

A SOLDIER'S LIFE REPORTS

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DEMONSTRATION SPECIMEN - The soldier is fictional (and where a unit is named, the unit is deliberately one that never existed). The document types, tiers, flags, and citations are exactly what a real report contains.

A CIVIL WAR SERVICE RECORD REPORT

Isaac Freeland

Corporal (mustered in as Private) · Company D · 141st U.S. Colored Infantry

Compiled Military Service Record (Union, USCT) — NARA RG 94

Family Keepsake Edition · Researcher-Reviewed

Prepared August 30, 2026

Every fact in this report is traced to the page that states it.

Prepared from the original compiled service records of the United States National Archives (Record Groups 94 and 109).

Isaac Freeland

Corporal (mustered in as Private), Company D, 141st U.S. Colored Infantry

Short Biography

Isaac Freeland was a twenty-two-year-old farmer, born in Garrard County, Kentucky, who came to Camp Nelson and enlisted in the Union army on July 5, 1864 — and on that same day was declared a free man by operation of the act of Congress that freed enlisting slaves. He served in Company D of the 141st U.S. Colored Infantry, laboring on fortifications, spending part of the winter of 1865 sick in the post hospital, and rising to corporal in August 1865. He mustered out at Helena, Arkansas, in the spring of 1866, and his one surviving letter asks for the bounty still owed him so he could return to Kentucky and the wife, Nancy, he had not seen since he enlisted.

The Story of Isaac Freeland and His Wife Nancy

This is a Union service record — a **United States Colored Troops (USCT)** Compiled Military Service Record from NARA Record Group 94. The jacket names the man plainly: **Isaac Freeland, Private (later Corporal), Company D, 141st U.S. Colored Infantry** (page 1). Every card in the file spells his surname the same way — *Freeland* — and where he signs, he signs with his mark, so the spelling belongs to the army's clerks, not to his own hand.

Isaac's story opens at **Camp Nelson, Kentucky, on July 5, 1864**. On that day two things happened at once. He put his mark to a **Volunteer Enlistment**, giving his age as twenty-two, his birthplace as **Garrard County, Kentucky**, and his occupation as **farmer**, and promising three years' service (page 2). And on that same day the superintendent's office issued him a **Certificate of Freedom**, certifying that Isaac Freeland, "a man of color," having been duly enlisted, "is FREE, by operation of the Act of Congress approved February 24, 1864" (page 3). For a formerly enslaved man, the enlistment paper and this certificate are among the most important documents that can survive — the birthplace they record, **Garrard County, Kentucky**, is the kind of fact that reaches behind the census walls, and the freedom certificate is the paper record of the day he became free.

The company's **descriptive book** repeats and rounds out the picture: age 22, five feet seven inches, complexion black, eyes black, hair black, born in Garrard County, a farmer, enlisted July 5, 1864, at Camp Nelson by Captain Restieaux — the same officer who witnessed his enlistment (pages 2 and 4).

From the bimonthly muster rolls we can follow Isaac himself. In **September and October 1864** he was **present**, "on fatigue duty at fortifications" — the heavy labor that so often fell to colored regiments (page 5). By the **January–February 1865** roll he was **absent, sick in the post hospital at Camp Nelson since February 2, 1865** (page 6). The next surviving roll, **July–August 1865**, shows him **present** again and carries the good news: **"Promoted Corporal August 1, 1865"** (page 7). Between and around these rolls there are stretches the file simply does not cover — see the timeline below — so we can say what these three rolls show and no more.

The **Muster-out Roll** closes his service: mustered out **April 30, 1866, at Helena, Arkansas**, last paid to February 28, 1866, with \$12.19 due him on his clothing account, and of his bounty **\$100 paid and \$200 still due** (page 8). That unpaid bounty is the subject of the file's most human document. Two days before muster-out, from **Helena, Arkansas, on April 28, 1866**, a letter was written at his

request by Chaplain J. Dole: *"I respectfully ask that the bounty still due me be paid, as I am mustering out and returning to Kentucky to my wife Nancy, whom I have not seen since I enlisted"* (page 9). It is signed "Isaac (his X mark) Freeland" — his own mark on his own request, and the only place in the record where his **wife, Nancy**, is named.

Personal Timeline (from the rolls of this file)

- **July 5, 1864** — Enlisted and mustered at Camp Nelson, Ky., age 22, for three years; declared free the same day (pages 2, 3, 4).
- **Sept.–Oct. 1864** — Present; on fatigue duty at fortifications (page 5).
- *Gap: no roll for Nov.–Dec. 1864 survives in this file.*
- **Since Feb. 2, 1865 (Jan.–Feb. 1865 roll)** — Absent, sick in the post hospital, Camp Nelson (page 6).
- *Gap: no roll for Mar.–Apr. or May–June 1865 survives in this file.*
- **July–Aug. 1865** — Present; promoted Corporal August 1, 1865 (page 7).
- *Gap: no roll between Sept. 1865 and the muster-out survives in this file.*
- **Feb. 28, 1866** — Last paid to this date (page 8).
- **April 28, 1866** — Letter from Helena, Ark., asking for bounty due, mentioning his return to wife Nancy in Kentucky (page 9).
- **April 30, 1866** — Mustered out at Helena, Ark., as Corporal (page 8).

Family and Named People

- **Nancy Freeland** — named as Isaac's wife in his letter of April 28, 1866; he states he had not seen her since he enlisted and was returning to her in Kentucky (page 9). This is the only naming of a family member in the file.
- **Capt. E. B. W. Restieaux** — witnessed the enlistment and is named as the enlisting officer in the descriptive book (pages 2, 4).
- **L. H. Fry** — Superintendent of the Organization of U.S. Colored Troops, who ordered the Certificate of Freedom (page 3).
- **J. Dole, Chaplain** — wrote the bounty-request letter at Isaac's request (page 9).

Bounty, Pay, and the Certificate of Freedom

The **Certificate of Freedom** (page 3) is the file's cornerstone document for a formerly enslaved soldier: dated Camp Nelson, July 5, 1864, it certifies that Isaac Freeland is free by operation of the **Act of Congress of February 24, 1864**. No enslaver is named in this specimen; the certificate rests the freedom on the enlistment itself.

The financial record is exact where it survives: at muster-out, **\$12.19 was due him on his clothing account**, and of his bounty **\$100 had been paid with \$200 still due** (page 8). The unpaid \$200 is precisely what his April 28, 1866 letter pursued (page 9). Money still owed at muster-out is often the thread a family later followed into a claim.

What This File Proves — and What It Cannot

Identity anchors this file provides: unit and company (Co. D, 141st U.S. Colored Infantry); enlistment July 5, 1864, at Camp Nelson, Ky.; age 22 (an implied birth year of about **1841–1842**, calculated); birthplace Garrard County, Kentucky; a physical description (5 ft 7 in., complexion, eyes,

and hair all black); occupation farmer; promotion to Corporal; muster-out April 30, 1866, at Helena, Ark.; and a named wife, **Nancy**.

The boundary: this record proves what *this* Isaac Freeland of Company D did. It cannot, by itself, prove that he is any particular family's Isaac Freeland — same-named men of the same era are common, and tying this soldier to a specific family line requires correlation with records **outside** this file (census, county, church, land, and probate records). The report reads the file; it does not confirm descent.

Jacket reconciliation: the jacket lists **six card numbers** (77120415, 77120633, 77121002, 77121288, 77121540, 88401277) and **two personal papers** (page 1). The two personal papers are present — the Certificate of Freedom (page 3) and the bounty letter (page 9). Counting the card-type documents supplied — the Volunteer Enlistment (page 2), Company Descriptive Book (page 4), three company muster rolls (pages 5–7), and the Muster-out Roll (page 8) — gives six, so the counts appear to reconcile if the enlistment is counted among the six cards. Because the classification of the enlistment is ambiguous, see the flag: it is possible one carded roll is not represented among the pages supplied.

Where the record points next (honest next steps): - **General Index to Pension Files (T288):** a federal pension on Union USCT service is fully possible and, for freedmen, often unusually rich — the Bureau frequently took extensive community testimony where documentary proof of marriages and births was lacking. A pension or widow's claim (Nancy is named here) would carry the family record this service file cannot. - **Freedmen's Bureau records and the Freedman's Savings Bank registers**, which frequently name family members. - **The 1870 census** for Garrard County and surrounding Kentucky — the first census to name the family. - **The full Carded Medical Records and post-hospital registers at Camp Nelson** for the winter 1865 illness noted on the Jan.–Feb. 1865 roll. - **Regimental and state adjutant-general records** for the service frame.

Artifacts in the File

The file holds more than paperwork. These pages are reproduced here exactly as they were filed — a caption beneath each tells you what the record itself says about it, and nothing more.

Personal Paper — Certificate of Freedom

Camp Nelson, Ky., July 5th, 1864.

This certifies that Isaac Freeland, a man of color, having been duly enlisted as a soldier in the military service of the United States, is FREE, by operation of the Act of Congress approved February 24, 1864, and the orders made in pursuance thereof.

By order: L. H. Fry, Superintendent of the Organization of U.S. Colored Troops

DEMONSTRATION SPECIMEN — fictional soldier; typeset reconstruction of real record types. Not a genuine record.

Plate 1 — Certificate of Freedom (personal paper) (page 3). inscribed/captioned: "This certifies that Isaac Freeland, a man of color, having been duly enlisted as a soldier in the military service of the United States, is FREE, by operation of the Act of Congress approved February 24, 1864, and the orders made in pursuance thereof.". Original personal paper filed in the jacket; the documentary record of the day of Isaac Freeland's freedom, issued Camp Nelson, Ky., July 5, 1864, by order of L. H. Fry.

Personal Paper — Letter Requesting Bounty Due

Helena, Ark., April 28th, 1866.

Sir - I respectfully ask that the bounty still due me be paid, as I am mustering out
and returning to Kentucky to my wife Nancy, who I have not seen since I enlisted.

Isaac (his X mark) Freeland

Written at his request by J. Dole, Chaplain

DEMONSTRATION SPECIMEN — fictional soldier; typeset reconstruction of real record types. Not a genuine record.

Plate 2 — Letter (personal paper, written for the soldier, signed with his mark) (page 9). inscribed/captioned: "Sir - I respectfully ask that the bounty still due me be paid, as I am mustering out and returning to Kentucky to my wife Nancy, whom I have not seen since I enlisted.". Dictated to Chaplain J. Dole at Helena, Ark., April 28, 1866; signed 'Isaac (his X mark) Freeland' — the only document naming his wife, Nancy.

Document Inventory

Page	Document Type	Summary
1	CMSR Jacket-Envelope	Cover for Isaac Freeland, Pvt./Corp., Co. D, 141 U.S. Col'd Infantry; lists six card numbers

		(77120415, 77120633, 77121002, 77121288, 77121540, 88401277) and 'Number of personal papers herein: 2.'
2	Volunteer Enlistment (personal/original form, with mark)	State of Kentucky, Camp Nelson; Isaac Freeland, born Garrard County, Ky., age 22, farmer, volunteered July 5, 1864, three years; described 5 ft 7 in., complexion/eyes/hair black; signed with his X mark, witnessed by Capt. E. B. W. Restieaux.
3	Personal Paper — Certificate of Freedom	Camp Nelson, Ky., July 5, 1864; certifies Isaac Freeland, 'a man of color,' free by operation of the Act of Congress of February 24, 1864; by order of L. H. Fry, Superintendent of Organization of U.S. Colored Troops.
4	Company Descriptive Book (card)	Isaac Freeland, Pvt., Co. D, 141st U.S. Colored Infantry; age 22, 5 ft 7 in., complexion/eyes/hair black; born Garrard County, Ky.; farmer; enlisted July 5, 1864, Camp Nelson, by Capt. Restieaux, three years.
5	Company Muster Roll — Sept. & Oct. 1864 (card)	Present; remarks: on fatigue duty at fortifications.
6	Company Muster Roll — Jan. & Feb. 1865 (card)	Absent — sick in post hospital, Camp Nelson, since Feb. 2, 1865.
7	Company Muster Roll — July & Aug. 1865 (card)	Present; remarks: promoted Corporal August 1, 1865.
8	Muster-out Roll (card)	Mustered out April 30, 1866, Helena, Ark.; last paid to Feb. 28, 1866; clothing account \$12.19 due soldier; bounty paid \$100, due \$200.
9	Personal Paper — Letter Requesting Bounty Due	Helena, Ark., April 28, 1866; asks bounty still due be paid as he musters out and returns to Kentucky to his wife Nancy, unseen since enlistment; signed Isaac (his X mark) Freeland, written at his request by J. Dole, Chaplain.
10	Fold3-style Source Page (digitization provider; not original record)	Source information page; notes this specimen corresponds to no actual NARA jacket and the soldier and unit are fictional (USCT infantry regiments were numbered through the 138th).

Every Fact and Its Source

Each substantive fact in this report, with the document that states it. Tier 1 = sworn or own-hand documents; Tier 2 = official contemporaneous records; Tier 3 = claim-process paperwork; Tier 4 = administrative material. Notes mark facts a witness learned second-hand, values worked out by calculation, and uncertain readings.

Fact	Source document (page)	Tier	Notes
Isaac Freeland served as Private (later Corporal), Company D, 141st U.S. Colored Infantry (Union, USCT).	CMSR Jacket-Envelope (p. 1)	4	—
The jacket lists six card numbers (77120415, 77120633, 77121002, 77121288, 77121540, 88401277) and two personal papers.	CMSR Jacket-Envelope (p. 1)	4	—
Isaac Freeland was born in Garrard County, Kentucky.	Volunteer Enlistment (p. 2)	2	corroborated by second source
He gave his age as twenty-two years at enlistment.	Volunteer Enlistment (p. 2)	2	corroborated by second source
Implied birth year of about 1841-1842 (age 22 in July 1864).	Volunteer Enlistment / Company Descriptive Book (p. 2)	2	calculated/derived
His occupation was farmer.	Volunteer Enlistment (p. 2)	2	corroborated by second source
He volunteered/enlisted July 5, 1864, at Camp Nelson, Kentucky, for three years.	Volunteer Enlistment (p. 2)	2	corroborated by second source
Physical description: five feet seven inches high, complexion black, eyes black, hair black.	Volunteer Enlistment (p. 2)	2	corroborated by second source
He signed the enlistment with his X mark; witnessed by Capt. E. B. W. Restieaux.	Volunteer Enlistment (p. 2)	1	—
Isaac Freeland was certified free by operation of the Act of Congress approved February 24, 1864, at Camp Nelson, Ky., July 5, 1864, by order	Personal Paper — Certificate of Freedom (p. 3)	1	—

of L. H. Fry, Superintendent of Organization of U.S. Colored Troops.			
Descriptive book records age 22, height 5 ft 7 in., complexion/eyes/hair black, born Garrard County Ky., farmer, enlisted July 5, 1864 at Camp Nelson by Capt. Restieaux for 3 years.	Company Descriptive Book (p. 4)	2	corroborated by second source
Present in Sept.-Oct. 1864, on fatigue duty at fortifications.	Company Muster Roll, Sept. & Oct. 1864 (p. 5)	2	corroborated by second source
Absent, sick in the post hospital at Camp Nelson since Feb. 2, 1865 (Jan.-Feb. 1865 roll).	Company Muster Roll, Jan. & Feb. 1865 (p. 6)	2	—
Present in July-Aug. 1865; promoted Corporal August 1, 1865.	Company Muster Roll, July & Aug. 1865 (p. 7)	2	—
Mustered out April 30, 1866, at Helena, Arkansas, as Corporal.	Muster-out Roll (p. 8)	2	—
Last paid to February 28, 1866; clothing account \$12.19 due soldier; bounty paid \$100, due \$200.	Muster-out Roll (p. 8)	2	—
Isaac Freeland had a wife named Nancy, whom he had not seen since he enlisted; he intended to return to her in Kentucky.	Personal Paper — Letter Requesting Bounty Due (p. 9)	1	—
On April 28, 1866, from Helena, Ark., he requested payment of the bounty still due; letter written at his request by Chaplain J. Dole and signed with his X mark.	Personal Paper — Letter Requesting Bounty Due (p. 9)	1	—
The Fold3-style source page states the specimen corresponds to no	Fold3-style Source Page (p. 10)	4	—

actual NARA jacket and that the soldier and unit are fictional (USCT infantry regiments were numbered through the 138th).			
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What the File Does Not Establish

The file is silent on these points. No document states them, so the report says so rather than filling them in.

- **Page 1** - the file does not answer this (The jacket lists six card numbers and two personal papers (page 1). The two personal papers are present (pages 3, 9). The card-type documents supplied — enlistment (p2), descriptive book (p4), three muster rolls (pp5-7), muster-out (p8) — total six only if the Volunteer Enlistment is counted as one of the six cards, which is ambiguous since it is an original form rather than an abstract card). The Research Gaps section points to the records that might.
- **Page 6** - the file does not answer this (The rolls in this file cover only Sept-Oct 1864, Jan-Feb 1865, and July-Aug 1865. No rolls survive here for Nov-Dec 1864, Mar-Apr 1865, or May-June 1865, and none between Sept 1865 and muster-out. Presence during those spans cannot be asserted from this file). The Research Gaps section points to the records that might.

About this report: it was produced from the file provided, read page by page. It does not search records beyond that file - the Research Gaps section points to the outside records that could carry the story further.