

ROGUE VALLEY GENEALOGICAL SOCIETY

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www.rvgslibrary.org

Third Place Winner, First Annual RVGS Writing Contest

Old Fremont Finally Found

by Brice Martin IV

I have been fortunate to be able to live on our family owned cattle ranch for five generations and have retained many original artifacts and of course the history that accompanies them. There have been many articles written about our colorful family's past in several local publications: *The Siskiyou Daily News, The Pioneer Press*, and Siskiyou Historical Society books. Here is a brief description of our family history up till now. I will then unveil my unusual discovery of a priceless family heirloom that was discovered two winters ago.

Robert Milton Martin, (called R. M.) was born in 1821 in Livingston, Tennessee. He acquired "gold fever," headed west, and arrived at the gold fields of the Trinity River, Scott River and Yreka, California area in 1849. He became Sheriff of Scott Bar shortly after. In 1852, he bought the ranch where I reside today, called Table Rock Ranch in Siskiyou County, CA. Similar to the formations in the Medford-Central Point area, he chose it for its abundant springs and beauty. There he raised beef cattle for the hungry miners. He had the first land patent in Siskiyou County, we learned recently from an old document from an attorney in Yreka. A James Buchanan-signed land grant in possession confirms that as well. R. M. was on the first Siskiyou Grand Jury in Yreka in 1854 (we have the picture), was promoted to Captain of the state militia, and in 1858 was promoted to Major General of the 6th Division. In the

1860s, he took 300 head of steer from Table Rock ranch to the silver mines in Idaho on a four-month venture through hostile, unchartered country. We still have the original diary of this journev.9 Of note, we also use the original "Q" brand on our cattle, which has been used for over 150 years. R.M. was elected to the state legislature in 1868. In 1870 at Table Rock he succumbed to congestive fever and did not recover. He left a pregnant widow, a daughter and four sons. One of his sons, Brice (my great-grandfather), eventually took over the ranch. My name is Brice Martin also and I am actually the fourth "Brice." I have passed the name down to my son (V),4 and he has passed it down to his son, making six generations of Brice Martins after Gen. R. M. Martin settled here. ⁵



Four generations of Brice Martin's – taken in 2007

Here is a little history about the name "Brice Martin." R. M.'s grandfather was the original Brice, born in 1737 in Albemarle County, Virginia. Brice's father, Joseph, was born in Bristol, England in 1702, the son of a wealthy merchant, William of Bristol, who did not approve of his impending marriage to an "undesirable" mate. So he sent Joseph on one of his shipping vessels named "The Brice" to Virginia in

Joseph then made several more voyages, including ones to Barbados, on "The Brice" until the ship was eventually stolen by pirates. Joseph collected the insurance money and bought a large estate in Charlottesville, VA. ⁵ He settled down there and married Susanna, of the reputable Chiles family. Joseph was left a substantial inheritance, which his oldest son, also named Joseph, traveled to England to receive. Luckily he missed the ship back to Bristol. It sank at sea in a storm and all were lost! The elder Joseph named a younger son Brice, after the ship on which he came to America. These two sons eventually settled on farms adjacent to one another in the town of Martinsville, VA, that was named after them. Joseph, who later became a Brigadier General was an unsung hero in the Revolutionary War. ³ He successfully persuaded the Cherokee Nation to change alliances from the British to the colonists enabling a victory at King's Mountain, a turning point in the Revolutionary War. ⁷ Teddy Roosevelt would later remark, "If it wasn't for the presence of Joseph Martin in the American Revolution, victory would have been postponed three to five years, if won at all."

I attended the Martin family reunion in 2008 in Martinsville VA, organized by Joe Martin, the connection that would be the source of this amazing "family artifact" story. ⁸ I met Joe Martin three years ago while searching for information on the Martin name, Brice. Major Brice's brother, Gen. Joseph, had a lot of information available about him. And actually Brice was an unsung hero as well, accompanying his brother on many occasions and became a Major in the Revolution, I came to find out. ² As I inquired through the Gen. Joseph web site to see if any Brice's still existed, I was directed to an individual who, I was told, was writing a book on Maj. Brice's Revolutionary War rifle. Wow! I was in disbelief as I wasn't aware that there was any activity or information on Brice. I was referred to a Joe Martin, a retired Air Force Colonel and family historian who resided in Gilbert, AZ. While Joe was doing some research in a library in Tennessee in 2003, he found records of Brice Martin's Revolutionary War rifle that indicated it had been handed down to Brice's nephew, Martin Hammack. His granddaughter donated the weapon to the Lake County Museum in Lakeport, CA, in 1930, the records stated.

Col. Joe called the Lake County Museum from Tennessee to see if the artifact was still there. But to his surprise he found out that it wasn't. He explained the uniqueness and grandeur of its height and size and encouraged them to look for it, also noting its six-digit value. They began to search the storage area



Brice Martin IV pictured with mother, Patricia

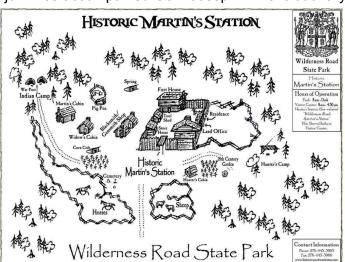
where other relics from bygone years sat in the undisturbed dust. To their amazement something similar to his description was discovered and soon confirmed as the authentic artifact! After two years of research compiling data, Joe wrote the rifle's biography in 2005. He shared the information with the Museum, who compiled the information for their display.² The rifle story goes as follows: Major Brice Martin, following his documented military service in the Revolutionary War, including the Battles of Guilford and Point Pleasant, passed down his rifle, nicknamed "Old Fremont," to his nephew, Martin Hammack. Martin was a soldier in Gen. Andrew Jackson's army and used the rifle in the War of 1812, and in the Black Hawk Indian War of 1832.2 Martin Hammack was an Indian scout and wagon master and could speak several Indian

languages fluently. He took the rifle on his six-month wagon train ride across the plains in 1853/54, arriving in Lake County California, where the Hammock family were the first white settlers in Big Valley, CA. ² In 2005, the Lake County Museum had a special ribbon cutting ceremony for the rifle in its new display case with its story. I discovered this information in 2007.

Joe's book on the rifle is available at the museum gift shop. When I got in contact with Joe for the first time and he confirmed that great story, I had a hard time containing my euphoria. Actually Joe felt the same when we met. It was like a great family reunion. That night I had to tell at least someone, as my wife was asleep. So I picked my dad, Brice III, even though it was late, and I went down and poured out the great story to him!

Joe and I have become pretty well acquainted in a short period of time. I visited him in Arizona three years ago on a family trip and he has visited our ranch twice and actually just left a couple of weeks ago. Joe is a direct descendant of Gen. Joseph, Brice's brother. He put together the Martin reunion in Martinsville that my wife and I attended. There at the old courthouse we had a monument dedication and a twenty-one gun salute in honor of Gen. Joseph, commemorating the 200th year anniversary of Gen. Joseph Martin's death in 1808. Keynote speakers were Col. Joe & Virginia Congressman of the fifth district, Virgil Goode. 8 I was the only Brice present in the crowd of several hundred and one of the few direct descendants of Major Brice. It was a great time of exchanging information. We toured the original home sites and viewed many artifacts. We are still looking for Brice's gravesite. Records indicate that around 1778 Brice was captain of the Militia and licensed to keep an ordinary at the courthouse in Martinsville. Tradition has it that while in his early years in Charlottesville Va., Brice ran an ordinary or bed & breakfast there called the "Ivy Inn." It is still in existence today. I mention this because several Martin events in my family were held there, including a wedding reception we attended. My family had no idea of this connection until the reunion. My family was also unaware of the connection to Martinsville, VA, and so much more up until my discovery of the rifle and "cousin" Joe. My aunt, the family historian, who had been the source for our information in the past, was totally unaware of the Martinsville, VA connection. She attended the reunion with her family as well. After meeting other Martin researchers and family members there, we acquired additional family facts. Here is the early summary: Records of our ancestors start in 316 AD in Northern France. Our early ancestor, Martin de Tours preached Christianity in France and in 1066 traveled with William the Conqueror and died in 1086. They were wealthy aristocrats, owned Pembroke Castle in Wales plus many other properties in London. Somerset, and the counties of Dorset, Devonshire, and Cornwall also. The family line continues with his sons, Robert and William Martin, with the name of William Martin being continued for many generations until 1650, when the William was born who was the father of Joseph Martin that came to America.³

A new General Joseph Martin web site is currently being upgraded by "cousin" Joe. It will include "the old Fremont" story. A new historical book that includes a biography on Brice is being published this year in Martinsville, VA. by the Henry County Historical Society. We have just compiled the text for the book. Major Brice accompanied Gen. Joseph in Revolutionary War battles and in 1769 they first attempted to es-



tablish a fort in Southwestern Virginia for protection from Indian attacks on the famous Wilderness Road Trail. This was the first documented journey of Maj. Brice's rifle. In "The Journey of Old Fremont" story (page 10, paragraph 2), Martin's Station was finally built in 1775. This fort played a key role in the settlement of the American frontier and westward expansion during the Revolutionary War, which Daniel Boone utilized. You can visit the reconstructed historic Martin's Station in Virginia's Wilderness Road State Park and view reenactments there today. It is an "outdoor living history museum" featuring the most authentically reconstructed frontier fort in America. ⁶

Who could have imagined that an heirloom lay hidden, then uncovered, then re-discovered by me with a little "click of a mouse." What a treasure was lying a hundred miles south of us in a museum that we had driven by in the past! That rifle has witnessed many amazing accomplishments: the securing of our country's freedom, the opening up of the American frontier, and the trail blazing for the many settlements in the West which were to come and that are found now where we reside.

Footnotes:

- 1. L'Anson, Bryan, The History of the Martyn or Martin Family, London, 1935
- 2. Martin, Colonel Joe L., <u>The Journey of Old Fremont</u>, <u>A Revolutionary War Rifle</u>, 1st edition, Gilbert, Az. 2005. pgs. 1, 3, 4, 7,12, 26
- 3. Martin, Colonel Joe L., Anthology of General Joseph Martin, 1st edition, Gilbert, Az. 2006
- 4. The Siskiyou County Historical Society, <u>The Siskiyou Pioneer, Little Shasta Valley Edition</u>, Volume 6, Number 1, 1988. Pg. 25
- 5. Coonrod, Sherry, reporter, The Brice Story, The Pioneer Press, Ft. Jones, CA, 7/4/2007
- 6. Sept. 2009. Mike Brindle http://www.historicmartinstation.com
- 7. http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Joseph_Martin_(general)#cite_note-62
- 8. Powell, Mickey, Martinsville Bulletin Newspaper article, June 29, 2008
- 9. The Siskiyou County Historical Society, <u>The Siskiyou Pioneer</u>, <u>Cattle Raising Issue</u>, 1963, Volume 3, Number 6, Pgs.6-12



Glenn Martin McWright family at the monument dedication ceremony 6/2008 in Martinsville, VA. Peter McWright was youngest descendant present.

NEW ACQUISITIONS have been moved to http://www.rvgsociety.org/ News.html due to the amount of materials being added. (Click on "New Additions.") The list includes items added to our Jackson County Genealogy Library collection through donations and purchases. Donations of books and cash for books are always welcome. Many recent purchases are expanding our Washington state resources.

Honorable Mention First Annual RVGS Writing Contest

Titanic

by Janice Schultz

My grandfather, Richard Henry Nicholls, was born in the Village of Nanacledra, England in 18901. As a young man he was living and working on a Ranch for 12 cents a day when he heard of an opportunity for a better life. A flyer told of work available for young men in the United States of America. He investigated and found that the work was copper mining in the Upper Peninsula (UP) of Michigan. The men were told to make their way to the UP and find their *Cousin Jack*; a term used to describe a man from their region in England who already worked at a mine and would put them to work also. Richard found his way to America, then Michigan, and began working in the Mohawk mine, located in the Keweenaw Peninsula. The work was dangerous and the pay was good, and there was a great demand for copper, so he prospered quickly. By 1912 he had married and saved enough money to bring his widowed mother and two brothers to Michigan, and he booked them second class passage on the new *R. M. S. Titanic*.

The decision had been made that the family should emigrate and join Richard in Michigan. Richard's mother, Elizabeth Agnes Mary Davis [Davies] 3 48 years old, and his two brothers, Joseph Charles Nicholls 19 years old, and Master John Davis [Davies] 10 years old, along with a family friend, Maude Sincock 4 20 years old, boarded *Titanic* (ticket number 33112, £36 15s.20s) and sailed from Southampton bound for Hancock, Michigan. 6 Joseph was in a separate cabin to the others. Once settled in Michigan, Joseph had planned to take in lodgers to supplement his mother's income; she having sold most of the family possessions to fund their move to America.

On April 15, 1912, *Titanic*, the largest most luxurious ship in the world sank into the North Atlantic Sea. The sinking was the result of a collision with an iceberg 2 hours and 40 minutes earlier. *7 Titanic* had the capacity to carry enough lifeboats (48) for all its passengers, but as a cost-cutting exercise the White Star line decided that only 20 lifeboats were needed on this maiden voyage, reducing the life-saving capacity of the ship to 52 percent.8

1 http://www.rootsweb.com accessed December 29, 2009

² Martha Nicholls Copeland, daughter of Richard, personal communication 1974

³ In some accounts Agnes and John are referred as Davis and in others Davies. The family name was Davis.

⁴ Maude Sincock boarded lifeboat 11 and survived; and will not be mentioned past this point in the story

⁵ Titanic Victims, Second Class Passengers, Mr. Joseph Charles Nicholls <a href="http://www.encyclopedia-titanica.org/ti

⁶ Titanic-Titanic.com http://www.titanic-titanic.com/elizabeth_agnes_mary_davies.shtml accessed December 29, 2009

⁷ Titanic-Titanic.com http://www.titanic-titanic.com/article-alyssa-freitas.shtml accessed December 29, 2009

⁸ Titanic-Titanci.com http://www.titanic-titanic.com/lifeboats.shtml accessed December 29, 2009

As the terrible tragedy of *Titanic* at sea unfolded, and it was evident that the ship would sink, the cry of "Women and Children First" became the mantra of those deploying the life boats. 9 On the night of the tragedy Joseph came to his mother's stateroom and helped her and his little brother to put their lifebelts on. Agnes (as his mother was called), Joseph and young John made their way to portside lifeboat 14. Agnes boarded and young John was handed down to her; but as Joseph began to board he was refused access because, they said, he was a man, and no man shall board until all women and children were safe. Agnes pleaded for Joseph's life; please allow him to board the lifeboat with her and his little brother John. She needed him to work; he was her only source of income as she had sold all of the family possessions to make the trip, she begged. At that point a man approached and pulled a gun; aiming it straight at Joseph he declared that Joseph would be shot where he stood if he made one move to enter the lifeboat. Joseph handed his mother down his money belt and a little book of poems he had written, and then stepped back from the lifeboat. As lifeboat 14 made its way into the blackness, the passengers listened over the next couple of hours as *Titanic* broke and lurched and took-on water while those made to stay with the ship moaned and screamed their death. As it made its final descent into the sea; the passengers of lifeboat 14 would not let Agnes watch. 10 Joseph was lost in the sinking.

The ship *Carpathia* rescued the occupants of lifeboat 14, and both Agnes and John were safe and on their way to New York. She wired Richard from the ship, "All safe" the message reported. She could not bear to tell him his brother was gone from so far away. II As well as overnight accommodations, train tickets were provided for her and John from New York into Calumet, Michigan, and five dollars in cash and a box lunch given to all of the survivors. A collection was taken for her by the passengers on the train after hearing of the terrible ordeal she had endured, and the devastating loss of her son. Richard was at the train station in Calumet to meet his family. He saw Agnes step down with young John and waited for Joseph's face to appear in the door of the train. When he didn't see him he thought he must be seeing to some affairs of the trip, and he turned his full attention to his mother. One look at her face told him something was terribly wrong; only then did she tell him the whole story, and that there would be no reunion with Joseph.

On April 23, 1912, Joseph's body was recovered from the sea by the *MacKay Bennett*. His was the 101st body to be recovered and identified. The body was buried at sea as identification proved difficult at the time. A memorial headstone to Joseph Charles Nicholls was placed in the Lakeview Cemetery in Calumet, Michigan.12

Agnes told her story at the Calumet Opera House, and the following events immediately before and after the sinking were recounted by her to the Calumet newspaper *Daily Mining Gazette* on arrival in Michigan:

'We were in our berths when the steamer struck the iceberg at 11.50 the night of Sunday. We felt the jar but did not imagine that anything serious had occurred. However I rang for the steward for the purpose of making inquiries. He assured us that nothing of consequence had happened and that we could remain in our berths without fear. A few minutes later Miss Phillips' father, who was also a passenger on the boat called his daughter and told her to dress. She went on deck and returned shortly and said orders had been given for all the passengers to dress and put on lifebelts. By this time I had dressed, although my little son was still sleeping. The steward again came to the stateroom and said there was no danger or occasion for fear. I decided to dress the boy, however, and did so.

⁹ http://www.logoi.com/notes/titanic/women_children_first.html accessed December 29, 2009

¹⁰ Martha Ann Nicholls Schinderle, granddaughter to Richard, family historian, personal communication 2009

¹¹ Martha Ann Nicholls Schinderle, granddaughter to Richard, family historian, personal communication 2009

¹² Titanic Victims, Second Class Passengers, Mr. Joseph Charles Nicholls http://www.encyclopedia-titanica.org/titanic-victim/joseph-charles-nicholls.html accessed December 29, 2009- Information taken from Record of Bodies and Effects: Passengers and Crew, S.S. Titanic (Public Archives of Nova Scotia) (#101), and Maude Sincock Roberts The Story of the Titanic Akron Beacon Journal (Ohio), 20 April 1912, p.1.

My son Joseph had dressed and he came to the stateroom and put lifebelts on us. Through all this time we had received no warning from the steward, no orders to prepare for anything like what we were to experience. Had it not been for our curiosity to learn what was going on we might have perished. We went on deck about 12.15 and my son and myself were placed in the third lifeboat.

My older son, Joseph, helped to place us in the boat and asked permission to enter it himself, this being refused with the threat that he would be shot if he attempted to get in. I pleaded with the officers in vain, that he be allowed to come with me. There were about fifty in the boat, but there was room for more. After we were lowered away and before the boat left the ship some men entered it by sliding down the davit ropes. The men in charge of the boat rowed as hard as they could to get away from the ship. By the time she sank, which was at 1.45, it seemed as if we were miles away, although I could hear the screams, cries and moaning of the drowning passengers.'

The following appeared in the St. Ives Times in May, 1912:

MRS DAVIES ARRIVES IN MOHAWK

We have received welcome news this week that Mrs. Agnes Davies, formerly of St Ives, and her nine year old son - Master John Morgan Davies - have at last reached Mohawk. On arriving they were met by Mr. Richard Henry Nicholls, Mrs. Nicholls, and Mr. G P Curnow, the latter being a close personal friend of Mrs. Davies's family. There was a most touching scene between mother and son, after their trying ordeal. The last time they met, Mr. Joseph Nicholls - who perished in the 'Titanic' disaster - was a member of the family circle which then gathered. Mrs. Davies's sufferings were very noticeable, and the suspense and agony of mind and body have left their marks upon her.

Agnes remained in Michigan for the rest of her life during which time she married Mr. Richard Edwards; they lived at 949 Railroad Avenue in Hancock. She passed away in St Joseph's Hospital, Hancock, Michigan on August 4, 1933 at age 70. She was buried in the Lakeview Cemetery, Calumet, Michigan. This cemetery also holds the grave of her son, John Davis, who died in 1951.13

Richard Henry Nicholls (my grandfather) worked in the copper mines of the Keweenaw Peninsula for 50 years and then retired. He died at age 94 of natural causes. He named his first son Richard Henry as did his dad before him; but he named his second son Joseph Charles Nicholls after his brother who was lost so tragically before his time. This second son Joseph was my dad, and the story of the sinking of the *Titanic* has been told and retold in our family down through the years. The money clip and book of poems is still in the family; but we never received any of the other articles reported to be found with his body. When the film *Titanic* was made, I decided not to see it because I didn't want to put a Hollywood spin to the story that I had heard so many times. My brother saw it and called me. He told me to go check it out so I did, and I have to say, except for the love story it was very much like everything we had heard, right down to the gun being pulled on the young man trying to board the lifeboat. As I watched that part of the story, in my mind the young man in the movie was my dad's namesake Joseph Charles Nicholls.

13 Titanic Survivors, Second Class Passengers http://www.encyclopedia-titanica.org/titanic-survivor/elizabeth- agnes-mary-davies.html accessed December 29, 2009-Information taken from Contract Ticket List, White Star Line 1912 (National Archives, New York; NRAN-21-SDNYCIVCAS-55[279]), List or Manifest of Alien Passengers for the United States Immigration Officer At Port Of Arrival (Date: 18th-19th June 1912, Ship: Carpathia) - National Archives, NWCTB 85 T715 Vol 4183, British Census 1881, The Story of the Titanic by Maude Sincock Roberts, Calumet Daily Mining Gazette, April 1912, St. Ives Times, May 1912



Researching Australia

RVGS has two resources for Australia in the Library:

Tracing Your Family History in Australia by Nick Vine Hall, c. 1994 (929.199 Hall) 657 pages

Australia Vital Record Index 1788-1905, by FHL, c.1994, (4 cd-roms) (cd-rom 994.02 Aus)

An indexed collection of references to 4.8 million birth, christening, marriage, and death records. This index covers only New South Wales (1788-1888), Tasmania (1803-1899), Victoria (1837-1888), and Western Australia (1841-1905).

Australian Family History Resources on the Internet

(This list was provided by Michael Fitzgerald, Client Service Officer, NSW Registry of Births Deaths & Marriages, in response to a query.)

http://www.bdm.nsw.gov.au/familyHistory/searchHistoricalRecords.htm

The New South Wales Registry of Births, Deaths & Marriages provides access to a free searchable database for Births 1788-1905, Marriages 1788-1955 & Deaths 1788-1975.

www.records.nsw.gov.au

State Records is the NSW Government's archives and records management authority. The website provides a variety of search methods and endless categories of information to search.

www.sag.org.au

The Society of Australian Genealogists website provides useful links to other Australian and overseas genealogical resources. The site also gives details on how to join the Society and member benefits.

www.naa.gov.au

Looking for the details of relatives who immigrated to Australia after World War II. The National Archives of Australia is a good place to start. Once files are more than 30 years old, they are available for public access.

www.cyndislist.com/austnz.htm

If you're not sure where to start when it comes to researching your family history, this website should point you in the right direction. It contains categorized lists of resources on everything from convict passenger lists to military sites.

www.coraweb.com.au

Coraweb is an Australian directory with an abundance of links to other family history websites. Links are organised by category, so you are sure to easily find what you are looking for.

www.lpi.nsw.gov.au

The LPI provides information about land titles, land grants, surveys, maps and plans. The LPI has produced a guide to searching Land Title Records which is available online at: www.lpi.nsw.gov.au/publications/guide to searching.pdf

World War II's "Old Man's" Draft Registration

Imagine being 64 years old...and having to register for the draft! On 27 April 1942, men between the ages of 45 and 64, born on or between 28 April 1877 and 16 February 1897, were registered for the draft. This was the "Fourth Registration" of World War II. These draft reg-

istration cards are available on Ancestry.com for 18 states, although the records are not complete for some of the included states. The records for 8 southern states were destroyed and thus will never be available. Ancestry plans to add more states as they can acquire the records. These are the only World War II draft registration cards currently available to the public, due to privacy laws. These records have the kind of information genealogists love, including birth date, birthplace, and physical description. More details are available on Ancestry.com. PLUS microfilm of the draft registration cards for many of the states can be rented for \$5.50 each for 3 weeks from the Family History Library through our JCGL/RVGS library.

ADVERTISE HERE!

Advertising space in *The Rogue Digger* is now available for genealogy-related services. Publication is quarterly and is sent to all RVGS members—now more than 480 individuals. A business card-size ad will cost \$25 for a single issue or \$90 for a full year (four issues). Larger advertisements will require special pricing. All proposed advertisements will be reviewed for relevance and appropriateness. Please submit your request or questions to Karen Asche by calling the Library (541) 512-2340 or via email at info@rvgslibrary.org.

MENTORING AVAILABLE

Beginning and less experienced genealogy members may now schedule free consultations to answer questions and receive research advice and direction. Interested members should contact Volunteer Coordinator Chuck Eccleston via email at cgecc@juno.com or by phone at 541-776-0778. Chuck will assist in scheduling consultations at the library with an experienced researcher. Chuck is also usually available at the library on 1st, 3rd, & 5th Mondays and Thursdays.

Genealogy Research Resources: U.S. Genealogical Records by State

Looking for land records in Oregon?

Military records in New York state?

Cemetery records in Wisconsin?

...and much more?

The following website may be a great tool for you in your search. It shows a breakdown by state of the genealogical records offered in each state:

http://www.usa.gov/Citizen/Topics/ History Family/State Genealogy.shtml

Happy Searching!