

## Spanish American War Records at the Archives of Michigan

The Spanish American War only lasted from April to August in 1898. Michigan sent nearly 6,500 men, and in the Naval Reserves over 300 men. The Archives of Michigan hold a number of records related to this conflict including records from the 31<sup>st</sup>, 32<sup>nd</sup>, 33<sup>rd</sup>, 34<sup>th</sup>, and 35<sup>th</sup> Michigan Infantry.

### Step One: Identifying Regiments

Military records are often organized by regiment and company rather than simply alphabetically. Identifying the regiment in which an individual served is an initial step to researching military records.

#### Index to Michigan Volunteers, 1898-1899

RG 59-14

This is an index to descriptive rolls. Entries in this volume are arranged alphabetically by name of volunteer. An entry provides name, volume, and page number of a descriptive roll. Researchers can find a description of descriptive rolls in the section on individual records.

Military Establishment, Series 5, Volume 84, Microfilm 673

#### United Spanish War Veterans, Master Index, 1898 – 1981

RG 84-88

These index cards catalog membership of the various camps of the fraternal organization, United Spanish War Veterans. It is important to note that not every Spanish American Veteran joined this fraternal organization. However, members of this fraternal organization may have served in any number of state and federal regiments. The cards capture name, age, residence, camp number, date of final discharge, rank, company/regiment, ship, length of service, cause of discharge, and death date. The pink cards show those individuals who have been suspended or discharged, and the blue cards denote those who were in good standing.

Management & Budget, Series 1, Card Catalog in Vault, Microfilm ??

### Books

Detroit, Mich. G. F. Sterling & Co., Michigan volunteers of '98; a complete photographic record of Michigan's part in the Spanish-American war of 1898.

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### Step Two: Individual Records

Once you have established the regiment in which an individual served, researching records on that individual becomes a little easier. Military records

on individuals can include enlistment papers, muster records (i.e. general term for records created out of military actions?).

**Descriptive Rolls, 1897-1899****RG 59-14**

These volumes of descriptive rolls detail the 31st through 35<sup>th</sup> Michigan Infantries. Entries in these volumes denote regiment, company, name, rank, date and place of enlistment, enlistment officer, term, date and place of muster, physical description, town and county quota credit, and history. There is an index to these volumes (see above *Index to Michigan Volunteers, 1898-1899*). They are organized by regiment, company, then alphabetically by name.

Military Establishment, Series 1, Volumes 49 – 53, Microfilm 594 – 595

**Online Databases Available in Archives Reading Room**

*Ancestry: U.S., Spanish American War Volunteers Index to Compiled Military Service Records, 1898*

This database contains an index to Compiled Service Records for U.S. volunteers who served in the Spanish-American War. Compiled service records (CSRs) were prepared by the War Department some years after the actual conflict. They consist of cards that record information about a soldier extracted from muster rolls, payrolls, enlistment records, examinations prior to discharge, and other records. A new card was created each time a soldier's name appeared on a new document. The cards are arranged in packets, with each packet pertaining to a specific soldier. Packets may also contain copies of some original documents.

**Certificates of Service, 1898-1907****RG 59-14**

These volumes include press copies of certificates of service in the Michigan Military Establishment. Pages are onion skin and can be difficult to read. There is an alphabetical index within each volume.

Military Establishment, Series 23, Volumes 159-166

**List of Dishonorable Discharges, 1899-1905****RG 59-14**

This volume shows name, company and regiment, date of discharge and cause of dishonorable discharge. Entries are organized by regiment then chronologically by date of discharge. The volume includes records from the first, second, and third infantry along with the first independent battalion.

Military Establishment, Series 20, Volume 119

**Step Three: Regimental Records**

Additional military records exist for individuals that are not necessarily organized by name. These records are often organized at the regimental level requiring a bit more research to find individuals.

**United Spanish War Veterans, Regimental Records, 1898 – 1899****RG 84-88**

The muster rolls offer name, rank, when and where enrolled, when and where mustered, place of residence, value of clothing issued, amount of pay, and remarks. The schedules on clothing and materials show name, type and amount of equipment issued, and value of property. The duty book is a list of names, ranks, and addresses of men plus some remarks on death and/or camp affiliation. The ordinance inventory identifies the kind and amount of equipment distributed to Company B, and the payrolls show name, rank, when enlisted, term, date of last payment, and amount. Finally, the unit roster gives name, town, where enlisted, rank, reason for discharge, and remarks. Arranged numerically by regiment.

Management & Budget, Series 4, Volume 1, Box 35, Sol. Box 11

**Muster-out Rolls of Michigan Volunteers in the Spanish-American War****RG 59-14**

These rolls shows regiment, company, name, rank, when and where enlisted, name of enlistment officer, when and where mustered, name of mustering officer, name of paymaster and date of last pay, total value of clothing issued by state, amount due United States, remarks and pay account. Rolls are organized by regiment then company. Individual entries may be organized alphabetically but also randomly.

Military Establishment, Series 19, Volumes 114-118, Microfilm 685 - 687

**Records Relating to Camp Eaton, Island Lake, 1898****RG 59-14**

Michigan serviceman organized into regiments at Camp Eaton in Island Lake. Material includes folders on detail for duty, letters, list of men, morning reports, orders, petitions and reports of inspection, sick, force absent and present reports, and guard reports. Material is organized by the kind of record.

Military Establishment, Series 54, Sol. Box 84 and Box 149

**Records Relating to Thirty-first – Thirty-fifth Infantry, Navy, and Thirtieth United States Infantry, 1898 – 1906****RG 59-14**

Consists of descriptive and assignment cards, letters, rosters, affidavits of officers, reports of death and discharge, oaths, consents for minors, and a monthly return from a chaplain. Material is organized by regiment, then the kind of record.

Military Establishment, Series 56, Sol. Box 83 and Box 145 – 146,  
Microfilm 11632

**Records of the Navy in the Spanish-American War, 1898** **RG 59-14**

Correspondences of the Adjutant General of Michigan. This correspondence is largely with the Bureau of Navigation, Navy Department from Washington D.C. Amongst the correspondence there are lists of volunteers assigned to U.S.S. Yosemite prepared by Michigan's Adjutant General and sent to the United States Navy.

Military Establishment, Series 56, Box 146, Folder 1

**Michigan Military Forces in the Spanish-American War, 1898** **RG 59-14**

Correspondence, in the form of letters and telegrams, sent to and from the Adjutant General related to the raising and mobilization of troops.

Military Establishment, Series 56, Box 146, Folder 2

**Official Oaths of Recruiting Officers, 1898** **RG 59-14**

Military Establishment, Series 56, Box 146, Folder 3

**Roster of Thirtieth United States Infantry, 1900** **RG 59-14**

Military Establishment, Series 56, Box 146, Folder 4

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**Step Four: Post-War Records**

Veterans of the Spanish American War may have been eligible for a medal and payments for serving their country.

**Record of Distribution of Spanish-American War Medals, 1902** **RG 59-14**

Entries in this volume are organized alphabetical by name of applicant. These medals were dispersed according to Public Act 223 of 1901. This act provided for the presentation of bronze medals to the sailors and soldiers who enlisted and served in the Spanish-American War and in the campaign in the Philippine Islands, from Michigan; also in certain cases to the relatives of such sailors and soldiers who perished in such service. A full transcription of this [volume](#) is online at Seeking Michigan.

Military Establishment, Series 24, Volume 240

**Spanish War Claims, 1899 – 1903** **RG 59-14**

Three folders of petitions, statements and papers accompanying claims of the State of Michigan for reimbursement of certain expenditures made in behalf of

the United States volunteers during the Spanish-American War. Records are organized chronologically. While names are identified in these materials not every person who received a claim is listed. This material also includes testimony of legislative investigation.

Military Establishment, Series 55, Box 149

**Record of Payment to Soldiers, 1899 - 1923**

**RG 57-24**

Relief pay outs to Spanish American War Veterans that includes voucher number, date, name of soldier, company, regiment and organization served, amount paid, name of County Board allowing payment, name of individual paid. This relief was enacted as part of Public Acts 12 and 134 of 1899. Materials arranged alphabetical by county, then by name of soldier.

Auditor General, Series 5, Volume 18

**Online Databases Available in Archives Reading Room**

*Ancestry: U.S., Civil War Pension Index: General Index to Pension Files, 1861-1934*

Millions of these men, or their dependents, applied for pension support from the federal government. These application cards (for Federal, not Confederate pensions) were indexed by the Pension Office and kept by the National Archives. This database is an index to nearly 2.5 million of these application cards. Each record includes the veteran's name and state in which he, or his dependents, filed the application. If a widow or a child filed the application, their name is provided.

**Grand Rapids Veteran's Facility**

\*\*See Research Guide No. 7

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**Step Five: Local Records**

Counties often kept records on local units and veterans. Records on the Spanish American War relief were filed as a result of Public Act No. 3, Special Session of 1899.

**Military Establishment, Detroit Light Guards, 1891-1907**

**RG 59-14**

Minutes of regular and special meetings relating to policy of the Guard, legislation, finances, armory maintenance and membership, from January 5, 1891 – May 1, 1907. Entries are organized chronologically by meeting dates.

Military Establishment, Series 58, Volume 151

**Genesee County, Discharges of Volunteers, 1865-1934**

**RG 81-50**

The discharge of volunteer records show the name, rank, company, regiment, date of enrollment, number of years served, date of discharge, reason, age at discharge, state born in, physical description, and pre-war occupation of each soldier recorded. Only a small sampling of Genesee County volunteers is represented. Material is arranged chronologically by date recorded at the county. There is no index.

Genesee County, Office of the County Clerk, Box 20

**Ingham County, National Guard Duty Book, 1897-1906** **RG 80-118**

One of the Lansing units in the Michigan National Guard was Company F of the First Infantry Brigade. About the turn of the century this outfit became Company B of the First Independent Brigade. This volume is a quarterly register of troops providing names, rank, and attendance. At the back is a similar section for the Second Section of Artillery. The volume entries are arranged chronologically by quarter.

Ingham County, Office of the County Clerk, Volume 16

**Ionia County, Soldier's Relief Board, 1899** **RG 66-73**

This volume contains meeting minutes of board actions from March 29, 1883 through November 6, 1899, affecting relief to care of soldiers, sailors and marines. Entries in volume are arranged chronologically by meeting date. Names of individuals who applied and/or granted relief are mentioned. There is no index.

Ionia County, Office of the County Clerk, Volume 16

**Isabella County, Spanish-American War Relief, 1900** **RG 72-89**

This volume contains reports of county relief board in the matter of proper care, maintenance and support of any sick, disabled or needy ex-soldier, sailor, or marine of the Spanish-American War. These reports include service records of individuals to whom relief was extended, amount of authorized expenditures, narrative facts of need, signature of witnesses, date and supporting bills laid in loose. Volume contains only two entries, Thomas R. Dale

Isabella County, Office of County Clerk, Volume 4

**Kalamazoo County, Relief Board for Spanish-American War Servicemen's Families, 1888 - 1899** **RG 68-64**

*\*\*Held at Western Michigan University Archives, Kalamazoo*

**Mecosta County, Soldiers' Relief Commission, 1899-1909** **RG 69-59**

Materials include minutes, accounts, claims, reports, and correspondence of the Mecosta County Soldiers' Relief Commission and are generally ordered

chronologically.\*\* These documents were filed as a result of Public Act No. 3, Special Session of 1899.

Mecosta County, Office of County Clerk, Box 3, Microfilm 888

**Oscoda County, Soldiers and Sailors Relief Commission Minutes, 1896-1944** **RG 67-40**

This volume contains minutes of meetings affecting relief to care of soldiers, sailors, and marines. Entries in volume are arranged chronologically by meeting date. Names of individuals who applied and/or granted relief are mentioned. There is no index.

Oscoda County, Office of County Clerk, Volume 234

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**Step Six: Fraternal Organization**

Fraternal organizations for Spanish American War soldiers were founded in Michigan as early as August of 1899. Among these groups was the Michigan Department of the Spanish American War Veterans, which was chartered in January of 1900. On April 18, 1904, the half-dozen independent associations amalgamated to form one body, the United Spanish War Veterans. Under Act 71 of 1915, the State provided quarters for this organization and its records were made available to the public.

The main purpose of the USWV was to promote the general welfare of those who fought in that conflict. To support this cause, a maximum of 4,650 men belonged to the fraternity during its peak membership year of 1932. This represents a figure equivalent to about 72% of all men who served from Michigan in the Spanish American War.

**United Spanish War Veterans, Camp Records, 1898 – 1981** **RG 84-88**

Camp records consist of various documents some of which are common to all camps and others are unique to just a few. A full list and description of the kinds of records are available in the guide to this collection in the Archive's reading room. All of these materials are arranged numerically by camp, then alphabetically by type of records, then chronologically. There is a card catalog to the membership of the various camps as well as an index on microfilm reels 445-450.

Management & Budget, Series 1, Boxes 1 – 30, Microfilm 445 – 450

**United Spanish War Veterans, Personal Records, 1943 – 1979** **RG 84-88**

This form shows name, address, pension number, camp affiliation, rank in service, regiment, date and place of enlistment and discharge, date and place of

birth, date and place of marriages, names(s) of wife(s), and date of death.  
Arranged alphabetically.

Management & Budget, Series 2, Boxes 30 – 32

**United Spanish War Veterans, Death Records, 1936 - 1976**      **RG 84-88**

Provides name, date of death, cemetery, grave number, date of birth, camp affiliation, rank in service, regiment, dates of enlistment and discharge, dates when headstone was ordered and received, nearest relative's name and address, and name of undertaker. Arranged chronologically.

Management & Budget, Series 3, Boxes 32 – 34