

M2019

RECORDS RELATING TO WAR OF 1812 PRISONERS OF WAR

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Introduction

On the single roll of this microfilm publication, M2019, are reproduced records relating to War of 1812 prisoners of war. These records are part of RG 94, Records of the Adjutant General's Office, 1780's-1917, and are designated as Subseries 2 of Entry 127 in the National Archives Preliminary Inventory (PI) 17, *Preliminary Inventory of the Records of the Adjutant General's Office, 1784-1947*. The records primarily concern American soldiers, but some also relate to civilians and British soldiers.

Background

The care and exchange of prisoners was primarily handled for the United States by John Mason, appointed in the spring of 1813 to the dual post of Commissary General of Prisoners and Superintendent of Alien Enemies. Agents employed in Canada, such as Robert Gardner and John Mitchell, assisted with these tasks. Under the terms of the cartel agreed to by the United States and Great Britain on May 12, 1813, no military or naval officer placed on parole could take up arms again until he had been officially exchanged.

Records Description

On March 30, 1917, the records included in this publication, originally on file in the Treasury Department, were sent to the Adjutant General's Office, where they were arranged, numbered, and indexed. They were assigned a manuscript number ranging from 1 to 94, perhaps indicating an original intention to arrange them in regimental order. Some are oddly numbered, such as 10 1/2 and 92 1/3, apparently where records on topics similar to the whole number (i.e., 10 and 92) were later inserted into the sequence. The manuscript number was usually annotated on the reverse side of the record, along with a number written in a circle which refers to the number of names for which an index card was created.

Most of the manuscripts are lists of prisoners, although there is some associated correspondence. There are also the following lists:

1. Accounts of the types, amounts, and value of clothing provided by U.S. agents to prisoners held in Canada.
2. Soldiers captured at a certain place or in a particular battle.
3. Prisoners of war held at a certain place.
4. Prisoners who died in captivity.
5. Men exchanged.

Related Index

An index to the records reproduced in this microfilm publication is on the three rolls of M1747, *Index to Records Relating to War of 1812 Prisoners of War*. The

index is arranged by the individual's name, and indicates the manuscript number and, within a multi-page manuscript, also the page number where information concerning that person can be found. If available, the soldier's rank and the regiment and company in which he served is also noted.

Related Records

Other records of the Adjutant General's Office relating to War of 1812 prisoners of war include miscellaneous numbered and unnumbered correspondence concerning British and American prisoners (PI 17, Entry 127, Subseries 1), which has an incomplete name and subject index (PI 17, Entry 128). There are also unindexed lists of prisoners which the Adjutant General's Office received from the Navy Department on November 22, 1907 (PI 17, Entry 127, Subseries 3).

As a result of its responsibility for diplomatic relations, the State Department also created records concerning War of 1812 prisoners of war. These records, from RG 59, General Records of the Department of State, include lists of American and British prisoners of war and correspondence concerning their exchange. The records have been microfilmed on the seven rolls of M588, "*War of 1812 Papers*" of the Department of State, 1789-1815.

Related Publications

Several publications contain information about the care and exchange of War of 1812 prisoners of war. Original correspondence regarding these matters is reproduced in William S. Dudley, Ed., *The Naval War of 1812: A Documentary History, Volumes I and II* (Washington, DC: Department of the Navy, 1985, 1992). Detailed accounts of the war, including references to prisoner care and exchange, can also be found in Benson J. Lossing, *The Pictorial Field-Book of the War of 1812* (New York: Harper & Brothers, 1869), and John K. Mahon, *The War of 1812* (Gainesville: The University of Florida Press, 1972).