: Blue Acorn Press, 2003.
 - *Echoes of Battle: The Atlanta Campaign*, Richard A. Baumgartner and Larry M. Strayer, Huntington WV, Blue Acorn Press, 2004.
 - *Echoes of Battle: The Struggle for Chattanooga*, Richard A. Baumgartner and Larry M. Strayer, Huntington WV, Blue Acorn Press, 1996.
 - *The Invincibles: The Story of the Fourth Ohio Veteran Volunteer Cavalry, 1861-1865*, Nancy Pape-Findley, Tecumseh MI, Blood Road Publishing, 2002.
 - Stephen Burr's research on the 55th OVI, privately published in limited quantity, but recently placed in the OGS Library and several other Ohio libraries.

Regimental Histories, Published Personal Accounts, Manuscripts and Manuscript Collections:

Search for both published and unpublished books, articles, pamphlets, and collections of personal papers, using

resources such as:

- Bibliography section for the unit of interest on the *Ohio in the Civil War* website, <<http://www.ohiocivilwar.com/>>.
- *Some Civil War Manuscripts: A Finding Tool*. Bowman, Mary A., Compiler. Mansfield OH: The Ohio Genealogical Society, 1997.
- Libraries holding items located in this search can be located by using the WorldCat search, <<http://www.worldcat.org/>>. Google Books or Microsoft Bing search may also help locate documents, or even provide full text copies of items in the public domain.
- Although there will be some duplication, search the following major bibliographic sources in addition to the website and Bowman book:
 - Dornbusch, C. E. *Regimental Publications & Personal Narratives of the Civil War: A Checklist*. New York: The New York Public Library, 1962. (Volume One, Northern States: Part V, Indiana and Ohio.)
 - Felton, Silas. *Military Bibliography of the Civil War, Volume Four*. Dayton OH: Morningside House, Inc. 2003. This expands and updates the Dornbusch bibliography.
 - Ryan, Daniel J. *The Civil War Literature of Ohio: A Bibliography with Explanatory and Historical Notes*. Originally published in Columbus OH, 1911. Reprinted in Columbus OH, 1994.
 - The USAMHI site, mentioned above, also includes unit histories and bibliographies for all Union and Confederate units.
 - National Union Catalogue of Manuscript Collections at the Library of Congress, <<http://www.loc.gov/coll/nucmc/>>.
 - Hydrick, Blair. *A Guide to the Microfiche edition of Civil War Unit Histories: regimental histories and personal narratives*. Bethesda MD: University Publications of America, 1992-1996. Five volumes of indexes in book form.
 - *Regimental Histories of the American Civil War: A Guide to the Microfiche Collection*. Ann Arbor MI: UMI, 1991-1993. Six volumes of indexes in book form. 8167 microfiches.

Historians Specializing in the Unit or its Battles:

One of the primary reasons for searching bibliographies should be to locate historians who are researching the unit or its campaigns and engagements. Whether their research has been published or not, such historians will often have valuable information about actual or potential photograph sources. There are many examples in *OCWGJ* articles, such as Harold George (9th Ohio Independent Battery Light Artillery), Martin Stewart (71st OVI), Lois Lambert (33rd and 91st OVI), Mike Elliott (104th OVI), Max Terman (82nd OVI), and Brad Quinlin (21st OVI.)

Local and State-wide Photograph Collections:

Local libraries, historical societies, and genealogical societies often have extensive collections of local photographs, some of which are now being made available digitally. These are often a good source for post-war photographs of veterans' reunions and articles. Examples include the Public Library of Cincinnati and Hamilton County, and the Public Library of Steubenville and Jefferson County. Major historical societies and libraries should also be researched, such as the OGS Library, Hayes Presidential Library, and Cincinnati Historical Society. The eight libraries in the Ohio Network of American History Resource Centers are responsible for preservation of historically valuable local government records and include: University of Akron Libraries, Center for Archival Collections at Bowling Green State University, Blegen Library at University of Cincinnati, Ohio Historical Society, Alden Library at Ohio University, Western Reserve Historical Society, Dunbar Library at Wright State University, and the Youngstown Historical Center of Industry and Labor. Internet links, addresses, and phone numbers for these centers are available on the OHS website at: <<http://www.ohiohistory.org/resource/lgr/network1.html>>.

Local Historians and Genealogists:

The local historians and genealogists in the individual's or the unit's home area may have suggestions and resources, such as individuals who have private collections or family collections that may include photographs of interest. The OGS Chapter for the location of interest is a good starting point. Many local historians have done extensive research on the Civil War units and veterans from that area. For example, Dallas Bogan has done extensive research on Warren County, Ohio. Some of his work and his email address are located at <<http://www.rootsweb.com/~ohwarren/Bogan/bogan112.htm>>, the Warren County site at Rootsweb.

Local Newspaper Collections:

In post-war years, there may be photographs of veterans with their obituary, or with feature articles. For example, a Columbus newspaper in 1913 had a feature article on area veterans who had served at Gettysburg and who were traveling there for the 50th Anniversary celebration. The article included photographs of each of the veterans.

Grand Army of the Republic (GAR) and other Veterans' Organizations:

Individual photographs of veterans were included in GAR state and national encampment programs for veterans featured on the program or being honored. GAR posts were named in honor of deceased veterans, and their photographs are sometimes found with those records. For example, the photograph of Capt. John Bell on the cover of *OCWGJ*, Vol. IX (2005), No. 4, was published in the report of the proceedings of the 1905 encampment of the Department of Ohio, GAR, held in Bell's home town of Washington Court House, hosted by the GAR John M. Bell Post No. 119 that was named in Bell's memory. The Sons of Union Veterans of the Civil War, the descendant organization of the GAR, includes a "Photos from the Past" section on their website, with photos of both individuals and groups, at <<http://suvvw.org/photos.htm>>. The site also includes photographs of GAR commanders such as John Andrews of Ohio, who served as Commander in 1940 until his death at age 91, <<http://suvvw.org/garcinc/jeandrews.htm>>.

Major Civil War Collectors and Shows:

There are many private collectors of Civil War photographs who have photographs for sale. At the Mansfield OH show held the first weekend in May each year, thousands of identified and unidentified Civil War photographs are displayed for sale by many different collectors and vendors. Most of these collectors and dealers are very knowledgeable about the entire market and very ethical in their dealings, but *caveat emptor* always applies. One of listing of some dealers in all types of materials is at <<http://www.civilwardealers.com/>>.

Civil War Publications:

In the monthly newspaper, *The Civil War News*, readers can place a classified advertisement in search of photographs (or other items) related to specific units or individuals <www.civilwarnews.com>. Classified ads are also available in *Blue & Gray Magazine*, <www.bluegraymagazine.com>.

Ebay or Other Online Markets:

While it may be improbable that a photograph of a particular individual or unit would be found on Ebay or an online market, there are many photographs becoming available through these channels, and they must be searched.

Public Family Trees on Ancestry or Other Genealogy Websites:

Contact the submitters as they might have photos. Trace all of the veterans' family members siblings and children to current relatives and ask them if they have photographs.

Genealogy Message Boards and Local Newspapers:

As with any genealogy research, questions launched through message boards or notices in local newspapers can sometimes reach collectors or descendants of veterans who may hold individual or group photographs but are not offering them for sale.