

CIVIL WAR PROVOST MARSHAL RECORDS

A Snapshot in Time

Jake Ersland, Archivist
National Archives of Kansas City
(816) 268-8014 Jake.Ersland@nara.gov

What Type of Records Were Created?

- All eligible individuals were recorded on lists, and when drafted, were examined to determine their fitness for service.
- Descriptive rolls were then created, listing details on all men drafted or recruited, including their physical descriptions, occupations, and places of residencies.
- Drafted men that had the means could hire a substitute to fight in their place.
- Many enlisted, or drafted men were found to have disabilities that prevented them from serving.

A Closer Look at the Types of Records Created by the Provost Marshal:

- Consolidated Lists
 - Name
 - An individual's residence
 - Description (age, race, profession, occupation or trade, and marital status)
 - Place of birth
 - Former military service (if applicable)
 - Remarks
- Registers of Drafted Men, Recruits, and Substitutes
 - When a person entered the army
 - What manner he entered (whether drafted, recruited or hired as substitute)
 - Regiment he selected or where assigned to
 - By whom and where a person was mustered into service
- Medical Registers of Examinations of Recruits and Substitutes
 - Where a person lived
 - Occupation
 - Age
 - Nativity
 - Height
 - Complexion
 - Eye Color
 - Hair Color
 - Physical Measurements
 - Results, and reasons for rejection or exemption
- Registers of Medical Examinations Showing Rejections and Exemptions
- Descriptive Book of Arrested Deserters
 - Deserter's name
 - Rank
 - Company
 - Regiment
 - Physical description (age, eyes, hair, complexion, height)
 - Where born
 - Occupation, residence (where enlisted)
 - When and where deserted
 - Where likely to be found
 - Remarks

Other Types of Records Available:

- Letters sent includes correspondence between branches of the Provost Marshal often discuss individuals, and their service status.
- The Veteran's Reserve Corps offered opportunities to men who had served but could no longer serve in the regular army.
- Found in a series titled "Reports and Returns," this record lists enlisted slaves from Missouri, with their master's name.
- Lists of volunteer units and the formation of companies and regiments
- Tracking of reenlistments
- Civilians employed by the Provost Marshal, dates, and monthly pay

These are Great! How do I Research Them?

- There are several options available for proceeding with Provost Marshal General Research. As with any genealogy research, it is always best to begin by collecting as much background information as you can.
- Determine where your ancestors lived
- How old were they during the Civil War?
- The more information collected before the search begins, the more likely your research will be fruitful.

What States are Available?

- The National Archives at Kansas City holds the Provost Marshal General's Bureau records from the states of Iowa, Kansas, Missouri, and the territory of Nebraska.
- These holdings contain 505 different series of records, and consists of over 110 cubic feet of records.

My Ancestors are not from the Central Plains. Where else can I look?

- If your ancestors did not live in the Central Plains Region, you still may be able to find the records you are looking for. Ten regional branches of the National Archives hold records from Record Group 110 (RG110), Records of the Provost Marshal General's Bureau.

How to Determine What District to Look In:

- Since congressional districts have drastically changed over the years, it can be hard to determine which district your ancestors lived in.
- The archives staff at Kansas City created a district map for Missouri and Iowa that will make identification for these states quick and easy.
- If you need to identify a district from a different state, refer to the "Proceedings of the Board of Enrollment" series that normally is contained in each district's records. This series generally lists the counties that make up each sub district and district.

Archival Research Catalog:

- All Record Group 110 records housed at the National Archives at Kansas City are described in the Archival Research Catalog (ARC) www.archives.gov/research/arc
- Advanced ARC research tips can be found on our Facebook page <http://www.facebook.com/nationalarchiveskansascity>

Ask an Archivist:

- The Staff at the National Archives at Kansas City are also always willing and ready to answer any of your questions regarding Provost Marshal General's Bureau research. Here are a couple ways to contact us with a reference request:
- Email: kansascity.reference@nara.gov
- Phone: 816-268-8000