WPA Veterans Grave Cards
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In the 1930s the Works Progress Administration (WPA) documented the service records and burial locations of deceased American military personnel. There were two parts to this effort. "Grave Registration Cards" were created on 3x5 in. cards with biographical, military, and burial information for each veteran, and surveys were conducted of cemeteries and plat maps drawn with plot notations for each veteran. For the cemetery maps, see the Hamilton County Recorders Office website at http://recordersoffice.hamilton-co.org/helpful_information/cemetery_locations.html.

These records are a boon for genealogists. It is hard to imagine how the researchers in the 1930s were able to compile so much data without computers or the technology available today. Even after the WPA was disbanded in 1943, the Grave Registration Card project continued through the early 1970s. In Hamilton County, Ohio the cards were initially stored in file drawers arranged first by cemetery, then grouped by war or regular service, then sorted alphabetically by surname of the veteran. Several years ago, the cards were scanned, and it is those approximately 40,000 images which are discussed here. In 2017-18 an effort was made to re-organize the scanned images to better reflect the correct burial locations, war served, etc.

Tips for the researcher:
- Within cemeteries, the categories are:
    - Revolutionary War
    - War of 1812
    - Mexican War
    - Civil War
    - Spanish-American War
    - World War I
    - World War II
    - Korea
    - Vietnam
    - Regular Service (peace time service)
    - Service Not Listed (the war served may be known, but the card does not state it)
- Names are organized only by the first four letters of the surname. As you search through the images, this may result in an un-alphabetical order like: Schnitker, Schnell, Schneider.
- Despite the massive effort to record this data, much is missing or incorrect on the cards. If you are looking for a specific veteran of, for example WWI, search first in the suspected cemetery, but be prepared to search also in the "Service Not Listed" category.
- Notations or corrections cannot be made to the images themselves. However, when some information was found to be incorrect, notations were made in the file name of the image. These include name misspellings, wrong war, and wrong cemetery.
- The latest death year recorded on the cards is 1974.
- The cemetery for many veterans has not been determined. See the "+UNKNOWN CEMETERY" folder.
- Thousands of cards are actually for cemeteries outside Hamilton County. They are at the top of the list with "+" preceding their location.

The online searchable collection is available on Google Drive at https://tinyurl.com/VetGraveCards (WPA Veteran Grave Cards in the HCGS Archive)

If you are logged in to a Google account a Search Drive box is available at the top of the screen. You can enter the first four letters of the last name of the veteran and search. If you do not have a Google account, or do not log in, no Search Drive box will appear. In either case you can still search by navigating the cemetery folders.

More information on military burials and the link to the collection can also be found on the HCGS website Cemeteries page at https://hcgsohio.org/cpage.php?pt=63#VetGraveCards.

Hamilton County Genealogical Society thanks Jeff Herbert for leading this project and Peggy Schmidt for renaming the digital files and re-organizing them logically to ease searching and finding specific cards. We also thank Wayne Coates, former Hamilton County Recorder, for making the card images available.
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