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Contact: LB Kovac

225-578-5104 / kovac1@lsu.edu

**Yankee Regiment's Personal Writings Reveal the North's Impressions of
the South During Civil War**

LSU Press to publish historian Larry Lowenthal's volume in December

Baton Rouge, LA— The 31st Massachusetts Volunteer Infantry Regiment was one of only a handful of New England units to serve in Louisiana and the Gulf region during the Civil War, and, of those, it remained there the longest. Its soldiers, most of whom were impressionable young men from small towns in central and western Massachusetts, assumed numerous roles, functioning as infantry, cavalry, and mounted infantry when needed. The regiment operated as an army of occupation; participated in siege warfare at Port Hudson, Louisiana; marched and fought in long field operations such as the Red River campaign; engaged in guerrilla warfare; and garrisoned coastal defense fortifications. It also had the distinction of being the first Federal unit to enter and occupy New Orleans.

Larry Lowenthal's authoritative history of the 31st is the first comprehensive examination of this remarkable regiment and its men. When veterans of the unit attempted to write its history in the late nineteenth century, they were not able to complete the task, but they did collect a large quantity of primary-source materials and deposited them in a Springfield, Massachusetts, museum. Lowenthal's work draws heavily from that unpublished cache. Among the documents are highly personal letters, diaries, and first-person recollections that offer vivid and unrivaled accounts of the unit's military experiences, as well as its soldiers' impressions of the people and physical conditions they encountered in Louisiana. The men also offer their unvarnished opinions on a variety of subjects.

Lowenthal, a longtime historian and former U.S. National Park Service employee, relays many of the stories in the soldiers' own words. Their impressions of the South—which they viewed as essentially a foreign country—are highly revealing. Critical issues such as slavery and abolition, as well as more private matters such as personal experiences and military life, are also discussed. To all of this, Lowenthal brings a modern perspective, presenting a crucial picture of the period's people and their views of the South and active military life. *A Yankee Regiment in Confederate Louisiana* is a welcome addition to the literature on occupied Louisiana and the Union Army's service in the Gulf South.

Larry Lowenthal is a former historian for the U.S. National Park Service.

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History / Civil War

To request a review copy or set up an interview with the author,
please contact LB Kovac at kovac1@lsu.edu.

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