

SOCI 4043: Families in the 21<sup>st</sup> Century

Project True North Collaborative Project: World War One

Examining the Enlistment Charles Walton

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SOCI 4043 A

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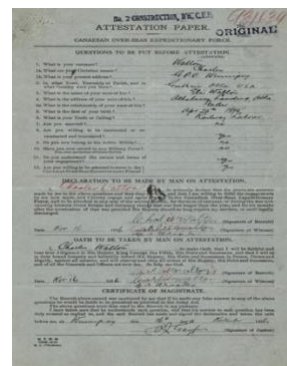
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## Step 1: Access the Service File of the Soldier

### **Part A: Library and Archives Canada**

After putting in the name of our soldier 'Charles Walton' and his regimental numbers '931639' we were granted access to his service files.

This was comprised of 52 pages.



## Step 2: Access the PTN Database

### **Part A: Data Entry Portal**

Here we were able to log in using the access code given to us. This then allowed us to transfer and organize the data from the service files, which will be discussed in 'Part B'.

### **Part B: Generate Soldier's Profile.**

The lest-we-forget website grouped the information into six sperate sections to make it easier to attain the information from the service files. The following information will be grouped equivalent to the way it was displayed on the website.

#### Attestation 1

Charles Walton's was ranked as a Private in the No.2 Construction Battalion in the Canadian Expeditionary Force (CEF). Originally born in Guthrie, Oklahoma in the US, at the time of his enrollment, he resonated in Athabasca, Alberta, Canada. Here he lived with his parents Eli Walton and Mrs. P Walton. Charles was a single, African American, 21-year-old, Baptist man with no children. Moreover, his trade was a railway laborer with no previous

military experience. Walton enlisted on November 16<sup>th</sup>, 1916 in Winnipeg Manitoba.

Subsequently, he underwent a medical examination on March 17<sup>th</sup>, 1917, which concluded he healthy, had no medical issues, deeming him fit for service.

### Attestation 2

In this section categories of his race, appearance, measurements and chest capacity were revealed. His complexion was listed as dark, which is the only piece of information inside the soldier service file that indicated his race as being Black. His chest capacity reached an expansion range of 36-39 inches, which at the time was considered fit for service. In addition, he did not attain any identifying marks Although Charles did not die within in service, identifying marks would be beneficial when identifying causality.

### Medical History

Charles was medically examined on November 16<sup>th</sup>, 1916, in Winnipeg, Manitoba. Here it was determined he was fit for service as he was healthy and no medical issues. These records also displayed that he was 5 foot 7 and weighed 165 pounds. Moreover, he had 20/20 vision and good physical development. In terms of vaccinations, he did not have any at the time of enlistment but was willing to receive any if needed. Overall, his successful medical examination led to his acceptance into the Canadian Expeditionary Force (CEF), approving him for military service. Upon discharge of his service, Charles underwent another medical examination, which concluded he was once again healthy and uninjured from his service in the war.

### Locations

LOCATION	SIGNIFICANCE	DATE
Oklahoma, USA	Place of birth	April 25 <sup>th</sup> 1895

Athabasca, Alberta, Canada	Present location	N/A
Winnipeg, Manitoba, Canada	Location of enlistment	Nov 16 <sup>th</sup> 1916
Halifax, Nova Scotia, Canada	Location of Embarkation	March 25 <sup>th</sup> 1917
Liverpool, UK	Location of disembarkation	April 7 <sup>th</sup> 1917
Seaford, UK	Overseas (France)	May 17 <sup>th</sup> 1917
Calgary, Alberta, Canada	Place of Discharge	Feb 18 <sup>th</sup> 1919
Halifax, Nova Scotia, Canada	Returned to Canada	Jan 17 <sup>th</sup> 1919
Edmonton, Alberta, Canada	Medical Examination upon leaving service	Feb 15 <sup>th</sup> 1919

### Military

Charles had no previous soldier experience. While a part of the No.2 Battalion he was ranked as a private throughout his duration of his service. On March 25<sup>th</sup> 1917 he departed Canada on the SS Southern land ship that took him to the UK. Later he then proceeded his service in France where he was paid around \$400 a year. Charles survived the war and returned home back to his parent's place of residence in Alberta. His discharge was due to demobilization on February 18<sup>th</sup> 1919. He was officially 'struck off strength' on January 9<sup>th</sup> 1919. Charles eventually returned to Canada on January 17<sup>th</sup> 1919 on the Olympic ship.

### **Part C: Inquiry Questions**

#### History of a Name

Our soldier's name is Charles Walton. Acknowledging that Charles was a Black person / African decent, it is clear that his surname 'Walton' was derived and given from a slave owner. That being said, in terms of history, the surname 'Walton' can indicate a history of slave

ownership. Contrary to surnames that were changed, Christian's name were not altered and displayed the name given to an individual by their parents at birth. Assumptions that may arise regarding the request of a recruit's Christian name is the race of that individual because that is the only name that will differentiate them from their white slave owners.

### Does where you come from really matter?

Charles Walton was born in Oklahoma, but his present address before being enlisted in the military was Alberta. This illustrates that we moved from the United States of America to Canada. During this time a mass global migration was occurring, in which the Atlantic Slave trade was one of the factors responsible for this mass migration. With this information being known, it can be presumed that Charles Walton one of the individuals who migrated, as such he moved from the US to Canada. In addition, his last name 'Walton' is that derived from a white slave owner, which can also assume that he was a part of the Atlantic Slave trade.

### Canada's Drafts

Conscription was a result of a military service act that reinforced depleted troops overseas. Men between the ages of 20 - 45 who have resided in Canada since 1914 were reliable for active service. Black men who were turned away from enlistment from the year 1914 due to their skin colour, were now subject to conscription. Numerous African American men were not fond of conscription because they were denied in previous years, highlighting racist ideologies. Subsequently, many eligible black men were forced to enlist against their will. If conscription were to be established today it would contradict current ideologies within society. Firstly, modern day society have implemented constitutional freedom rights, which apply to all

individuals despite differences. That being said, forcing people into enlistment would not constitute these rights and set Canadian society back in the progression of freedom amounts all citizens. Obstacles might include not only the law but a reaction from society through social justice movements and resistance

### Soldiers Religion

Unlike today, where differences are more accepted, back then they were perceived as something negative. Christianity was the prominent religion, which is evident through one's first name that is referred to as their 'Christian name'. Consequently, people who did not attain values or a religion parallel to Christianity were not only segregated but treated with less respect. The military might want to know a soldier's religion, as it might be utilized within the military hierarchy. For example, if the position of a captain were to be open, one who was not Christian who not secure this position because the military would not want their distinctive views to be projected onto others.

### Age

Age was a factor that determined if one were to be enlisted. For example, one of the requirements for conscription was to be between the ages of 20-45. It can be presumed that age was to be considered because a young man's physical ability is much more capable of vigorous activities in comparison to an older man. As such, the military would want to have a strong group of men that represented that country. In terms of a single man and a married man being enlisted, their reasons for enlisting could be dissimilar. A married man might enlist to mainly protect his family, yet a single man might enlist to fight for his country.

### Chest Expansion

Chest expansion is important as it indicates one's lung capacity. This can be used to determine one's likely hood of surviving diseases or various obstacles that may arise within the military. For example, the medical condition torulosis. In addition, it can also determine if an individual is unfit to serve in the military.

### Identifying Marks

Marks are unique to every individual; therefore, marks can determine the identity of a causality.

### Vaccines

Some of the more common vaccines at this time were for the plague, smallpox, rabies, Spanish flu and tetanus. These are similar to the vaccines in place today, as such, everyone is required to receive some of these vaccines. Moreover, currently individuals still take the vaccines for rabies and tetanus. Also, we are currently in a global pandemic, and similar to the Spanish flu vaccine we now have the COVID-19 vaccine. The military might be interested in knowing an individual's vaccines to determine their protections against diseases and also which ones they will need moving forward

### **Part D: Questions for Historians**

1. Are there additional sources that could provide a soldiers cause of death, besides the one provided to us?

2. Could the service files be revised in eligible writing because cursive writing was difficult to read out?
3. Is there data available that discloses the soldier's life after their service?
4. Why was there a mass migration at the beginning of WW1? Also, what was the specific reason why some soldiers migrated to another country, such as Charles Walton?

### **Step 3: Browse the Canada Census Record of 1911**

#### **Part A: Census of Canada 1911**

After providing our soldiers name 'Charles Walton and his province prior to the war 'Alberta', there was no records available.

#### **Part B: Soldiers Family History**

As mentioned previously, there were no records available, therefore, the information on Charles Walton, his father Eli, or his mother Mrs. P was unavailable.

### **Step 4: Circumstances of Death**

#### **Part A: Circumstances of Death**

Charles Walton did not die in the war. He was discharged from the service due to demobilization. As such, there was no death certificate or cause of death. This conclusion was drawn upon after examining the circumstances of death register site.

#### **Part B: Additional Information**



After attempting to find information regarding Charles Walton we were unsuccessful to collect additional information about him. Information of his parents were mentioned, more specifically their home address. As such, it can be assumed that Charles Walton returned home after the war.

### **Step 5: Historical Newspapers**

#### **Part A: Historical Newspaper Research**

Using the Carleton Library Omni data base site, we conducted a search under ‘No.2 Construction Battalion’ or ‘2<sup>nd</sup> Construction Battalion’ or ‘2 Construction Battalion’ or ‘Black Battalion’, for the years 1910- 1920. Successively, we were able to find two articles “A Black Battalion” and “The Jesuit Election. Moreover, the information comprised within these articles were limited and did not provide knowledge about Charles Walton.

#### **Part B: Records of the Names and Links of Newspapers Consulted**

After a search on Canadian News Stream through ProQuest, while using the same search key words in the Carleton Library Omni data base, we were yet again unsuccessful in finding information. It should also be mentioned that articles were checked between the years of 1910 – 1920, which was the time period of World War One.

We then conducted a Google News search through the only Newspaper in Winnipeg at the time of Charles Walton’s enlistment ‘Canadian Jewish Chronicle’. Similar to the other News article searches, we were unsuccessful in our findings. Furthermore, within Google Docs we

managed a search on the only News Paper within Charles Walton's date range, which was called 'The Manitoba Ensign'. Once again, no results were found.

## **Step 6: Databases and other Research Tools**

### **Part A: Ancestors Search for other Databases**

We did acquire information regarding Charles Walton and his enlistment on the 2<sup>nd</sup> Construction Battalion. This was discovered using the Nova Scotia data base (<https://archives.novascotia.ca/2construction/archives/?ID=13>). The data provided was already enclosed in his service files. This included his name, rank, name next of kin, address next of kin, country of birth, and the place and date when taken on strength. It did provide a photo of all the



men that were members of the Canadian Expeditionary Force: No. 2 Construction Battalion (The photo is below). In addition, we ran a search through the ancestry website. This only provided files that of which we already retrieved from Charles Walton's service file. After this, we decided to scan Captain William A. Whites diary in hopes of mention of Charles Walton. Although comprised of various information regarding the Construction Battalion, there was no specific information about Charles Walton.

Although Walton was born in the US, we attempted a search to determine if Walton was a naturalized Canadian citizen. Similar to most the searches done, no results were found. The link for the website is provided below.

<https://www.bac-lac.gc.ca/eng/discover/immigration/citizenship-naturalization-records/naturalized-records-1915-1951/Pages/list-naturalization-1915-1939.aspx?Surname=walton&GivenName=charles&CountryEn=Canada&>

Before the war it was noted that Charles was not married and did not have children. In attempt to discover if this changed after the war, we did a search on the Library and Archives of Canada website. No results were found. Link of website is below.

<https://www.bac-lac.gc.ca/eng/discover/vital-statistics-births-marriages-deaths/births-marriages-deaths-recorded/Pages/list.aspx?Surname=Walton&GivenName=Charles&>

There were also no results derived from the Census of Canada 1921. The website used is given below.

<https://www.bac-lac.gc.ca/eng/census/1921/Pages/results.aspx?k=cnsSurname%3a%22walton%22+AND+cnsGivenName%3a%22charles%22+AND+cnsAge%3a%2226%22>

### **Reflection**

It was difficult finding information on Charles Walton that subsided outside of the archive documents provided to us. With the data we were able to attain, it was evident that Charles was a healthy, independent and hardworking individual. As such, his medical files disclosed he was fit to serve and attained no diseases or injuries before and after the war. Moreover, Charles was born in the United States, yet was located in Canada at the time of his enlistment. From this, one can assume that he was one of the numerous individuals who were apart of the mass migration that accrued at this time. In addition, knowing that he was single and

did not have children, it can be assumed that enlisting himself into service would be easier than that of a soldier with dependence of a wife and children. We did attempt to use additional data bases and newspaper archives but were unsuccessful. Either no information was provided or the information that was provided was already comprised within the service files. Information we wished we could have discovered was Charles Walton's post service activities, including his cause of death. Consequently, we were unable to detect what each primary source would have told us about the war, in regard to an individual's life.

### **Recommendations**

After conducting research on a soldier profile, we have several recommendations, that of which can help future students and teachers on researching primary evidence. From the difficult experience we endured in attempt to find data pertaining to Charles Walton, we would argue that the most information that one will be able to acquire is through the Library Archives. This is where we were able to find the service files, comprised of information regarding a soldier before, during and slightly after the war. In addition, we were also unable to find and access data that examined Charles' family. One website that did provide information on Charles Walton's father, Eli Walton, required a method of payment. This website was 'ancestry.ca', therefore, we presume if one is willing to pay for information, the information given could be both detailed and not found within the service files. Moreover, a recommendation we have for teachers is to conduct a soldier list that has additional information outside of the service files. This will ensure that each student is able to access multiple sources because if it was not for the service files, we would have no additional information about Charles. From this we realized that we have an absence of crucial information that would aid in our comprehension of the life of a soldier within and outside the war.