

Publisher's Note on the use of Civil War Terms

The Army University Press supports the professional military education of Soldiers and leader development.

Books are published by our press that describe the historical facts pertaining to the American Civil War and acknowledges that the legacy of that war is still at the forefront of our national conversation. We intend to describe the political and social situation of the Civil War in a neutral manner. For example, the traditional terms to describe the opposing sides, North and South, are only used for grammatical variety, as they ascribe generalities that certainly did not apply to the totality of the “North” or the “South.” Many local citizens who resided in states that openly rebelled against the United States government were not in favor of secession, nor did they believe that preserving slavery warranted such a violent act.

Similarly, citizens in states who remained loyal to the United States did not all feel a strong commitment towards dissolving the institution of slavery, nor did they believe Lincoln's views represented their own. Thus, while the historiography has traditionally referred to the “Union” in the American Civil War as “the northern states loyal to the United States government,” the fact is that the term “Union” always referred to all the states together, which clearly was not the situation at all. In light of this, the reader will discover that the word “Union” will be largely replaced by the more historically accurate “Federal Government” or “U.S. Govern-

ment.” “Union forces” or “Union army” will largely be replaced by the terms “U.S. Army,” “Federal,” or “Federal Army.”

The Reconstruction policy between the Federal Government and the former rebellious states saw an increased effort to control the narrative of how and why the war was fought, which led to an enduring perpetuation of Lost Cause rhetoric. The Lost Cause promotes an interpretation of the Civil War era that legitimates and excuses the secessionist agenda. This narrative has been wholly rejected by academic scholars who rely upon rigorous research and an honest interpretation of primary source materials. To rely upon bad faith interpretations of history like the Lost Cause in this day and age would be insufficient, inaccurate, and an acknowledgment that the Confederate States of America was a legitimate nation. The fact is that Abraham Lincoln and the U.S. Congress were very careful not to recognize the government of the states in rebellion as a legitimate government. Nonetheless, those states that formed a political and social alliance, even though not recognized by the Lincoln government, called themselves the “Confederacy” or the “Confederate States of America.” In our works, the Army University Press acknowledges that political alliance, albeit an alliance in rebellion, by allowing the use of the terms “Confederate,” “Confederacy,” “Confederate Army,” for ease of reference and flow of the narrative, in addition to the variations of the term “rebel.”



Engineer camp, 8th N.Y. State Militia, (NARA - Series: Mathew Brady Photographs of Civil War-Era Personalities and Scenes, 1921 - 1940; Record Group 111: Records of the Office of the Chief Signal Officer, 1860 - 1985)

