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Pamphlet Describing M1894

Descriptive Recruitment Lists
of Volunteers for the United
States Colored Troops for the
State of Missouri, 1863–1865

Records of the Adjutant General's Office,
1780's–1917

Record Group 94

JULIUS K. HUNTER AND FRIENDS
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M1894

DESCRIPTIVE RECRUITMENT LISTS OF VOLUNTEERS FOR THE
UNITED STATES COLORED TROOPS FOR THE STATE OF
MISSOURI, 1863-1865



Julius K. Hunter & Friends
African American
Research Collection

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INTRODUCTION

On the six rolls of this microfilm publication, M1894, are reproduced descriptive lists of black volunteers recruited for the army from the State of Missouri, 1863–1865. These records consist of 55 descriptive recruitment books and 3 bound indexes. These volumes are part of the records of the Colored Troops Division, 1863–1889, in the Records of the Adjutant General's Office, 1780's–1917, Record Group (RG) 94, at the National Archives Building in Washington, DC.

Background

Concerted effort to recruit large numbers of African American volunteers in Missouri during the Civil War for service in the United States Colored Troops (USCT) began with the November 14, 1863, issuance of General Orders No. 135 by Maj. Gen. J. M. Schofield, commander of the Department of Missouri. General Orders No. 135 authorized assistant provost marshals throughout Missouri to recruit slaves, contrabands, or free blacks and to compensate loyal slaveowners who lost their slaves up to \$300 per slave.¹ Prior to this order, recruitment efforts were limited and inconsistent and based on the efforts of a few energetic provost marshals who sought recruits or lured slaves for enlistment in Kansas, Iowa, or Arkansas.

From the outset, recruitment of African Americans in Missouri faced many obstacles. General Orders No. 135 was issued against the backdrop of intense political infighting and violence over the question of slavery in this Civil War border state. The question of the enlistment and arming of blacks was an extremely sensitive issue among Missouri radicals, who sought the immediate emancipation of slaves statewide; Missouri moderates, favoring gradual emancipation; and slaveowners. Maj. Gen. Schofield's letters clarifying General Orders No. 135 reflected this sensitivity. Even though the orders called for widespread enlistment of blacks into the army, Schofield restricted those recruiting techniques particularly objectionable to slaveowners. For example, some energetic provost marshals had employed roving recruitment squads that moved through plantations and towns aggressively seeking to recruit blacks.² Beginning in November 1863, all recruiting had to be done through recruitment stations based in county or military district seats. General Schofield hoped this would alleviate the growing complaints by slaveowners who bitterly claimed that the roving parties were plying slaves of Union loyalists with whiskey and false promises. From November 1863 to March 1865, more than seventy provost marshal officers recruited African Americans at 45 recruitment stations.³ Upon passing a physical examination, prospective recruits were sent to

¹ General Orders No. 135, November 14, 1863, Vol. 3, Ch. V, Pt. 1, p. 1739, *The Negro in the Military Service of the United States, 1639–1886*, (National Archives Microfilm Publication M858, roll 2), Records of the Adjutant General's Office, 1780's–1917, Record Group (RG) 94, National Archives Building (NAB).

² Maj. Gen. Schofield to Col. E. D. Townsend, September 29, 1863, Vol. 3, Ch. V, Pt. 1, pp. 1631–1635, M858, roll 2.

³ See County/Station/Recruiter Index [vol. 1] on roll 1 of this microfilm publication.

Benton Barracks, outside St. Louis, for muster in and organization into United States Colored Troops regiments.⁴

Recruitment efforts in Missouri were never uniformly successful. Col. William A. Pile was appointed superintendent of the organization of black troops, but he had virtually no enforcement powers over the activities of the provost marshals. His role was further complicated by an unclear chain of command because he reported to both the Colored Troops Division and the commander of the Department of Missouri. Provost marshals were given wide latitude in managing their duties in the districts and counties. No quotas were set for black recruits, and many provost marshals were simply too busy with other duties to concentrate on black recruitment. Some officers openly opposed arming blacks and refused to recruit slaves, while others resorted to tricks such as denying to the slaves that any recruitment order existed, or failing all prospective enlistees on their physical exams.⁵

The restriction of roving recruitment parties had a major adverse impact on recruitment. Slaves could no longer expect armed escort if they left their masters' plantations. The war in Missouri had turned into a war of attrition with guerillas, slave patrols, and bandits roaming the nearly lawless countryside. Atrocities were rampant against slaves seeking freedom in Unionist sanctuaries or across state borders, or against those who intended to enlist.⁶ Reprisals by slaveholders against the families of those slaves who enlisted without their master's permission were widespread. Beatings, abuse, and imprisonment of family members of recruits were common. Some slaveowners resorted to confiscating the clothing of their slaves at night and locking them away. However, perhaps the most reviled tactic of reprisal against blacks who enlisted was selling their families further south or to other border states. Military authorities issued several orders demanding a stop to the practice, and there is evidence that most provost marshals tried to enforce these rules but were never entirely successful.⁷

Despite these obstacles, more than 8,000 Missouri African Americans enlisted in the United States Colored Troops. Five United States Colored Troops regiments were organized with predominantly or all Missouri recruits: the 18th, 60th, 62nd, 65th,

⁴ General Orders No. 135, *The Negro in the Military Service of the United States, 1639–1886*.

⁵ John W. Blassingame, "The Recruitment of Negro Troops in Missouri during the Civil War," *Missouri Historical Review*, LVIII, No. 3 (April 1964): 336, and testimony of Col. William A. Pile, November 29, 1863, O-328 1863, American Freedmen's Inquiry Commission, General Correspondence, Letters Received, 1805–1889, RG 94, NAB.

⁶ Col. William A. Pile to Maj. O. D. Greene, February 11, 1864, Letters Received, Department of Missouri, Records of U.S. Army Continental Commands, 1821–1920, RG 393, Pt. 1, NAB.

⁷ Col. Pile to Maj. Gen. William S. Rosecrans, February 23, 1864, Letters Received, Department of Missouri, RG 393, Pt. 1, NAB.

and 68th USCT.⁸ Recruitment of African Americans in Missouri took place under the jurisdiction of the Department of Missouri Military Headquarters, located in St. Louis. However, records of enlistment were forwarded to the Colored Troops Division of the Adjutant General's Office, Washington, DC, responsible for all matters pertaining to the recruitment, organization, and service of black troops and their officers. Descriptive recruitment lists were made in triplicate at the time of recruitment. One copy was sent to the Provost Marshal General's Office, another was given to the recruit or to the recruit's owner, and the third accompanied the recruit to be turned over to the Colored Troops Division offices at Benton Barracks or St. Louis. These copies were bound as the volumes reproduced on this microfilm.

Records Description

The descriptive recruitment lists of black volunteers enlisting in the army from Missouri, 1863–1865, are bound in 55 recruitment books and 3 index books. The leather-bound recruitment volumes are arranged numerically according to station or stations. However, most volume numbers have been damaged or lost, having fallen off the spines. Each volume has its own index arranged alphabetically by first letter of the surname of the recruit. The recruits are listed chronologically within each volume. The listing gives the recruit's name and describes his physical characteristics including eye and hair color, height, and skin complexion. Notations for skin color in the recruitment volumes include such terms as black, light, brown, copper, dark copper, light copper, yellow, and mulatto. The descriptive list also gives the recruit's place of birth by county or state, occupation at the time of recruitment, details (when and where recruited), recruitment officer's name, period of service, and former slaveowner's name and residence by county or state. The descriptive list also provides the name of the examining surgeon, the recruiting officer's name, the recruitment station, and the date of recruitment. A remarks section provides further background or explanation about the circumstances of the recruit such as whether the examining surgeon rejected the recruit, whether he deserted, whether an agent for the slaveowner presented the slave for recruitment, or whether the slave presented himself on the grounds that his former master was disloyal. Of particular interest to researchers will be the volume for Syracuse found on roll 5. In this volume, a copy of each recruit's enlistment paper was glued into the binding along with his descriptive information. One recruitment volume for Plattsburg and one recruitment volume for Washington are missing and were not filmed.

The three bound index books have been reproduced on roll 1. The first index filmed was created by the Record and Pension Office in 1891 after the records were transferred there. This index lists counties, stations, and recruitment officers in Missouri alphabetically. Following each entry is a number corresponding to the number assigned each volume, presumably by the Record and Pension Office. The second volume contains two name indexes that were bound together. Part one lists names

⁸ *Supplement to the Official Records of the Union and Confederate Armies, Part II, Record of Events*, Vols. 89–91 (Wilmington, NC: Broadfoot Publishing Co., 1998).

alphabetically, A-K, and part two lists names alphabetically, L-Z. Volume three repeats the alphabetical range of volume two, and parts three and four therein are duplicates of parts one and two.

The indexes indicate that there were two numbering systems used to identify the descriptive volumes. The Colored Troops Division of the Adjutant General's Office assigned numbers to the volumes according to the recruitment station name. In the indexes, the Colored Troops Division number is usually found in black ink in the "number" column before each recruit's name. The Record and Pension Office realized that volumes were missing and renumbered the volumes in sequential order. Those numbers were entered in red ink in the number column above the original entry. The red numbers list first the entry number assigned to the recruit in each volume, and then the volume number. However, the red ink is not distinguishable on this black-and-white microfilm. Both arrangements are difficult to use because most of the volume numbers on the spines have been damaged or lost. For this reason, the volumes have been microfilmed in alphabetical order by name of recruitment station. Four volumes, 8, 12, 26, and 48, contain more than one station.

To locate an individual, find his entry number (the upper one in the number column) and his station of recruitment in the general indexes on roll 1. Then consult the Contents section of this introduction to identify the roll containing that volume.

Related Records

For more information regarding the military service of African American recruits from Missouri during the Civil War, consult the Compiled Military Service Records of Volunteer Union Soldiers Who Served with the United States Colored Troops in Record Group (RG) 94. These carded records provide descriptions of individual military service from muster in (enlistment) to separation from the army. A carded index for the USCT, reproduced as National Archives Microfilm Publication M589, *Index to Compiled Military Service Records of Volunteer Union Soldiers Who Served with U.S. Colored Troops*, may be used to locate the regiment of USCT personnel. An index card gives the name of the soldier and his rank, as well as the unit in which he served; sometimes there is a cross-reference to his service in other units or organizations. The National Archives is continually producing microfilm publications of volunteer Union compiled military service records. A complete listing of finished publications can be found in the National Archives *Microfilm Resources for Research: A Comprehensive Catalog*, which is available for purchase or online at <http://www.archives.gov>.

If a soldier or dependent applied for a pension, the pension application case file should be among the Records of the Veterans Administration, RG 15. Indexes to the pension applications have been reproduced as Microfilm Publications T288, *General Index to Pension Files, 1861-1934*, and T289, *Organization Index to Pension Files of Veterans Who Served Between 1861 and 1900*.

The records of the Colored Troops Division, within RG 94, include division correspondence and recruitment records, registers of appointments of officers, and information on the slave or free status of individuals. Microfilm Publication M858, entitled *The Negro in the Military Service of the United States 1639-1886*, is a compilation of historical extracts and official papers concerning the military service of African Americans from the colonial period through the Civil War. The Records of the Bounty and Claims Division, also in RG 94, include correspondence of the division and records relating to bounties and claims paid to loyal slaveowners by the Slave Claims Commissions of Delaware, Kentucky, Maryland, Missouri, Tennessee, and West Virginia.

Other series in RG 94 that contain information relating to volunteer Union soldiers who served with the USCT include carded records relating to Union staff officers, carded medical records of volunteer Union soldiers, unbound and bound regimental descriptive records, and "record of events" cards. The "record of events" cards include information copied from the units' muster rolls and returns. They document the stations of the field and staff as well as the stations of the companies of the regiment at the time the muster roll or return was prepared, and sometimes mention battles, skirmishes, or other activities in which the regiment participated. The cards have been reproduced as Microfilm Publication M594, *Compiled Records Showing Service of Military Units in Volunteer Union Organizations*.

Other record series having information pertaining to the USCT in Missouri include the headquarters and field offices series of the Records of the Bureau of Refugees, Freedmen, and Abandoned Lands, RG 105; Records of the Provost Marshal General's Bureau (Civil War), RG 110; and Records of the Department of Missouri, 1821-1920, of the Records of U.S. Army Continental Commands, RG 393.

Works describing the general history of recruitment for the United States Colored Troops in Missouri include *The Official Records of the Union and Confederate Armies* (Wilmington, NC: Broadfoot Publishing Co., 1998); and *Freedom: A Documentary History of Emancipation, 1861-1867, Series II, The Black Military Experience*, edited by Ira Berlin, et al., (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1982). See also John W. Blassingame, "The Recruitment of Negro Troops in Missouri during the Civil War," *Missouri Historical Review*, LVIII, No. 3 (April 1964): 326-338; Earl J. Nelson's, "Missouri Slavery, 1861-1865," *Missouri Historical Review*, XXVIII, No. 4 (July 1934): 260-274; and Michael Fellman's, "Emancipation in Missouri," *Missouri Historical Review*, LXXXIII, No. 1 (October 1988): 36-56. Holdings of the National Archives relating to the Civil War are outlined in Kenneth W. Munden and Henry Putnam Beers, *Guide to Federal Archives Relating to the Civil War* (Washington, DC: National Archives, 1962), and Henry Putnam Beers, *Guide to the Archives of the Government of the Confederate States of America* (Washington, DC: National Archives, 1968), which were reprinted as *The Union* (1986) and *The Confederacy* (1986).

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The records reproduced in this microfilm publication were prepared for filming by Michael F. Knight. Introductory remarks written by Michael F. Knight and edited by Benjamin Guterman.

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* Volume numbers assigned by the Colored Troops Division of the Adjutant General's Office are shown in parentheses to assist in identifying the volumes.

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