

# Railroad Pension Records: Their Value for Genealogical Answer

Kim S. Harrison

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8<sup>th</sup> Jan. 2025

Pension records are housed at:

National Archives at Atlanta

5780 Jonesboro Road

Morrow, GA 30260

Phone: 770-968-2100

E-mail: [atlanta.archives@nara.gov](mailto:atlanta.archives@nara.gov)

Cost is \$.80 per page. NARA staff will give you quote of key pages as well as for the full packet. Include the following information with your request.

- First Name, Middle Name/Initial, Last Name
- Railroad Retirement Board Claim Number
- Social Security Number
- Year of Birth (location if known)
- Year of Death (location if known)
- Spouse (if known)

Indexes can be found at:

Midwest Genealogy Center

<http://quicklook.midwestgenealogycenter.org/>

Ancestry.com

<https://www.ancestry.com/search/collections/railroadretirementboard/>

NARA

<https://catalog.archives.gov/id/5743080>

## NARA

Notes on the movement of records and expanding the indexes:

Email from Atlanta Archives dated 3 Dec. 2024. The RRB records are arranged in what we call "storages" which was how they were originally stored by RRB. Storages 1-7 were destroyed years ago prior to a change in the records schedule. Storages 8-15 are held here at the National Archives at Atlanta. We recently transferred storages 16-20 to the National Archives at Boston to open up more archival space in our facility. We will also transfer storages 8-15 to Boston in the next year. Storage 21 is held at the National Archives at Chicago, and all of the more recent

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storages are held at the Chicago Federal Records Center. They will be transferred to the National Archives as the files in each storage become inactive. Storages 8-20 consist of 67,525 linear feet of records, and storage 21 consists of 10894 linear feet, 4 linear inches.

The index for storages 8-20 can also be found on the Midwest Genealogy Center's website (<https://quicklook.midwestgenealogycenter.org/>) and the National Archives catalog (<https://catalog.archives.gov/id/5743080>). The index for storage 21 is in the National Archives catalog (<https://catalog.archives.gov/id/315948959>). As additional storages are transferred to the National Archives, the indexes will be updated in the National Archives catalog, but not necessarily on ancestry or Midwest Genealogy.

## Printed Sources:

- Allen, Desmond Walls & Carolyn Earle Billingsley, **Social Security Applications: A Genealogical Resource**. Bryant, AR: author, 1989.
- Elliott, Wendy. "Railroad Records for Genealogical Research", **National Genealogical Society Quarterly**. Vol. 75, #4, Dec. 1987. pp 271-277.
- Pfeiffer, David A. "Riding the Rails Up Paper Mountain: Researching Railroad Records in the National Archives", **Prologue**. Vol. 29, #1, Spring 1997 (there are 3 parts)

## What information can be found in the Railroad Pension files:

- Original Documents
  - Marriage, Divorce, Death
  - Funeral Records
  - Employment Records
  - Bible Record
- Work History
  - Employer Information
  - Job Titles/Duties
  - All Railroad Companies
  - Work Location
- Residences
- Signatures
  - Railroad Employee
  - Spouses

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- Notice how they used their name
  - Keep in mind alias
- Birth Information
  - Location
  - Parent's full name (includes maiden names)
- Death Information
  - Ancestor's Death Record
  - Funeral Records
  - Spouses
- Health Information
- Marriage and Divorce Information
  - Includes all marriages
  - Includes all divorces
  - Including location for each
- Family Members
  - Spouse Information
  - Spouse's signature
  - Children Information
- Military Service
- Immigration Details
- Union/Association Memberships
  - Possible spouse association membership

Think what you can find using Railroad Pension Files? This record group will lead you to other clues about your railroad ancestor and their family.