CIVIL WAR PROVOST MARSHAL RECORDS

A Snapshot in Time

Jake Ersland, Archivist National Archives at Kansas City (816) 268-8014

Jake.Ersland@nara.gov

The Provost Marshal General's Bureau: What was this?

- As the canons that fired on Fort Sumter cooled, the public geared up for the conflict sure to come. Many thought that the coming war would be quick, and long term military service would not be a necessity for a generation of the nation's young men.
- All such notions shattered with the first major engagements of the Civil War. The casualties suffered and resolve shown at battlefields such as Bull Run and Wilson's Creek proved a harbinger for a long and bloody war. It was soon apparent that very large armies would have to be raised.

The Provost Marshal General's Bureau: What was this?

The young nation had no experience in mobilizing the majority of its fighting aged men for war, and would have to learn how quickly. The end result of this experiment was the Provost Marshal General's Bureau.

A Great and Necessary Task

- September 1862 a general order established the post of Provost Marshal General of the War Department.
- March 1863 an act of Congress created a separate Provost Marshal General's Bureau.
- Oversaw army enlistments for state-based regiments, the enrollment of men for the draft, and the arrest of deserters.
- Although it worked on a national level to meet enlistment goals, the new bureau was predominantly operated on a state level.
- A congressional mandate required that each congressional district create a board of enrollment to oversee the work of provost marshals, and to decide on requests for draft exemption.

Getting the Job Done

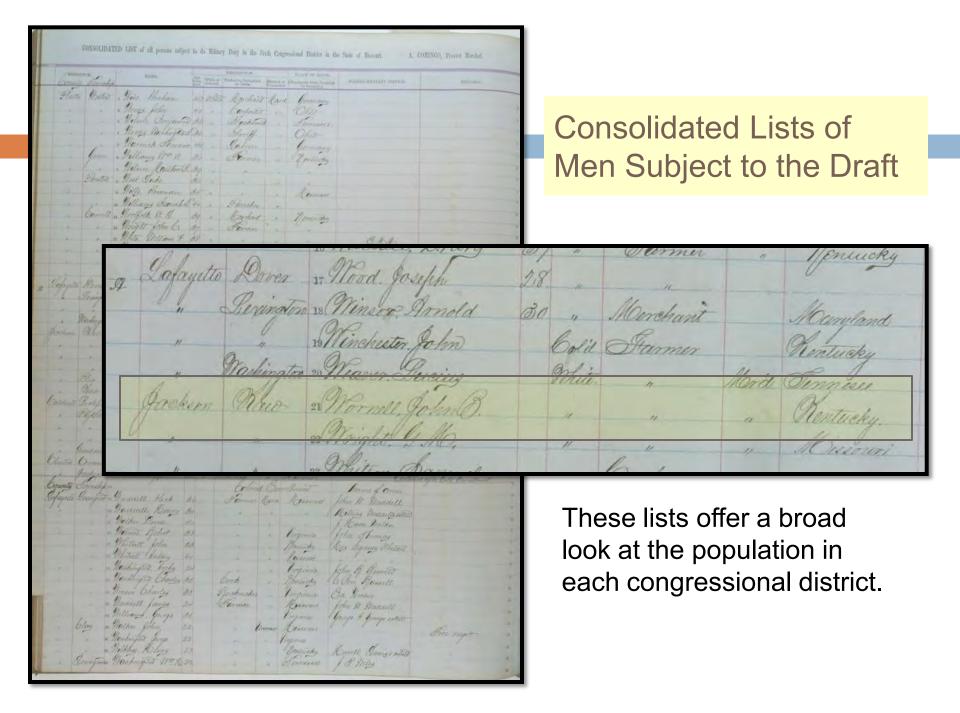
- The Provost Marshal's office deployed an army of enrolling officers, clerks, and special agents to identify all men eligible for service.
- States were divided into districts and districts were divided into sub-districts, with quotas for enrolled men assigned to each.
- Enrolling officers then had the unenviable task of traveling the countryside, creating lists of all service aged men. From these lists, the soldiers that would fight and win the Civil War were selected.

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
- Registers of Drafted Men, Recruits, and Substitutes
- Medical Registers of Examinations of Recruits and Substitutes
- Registers of Medical Examinations Showing Rejections and Exemptions
- Descriptive Book of Arrested Deserters

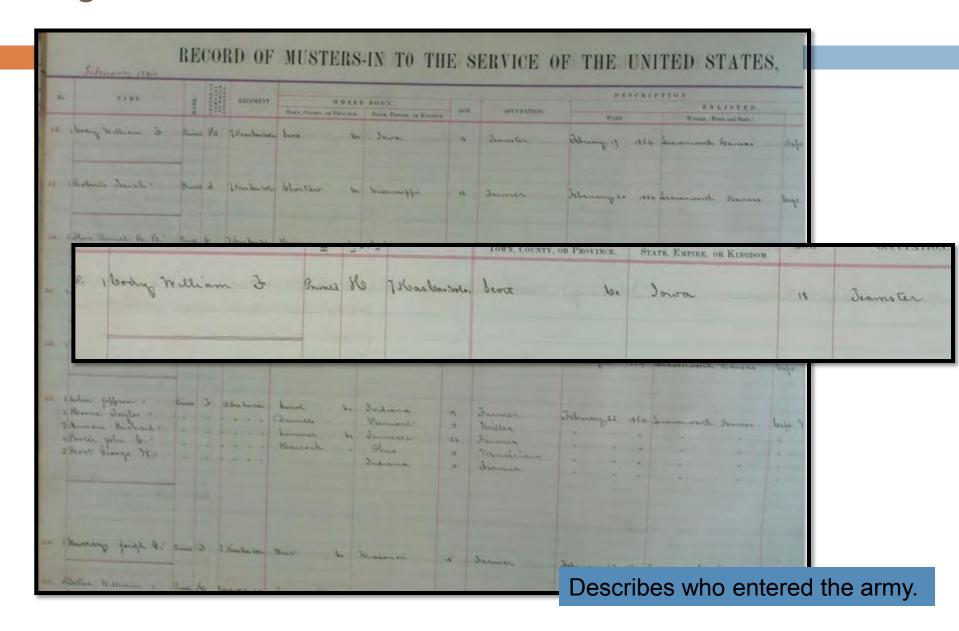


What can I learn from these records?

Consolidated Lists of Men Subject to the Draft generally contain:

- Name
- An individual's residence
- Description (age, race, profession, occupation, or trade, and marital status)
- Place of birth
- Former military service (if applicable)
- Remarks
- See Also Consolidated Enrollment Lists (ARC ID 4213514)

Registers of Drafted Men, Recruits, and Substitutes



What Can I Learn From These Records?

Registers of drafted men, recruits, and substitutes list

- When a person entered the army
- What manner he entered (whether drafted, recruited or hired as substituted)
- 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

Just because a person was drafted did not mean they necessarily served in the army. The army did not want to waste time or money on anyone that was unfit for service.

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What Can I Learn From These Records?

Medical Registers of Examinations of Recruits and Substitutes record information about potential soldiers:

•Age	•Nativity
Occupation	•Height
•Complexion	•Eye Color
•Hair Color	•Where enrolled
•Physique	•Marital Status
•Race	•Type of Muster (Recruit or Substitute)
•Remarks	•Results of Examination

Registers of Medical Examinations Showing Rejections and Exemptions

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Detailed records were needed to record those that could not serve in order to prevent additional attempts to enroll an individual, and to prevent fraudulent claims of exemption.

What Can I Learn From These Records?

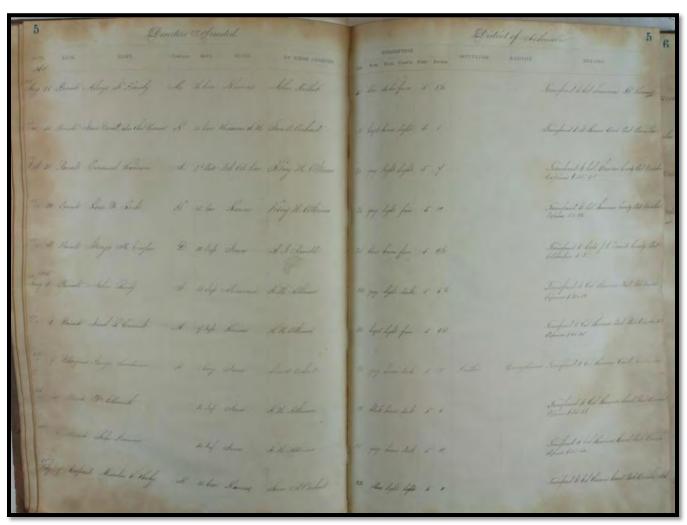
 The Medical Register of Examinations of Recruits and Substitutes record

- Where a person lived
- Occupation
- Age
- Nativity
- Height
- Complexion

- Age
- Eye color
- Hair color
- Physical measurements
- Results, and reasons for rejection or exemption.

Descriptive Books of Arrested Deserters

Tasked with tracking down and arresting deserters, the Provost Marshal General's Bureau needed exact details on who it was exactly they were looking for.



What Can I Learn From These Records?

Descriptive Books of Arrested Deserters capture:

- 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

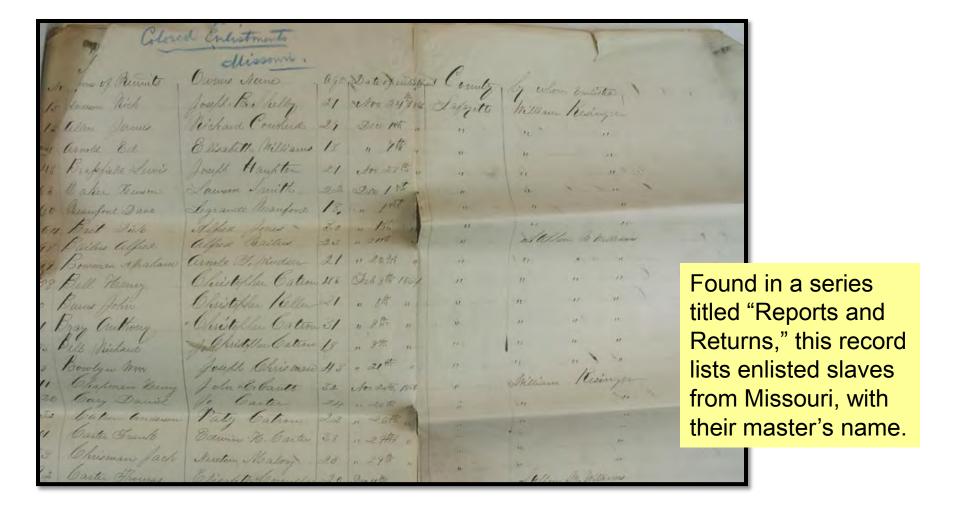
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-	chief of Staff
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Letters Sent includes correspondence between branches of the Provost Marshal often discuss individuals, and their service status.

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The Veteran's Reserve Corps offered opportunities to men who had served but could no longer serve in the regular army.



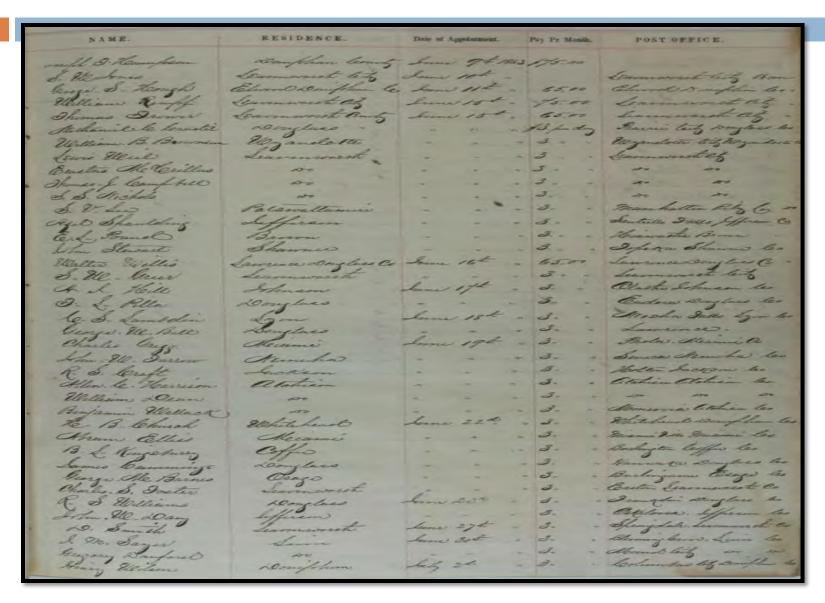
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This volume, "List Showing Dates of Muster-In and Forwarding of Muster Rolls of Missouri Volunteer Organizations," documents the formation of Missouri's earliest volunteer units, listing the initial commanding officer of each company as a regiment was formed.

Information on men that joined the army prior to the formation of the Provost Marshal General's Bureau can also be found in "Register of Veteran Volunteers, Officers, and Recruits Mustered into Service." The Provost Marshal needed to track reenlistments in order to ensure that each district received its proper credit against the draft.

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Civilians that received employment by the Provost Marshal also were recorded. This register of employees documents where workers came from, when their employment began, and their 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 where 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, Records of the Provost Marshal General's Bureau.

Locations of Records:

Northeast Region (Boston, MA)

Maine New Hampshire

Vermont

Massachusetts

Connecticut/Rhode Island

Southeast Region (Atlanta, GA)

Kentucky

Tennessee

Southwest Region (Fort Worth, TX)

Arkansas

Mid-Atlantic Region (Philadelphia, PA)

Pennsylvania

Delaware/Maryland

West Virginia

North East Region (New York City, NY)

New York New Jersey

Rocky Mountain Region (Denver, CO)

Colorado & Dakotas

Great Lakes Region (Chicago, IL)

Ohio

Indiana

Illinois

Michigan

Wisconsin

Minnesota

Pacific Alaska Region (Seattle, WA)

Washington & Oregon

Pacific Region (Riverside, CA)

California & Nevada

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) <u>www.archives.gov/research/arc</u>.
- 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: <u>kansascity.reference@nara.gov</u>
- Phone: 816-268-8000

Questions