In view of the distrust with which the South for a while naturally regarded the efforts made by the Government to procure the records of the Confederacy, the work of the department to obtain this material at first met with slight success.

In 1878, the writer, a Confederate officer, was appointed as agent of the War Department for the collection of Confederate archives. Through his efforts the attitude of the Southern people became more cordial, and increased records were the result. By provision of Congress, certain sets of the volumes were distributed, and others held for sale at cost.

The history of this official record is mentioned in these pages as it indicates a wide-spread national desire on the part of the people of the United States to have a full and impartial record of the great conflict, which must form, necessarily, the basis of all history concerned with this era. It is the record of the struggle as distinguished from personal recollections and reminiscences, and its fulness and impartial character have never been questioned. The large number of these volumes makes them unavailable for general reading, but in the preparation of "The Photographic History of the Civil War" the editors have not only consulted these official reports, but give the equally permanent testimony of the photographic negative. Therefore, as a successor to and complement of this Government publication, nothing could be more useful or interesting than "The Photographic History of the Civil War." The text does not aim at a statistical record, but is an impartial narrative supplementing the pictures. Nothing gives so clear a conception of a person or an event as a picture. The more intelligent people of the country, North and South, desire the truth put on record, and all bitter feeling eliminated. This work, it is believed, will add greatly to that end.