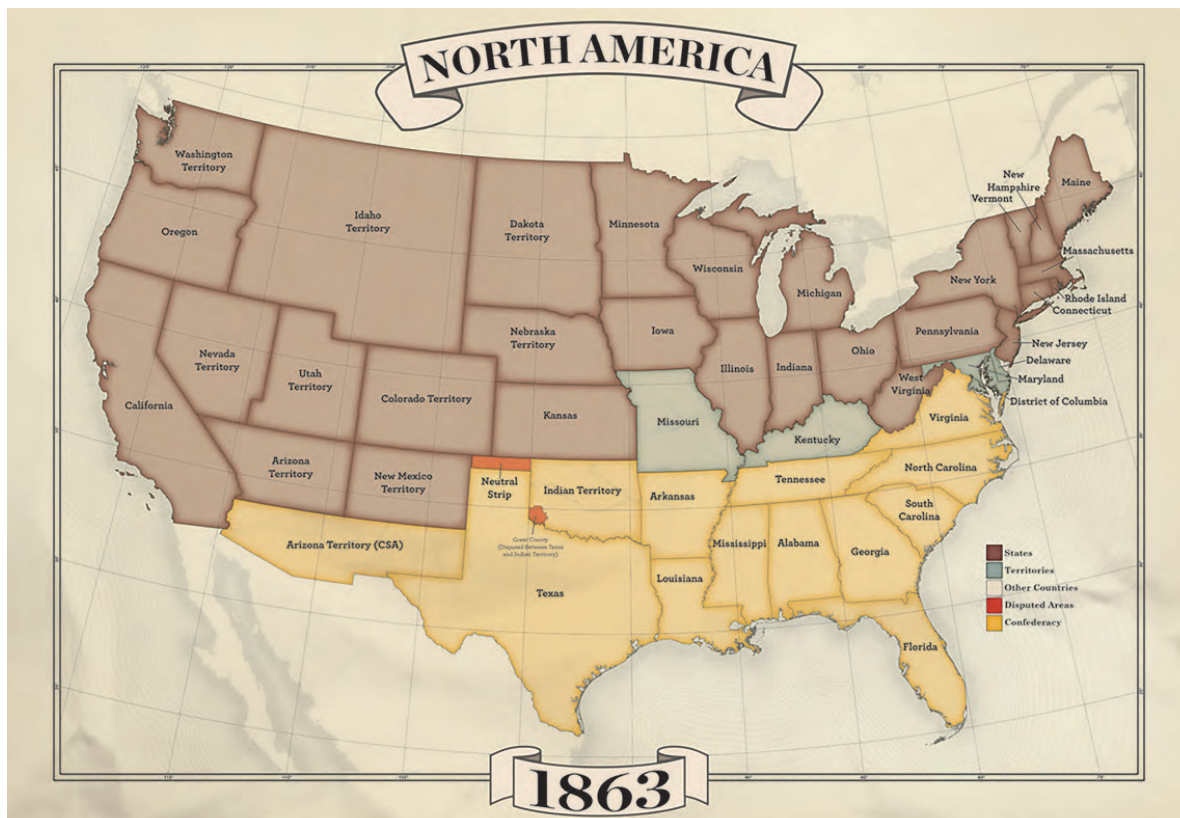


Civil War: Union & Confederate Symbolism

The United States Civil War was fought between the Union and Confederacy from 1861–1865. Economic and cultural differences created a division between the northern and southern states that centered around slavery. The northern industrial states were against enslavement of African Americans while the farming southern states were in support of slavery. The southern states felt their ideas were not represented in the United States government and *ceded*, creating the Confederacy. This started the Civil War between the Union (northern states) and the Confederacy (southern states).

People in the “West” (states West of the Mississippi River) found themselves forced to choose sides in the Civil War. Western forts housed as many as three-fourths of the nation’s army, and those forts were abandoned as U.S. forces headed east to the battles. Officers in the frontier army who sided with Confederacy resigned their jobs or abandoned posts. Pioneers and miners enlisted to fight in the war. African American volunteers fought on the prairies and in the Indian territories for the Union. Hispanic volunteers from California and New Mexico helped drive Confederates out of New Mexico. Native Americans—some themselves slaveholders—fought on both sides.



Glossary

Ceded: left or gave up power

Civil War: Union & Confederate Symbolism

Civil War Letters & Envelopes

During the Civil War, private (non-government) envelope makers, printers, book publishers and individuals created envelopes to promote their political ideas, to support troops or to make money. Preprinted envelopes with patriotic images and mottos reflected the soldiers' beliefs and reasons for fighting the war. Soldiers and their loved ones used the envelopes in both the Union and the Confederacy to show support and connect during wartime. The envelopes often included the same letterhead or *stationery* to match. Soldiers sent over a million letters home from the battlefield every month. Collecting the envelopes soon became a popular craze.

In **Part I**, you will examine the envelopes below from the Autry Museum's collections to determine if they are in support of the Union or the Confederacy. Next, **Part II** will help you identify the message of the envelope image and the techniques used to promote it. **Part III** will ask you to evaluate the similarities and differences between the envelopes in support of the Union and the Confederacy during the Civil War. In **Part IV**, you will create your own envelope or letterhead with a symbolic image.



Glossary

Stationery: writing paper with matching envelopes

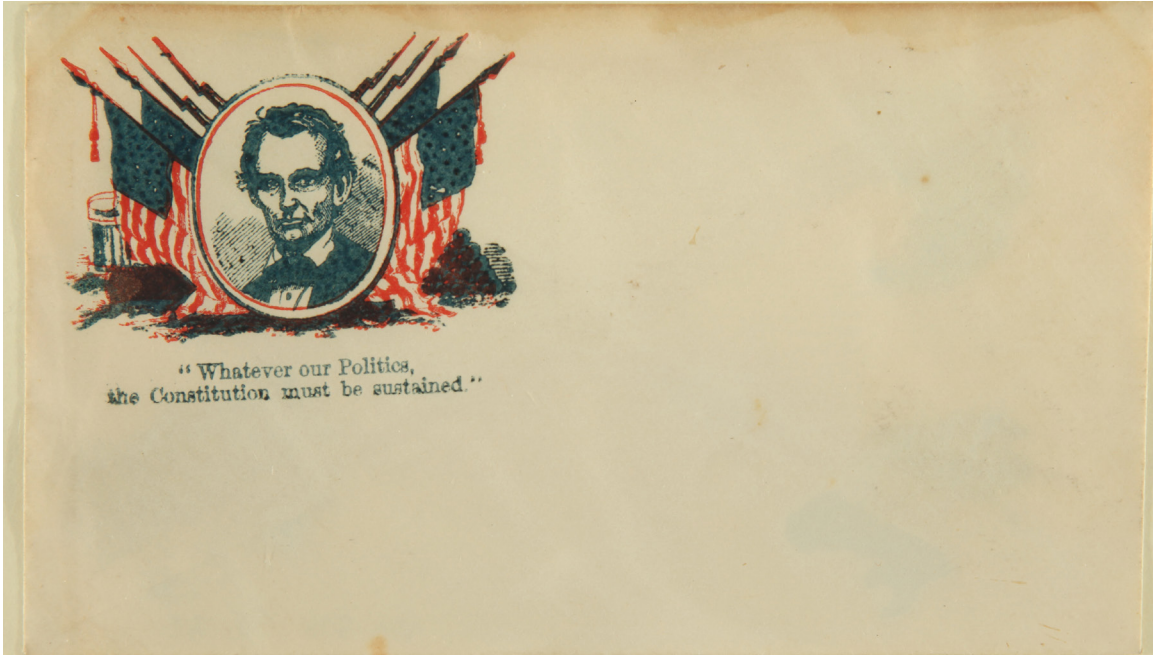
Civil War: Union & Confederate Symbolism

Civil War Letters & Envelopes

PART I – In Support of the Union or the Confederacy?

Examine the envelopes below to determine if they were in support of the Union or the Confederacy. Provide evidence from the envelope to prove this and explain.

Example: Envelope A



Civil War envelope with portrait of Union President Abraham Lincoln with logo: *Whatever our Politics, the Constitution must be sustained*, 1861-1862. Autry Museum; MS.518.S2.33

Is this in support of the Union or the Confederacy? Union

What evidence on the envelope made you think it was in support of the Union or Confederacy?
"the Constitution must be sustained"

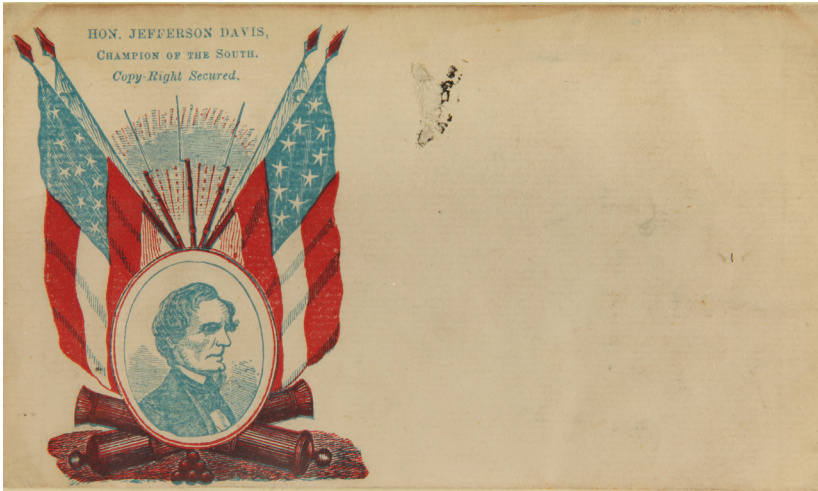
Explain how this evidence shows support of the Union or Confederacy. The Union wanted to keep the United States together like the Constitution says – the United States

Glossary

Sustained: kept together, remained the same

Civil War: Union & Confederate Symbolism

Envelope B



Civil War envelope with portrait of Confederate President Jefferson Davis surrounded by patriotic symbols with slogan *Hon. Jefferson Davis, Champion of the South*, 1861. Autry Museum; MS.518.S2.46

Is this in support of the Union or the Confederacy? _____

What evidence on the envelope made you think it was in support of the Union or Confederacy?

Explain how this evidence shows support of the Union or Confederacy. _____

Envelope C



Civil War envelope with image of American eagle and slogan *The Union: It Cannot be Improved*, 1861-1862. Autry Museum; MS.518.S2.77

Is this in support of the Union or the Confederacy? _____

What evidence on the envelope made you think it was in support of the Union or Confederacy?

Explain how this evidence shows support of the Union or Confederacy. _____

Civil War: Union & Confederate Symbolism

Envelope D – The image printed on this envelope features Lady Liberty grieving at the grave of Colonel Ellsworth, who was a close friend of Union President Abraham Lincoln.



Civil War envelope with patriotic symbols and slogan *Defender of the Stars and Stripes: A Nation mourns thy loss. A Nation's Tears thy Memory shall bedew.*, designed and published by J. E. Hayes, Boston, Massachusetts, 1861. Autry Museum; MS.518.S2.11

Glossary

Mourns: grieves, is sad because of

Thy: your

Bedew: sprinkle with water or other moisture—like the morning dew

Is this in support of the Union or the Confederacy? _____

What evidence on the envelope made you think it was in support of the Union or Confederacy?

Explain how this evidence shows support of the Union or Confederacy. _____

Envelope E



Civil War envelope with portrait of Confederate President Jefferson Davis surrounded by patriotic symbols and slogan *Southern Rights and Southern Institutions*, circa 1862. Autry Museum; MS.518.S2.48

Is this in support of the Union or the Confederacy? _____

What evidence on the envelope made you think it was in support of the Union or Confederacy?

Explain how this evidence shows support of the Union or Confederacy. _____

Civil War: Union & Confederate Symbolism

Envelope F



Civil War envelope with image of Union General Scott chopping down a large tree with a bunch of secessionist sitting in the branches, and slogan *The Downfall of Secession Treas-on!*, copyright secured by Brown & Ryan, New York, 1861. Autry Museum; MS.518.S2.20

Is this in support of the Union or the Confederacy? _____

What evidence on the envelope made you think it was in support of the Union or Confederacy?

Explain how this evidence shows support of the Union or Confederacy. _____

Glossary

Secession: break away

Treason: overthrow one's government

Civil War: Union & Confederate Symbolism

Union and Confederate Symbolism

While people used the envelopes to write and send letters, they also used the envelopes to promote the Union or Confederate position on the war and support of the troops fighting for each. The envelopes use *symbolism* such as words, images, symbols, colors, to support the two different sides in the war. Today, you can find symbolism on advertisements, websites, art, memes, and other ways people receive and send information.

PART II - Look at the imagery on the envelopes used to promote the Union or the Confederacy during the Civil War. Write down colors, people, symbols, and/or key words you see on each envelope. Next, analyze how these are used to impact viewers. What message or emotion are they trying to promote?

ENVELOPE	IN FAVOR OF UNION OR CONFEDERACY?	COLORS	SYMBOLS, IMAGES, PEOPLE	WORDS, PHRASES	MESSAGE, EMOTION
A	Union	Red, white, blue	American flag, Abraham Lincoln	Constitution, sustained	Stay together
B					
C					
D					
E					
F					

Glossary

Symbolism: things that represent something else

Civil War: Union & Confederate Symbolism

PART III – Using the table above, how was the symbolism used by the Union and Confederacy similar or different?

The colors used in the Union envelopes and Confederacy envelopes are similar and/or different because...

The symbols, images and people used in the Union envelopes and Confederate envelopes are similar and/or different because...

The words used in the Union envelopes and Confederate envelopes are similar and/or different because...



The message/emotion of the Union and Confederate envelopes are similar and/or different because...

Civil War: Union & Confederate Symbolism

PART IV – Create your own envelope or letterhead with a symbolic image on it for something you are in support of/against. Use the guides below to help you with creating the envelope or letterhead.

Example:

I am in support of against (circle one): trash

MESSAGE, EMOTION	COLORS	SYMBOLS, PEOPLE	WORDS/PHRASES
<p>Pick up your trash</p> <p>Concern for environment</p>	<p>green, brown, earth colors</p>	 	<p>Keep Clean</p> <p>Save trees, etc.</p> <p>Don't Trash</p> <p>Beautiful for all</p>

Sketch the symbolic image with words, colors, and/or symbols in the box below.



Make the envelope or stationery.



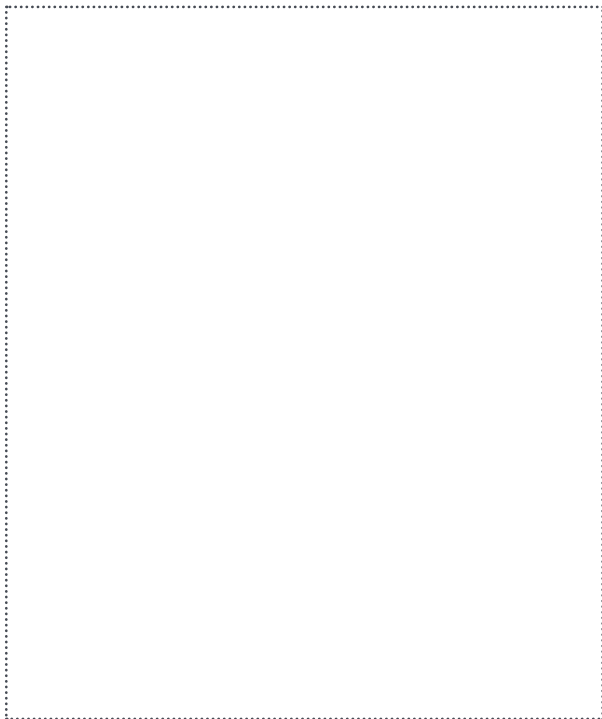
Civil War: Union & Confederate Symbolism

My Envelope or Letterhead

I am in support of/against (circle one): _____

MESSAGE, EMOTION	COLORS	SYMBOLS, PEOPLE	WORDS/PHRASES

Sketch the symbolic image with words, colors, and/or symbols in the box below



Make a letterhead OR envelope with your symbolic image of words, colors, and/or symbols. Depending on the materials you have at home, draw your image on letterhead (paper) or an envelope.

Letterhead Instructions:

Take a blank piece of paper and position it portrait (hamburger not hotdog). Put the symbolic image with words, colors, and/or symbols on the top of the paper. You can center the image, put in on the left or right-hand side of the top of the paper. Add a border or other lines to showcase the symbolic image.

Envelope Instructions:

Use a blank envelope. Put the symbolic image with words, colors, and/or symbols in the top left corner of the front of the envelope or on the back envelope on the flap.

Resources

Images

U.S. map designed by Gene Wyrick for *Empire and Liberty: The Civil War and the West*

Civil War envelope with portrait of Union President Abraham Lincoln with logo: *Whatever our Politics, the Constitution must be sustained*, 1861-1862. Autry Museum; MS.518.S2.33

Civil War envelope with portrait of Confederate President Jefferson Davis surrounded by patriotic symbols with slogan *Hon. Jefferson Davis, Champion of the South*, 1861. Autry Museum; MS.518.S2.46

Civil War envelope with image of American eagle and slogan *The Union: It Cannot be Improved*, 1861-1862. Autry Museum; MS.518.S2.77

Civil War envelope with patriotic symbols and slogan *Defender of the Stars and Stripes: A Nation mourns thy loss. A Nation's Tears thy Memory shall bedew.*, designed and published by J. E. Hayes, Boston, Massachusetts, 1861. Autry Museum; MS.518.S2.11

Civil War envelope with portrait of Confederate President Jefferson Davis surrounded by patriotic symbols of the Confederacy and slogan *Southern Rights and Southern Institutions*, circa 1862. Autry Museum; MS.518.S2.48

Civil War envelope with image of Union General Scott chopping down a large tree with a bunch of secessionist sitting in the branches, and slogan *The Downfall of Secession Treas-on!*, copyright secured by Brown & Ryan, New York, 1861. Autry Museum; MS.518.S2.20

Environmental symbolism and letterhead illustrated by Jade Selway, age 12

Text

Empire and Liberty: The Civil War and the West exhibition, Autry Museum of the American West, 2015

<https://www.utsa.edu/ovations/vol6/story/envelopes.html>

<https://www.jstor.org/stable/40067362?seq=1>

Do you want to see the envelope you created on our Instagram or Twitter?

Send a photograph of the envelope or letterhead you made along with some your name, your age, and the topic of your in support for or against image to outreach@theautry.org for a chance to be featured on our social media!

Art Extension:

Make your own envelope. Search the internet on how to make your own envelope using paper and scissors or try and do it without paper and scissors, origami-style!