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**U.S. Revolutionary War
Bounty Land Warrants
Used in the
U.S. Military District of
Ohio and Related Papers
(Acts of 1788, 1803, 1806)**



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Records of the Bureau of Land Management

Record Group 49

U.S. REVOLUTIONARY WAR BOUNTY LAND WARRANTS
USED IN THE U.S. MILITARY DISTRICT OF OHIO
AND RELATED PAPERS
(Acts of 1788, 1803, 1806)

On the 16 rolls of this microfilm publication are reproduced U.S. Revolutionary War bounty land warrants, dated 1789-1833, and related papers dated as late as 1880. The warrants were issued under acts of July 9, 1788 (Journals of the Continental Congress, vol. 34, p. 307); March 3, 1803 (2 Stat. 236); and April 15, 1806 (2 Stat. 378).

A bounty land warrant was a right to free land on the public domain. During the Revolutionary War the Continental Congress promised bounty land as an inducement to military service. For this war and other wars in which the United States engaged during the years 1812-55, the issuance of bounty land warrants to veterans or their heirs as a form of reward for service was continued. Some of the States also granted bounty lands for service during the Revolutionary War, but the warrants reproduced in this publication were issued by the U.S. Government. Four finding aids to the warrants are reproduced on roll 1.

On September 16, 1776, Congress passed a resolution (Journals of the Continental Congress, vol. 5, p. 763) promising free land in the public domain to officers and soldiers who continued to serve during the Revolutionary War or, if they were killed, to their representatives or heirs. The resolution provided that a private or noncommissioned officer would be entitled to 100 acres of bounty land, an ensign to 150 acres, a lieutenant to 200 acres, a captain to 300 acres, a major to 400 acres, a lieutenant colonel to 450 acres, and a colonel to 500 acres. In 1780 the resolution was extended to grant a brigadier general 850 acres and a major general 1,100 acres.

The resolution was implemented by an ordinance passed by the Confederation Congress on July 9, 1788, which authorized the Secretary at War to issue land warrants to all eligible veterans upon application. When the Federal Government was formed in 1789 (1 Stat. 50), the Secretary of War retained the responsibility for processing applications and issuing bounty land warrants, although the Treasury Department was in charge of the public domain and supervised the individual's selection and location of land. The Department also issued the patents, which gave actual title to the claimed land. In 1812 the General Land Office was established in the Department to administer the public lands. The records reproduced in this microfilm publication are those preserved by the Office of the Secretary of the Treasury and later by the General Land Office.

There was no effective system for providing land upon which to "locate" the Revolutionary War bounty land warrants until June 1, 1796 (1 Stat. 490), when Congress reserved a 4,000-square-mile tract in the Northwest Territory. This area, which became known as the U.S. Military District of Ohio, was surveyed into townships 5 miles square, each of which was divided into quarter townships of 4,000 acres; the acres in turn were subdivided into sections, half sections, and lots. The act specified, however, that land was to be distributed in minimum quantities of quarter townships. For this reason it was necessary for persons possessing warrants totaling less than 4,000 acres to pool their rights. In most cases owners entrusted their warrants to an agent who located the land and received a patent. The land was then redistributed among the original warrant holders and a deed was issued to each one by the agent. The act of 1796 also provided that the Secretary of the Treasury should give public notice in the States and Territories and then register warrants for 9 months. After this period the priority of location of the registered warrants was determined by a lottery drawing. A warrant holder could then select the specific quarter township he desired, and a person who had failed to register within the specified time could make his selection from any land still available.

Originally the lands in the U.S. Military District of Ohio were to be distributed by January 1, 1800. By the end of 1802 about 14,000 warrants had been issued for 1,612,605 acres, of which 552,605 acres had not been located. To provide additional time to locate warrants, and also to grant warrants to soldiers who had made late applications or had not completed their claims, Congress passed the act of March 3, 1803, which was amended by the act of April 15, 1806. After 1806 Congress periodically extended the time limit necessary for registering and locating the warrants.

Until 1830 all U.S. Revolutionary War bounty land warrants, as distinct from Revolutionary War bounty land warrants issued by the States or through special acts of Congress, could be used to locate land only in the U.S. Military District of Ohio. By an act of May 30, 1830 (4 Stat. 423), scrip certificates were issued in exchange for unused warrants and could be used to purchase land in Ohio, Indiana, and Illinois. By an act of July 27, 1842 (5 Stat. 497), the scrip was honored for any land open in the public domain.

The warrants and related papers reproduced in this publication are arranged by date of act and thereunder in numerical sequence. The first series includes U.S. military bounty land warrants issued under the act of July 9, 1788, which are numbered 1-14220.

A warrant shows the date of issuance, the name and rank of

the veteran, the State from which he enlisted, and when applicable the name of the heir or assignee. Because a warrant was assignable and was often sold by the veteran on the open market, a notation on the reverse of the warrant indicates subsequent transfers of ownership from the veteran to heirs or assignees.

Most of the warrants from 1 to 6912 in this first series were destroyed during War Department fires in 1800 and 1814; generally the only existing documents in the files relating to these warrants are a few copies of patents granted for land claims. Beginning with warrant 6913 most of the actual warrants are intact. Those that are missing are presumed to be lost or not surrendered by the veteran or his heirs. Several warrant numbers that are included in a range of documents on a specific roll have cross-reference notations to see a warrant reproduced on another roll. In the few instances where a warrant was exchanged for scrip, a cross-reference sheet among the records has been filmed to indicate the scrip application number and the appropriate act. The military bounty land scrip applications are in another series and have not been reproduced in this publication.

The second series comprises U.S. Revolutionary War bounty land warrants issued under the acts of March 3, 1803, and April 15, 1806. The warrants are numbered from 1 to 272 under the act of 1803 and continue from 273 to 2119 under the act of 1806. A series of 18 additional warrants issued under later acts is included: 1299, 2314, 2340, 2346, 2359, 2418, 2436, 2442, 2453, 2455, 2458, 2462, 2467, 2468, 2470, 2471, 2475, and 2479. These warrants are in this series although they were issued by authority of acts of January 27, 1835 (4 Stat. 749); July 27, 1842 (5 Stat. 497); and June 26, 1848 (9 Stat. 240). Presumably the remainder of the warrants issued under these three acts are no longer extant.

A warrant in the second series shows the date of issuance, the name and rank of the veteran, the State from which he enlisted, and the name of the heir or assignee. Most of the individual warrants are present along with a "certificate of location" that indicates where the bounty land was located in the U.S. Military District of Ohio. Occasionally filed with a warrant are such related papers as an affidavit, a power of attorney, or a deed of conveyance showing transfer of warrant ownership. When there is no certificate of location with the warrant, a legal description of land location is usually provided on the front or reverse of the warrant by a series of numbers and dots, such as 23.1.2.8., indicating lot, quarter of section, township, and range, respectively. For this series, reference notations have been inserted to indicate if a warrant is missing or was exchanged for scrip.

Finding aids for each of the two series of warrants have

been filmed on roll 1. For the first series of warrants, which were issued under the act of 1788, the finding aids are identified as the "Index to the Register of Army Land Warrants" and the "Register of Army Land Warrants per Acts of 1796 and 1799."

The index to the register contains entries arranged alphabetically by the first letter of the surname of the warrant holder who registered and located his warrant on land in the U.S. Military District of Ohio between 1799 and 1805. An entry also gives the warrant number, the number of acres shown on the warrant, and the page number in the register where the name of the veteran or of the warrant holder is cited. Breaks occur in the pagination of the index to the register in the microfilm publication because blank numbered pages were not filmed.

The register of Army land warrants contains entries arranged chronologically by date of warrant registration from April 11, 1799, to March 20, 1805. Each entry gives the registration date, the name of the patentee, and the name and the service rank of the warrantee. Because land could be granted only in quarter townships, warrants are registered in 4,000-acre groupings, and a legal description is provided only for each located quarter township. The legal description for an entry can be found by checking the column "Description" and proceeding to the end of the section for the 4,000-acre quarter township in which the specific entry is contained. Additional information provided for each quarter township includes the lottery numbers drawn and the number of land certificates surrendered for the 4,000 acres. Entries on pages 291-295 include the date on which a patent was received in 1804 or 1805 and to whom the patent was delivered. The same pages also contain random entries pertaining to the early registration of warrants issued under the act of 1803, which were located before March 20, 1805.

The register of warrants and the accompanying index to the register for the first series of warrants terminate their entries in 1805. Some warrants in the 1788 series are not cited in these two finding aids either because they were registered and located after 1805, in which case they will be entered in the finding aids for the second series of warrants, or because they were never surrendered by the veterans, their heirs, or assignees. In some instances entries in these two finding aids to the first series will show the issuance and registration of certain warrants, but a subsequent check of the actual warrant files will reveal that the warrants are missing.

For the second series of warrants, which were issued under the acts of 1803 and 1806, the finding aids filmed on roll 1 are identified as the "Index to Revolutionary War Military Bounty Land Warrants Issued Under the Acts of 1803 and 1806" and the "Register of Military Land Warrants Presented at the Treasury for Locating and Patenting, 1804-35." The index was prepared by the

National Archives staff from the warrant files and from the register.

Entries in the index usually indicate the veteran's name, his warrant number, and the act under which the warrant was issued, and may contain a cross-reference notation to the scrip application number. For those entries extracted from the register, an additional reference is made indicating the page on which the information was found.

Entries in the register of military land warrants are arranged chronologically by date of warrant registration, 1804-35. Each entry provides the registration date, the name of the person presenting the warrant for registration; the warrant number; the name and the service rank of the warrantee; the number of acres shown on the warrant; the location of the warrant by lot, township, and range in the U.S. Military District of Ohio; the date on which a patent for the land was received; and to whom the patent was delivered. Pages in the register are numbered from 1 to 91. Entries on pages 56-71, 74-87, and 89-91, relate to warrants registered in exchange for scrip. Entries on these pages generally provide the warrant number, the name and the service rank of the warrantee, the name of the person to whom the scrip was issued, the number of acres shown on the scrip, and the date the scrip was issued. Entries on page 88 list caveats against some military land warrants that were filed in the Office of the Register of the Treasury during the period 1796-1828.

In using the index to the register for the 1803 and 1806 warrant series, it is necessary to note whether an index entry cites a "volume 2, page ___" designation. This reference is to the page in the register of military land warrants where the name of the veteran or of the warrant holder will be cited. If an index entry does not contain this reference, then the information was taken directly from the actual warrant files.

The register and the accompanying index for the second series of warrants terminate their entries in 1835. Some warrants in the 1803 and 1806 series are not cited in these two finding aids because they were never surrendered by the veterans, their heirs, or assignees. A few warrants in the 1788 series that were registered and located after 1805 are cited in the register for this second series. In some instances entries in these two finding aids to the second series will show the issuance and registration of certain warrants, but a subsequent check of the actual warrant files will reveal that the warrants are missing.

The records reproduced in this microfilm publication are among the Records of the Bureau of Land Management, Record Group 49. They are part of the records identified as land entry

papers, which are now deposited in the Archives Branch of the Washington National Records Center.

In the same record group are several series of related records. A series designated Applications for Military Bounty Land Scrip contains applications for exchanging both Federal and Virginia military bounty land warrants for scrip certificates. The application file generally contains the original warrant together with correspondence and other papers.

A second series titled "Virginia Military Bounty Land Warrants Surrendered to the Federal Government," contains land warrants issued to Virginia veterans by that State for service in the Revolutionary War. Warrants in this series were used to locate land tracts in the Virginia Military District of Ohio. A warrant file generally includes a surrendered warrant, land survey, power of attorney, certificate of location, an assignment statement, and an affidavit concerning the heirs of the veteran.

A third series contains warrants issued under the act of March 3, 1855 (10 Stat. 701), which authorized bounty land warrants of 160 acres for all Revolutionary War soldiers who had served at least 14 days or who had taken part in at least one battle engagement. Widows and dependent children of such veterans were also eligible to make application. The act also provided that those veterans who had received a warrant for less than 160 acres under previous legislation could reapply for a second warrant granting additional land to complete a total of 160 acres. The 1855 act was extended on May 14, 1856 (11 Stat. 8), to include Revolutionary War naval and marine veterans and their widows and dependent children.

Among the cartographic records of the General Land Office is a "Map of the United States Military District in the State of Ohio. Survey'd under the direction of Rufus Putnam, Gl. Survor [sic] of the United States."

There are also related records in other record groups. Among the Records of the Veterans Administration, Record Group 15, are Revolutionary War pension and bounty land warrant application files (reproduced on microfilm as M804 and M805); in the War Department Collection of Revolutionary War Records, Record Group 93, are service records for Revolutionary War soldiers; and among Records of the Office of the Secretary of War, Record Group 107, and Records of the Office of the Secretary of the Interior, Record Group 48, is correspondence concerning the administration of bounty land matters.

Record copies of patents issued to holders of Revolutionary War warrants have been retained by the Bureau of Land Management (formerly the General Land Office) in the Department of the

Interior. Records pertaining to Revolutionary War bounty land applications and warrants issued by various States are deposited in State archival agencies.

Of additional research aid is the compilation by Max E. Hoyt et al., Index of Revolutionary War Pension Applications (Washington, 1966), which lists names of veterans for whom bounty land applications are in the National Archives, and indicates the military bounty land warrant number issued. General historical information pertaining to bounty land warrants, legislation, and administration is available in Payson Jackson Treat, The National Land System, 1785-1820 (New York, 1910); William Edwards Peters, Ohio Lands and Their Subdivision (Athens, Ohio, 1918); Malcolm J. Rohrbough, The Land Office Business: The Settlement and Administration of American Public Lands, 1789-1837 (New York, 1968); Rudolf Freund, "Military Bounty Lands and the Origins of the Public Domain," Agricultural History, XX (1946), 8-18; Jerry O'Callaghan, "The War Veteran and the Public Lands," Agricultural History, XXVIII (1954), 163-168; William Thomas Hutchinson, "The Bounty Lands of the American Revolution in Ohio" (Unpublished Ph.D. Dissertation), University of Chicago, 1927; and Caroline Lichtenberg, "Beginnings of the United States Military Bounty Policy, 1637-1812" (Unpublished Master's Thesis), University of Wisconsin, 1945.

The records reproduced in this microfilm publication were prepared for filming by Edwin D. Anthony and Leslie C. Waffan. Leslie Waffan also wrote these introductory remarks and provided the other editorial material.

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2	1-6999
3	7000-7499
4	7500-7999
5	8000-8599
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