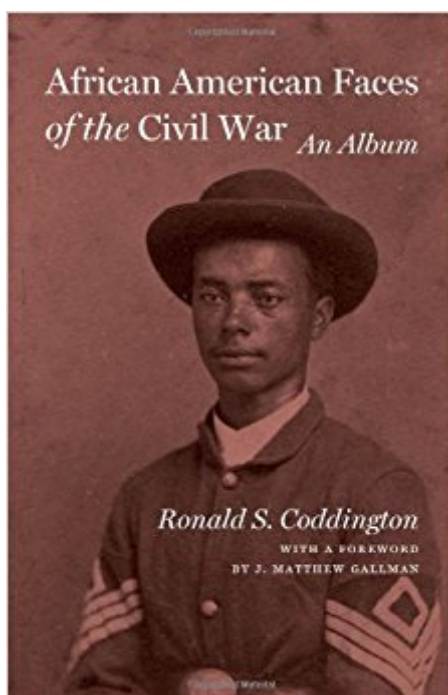


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# African American Faces Of The Civil War: An Album



## Synopsis

A renowned collector of Civil War photographs and a prodigious researcher, Ronald S. Coddington combines compelling archival images with biographical stories that reveal the human side of the war. This third volume in his series on Civil War soldiers contains previously unpublished photographs of African American Civil War participants—many of whom fought to secure their freedom. During the Civil War, 200,000 African American men enlisted in the Union army or navy. Some of them were free men and some escaped from slavery; others were released by sympathetic owners to serve the war effort. *African American Faces of the Civil War* tells the story of the Civil War through the images of men of color who served in roles that ranged from servants and laborers to enlisted men and junior officers. Coddington discovers these portraits—cartes de visite, ambrotypes, and tintypes—in museums, archives, and private collections. He has pieced together each individual's life and fate based upon personal documents, military records, and pension files. These stories tell of ordinary men who became fighters, of the prejudice they faced, and of the challenges they endured. *African American Faces of the Civil War* makes an important contribution to a comparatively understudied aspect of the war and provides a fascinating look into lives that helped shape America.

## Book Information

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## Customer Reviews

In the course of collecting photographs for *Faces of the Civil War* (2004) and *Faces of the Confederacy* (2008), Coddington constantly ran across images of black soldiers who fought for their

freedom in the Civil War. In this book, he presents 77 images and the stories behind them. The subjects are mostly Union soldiers, with their poses ranging from formal to casual as they faced their chance to prove themselves at a time when confusion reigned regarding their status as citizens. With each portrait, Coddington offers a brief profile, including regimental history and campaigns and battles as well as family history and lives after the war. Among the subjects are Martin Delaney, an "ardent black nationalist" who wrote a novel that countered the docile images of slaves in *Uncle Tom's Cabin*; Robert Smalls, who commandeered an armed Confederate vessel and surrendered it to the Union in Charleston, South Carolina; and Allen Walkup, later Allen King, who served as a stand-in for Mark Twain's cousin. An engaging look at a neglected part of the history of the American Civil War. --Vanessa Bush

"Coddington's use of African American-owned newspapers and pension records is groundbreaking. It does nothing to diminish the depth and precision of Coddington's research to say that each compelling vignette prompts the reader to hurriedly flip to the next one." (Publishers Weekly (starred review)) "An engaging look at a neglected part of the history of the American Civil War." (Vanessa Bush Booklist) "African American Faces of the Civil War: An Album serves us well to remind us of those who came before and honor them." (Sara Rosen *Le Journal de la Photographie*) "With the plethora of Civil War books that focus on battles, regiments, and the famous, this volume's subject matter and format are a welcome counterpoint." (Library Journal) "A stunning album of 77 portrait photographs—œcartes de visite, ambrotypes and tintypes... African American Faces of the Civil War provides a unique visual record, quite literally documenting the faces of war at a transitional moment in U.S. history. Lincoln's black warriors helped to overthrow slavery and to restore the Union. Their descendants spent the next century fighting new battles for true equality." (John David Smith *Charlotte Observer*) "Coddington's thoughtfully crafted and cogently written study, replete with an insightful foreword by J. Matthew Gallman on the African-American experience, will appeal to readers interested in the efforts of African Americans and the war's larger military, social and global consequences." (Jonathan A. Noyolas *Civil War News*) "Coddington highlights the bravery of African American soldiers at a time when many considered them to be cowards, and shows the Civil War from the perspective of African Americans fighting for freedom, dignity, respect, and equality." (Choice) "A fascinating work that captures the soldiers at a moment when they proudly served a country that was only just then beginning to reassess their citizenship rights. Because they risked everything to fight for emancipation and the Union, the Civil War's African-American soldiers deserve to never be forgotten. Coddington's

work will help to ensure that that no one will ever need to be reminded that 'there were men of color who... fought.'" (Glenn David Brasher Civil War Monitor)"The sesquicentennial observance of the Civil War era will be marked by numerous publications of works. Few book will be as fascinating and informative as African American Faces of the Civil War... This third book on soldiers in the Civil War, African American Faces of the Civil War, is a well-documented and a valuable work, It is an outstanding contribution to the scholarship on the Civil War and African American History in general." (Civil War Book Review)" African American Faces of the Civil War, like the photographs it presents, captures the moment when black men in America transitioned from slaves to soldiers and the Civil War became about more than merely preserving the Union. Unlike any single photograph, however, Coddington's book depicts this moment from a diverse variety of perspectives" (Kelly Erby Kansas History)"Coddington exposes the good and the bad... The book is a must-read for all Civil War buffs and contains important historical data to complete a full circumference of Civil War history." (Daguerrian Society)"All those who are fascinated by Civil war photography or black history in general will find this volume to be a most enjoyable read. The book helps us to remember that during the Civil War a significant number of black men were willing to fight for their freedom or to help secure freedom for their fellow African Americans." (Roger D. Cunningham Journal of America's Military Past)"In developing parallels between the control of one's image in narratives and the use of the photograph as biography, Coddington makes a compelling argument for the reader to rethink the place of photography in telling history. His use of photographs as visual text allows the reader to reimagine history through the photographer's leans. This book maps new methodologies for researching and writing about photographs and plumbs the hidden history of the Civil War narrative." (Deborah Willis Indiana Magazine of History)"African American Faces of the Civil War is just lovely. The prose is fast-paced but personal, and readers will feel as if these soldiers are telling their stories in their own words. Mr. Coddington's research is stunning, his details are meticulous, and he even went the next step and thoughtfully enlarged the pictures in his rare collection so that they are alive with power and detail." (The Black History Channel)

I am a frequent speaker on United States Colored Troops, and I'm always looking for new material to incorporate into my presentation. This book has been a joy to read. I've seen many of the pictures in this book before, and some of them I use in my Power Point as part of my program. But what I had NOT seen previously was the personal, first-hand stories behind many of the pictures.. A prime example is a picture of a single soldier from a NC regiment, the same picture I'd found years ago from the regiment in which my great great grandfather had served. Although I've had Pvt.

Meekham's picture for several years, I never knew the story of his marriage to a slave girl just days before he left with his regiment. He survived the war and returned home, only to find that his wife had been sold shortly after he left. He searched for her, but never found her. Just knowing his story made the book worth the purchase, and there are many more stories of soldiers' experiences during the Civil War, and their lives afterwards. It's a great read and a wonderful source of information if you're a Civil War history buff. A great addition to my personal Civil War library.

The book African American faces of the civil war, is a fantastic read. I am not a reviewer by any means but this book was revealing and moved me. I am an artist and illustrate images from the civil war in particular the black soldiers. To read each individual story, adds such a crucial element that goes way beyond the photos, and I want to thank the writer and the publisher for this book. Thank you!! I will be referring this book to many, and more than likely buying it as a gift for others as well.. simply beautiful...

The pictures of the real men who fought and died for this country are a treasure in themselves. To be able to read something about each man helps the reader to connect with his time, struggles, and impact on the civil war. To be able to put a story with the face is priceless and what every person would want to know. Each gave a glimpse of the individual as a man. This is the type of story I love to read about. One in which history is shown, but so is the individual who play a role in the war. My only complaint is that I could have read more personal history about each individual, but thought that the author did an excellent job and provided all the information available and relevant to his purpose.

The history given behind each photograph is most interesting and the photographs themselves are moving to look at and they draw you into the times of the Civil War. Great book!

Interesting and moving stories. I certainly recommend this book to anyone interested in the Civil War as seen from the side of the African Americans

beautiful enjoying reading and exploring the rich history and photos that are rarely shown in main stream civil war history that highlights white americans and often downplays the African American herorism in our history. Glad the author did this book!

## Great insight into history

While Black people played an important role in the Civil War, more often than not, they're not talked about very often as they should. As a person of color, I read a number of books on the "War Between the States." But this one esp. gets me. The book has 77 portrait photos of Black men (in military uniform) who served in the war as well as a biography of each of the men in the photos. Some were free man, others were runaways who joined & even some who were slaves, but whose owner allow them to join. While the photos are greatly restored, the bios of the men are the real bread & butter here. The author spend several years researching the lives of the men profiled in the photos, their early life, when they went into the army as well their life after the Civil War. It's been a long time since a book of this kind came out. This is truly a must read for history buffs as well as those for want to know more about the Black Experience during the Civil War.

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