
Compiled Military Service Records

Part II: The records *outside* the CMSR jacket

In honor of the sesquicentennial of the American Civil War, this is the fourth in a series of articles about records at the National Archives in Washington, D.C., that are useful in researching the war and its participants.

In the last issue of *NGS Magazine*, we learned about some of the millions of cards *inside* the Compiled Military Service Record (CMSR) jackets of volunteer soldiers of the Civil War (Union and Confederate) that make it easy to access information that would otherwise be challenging and time consuming to access in its original form.

In this article, we discuss compiled records that are *outside* the CMSR jacket that researchers must pursue separately from the CMSR.

Unfiled cards and miscellaneous personal papers

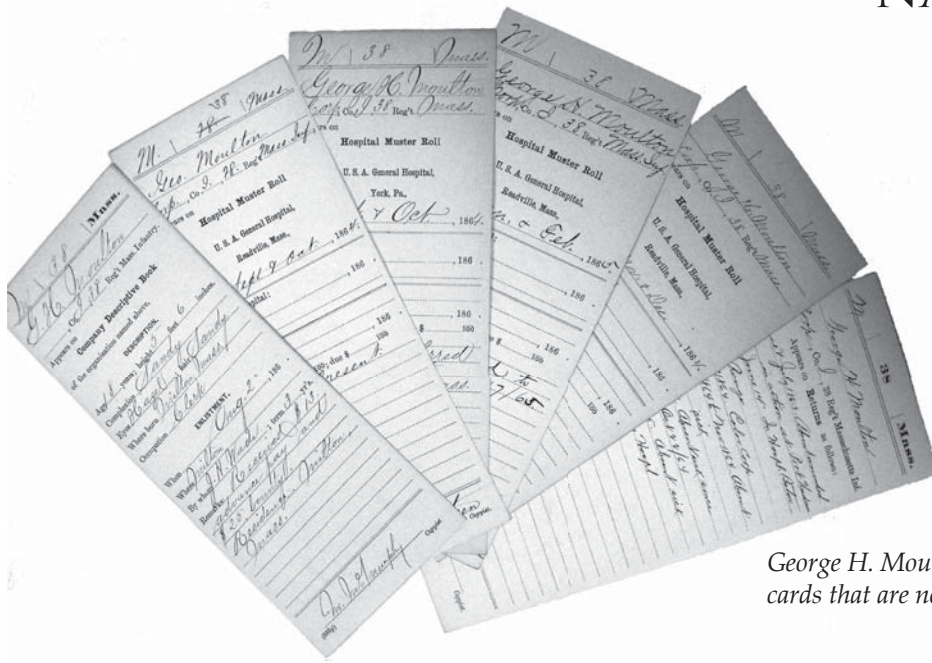
The visionary goal of General Fred C. Ainsworth, as discussed in a previous issue of *NGS Magazine*,¹ was that each CMSR would contain a soldier's complete record of service in one regiment. Unfortunately, Ainsworth was not completely successful in achieving his goal. The CMSR project—which involved creating 58 million cards

recording the service of volunteer soldiers from more than six wars—spanned about twenty-five years. Under the circumstances, it was inevitable that a small percentage of those records never got filed in their proper places.

Why? A two decades-long project involving huge quantities of records is bound to have loose ends that remain unfinished. There are at least two reasons. First, there were cards and personal papers containing discrepancies, contradictory, or insufficient information that could not positively link the record to a soldier for whom a CMSR had been established on the basis of normal service records, so none was created. Second, large lengthy projects inevitably involve managers changing priorities, resulting in staff being shifted to different tasks before finishing the task at hand. Loose ends get left for “later” but instead get forgotten. As a result, numerous cards and personal papers that could have easily been filed inside a CMSR jacket just never got filed in their proper places.

How does the researcher discover whether there are “unfiled” cards and personal papers for a particular soldier?

Researchers can easily discover the additional records for Confederate military personnel in



George H. Moulton, 38th Massachusetts Infantry. Six unfiled cards that are not inside the CMSR jacket.

National Archives Microfilm Publication M347, *Unfiled Papers and Slips Belonging in Confederate Compiled Service Records* (442 rolls), which is available on microfilm at the National Archives Building, Washington, D.C. (NAB); selected NARA regional archives; libraries having large genealogical collections; and online at Fold3.com. The records are arranged alphabetically by name without regard to state or unit, but similar sounding names are grouped together. For example, Collman, Colman, Colmon, and Coalman are all grouped together under Coleman.

Researchers seeking the additional records for Union military personnel face a more nuanced search. As mentioned in previous articles, Civil War CMSRs are filed by state, then by regiment. (There were also certain organizations, such as the U.S. Colored Troops, U.S. Sharp Shooters, and others, that lacked a “state” designation.) For Union military units, “unfiled” cards (sometimes called by other names such as “miscellaneous card abstracts”) and personal papers may be physically located (1) at the end of the CMSRs from that state; (2) at the end of that regiment; (3) after every couple regiments; or (4) in some combination of these locations. Researchers

can easily discover the additional records on microfilm or online for Union units whose CMSRs have been microfilmed. However, for Union units whose CMSRs have *not* been microfilmed, the researcher must do research in person at the NAB or submit a request to NARA for copies of the additional records separately from a request for a copy of the soldier’s CMSR. Should you bother? Yes, because these additional records can contain excellent information not found inside the CMSR jacket. Understand, however, that many soldiers may not have additional records.

Examples

George H. Moulton, who served as a private in Company I, 38th Massachusetts Infantry, provides an excellent example of what the additional unfiled records may yield. Moulton’s CMSR jacket holds eighteen cards and six personal papers. Are there more records *outside* the jacket? Yes. There are “unfiled cards” for the 37th, 38th, and 39th Massachusetts Infantry regiments physically located between the end of the CMSRs for the 38th Massachusetts and the beginning of the CMSRs for the 39th Massachusetts. In CMSR box 13481, which contains unfiled cards for men



Frank Despard, 19th Kansas Infantry (6th month organization, 1868-69). One additional card.

named G-Sm in the 38th Massachusetts, there are six cards for George H. Moulton: four hospital muster roll cards for his stays at the U.S. Army General Hospitals at York, Pennsylvania, and Readsville, Massachusetts; a returns card showing the dates and comments on five returns (lists) on which he was mentioned, and a company descriptive book card that gives his physical description, occupation, and the amount of advance

pay and bounty he received. These are records that are not inside his CMSR jacket.

In addition to “unfiled cards,” Massachusetts also has four subseries of “miscellaneous personal papers” as follows: CMSR box 13743; boxes 13744–13788; box 13789; and finally, boxes 5–23 in a subseries with different box numbering. There were no additional records for George H. Moulton in these locations, but it was worth checking.

Frank Despard served in Company D, 19th Kansas Cavalry (6th month organization, 1868–69), for just two weeks until he decided to desert his unit on 15 November 1868, unlawfully taking with him his U.S. government horse, Spencer carbine, and various accoutrements and supplies. His CMSR contains five cards and two personal papers. There is one more item *outside* his CMSR jacket. In CMSR Box 9507, there is a returns card that indicates Frank was listed as a deserter on a November 1868 return. While it provides no further details, it is still one additional record.

Moulton and Despard are just two random examples of men whose CMSRs are incomplete. It is regrettable that Ainsworth’s staff never finished filing cards and personal papers in their appropriate Civil War CMSR jackets. However, knowledgeable researchers who are aware of these facts can pursue the additional records that are *outside* the CMSR jacket. Good luck!

For more information

Table 1 indicates which rolls of microfilm contain records *outside* the CMSR jacket. These records are available on microfilm at the NAB; selected NARA regional archives; libraries having large genealogical collections; and online at Fold3.com.

Complete titles of NARA microfilm publications, along with descriptive pamphlets, roll lists, and information on which NARA facilities have them, can be obtained at “Order Online,” <https://eservices.archives.gov/orderonline/>. Click on the “Microfilm” tab to get started. You do not need to register or buy anything.

Table 2 provides guidance on whether there are Unfiled Cards (called “Cards” in the table) or Miscellaneous Personal Papers (called “Papers” in the table) outside the CMSR jacket. Box numbers are provided when possible. CMSRs and records outside the jacket must be requested from NARA.

To request paper copies of CMSRs by mail, either order the records online at “Order Online” at <https://eservices.archives.gov/orderonline> or request by mail using NATF Form 86, National Archives Order for Copies of Military Service Records, available at <http://www.archives.gov/forms/pdf/natf-86.pdf>. A free online index to CMSRs is the “Civil War Soldiers & Sailors System” online on the National Park Service website, <http://www.itd.nps.gov/cwss/index.html>.

To request copies of unmicrofilmed records outside the CMSR jacket, write to the Old Civil and Military Records Branch, National Archives and Records Administration, 700 Pennsylvania Avenue NW, Washington, DC 20408, or send an

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Table 1**States and units whose Union CMSRs have been microfilmed**

These microfilm publications include the records *outside* the jacket.

State/unit	Microfilm Publication number	Rolls with records outside the jacket
Alabama	M276	10
Arkansas	M399	59–60
Dakota	M1960	3
Delaware	M1961	110–117
Florida	M400	11
Georgia	M403	not applicable
Kentucky	M397	473–515
Louisiana	M396	47–50
Maryland	M384	208–238
Mississippi	M404	4
Missouri	M405	723–850
Nebraska	M1787	43
Nevada	M1789	16
New Mexico	M427	44–46
NY 1st Engineers	M2004	36–39
North Carolina	M401	25
Oregon	M1816	18 and 34
Tennessee	M395	200–220
Texas	M402	13
Utah	M692	not applicable
Virginia	M398	7
West Virginia	M508	232–261
USCT: 54th Massachusetts	M1898	19–20
USCT: 55th Massachusetts	M1801	16
USCT: Artillery	M1818	108, 133, 185–187, 216–217, 245–246, 263, 279, 296, 299
USCT: 1st–6th Cavalry (various)	M1817	not applicable
USCT: 1st Infantry (various)	M1819	17
USCT: 2nd–7th Infantry (various)	M1820	16, 29, 49–50, 66–67, 82–83, 110–111, 116
USCT: 8th–13th Infantry	M1821	17–18, 39–41, 55–59, 77, 92, 109
USCT: 14th–19th Infantry	M1822	17, 32, 48, 64, 83, 104–105
USCT: 20th–25th Infantry	M1823	21, 36, 50–51, 70–71, 98
USCT: 26th–30th Infantry	M1824	16, 33, 53, 71, 90, 108
USCT: 31st–35th Infantry	M1992	18, 31, 48, 63, 86
USCT: 36th–40th Infantry	M1993	25–26, 51, 78, 100, 116
USCT: 41st–46th Infantry	M1994	17–18, 31, 55, 73, 92–93, 113
USCT: 47th–55th Infantry	M2000	18–19, 39, 60–61, 86–87, 107, 130–131, 149, 161, 183
1st–6th U.S. Volunteer Infantry	M1017	65

Table 2**States and units whose Union CMSRs have not been microfilmed**

This table gives guidance on whether there are unfiled cards (“Cards”), miscellaneous personal papers (“Papers”), or other miscellaneous records that are *outside* the CMSR jacket. These are usually arranged alphabetically by name (“alpha”), unless otherwise indicated (such as “by Regt. then alpha”). States marked “Cards filed after each regiment” may have cards for particular regiment(s) filed before or after the regiment in a similar manner to those marked “Cards (by Regt. then alpha) filed after every couple regiments.” Box numbers are indicated when possible. Boxes 1–250 are a subseries separate from the main CMSR series. CMSRs for more U.S. Colored Troops, California, Colorado, District of Columbia, and Vermont are slated for future digital filming. These records are part of the series, *Carded Records Showing Military Service of Soldiers Who Fought in Volunteer Organizations During the American Civil War* (ARC Identifier 300398), in Record Group 94, Records of the Adjutant General’s Office, 1780s–1917.

State/Unit	CMSR Box Nos.	Comments
Arizona	not applicable	none
California		Papers at end of state
Colorado		Cards and Papers at end of state
Connecticut	1226–1264	Papers
District of Columbia		Cards and Papers at end of state
Illinois	various	Cards at the end of some regiments
	5292–5294	Cards
	5295–5394	Papers
	5395–5422	Papers (by Regt. then alpha)
	1	Papers (by Regt. then alpha)
Indiana	8014–8021	Cards (by Regt. then alpha)
	8022	Cards, Permanent Party Garrison Guards
	8022–8023	Cards (by Regt. then alpha)
	8024–8055	Papers
Iowa	9255–9256	Cards (by Regt. then alpha)
	9258	Cards (Misc. Infantry by Regt. then alpha)
	9259–9280	Papers
	2	Papers (by Regt. then alpha)
Kansas	various	Cards (by Regt. then alpha) filed after every couple regiments
	9506–9507	Cards (by Regt. then alpha)
	9655–9659	Papers
	9659A	Cards (Cavalry and Battery by Regt. then alpha)
Maine	various	Cards (by Regt. then alpha) filed after every couple regiments
	11642	Cards (by Regt. then alpha)
	11643–11666	Papers
Massachusetts	various	Cards (by Regt. then alpha) filed after every couple regiments
	13743	Papers (1st subseries)
	13744–13788	Papers (2nd subseries)
	13789	Papers (3rd subseries)
	5–23	Papers (4th subseries) (by Regt. then alpha)
Michigan	various	Cards filed after each regiment
	15170–15193	Papers

Minnesota	various	Cards filed after each regiment
	15554	Cards
	15556–15562	Papers
New Hampshire	various	Cards filed after each regiment
	21376–21397	Papers
New Jersey	various	Cards filed after each regiment
	22239–22255	Papers
	22255A	Papers, rejected recruits
New York	various	Cards filed after each regiment
	28498–28502	Cards
	28503	Cards, VRC transferred from NY organizations
	28504–28513	Cards, 33rd–193rd Infantry, and misc. (by Regt. then alpha)
	28515–28684	Papers
Ohio	32608–32609	Cards, misc. infantry
	32618–32663	Papers
	32664	Papers, rejected recruits
	32665–32678	Cards (by Regt. then alpha)
	32679–32679C	Cards
Pennsylvania	various	Cards filed after some regiments
	37079	Cards, 1st–4th Cavalry (by Regt. then alpha)
	37080–37083	Papers
	37088	Cards, 192nd–215th Infantry (by Regt. then alpha)
	37089–37223	Papers
Rhode Island	25–234	Papers (by Regt. then alpha)
	various	Cards (by Regt. then alpha) filed after every couple regiments
	37469–37473	Papers
Vermont		Cards filed after each regiment
Washington	38505A	Cards
Wisconsin	various	Cards filed after each regiment
	40230	Cards
	40231–40253	Papers, miscellaneous
	40254–40261	Papers, “proof file” (enlistment papers)
	251–324	Papers (by Regt. then alpha)
U.S. Colored Troops, 56th & up	various	Cards at end of most regiments
		Cards and Papers at end of U.S.C.T.
U.S. Sharp Shooters	43104	Cards
	43105	Papers
U.S. Signal Corps	43154	Papers
Veterans Reserve Corps	44294–44315	Papers
	44316–44371	Cards
	235–250	Papers (by Regt. then alpha)
Indian Home Guards	various	Cards at end of each regiment
Misc. States & Orgs. ²	3–4	

CSMR continued from page 34

email to archives1reference@nara.gov. Provide the soldier's name, company, and regiment; specify Civil War and that you seek "unfiled cards and personal papers" that are outside the CMSR jacket. 🌲

Notes

1. Claire Prechtel-Kluskens, "Thank You, General Ainsworth," *NGS Magazine* 37 (October–December 2011): 54–57.

2. Papers, random material relating to men serving from Connecticut, Delaware, District of Columbia, Illinois, Indiana, Iowa, Kansas, Kentucky, Maine, Maryland, Michigan, Minnesota, Missouri, New Hampshire, New Jersey, New Mexico, New York, Ohio, Pennsylvania, Rhode Island, Texas, Vermont, Virginia, Wisconsin, and U.S. Colored Troops. In January 1937 (25 years after Ainsworth's resignation from the Army), a Mr. Wilmarth in the Army's medical department recommended these records be filed in personal papers jackets, but no action was ever taken).

Claire Prechtel-Kluskens, a microfilm projects archivist at NARA, served as NGS registrar (1996–98) and director (1998–2000). She can be reached at ckluskens@verizon.net.

(No. 22.)
THE CONFEDERATE STATES,
To J. T. Broach Dr.

DATE	DEBARS	CYS
August 1		

For use of one horse while serving as courier at Brigade Hd Qrs from 1st Aug 1863 to Sept 10th 1863 forty one days (41) at 40^{cts} per day \$16 40^{cts}

I certify that the above account is correct and just; that the services were rendered as stated; and that they were necessary for the public service.

Received at [unclear] the [unclear] day of [unclear] 186[unclear]
of [unclear] [unclear] [unclear]
the sum of [unclear] Dollars
and [unclear] Cents in full of the above account.

(GOOD BY DUPLICATE.)

Image found on Fold3.com from M347, Unfiled Papers and Slips Belonging in Confederate Compiled Service Records for a J.T. Broach.



Infantry resting from drill (ARC Identifier 524639); Matthew Brady Photographs; RG 111, Records of the Office of Chief Signal Officer; NARA, College Park, MD.