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COMPILED SERVICE RECORDS OF CONFEDERATE SOLDIERS  
WHO SERVED IN ORGANIZATIONS  
FROM THE STATE OF MISSISSIPPI

On the 427 rolls of this microfilm publication are reproduced the compiled service records of Confederate soldiers belonging to units from the State of Mississippi. The compiled service records consist of a jacket-envelope for each soldier, labeled with his name, his rank, and the unit in which he served. The jacket-envelope typically contains (1) card abstracts of entries relating to the soldier as found in original muster rolls, returns, rosters, payrolls, appointment books, hospital registers, Union prison registers and rolls, parole rolls, and inspection reports; and (2) the originals of any papers relating solely to the particular soldier. There are cross-reference cards and jacket envelopes for soldiers' names that appear in the records under more than one spelling.

The compilation of the service records of Confederate soldiers was begun in 1903 under the direction of Brig. Gen. Fred C. Ainsworth, head of the Record and Pension Office in the War Department. Abstracts were made from documents in the War Department Collection of Confederate Records and from documents borrowed by the War Department in an effort to obtain as nearly complete military service records as possible. The abstracts made from the original records were verified by a separate operation of comparison, and every conceivable precaution was taken to ensure that the abstracts were accurate.

The compiled service records of soldiers belonging to units from the State of Mississippi are arranged according to a complicated organizational breakdown ending with either the regiment or independent battalion or company. Under each unit the service records are arranged alphabetically by soldiers' surnames.

Preceding the jacket-envelope for the individual soldiers in each organizational unit there are empty envelopes on which are listed the officers of that unit. Following these are jacket-envelopes containing (1) caption cards for muster-in and muster-out rolls showing the exact caption of the rolls that were copied and the certificate of the mustering officer verifying the accuracy of the rolls; and (2) record-of-events cards, indicating the activities in which any portion of the unit had been engaged.

Two separate indexes may be used to locate the compiled service record of a soldier from Mississippi. One is a card index to the service records of soldiers who served in organizations from the State of Mississippi reproduced as Microcopy 232). This index contains the names of Mississippi soldiers for whom there are compiled service records. The cards give the name of the soldier, his rank, the unit in which he served, and often a statement concerning the origin or

background of that unit. The information contained in this State index is duplicated in a "consolidated" or master card index (reproduced as Microcopy 253) that contains the names of all Confederate soldiers found in compiling the service records, regardless of whether the service was with a unit furnished by a particular State, with a unit raised directly by the Confederate Government, or as a staff officer. Unless the unit in which a soldier served is already known, his compiled service record can be located only through the use of one of these indexes.

The compiled service records reproduced in this microcopy and the indexes referred to above are part of a body of records in the National Archives designated as Record Group 109, War Department Collection of Confederate Records. The compiled service record of a Confederate soldier from Mississippi may not appear in this microcopy for several reasons. First, he may not have served in a Mississippi unit. Second, he may have served under a different name or used a different spelling of his name. Third, proper records of his service may not have been made by the Confederate Army, or, if made, may have been lost or destroyed in the confusion that often attended the initial mobilization, subsequent military operations, or the final surrender of the Confederate military forces. Fourth, the references to the soldier in the original records may be so vague that it has not been practicable to determine his correct name or the unit in which he served.

Card abstracts of vague entries in the original records of military service, together with the originals of any papers containing vague references to individual soldiers, are maintained in a separate alphabetical series without regard to State or military unit. They are not indexed. Sometimes supposed Confederate military service is shown by the records to have been service in a civilian capacity, as in the case of government employees. Evidence of such service, or of having aided the Confederate cause as a civilian in some other way, may sometimes be obtained from a series of records in the National Archives known as the "Citizens File," consisting of Confederate documents each of which relates only to a particular civilian. They are arranged alphabetically by name of person and are not indexed. Other information about the activities of Confederate civilians is contained in a similar unindexed series of documents accumulated by Union provost marshals and known as the "Provost Marshal File." The National Archives had still other Confederate records in its custody among which documents may possibly be found relating to particular Confederate civilians or soldiers. The records described in this paragraph are available for examination in the National Archives by inquirers or their agents.

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