Discovering Joseph Eschenlohr: How linking records illuminated a life.

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**Introduction**

During the US Civil War, thousands of immigrants served in the military, many receiving pensions upon discharge from service. The Bureau of Pensions kept extensive service records, which are now held at the National Archives and Records Administration, and those records now serve as popular resources for research, particularly genealogical research. However, many soldiers, both immigrants and US-natives, moved overseas, leaving behind a paper trail which can be traced if one knows where to look. This project examines records from four National Archives records groups which document the life of Joseph Eschenlohr, a German-born immigrant to the US who served in the Union army during the Civil War and later returned to his home in Alsace, to examine how linking metadata can help archivists maximize the discoverability of historic records, both to the benefit of the institution and the public.

**Metadata Analysis**

Some record groups are more obviously linked than others. How can archivists link records from record groups like RG 15 and RG 84? At what point in the processing workflow should these connections be made? Can the discoverability of records be maximized through other methods besides linking data? Are individualized recommendations based on browsing data the way forward? Crowdsourced metadata tags?

**Timeline of events in Joseph Eschenlohr’s life as documented by records from four records groups at the National Archives and Records Administration**

- **April 7, 1830**: Joseph Eschenlohr born in Littenheim, Alsace.
- **July 30, 1835**: Maria Anna Hügel born in Willgotthaim, Alsace.
- **April 20, 1861**: Joseph Enscenlohr enlists in 10th Ohio Infantry.
- **April 6, 1863**: Joseph transferred from army and issued pension.
- **October 8, 1862**: Joseph wounded at Battle of Chaplin Hills, Perryville, KY.
- **November 5, 1863**: Joseph enlisted in Veteran’s Reserve Corps (111 Company, 2 Battalion).
- **June 13, 1864**: Joseph discharged from VRC and pension renewed.
- **April 4, 1870**: Joseph married Maria Anna Hügel.
- **December 21, 1886**: US Commissioner of Pensions attempted to secure documents for increase of pension.
- **January-March 1887**: Joseph refused to report for required medical examination.
- **November 29, 1892**: Maria Hügel Eschenlohr applied for pension.
- **September 27, 1895 and August 10, 1896**: Widow Maria Hügel Eschenlohr applied for pension.
- **April 29, 1897**: Maria Hügel Eschenlohr’s application for pension denied.
- **Eschenlohr’s wife, Maria Hügel Eschenlohr, and daughter, Maria Eschenlohr were named his heir.**

**Color Key**

- RG 15, Records of the Veterans Administration
- RG 48, Records of the Office of the Secretary of the Interior
- RG 84, Records of Foreign Service Posts of the Department of State
- RG 94, Records of the Adjutant General’s Office