

PENNSSTATE



Guide to the Civil War Draft Exemption Records from Rockland County, New York, 1862

Accession number: 1950-0002H

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Descriptive Summary

- Title:** Civil War Draft Exemption Records from Rockland County, New York, 1862
- Accession:** 1950-0002H
- Provenance:** Details of provenance are largely unknown. The records were a gift of Harry Parker Hammond in 1950, at which time he was Dean of Engineering at the Pennsylvania State University. Hammond may have come upon these records during World War I, when he served as chairman of the local board for Division 58, New York City, under the Selective Service Act.
- Extent:** 0.4 cubic feet
- Repository:** Pennsylvania State University, University Libraries, Special Collections Library

Administrative Information

Processing Information

This collection had previously been catalogued under the donor's name, Hammond, and appears thus in the ArchivesUSA database (see there, NUCMC Number: MS 69-450).

The control folder for this collection contains, for folders 1 through 5, typewritten inventories prepared in 1958, listing names and the month and day of each individual exemption claim. These typewritten lists might be of assistance to readers working through the handwritten records.

Access

Unrestricted access.

Preferred Citation

Civil War Draft Exemption Records from Rockland County, New York, 1862, Accession 1950-0002H, Historical Collections and Labor Archives, Special Collections Library, University Libraries, Pennsylvania State University.

Arrangement

This collection is arranged alphabetically by township, followed by a few pamphlets and pre-printed forms.

Agency History Note

On July 1, 1862, Abraham Lincoln called for 300,000 men, on July 17 he signed the Militia Act, and on August 9 Secretary of War Edwin McMasters Stanton issued instructions for organizing the militia draft by county. The instructions included categories of qualified exemptions, while also giving each state the discretion to identify and enumerate additional categories for draft exemption.

The present draft exemption records were probably created by an authority of Rockland County, New York, but which agency, and whether civilian or military, is unknown. Rockland County is situated north of New York City on the southern tip of New York State, with its eastern border defined by the Hudson River. Established in 1798, the county at that time was comprised of four townships: Orangetown, a former township of Orange County, from which Rockland County was carved; Haverstraw, which separated from Orangetown in 1719 and became a township in 1788; and Clarkstown and Ramapo, which in turn separated from Haverstraw in 1791. A current fifth township, Stony Point, formed from a portion of Haverstraw only later, in 1865. Hence the Civil War Draft Exemption Records pertain to the entire county. The total population of Rockland County in the 1860 United States census was 22,492.

Scope and Content

The collection consist mainly of documents created in preparation for the state militia draft of 1862. These records may be of interest to researchers in the areas of military history, genealogy, medicine, ethnography, national identity, and social history. The draft exemption records provide insights into mid-19th century conceptions of health and infirmities. They illuminate mid-19th century views of citizenship, with numerous individuals claiming exemption as aliens (principally as citizens of Germany, Ireland, or Great Britain) or stating that the process of naturalization as American citizens had been initiated but was not yet completed. The records also reveal individual efforts to match mandated categories of occupational exemption.

Bibliography

Geary, James W. *The Union Draft in the Civil War*. Dekalb, Ill.: Northern Illinois University, 1991.

Extensive information on exemption from the Enrollment Act of 1863, the first national draft, is preserved in the Records of the Provost Marshal General's Bureau, 1863-1865, Record Group 110, at the National Archives. Parallel information from the preceding year, the Militia Act of 1862, is by comparison widely scattered and not systematically preserved. New York State is best represented, with draft exemption documents surviving not only from Rockland County, but also from the counties of Oneida (at the Rome Historical Society), Onondaga (at the Onondaga Historical Association, Syracuse), Orange (at the town archives in Cornwall), Saratoga (at the Saratoga County Historical Society, Ballston Spa), Steuben (in the New York State Archives, Albany), and Suffolk (at the Research Center, Huntington; at the Suffolk County Historical Society, Riverhead; and at the Smithtown Library). Among other Northern states, analogous documents may be found for Middlesex County in Massachusetts (at the Massachusetts Archives Boston), Missouri (at the Missouri State Archives, Jefferson City), Monmouth County in New Jersey (at the Monmouth County Archives, Manalapan), several Pennsylvania counties (at the Pennsylvania Historical and Museum Commission, Division of Archives and Manuscripts, Harrisburg), and Dane County in Wisconsin (at the State Historical Society of Wisconsin, Madison).

Index Terms

These materials are indexed under the following headings in the catalog of the Pennsylvania State University. Researchers wishing to find related materials should search the catalog under these index terms.

Corporate Subjects

New York (State). National Guard -- 19th century -- Recruiting, enlistment, etc.

United States. Army -- Recruiting, enlistment, etc. -- 19th century

Topical Subjects

Citizenship -- United States -- History -- 19th century

Draft -- United States -- 19th century

Health attitudes -- United States -- 19th century

Medicine -- United States -- History -- 19th century

Geographic Subjects

Clarkstown (N.Y.) -- History -- Civil War, 1861-1865

Haverstraw (N.Y.) -- History -- Civil War, 1861-1865

Orangetown (N.Y. : Town)-- History -- Civil War, 1861-1865

Ramapo (N.Y. : Town) -- History -- Civil War, 1861-1865

Rockland County (N.Y.) -- History -- Civil War, 1861-1865

United States -- History -- Civil War, 1861-1865

Form/Genre Terms

Military records -- New York (State) -- 19th century

Container List

Draft Exemption Records Series

Draft exemption records, 1862.

Box 1

Folder 01

Clarkstown, 1862

Documents for Clarkstown consist of: (1) 106 individual claims for exemption, arranged alphabetically by surname and ranging in date from 27 October through 6 November 1862. Nearly all of the individual claims are handwritten on a pre-printed "County of Rockland" form, but a few are entirely handwritten. (2) Lists organized by surname and grouped by each letter of the alphabet (but not in strict alphabetical order on a name-by-name basis). With few exceptions, names and medical claims are collected on the second of two pages for each letter; names and all claims other than medical (occupational, age, nationality, and so forth) are on the first of two pages for each letter. These lists are headed "Town of Clarkstown," "Names," and "Reason for Exemption." More than 250 names appear. Evidently more than half of the corresponding individual claim forms are lost. (3) In three folios, an alphabetical "List of Exempts, in the County of Rockland Town of Clarkstown," giving "Names" and "Reason for Exemption." 186 names appear. Presumably this is a list of individuals who were actually granted an exemption. (4) A numbered list of names, the meaning of which is unknown.

Box 1

Folders 02-03

Haverstraw, 1862

Surviving for the township of Haverstraw (also spelled "Heaverstraw") are 187 individual claims for exemption; an additional 45 claims, all for medical reasons and all marked "exemption not recommended;" a disorganized list of 190 names and reasons for exemption, partially corresponding to the individual claim forms; two folios, for surnames M through Z, listing names and reason for exemption; another unidentified numbered list of names; and claims for exemptions for members of Company D and Company F of the 17th Regiment.

Box 1

Folder 04

Orangetown, 1862

The types of documents that survive for Orangetown include: 30 individual claims forms; letter-by-letter lists of more than 400 claims for exemption; 5 folios listing approximately 365 exemptions granted; and an unidentified numbered list of names. The folder also holds a claim for exemption for members of Company C, 17th Regiment, 7th Brigade, 2nd Division of the New York State Militia.

Box 1

Folder 05

Ramapo, 1862

For the township of Ramapo, no individual claim forms survive, but the folder contains letter-by-letter lists of approximately 180 claims for exemption; a folio listing 72 exemptions granted for those with surnames in letters A through L; and yet another unidentified numbered list of names.

Box 1

Folder 06

Legislative pamphlets and enlistment and draft forms, 1862 and circa 1862

This folder contains three pamphlets issued by the office of the New York State Adjutant General and two pre-printed forms. The pamphlets of 7 July, 2 and 14 October 1862, explain the proposed organization of the expanded New York State Militia. One pre-printed form is a draft notice specifically prepared for the State of New York for the month of November 1862. The other form, circa 1862, provides for volunteer enlistment in any state for nine months service during the 1860s.