

## **EARLY BURIALS OF US WAR DEAD**

A Working Bibliography of MHI Sources

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### **GENERAL SURVEY**

Since 1775, the US Army Quartermaster Dept has held primary responsibility for the disposition of deceased military personnel. Until the 20<sup>th</sup> century, battlefield conditions rather than official policy appear to have influenced the where and how of burials.

Information is scarce on disposition of remains during the Revolutionary War. Battlefield burials receive no mention in histories of the war or its battles, nor in the 39-volume Writings of George Washington or Erna Risch's Supplying Washington's Army....

Research here also uncovered no substantive info on care of the dead during the War of 1812, the Seminole Wars, or the Black Hawk War. Post-battle conditions determined how, if at all, soldiers were buried. Efforts to move the remains to nearby post cemeteries, if practicable, appear to have been made.

Large numbers of deaths from both disease and combat occurred outside the US for the first time during the Mexican War. Secondary sources here reveal little info on disposition of soldiers who died of disease or in battle. They were probably buried near their place of death. In 1850, Congress appropriated funds for a military cemetery in Mexico City, the first such cemetery established either at home or abroad. Several hundred bodies were eventually exhumed from Mexican War battle sites and relocated there.

Early in the Civil War, hasty and mass burials occurred without benefit of identification and documentation, because the large number of casualties were both unanticipated and unmanageable. As late in the war as 1863, specific reference to mass graves appears in the report of Samuel Weaver, who was responsible for relocating Union dead from battlefield gravesites to the newly-established National Cemetery after the Jul 1863 Battle of Gettysburg. By war's end, however, the National Cemetery system became firmly entrenched in the Federal government.

For the various Indian Wars sites, see National Park Service's Soldier and Brave: Historic Places Associated With the Indian Wars in the Trans-Mississippi West (Wash, DC: NPS, 1971; E81U55). It lists historic sites, describes their significance and present condition, and includes info on extant cemeteries.

**REVOLUTIONARY WAR THROUGH THE 1830s**

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Eby, Cecil. "That Disgraceful Affair": The Black Hawk War. NY: W.W. Norton, 1973. pp. 224-25. E83.83.E29.

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Henderson, Frank D., et. al., compilers. The Official Roster of the Soldiers of the American Revolution Buried in the State of Ohio. 3 vols. Columbus, OH: F. J. Heer Printing, 1929-1959. E260.O3.O34.

Mahon, John K. History of the Second Seminole War, 1835-42. Gainesville, FL: U FL, 1967. pp. 158-59. E83.835.M3.

Muller, Charles G. The Darkest Day: 1814: The Washington-Baltimore Campaign. NY: Lippincott, 1963. pp. 133-34. E355.6.M8.

Pfeiffer, Susan, editor. Snake Hill: An Investigation of a Military Cemetery From the War of 1812. Toronto, Canada: Dundurn, 1991. 442 p. E356.E5.S65.

Sprague, J.T. Origin, Progress, and Conclusion of the Florida War...Together with Orders for Collecting the Remains.... NY: Appleton, 1848. 557 p. E83.B35.S77.

Williams, Mary L. "Care of the Dead (and Lack of It) at 19<sup>th</sup> Century Posts." Periodical (May 1984): pp. 14-30. Per.

Williamson, Ronald, editor. The Snake Hill Site; A War of 1812 Cemetery. 2 vols. Toronto, Canada: Archaeological Services, 1988. ca 500 p. E356.E5.S62.

Results of US-Canadian research on site discovered in Apr 1987 (see Hasenauer, cited above)

**MEXICAN WAR**

Butler, Steven R. "The Forgotten Soldiers: Deceased U.S. Military Personnel in the War with Mexico." MA thesis, U TX-Arlington, 1999. 131 p. E415.2.D4.B88.

Hilsabeck, Carter L. "Burial Sites of Decedent American Soldiers, American-Mexican War, 1846-47.: Notes & correspondence, ca 1960s." 35 p. E409.2.H54.

Scribner, Benjamin F. Camp Life of a Volunteer: A Campaign in Mexico, or a Glimpse at Life in Camp. Austin, TX: Jenkins, 1975 reprint. pp. 20, 25, & 67-69. E409.5.I7.S37.

Steere, Edward. The Graves Registration Service in World War II: Quartermaster Historical Studies No. 21. Wash, DC: GPO, 1951. p. 3. UC34.A2no21.