

**“Weird Copies of Carnage:” Marketing Civil War Photographs and the
Public Experience of Death**

BY

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DISSERTATION

Submitted as partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy in Art
History in the Graduate College of the University of Illinois at Chicago, 2019

Chicago, IL

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This dissertation is dedicated to my husband Jim, who has been my biggest supporter, and to Peter Hales, whose overwhelming support and guidance in the early days of this project were invaluable and greatly appreciated. I wish that he could have seen the final product, I'd like to think that he would have approved.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

The number of people who helped with the completion of this dissertation in some way are too numerous to name individually. I would like to especially thank the members of my dissertation committee for their continued guidance and expertise throughout the research and writing process. I would like to particularly acknowledge the work of Hannah Higgins and Bruce Levine without whose willingness to collaboratively head my committee this project would not have been possible. I would also like to thank my family, many of whom helped in countless large and small ways from reading and editing to babysitting so that I could write. Finally, I would like to thank the Newberry Library for the opportunity to work as a Graduate Scholar in Residence in 2016-2017 and whose vast collections and incredible community of scholars were critical to the progression of my research and writing.

AMH

TABLE OF CONTENTS

CHAPTER	PAGE
I. INTRODUCTION: A COMMODIFICATION OF DEATH.....	1
WORKS CITED.....	8
II. “A MATERIALIST REALIZATION OF ETERNITY:” THE CULTURAL HISTORY OF DEATH AND POSTMORTEM PHOTOGRAPHY.....	9
A. Death in Nineteenth-Century America.....	10
B. The Criticality of the Good Death and Mourning Practices.....	14
C. The Rise of Photography and Postmortem Photography.....	26
D. Conclusion.....	41
WORKS CITED.....	43
III. MARKETING “THE DEAD OF ANTIETAM:” THE CREATION OF IMAGES OF DEATH AS A CULTURAL COMMODITY.....	45
A. Overview of the Battle of Antietam.....	46
B. “The Dead of Antietam”.....	51
C. “Tokens of the Real”.....	62
D. The Power of the Press.....	71
E. Conclusion.....	76
WORKS CITED.....	78
IV. PHOTOGRAPHING THE BATTLES OF GETTYSBURG, SPOTSYLVANIA, AND PETERSBURG.....	80
A. Overview of the Battle of Gettysburg.....	80
B. Photographing Gettysburg.....	83
C. The Battle of Spotsylvania Courthouse.....	92
D. The Photographs of the Battle of Spotsylvania.....	94
E. Overview of the Battle of Petersburg.....	101
F. Photographs from the Battle of Petersburg.....	102
G. Advertising the War.....	109
H. The Trauma of an Image.....	116
I. Conclusion.....	125
WORKS CITED.....	128
V. THE ASSASSINATION ABRAHAM LINCOLN: CIVIL WAR PHOTOGRAPHS AS INFLUENCERS OF CULTURE.....	130
A. The Death of a President.....	132
B. The Conspirators.....	133
C. Photographing an Execution.....	134
D. A Fallen President – A Conflicted Imagery.....	142
E. Public Mourning/Public Trauma.....	156
F. Conclusion.....	166

TABLE OF CONTENTS (continued)

CHAPTER	PAGE
V. WORKS CITED.....	169
VI. CONCLUSION: THE REVERBERATING EFFECTS OF CIVIL WAR	
PHOTOGRAPHS OF THE DEAD.....	171
WORKS CITED.....	181
FIGURES.....	182
VITAE.....	251

LIST OF FIGURES

FIGURE	PAGE
1. William Sydney Mount, <i>California News</i> , 1850.....	182
2. Richard Caton Woodville, <i>War News from Mexico</i> , 1848.....	183
3. <i>The Imaginary and the Actual Prince: (Scraps from a Collector)</i> , <i>Harper's Weekly: A Journal of Civilization</i> , September 22, 1860.....	184
4. Alexander Gardner, <i>Bodies in Front of Dunker Church</i> , Battle of Antietam,.... 1862	185
5. Felice Beato, <i>Bodies of Chinese soldiers on the ramparts of the North Taku Forts</i> , 2 nd Opium War, China, 1860.....	186
6. <i>Postmortem photograph of a young girl with eyes propped open or painted</i> , 1850.....	187
7. <i>Postmortem photograph of an unknown girl</i> , c 1859.....	188
8. <i>Deceased Baby with Parents</i> , nd.....	189
9. Alexander Gardner, <i>Dead of Stonewall Jackson's Brigade by the rail fence</i> <i>on the Hagerstown Pike</i> , Battle of Antietam, 1862	190
10. Benjamin West, <i>The Death of General Wolfe</i> , 1770.....	191
11. <i>Dying Warrior at the Temple of Aphaia</i> , Greece, c 7 th -5 th century BCE.....	192
12. <i>The Dying Gaul</i> , Roman copy of Hellenistic Greek original, c 3 rd century BCE....	193
13. <i>Bayeux Tapestry, Depiction of the Battle of Hastings and the Death of Harold</i> , 11 th century.....	194
14. John Trumball, <i>The Death of General Warren at the Battle of Bunker Hill</i> , 1786...	195
15. John Singleton Copley, <i>The Death of Major Peirson</i> , 1783.....	196
16. Alexander Gardner, <i>The "Sunken Road at Antietam</i> , Battle of Antietam, 1862.....	197
17. <i>Harper's Weekly: A Journal of Civilization</i> , October 18, 1862.....	198

LIST OF FIGURES (continued)

FIGURE	PAGE
18. Alexander Gardner, <i>Federal Buried, Confederate Unburied, Where They Fell</i> , Battle of Antietam, 1862	199
19. Brady back mark on version side of a photograph from the Battle of Antietam.....	200
20. Alexander Gardner, <i>Dead of Stonewall Jackson's Brigade by the rail fence on the Hagerstown Pike</i> , Battle of Antietam, (blood added), original image created 1862, color added to later copies.....	201
21. Alexander Gardner et al, <i>Farmer's Inn and Hotel Emmitsburg</i> , Battle of Gettysburg, 1863.....	203
22. Timothy O'Sullivan, <i>Harvest of Death</i> , Battle of Gettysburg, 1863.....	204
23. Timothy O'Sullivan, <i>Home of a Rebel Sharpshooter</i> , Battle of Gettysburg, 1863....	205
24. Timothy O'Sullivan, <i>The Field Where General Reynolds Fell</i> , Battle of Gettysburg, 1863.....	206
25. <i>Harvest of Death</i> , <i>Harper's Weekly: A Journal of Civilization</i> , July 22, 1865.....	207
26. Timothy O'Sullivan, <i>One of Ewell's Corps as He Lay on the Field after the Battle of Spotsylvania</i> , Battle of Spotsylvania, 1864.....	208
27. Timothy O'Sullivan, <i>Dead Confederate Infantryman Near Alsop's Farmhouse</i> , Battle of Spotsylvania, 1864.....	209
28. Timothy O'Sullivan, <i>Dead Confederate Soldier Near Mrs. Alsop's House</i> , Battle of Spotsylvania, 1864.....	210
29. Timothy O'Sullivan, <i>Confederate Dead Laid Out for Burial Near Mrs. Alsop's Farm</i> , Battle of Spotsylvania, 1864.....	211
30. <i>General Grant's Campaign in Virginia</i> , <i>Harper's Weekly: A Journal of Civilization</i> , July 9, 1864.....	212
31. TC Roche, <i>A Dead Rebel Soldier, bare footed, killed by a shell, which tore his side out, the entrails are protruding from his side. Shows a foot passage half way up the side of the bank. The View was taken the morning after the storming of Petersburg</i> , VA, Battle of Petersburg, 1865.....	213

LIST OF FIGURES (continued)

FIGURE	PAGE
32. TC Roche, <i>A Dead rebel Soldier as he Lay in the Trenches of Fort Mahone, called by the Soldiers “fort Damnation.” This Soldier must have been killed by a fragment of shell that exploded close by, as he is covered all over with mud and blood. This View was Taken the morning after the storming of Petersburg, VA, Battle of Petersburg, 1865.....</i>	214
33. TC Roche, <i>Rebel Soldiers Killed in the Trenches of Fort Mahone, called by the soldiers “fort Damnation”. The View Shows construction of their bomb proofs and covered passages, which branch off in every direction. This View was taken the morning after the storming of Petersburg, VA, Battle of Petersburg, 1865.....</i>	215
34. William Powell, <i>Slave Pen, Alexandria, VA, 1863.....</i>	216
35. James Gibson, <i>Ruins of Stone Bridge, Bull Run, VA, 1862.....</i>	217
36. Timothy O’Sullivan, <i>Group of Confederate Prisoners at Fairfax Courthouse, 1863.....</i>	218
37. David Knox, <i>Battery Wagon, Front of Petersburg, September, 1864.....</i>	219
38. Alexander Gardner, <i>Dead Confederate Sharp Shooter at the Foot of Little Round Top, Battle of Gettysburg, 1863.....</i>	220
39. TC Roche, <i>A Rebel Soldier Killed in the Trenches before Petersburg. The Spots and marks on his face, are blood issuing from his mouth and nose. The wound is in the head, caused by a fragment of shell. This view was taken the morning after the storming of Petersburg, VA, Battle of Petersburg, 1865.....</i>	221
40. Advertisement for Gardner’s Exhibition by Fallon’s Stereopticon, <i>New York Times</i> , June 27, 1864.....	222
41. a. <i>Lincoln’s Funeral – Citizens Viewing the Body at the City Hall, New York City, Harper’s Weekly: A Journal of Civilization, May 6, 1865.....</i>	223
b. <i>Lincoln’s Funeral – Reception of the remains at Chicago Commons, at Chicago, IL, Harper’s Weekly: A Journal of Civilization, May 20, 1865.....</i>	224
42. Jeremiah Gurney, <i>Abraham Lincoln Lying in State, New York City Hall, New York City, April 24 1865.....</i>	225

LIST OF FIGURES (continued)

FIGURE	PAGE
43. <i>The Execution of the Conspirators, Harper's Weekly: A Journal of Civilization</i> , July 22, 1865.....	226
44. Wanted poster for three of the conspirators in Lincoln's Assassination, 1865.....	227
45. a. Alexander Gardner, <i>David Harold</i> , 1865.....	228
b. Alexander Gardner, <i>George Atzerodt</i> , 1865.....	229
c. Alexander Gardner, <i>Lewis Paine</i> , 1865.....	230
46. Timothy O'Sullivan, <i>The Courtyard of the Old Arsenal Prison Just Before the Executions</i> , July, 1865.....	231
47. Timothy O'Sullivan, <i>The Men Who Hanged the Conspirators</i> , July 1865.....	232
48. Alexander Gardner & Timothy O'Sullivan, <i>The Execution of Lincoln's Conspirators, Old Arsenal Prison, Washington DC, July 7, 1865</i>	
a. <i>View of the Scaffolding, Arrival on the Scaffolding, The Drop</i>	233
b. <i>The hanging bodies of the conspirators, The coffins of the Conspirators</i>	234
49. <i>The Conspirators, Harper's Weekly: A Journal of Civilization</i> , July 1, 1865.....	235
50. Mathew Brady, <i>Abraham Lincoln "Cooper's Union Pose,"</i> February 1860.....	236
51. <i>The President at Home (photograph by Brady), Harper's Weekly: A Journal of Civilization</i> , May 6, 1865.....	237
52. Alexander Gardner, <i>Last Known Portrait of Abraham Lincoln</i> , February, 1865.....	238
53. Maria Jane Hurd Memorial Card, 12 years old.....	239
54. Alexander Gardner, <i>Lincoln's Box Seat, Ford's Theater</i> , 1865.....	240
55. Lincoln's Rocking Chair.....	241
56. Alexander Gardner, <i>Exterior of Ford's Theater</i> , 1865.....	242
57. Alexander Gardner, <i>John Howard's Livery Stable</i> , 1865.....	243
58. Alexander Gardner, <i>Navy Yard Bridge</i> , 1865.....	244

LIST OF FIGURES (continued)

FIGURE	PAGE
59. Alexander Gardner, <i>Telegraph Office Where News of Lincoln's Assassination.....</i> <i>was Dispatched</i> , 1865	245
60. <i>Postmortem Exam of John Wilkes Booth, Based on lost Booth Photograph,</i> <i>Harper's Weekly: A Journal of Civilization</i> , May 13, 1865.....	246
61. <i>Jerusalem Site of Temple on Mount Moriah, and Jerusalem Court of the Mosque</i> <i>of Omar</i> , 1857.....	247
62. William Notman, <i>Niagara Falls</i> , 1858.....	248
63. Hermann Biow, <i>Ruins caused by the Hamburg Fire</i> , 1842.....	249
64. <i>George and Ed Silsbee Hanged by a Mob of Citizens in Front of Jail</i> , Jan. 20, 1900.....	250

SUMMARY

This dissertation examines the cultural impact of photographs of fallen soldiers taken during the American Civil War, and how these photographic images of the dead influenced a shift in the understanding and experience of death and mourning from a private familial experience to one that took place largely in the public sphere in the nineteenth-century northern United States. Looking closely at photographs taken of dead soldiers after engagements like the Battle of Antietam and the Battle of Gettysburg, as well as the advertising and marketing of those photographs, this project considers how a focused marketing campaign, the exhibition and promotion of the photographs, and their conversion into woodcuts prints published in illustrated journals helped to disseminate photographs of the dead throughout the Union impact cultural understandings. By combining a careful analysis of these photographs, their use, and dissemination with a deep historical consideration of cultural and social understandings of death, this dissertation argues that battlefield photographs of the Civil War, like those taken at the battles of Antietam and Gettysburg were formative in shifting the experience of death from the private to the public sphere.

To further deepen this inquiry, by extending the narrative through the summer of 1865 to look at the photographic images surrounding the assassination of President Abraham Lincoln, this project also considers how photographic images of fallen soldiers from the Civil War (including the Lincoln photographs) have had a reverberating effect on the experience and understanding of death and mourning through the end of the nineteenth century and into today. In particular, photographs taken after the assassination of Abraham Lincoln helped to confirm the shift in the understanding of death and mourning as the public was forced to grapple with the death of a

SUMMARY (continued)

President after four years of brutal conflict. The Lincoln photographs are more mediated, showing views of the areas relevant to his death and the execution of those involved in the conspiracy to kill him. Yet they are critically important because they demonstrate how photographs function as a proxy for the literal representation of death in this context. As well, the suppression of photographs of Lincoln lying ins state and the autopsy of John Wilkes Booth set a precedent for the suppression of photographic images by official bodies as a way of determining and mediating public perception and the message that is disseminated in the public sphere which reverberates even today.

I. INTRODUCTION: A COMMODIFICATION OF DEATH

On April 12, 1861, the world of the nineteenth-century United States exploded as shots were fired on Fort Sumter off the coast of South Carolina. The firing on Fort Sumter plunged the United States into four horrifyingly brutal years of civil war that tore the nation apart and shifted the economic, political, and cultural structure of a country that had seemingly gone mad. By the time it was over, more than 700,000 men would be killed, and lives and landscapes alike would be irrevocably destroyed.¹

In addition to the severe consequences to the economic and political structure of the country, the Civil War influenced cultural norms in important ways. One of the most critical shifts was a solidification of the way that death and mourning were understood and experienced, not only for the dying, but for the survivors that they left behind. This shift was most apparent in a general movement of the experience of death from a private familial affair to an event that increasingly took place in the public sphere. Too, rather than accepting and even embracing, death as the “culture of death” of the antebellum period had demonstrated, death would become something to avoid at all costs if possible, far removed from the home and the domestic life of nineteenth-century America. Although there were several factors that played a role in these shifts, like the redesign of cemeteries as places of repose, the practice of embalming which became increasingly common during the Civil War, and the gradual but definite development of the funeral industry by the 1880s, there were other, more nuanced influences as well.

Among the most significant of those influences were the photographs of dead soldiers that were taken during the war at places like Antietam, Gettysburg, Spotsylvania, and Petersburg. Far

¹ Bruce Levine, *The Fall of the House of Dixie: The Civil War and the Social Revolution that Transformed the South*, (New York: Random House, 2013) p. 284

from being discrete, obscure images these photographs were detailed, capturing the horror of death for viewers to see. Importantly, the photographs were marketed and sold to the public by photographers like Alexander Gardner and firms like E. & H.T. Anthony. Citizens could buy the images as large photographs, *carte de visites*, and stereographs that could be viewed in the parlors of homes or displayed in albums if one so chose. The prominence of the newspaper industry helped to drive these marketing efforts, especially *Harper's Weekly: A Journal of Civilization*, the most widely dispersed illustrated journal in the country. By combining a careful analysis of photographs of the dead from the Battles of Antietam, Gettysburg, Spotsylvania, and Petersburg, including their marketing and dissemination, with a consideration of the cultural and social understandings of death, this dissertation argues that Civil War battlefield photographs of fallen soldiers were influential, and in fact formative, in redefining the understanding and experience of death and shifting it from the private to the public sphere.

The Civil War was the first time that an organized full-scale effort was made to photographically record a military conflict. Photographers like Mathew Brady, Alexander Gardner, and others committed themselves to recording the war so that people could see its devastating toll. Brady's 1862 exhibition of photographs taken by Gardner after the Battle of Antietam titled "The Dead of Antietam," marked the first step in the publication of photographs of the dead. This very public distribution of images of dead soldiers continued throughout the war, culminating after it ended in the publication of Gardner's *Photographic Sketchbook of the Civil War* as well as in the publication of photographs from the Battle of Gettysburg in 1865. The development of photography since the 1830s had caused people to re-imagine the idea of an image in general and the impact that a picture could have on their lives. The growing prominence of photography had a significant impact on the way people saw the Civil War as printed images of

battlefield deaths based on photographs were distributed in newspapers and illustrated journals.² Importantly, these photographs were being created at the same time that the experience of death for the living was being removed from the home by war as well as through other cultural factors.

The popularity of photography, and the prominence of newspapers had risen throughout the nineteenth century, although the history of newspapers in the United States dates back to the origins of the country and beyond. Newspapers transmitted news to the far reaches of the Union in a system that often worked almost as a relay. Although many newspapers themselves were restricted in their distribution to areas close to their place of publication, news stories from one place were often reprinted in the newspapers of another, further increasing the stories' dissemination. For example, a report in *The Illinois Gazette* of Shawnee-town, IL reported on December 18, 1830 news received from New York:

Foreign News...From the New York American, of Nov. 24; Europe – The intelligence from Paris, ... is later by three days than previously received. ...The injudicious and ill-timed movement made by the Chamber of Deputies for the abolition of the punishment of death was, at our previous dates, it will be remembered, causing considerable ferment among the people of Paris. This seems to have reached such a height since, as to require and produce the effectual interposition of the National Guard, by whose means order was restored, apparently, without resistance or bloodshed, and many of the offenders were arrested. On the 22nd October Paris was tranquil. ...³

Foreign reports like this were sometimes published in local newspapers. In this case, the report is an update on an ongoing story from the other side of the Atlantic on unrest occurring in Paris. These news reports kept even people in the farthest reaches of the United States informed about

² Sarah Burns and John Davis, *American Art to 1900: A Documentary History*, (Berkley, Los Angeles & London: University of California Press, 2009) p. 519

³ "Foreign News, From the New-York American, of Nov. 24," *The Illinois Gazette*, Shawnee-town, IL, Issue 30, December 18, 1830

news and events on both a national and an international level and made the function of newspapers in communities all that more critical.

The invention of the telegraph in 1837 further increased the spread of the news, as reports of news and events that could be included in newspapers were transmitted across the lines more quickly than ever before for inclusion in the latest edition of the paper. Even those citizens who could not afford to purchase a newspaper for themselves were able to learn the news of the day. In many towns the mail, including the newspaper, was distributed at the local general store, hotel, or other main business. From there, an unofficial “town crier” would read the news aloud to anyone who cared to listen. This practice held such cultural importance throughout the century that it was even depicted by nineteenth-century American genre painters in paintings like William Sydney Mount’s *California News* (1850, **Fig. 1**) and Richard Caton Woodville’s *War News from Mexico* (1848, **Fig. 2**).

By the mid-nineteenth century, newspapers had become much more than a conduit for the news. They were a cultural influencer due to the prominence of advertisements and stories of cultural events like the visit of Edward, the Prince of Wales of Great Britain in 1860 to the United States and Canada, a cartoon of which was published in *Harper’s Weekly* on September 22, 1860.⁴ (**Fig. 3**) During the Civil War, photographers like Gardner and companies like E.&H.T. Anthony were able to take advantage of this cultural function of newspapers by having photographs converted into woodcut prints and published in *Harper’s Weekly* and other illustrated journals. The frequent advertising efforts of photographs that included dead soldiers further solidified the impact that these riveting images had on the broader understanding and experience of death during and after the Civil War.

⁴ “The Imaginary and the Actual Prince.(Scraps from the Portfolio of a Collector),” *Harper’s Weekly: A Journal of Civilization*, September 22, 1860

The prominence of newspapers and illustrated journals in the nineteenth-century United States was critical to the success of photographers' attempts not only to record the Civil War, but to disseminate the photographs to the public. Studios like Gardner's Photographic Gallery in Washington, DC as well as photographic supplies houses, agents, and financiers like E.&H.T. Anthony and Philp & Solomon used this avenue of communication to their great advantage by advertising their wares and their commitment to taking and selling photographs that brought "the battlefields, their incidents, and localities before us in the most faithful and vivid manner, each view being reproduced on a canvas covering a surface of over 6.0'square feet," in the *New York Times*, *The Daily National Intelligencer*, and *Harper's Weekly*, among others.⁵ Exhibitions and articles framed around war photographs also appeared. Critically, the inclusion of descriptions of photographs of the dead in advertisements situated this kind of photographic image as a particular focal point of the journalistic efforts of Gardner and others.

The first chapter in this dissertation examines the culture of death that was prominent in the United States in the nineteenth-century and the related development of postmortem photography. The popularity of postmortem photographs of loved ones who had died was significant during the second half of the century. Many times subjects were rendered as if they were still alive, resulting in a juxtaposition of solace and eerie surrealism similar to what is seen in the many photographs of deceased children that were photographed on their own, with beloved possessions, or with family members. Typically kept as private memorials, postmortem photographs functioned as both a tool of mourning and a way of remembering the dead, especially children. In the second chapter, a close examination of Brady's "The Dead of Antietam" exhibition

⁵ "Advertisement for Gardner's Exhibition by Fallon's Stereopticon," *New York Times*, June 27, 1864; The canvas that the advertisement refers to is what we would understand in today's terms a projection or movie-type screen so that an audience can view images projected by a magic lantern or projector.

and its status as the first public exhibition of photographs of dead soldiers in the United States is critical to recognizing the impact of battlefield photographs of the dead on the move of the experience of death and mourning from the private to the public sphere. Photographs like *Bodies in Front of Dunker Church* (**Fig. 4**) shocked the viewers who saw them in Brady's studio, yet were later sold for viewing almost as a form of entertainment. By focusing on the marketing, promotion, and reviews of this exhibition, and importantly, the marketing and sale of the photographs afterward, we can begin to see the impact of Brady's show and later marketing efforts on the shift in the experience of death. Chapter three continues the examination of battlefield photographs of fallen soldiers by looking at the sale and use of these images from the Battles of Gettysburg, Spotsylvania and Petersburg. Finally, chapter four begins to look at the post-war period with an examination of the use of photographs of both Abraham Lincoln and his assassins in the spring and summer of 1865. Despite strict prohibitions against it, a select few photographs of Lincoln's body were taken in the days immediately following his death. However, they were quickly suppressed, and were not seen until they were rediscovered in the twentieth century. This contrasts significantly with both the publicity that surrounded Lincoln's death, and the shifting nature of the use of photographs as a public record of death. In addition, Gardner took several photographs of the execution of the conspirators in Lincoln's assassination, many of which were marketed in the public realm. A look at the history of these photographs, as well as the spectacle that occurred in the weeks after Lincoln's assassination, helps to trace the way that photographic images of death continued to influence the way death was understood at the time. With the photographs that surround Lincoln's death came a solidification of the ways in which these images function as cultural influencers of the understanding and experience of death.

The photographs of fallen soldiers taken during the Civil War continue to have relevance and reverberations in the twenty and twenty-first centuries, and their creation and dissemination have set precedents and influenced the way that we understand photographic images of war death and other trauma today. Distinctly different from the close relationship with death of the nineteenth century, American culture today is one that places death firmly in the public sphere with those at the end of life often spending their last days in a hospital or hospice, and the aftermath of the death being executed far outside of the private environment of the home. To add to this, the suppression of photographic images that might be understood as culturally or politically sensitive has a precedent in Secretary of War Edwin Stanton's suppression of photographs of Abraham Lincoln lying in state after he was assassinated in 1865, as well as the destruction of photographs of John Wilkes Booth's autopsy, as a way of mediating public perception of these events. One of the most direct examples of this continued influence is the 1991 "Dover Ban" put in place by the US Department of Defense to prohibit the creation and dissemination of photographs of the coffins of fallen soldiers returning from Iraq. In short, the photographs of fallen soldiers (a category that in this case also includes Lincoln's postmortem photographs) continue to matter not just for our understanding of the culture of the United States in the nineteenth century and those who experienced the Civil War and the death that accompanied it, but also for today. Critically, these photographs continue to have the power to impact cultural understandings of death in the past and the present. The following chapters will demonstrate how the cultural influence of photographs of dead soldiers developed during and just after the Civil War, and how these images played a part in forming and solidifying a new cultural understanding of death on a broad scale in the United States.

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II. “A MATERIALIST REALIZATION OF ETERNITY:” THE CULTURAL HISTORY OF DEATH AND POSTMORTEM PHOTOGRAPHY

French photographer Gaspard Felix Tournachon (commonly known as Nadar) wrote in his autobiography of the fear that his friend and frequent sitter, writer Honore de Balzac held about the idea of having his picture taken. Nadar explains that Balzac believed the process of having his likeness created in a photograph would compromise the integrity of his “essence” (his psyche/inner self).⁶ Nadar writes:

Balzac was one of those who could not rid himself of a certain uneasiness about the Daguerreotype process. he used an exceedingly large number of words to explain it to me on several occasions. According to Balzac’s theory, all physical bodies are made up entirely of layers of ghostlike images, an infinite number of leaflike skins laid one on top of the other. Since Balzac believed man was incapable of making something material from an apparition, from something impalpable – that is, creating something from nothing – he concluded that every time someone had his photograph taken, one of the spectral layers was removed from the body and transferred to the photograph. Repeated exposures entailed the unavoidable loss of subsequent ghostly layers, that is, the very essence of life.⁷

Balzac was not alone in his concern about photography in the first decades after it was introduced. In fact, according to Nadar, others like writer Theophile Gautier and Gerard de Nerval shared a similar uneasiness to Balzac’s concern.⁸ Importantly, Balzac’s misunderstanding of the new technology was closely linked to the parallel connections made between photography and death, and to a changing understanding of death that occurred in the United States in the middle of the nineteenth century. When Balzac worried about a loss of his “essence,” he was referring to a kind of death at the hands of the camera, albeit a more metaphorical one than the literal loss of

⁶ Gaspard Felix Tournachon (Nadar), “My Life as a Photographer,” translated by Thomas Repensek in *October*, vol. 5, Photographer, Summer, 1978; original text, 1854, p. 9

⁷ Tournachon, 1854, p. 9

⁸ Tournachon, 1854, p. 10

life. The early connections between photography and death as demonstrated by Balzac's concern, combined with the apparent objectivity of photographs of current events, were critical to the impact that photographs had on the cultural understanding of death during the American Civil War. It is within this convergence of photography and death that we can isolate the influence that photographs of dead soldiers had on cultural ideas of death and mourning in the second half of the nineteenth century.

A. DEATH IN NINETEENTH-CENTURY AMERICA

Nineteenth-century America has been characterized by historians like Mark Schantz and Drew Gilpin Faust, as having a unique "culture of death." Throughout the century there was a fascination with the end of life, and an apparent desire for it in some cases, that belies our twenty-first century understanding of death as something to be avoided at all costs.⁹ Due to high mortality rates death was a frequent part of life, especially for children, as accidents and diseases like cholera and yellow fever were a frequent occurrence.¹⁰ Moreover, death was represented and even revered in many cultural aspects of nineteenth-century life. It was understood as an ultimate life goal to be able to die well, not only because of the finality of death and the obvious end of life, but because to be able to die well meant that one had fulfilled their life and could die at peace. The strict religiosity that pervaded American culture made this an ultimate goal for anyone with a spiritual system of belief. In earlier centuries, memorial portrait paintings were often commissioned by those who could afford them as a way of keeping the deceased present for those who survived them. These painted portraits set a precedent for the unbelievable popularity of photographic postmortem portraits that consigned the dead to posterity from the 1840s on. Jewelry, wall

⁹ Mark Schantz, *Awaiting the Heavenly Country: The Civil War and America's Culture of Death*, (Ithaca & London: Cornell University Press, 2008) pp. 3-4

¹⁰ Aaron Sachs, *Arcadian America: The Death and Life of an Environmental Tradition*, (New Haven & London: Yale University Press, 2013) p. 20

hangings, hair ornaments, and other personal and domestic accessories were also made out of locks of hair and preserved as family heirlooms.

The process of mourning was a formal and precise practice, especially for the middle and upper classes. The 1830s saw the development of the cemetery movement as graveyards were redesigned as places of repose, memory, and reverence. Mount Auburn Cemetery in Cambridge, Massachusetts was one of the first cemeteries reconceptualized in this way and was designed with ribbons of pathways, gardens, and even benches so that visitors could tour the cemetery and not only visit the graves of loved ones, but take time to reflect on the overarching cycle of life and death within the peaceful confines of nature.¹¹ Prior to this, graveyards were usually very simple, merely functional even, and consisted of rows of gravestones marking the location of those who had passed on. They were not typically a place where one wanted to visit unless it was necessary, and certainly not where one would want to spend time. That the cemetery movement included such a complete redesign not only of the cemeteries themselves, but also of the way these spaces could be experienced, speaks to the importance that was placed on the understanding of death and mourning for survivors. It also gave those at the end of life a place where they could look forward to the physical body spending eternity, and by extension their spiritual selves as well.

The understanding of death in late eighteenth and nineteenth century America was rooted in a strict Protestant moral code.¹² The First and Second Great Awakenings of these centuries sparked a new brand of evangelical religiosity that centered both spiritual and cultural life around a faith-based system. These two revivalist movements occurred in response to a perceived shift

¹¹ Sachs, 2013, pp. 21-64

¹² Robert J. Miller, *Both Prayed to the Same God: Religion and Faith in the American Civil War*, (Lanham, MD: Lexington Books, 2007) p. 41

away from religious piety by the faithful and were intended to help increase the devotion of individuals by focusing on personal spiritual and moral growth over education and theology.¹³

Whether evangelist or not, a belief in a higher power was important to many people in the antebellum period, although it did not manifest in a uniform belief system. At the heart there was some kind of belief system that was centered around a person's interaction and response to the influence of a higher power acting in their lives.¹⁴ To unify the broad range of spirituality in the nineteenth century, the evangelical tenure of Protestantism brought forward by the Great Awakenings framed the general cultural mores of the period. This is not to say that Protestantism, or even Christianity, was the only religion active in the United States. There were, in fact, many religions that people ascribed to. Catholicism, Judaism, Quaker, and even Islam were practiced by some members of the American population. But the overarching CULTURAL constructs of the country spoke to the popular dominance of Protestantism that reverberated from the Puritan and Colonial periods.

During the second half of the nineteenth century, significant changes began to take place in the practice of encountering death and mourning.¹⁵ These changes were influenced by the growth of photography, the Civil War, and the photographs that stemmed from that conflict. To be sure, death was integrated into life and ideas of death and mourning suffused all aspects of antebellum culture. In fact, in traditions that dated back as far as Puritanism, which predated the earliest days of the United States, all members of society participated in varying ways in the inevitability of death. When a loved one died, all family members, including children, attended the funeral and observed some kind of formal mourning. Printed materials and newspapers often

¹³ Joseph Tracy, *The Great Awakening: A History of Religion in the Time of Edwards & Whitefield*, (Oxford: The Banner of Truth Trust, 1989, first published in 1841) pp. ix-xiii

¹⁴ Miller, 2007, pp. 11-13

¹⁵ Audrey Linkman, *Photography and Death*, (London: Reaktion Books, 2011) p. 62

described the occurrence of a death eloquently, frequently noting the duties of religion, sometimes in detail.¹⁶ An 1813 excerpt of an obituary in *The Supporter* (Chillicothe, Ohio) reads,

Died of the 21st inst. After a painful and protracted illness, *Mrs. Elizabeth Wilson*, the amiable and much respected consort of the Rev. Robert G. Wilson of this place. While this mournful event inflicts a deep and lasting wound on the bosom of congeal & filial affection, society has occasion to mingle its tears in deploring the loss of one of its brightest ornaments. Yet in *weeping with those that weep*, our very grief should be christian. Our holy religion and its divine hopes forbid that we ‘sorrow even as others who have no hope.’¹⁷

An 1816 entry in *The National Advocate* (New York City) provides a detailed report of a dramatic death that had occurred in Fayetteville, North Carolina:

The following shocking occurrence is copied from the Fayetteville, North Carolina, American, June 21:

Lumberton, NC, June 13.

Extraordinary and Shocking Occurrence. – On Friday afternoon, the 7th inst. Mrs. Anna Ratley was riding across the Gum Swamp, (about 12 miles from this place) where the water was little more than but knee deep, the beast on which she rode was attacked by an alligator, and, in the struggle, Mrs. Ratley was thrown, and the moment she fell the monster seized, bit and mangled her most horribly, of which wounds she died on Monday evening last. Her husband and brother were near at hand and ran to her assistance, and, in rescuing the woman, one of the men received a blow from the alligator without sustaining much injury, and, after shooting seven or eight times, they succeeded in killing him, he measured eleven feet in length.¹⁸

Rather than try to remove themselves from this proliferation of information about deaths that occurred, Americans embraced reminders of death and viewed the end of life as a confirmation of the connections between the past, present, and future.¹⁹

Because of the overall mindset of the period, and in spite of the fact that the United States was not built on a particular religion, the Protestant symbolism that permeated American culture was significant. The corpse itself was imbued with a kind of Christian symbolism that dictated its

¹⁶ Sachs, 2013, pp. 19-20

¹⁷ “Obituary,” *The Supporter*, December 29, 1813, Chillicothe, OH

¹⁸ News Report, *The National Advocate*, June 28, 1816, New York City, NY

¹⁹ Sachs, 2013, p. 20

treatment and reverence after death.²⁰ In fact, people attached a kind of spiritual importance to the physical corpse because it was the last remnant of a life lived. This reverence for the detritus of life, and the not infrequent loss of the physicality of the body of a deceased loved one during the Civil War, made the war especially damaging and hard to deal with for the families and communities of soldiers who went to fight and did not return home. Importantly, this also made the creation of photographs of the dead so important and influential during and after the conflict. As the century progressed, the United States experienced a gradual distancing from the Christian mindset as Protestantism began to lose its hold on cultural norms and beliefs about a spiritual life after death. This distancing manifested in a more public method of dealing with death that further removed the corpse and the practice of death and mourning from the Christian church.²¹

B. THE CRITICALITY OF THE GOOD DEATH AND MOURNING PRACTICES

There were a number of specific cultural norms and ideas that Americans looked to as they prepared for death which provided strength and comfort as loved ones confronted or grappled with the reality of the end of life.²² These norms and behaviors included specific practices for laying out and caring for the body, visitation with the body and the loved ones of the deceased, burial of the deceased in a cemetery or graveyard and, for those who were able, a mourning period with rigidly prescribed dress and behaviors for a period of time after the death. Cultural practices like this are not unusual across time and space, and many cultures in the world rely on set discourses and practices to help them confront death whether it is feared or embraced within the culture. Among the most significant of these ideas on both a spiritual and a cultural level in nineteenth-

²⁰ Gary Laderman, *The Sacred Remains: American Attitudes Toward Death, 1799-1883*, (New Haven & London: Yale University Press, 1996) p. 10

²¹ Laderman, 1996, p. 10

²² Schantz, 2008, p. 18

century America was the concept of the “Good Death” which was central to both mid-century United States and to Christian practice.²³

The idea of the Good Death was based on the importance of the ability to die at home, surrounded by family and loved ones and with time to reconcile the physical and spiritual self before passing.²⁴ The concept dates back centuries in Christian thought and was written about at least as early as the fifteenth century. Texts which describe the *Ars Moriendi* (the art of dying) set out specific procedures or protocols for both the dying and for those who attended the death. These protocols were carefully followed in Christian homes. The texts included directions on how to give up the soul, how to face the temptations provoked by a lack of belief, how to emulate the death of Christ, and how to pray.²⁵ The invention of the printing press in the fifteenth century made texts that discussed the *Ars Moriendi*, or the Good Death, available to a broad population and helped to spread its ideas further.

In the nineteenth century, reprints of many early texts kept the Good Death solidly within cultural norms. Sermons in the United States and Europe expounded on the importance of dying a Good Death while medical journals demonstrated a combination of science with the religious importance of “dying well.”²⁶ As well, popular literature in the nineteenth century illustrated the value of being able to confirm a Good Death with the descriptive passing of such characters as Harriet Beecher Stowe’s Eva in her novel, *Uncle Tom’s Cabin* (1852). In Stowe’s writing, Eva’s death reflects the undeniable Good Death that is sought. Importantly, her speech to the members of her household, including the family slaves, speaks of her concern for their future salvation after death as well as her conviction in her own as she faces the end of her life:

²³ Drew Gilpin Faust, *This Republic of Suffering Death and the Civil War*, (New York: Vintage Books, 2008) p. 6

²⁴ Schantz, 2008, p. 18

²⁵ Faust, 2008, p. 6

²⁶ Faust, 2008, pp. 6-7

Listen to what I say. I want to speak to you about your souls Many of you are very careless. You are thinking only about this world. I want you to remember that there is a beautiful world, where Jesus is. I am going there, and you can go there. It is for you, as much as me. But, if you want to go there, you must not live idle, careless, thoughtless lives. You must be Christians. You must remember that each one of you can become angels, and be angels foreverIf you want to be Christians, Jesus will help you. You must pray to him; you must read - O dear, you can't read, - poor souls!" and she hid her face in her pillow and sobbed, while many a smothered sob from those she was addressing, who were kneeling on the floor aroused her. "Never mind," she said, raising her face and smiling brightly through her tears, "I have prayed for you; and I know Jesus will help you, even if you can't read. Try to do the best you can; pray every day; ask Him to help you, and get the Bible read to you whenever you can; and I think I shall see you in heaven."²⁷

Although Eva's speech demonstrates some of the controversial aspects of Stowe's book and highlights the racism that is inherent in the novel in the patronizing way that Eva speaks to the family slaves, addressing them as their benefactor without whose guidance they would be lost, her grave concern over their post-earthly condition and her conviction in her own also illustrates the cultural importance that was placed on securing one's spiritual state at the end of life.

Similarly, Charles Dickens' description of the death of Little Nell in *The Old Curiosity Shop* (1841) leaves little doubt that it was of critical importance to be able to believe that she had died well, that she existed in a better place after life, and that her final desires would be realized:

They moved so gently, that their footsteps made no noise; but there were sobs from among the group, and sounds of grief and mourning. For she was dead. There, upon her little bed, she lay at rest. The solemn stillness was no marvel now. She was dead. No sleep so beautiful and calm, so free from trace of pain, so fair to look upon. She seemed a creature fresh from the hand of God, and waiting for the breath of life; not one who had lived and suffered death. Her couch was dressed with here and there some winter berries and green leaves, gathered in a spot she had been used to favour. 'When I die, put near me something that has loved the light, and the sky above it always.' Those were her words. ... 'It is not,' said the schoolmaster, as he bent down to kiss her on the cheek, and gave his tears free vent., 'it is not on earth that Heaven's justice ends. Think what earth is, compared with the World to which her young spirit has winged its early flight; and say, if one

²⁷ Harriet Beecher Stowe, *Uncle Tom's Cabin*, (New York City: The Library of America, 1982, originally published in 1852) pp. 338-339

deliberate wish expressed in solemn terms above this bed could call her back to life, which of us would utter it!’²⁸

Cultural manifestations and reminders were so pervasive, in fact, that even songs and poems written during the Civil War frequently looked to the Good Death as a central theme.²⁹ A song entitled *Dream of a Good Death* (1863) talks about the fear and hardship of facing death on the battlefield in its poignant lyrics:

Now I fear dying a thousand miles from home. I dreamt last night of a hilltop
where I will face God, and though I’ve read the good book, this too have I lost.
..... I see eternity rising a day or so from now. I fought my way through it in
Sharpsburg. I found my way back to the South. But this time, I see a shadow
Coming from the clouds. Two long years now since I left you and a baby I’ve
never known. And now I fear dying a thousand miles from home.³⁰

The words of this writer and others, often poignant in their expression of longing, loss, and death, encapsulate the overwhelming desire of soldiers and their loved ones at home to be able to die in a particular way, specifically in accordance with the Good Death. Even far from home to hope for this end if death came was to be able to hold on to a kind of normalcy that was otherwise significantly removed amongst the reality of the battlefield.

²⁸ Charles Dickens, *The Old Curiosity Shop*, (New York City & Toronto: Alfred A. Knopf, 1995, originally published in 1841) pp. 538-539

²⁹ Faust, 2008, p. 7

³⁰ Unknown Author and Composer, “Dream of a Good Death,” 1863, <http://www.civilwarsong.com/dream-of-a-good-death-june-28-1863/>, Accessed December 4, 2018; **Complete Lyrics:** *Had I a picture of your face, to hold while I walk here today, I’d be less afraid of what’s ahead. But your letters were lost Somewhere near Fredericksburg, Now I fear dying a thousand miles from home. I dreamt last night of a hilltop where I will face God, and though I’ve read the good book, this too have I lost. We head north through the Valley. My heart is thick with the thought of what I’ve seen and what I’ve done a thousand miles from home. If I close my eyes, I can see my Emma dear. I see a growing boy and all the missing years. I see a golden cornfield; I see a dozen cows. I see eternity rising a day or so from now. I fought my way through it in Sharpsburg. I found my way back to the South. But this time, I see a shadow coming from the clouds. Two long years now since I left you and a baby I’ve never known. And now I fear dying a thousand miles from home. And now I fear dying a thousand miles from home.*

Far from being restricted to a religious practice, the realization of the Good Death became a part of the behavior of respectable middle and upper-class citizens in the United States in a way that was largely separate from its original theological roots. Although it remained crucial to those of Protestant faith, the promise of a Good Death was embraced by almost everyone of religious inclination in the country, including those of Catholic and Jewish faith, among others. The cultural popularity of the Good Death also speaks again to the pervasiveness of Protestant understandings which dominated not only cultural life in the United States, but also specifically the discussion of death.³¹

Regardless of spiritual orientation, citizens of the United States felt similarly about the transcendent importance of death and “dying well.” In fact, the importance of a Good Death even exceeded the importance of birth, marriage, or any other life experience for many nineteenth-century Americans. Death was, more than almost anything else, wholly unchangeable, and to be able to “die well” was an ultimate goal for many because it confirmed that a life had been well lived and purposeful. The moment of death was even understood to offer a glimpse of the future, so being able to confirm a Good Death was especially important. How a person died epitomized the life they had led and predicted the quality of their afterlife. As such, the hour of death was carefully documented, witnessed, interpreted, and examined. The moment of death also had to be prepared for by the dying, who wanted to be deemed worthy of spiritual peace.³²

The presence and involvement of family was critical to the achievement of a Good Death and family members performed critical rituals surrounding the event. The nineteenth-century ideal of domesticity reinforced the importance of a death that took place in a familial setting. Significantly, during the antebellum period, funeral homes were rare, making the home the center

³¹ Faust, 2008, p. 7

³² Faust, 2008, p. 8

of the end of life. It was not that funeral homes were entirely nonexistent. The germs of that industry began to develop in the mid-century for those who could afford it as undertakers gradually began to take over services of preparing the body and constructing caskets and other essentials for burial. The commission of an undertaker (eventually a funeral director) was not, however, common practice until the last part of the nineteenth century.³³ Prior to the 1880s, most practices surrounding the death of a person happened at home and were taken care of by family and friends.

The protocol of the Good Death dictated that a person should die among family, with loved ones gathered around the bedside to show concern and comfort and take care of the needs of the dying. It was also important for family members to be present to witness and confirm the state of the person's soul in the moments before they died. The act of dying was understood not as a loss of the self, but as a redefinition of the soul for eternity. The evaluation of the state of the person on their deathbed then confirmed for those left behind the likelihood of a reunion in heaven according to Christian belief. The last words of the dying were similarly important because they completed the narrative of life. These declarations were prominent in the cultural process of death and were understood to be unarbitrarily truthful because there was no motivation for deception. They were also understood as teaching mechanisms for those left behind.³⁴ Moreover, as scholar Phillippe Aries argues, the last words of the dying were sacred to the survivors who then spent their remaining time on earth committed to respecting those words and carrying out any last wishes that the deceased expressed.³⁵ Aries' argument of the sacred nature of the last words solidifies the importance of the events that needed to take place in the last moments before death, and both the spiritual and cultural significance of being able to "do it well." In addition to an attachment to the

³³ Laderman, 1996, 45-47, 73-74; See also Sachs, 2013, p. 4

³⁴ Faust, 2008, p. 10; See also, Philippe Aries, "The Reversal of Death: Changes in Attitudes Toward Death in Western Societies," (*The American Quarterly*, vol. 26, no. 5, Special Issue Death in America, Dec. 1974), p. 544

³⁵ Aries, 1974 p. 544

occurrence of a Good Death, nineteenth-century middle and upper-class customs in the United States kept the physical advent of death and its aftermath ensconced in the domestic sphere prior to the Civil War. Hospitals were places where a person went to die only if they were impoverished or not a part of respectable society.³⁶ For those of respectable society, the body was cared for by the family and buried in a family-centered cemetery (often on family land if possible).³⁷

Mourning practices in the mid-nineteenth century revolved around a rigidly set program of behaviors that followed a specific timetable. After a death, family members would enter a formal period of mourning. The adoption of prescribed clothing and accessories, use of designated stationary, and restrictions regarding visiting and being seen in public spaces functioned as physical manifestations of the loss of a loved one. Mourning dress, especially for women, was carefully set out and adhered to in middle and upper-class homes. Most directly, a person's attire proclaimed to all who could see what state of mourning they were moving through and reminded both survivors and viewers of the recent death. Metaphorically, it also helped to keep the deceased alive in thought by evoking memories of them, as well as by demonstrating respect for those who had passed and provoking special consideration for survivors.³⁸

Rituals of mourning like adhering to a socially prescribed mourning period and kind of dress functioned as an important part of the mores and norms of respectable society. Although the guidelines were accessible to anyone who wished to be considered to be part of that population, economic restrictions and class distinctions meant that it was a practice that was restricted largely to the middle and upper-classes.³⁹ For those of the lower class, the strict regulations of dress and where and when they could appear in public were often not possible because these practices

³⁶ Glennys Howarth, *Death and Dying: A Sociological Introduction*, (Cambridge: Polity Press, 2007) p. 116

³⁷ Schantz, 2008, p. 19

³⁸ Linkman, 2011, pp. 125-126

³⁹ Linkman, 2011, p. 126

required the ability to shift the routine of daily life for a significant period of time, as well as the financial stability to obtain proper mourning attire. Often, neither of these were within the reach of the poorer echelons of society. However, even those in the lower classes sought to follow the rules of mourning to whatever extent was possible for their situation in order to pay tribute to loved ones who had passed on.

Rules of mourning varied depending on the closeness of the relationship between the deceased and the survivor. The closer a person was to the person who had passed, the longer the period of mourning they were expected to observe. Widows were expected to mourn their husbands for two years while child/parent relationships required a mourning period of eighteen months. Grandparents and siblings of the deceased were expected to mourn for just six months. Women were also expected to enter mourning for members of their husband's families and even the family members of his former wives if there were any. The specific prescriptions for mourning for women of the household then, reaffirmed the importance of family life and of the domestic sphere in the nineteenth century.⁴⁰

The process of mourning properly was expensive and time consuming for a respectable household. Not only were adults expected to observe a mourning period, but children also assumed mourning attire for the socially specified period. Even servants of affluent households were provided with black clothing in which to mourn the death of notable members of the home.⁴¹ This was especially important for middle-class homes because the ability to mourn properly could confirm the family's place in society. It also functioned as a visceral process that could move people through the grieving process and give the public a visible representation of their situation. It is here that the clothing worn was perhaps the most critical as an important physical

⁴⁰ Linkman, 2011, p. 126

⁴¹ Linkman, 2011, p. 126

representation of the process of grieving. The stages of mourning for women, especially, were represented by their attire. When a woman was in deep mourning, only matte black was worn, including a veil made of black crepe, and black (often jet, a black gemstone that was popular throughout the nineteenth century) jewelry. After the appropriate period of time, a woman progressed to half mourning which was announced by the addition of the colors of lavender, grey, and occasionally purple, and the use of white trim. Activities for women during the mourning period were severely curtailed. Mourning for men was much shorter as men were expected to return to society almost immediately after the funeral. They were also encouraged to remarry shortly after the loss of their wife (women were expected to remain widowed for much longer after the loss of a husband). For men, the only physical manifestation of their grieving state was a black band that could be worn around the brim of a hat or on their arm. The width of the band signified the closeness of the relationship between the man and the deceased. No other assigned attire was expected.⁴²

With the onset of the Civil War the consideration of cultural norms like the Good Death became even more important to citizens. The war would make the all-important spiritual peace of the Good Death impossible because of its brutality and because of the instantaneous nature of the death it brought.⁴³ As many scholars have argued, the Civil War unseated the conventions of domestic, private death practices because of the vast number of soldiers who died far from home, and in many cases, were never returned after death. Although the Revolutionary War and the War of 1812 had certainly resulted in a fair number of casualties, the occurrence of soldiers being killed in battle and not returning home was not nearly as prevalent because of advances in warfare that

⁴² Linkman, 20011, pp. 125-128; See Also Faust, 2008, pp. 148-149

⁴³ Faust, 2008, pp. 7-8

were introduced during the Civil War and the general scope of the conflict that set it apart from previous wars on US soil.

So pervasive was this new norm that Civil War hospitals provided texts of how not to die and soldiers and their families sought ways to virtually construct a Good Death within the chaos of war.⁴⁴ To do this, they would often substitute the elements that were critical to a Good Death, but so often missing in wartime, in order to compensate for otherwise unrealized expectations of death. Soldiers would write letters home before battles assuring their families of their spiritual state should they not survive. The well-known last letter of Sullivan Ballou, who was killed at the First Battle of Bull Run in 1861 reads in part:

I cannot describe to you my feelings on this calm summer night, when two thousand men are sleeping around me, many of them enjoying the last, perhaps, before that of death -- and I, suspicious that Death is creeping behind me with his fatal dart, am communing with God, my country, and thee. ... And hard it is for me to give them up and burn to ashes the hopes of future years, when God willing, we might still have lived and loved together and seen our sons grow up to honorable manhood around us. I have, I know, but few and small claims upon Divine Providence, but something whispers to me - perhaps it is the wafted prayer of my little Edgar -- that I shall return to my loved ones unharmed. If I do not, my dear Sarah, never forget how much I love you, and when my last breath escapes me on the battlefield, it will whisper your name. ... Sarah, do not mourn me dead; think I am gone and wait for thee, for we shall meet again. ... As for my little boys, they will grow as I have done, and never know a father's love and care. Little Willie is too young to remember me long, and my blue eyed Edgar will keep my frolics with him among the dimmest memories of his childhood. Sarah, I have unlimited confidence in your maternal care and your development of their characters. Tell my two mothers his and hers I call God's blessing upon them. O Sarah, I wait for you there! Come to me, and lead thither my children.⁴⁵

⁴⁴ Faust, 2008, p. 9

⁴⁵ *Last Letter of Sullivan Ballou to His Wife*, July 14, 1861, http://www.civil-war.net/pages/sullivan_ballou.asp, Accessed December 8, 2018

Although Ballou's reference to a Good Death is not direct, it is clear that he places importance on expressing his spiritual state, and that he believes that his wife will take comfort in hearing of it. He offers her hope and encouragement for his safe return, but also prepares her for his death and reassures her that he is ready for what is to come.

Soldiers would also ask for letters to be written and sent home in the case of their death that explicated presence of their spiritual state and as a way of reassuring families that they had, in fact, died well. In many cases nurses and others in the hospital would write letters to families of deceased soldiers that assured them that their loved one had lived a good life and died with all of their spiritual and earthly commitments in order. A letter of condolence written by the poet Walt Whitman, who frequently sat by the bedsides of wounded and dying soldiers, assures the family of Frank H. Irwin of the 93rd Pennsylvania in the spring of 1865 that he had lived and died well:

For a couple of weeks afterwards he was doing pretty well. I visited and sat by him frequently, as he was fond of having me. The last ten or twelve days of April I saw that his case was critical. He previously had some fever, with cold spells. The last week in April he was much of the time flighty—but always mild and gentle ... He was so good and well-behaved and affectionate, I myself liked him very much. ... Toward the last he was more restless and flighty at night—often fancied himself with his regiment—by his talk sometimes seem'd as if his feelings were hurt by being blamed by his officers for something he was entirely innocent of—said, "I never in my life was thought capable of such a thing, and never was." At other times he would fancy himself talking as it seem'd to children or such like, his relatives I suppose, and giving them good advice; would talk to them a long while. All the time he was out of his head not one single bad word or idea escaped him. It was remark'd that many a man's conversation in his senses was not half as good as Frank's delirium. He seem'd quite willing to die—he had become very weak and had suffer'd a good deal, and was perfectly resign'd, poor boy. I do not know his past life, but I feel as if it must have been good. At any rate what I saw of him here, under the most trying circumstances, with a painful wound, and among strangers, I can say that he behaved so brave, so composed, and so sweet and affectionate, it could not be surpass'd. And now like many other noble and good men, after serving his country as a soldier, he has yielded up his young life at the very outset in her

service. Such things are gloomy—yet there is a text, “God doeth all things well”—the meaning of which, after due time, appears to the soul.”⁴⁶

Whitman’s letter demonstrates his understanding that Irwin’s family would receive comfort from the reassurance that he was known as a good and caring person who had lived a good life. Whitman’s inclusion of a quote at the end of his writing that reminds of the spiritual destiny of providence of God similarly connects Irwin’s spiritual peace at the time of his death to the family’s desire to understand his loss within the context of a Good Death, even in the absence of proximity and ability to physically witness it.

Photographs of loved ones also served as a kind of proxy to the physical presence of family members that was traditionally critical to the attainment of a Good Death as soldiers used them to remain connected to their loved ones and remember the security of home in times of fear and danger. It was not uncommon, in fact, for soldiers to be found dead on the battlefield with *carte de visites* or tintypes of those at home clutched in their hands. In short, the Civil War meant that thousands of soldiers were dying far from home in a way that was unprecedented, and there was often no way to confirm or realize the occurrence of a Good Death in the traditional manner. The success or failure of exercises like letters and photographs that could take the place of the norm of a Good Death then affected both the dying and those left behind to mourn.⁴⁷

Acclaimed historian Drew Gilpin Faust argues that the high level of death and loss that the Civil War brought on unraveled the previous understandings of death on which nineteenth-century America had so carefully relied. Soldiers and their families could not rely on being able to attain a Good Death, or prepare for it, because the war was too brutal, and the likelihood not only of

⁴⁶ Walt Whitman, *Letter to the mother of Frank H. Irwin, company E, 93d Pennsylvania*, May 1865, <https://emergingcivilwar.com/2011/11/16/i-regret-to-inform-you/>, Accessed December 8, 2018

⁴⁷ Faust, 2008, pp. 20-22

death, but of total dismemberment was too great to make dying well possible for many.⁴⁸ As such, it was not just the physical loss of life during the war that occurred, but the loss of a critical way of practicing and conceiving of death and of life. Faust presents a compelling argument here. Most importantly, the imagery generated during the war, especially photographs which depicted battlefield death in a way that was both more realistic and more widely distributed than ever before, solidified, and in fact, influenced the shifting understanding of death and mourning. Photographs from the Battles of Antietam, Gettysburg, Spotsylvania, and Petersburg were too graphic, too horrifying, for a public that was completely unprepared for the brutality of the war, and their publication and sale forced a confrontation with the reality of the battlefield that would play a part in what Faust identifies as a complete redefinition of death and mourning.

C. THE RISE OF PHOTOGRAPHY AND POSTMORTEM PHOTOGRAPHY

Photography was first introduced to the public in 1839 with the publication of the Jacques-Louis-Mande-Daguerre and Joseph Nicéphore Niépce's daguerreotype process. Daguerreotypes quickly boomed in popularity as people jumped at the chance to have their likeness recorded, in many cases for the first time in their lives. Photography was the great equalizer in many ways, because while previously only the wealthy could have their likeness reproduced in the form of painted portraits, daguerreotypes were inexpensive enough that even many who were not as well-off could now have a picture made of themselves and their loved ones.

The daguerreotype process began in France and was quickly brought to the United States by Samuel Morris, who learned the process from Daguerre. It quite literally changed the technological and cultural fabric of the United States. As art historian Richard Rudisill noted in 1971 when writing about the impact of the daguerreotype of the United States, "As a technological

⁴⁸ Faust, pp. 9-15, 19-31

medium in the hands of devoted operators, the daguerreotype was assimilated into national consciousness as few inventions have been accepted in history. No other nation produced more or better daguerreotypes, and no other nation more widely employed the medium than the United States.”⁴⁹ In fact, in 1844 there were sixteen daguerreotype studios in New York City. By the mid-1850s, there were eighty-six daguerreotype studios and by the end of the decade the number of daguerreotypists in the city numbered in the hundreds.⁵⁰ Other cities boasted numerous studios as well and their numbers continued to grow exponentially throughout the remainder of the century, particularly as photographic technology advanced. While groundbreaking, the daguerreotype process was also very slow and was a direct positive process, which meant that the final image was created with the initial exposure. Images were exposed onto highly silvered copper plates which gave the daguerreotype an incredible potential for depth and detail, but also meant that the image had to be viewed in a certain way in order to be seen as a positive image. Nevertheless, their uniqueness and relative affordability distinguished them from painted portraits so thoroughly that they were highly sought after.

Concurrent to the daguerreotype process, a second photographic process was developed in England by intellectual William Henry Fox Talbot – the calotype process. Although the calotype process was similarly based on the idea of creating pictures from light like the daguerreotype process, it was also quite different. The calotype process was a negative-positive process (meaning

⁴⁹ Richard Rudisill, “Mirror Image: The Influence of the Daguerreotype on American Society” (1971), in *Photography in Print: Writings from 1816 to the Present*, ed. Vicki Goldberg, (New York: Simon & Schuster, 1981) p.70

⁵⁰ Jordan Teicher, “The Hidden History of Photography and New York,” *The New York Times*, February 22, 2017, <https://lens.blogs.nytimes.com/2017/02/22/the-hidden-history-of-photography-and-new-york/>, Accessed January 5, 2019; See Also, “The Daguerreian Era and Early American Photography on Paper, 1839–60,” Metropolitan Museum of Art Heilbrunn Timeline of Art History, https://www.metmuseum.org/toah/hd/adag/hd_adag.htm, Accessed January 5, 2019

a negative was produced first and then positive prints were made from the original negative) that produced a more nuanced, sometimes considered “painterly” kind of photographic image. Because the process produced a negative from which positive prints were then made the production of multiple copies of a single photograph was possible, something the daguerreotype process could not do.

By the 1850s technology had advanced and new processes made taking photographs faster, easier, and much less expensive. During the Civil War the predominant process was the collodion process which combined the attributes of the detail of the daguerreotype process and the reproducibility of the calotype process into a technology that increased the accessibility of photographs for both photographers and consumers. These new innovations in technology paved the way for an increasing number of new subjects that could be captured as the range and scope of photographic understanding also expanded. Originally thought of as a medium that could only be used to document elements of the world, the desire for photography to be understood as having artistic or aesthetic potential quickly moved to the forefront of consideration in the minds of photographers and prominent citizens like Lady Elizabeth Eastlake, whose husband was the first president of the Royal Photographic Society and director of the National Gallery in London. Alongside this was a desire to expand the documentary potential of the medium and incorporate new themes and subjects. Critically too, with the development of the cheaper, faster collodion process by the 1850s the potential for recording current events was finally realized.

As it has been throughout history, war quickly became a sought-after subject on both sides of the Atlantic for photographers. The Crimean War (1853-1856) was photographed by Roger Fenton at the behest of the British government in an attempt to shift negative popular opinion about

the conflict during the war.⁵¹ After the Crimean War, Fenton and others like Felice Beato photographed multiple conflicts in India and China, including the Second Opium War (1856-1860). A very few daguerreotypes of the Mexican-American War (1846-1848) were also created, although most of those no longer exist. The majority of these images focus on portrait groups of soldiers, camp life, and isolated, unpopulated views of battlefields. The Second Opium War was the first time that any photographs at all of dead soldiers were taken, but they were not publicized or marketed, and were not known in the United States. These first photographs also frame the soldiers in such a way that little detail can be discerned. (**Fig. 5**) Even so, the ability of a photograph to record the event of war was unprecedented. Although it would be decades before actual combat could be effectively recorded, photographers could record many other aspects of war, including the aftermath of a battle.⁵²

The Civil War was the first conflict to be comprehensively documented in photographs. More importantly, it was the first time that detailed photographs of dead soldiers were not only taken but also marketed to the public, both during and after the war, particularly in the United States. Photographer and studio owner Mathew Brady had made a name for himself in New York City and Washington, DC as a celebrity portrait photographer, creating portraits of the likes of President Abraham Lincoln, activist Frederick Douglass, and writers Mark Twain and Walt Whitman, among many others. Since the turn of the twentieth century, Brady has been broadly credited with conceptualizing and executing the creation of almost all Civil War photographs. This is largely due to the fact that he listed himself as the photographer on all images that came out of

⁵¹ Although Fenton's photographs were intended to serve as political propaganda for the British government to promote their involvement in Crimea, they were not actually published until after the war ended and so had minimal effect.

⁵² There is just one known photograph of actual combat from the American Civil War which was taken at Fort Sumter in 1861. The action is barely discernable but serves as a forerunner of later photographs.

his studio, rather than crediting individual photographers. Brady's contribution to the photographic documentation of the war should not be overlooked of course. However, it must be remembered that while Brady played an important role, he was by no means as single-handedly responsible for the production or marketing of the photographs for which history has given him credit. In fact, many other photographers also played a notable role, including Scottish-American photographer Alexander Gardner, as well as Timothy O'Sullivan, TC Roche, and James Gibson, among others. Gardner worked for Brady at the beginning of the war and managed his studio in Washington DC throughout most of 1862. Gardner's role, especially, was much more significant than history has presumed. In fact, in recent years, some scholars have suggested that Gardner might have been at least as, if not more, responsible than Brady for conceiving of the idea of documenting the conflict to the extent that it was executed. There is support for this idea in his commitment to photographing the war even after he left Brady's employ in late 1862/early 1863, and especially in his dedication to photographing dead soldiers and marketing those images after battles like Antietam and Gettysburg. Critically too, Brady and his employees did not take a single photograph of fallen soldiers either before or after Gardner's landmark photographs from the Battle of Antietam (which were taken under Brady's employ but which went with Gardner when he left). In fact, Brady rarely visited the battlefields of the war after the Battle of First Bull Run in 1861, due to his deteriorating eyesight. Rather, he focused his energies on coordinating his photographers and sending them into the field to capture images of military camps, groups of soldiers, and the landscape of the conflict.

Along with the rising popularity in the desire to record current events and portraits, the development of photography spawned a whole new kind of subject – photographic images of loved ones who had died, commonly known as postmortem photography. In fact, the tradition of

photographing corpses before burial began almost as soon as photography was introduced and became a widespread practice in both the United States and in Europe, expanding with the rapid growth of studios from the 1840s on.⁵³ Professional photographers advertised their ability to create images of deceased loved ones in newspapers and journals. Southworth and Hawes, one of the most prominent early photography studios in Boston was known to list their ability to create these portraits as a focal point of their practice in advertisements. Significantly, they emphasized that they could photograph both adults and children.

Our arrangements are such that we take miniatures of children and adults instantly, and of DECEASED Persons either in our rooms or at private residences. We take great pains to have Miniatures of Deceased Persons agreeable and satisfactory, and they are often so natural as to seem, even to Artists, in a deep sleep. (Southworth and Hawes, 1846)⁵⁴

Other studios similarly proclaimed their ability to capture the visual memory of loved ones lost. A photographer's advertisement in *The Daily Cleveland Herald* in 1855 reads "Daguerreotypes of deceased persons can be magnified the size of life and finished true to nature."⁵⁵ The willingness to photograph children after death was especially desired because it allowed families a chance to create what was often the only living memory of those lost so young. In most cases, an emphasis was placed on creating a distinctively naturalistic likeness so that the "sitter" appeared to be simply asleep.⁵⁶

As the photography industry boomed and the practice of postmortem photography followed suit, it gave rise to a side industry for certain accessories for the genre. Black mats were created and sold by photographic supply houses like E.&H.T. Anthony specifically for the purpose of

⁵³ Jay Ruby, *Secure the Shadow: Death and Photography in America*, (Cambridge & London: MIT Press, 1995) p. 50

⁵⁴ "Advertisement for Southworth & Hawes," *Boston Business Directory 1846*, Taken from Ruby, 1995, p. 53-54

⁵⁵ Advertisement, *The Daily Cleveland Herald*, October 26, 1855

⁵⁶ Ruby, 1995, p. 53

framing postmortem photographs. Often these mats were decorated with images of flowers. Special daguerreotype cases were also sold which were targeted for use with these images of death.⁵⁷ The attention given to the creation of not only postmortem photographs themselves but the accessories that accompanied them, like mattes, speaks to the importance that was placed on this kind of photographic image. Postmortem photographs were items that were meant to be treasured, cherished, and passed down. Even more importantly, they served as a vital link between the living and the dead and were a source of memory that was firmly enmeshed in the cultural experience of death of the mid-nineteenth century. Photographers and those who made and sold photographic accessories realized this and created an entire side industry that profited from the very esoteric value of postmortem photography.

The practice of postmortem photography was also discussed at length in photographic trade journals that were being published by the mid-nineteenth century. In 1873, photographer Josiah Southworth, for example, discussed his mid-century practice (at this point decades removed from it) and described the process in detail.

When I began to take pictures twenty or thirty years ago, I had to make photograph of the dead. We had to go out then more than we do now, and this is a matter that is not easy to manage; but if you work carefully over the various difficulties you will learn very soon how to take pictures of dead bodies, arranging them just as you please. When you have done that the way is clear, and your task easy. The way I did it was just to have them dressed and laid on the sofa. Just lay them down as if they were in a sleep. That was my first effort. It was with a little boy, a dozen years old. It took a great while to get them to let me do it, still they did let me do it. I will say on this point, because it is a very important one, that you may do just as you please so far as the handling and bending of corpses is concerned. You can bend them till the joints are pliable, and make them assume a natural and easy position. ... Arrange them in this position, or bend them into this position. Then place your camera and take your picture just as they would look in life, as if standing up before you. You don't go down to the foot of the sofa and shoot up this way. Go up on the side of the head and take the picture so that part of the picture that comes off from you will come off above the horizontal line. So it would

⁵⁷ Ruby, 1995, p. 53

be as if in a natural position, as if standing or sitting before you. ... I make these remarks because I think that they may be very valuable to somebody.⁵⁸

Southworth's careful explanation of the proper conditions and posing of the body speak to emphasis that was placed on creating careful, effective photographs of the deceased. He stressed the importance of making the body look natural, even on the frequent occasion that it looked far from that. Many of the techniques that Southworth and others discussed were similar to the preferred ways of creating live portraits as well but retained a greater sense of importance in postmortem photography because of the special circumstances of working with a subject that could not look natural on its own.

Scholar Jay Ruby argues that professional photographers accepted the responsibility and necessity of taking postmortem photographs, but that many of them also found it to be a distinctly unpleasant task.⁵⁹ Southworth's words are useful here as well, and his verbiage is particular. He talks about the time in his career when he "had" to take pictures of the dead and discusses the importance of learning how to create postmortem photographs. This way of speaking about the task at hand suggests that creating photographs of dead bodies was not necessarily a desirable one but was still important for several reasons. Certainly, the necessity of advertising the ability to create photographs of a broad range of subjects and ideas would better secure the success of a photographer's studio. At the least, the cultural importance of creating these records of the lost seems to have been broadly understood in addition to the financial stability that the practice provided to studios. Early photographers by necessity had to cater to the desire of their customers in order to make enough money to survive, and so taking even undesirable photographs like a

⁵⁸ Josiah Southworth, "'A Panel Discussion on Technique,' *Philadelphia Photographer*, 10: 279-280, 1873; Taken from Jay Ruby, *Secure the Shadow*, 1995

⁵⁹ Ruby, 1995, pp. 54-55

picture of a deceased person was critical to their financial success and stability. The idea of creating postmortem photographic images would not have been seen and understood as a profitable business venture, never mind one that could guarantee financial stability, if the cultural tenor of the period did not encourage the collection of remnants and reminiscences of the dead. The culture of death in the United States, which already embraced the collection of locks of hair and other personal and domestic accessories to be made into jewelry, pictures frames, and other domestics accessories, made both the business and the cultural potential of postmortem photographs possible. Moreover, that deeply entrenched cultural norm would be pivotal to the marketing and sale of Civil War dead in the 1860s and beyond.

In most cases, photographers were only commissioned to create postmortem photographs after the body had already been laid out. As such, the period of time which photographers had to create the images before decomposition took hold was limited to a couple of hours after the death had occurred. Many photographers promoted their ability to come within an hour of commission, or at least the same day, in order to maximize the potential of a naturalistic photograph of the dead.⁶⁰ Photographs were most often taken in the home so a photographer's ability to travel to a location was critical.⁶¹ Less frequently, they might be taken in the photographers studio, usually on the way to the cemetery. There were a number of reasons for the commission of postmortem portraits in the mid-nineteenth century. Many of these reasons were of course related to the specific circumstances that surround the loss of a loved one. For one, the creation of postmortem photographs implies that there is a desire to both be able to see and to remember a person after they are gone.⁶² This desire was very likely related to the desire for a Good Death during the

⁶⁰ Linkman, 2011, p. 31

⁶¹ Ruby, 1995, p. 59

⁶² Linkman, 2011, pp. 46, 14

antebellum period and later. In some cases, postmortem photographs included the deceased holding crucifixes and other religious objects that spoke to their desire to pass from the earthly life in good spiritual state.⁶³ With the inclusion of a religious object like a crucifix, not only could survivors of the deceased look back on the photographs to remember and mourn, but each experience of doing so would prompt the viewer (the survivor) to remember yet again that the deceased had lived their life well, and importantly that they had died well and with heavenly affairs in order.

The creation of postmortem photographs was a practice that helped survivors both reflect on their loss and come to terms with it. The significance of being able to hold onto a physical remnant in the form of a photograph was especially significant for those who did not have any other existing image, specifically a photograph, to remember their loved ones by. This was particularly important when the deceased was a young child because postmortem photographs served not only as a source of memory, but also as proof that they had actually existed. The evidence for this desire is staggering as postmortem photographs of children make up by far the most significant percentage of existing images from the period. This high percentage also mirrors the high rate of infant and child mortality during the nineteenth century.⁶⁴

The postmortem photographs of the nineteenth century encapsulated what Ruby argues was a “materialist realization of eternity.”⁶⁵ By this he means that these photographs allowed people to conceptualize and realize a kind of immortality or eternal life in the physical form of the new technology of photography. Ruby has a point. Because photographs were understood as images of the “real” to a much greater extent than visual images were previously understood, they

⁶³ Linkman, 2011, p. 61

⁶⁴ Linkman, 2011, p. 18

⁶⁵ Ruby, 1995, p. 60

gave the grieving a visceral way to remember those they had lost embodied by the physical material object of a photograph that could be held and viewed at any time. As well, the indexicality of postmortem photographs that is demonstrated by this materiality would eventually extend to the photographs of dead soldiers taken during the Civil War because the photographs of Gardner and others afforded people a material way to see the destruction of the body that the war would entail. To be sure, photographic portraits were understood as a specific kind of physical preservation and in fact, a kind of immortality in and of themselves.

To better understand this idea, we can return to Balzac's uneasiness over the action of having a photograph taken. If we think about Balzac's conviction that layers of a person's "essence" were removed and translated onto a photograph every time an image was taken, the idea that a postmortem photograph embodies a kind of immortality of the deceased gains significantly more weight because it grants a very literal physicality to the idea of remembrance of a loved one that postmortem photographs make possible. In this case, the photographs can be understood as containing a "piece" of the deceased that can be held on to for posterity. Most photographic portraits were viewed as likenesses rather than literal portraits because the photographic image provided a recognized reproduction of the person that exceeded the subjectivity of painted portraits. Sitters were typically centrally positioned within the frame and props and backgrounds were standardized from early on in the practice. The details of the facial features of the sitter were the most important focus for the photographer. Postmortem photographs by their very definition forced photographers to construct a scene and pose the sitter to a much greater extent than living portraits because of the manual manipulation of the body that was necessary. In many cases, the skill of the photographers was not sufficient to accomplish this successfully and so these portraits do not even come close to a portrait but are curtailed at the simple likeness of the figure.

The long-standing pictorial convention of depicting the deceased in the context of the “last sleep” is demonstrative of a broader sentiment toward death that predominated the nineteenth century as well. During this period, one of the overarching cultural understandings was that death did not actually happen – rather people “went to sleep,” not because people did not understand the idea of death, but because to think of it as a kind of sleep made it more palatable to deal with. Given this, it is not surprising that the idea of a last sleep developed within the context of postmortem photography as well, according to Ruby.⁶⁶ Significantly, this idea of sleep would be one of the cultural mores which the Civil War and especially the marketing and sale of photographs of dead soldiers destabilized and dismantled.

One of the ways that photographers achieved the perception of a last sleep was by adhering to the practice of taking photographs from a closely cropped angle, placing the body on a piece of furniture, and draping it in a cloth as Southworth described in his writing in 1873. Very young children might be placed in a buggy. On rare occasions, photographs of children might include a toy or special stuffed animal. Flowers or books might be placed in the hands of the deceased but more often few accessories were used. When such items were used, it was typically because there was a special significance to the item that connected it to the deceased. On these occasions, they afforded mourners a feeling of the life of the lost and a sense of comfort to move forward.⁶⁷

There was also a kind of logic to the practice of creating close-up images of the deceased, rather than more distant images. For one, embalming was not practiced before the Civil War and was not common until after 1880. Additionally, ready-made coffins were not generally available. Both of these circumstances meant that it was critical to minimize the appearance of the

⁶⁶ Ruby, 1995, pp. 63-65

⁶⁷ Linkman, 2011, pp. 39, 42

decomposition that rapidly occurred and would be more evident in a broadly framed composition. To add to this, the nonexistence of funeral parlors prior to the end of the century meant that the deceased had to remain in the home until burial. Corpses were often placed on a board over ice to slow the decomposition process. The time between death and burial was sometimes as short as a day – making the photographer’s ability to come on short notice even more important. The belief in the last sleep meant that those left behind would not want the last image of their loved one to include the presence of the coffin, or any other accoutrements of death and burial. As such, postmortem photographs frequently portrayed sitters as simply being at rest. Sleep was familiar, unthreatening, and temporary – death was not, and the ability to conceptualize a death pictorially as one in which the deceased was asleep made it all that much more acceptable for loved ones left behind and provided a sense of comfort.⁶⁸

There were other conventions that developed as a way of representing the deceased as if they could still be alive in an attempt to comfort the grieving and help them grapple with the idea of death.⁶⁹ The body was often placed in an upright position sitting in a chair or on some other kind of seating. Eyes were sometimes either left open or were painted open later after the photograph was developed.⁷⁰ (**Fig. 6**) Both of these practices gave the impression of activity or wakefulness, suggesting that the deceased was still alive. The photographer was also expected to try to capture a peaceful expression that belied any kind of pain or struggle. (**Fig. 7**) In the event that casket photographs were taken they were usually more straightforward, but the casket was minimized as much as possible.⁷¹ A tradition also developed wherein survivors were

⁶⁸ Ruby, 1995, pp. 69-72; Linkman, 2011, p. 21

⁶⁹ Ruby, 1995, p. 72

⁷⁰ There are also postmortem photographs of African American citizens as well as postmortem photographs of white children who were photographed with their African American nannies or slaves. The formal qualities of these photographs maintain the typical depictions represented here.

⁷¹ Ruby, 1995, pp. 72-75, Linkman, 2011, p. 21

photographed with the deceased. (**Fig. 8**) Here, the emphasis was not so much on the deceased themselves as it was on the idea of how the death affected those left behind.⁷² While the photograph that was produced did include the deceased, the composition focused on the parent or loved one who held, or sat next to, the deceased as if they were sleeping, not dead, which minimized the feeling of loss that was otherwise felt.

Postmortem photographs during the nineteenth century functioned as a critical source of memory and preservation for those whose loved ones had died. In fact, the reality that these photographs, or photography in general, could not bring a person back to life did not even begin to diminish the popularity of postmortem images. Rather the photograph's status as a documentary object – one that represented an idea of the real – gave the practice of postmortem photography traction because it provided a new, and in some cases first, opportunity for people to retain a visual likeness of their loved ones after they passed away. To be sure, the market for postmortem photographs was significantly larger than it was for postmortem paintings, because it was accessible to a much larger part of the population. For example, a twelve day period in the account books of Southworth & Hawes tells us that there were sixteen sittings to photograph a deceased person.⁷³ This popularity demonstrates the vitality of the industry into which Gardner and other photographers who captured photographs of dead soldiers would insert themselves between 1862 and 1865.

All of this further confirms the connections that were made even early on between photography and the general idea of death. Photography was, after all, a mechanism that expanded the idea of human representation in a way that earlier mediums could not because of the basic understanding of photographs as “real.” Postmortem photographs provided an avenue for this

⁷² Linkman, 2011, p. 54

⁷³ Ruby, 1995, pp. 75, 164-165

understanding in the context of one of life's most trying and unavoidable circumstances. The use of these images speaks volumes as a reification of this function, as well as the cultural importance of photographs as tools for dealing with the idea of death more generally. Throughout the second half of the nineteenth century, postmortem photographs were found hung in the parlors of homes. They were also sent through the mail, placed into albums, and set on mantels.⁷⁴ This demonstrates that postmortem photographs were a much larger part of cultural and domestic life in the United States than would be indicated if the images were kept privately, isolated from view in the home or in the public sphere. They were objects that were sought after, used and viewed for years after a death, and were shared even with those who were far removed physically from the family and/or the person who had died. In fact, Ruby suggests convincingly that postmortem photographs might have even served a more formalized function in nineteenth-century mourning practices than has been documented. There is, however, no known mention of what exactly this function might have entailed.⁷⁵ Many of these avenues of display and remembrance would also be used for photographs of the Civil War, including those of dead soldiers.

There is a practical link between the idea of grieving and photographic images because photographs can serve as a memorial to life and also commemorate a death and provide a way to both remember one and forget the other. When a person dies, mourners are forced to find a way to accept the reality of that death while at the same time keeping the memory of those lost alive. Photographs, and especially postmortem photographs, provided a way to do this. Postmortem photographs could also function as an extension of the very natural desire to preserve one's heritage or family lineage because they provided a visual reminder to the survivors.⁷⁶ This desire

⁷⁴ Linkman, 2011, p. 20

⁷⁵ Ruby, 1995, p. 161

⁷⁶ Ruby, 1995, p. 174

became especially important in the nineteenth century with the advent of Westward Expansion and more significantly, the Civil War. As individuals and whole families struck out past the Missouri River to places like California and Oregon, the photographs that they had kept them tied to their loved ones in the East. Since this movement also meant that the physical remains of a deceased loved one were left behind, postmortem photographs gave people a way to physically take the deceased with them, albeit in a symbolic way rather than a literal one. As the Civil War tore families and communities apart, postmortem photographs of loved ones took on a special importance for survivors. This was especially true because so many soldiers never returned home, thereby breaking the connections of lineage for many families were it not for the existence of postmortem photographs of those family members who were at home. In this way, families could literally preserve themselves in pictures, even in the face of the loss of so many.

D. CONCLUSION

The unique culture of death of the nineteenth century, and the resulting relationship that people had to the end of life, meant that when the Civil War broke out, it did so within a culture that was in a sense primed for a new kind of imagery connected to war and to the death it brought. Photography's close association with death illustrated by Balzac's fear of the photographic process was exactly the kind of conduit required not only to document the war overall, but to influence the way that people understood and dealt with death and mourning on a cultural level as a reverberation of the war and also more broadly. The popularity of postmortem photography confirmed the fascination with, and reverence for, death, but it also provided an opportunity for people to obtain a physical likeness of loved ones that could help people memorialize and remember their life and their passing, as well as serving as a tool to move past the loss.

The photographs of dead soldiers took the tropes and norms of early postmortem photography to a new level by bringing to the home front the brutality of dying on the battlefields of war. As a result, the influence of these photographs of the fallen from places like Antietam, Gettysburg, Spotsylvania, and Petersburg worked with the already shifting cultural understandings to compel a reconceptualization of the end of life within this culture of death. As the war ended and the country was forced to weather the assassination of a President, the influence of those battlefield photographs was further confirmed by the photographs that surrounded the death of Abraham Lincoln. Gardner's and other's determination to market photographs of him played off of the marketing of earlier postmortem photographs and the general fascination with death to further magnify the influence of the photographic images of soldiers killed in battle.

The 1880s would see the development of a formal funeral industry which, combined with the evolution of cemeteries earlier in the century, helped to confirm the new understanding of death as a public event, but also one that should be as far removed from the home and personal life as possible. That the death of the Civil War was documented in photographs which were marketed so carefully helped to pave the way for this new development. It helped to facilitate the removal of death from the home because of the circumstances of a war where many soldiers never returned home, and because of the parallel documentation of the end of their lives which were displayed in newspapers, journals, and advertisements during the war and beyond.

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III. MARKETING “THE DEAD OF ANTIETAM:” THE CREATION OF IMAGES OF DEATH AS A CULTURAL COMMODITY

In October 1862 photographer and entrepreneur Mathew Brady launched an exhibition of photographs taken by Alexander Gardner at the Battle of Antietam. The exhibition, held at Brady's New York gallery and titled "The Dead at Antietam," was the first of its kind in America.⁷⁷ One of the photographs shown was Gardner's image of the *Dead of Stonewall Jackson's Brigade by the rail fence on the Hagerstown Pike (Fig. 9)*. The photograph is visceral in its poignancy and presents a startling glimpse of the horrific brutality of the battle. Lying next to a rail fence are the bodies of three soldiers. The bodies of two of the three Confederate soldiers are contorted so that their faces are not visible. The only indication of their humanity is the thrust of legs extending in various directions from their torsos. The soldier to the left is twisted to the point that he appears to be headless, his legs jutting out toward the viewer as his upper body pushes against the fence. His left arm seems to be in continuous motion as it reaches up, almost as if he is reaching for a weapon or raising a hand to beg for assistance. On the right side of the frame, another body is even more knotted. One leg is bent as if he tried to rise while an arm remains fixed in a cradled position against the fence. He wears his hat, but his head is almost indistinguishable from the foliage in which he has fallen, and his lower leg seems to blend into the figure beside him. In the center of the group lies the only soldier whose face we might recognize. Even here, the image of the agony of death demonstrated in the soldier's twisted expression is what will remain with the viewer.

Brady's exhibition of these photographs, and the sale of them afterward, is significant. The Battle of Antietam was the first time that photographs of the casualties of war were captured

⁷⁷ Bob Zeller, *The Blue and Gray in Black and White: A History of Civil War Photography*, (Westport, CT: Praeger Publishers, 2005) p. 66

extensively. The groundbreaking exhibition provided civilians with what was for most their first encounter with the grisly images of actual battlefield death. Promoted in newspapers like the *New York Times*, the exhibition, along with the conversion of many of Gardner's images into woodcut prints that were published in papers like *Harper's Weekly: A Journal of Civilization* and advertised for sale to those at home along with photographs of other battles, created a new kind of commodity – the marketing of the dead.⁷⁸ Moreover, this new way of visualizing the battle, which captured the bodies of fallen soldiers contorted, maimed, and anything but heroic, was crucial to redefining the way that people on the home front understood the combat experience and the death that inevitably accompanied it. Because of their position as a conduit of information, the visceral quality of the photographs and prints, and the significance of the battle itself, Gardner's images of Antietam sparked the beginnings of the influence of Civil War photographs on the broader cultural experience of death in the nineteenth-century North.

A. OVERVIEW OF THE BATTLE OF ANTIETAM

The Battle of Antietam was fought on September 17, 1862. It was a significant event in the Eastern Theater of the Civil War because it was Robert E. Lee's first invasion of the North with the Army of Northern Virginia which required a dangerous advancement for Lee's army because he wanted to win a decisive battle that would help to secure the independence of the Confederacy.⁷⁹ This seemed to be well within the realm of possibility for Lee, because the Union had encountered a series of issues in recent months. Federal success in the East had been compromised that summer with Confederate victories at the Battle of Winchester, the Second Battle of Bull Run, and the capture of Harper's Ferry by Stonewall Jackson - the South had also

⁷⁸ The technology to print photographs directly within in a newspaper format would not be available until the 1880s with the development of the halftone printing process.

⁷⁹ Stephen Sears, *Landscape Turned Red: The Battle of Antietam*, (New Haven & New York: Ticknor & Fields, 1983) p. 1

regained control of Virginia. The Union command structure had also been damaged and discredited due to several mistakes and errors of judgement by General George McClellan who commanded the Army of the Potomac. To add to this, Lincoln and McClellan were distinctly at odds as McClellan pushed against the administration and entertained grandiose ideas of himself as the “savior of the Union.”⁸⁰ Moreover, peace movements in the North that objected to the war were threatening to force Abraham Lincoln to begin to negotiate a truce in favor of the Confederacy. The timing for Lee’s invasion could not have been more well placed.⁸¹

Long considered to be one of the most savage fights of the Civil War, the Battle of Antietam was the bloodiest single day of combat of the conflict. Moreover, the battle would go down in history as the bloodiest single day of combat in the history of the United States, not even excepting the events of World War I, World War II, and the Vietnam War. During the Battle of Antietam, the Union lost around 12,400 men, while the Confederate toll was roughly 10,320.⁸² Veteran accounts stated years after the war that the Battle of Antietam was unlike any battle they had seen before or since, and its terror and horror were seared into memory.⁸³ The battle was traumatic even for those who did not experience it directly. In an 1863 article in the *Atlantic Monthly*, writer Oliver Wendell Holmes recounted his own horror at hearing that his son had been wounded during the battle, and his incredible relief at finding him alive in an army hospital.⁸⁴ Many were not so lucky, however, and did not hear anything of their loved ones for months after the battle, only to find out that they had been killed and would never return home, even to be buried. Countless

⁸⁰ Richard Slotkin, *The Long Road to Antietam: How the Civil War Became a Revolution*, (New York & London: WW Norton & Company, 2012) pp. 17-18, 30-32 45-47, 102-103

⁸¹ Marion V. Armstrong, Jr., *Unfurl those Colors!: McClellan, Sumner, and the Second Army Corps in the Antietam Campaign*, (Tuscaloosa: University of Alabama Press, 2008) p. 1

⁸² <https://www.nps.gov/anti/learn/historyculture/casualties.htm> (accessed 06/14/17)

⁸³ Sears, 1983, p xii

⁸⁴ Oliver Wendell Holmes, “Doings of a Sunbeam,” *The Atlantic Monthly*, July, 1863, pp. 10-12

families on both sides of the fighting endured similar experiences, and stories of mothers and other family members searching for their soldiers for months and even years after the war destabilized the traditional, and sought after, reassurance of a close, private, family death (the Good Death).⁸⁵

The battle was as emotionally and mentally treacherous as it was physically destructive. Many of the troops were severely debilitated by disease, malnourishment, and the physical trauma of war, so much so that they could hardly function as a complete unit. Making matters worse, a number of the intact units were so badly trained and new that they were utterly unprepared for the ferocity of the Battle of Antietam.⁸⁶ The experience of the 16th Regiment Connecticut is a heartbreaking example of the consequences of this reality. The 16th Connecticut saw action for the first, and for many soldiers, the last time at the Battle of Antietam. The regiment had been formed in the summer of 1862 after Abraham Lincoln issued a call for 300,000 more Union volunteers. Many of those who enlisted in the 16th Connecticut were young and few, if any, had combat experience. They were formally mustered in in August after an extensive wait for supplies and weapons. When they reached the battlefield outside Sharpsburg, Maryland on September 16th after a long march, they had been enlisted for less than one month and had had little training to prepare them logistically or emotionally for the gruesome nature of combat. The results were devastating. The men were surrounded in a cornfield and became cannon fodder for the more experienced Confederate troops. In a panic, many soldiers broke rank and fled while others hugged the ground amidst the confusion of the battle. Afterward, the regiment's casualties exceeded twenty-five percent with almost 250 of the 940 enlisted killed, wounded, missing, or deserted. Fewer than one third of the enlisted soldiers of the 16th Connecticut were present the morning of

⁸⁵ Drew Gilpin Faust, *This Republic of Suffering: Death and the American Civil War*, (New York: Vintage Books, 2008) p. 27, passim

⁸⁶ John M. Priest, *Antietam: The Soldiers' Battle*, (New York & Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1989) p. viii

September 18th for roll call. Diaries and letters from the soldiers of the regiment talked of the horror of the battle and their feeling that they had been “murdered” because of the high devastation of the regiment.⁸⁷ The experience of the 16th Connecticut was not a wholly isolated one but serves as an illustration of the ferocious nature of the battle and the devastating toll it took on men both personally and militarily.

When the battle was over, many of the dead, especially Confederate, were left on the field, some for more than a week as regiments struggled to recover from their losses. As was the case after many encounters of the war, accounts from those who arrived after the fighting ended talked of the dead “lying as blackened corpses” for days on end.⁸⁸ The experience of the 16th Connecticut was certainly not the only tragic story of the war, nor was the battle of Antietam the only brutal battle. One could argue, in fact, that the general tenor of the Civil War overall had a particular viciousness to it that made the creation of photographs of the dead both possible and influential.⁸⁹ There were certainly other incredibly bloody, brutal battles before Antietam. The Battle of Shiloh was fought in Tennessee on April 6th and 7th, 1862 and the Second Battle of Bull Run was fought in Virginia August 28th-30, 1862 to name just a few. However, these and other early encounters lacked the specific gross viciousness of Antietam that was combined with the military and political weight of a positive outcome for the Union in the Eastern Theater. In the summer of 1862, Lincoln was anxiously waiting for a Union victory that would provide a reason to issue the Emancipation Proclamation in the hope of forcing the Confederacy’s hand and prompting negotiations in the Union’s favor. The Union’s success at the Battle of Antietam, ambiguous though it was, provided

⁸⁷ Lesley J. Gordon, “All Who Went into That Battle Were Heroes: Remembering the 16th Regiment Connecticut Volunteers at Antietam,” in *The Antietam Campaign*, ed. Gary Gallagher, (Chapel Hill & London: University of North Carolina Press, 1999) pp. 171-181

⁸⁸ Faust, 2008, pp. 66-67

⁸⁹ Slotkin, 2012, pp. 364, 395, 406-408

just such an opportunity. It is critical to remember, however, that it was the very *specific* fierceness and brutality of the Battle of Antietam, combined with both the strategic criticality of that encounter in the Eastern Theater, *and* Gardner's commitment to photographing the human aftermath of the battle, as well as the opportunity that he took advantage of after the fighting ended, that gave his images the weight that they eventually held in the public imagination. This influence began with the conversion of the photographs into woodcut prints for *Harper's Weekly* and continued with Brady's display of the photographs at his gallery. The photographs' influence was then further magnified throughout the war by the marketing and sale of the photographs in newspapers and catalogs. The story of the 16th Connecticut encapsulates many of the particular factors of the Antietam battlefield that made it a prime engagement to create the first photographs of combat dead and points to the specific nature of the engagement as one that was especially deadly, tragic, and traumatizing.

The Battle of Antietam was seen as a much-needed Union victory because McClellan had managed to hold onto control of the field at the end of the day on September 17th. Control had vacillated throughout the fight, however, and both sides sustained heavy losses. No one was content with the end result. Lee had lost much of the advantage he had hoped to expand on with his invasion and quietly moved his army back across the Potomac on the night of September 18th.⁹⁰ Although McClellan could claim victory at the end of the day, it was far from the strong, decisive victory the Union so desperately needed. Moreover, accounts of McClellan's mistakes over the course of the fighting were rampant and many believed it was only by sheer good luck that the Union did not experience an even more debilitating defeat in the face of Lee's carefully measured

⁹⁰ Slotkin, 2012, pp. 352-354

strategy.⁹¹ Some of the worst fighting of the day had occurred around the North and West Woods, around Millers Farm at Hagerstown Pike, and in the area called the Sunken Road. Descriptions of the brutality in these areas were many. One observer stated that “Yankees [were] shot between the fence rails....leaving many corpses in their wake..” along Hagerstown Pike. Another witness recorded “corpses slumped over the fence rails, dead” around Mumma Farm, an area which also saw significant action throughout the day.⁹² Several of these areas became primary sights for Gardner’s and his colleague James Gibson’s photographs when they arrived shortly after the battle ended. Most particularly, Gardner’s pictures of dead soldiers along Hagerstown Pike, at Sunken Road, and lined up for burial near Dunker Church, among others, speak poignantly of the fierce nature of the fight.

B. “THE DEAD OF ANTIETAM”

When “The Dead of Antietam” exhibition opened in October 1862, people flocked to Brady’s gallery to see images of the carnage of war. Although there is no record of the exact number of visitors, reports talk of people lining up to see the exhibition. Among those visitors was an unknown reporter for the *New York Times* who wrote a description of the photographs that cannot be easily forgotten.

Mr. Brady has done something to bring home to us the terrible reality and earnestness of the war. If he has not brought bodies and laid them in our dooryards and along the streets, he has done something very like it. Crowds of people are constantly going up the stairs; follow them and you find them bending over photographic views of that fearful battle-field.....You will see hushed, reverent groups standing around these weird copies of carnage, bending down to look on the pale faces of the dead, chained by the strange spell that dwells in dead men’s eyes.....The pictures have a terrible distinctness....We would scarce choose to be in the gallery, when one of the women bending over them should recognize a

⁹¹ *Papers of the Military Historical Society...*, 1915, pp. 14-15

⁹² Priest, 1989, p. 76, 48

husband, a son, or a brother in the still, lifeless lines of bodies, that lie ready for the gaping trenches.⁹³

The reporter's words are poignant and bring the reality of the experience of viewing the grisly images of the dead soldiers of Antietam to life, even more than 150 years after they were penned. They describe a view of battle that most nineteenth-century Americans had never before seen, forcing citizens at home to confront the reality of the war with brutal clarity.

In late 1862, the idea of bodies dead from battlefield combat was understood very differently and was based on a visual history of several hundred years that depicted battle death as a grand, honorable, and entirely distinctive way to leave the earth. A brief detour into that history goes a long way toward explaining the power of Gardner's images. One of the most well-known examples of this early trope is Benjamin West's *The Death of General Wolfe*, 1770 (**Fig. 10**) with which many Americans in the mid-nineteenth century would have been familiar. In West's famous painting, General Wolfe is represented in the foreground of the image in the throes of a glorified death. His men surround him, holding onto him as if to ease his passage as he takes his final breaths and moves into the afterlife. General Wolfe appears as if he is on display, more a statuesque actor in a scene than a person who has experienced the brutality of battle and been mortally wounded in the process. There is little to no blood, and what agony exists in his ever-distinguished figure seems to be more a staged act of death than the horrible reality of succumbing to the wounds of battle. Death is present but is wholly unrealistic, particularly for an event so terrible as a battle, and the General is afforded the luxury of a valiant, dignified end of life.

West's painting functions as a particularly good example of the trope of grand war death because of his prominence as an artist on both sides of the Atlantic in the eighteenth and nineteenth

⁹³ "Brady's Photographs: Pictures of the Dead at Antietam," *New York Times*, October 20, 1862

centuries. Moreover, *The Death of General Wolfe* was widely recognized even in the nineteenth century as a benchmark painting in American art and was one of the few that was considered to successfully tackle the subject matter of death on the battlefield. It would have been known to citizens in both the North and the South prior to the war and was revered for its technique and its treatment of subject matter.⁹⁴ This and many other visual representations shaped the understanding of war death as a glorious affair which people held at the beginning of the Civil War in a tradition that was entrenched in centuries of visual tropes that belied the usually terrible reality. In fact, the number of representations throughout Western history that mirror the kind of heroic death seen in West's painting is staggering. From the *Dying Warrior at the Temple of Aphaia* in Greece (c 7th-5th century BCE, **Fig. 11**), *The Dying Gaul* (c 3rd century BCE, **Fig. 12**), and the *Bayeux Tapestry's* depiction of the Battle of Hastings and the death of Harold (11th century, **Fig. 13**), to John Trumbull's *The Death of General Warren at the Battle of Bunker Hill* (1786, **Fig. 14**), and John Singleton Copley's *The Death of Major Peirson* (1783, **Fig. 15**), artists since antiquity have presented war death in this very specific manner, one which is completely unlike what actually happens on the battlefield.

The gaping disparity between the classic representation of battlefield death and Gardner's photographs of his "weird copies of carnage" from the Antietam battlefield tell us about the different aims of the visual history illustrated by West and the photographs. Gardner's images almost single-handedly dismantled the sanitized, heroic conceptions of battlefield death seen in earlier visual arts and sparked a distinctly new way of understanding war death, and eventually, death generally. The *New York Times* reporter's words capture this newfound sentiment. In his review, he spoke of the carnage, of dead bodies, and of citizens being able to see such great detail

⁹⁴ Paul Staiti, *Of Arms and Artists: The American Revolution Through Painters' Eyes*, (New York & London: Bloombury Press, 2016) pp. 6, 65, 87, 109, 184

that they might be able to recognize their kin.⁹⁵ Never before had people seen the graphic reality of war carnage like the photograph of *The “Sunken Road” at Antietam* which depicts a trough filled with the bodies of the dead as a group of well-dressed men stand over it. (**Fig. 16**) Here, the deceased soldiers seem to be tossed in the depression on the ground with little care, adding to both their disturbing anonymity and the tragic loss of life. Because they are piled in such a careless manner, they seem dehumanized, their condition after death has erased their humanity. In fact, it is hard to distinguish the features or situation of most of the bodies. To add to this, the men standing above look on casually, as if they have taken in the scene before, or at the least as if it has little effect on them. The photograph, and others from this series, are as moving as Gardner’s views of Hagerstown Pike and demonstrate to the viewer the horror of dying in combat in a new and vivid way.

While the article which appeared in the *New York Times* on October 20th, 1862 gained widespread attention, it was not the only coverage of the “Dead of Antietam” that fall. Brady’s exhibition of Antietam photographs was up and running just two weeks after the battle and after Gardner’s creation of the images. A short promotional article published in the *New York Times* on October 3rd titled “Antiotam Reproduced” states that “a series of most interesting views...comprise pictures of the battle... can be seen and copies purchased at Brady’s gallery on Fifth Avenue in New York City.”⁹⁶ The article, while brief, tells us several things definitively. For one, the speed with which Brady launched and advertised the exhibition confirms that he was determined to use these photographs to give the public a more realistic understanding of the war. While it is certainly true that Gardner, Brady, and their financiers were all businessmen interested in the money-making

⁹⁵ “Brady’s Photographs...,” *New York Times*, October 20, 1862

⁹⁶ “Antiotam Reproduced,” *New York Times*, October 3, 1862); The October 3rd article misspells “Antietam” as “Antiotam.” This is corrected in the article title on October 6th. Even so, it is clear what battle is being referred to and is further confirmed in later editions.

potential of the successful photographic documentation of the war, that was not the only impetus behind their concentrated effort to record. At least as important was the realization of the opportunity to bring something to the public that had never been seen before as a way of demonstrating the potential of the new technology of photography. Even more significantly was their desire to capture the reality of the war with the camera and disseminate it to the public.⁹⁷ Furthermore, the blurb proclaims that copies of Gardner's photographs can be purchased at the gallery, further indication of the intent of creator, exhibitor, and publisher to disseminate them into the public sphere in spite of, or more accurately because of, their graphic nature.

Another promotional article appeared in the *New York Times* three days later, on October 6th, and is even more detailed. This article, also short and titled "Antietam Reproduced," leaves absolutely no doubt about what the content of Brady's exhibition is, and from which battle the photographs came. The unknown writer of the piece encourages those who want to know of the "horrors of war" to go to Brady's gallery. There they can see "Blackened faces, distorted features, expressions most agonizing..." Moreover, like the October 3rd piece, the publication on October 6th states clearly that pictures can be purchased at the National Gallery [Brady's gallery]. It further indicates that the size of the pictures is "a size convenient for albums" – exactly what citizen viewers coming to Brady's gallery might purchase as a keepsake or for placement in a parlor at home for later viewing.⁹⁸

The idea of purchasing photographs of dead soldiers might seem overly macabre and morbid to the mind of a twenty-first century reader, but it is important to remember that people in the nineteenth century had a very different attachment to death than we do today. The collection of a lock of hair or other memento from the body of the deceased for placement in a locket to be

⁹⁷Zeller, 2005, p. 66

⁹⁸ "Antietam Reproduced," *New York Times*, October 6, 1862

worn or incorporated into a wall hanging, along with the popularity of postmortem photography by the middle of the century, points to a society that was much closer to death than the contemporary viewer. As such, entrepreneurs like Brady and Gardner suspected that there would be a vibrant market for images of battlefield dead that could be viewed in the privacy of the home. This does not reduce the shocking nature of the images of Antietam or other battles, nor does it imply that they would have been viewed or experienced cavalierly. The photographs presented such a different view of war death and suggested the possibility of “finding” a loved one in the carnage because of their detail, that the familiarity with death that Brady and Gardner banked on for their success only added to the impact of the images when they were presented for sale.

These two short articles also situate the opening of Brady’s exhibition much earlier in October than scholars have previously suggested.⁹⁹ The opening of the “Dead of Antietam” so close to the date of the battle suggests an increased sense of urgency in the intent of Brady and Gardner to disseminate the photographs to the public. The fact that this was the first time that pictures of the dead after battle had been captured makes this urgency even more telling. Brady and Gardner understood the importance of capturing these images, and they did not do so merely for the matter of record or posterity. The purpose of photographing the dead could only come from the conviction that people needed to be able to see the war in all its terrible reality and, although the potential financial gain was clearly recognized, it was not merely the sole reason for the endeavor.¹⁰⁰ Brady’s exhibition began to accomplish that, and the publication of information in the *New York Times* more than two weeks prior to the famous October 20th review reveals both

⁹⁹ With no definitive record of the date of the opening of Brady’s exhibition, scholars have traditionally placed it sometime around the middle of October, largely based on the publication of the *New York Times* review on October 20, 1862. Little evidence has been found previously to situate the opening any earlier. These two promotional articles are significant then because they confirm that Brady launched his exhibition much earlier than has been assumed, and much closer to the Battle of Antietam itself. This speaks to the urgency all those involved felt to get Gardner’s photographs into the public sphere as quickly as possible.

¹⁰⁰ Zeller, 2005, pp. 66-67

the determination to release the photographs and, importantly, to actively market and sell those images for people to see at home.

The title of these two promotional articles is especially notable. By captioning the blurb "Antietam Reproduced" rather than "Pictures of Antietam," "War Views," or "Antietam Exhibition," for example, the writer gives the impression that a viewer will be able to experience the battle and its aftermath as "real" through the photographs that were exhibited. This choice of words makes the writing that much more compelling. Critically, it brings the viewer to the battlefield itself and suggests that by viewing these photographs, the audience can take part in a second experience of the Battle of Antietam, albeit from the safety of Brady's gallery. This new way of directly conceptualizing the battle, through visceral images and the description of them rather than just through words on a page, worked alongside the particular brutality of the Battle of Antietam and Brady's and Gardner's determination to sell copies of the photographs to redefine the way the people on the home front understood the combat experience.

In light of these short articles, the October 20th *New York Times* review adds another layer of complexity to the impact of Brady's exhibition as it describes the experience of walking up the stairs to the gallery to view images of the destruction of the battle, and to come face to face with the death that it wrought. The reporter paints a picture of Brady "doing something to bring home the terrible reality and earnestness of war." His description is so clear, in fact, that even those who did not see the exhibition, and particularly those in the far reaches of the Union who could not see it, could easily grasp the grisly nature of death in combat. He speculates that the detail of Gardner's photographs makes it possible perhaps to identify the bodies along Hagerstown Pike or near Dunker Church and ruminates on what might happen should that occur.¹⁰¹

¹⁰¹ "Brady's Photographs...", *New York Times*, October 20, 1862

In addition to the *New York Times* coverage of Brady's exhibition an article about Gardner's photographs was published in *Harpers Weekly* on October 18, 1862. In this article, the writer gives descriptions of several of the photographs, including an image of a dead drummer boy and the photograph of soldiers at the Sunken Road. This is paired with a moving layout of woodcut prints that were created directly from Gardner's photographs. (**Fig. 17**) The writer's descriptions of the printed images are gripping. In one, he writes that "you can, by bringing a magnifying glass to bear [on the images] not merely identify their general outline, but actual expression. This...shows through what tortures the poor victims must have passed..." Another image in the layout is clearly adapted from Gardner's photographs of the Sunken Road. The writer is no less poignant here – "Lying transverse in its depths,...are piles of rebel dead, many of them shoeless and in rags." (**Fig. 16**) Finally the writer comes to the print of the unburied drummer boy – "...the body of a little drummer boy who was probably shot down on the spot. How it happens that it should have been left uninterred...we are unable to explain."¹⁰² (**Fig. 18**) The print of the drummer boy in *Harper's Weekly*, and its original photograph, place the disparity with which the dead of the winning and losing sides were treated in glaringly clear light. The young soldier lies in an almost fetal position. As the article states it is thought that he was a Confederate drummer boy which would indicate that he was young, and far from maturity when he was killed. Next to him is the grave of another soldier, this one an older Union soldier. A rough placard marks the site of the Union soldier's resting place and confirms his identity. To the right of the deceased figures stands an observer neatly dressed in a top hat and duster as he looks over them.

The difference in the condition of the two bodies (Confederate unburied, Union buried) is significant and warrants consideration because the state of both bodies in this image points to a

¹⁰² "The Battle of Antietam," *Harpers Weekly: A Journal of Civilization*, October 18, 1862

reality of death during the Civil War, and most other times of combat. Importantly, it also highlights a break in the traditional nineteenth-century understanding and experience of death and mourning. In the aftermath of battle during the Civil War, the winning side tended to their wounded and buried their dead first. The losing side often did not have access to the field and it was left to the humanity of the victorious to bury those on the other side who had lost their lives. In the best cases, this usually happened after the victor (the Union in this case) had taken care of their own. In the worst cases, the soldiers were left on the field and might never receive a proper burial. This was often a matter of practicality as much as anything else, because of the need of both armies to move on. It also, however, flies in the face of what was considered to be the appropriate behavior after a death for most citizens who were accustomed to the ceremonial and habitual practices of mourning and burial when their loved ones, or anyone else, passed away. For most people, it was unconscionable that a person would be left unattended after they died, even if that person was a Confederate aggressor.

Although we cannot say for certain that the image of the young boy lying next to the completed grave was included in Brady's exhibition, its conversion into a woodcut print and publication in *Harper's Weekly* makes it central to the public experience of the Battle of Antietam and Brady's and Gardner's marketing efforts. The image's inclusion in the newspaper spread also suggests that it likely was a part of the exhibition because it was set apart from the large number of images that Gardner created. Whether it was shown at Brady's gallery or not, its publication in *Harper's Weekly* along with several other images would have exposed this riveting image to a large number of viewers across the Union, simply because of the wide dissemination of the paper. By the early 1860s *Harper's Weekly* was the most widely distributed paper in the Union and had

reached a circulation of 100,000 readers. By the middle of the Civil War its distribution exceeded 200,000 nationwide.¹⁰³

It is reasonable that viewers of the image of the drummer boy in particular might have noticed the juxtaposition between their own experience of what happens after death and the very real circumstances of deceased Confederate soldiers after the Battle of Antietam. Even though the unburied drummer boy was Confederate, this would have had an effect on Union viewers of the image because of the inherent tendency to connect to, and be emotionally and mentally impacted by, an image of a deceased person, especially one so young. That he was Confederate would have likely meant little in the face of the realization that it could just as easily have been one of their own and that countless young soldiers on both sides met the same fate in battle as the drummer boy seen in the photograph. The fact that the article in *Harper's Weekly* did not mention Brady's New York City exhibition, which was by all accounts already running at the time, speaks volumes as well. Importantly, it confirms that Gardner's photographs, including those of dead soldiers, were already in public circulation (and had likely been sold to the newspaper) even as Brady was beginning to promote the exhibition and the sale of photographs at his gallery.

The use of photographs of Antietam in a second life as woodcut prints is significant. By converting the images into woodcut prints and publishing them in *Harper's Weekly* they were disseminated to a new audience that included people across the Union who would not have been able to see the photographs on a wall in New York. As a result, when the October 18th issue was published, Gardner's images found a new audience in print form who were then exposed to the horror of the death of war, in many cases for the first time. *Harper's Weekly* also made a point to

¹⁰³ Joshua Brown, *Beyond the Lines: Pictorial Reporting, Everyday Life, and the Crisis of Gilded Age America*, (Berkeley & London: University of California Press, 2002) p. 62; & "Civil War: Harper's Weekly 1861-1865," www.paperlessarchives.com/cw_harper_s_weekly.html, Accessed – April 11, 2017

credit Brady and his gallery (although unfortunately not Gardner) in their publication, giving those who saw the spread enough information to purchase copies of the photographs if they wished.

The publication of these articles, prints, and promotions in newspapers that reached an increasingly large audience demonstrates a fundamental acceleration in the dissemination of Gardner's photographs as a marketable commodity. For one, the date and speed with which these articles were published in early October gives us a template for exactly what use Brady, Gardner, and others planned for the images of the Battle of Antietam. They fully intended for the public to see photographic images of the conflict. For those who did not have access to the original photographs, or copies of them, the conversion of photographs into prints for *Harper's Weekly* functioned in much the same way – giving even more people access to the raw gruesomeness of Gardner's images of death. There is also clear evidence that Brady had every intention of turning his enterprise into a money-making venture based on the publication and distribution of catalogs of images, further distributing Gardner's photographs by placing them into private homes for viewing and as keepsakes.

Harper's Weekly and Brady's exhibition were far from the only exposure that people had to Gardner's wrenching photographs of the Battle of Antietam. Nor was the fall of 1862 the only time people saw or could obtain copies of the images. By late 1862 or early 1863, Gardner had left Brady's employ and opened his own studio in Washington DC.¹⁰⁴ When he left, Gardner took with him most of the negatives that he had created, including the photographs from the Battle of Antietam. By May 1863, he was advertising "War Views for Sale" in the Washington DC *Daily National Intelligencer*. Among the images listed were views of Antietam. Brady and E.&H.T. Anthony also continued to advertise the sale of war views in New York City, including images of

¹⁰⁴ The exact date of the split is unknown, however, by May 1863 Gardner was advertising in the *Daily National Intelligencer* in Washington DC that his studio was open and that photographs could be purchased.

Antietam. Furthermore, by late 1863, E.&H.T. Anthony was running advertisements in *Harper's Weekly* on a weekly basis. Often more than one advertisement for war views appeared in the same issue. Views of Antietam were frequently among those listed for purchase, suggesting that their continued impact over the course of the war, whether perceived or actual, was significant.¹⁰⁵

C. **"TOKENS OF THE REAL"**

Although the Battle of Antietam was the first time that photographers successfully captured images of the dead, the war had already taken a terrible toll by the end of the summer of 1862. Ambulances were common sights in areas of the Eastern Theater that had seen heavy action, often clogging the roadways of the Peninsula in Northern Virginia and other places. In some cases, people very likely had a close look at the bodies of the dead as they were loaded and unloaded from wagons and ambulances. Even so, people at home were still shocked and even mesmerized when they were confronted with Gardner's photographs of the Battle of Antietam. The words of those writing about his images, and particularly the descriptions of people like Oliver Wendell Holmes who saw both the aftermath of the battle and the photographs themselves, make this clear. It is true of course, that people who lived in New York City (who would have been the most likely to view Brady's exhibition) might not have had as much direct exposure to the nature of those killed in battle, simply because of their more northern location, but the general experience of death was something with which they were intimately familiar.

As Alan Trachtenberg, scholar of American culture and photography discusses, Gardner's photographs of Antietam contain an intimacy that is startling for the viewer, particularly given

¹⁰⁵ There are unfortunately no sales records available for any of the photographers working during the Civil War because of the lax nature of business practices, the climate of the war itself, and several misfortunes including studio fires in the case of Brady and likely Gardner as well. However, the fact that E. & H.T. Anthony, Brady, Gardner and others continued to market and sell the images throughout the war and after strongly suggests that they had enough interest and likely actual sales to make such a venture fiscally sound.

their gruesome detail. Trachtenberg particularly questions whether images can help people to understand the brutality of the battlefield or other terrible events. In order to grapple with this question, he argues that it is important to consider whether a single photograph, like the image of the young boy lying next to a freshly buried soldier, can make people understand the viciousness of a traumatic event, or if photographs of an event like the Battle of Antietam are dependent on their inclusion in a collective series of images for their impact.¹⁰⁶ In general, Trachtenberg asserts that photographs of the Civil War provide a unified image of an organized event. They become a reality of their own, the equivalent of “having been there.” Accordingly, photographs are not only historical as objects, but also remain historically real because of our understanding of their ability to represent or communicate reality, in this case, to “copy carnage weirdly.” This historicizing of the photograph as “real” cannot function on a singular, image by image level, however, Trachtenberg claims.¹⁰⁷ In other words, following Trachtenberg we need to consider the series of Antietam photographs as a whole unit in order to properly understand both what happened on September 17, 1862, and the reverberating trauma that resulted from the engagement for both soldiers who experienced the battle and for those at home who viewed the images. Gardner’s photographs were not meant to, and shouldn’t, be viewed as isolated scenes since doing so diminishes their impact as historical documents or objects by critically disconnecting them from their contexts. This means that if we only look at a photograph from the Sunken Road, or Hagerstown Pike, or any other part of the Antietam battlefield, it will give us just a part of the story, and the magnitude of the image’s impact will not be realized. It is only if we consider the photographs as a collection that we can fully understand how terrible the battle was and

¹⁰⁶ Alan Trachtenberg, *Reading American Photographs: Images as History Mathew Brady to Walker Evans*, (New York: Hill & Wang, 1989) p. 74

¹⁰⁷ Alan Trachtenberg, “Albums of War: on Reading Civil War Photographs,” *Representations*, No. 9, (Winter 1985): p. 1

particularly, the effect that seeing the photographs on the wall of Brady's gallery (or in an album) would have had on nineteenth-century viewers.

Although it is useful and fascinating to think about Gardner's photographs individually, Trachtenberg's emphasis on the importance of understanding the seriality of images is especially critical when we think about the function of Gardner's photographs as a commodity that advertised death. This is because the real power of the images of Antietam or any other battle, and their potential as something that is marketable, exists in an understanding of the terribleness of the battle as a whole, which the viewer gains by looking at the entire collection of views in the series, in addition to closely studying the individual photographs. Moreover, photographs such as Gardner's views of the Battle of Antietam (and particularly dead soldiers) cannot exist as a commodity if they are only used or seen as individual objects. They can only function as a commodity or marketable product when they are understood as a collective series that is bought and sold. In fact, it is crucial to understand these photographs as a collective unit to fully understand the power that they held both as a commodity that could be used at home and as a product of the marketplace.

In a similar way, the evolution of photographs as objects for public viewing consumption makes them an important vehicle for establishing cultural meaning.¹⁰⁸ How photographs are consumed is important here as well. Brady and Gardner bought into the recent rise in popularity of the stereograph and the photo album and exploited the seriality of both. Indeed, these products made it possible, and even desirable, for people to view a series of photographic images in the comfort of their own homes, as well in more public forums like a gallery. So popular had stereographs and albums become, in fact, that they came to be seen as a kind of parlor entertainment, particularly in the case of the stereograph which was commonly viewed through a

¹⁰⁸ Trachtenberg, "Albums...", 1985, p. 1

stereoscope. The majority of photographs of the Battle of Antietam, and in fact most Civil War images, were created and sold as either stereographs (stereo cards) or as cabinet cards or *carte de visites* for placement in an album.¹⁰⁹

Brady, Gardner, and others including publishers like E.&H.T. Anthony realized the potential for the marketing and sale of images of Antietam in this way and capitalized on it as early as late 1862. Numerous advertisements for the sale of “Views of the War” appeared in newspapers like the *New York Times*, the *Daily National Intelligencer*, and especially, *Harper’s Weekly*, and *Frank Leslie’s*. Many of these advertisements broadcast the photographs of the war as products for consumption, with phrases like “Views of the War, obtained at great [personal] expense and forming a complete photographic history of the great Union contest.”¹¹⁰ Even more compelling were the labels fixed to the verso side of many photographs that depicted dead soldiers with statements like “Completely Silenced! Dead Confederate Artillerymen, as they lay around their battery after the battle of Antietam.” (**Fig. 19**) In these and many other examples the message is clear - photographs taken of the war, including those of dead soldiers, should be purchased for private viewing in homes across the Union. More significantly, in many cases it was the fact that there were photographs that included dead combatants that was the driving force, or selling point, behind the marketing of the commodity.

To be sure, some of the attraction of being able to buy photographs of dead rebel soldiers (Confederates) could have been driven by the opportunity they provided to consumers to rejoice

¹⁰⁹ A stereograph is a double photograph that is typically viewed through a stereoscope. The viewing of the two images together in this manner creates a three-dimensional kind of effect for the viewer. A *carte de visite* is a portable single image that is roughly the size of a calling card, or today’s wallet portrait photograph. A cabinet card is a larger version of a *carte de visite* often used to populate photo albums or framed to be hung in homes.

¹¹⁰ “Advertisement,” *Harper’s Weekly: A Journal of Civilization*, October 5, 1865; Although dated after the surrender at Appomattox Courthouse, this advertisement is typical of the many that E.&H.T. Anthony ran in *Harper’s Weekly* throughout the war.

over the fallen enemy, (an opportunity that would have been made easier by the fact that it was almost always dead Confederate soldiers who were photographed). On the other hand, however, the conditions of the war where families and communities were literally divided between sides, made that opportunity to celebrate the death of the enemy much more complicated, in addition to the fact that it was so easy to look at the photographs of fallen Confederates and see the loss of their own soldiers. In fact, the words of Sergeant Jacob Fryberger of the 51st Pennsylvania Infantry show us that in at least some cases, victory or rejoicing over the death of the enemy was not felt, rather there was a feeling of unified sadness, and a connection to the lost that superseded any feelings of triumph over the defeat of the enemy. "Before the sunlight faded, I walked over the narrow field. All around lay the Confederate dead...clad in 'butternut'...As I looked down on the poor pinched faces...all enmity died out. There was no 'secession' in those rigid forms nor in those fixed eyes staring at the sky. Clearly it was not their war."¹¹¹ In either case, the situation of the photographs of Antietam as products of consumption is also important because it places Gardner's images as objects that actually functioned as tools of culture, defining and helping to form cultural norms as much as they reflected them.

In addition to the function of the photographs taken of the Battle of Antietam as tools that can confirm cultural meaning (in this case, a specific understanding of battlefield death and the impact of war that was being redefined), their ability to function as objects that can actually create broader contextualized cultural meaning is important to consider. This is typically a reverberation of the experience of viewing the images themselves, and in this case the trauma that results from that viewing experience. The depiction of dead bodies in a photograph like Gardner's views of

¹¹¹ "Eyewitness Account of Sgt. Jacob Fryberger, Company K, 51st Pennsylvania Infantry," Eyewitness to Battle, National Park Service, <https://www.nps.gov/anti/learn/historyculture/eyewitness-to-battle-part-2.htm>, Accessed January 5, 2019

Antietam is notable because there is a break that occurs between a viewer's real, or actual experience with mortality (i.e. seeing ambulances filled with wounded or visiting a battlefield after the fighting ends) and the viewing of the photographic image. Scholar John Berger argues that when a photograph of war is created, whether the Civil War or a more recent conflict, it is "doubly violent." This is because when viewers look at an image of the violence of the war, and then have to return to their daily life, the contrast between the two experiences is so significant that there is no appropriate response to the image that has just been seen. In fact, any realistic response will appear to be wholly inadequate compared to the trauma of the image that has been experienced by the viewer. This discontinuity can even be experienced as a feeling of moral inadequacy.¹¹² It would have been particularly important for a nineteenth-century viewer of pictures of the Battle of Antietam, because of the strict religiosity around which they were accustomed to framing their world. In other words, how can one, particularly one with a strong belief system, view the carnage of Antietam through photographs like *The "Sunken Road" at Antietam* (**Fig. 16**) and *Bodies of Confederate Artillerymen Near Dunker Church* (**Fig. 4**), and then move on with their day as if nothing had happened, and no trauma had occurred either in the image or in their experience? As Berger argues, this juxtaposition means that the photograph, in this case images of the Battle of Antietam, becomes evidence of the human experience whether positively or negatively.¹¹³

It is critical to understand Gardner's photographs themselves in terms of a traumatic experience because the disconnect that Berger speaks of, and that the images are capable of producing, holds an even more significant impact in this case. The wrenching between what a viewer sees in a photographed image and what their understanding of reality is happens anytime a

¹¹² John Berger, "Photographs of Agony," in *The Photographic Reader*, ed. Liz Wells, (London & New York: Routledge, 2003) pp. 288-290

¹¹³ Berger, 2003, p. 290

person looks at a disturbing or shocking image. We experience Berger's "doubly violent" effect when we see a potentially traumatic image today. In fact, in today's terms, we are so used to this rupture that we might not even notice that it is happening. That feeling was even more pronounced in the mid-nineteenth century. Not only did viewers have to grapple with the horrific nature of the photographs and come to terms with at least the potential of recognizing a loved one, they were also trying to deal with the capacity of the new technology of photography to reshape their world, as it invariably did from the 1840s forward.

Oliver Wendell Holmes' account of his experience at the Antietam battlefield and his later writing about it serves as a valuable example here. When Holmes talks in the *Atlantic Monthly* about his frantic trip to the battlefields of Antietam in search of his son he vividly describes the panic, the terror, and the dreadfulness of searching the fields before discovering that his son was safe. It is the traumatic nature of a parent's search in the aftermath of a battle that is notable, an experience shared by many parents and loved ones on both sides. Holmes' description of Gardner's photographs is also compelling. Almost a year after the engagement, he explicates that in one photograph the "ditch was encumbered with dead."¹¹⁴ He talks of the "wrecks of manhood" lying in heaps and laid out carelessly for burial. Many of the men in the images, he acknowledges, will never make it home to their families for a traditional burial. Holmes eloquently gets at the physical and emotional tragedy of the photographs of dead soldiers in a way that few were able to articulate even months after the images were created. He states that seeing Gardner's photographs is akin to visiting the battlefield itself. Holmes writes,

It was nearly like visiting the battlefield to look over these views, that all the emotions excited by the actual site of the stained and sordid scene, strewn with rags and

¹¹⁴Holmes, 1863, pp. 11-12

wrecks, came back to us, and we buried them in the recesses of our cabinet as we would have buried the remains of the dead they too vividly represented.¹¹⁵

Holmes also make allowances for the potential inaccuracy of the views later in his article, but he argues that they do provide viewers with an intimate understanding of what war was really like. Holmes further writes, “the photographic remains of that sad event proved too much like tokens of the real thing to be endured.”¹¹⁶ With his words Holmes encompasses the terror and trauma of people who sent a loved one to battle, many of whom never saw their soldiers again, or heard of their fate. As Trachtenberg points out, the thing that makes the photographs of the Battle of Antietam so unbearable is not so much the gruesome depictions of carnage but what they stand for: “a fissure in Holmes’ [and others] system of belief, the structure by which Northern intellectuals...explained to themselves the unexpected savagery and mass destruction of [the] war.”¹¹⁷ In sum, these photographs represent a new understanding of combat death, as well as demonstrating a radical shift in how the instance of death had to be dealt with which belied traditional beliefs and experiences of death. As mentioned previously, people in the nineteenth century were familiar with death, but they were not familiar with having no control over the aftermath of it or the end of the deceased person’s life. These were cultural practices and beliefs that were firmly entrenched in the strict Protestant belief system that was central to the way that many people in the North defined and lived their lives, and which the Civil War and Gardner’s photographs destabilized.

Gardner’s photographs quickly became central to how people in the North understood the violence and brutality of the war. Holmes’ captivating article was not published in *The Atlantic*

¹¹⁵Holmes, 1863, pp. 12

¹¹⁶ Holmes, 1863, pp. 11-12

¹¹⁷ Trachtenberg, “Albums...,” 1985, p. 8

Monthly until almost a year after the Battle of Antietam. His writing detailed how stereographs brought a concrete experience into homes throughout the United States. He discussed not only the development of photography, “doings of a sunbeam,” but also focused on the way that stereographic images were growing in popularity and being consumed by viewers. That he used Gardner’s stereographic images of the Battle of Antietam as one of his primary examples almost a year after the event situates these photographs as remaining crucial to the popular imagination. Of Gardner’s images Holmes claims,

These wrecks of manhood thrown together in careless heaps or ranged in ghastly rows for burial were alive but yesterday. How dear to their little circles far away most of them! – how little cared for here by the tired party whose office it is to consign them to the earth!¹¹⁸

Holmes knew that by detailing the photographs in his article, combined with a description of his own experience on the battlefield as he searched for his son, he could appeal to the emotions of his readers. This was made even more true at a time when the war was so prevalent in people’s minds as they dealt with the daily concern of soldiers who may never return home, whether to return to their lives or for a proper burial.

It is of course impossible, and unwise, to apply our own sense of horror and trauma at viewing the photographs of Antietam onto the sensibilities of nineteenth-century viewers, and it is critical that we are careful not to do so. Yet Berger’s and Trachtenberg’s arguments carry a great deal of weight and can do much to help us understand the perspective of an audience long gone. Moreover, Holmes words support these arguments by illustrating the way that Civil War photographs were received, experienced, and contextualized psychologically, mentally, and emotionally. Berger’s and Trachtenberg’s ideas are particularly useful in considering how that

¹¹⁸ Holmes, 1863, p. 11

experience is viscerally different from the raw, real experience of seeing an actual death, while at the same time, contributing to a broader cultural understanding of something as esoteric as the experience of death and mourning. Newspapers throughout history have been able to play on this psychology, as did *Harper's Weekly* in their decision to publish woodcut prints based on the photographs of Antietam during the war. As Berger claims, newspapers can and do continue to carry images of war because of the specific effect they have on the audiences that consume them.¹¹⁹

D. THE POWER OF THE PRESS

By the mid-nineteenth century newspapers had taken a firm hold on the American imagination and had become an important conduit for the transmission of information. The rise of the illustrated press with newspapers like *Harper's Weekly* and *Frank Leslie's* in the mid-nineteenth century signaled a further refinement of this function.¹²⁰ Importantly, newspapers are both a tool to convey information as well a building block of communities, and can even help to move or create public opinions and ideas from religious and political debates to broader ideas and platforms that strengthen the unity of the community.¹²¹ One of the ways that illustrated newspapers function in this way is by providing cultural and social information in addition to other information like the news.¹²² Not infrequently, the unity a newspaper provides extends to the confirmation and even the development of cultural ideas and norms. In fact, publications such as newspapers generally function within a community to guide discussion and help to set an agenda for the society in which they exist.¹²³ Nineteenth-century French diplomat and historian Alexis de Tocqueville confirms this understanding: "A newspaper survives only if it echoes a doctrine or

¹¹⁹ Berger, 2003, p. 288

¹²⁰ Mason Jackson, *The Pictorial Press: Its Origin and Progress*, (London: Hurst & Blackett, 1885) p. 4

¹²¹ David Paul Nord, *Communities of Journalism: A History of American Newspapers and Their Readers*, (Urbana & Chicago: University of Illinois Press, 2001) pp. 2-7

¹²² Jackson, 1885, p. 4

¹²³ Thomas C. Leonard, *News for All: America's Coming of Age with the Press*, (New York & Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1995) p. 192

opinion common to a large number of men. Thus, a newspaper always represents an association of which its regular readers make up the membership.”¹²⁴ In the case of newspapers during the Civil War, one of those opinions was the way both the war and death were understood.

The influence of newspapers increased even more by mid-century as displays of advertising began to appear more frequently, and advertisements were increasingly used to exert influence over consumers. Initially, advertisements came pre-set from the advertiser, and publishers only had to provide the space for their publication. As the century progressed, publishers and editors took on an active role in the form and appearance of advertisements, as well as their placement within the paper. By the 1850s and 1860s the form of the paper itself shifted as more distinct demarcations were made between news text, illustrations, and advertisements. This made each individual section stand out more completely against the otherwise chaotic atmosphere of the paper. Moreover, advertisements were used with ever greater frequency to exert influence and control over consumers. This happened at both an economic and a cultural level, making the advertisements themselves venues for determining cultural norms as much as any other part of the publication. Furthermore, by the end of the 1860s, advertisements consistently functioned more and more as markers of the cutting-edge innovations. The advertising of goods, whether dry wares, trinkets, or photographs, became more common as well. This often resulted in a focus on cost over the distinctive quality of the goods, increasingly targeting the “common person” as the consumer. Finally, advertisements were regularly separated from the news section, emphasizing their individual importance in both the publication and in the economic and cultural world overall.¹²⁵

¹²⁴ Alexis de Tocqueville, *Democracy in America*, trans. Gerald Bevan, (London: Penguin Books, 2003) p. 603

¹²⁵ Kevin G. Barhardt, & John Nerone, *The Form of News: A History*, (New York & London: The Guilford Press: 2001) pp. 69-75, 85, 95-98

As journals like *Harper's Weekly* and *Frank Leslie's* increased in distribution and popularity in the mid-nineteenth century, their ability to disseminate both news and cultural ideas grew exponentially.¹²⁶ These papers could logically assume that their readers already had access to, and had read, the daily papers and their contribution to the distribution of information was therefore complementary. Since most illustrated papers were published weekly, they could draw on and enhance the news and information that daily publications, like the *New York Times* and the *Daily National Intelligencer*, had already introduced. One of the ways that publishers accomplished this was through the use of the woodcut prints that were integrated into *Harper's Weekly* and *Frank Leslie's*. These prints gave people a new experience as they read – one which could allow them to gain a greater sense of experiences they had previously only read about and visualize not only people but also places and events like the battles of the Civil War. In essence, the illustrated press gave people a visual sense of what it was like to actually be there during an event. This was critical to the way that readers experienced the Battle of Antietam and the Civil War more broadly.

When *Harper's Weekly* published prints based on Gardner's photographs, the destruction of the war and the grisly nature of war death was no longer an abstract idea for people in the North, who often did not have as direct exposure to the conflict as their Confederate counterparts. Even as Brady's exhibition was launching, the October 18th spread in *Harper's Weekly* provided a stark, albeit romanticized, view of the dead.¹²⁷ The result of this experience was that readers could gain

¹²⁶ Brown, 2002, pp. 23-24

¹²⁷ The characterization of the prints in *Harper's Weekly* as "romanticized" draws on a particular way of understanding imagery that focuses on the aesthetics of an image and the way that the picture will be understood or received by the viewer. In this case, we can think of the *Harper's Weekly* spread of images as romanticized because most of the blunt references to a gory or horrific death have been toned down or removed, and the original image has been modified in such a way as to make it more palatable to look at. While the figures of soldiers depicted in prints like *The Sunken Road* and the *Unburied Confederate/Buried Union Soldier* are clearly deceased, the rawness that is evident in the photographs which speaks to the reality and horror of battlefield death has been glossed over. Even so, the fact that these prints were created from photographs that depicted that reality, and the viewers'

a feeling of having been there from the paper itself. They trusted that the images represented the event accurately because Gardner had been there, and the published prints were based on his photographs. *Harper's Weekly* became another channel to the real, giving people a crucial archive of images that became part of the memory of the war.

To further solidify Gardner's photographs as important to the memory of the war, and therefore the shifting of a cultural norm, the images continued to be exhibited after the fall of 1862. In at least one instance (and it seems probable that there are more) the photographs returned to New York City in a public exhibition. A June 1864 entry in the *New York Times*, as well as an advertisement the following day, declare that photographs by "Mr. Alexander Gardner, Photographer of the Army of the Potomac and his corps of celebrated artists" would be shown by Fallon's Stereopticon at Irving Hall "from original photographs taken in the field." Among the images available for viewing, the June 27th advertisement proclaims, are images of the "Rebel dead at Antietam" as well as the "Irish Brigade at Antietam."¹²⁸ The reference to "rebel dead" is especially striking. For one, while advertisements often appeared for the sale of photographs of the Battle of Antietam even well after the encounter, it was much rarer for them to specifically advertise images of the dead. Moreover, the focus on this aspect of the Antietam collection tells us that Gardner was actively trying to market and sell these images in particular, and that he had sufficient reason to believe that people would want to buy them.

The marketing efforts of Gardner and E.&H.T. Anthony (on behalf of Brady) were substantial, extending into the sphere of mail order catalogs and encompassing manifestations of many of the images throughout the war. As early as late summer 1863 Gardner released a catalog

knowledge of that origin (which is made clear in the caption of the spread) lends weight to their ability to communicate a similar understanding of the scene as Gardner's original photographs.

¹²⁸ "Advertisements," *New York Times*, June 27-28, 1864

under his own name of photographs of the war that could be purchased through his studio. Included was an extensive list of views from Antietam, including photographs of the dead. These catalogs were available through the mail for anyone who wrote to request one. Furthermore, Gardner's early advertisements in the *Daily National Intelligencer* advertised the availability of his catalogs to readers. Similarly, E.&H.T. Anthony sold a catalog of Brady's photographs which included Gardner's photographs of Antietam. E.&H.T. Anthony's catalog was advertised in *Harper's Weekly* in a similar manner as Gardner's Washington DC advertisements. Both catalogs were available to consumers in occasionally updated editions throughout the remainder of the war.

Both Gardner and E.&H.T. Anthony were also known for offering photographic copies that were colored in strategic ways, often creating a copy that was unabashedly splashed with red to indicate the blood of the wounded or dead. One such example of this is a later copy of *Dead of Stonewall Jackson's Brigade by the rail fence on the Hagerstown Pike* (blood added). (**Fig. 20**) In this modified version, the technician added streams of blood coming from the foremost soldier's mouth. The addition of blood makes this image, and others like it, even more gruesome and wrenching for anyone who might have seen or purchased it. More importantly, the addition of color accomplishes two things on an aesthetic level. For one, it adds weight to the idea of the photograph as an image of the real because people were accustomed to understanding their world in color. At the same time, it visually connects the photograph to the painted medium that those in the nineteenth century were familiar with. While these two ideas might appear to be contradictory, they actually worked together to add to the understanding of the modified photograph as an image that was both accurate and emotionally poignant. This further adds to the appeal of the photograph, which relies on the human fascination with traumatic images, as well as the need to see and better understand the war, for its success. Gardner, Brady, and E.&H.T.

Anthony banked on this fascination in the marketing and sale of photographs throughout the war and made a point to market the images to the public in a way that they believed would be effective.

E. CONCLUSION

The photographs of the Battle of Antietam gripped the imagination of an American public entrenched in the undeniably brutal conflict of the Civil War. Although they make up only a small part of the larger collection of photographs taken by Gardner and others during the war, they served an important purpose in both the way that people understood the war, and how the Civil War impacted people's perception of the very real nineteenth-century experience of death and mourning, both logically, and especially as a cultural experience or norm. Importantly, the distribution and sale of Gardner's photographs of soldiers killed in battle is also critical to our understanding of their place in both the history of the war, and even more importantly, the cultural impact of the death it wrought. For the first time photographs of the dead (not just wounded) were not only exhibited to the public as in Brady's exhibition and in the later 1864 Stereopticon, they were marketed to a public that was at once desperate for the war to end, struggling to understand the conflict, and fascinated with both a new technology and the very concept of being able to render an image of the battlefield in all of its gruesome reality.

The photographs of the Battle of Antietam, their publication in the illustrated press, and their third life as a consumer commodity that was confirmed and disseminated through the rising forms of newspapers and advertisements were critical to helping to establish the influence that Civil War photographs of the dead would have on broader cultural understandings of death and mourning. They also set the stage for the creation of similar photographs as the war continued, and later battles like Gettysburg, Spotsylvania, and Petersburg would prompt the production of even more grisly images of death. The following chapter will discuss these in detail and

demonstrate how, beginning with the Battle of Antietam, the totality of photographs of the dead during the Civil War was influential in the shift of the cultural norms that re-characterized the understanding of death and mourning for people in the nineteenth-century North.

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IV. PHOTOGRAPHING THE BATTLES OF GETTYSBURG, SPOTSYLVANIA, AND PETERSBURG

As the Civil War progressed, photographers continued to record it and collected a vast array of images. Opportunities to capture the aftermath of battles in the form of images of dead soldiers, however, were few and far between. In fact, overall, there were only seven battles after which photographic images of the dead were created, and all of those battles were Union victories. Photographs of the combat dead continued to have a significant impact on the northern public as they were marketed and sold on an increasingly regular basis across the Union. This chapter will focus on three of the most influential series of images, those from the Battles of Gettysburg, Pennsylvania, Spotsylvania, Virginia, and Petersburg, Virginia.¹²⁹

A. OVERVIEW OF THE BATTLE OF GETTYSBURG

The Battle of Gettysburg was fought between July 1st and July 3rd, 1863. The town of Gettysburg, Pennsylvania proved rather unexpectedly to be a prime place for a battle because several roads, Emmitsburg Rd, Tanneytown Rd, Baltimore Pike, Hanover Rd, York Rd, Hunterstown Rd, Harrisburg Rd, Newville Rd, Carlisle Rd, Mummasburg Rd, Chambersburg Pike, and Fairfield Rd., came together at that point before they extended like the spokes of a wheel across the Pennsylvania countryside. The roads then radiated in all directions connecting Gettysburg to the rest of Pennsylvania and to Maryland. The Battle of Gettysburg started largely unintentionally as a convergence of the Army of the Potomac and the Army of Northern Virginia. From there it exploded into one of the largest battles of the Civil War, and on United States soil.¹³⁰

¹²⁹ It is not that the images from other encounters are not important, however they are much more scattered and contain significantly smaller groups of images so as to lessen their overall cultural impact .

¹³⁰ Stephen Sears, *Gettysburg*, (Boston & New York: Houghton Mifflin Company, 2003) p. xiv

By the spring/summer of 1863, Robert E. Lee was determined to pull off a successful invasion of the North. He was convinced that a strong maneuver north of the Mason Dixon line would end the war in the Confederacy's favor, even against their much larger enemy (Union firepower was roughly 120,000 versus Confederate firepower of 60,000), and would also help to confirm the validity of a new nation.¹³¹ Lee had also gained a dangerous sense of security in the strength of his army with the Army of Northern Virginia's victory at the Battle of Chancellorsville in May of that year.¹³² As a result Lee became complacent in the weeks immediately preceding the Battle of Gettysburg.¹³³

In contrast to Lee's uncharacteristic lack of preparation, General George Meade had replaced Major General Joseph Hooker as commander of the Army of the Potomac on June 28th, just three days before the Battle of Gettysburg.¹³⁴ Unlike Lee, Meade was well aware of where the Army of Northern Virginia was and the direction of their movements. In fact, many of Meade's officers expected or saw the potential for a clash between the two forces around Gettysburg. On the night of June 30th, Buford, along with several other officers, was concerned about the potential ramifications of an engagement at Gettysburg saying in response to Brigadier General Tom Devin's proclaimed confidence, "No, you won't. They will attack you in the morning and they will come booming – skirmishers three deep. You will have to fight like the devil to hold your own until supports arrive."¹³⁵

The Army of the Potomac and the Army of Northern Virginia came together in a slowly building tempest on July 1st. By the end of the first day of fighting, the Army of Northern Virginia

¹³¹ Bruce Catton, *Gettysburg: The Final Fury*, (New York: Vintage Civil War Library, 1974) pp. 4-6; James McPherson, *Battle Cry of Freedom: The Civil War Era*, (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1988) pp. 638-640

¹³² Catton, 1974, pp. 4-6

¹³³ McPherson, 1988, pp. 646-650

¹³⁴ McPherson, 1988, p. 652

¹³⁵ Sears, 2003, pp. 143-144, 153

had established a clear victory over the Army of the Potomac as they held or took control over most of the field, including the town of Gettysburg.¹³⁶ On July 2nd, the conflict generated even more movement between both armies. By the end of the second day of the conflict, the Army of the Potomac held the important location of Cemetery Ridge and had established much of the dominance that they lacked on July 1st. The tide of the battle appeared to have turned in the Union's favor. That evening, after the armies had suspended fighting, both Lee and Meade assessed their options and their strategies for moving forward. Lee decided that the best tactic for securing a chance for a victory was an all-out assault on the Army of the Potomac, a maneuver has since become known as Picket's Charge. On July 3rd the advancement did not begin until around 1:00 in the afternoon. The outcome was disastrous for Lee's forces as Confederate troops were subjected to substantial fire from Union defensive lines and sustained heavy casualties. By the end of the assault, more than half of the men in most of the regiments involved were lost, and the Union took control of the field. Combined with victories on Culp's Hill and other areas of the field, the Army of the Potomac ended the day with a victory over the Army of Northern Virginia. The toll of the battle was devastating on both sides, resulting in 23,000 Union casualties, over one quarter of Union strength, and 28,000 casualties on the Confederate side, more than one third of Lee's army.¹³⁷

The Battle of Gettysburg was one of the most significant Union victories of the Civil War, and the Confederacy struggled to regain an upper hand after the loss. This was bolstered by a second Union victory that was strategically even more critical to the overall success of the Union armies. In May of that year, the Union had taken the town of Vicksburg, Mississippi under siege and captured it on July fourth, just as the Battle of Gettysburg was ending in Pennsylvania. After

¹³⁶ Catton, 1974, pp. 32-33

¹³⁷ McPherson, 1988, pp. 660-664

Vicksburg fell, the garrison of Port Hudson down river from the town fell on July ninth which gave control of the Mississippi River to the Union. The victory at the Battle of Gettysburg and the success of the Vicksburg Campaign, put the Union in a strong position in both the Eastern and the Western theaters.¹³⁸

The photographic archive that was produced in the wake of the Battle of Gettysburg would demonstrate to viewers the enormous physical cost of the engagement. Moreover, these images would help to situate the Battle of Gettysburg as one of the notable engagements of the war and would continue to reveal to Northerners the reality of the human toll of the war. Like those taken after the Battle of Antietam, the photographs stood the test of time and were marketed and sold throughout the duration of the war. They would also continue to be published and sold in a variety of ways after the war finally ended.

B. PHOTOGRAPHING GETTYSBURG

Alexander Gardner, who had opened his own studio in Washington, DC in the spring of 1863, arrived at nearby Gettysburg (a little over 85 miles away) on July 5, 1863, just two days after the battle ended. With him were photographers James Gibson, who had previously worked with Gardner at the Battle of Antietam, and Timothy O'Sullivan. O'Sullivan was a talented photographer in his own right and had spent the majority of the war to date in Mathew Brady's employ. Gibson was also a practiced photographer, having worked closely with Gardner for some time. Both men followed Gardner from Brady's studio when Gardner and Brady split. The reasons for O'Sullivan's and Gibson's decisions to move with Gardner are not conclusively known. Scholar of Civil War photography William Frassanito and others have speculated, convincingly, that it was likely due to Gardner's willingness to properly credit his photographers for their work,

¹³⁸ McPherson, 1988, pp. 363-368, 665

a practice that Brady refused to do in his studio. One way that Gardner accomplished this in the chaotic nature of the battlefield was to number and organize the photographs that he and his team created with a system that included the photographer's name in the identification.¹³⁹

Because they arrived on the field so close to the end of the fighting, Gardner and his team were able to capture several photographs of the dead before the burial teams had completed their work. The caption of one early image, *Farmer's Inn and Hotel Emmitsburg, July 5, 1863* (**Fig. 21**) confirms his early arrival in the area. In fact, it has been speculated that Gardner arrived so soon after the battle ended that there was not even a guide or other knowledgeable person available to show the photographers where the most important areas of the conflict were.¹⁴⁰ In contrast, Brady's team did not arrive at Gettysburg until around July 15th, well after the dead were buried.¹⁴¹ In a reflection of his timing, as well as his interests, none of Brady's photographs include dead bodies on the field, but focus instead on the landscape of the field and the buildings of the town.

Gardner's focus, on the other hand, was primarily on capturing images of dead soldiers before they were buried, and his timing after the battle was crucial to securing those images. He and his team focused largely on the areas of the battlefield where action had taken place on July 2nd and 3rd. Frassanito, who has spent a majority of his career determining exactly where many of the photographs from Gettysburg and other battles were taken and how photographers like Gardner and O'Sullivan worked, has determined that Gardner did not create any images of dead soldiers in the areas of the field where fighting occurred on the first day. This was probably for two very practical reasons rather than by intentional exclusion. For one thing, Rose Woods and the area

¹³⁹ Bob Zeller, *The Blue and Gray in Black and White: A History of Civil War Photography*, (Westport, CT & London: Praeger, 2005) pp. 104-107

¹⁴⁰ William Frassanito, *Gettysburg: A Journey in Time*, (Gettysburg, PA: Thomas Publications, 1975) pp. 25, 33

¹⁴¹ Zeller, 2005, p. 104

around Little Round Top were very likely the first areas Gardner came to when he arrived. For another thing, many of the bodies of the fallen from the first day on the field were almost certainly already taken care of by the time Gardner arrived on July 5th.¹⁴²

Gardner and his men took roughly sixty photographs of the Gettysburg battlefield between July 5th and their departure on July 7th. Seventy-five percent of those images include either corpses or the graves of soldiers.¹⁴³ In fact, some of the best-known Civil War images come from Gardner's team in the first days after the battle. One of the most well-known images of the Civil War, *Harvest of Death* (**Fig. 22**), was taken by Timothy O'Sullivan. The image graphically demonstrates the reality of death wrought by war, and its effects on those who suffered that fate. O'Sullivan framed his photograph in such a way that it would be easily understood by a population that was accustomed to the lines and forms of a painter's brush as the composition moves the viewer's eye from front to back beginning with the foremost figures who lay splayed in death on the battlefield. Although O'Sullivan was not one who was interested in the artistic nature of an image (throughout his career he was much more driven by the documentary possibilities of the photograph), he was aware that the use of the visual language of painting would easily be understood by those who saw his images.

Across the picture frame there are at least seven (and likely more) bodies lying in the field as if they had been reduced to refuse. While several of them are indistinct due to both the position into which they fell and their placement within the picture frame, the viewer can easily gain a sense of their contorted nature with even a brief look. The central figure in the photograph is the single most distinct as he lays in the front and center of the frame. In this case, the death mask of the soldier's agonized gaze confronts the viewer without apology. We can see not only the position

¹⁴² Frassanito, 1975, p. 224

¹⁴³ Frassanito, 1975, p. 27

of his death, but also the tortured expression that was present on his face in the last moment of life. His mouth gapes open in a grotesque way and a viewer can almost hear the silent scream of agony. His eyes are closed, and the rest of his body is splayed out in a spread eagle. Next to him we see the legs of another soldier, and to the left of that, a third body is noticeable, although it is cut off by the edge of the picture frame. That the soldier's body lies very close to that of the soldier behind him further magnifies the feeling of chaotic clutter of the battlefield. As a viewer's gaze moves back into the image, more bodies can be seen scattered carelessly across the field, confirming both the magnitude of the human toll and the chaos, and perceived isolation of death on the battlefield. O'Sullivan was careful in his composition as well and he made use of lines of formal composition, perspective, and depth of field to create a photograph that spoke to the viewer in the well-understood language of painting composition. This attention to composition further adds to the impact of the photograph because it functions within a visual vocabulary that makes the unfamiliar reality of the subject (battlefield death) more easily understood.

O'Sullivan photograph *Home of a Rebel Sharpshooter* (**Fig. 23**) is even more intriguing, because it points to a particular characteristic of many Civil War images that include bodies. The bodies were sometimes moved. The image is gripping. A single soldier lies wedged between two rock outcroppings, and in front of what appears to be a "snipers nest." The isolation of the soldier coupled with the cramped space into which he is placed is particularly representative of the risks and consequences of the select few who served as sharpshooters or snipers on both sides of the conflict. Here again, the photograph is well composed. The picture plane is shallow, which brings the viewer's gaze to the soldier in a way that is both nuanced and uncompromising. He is laid out carefully with his head on a knapsack. His head rests against the stone wall of the rocky crevice and is turned to face the viewer in an unnatural position. His feet rest against the opposite rock

wall. Behind him a viewer can see a man-made rock wall, the sniper's nest, which faces Little Round Top and the Slaughter Pen on the opposite side. A rifle has been placed carefully, no doubt by Gardner or O'Sullivan. While it is not the rifle a sniper would use, it does confirm the purpose of the enclave. Despite the uncomfortable position of his body, he appears to be at peace, and there is no blood or mutilation evident to the casual observer. In fact, if a viewer did not know better, he appears to be sleeping rather than deceased. Interestingly, he has been posed in a way that speaks loosely to the formal tropes of many images from the Christian tradition – in this case the Lamentation found in many late Medieval and Renaissance paintings. This is significant because the positioning of the body would have been recognizable to 19th century viewers in the same way that the formal elements of composition would have been easily readable. It also situates the soldier as one connected to a Christian way of life, and more significantly, one who might have died a Good Death. The close cropping of the picture frame belies the chaos of the battle but magnifies the loneliness of death in war.

The photograph tells us of the particular danger and isolation of the work of a sniper in the war theater – he is alone and, if we take the image at face value, he died that way as well, without even the comfort of his fellow soldiers in the last moments of his life, let alone his loved ones. Frassanito's careful research into the image tells us, however, that there is much more to consider here. Frassanito discovered that the body was deliberately positioned by Gardner, and most likely Gibson, based on the careful placement of a knapsack underneath his head and the fact that the wall that was meant to create the sniper's position could not have served a functional purpose in that context. To add to this, the rifle that was so carefully placed next to the soldier is not a sniper's

rifle but a Springfield musket which would have been used principally by infantrymen rather than snipers.¹⁴⁴

To the twenty-first century mind the fact that Gardner so obviously staged this photograph is disturbing and deeply problematic. After all, it flies in the face of the understanding that a photograph of war, or any other current event, should only depict reality in the most unmediated way possible. It is important to remember though, that viewers in the nineteenth century almost certainly would not have understood the image in this way, even if they knew that it was deliberately composed (and it is very possible that they did not realize this aspect of the image). While the photograph is not real in the sense that Gardner did not just happen on the scene and record it (something that happened in many Civil War photographs), it does demonstrate in a visual way the circumstances of the war and the conditions under which many men died. It symbolically gets to the reality of war, which made as much of an impact on viewers' understanding of the war and the death that it brings as did those images which were not staged. As Susan Sontag points out, "If we admit as authentic only photographs that result from the photographer's having been nearby, shutter open, at just the right moment, few victory photographs will qualify Either way, the photograph retains its period charm and authenticity as a celebration of a vanished ideal of national fortitude and sangfroid."¹⁴⁵ Although Sontag is specifically talking about celebratory photographs like the raising of the flag on Iwo Jima in February, 1945 at the end of World War II, her assertion that a photograph retains its "period charm" is important because it demonstrates the fact that photographs are understood as "real," even if they are found to have been posed. The authentic nature of a photograph, whether in celebration of a victory or documenting a tragedy like war death, gains its power from the way that it is perceived by the viewer. It is for this reason that

¹⁴⁴ Frassanito, 1975, pp. 190-192

¹⁴⁵ Susan Sontag, *Regarding the Pain of Others*, (New York City: Farrar, Straus, & Giroux, 2003) pp. 56-57;

O'Sullivan's photograph of the Confederate soldier lying dead in Devils Den, or any other posed photographs of fallen Civil War soldiers, retain their power and impact as a visual image that can not only inform the viewer, but influence the way they understand war and the death that surrounds it.

The Field Where General Reynolds Fell (**Fig. 24**) is similar to *Harvest of Death* compositionally but it demonstrates yet another tendency found in many photographs from the War. Like *Harvest of Death*, the field in this photograph is scattered with the bodies of soldiers left waiting for burial (which may or may not happen). The bodies here are much closer to the front edge of the picture plane. In the middle of the group a soldier's head is thrown back with mouth gaping open in the rigor of death, while the arms of each figure are spread in varying positions. It is possible to see not only the expression of at least two of the faces, but also to imagine that they might be identifiable if seen by a loved one. The viewer's eye is moved from front to back by the arrangement of figures. In this case, however, it is easier to see the details of at least the first two bodies in the photograph as they lay splayed across grass that also seems to have died. Further back, the figures become more obscured, yet it is still possible to discern the shapes and composition of the soldiers as they lay. O'Sullivan again used the elements of detailed foreground and muted background to draw his viewer's eye into the frame, giving those looking at the image in the 19th century a comfortable reference (that of painting) through which to see a traumatic and decidedly uncomfortable circumstance. The desolation of the battlefield is evident. Given the timing of the battle in midsummer a viewer might even imagine the terrible heat and humidity in which these men fought and died.

When O'Sullivan and Gibson created this photograph, they captured again the remnants of the field of battle. What is particularly compelling about the image, however, is the title that

Gardner gave it when the image was published in 1866. By titling the photograph “The Field Where General Reynolds Fell,” Gardner isolates the scene as a place of particular importance – namely where a Union officer was killed during the battle.¹⁴⁶ There are two things at issue with this particular attribution, however. First and foremost, the location of the photograph was not actually the place where General Reynolds was killed. More importantly, by giving the image the distinction of being the location of the death of an officer, Gardner negates the significance of the unknown soldiers that we can see pictured in the frame, rendering them forever nameless and indistinct. It was not uncommon for portions of battlefields to be identified and remembered based not only on significant parts of a battle (Picket’s Charge for example) but also based on their distinction of being the place of death of officers who fell during the battle. Gardner uses just this trope when he titles the photograph, forever linking this section of the battlefield to the death of an officer, regardless of whether or not this is actually where Reynolds fell.

We do not know why Gardner chose to title the photograph in this way, but it was likely a marketing ploy to make the image more compelling to viewers. With the name of an important officer attached to the image, it might sell because people would strive to possess the actual location of such a notable event. What is unfortunate here, however, is the rendering of those pictured as nameless, a common additional casualty of war throughout history. Remember the officers and the heroes, forget the hundreds and thousands of common foot soldiers who also died. The men who are actually depicted here remain nameless – forever captured in visual history on a field that does not even acknowledge either their life or their death.

These are just a few of the many photographs that Gardner and his team created in the days after the Battle of Gettysburg. Overall, the team focused on a relatively small area of the field,

¹⁴⁶ Incidentally, Reynolds was also the first officer killed at the Battle of Gettysburg and lost his life on July first.

apparently moving from Rose's Farm, to Devil's Den to Little Round top. On July 7th they photographed the area around Little Round Top.¹⁴⁷ Most likely, they simply did not have time to both survey the field widely and also capture photographs of the bodies before they were buried. They were, however, the only photographers to cover the far southern portion of the field, particularly the areas south and west of Rose Farm and the Rose Woods. Because they arrived so soon after the end of the battle, Gardner's images are also much closer to what the soldiers may have actually seen on the field as they fought.¹⁴⁸ In addition to the disturbing images, Gardner and his team took several images of the field before leaving. Interestingly, although Brady arrived on the field much later than Gardner, he actually was able to scoop him in the end by getting his own photographs published in *Harper's Weekly* well before Gardner could.¹⁴⁹ In fact, Gardner's images were not reproduced in the paper until July 22, 1865 with the publication of a print based on *Harvest of Death*, although the photographs were sold through catalogues and advertisements throughout the war.¹⁵⁰ **(Fig. 25)**

Brady's speed in getting his own photographs converted into prints and published in *Harper's Weekly* certainly gave him an advantage in the public eye because it further confirmed his position as the photographer of the Civil War. However, the fact that *Harvest of Death*, was converted into a print and published two years after the battle suggests that there remained an extended interest in the images of dead soldiers that Gardner and his colleagues were producing. Critically, it confirms that they had a reverberating effect on the public that mirrors the ongoing impact of the Antietam photographs of the dead. Too, the print based on Gardner's photograph

¹⁴⁷ Zeller, 2005, p. 107

¹⁴⁸ Frassanito, 1975, pp. 33-34

¹⁴⁹ Zeller, 2005, p. 111

¹⁵⁰ "The Harvest of Death, Gettysburg (Photographed by Gardner, Washington)," *Harper's Weekly: A Journal of Civilization*, July 22, 1865

was published in the same issue of *Harper's Weekly* as was a report about the laying of the Soldier's Monument at Gettysburg and a report about the execution of the conspirators in Lincoln's assassination, with prints of the event based on Gardner's photographs. The confluence of these images and reports further places the continuing importance of them at the forefront of the understanding of the war.

C. THE BATTLE OF SPOTSYLVANIA COURTHOUSE

The Battle of Spotsylvania Courthouse near Spotsylvania, Virginia lasted more than two weeks from May 8th to May 20th 1864. It came just four days after the horrors of the nearby Battle of the Wilderness, a group of engagements that decimated troops and resources. By this point of the war, Lee had been forced to shift his tactics in an attempt to lessen his losses as he came face to face with General Ulysses S. Grant, who had taken over the Army of the Potomac. Lee was not the only one who found himself up against his equal for the first time. In fact, both Grant and Lee suddenly found themselves pitted against an opponent that was far more formidable than any they had encountered up to this point.¹⁵¹ Grant had come from his position in the Western theater with a strong reputation and had been responsible for the successful capture of Vicksburg, Mississippi as well as a number of other effective engagements. He also had the upper hand due to recent Union success in the Eastern theater and simply needed to maintain his own strength while Lee had to try to shift the balance in favor of the Confederacy.

The fighting in many areas of the battle was vicious and would go down in the annals of history as some of the worst many soldiers had seen, according to personal accounts. An unknown Union officer was known to write of the battle, "I never expect to be fully believed when I tell what I saw of the horrors of Spotsylvania, because I would be loathe to believe it myself were the

¹⁵¹ Joseph Wheelan, *Bloody Spring: Forty Days that Sealed the Confederacy's Fate*, (Boston: Da Capo Press, 2014) p. 151

case reversed.” One of the worst areas became known as the Bloody Angle where soldiers were forced into hand to hand combat as rain poured down on them. According to accounts, the field quickly became a sea of rain, blood, and bodies and men struggled to gain the upper hand in any way that they could. Soldiers who were assigned to burial detail afterward talked of piles of dead soldiers, in one case 150 bodies piled into an area of a trench that measured 200 feet square. There were so many that they were later buried by pushing a parapet over on top of them, sealing them in a mass grave.¹⁵²

One of the last encounters of the extended Battle of Spotsylvania was the much less known Battle of Harris’s Farm which occurred on May 19, 1864, just at the end of the larger engagement.¹⁵³ It was here that Timothy O’Sullivan created his series of six photographs of dead soldiers. By the time of this last engagement, both Grant and Lee had realized that the larger encounter was at a stalemate. The Union casualties at Harris’s farm exceeded 1,400 men killed, wounded, captured, or missing. In contrast, Confederate losses were closer to 900 men. However, the toll was much more detrimental to the Confederates because the South’s resources, both human and otherwise, were already so severely diminished. This is significant because when O’Sullivan arrived on May 20th, he took most of his photographs, and all of his death studies in the area of the Battle of Harris’s Farm.¹⁵⁴ Carol Reardon argues that the visual images of death became entrenched in the memory of those who were at Harris’s Farm, and the Battle of Spotsylvania more broadly. Men described the unimaginable carnage and held on to it forever after the war. Many of the men who fought at Harris’s farm fought shoulder to shoulder as they had been trained, and

¹⁵² McPherson, 1988, p. 730

¹⁵³ Gary Gallagher, “I Have to Make the Best of What I Have: Robert E. Lee at Spotsylvania,” in *The Spotsylvania Campaign: Military Campaigns of the Civil War*, ed. Gary Gallagher, (Chapel Hill & London: University of North Carolina Press, 1998) p. 5

¹⁵⁴ Frassanito, 1983, pp. 108-109

this resulted in a death toll that was particularly high. Reardon further asserts that the Battle of Spotsylvania actually made veterans from the North reconsider what it meant to die in battle. The battlefield was far more horrific than any had imagined. No longer was battlefield death something to be honored and even to strive for. Rather it was an unfathomable horror to be avoided at all costs as soldiers saw their comrades dismembered, crushed, or even pulverized by canisters, mini balls, and other artillery. For many, the death and destruction of Battles like Spotsylvania and Harris's Farm reached a point whose magnitude they could not even comprehend. An unknown Union private wrote in his diary after Spotsylvania, "I have seen so much that can't nor will put it in this book. I will seal this in my memory by myself. God have mercy on those who started this cruel war."¹⁵⁵ Moreover, the visual reminder of the conflict in O'Sullivan's photographs not only solidified, but also continued, the terror of the battlefield long after the battle and the war were over.

D. THE PHOTOGRAPHS OF THE BATTLE OF SPOTSYLVANIA

A large number of the photographs taken after the Battle of Spotsylvania which include images of dead soldiers were taken around the area of James Alsop's Farm near the engagement at Harris's Farm. All were taken by Timothy O'Sullivan within his position as a photographer for Gardner's studio. Although O'Sullivan only created six photographs of dead soldiers, they are some of the most poignant because three of the six focus on the same two soldiers. These images are taken from different viewpoints and highlight the isolation that so often comes with a battlefield death. We can see this isolation drawn out starkly in O'Sullivan's *One of Ewell's Corps as He Lay on the Field After the Battle of the 19th of May, Spotsylvania*. (**Fig. 26**) The dead soldier in

¹⁵⁵ Carol Reardon, "A Hard Road to Travel: The Impact of Continuous Operations on the Army of the Potomac and the Army of Northern Virginia in May 1864," in *The Spotsylvania Campaign: Military Campaigns of the Civil War*, ed. Gary Gallagher, (Chapel Hill & London: University of North Carolina Press, 1998) pp. 191-195

this photograph lies alone in the field, surrounded only by dried grass and foliage that also appears to have died. O'Sullivan framed the image so that the viewer's focus is entirely on the soldier. He is placed in the extreme forefront of the image so that his head, which rests on a backpack of haversack, confronts the viewer first. His expression is almost peaceful, with eyes and mouth appearing closed. This peacefulness is further magnified by the placement of the pack under his head, which gives the viewer the feeling that his body was treated with care by someone (perhaps O'Sullivan). Where it not for the awkward placement of the soldier's hands, which are raised as if he is trying to ward off death, he would almost seem to be asleep. A gun is laid across his legs as if he fell backward after being hit. Next to him lie a canteen and hat. In the foremost corner of the photograph a viewer can see papers lying in the field which bring to mind the suggestion of a last letter from home fallen out of the bag. Based on the positioning of the gun and the placement of the soldier's head on the sack, it is more than likely that O'Sullivan placed them there – it is unrealistic to suppose that he simply fell and died this way on the field of battle. Even so, the photograph marks the loneliness and perceived isolation that comes from dying on the field of battle. That this is most probably staged does not detract from the nuanced representation of what this kind of death means for the soldier and for those at home. While he might not have died alone, he is alone in death, and the absence of even other bodies speaks volumes.

It is thought that O'Sullivan took all six photographs in this series just after the end of the fighting, on the morning of May 20, 1864. According to Frassanito, who studied the photographs taken during the Overland Campaign in a similar way to his studies of the photographs of the Battles of Antietam and Gettysburg, O'Sullivan most likely simply "got lucky" by being in close enough proximity to this area of the fighting that he was able to make it to Alsop's farm before the

burial crews had completed their work.¹⁵⁶ O'Sullivan had been around the Beverly House, field headquarters of the 5th Corps on May 19th,¹⁵⁷ so it would have been easy for him to shift his operation to the Alsop farm on the 20th. Frassanito also contends that O'Sullivan most likely chose this area to photograph because burial operations were already too far advanced in other parts of the battlefield or, more likely, because other parts of the field contained a larger number of Union soldiers rather than Confederate.¹⁵⁸ Frassanito notes:

One might wonder why O'Sullivan selected the Alsop-farm site to record his death studies, and not the Harris Farm, Perhaps he visited the Harris Farm first and found burial operations there too far advanced (or already completed) to secure the kind of studies he apparently was seeking. Or perhaps the unburied dead he encountered in the vicinity of Harris's farm were Union, a subject Northern photographers generally tended to avoid if presented with a choice. The latter suggestion correlates well with the fact that one of Ewell's deepest penetrations into the Union lines during the battle occurred near the Alsop house. Thus, for anyone seeking readily accessible concentrations of Confederate dead, the Alsop farm would have been the place to visit.¹⁵⁹

As Frassanito has determined based on positions on the field and clothing where possible, the soldiers O'Sullivan photographed around Alsop's farm were all Confederate soldiers. His argument makes sense as well because of the fact that in most instances of war, and certainly during the Civil War, it has been seen as a mark of respect and honor to refrain from photographing the fallen soldiers of your own army when possible. Although the bodies of Confederate soldiers were often photographed in such a way that preserves their dignity in death, there was no such prohibition against photographing the fallen of the enemy.

There were roughly 2,300 casualties in the area around Harris's farm overall. The few images that O'Sullivan captured are made even more significant in their uniqueness because his

¹⁵⁶ Frassanito, 1983, p. 113

¹⁵⁷ Zeller, 2005, p. 140

¹⁵⁸ Frassanito, 1983, p. 113

¹⁵⁹ Frassanito, 1982, p. 113

sequential organization and framing of each photograph allows a viewer to imagine the scene that they are confronted with, and therefore better connect with it. O'Sullivan posed the bodies in some of his photographs at Spotsylvania in a way that was similar to the posing that he and Gardner did in the death studies of Gettysburg.¹⁶⁰ For one, the placement of a musket across the body as a prop in *Dead Confederate Infantryman Near Alsops Farmhouse, Battle of Spotsylvania, 1864*. (Fig. 27) The reasoning behind this and other instances of posing bodies is similar – while it strays from twenty-first century expectations of “accurate documentation,” it does situate the body as being on the field of battle in what otherwise might be a more obscure location.

The soldier in the picture frame here is laid out among a pile of logs, brush, or a broken fence. Timbers lay to his right, suggesting that he fell within a broken fence during the battle. He lies on his back with his head thrown back in a nuanced image of death. His mouth is slightly open, but he does not seem to be in agony, as if his death was quick. A rifle rests between his right leg and the timbers. His cloths are tattered and worn, a close look reveals holes in his shirt. He is alone, with no evidence of the battle around him save for the rifle and his deceased state. Although he lies to the far right side of the frame, the composition is almost artistic as he appears to have fallen (or been placed) in a position that recalls a Christian Pieta or Lamentation. His features are hidden by the position of his head so that a viewer cannot easily see the full scope of his face. Bits of dead grass and wood surround his resting place and a rock or broken canteen lie next to him on the ground. Moreover, the placing of weapons and posing the dead body speaks to the representative understanding of the reality of war that so many people were just beginning to understand.

¹⁶⁰ Zeller, 2005, p. 140

O'Sullivan used a stereo camera for three of his six images of dead soldiers, including the photograph of ten bodies lined up for burial and images of soldiers collecting bodies for burial. The use of a stereo camera in this instance, or any instance of recording the war or other event is important. Stereographs (the photographs created by this multi-lens camera) had become popular on both sides of the Atlantic in the early 1850s after they were embraced by Queen Victoria and were designed for use in the home. The dual photograph created by the camera presented the viewer with a three dimensional image when it was viewed by a stereoscope – giving the viewer a sense of being in the scene that had never before been possible and adding yet another dynamic to the experience of looking at a photograph. Stereographs and stereoscopes became so popular by the Civil War, in fact, that they were often found in parlors where they became a kind of parlor entertainment. In fact, the format of this kind of photographic image was made specifically for this kind of use. The fact that O'Sullivan and others frequently created stereographs of the Civil War, including those of dead bodies, speaks strongly to the understanding of this format as one that would drive the market and sale of the photographs. Critically, O'Sullivan was catering to the marketability of photographs of the dead by creating stereographic images of them – further confirming the development of photographs of the dead as a marketable commodity for the public.

The photographs of the dead that O'Sullivan took after Spotsylvania can actually be broken into two categories. The first is soldiers lying on the field, having not been “collected” by the burial parties. One of these is quite similar to *Dead Confederate Infantryman Near Alsop's Farmhouse, Battle of Spotsylvania, 1864* in composition. In *Dead Confederate Soldier Near Mrs. Alsop's House, Spotsylvania, May 20* (**Fig. 28**) we see two soldiers laid out near an old fence or a pile of wood. This image actually provides us with a second view of the previous photograph and adds yet another piece to the story that is being told. The soldier in the foreground of the

photograph is the same soldier that we see in the previous photograph, yet here we see him in profile. The camera has been pulled back so that a viewer can glimpse the field where he lies, muddled as the image appears to be. To the soldier's left lies the body of another soldier, although all distinguishing marks have been erased by the distance of the view so that it is just barely apparent that a body lies there. The brush and timbers surrounding the scene give a sense of destruction and isolation, as if these two men died separated from their unit(s). These two photographs also serve as an example of a common practice among O'Sullivan, Gardner, and many other photographers of the Civil War. They would frequently photograph the same scene, and particularly the same group of bodies from multiple angles in order to obtain the most riveting perspective. This speaks to a commitment to capture the war in the most effective way possible so that those who saw or purchased the images gained a real sense of the reality of the war. In this case, the two perspectives each tell a part of the terrible story of the battle – one which gives a viewer an intimate, personal understanding of the loneliness of dying, and one which gives a sense of the broader picture of the aftermath of that death (burial).

The second group includes a few photographs of dead soldiers who have already been collected and laid out for burial. *Confederate Dead Laid Out for Burial Near Mrs. Alsop's Farm, May 20th* (**Fig. 29**) is part of the second “series” of photographs of the dead that O'Sullivan captured at Spotsylvania. In this image, the dead are laid out in an organized fashion waiting for burial. The viewer can see the line of bodies reaching into the back of the frame as the soldiers are laid out against a patch of brush. They appear almost desiccated to a viewer's eye, as if they have been lying there for a while. The line of bodies draws the viewer's gaze into the photograph, moving them from front to back in a way that is again reminiscent of the visual tools used by painters. The body in the close foreground is of course, the most distinct. He lays on his back.

His head is thrown back, in this case, emphasizing the limpness of death. Next to him, another figure lies in a similar position. As the line moves back into the picture frame, the bodies become increasingly less distinct, and the last few appear as little more than piles of refuse. We can count at least seven bodies, however only the features of the first are distinguishable, as is his arm which is splayed to his side. The brush behind the line of bodies and the building in the background of the image give the viewer a bit of context as they suggest that the group of bodies lies, not in the middle of a barren field, but in a farmer's yard. Further adding to the complexity of the image is the small group of figures standing to the very far right of the picture frame, perhaps the burial party, read to complete their task. The arrangement of the bodies is especially informative because it points to the method of burial that was frequently used, as burial parties grouped and laid out large numbers of bodies before placing them in often shallow graves, or even trenches that became a mass grave for the lost.

Like Gardner's photographs from the Battle of Antietam, three of O'Sullivan's images were converted into woodcut prints and published in *Harper's Weekly* on July 9, 1864 (**Fig. 30**). The photographs are part of a larger vignette of images taken during the Virginia Campaign which includes representations of each of the three kinds of photographs of dead soldiers from The Battle of Harris's Farm. O'Sullivan's photograph of bodies laid out for burial anchors the collage with its position in the bottom left of the page. Meanwhile, both of the photographs from O'Sullivan's series which focus on individual soldiers are also included. The body in the field occupies the bottom center and the soldier propped against a pile of wood sits in the bottom right corner. Together they tie the rest of the composition, which otherwise includes various images of camp and regiment life, together. The inclusion of the photographs of dead bodies in this vignette tells us that Gardner, O'Sullivan, and the publishers of *Harper's Weekly*, all well understood the

potential impact of this kind of imagery. Playing off the success and reception of Gardner's images from Antietam in 1862, the photographs of those killed at the Battle of Spotsylvania continued the visual narrative begun after Antietam and worked to further solidify photographs of the dead as a marketable commodity.

E. OVERVIEW OF THE BATTLE OF PETERSBURG

The Battle of Petersburg, Virginia in March 1865 was the culmination of a siege on the town that began in the summer of 1864 and extended through the end of March 1865. The engagement was made up of several encounters, including the Battle of the Crater, and culminated with the Battle over Forts Mahone and Sedgewick. Fort Mahone was a simple Confederate earthen fortification that was situated just ahead of the Confederate line outside of Petersburg and west of Jerusalem Plank Road. Fewer than 700 yards away lay the Union Fort Sedgewick which straddled Jerusalem Plank Road. Casualties for the engagement overall were heavy with about 8,150 Union and 3,236 Confederate lost. The Union had achieved greater success in other areas of the Petersburg front, however. In the face of Union success, Lee became convinced that both Petersburg and nearby Richmond were lost. He further believed that prolonging the defense of the two towns would only put his army at greater risk. He decided to abandon both cities and retreat to the west in a desperate attempt to save his army.¹⁶¹

By the morning of April 3rd, it became clear to Union troops, and especially to Grant, that all Confederate positions had been abandoned. Even in the face of victory, the Army of the Potomac did not hold the same strength that it had in previous battles at the Wilderness and Spotsylvania. In fact, according to McPherson, it was not at all the same army in the spring of 1865 because so many of its best soldiers and commanders had been killed or wounded. Roughly

¹⁶¹ Frassanito, 1983, pp. 340-341

65,000 Union soldiers had been killed, wounded, or gone missing since the Battle of Spotsylvania in May 1864. Moreover, many enlistments had either ended or were coming to an end that spring. This equated to about three fifths of the casualties that occurred during the previous three years combined.¹⁶² The Union won the final Battle of Petersburg, and likely captured that city and Richmond, only because Lee made the decision to retreat and abandon his position rather than risk the complete destruction of his army. In this sense, the culmination of the Petersburg engagement was one of attrition more than a demonstration of either army's military strength.

F. PHOTOGRAPHS FROM THE BATTLE OF PETERSBURG

By late 1864, both Gardner and Brady had pulled most of their photographers out of the front of the Eastern theater indefinitely, partly due to the coming winter and the reduced number of engagements in that season.¹⁶³

The complete absence of photographs dating from this period [late March 1865-April 3, 1865] should come as no surprise when one considers that few if any opportunities for safe documentation of battlefield subjects surfaced prior to the Confederate evacuation of the area [Richmond-Petersburg, VA] ... Sometime near the end of November or in early December, 1864, Brady's firm, like Gardner's three months before, indefinitely closed down the major portion of its Virginia operation.¹⁶⁴

As a result, only a few photographers were still active on the front by late March 1865.

One of the photographers still working in the field was the little-known T.C. Roche. Formerly employed by Brady, Roche had begun working directly for E.&H.T. Anthony sometime prior to April 1865.¹⁶⁵ On April first, Roche was informed of the final assault that the Union planned to launch on Petersburg on April 2-3, 1865. With a confidence that bordered on premonition, according to a later account by photographer and Union Captain A.J. Russell, Roche

¹⁶² McPherson, 1988, pp. 741-742

¹⁶³ Frassanito, 1983, p. 335

¹⁶⁴ Frassanito, 1983, pp. 335-336

¹⁶⁵ Frassanito, 1983, p. 336

was convinced that this was the final major engagement of the war. Although Russell's account was recorded more than fifteen years later, it still illuminates the criticality of Roche's ability to create his death studies in the Fort Mahone trenches so immediately after the fall of the fort, as well as his awareness of the importance of doing so. According to Russell, Roche visited his headquarters the night of April 2nd with the following announcement.

Cap. I am in for repairs and want to get things ready for the move, for the army is sure to move tonight. The negatives on hand I wish to send North with some letters, prepare my glass and chemicals; in fact, get everything ready for the grand move, for this is the final one, and the Rebellion is broken, or we go home and commence over again.¹⁶⁶

Russell goes on to talk of staying up with Roche until the "wee sma' hours" to make sure he had everything to record the aftermath of the engagement and listened with Roche to the "boom of cannons" from the direction of Petersburg. At the sound of the cannons, Roche jumped to his feet and stated, "Cap. The ball has opened; I must be off." Russell goes on to claim that he next saw Roche the next morning after Petersburg had fallen with "scores of negatives taken where the harvest of death had indeed been gathered – pictures that in truth will teach coming generations that war is a terrible reality."¹⁶⁷

This account, while drawn from the depths of Russell's memory, confirms the urgency with which Roche approached the recording of the fall of Petersburg. Because of the haste with which he moved to the battlefield, it is reasonable to suppose that among his specific aims was the documentation of those soldiers who had lost their lives in the midst of the battle, and to demonstrate to viewers that the reality of war was brutal and horrific, not the grand escapade of earlier visual tropes that Gardner's 1862 photographs had begun to dismantle.

¹⁶⁶ Zeller, 2005, p. 162

¹⁶⁷ Frassanito, 1983, pp. 336-337

Roche's photographs were taken at both Confederate Fort Mahone, and Union Fort Sedgewick. He worked mostly in the vast area of trenches of the two forts. The large majority of his views were taken on April 3rd, the day after Petersburg finally fell. Overall, Roche created more than fifty images for his Petersburg series. Frassanito contends that these were actually taken on both April 3rd AND April 4th because it would have been particularly difficult to expose and create this significant number of wet plates in one day.¹⁶⁸

As might be expected given most photographers' hesitancy to photograph Union dead, all of Roche's death studies from the Battle of Petersburg were taken in the trenches of Fort Mahone and are of Confederate soldiers. The Fort was found evacuated on the morning of April 3rd and Roche was able to capture twenty-two death studies, having arrived in the area early that morning. These were almost certainly the first images that he recorded that day. There is no decomposition evident on any of the bodies yet, indicating that they had not been dead for long. Moreover, they were likely buried quickly based on the number of Union soldiers on hand to accomplish the task. This windfall was a coup of Roche who had yet to make his name in the way that Gardner, O'Sullivan, and Brady had done throughout the conflict. The fact that there are no dead Union soldiers in Roche's images is notable as well, because the number of Union killed in the area around Fort Mahone was likely far greater than that of Confederate soldiers killed.¹⁶⁹ Curtin's column alone, which attacked the Fort, withstood 287 casualties with thirty-seven killed, and sixty-five captured, wounded or missing. This suggests that the Union dead were tended to first, as would be expected, and had already been buried when Roche arrived at the Fort.¹⁷⁰

¹⁶⁸ Frassanito, 1983, p. 338

¹⁶⁹ Frassanito, 1983, p. 341

¹⁷⁰ Frassanito, 1983, p. 341

Overall, Roche's work at Fort Mahone is one of the most extensive death studies of the war. It is likely that this series sold quite well, although there are no sales numbers to confirm that. However, they are some of the most commonly found photographs of the Civil War today – which speaks strongly to their popularity in 1865 and in the months and years after the war ended.¹⁷¹ Moreover, E. & H.T. Anthony advertisements in issues of *Harper's Weekly* in late 1864 and 1865 list Petersburg as among the battles from which photographs could be purchased.¹⁷² When we study the images that Roche created, it is easy to see why they might have been popular, even among a public that had become weary of war and desperate for it to end.

In *A Dead Rebel Soldier, Barefooted, Killed by a Shell, Which Tore his Side Out, the entrails are protruding from his side. Shows a foot passage half way up the side of the bank. This View was taken the morning after the storming of Petersburg, VA, 1865 (Fig. 31)* we see a single soldier lying against the wall of the trench, and TC Roche's photograph brings the developing concept of photographing the war dead to a new level in several ways. The soldier lies against a muddy fortification. He is on his back with his feet drawn up as if he is resting rather than dead. The viewer can barely make out the details of his face, but it is distinct enough that we gain a sense of his features. His arms rest under his head – as if placed there. The positioning of his body highlights his torso. The viewer's focus is solely on him because of the lack of environment in the photograph and the closely cropped positioning of Roche's camera. The most shocking part of the image is visible only to those who can, or are brave enough to, look closely and is described in the photograph's description. Entrails spill from his mutilated side in a way that ascribes a particular gruesomeness to the image and leaves no question about what killed him. To add to this, the

¹⁷¹ Zeller, 2005, pp. 162-163

¹⁷² "E.&H.T. Anthony Advertisements" (various), *Harper's Weekly: A Journal of Civilization*, New York City, 1864-1865

soldier is barefoot, although whether he was in this state at the moment of death or whether his shoes were removed afterward is unclear. The isolation of this kind of death, as well as its brutality, are apparent in this stereograph.

In the similarly titled *A Dead Rebel Soldier as He lay in the Trenches of Fort Mahone... This Soldier Must have been killed by a fragment of shell* (**Fig. 32**) the body is curled in a fetal position as if he might have fallen asleep. His arm rests next to his head concealing his features. He is covered in the mud and debris of the trench. His left foot is submerged in the muck so that it seems as if it is not there. He would appear to the casual observer to be peaceful were it not for the barren, battle-torn trench that he lies in. When a viewer looks closely, one can see the blood and grime that mar his face. He is alone, almost as if he was left as his comrades moved on. This gives the viewer the feeling that he is nothing more than detritus, the dead left behind as refuse and little else. The composition of the photograph itself is closely cropped so that the viewer's focus is on the fallen soldier and the remnants of the trench around Fort Mahone.

Rebel soldiers killed in the trenches of Fort Mahone.... shows construction of the bomb proofs and covered passages (**Fig. 33**) gives us a sense of the magnitude of the carnage in the trenches around the Fort and the image of fallen soldiers surrounded by the debris of the bomb proofs brings the reality of dying in combat to light in a newly visceral way. No less than three bodies (possibly four) lay sprawled in the mud at the bottom of the trench. The soldiers lie in the trench as if discarded, closed in by the walls of the fortification. The three bodies which lead the eye back into the picture frame, each of them pushed up against the walls where they fell. As in previous photographs, the foremost soldier is the most distinct and is enmeshed in the muddy bottom to such an extent that the top of his body seems to be sinking. This soldier is the only figure whose face is apparent, but it is turned to the edge of the trench wall so that we cannot see

his expression. Behind him lie the other two bodies, strewn across the floor of the space. Timbers and other remnants of the bomb proof are leaning against the trench walls and scattered against the edges. As is often the case in Roche's Petersburg photographs, the picture frame is closely cropped so that the sole focus is on the fallen soldiers, with little other context aside from the information we glean from the very descriptive title. The soldiers really do appear here to have been photographed "as they fell." In fact, they appear to be little more than debris themselves. Leftover from the battle, they have become human "garbage" in death. Roche also captured some of the structures of the bombing tunnels and passageways that were built, the remnants of which add further to the feeling of dispassionate destruction in the trenches because of the total devastation that he captured on film, both architectural and human.

The photographs that Roche took at Fort Mahone after the fall of Petersburg present a very different feeling than do the photographs that Gardner, O'Sullivan, and Gibson took after the battles of Antietam, Gettysburg, and Spotsylvania. This may be partially due to the conditions of the Fort Mahone trenches when Roche arrived to photograph them, but it bears considering what the differences in the photographers' styles are as well. Most of the photographs taken of dead soldiers are graphic in their representation of the loss of human life like *Harvest of Death*, (**Fig. 22**) *The Sunken Road at Antietam*, (**Fig. 16**) or *Dead of Stonewall Jackson's Brigade by the rail fence on the Hagerstown Pike*. (**Fig. 9**) Even those photographs which are more nuanced like *Home of a Rebel Sharpshooter* (**Fig. 23**) present the consequence of war death in a more realistic way than was historically understood and gave nineteenth-century viewers a new understanding of war death and death overall, even if their only access to the images was the prints that were based off of original photographs and published in *Harper's Weekly*. However, there is a candidness to Roche's photographs from Fort Mahone at the Battle of Petersburg that belies the

more organized photographs from earlier battles. It is as if Roche created his photographs in a rush, with little attention to composition in favor of capturing the reality of the moment and the condition of the soldiers before they were moved and organized for burial. At Petersburg, we do not see the organized lines of soldiers already collected for burial, nor do we have any evidence that he posed his subjects as Gardner did at Gettysburg or O'Sullivan did at Spotsylvania. In fact, the location of several soldiers still lying amongst the mud-strewn wreckage of the trenches speaks to the likelihood that he did not take the time to pose the soldiers before releasing the shutter. These elements of Roche's photographs at Petersburg demonstrate the fallen soldiers on the battlefield as human detritus in a way that the lines of burial preparation in the photographs of Gardner, O'Sullivan, and Gibson do not, and add significantly to the understanding that dying at war is far from the glorious, dignified affair depicted in paintings like West's *The Death of General Wolfe* (**Fig. 10**), but is in fact, an often gruesome, lonely, and terrible way to die.

The photographs of dead soldiers taken by Gardner, O'Sullivan, Gibson, and Roche in the aftermath of Gettysburg, Spotsylvania, and Petersburg continue the narrative begun by Gardner's photographs of the dead from the Battle of Antietam. Together the images documented the war and told a story that illustrated the conflict for Union citizens in a way that made starkly clear the toll that the war had on everyone involved, and the magnitude of the loss of human life, and human decency in some cases. The idea of dying on the battlefield was no longer an obscure concept, understood through grand paintings and poetic texts that extolled the dignity of dying this way. The photographs taken at places like Antietam, Gettysburg, Spotsylvania, and Petersburg showed the horror, the grit and dirt, the loneliness, and the devastation of the human body (i.e. potentially the loved ones of those who saw them) in a way that brought the war home to a brutal extent. The anonymous *New York Times* reporter's words describing the photographs from the Battle of

Antietam should again be remembered here – “If he has not brought bodies and laid them in our dooryards and along the streets, he has done something very like it.”¹⁷³ That these photographs were published and sold in varying ways throughout the remainder of the war and beyond speaks to the importance of the work of these photographers and others who worked with them. Moreover, the marketing of the photographs is a visual advertisement of the war itself and the continued circulation of the images would be critical to the reverberating effects of the conflict even after it ended.

G. ADVERTISING THE WAR

After the publication of Gardner’s photographs from the Battle of Antietam, he, Brady, E.&H.T. Anthony Co. and others continued to market their images with increasing frequency. The opening of Gardner’s studio by late May of 1863 speaks strongly to his own desire to disseminate his photographs in the public realm. In fact, his advertisement in the *Daily National Intelligencer* on May 26th proclaimed not only that his studio was open, but that he had “views for sale.” His advertisement on August 11, 1863 reads in part:

Photographic Incidents of the War. The largest and finest collection of War Views ever made... The collection consists chiefly of views of and scenes on the battlefields of the first and second Bull Run, Yorktown, Fair Oaks, Savage Station, Cedar Mountain, Hilton Head, Fort Pulaski, South Mountain, Harpers Ferry, Antietam, and Fredericksburg... A corps of artists constantly in the field who are adding to the collection every day. Send for a catalogue, corrected till 1st June 1863.¹⁷⁴

Moreover, Gardner continued to run advertisements in the well-established Washington paper on at least a weekly basis throughout the summer of 1863 and beyond. These advertisements were often situated in a consistent place in the paper from week to week, making it easy for readers, and

¹⁷³ “Brady’s Photographs: Pictures of the Dead at Antietam,” *New York Times*, October 20, 1862

¹⁷⁴ Alexander Gardner, Advertisement, *Daily National Intelligencer*, August 11, 1863

potential customers, to locate important information about his studio and the photographs he had for sale.

The *Daily National Intelligencer* was one of the most prominent newspapers in Washington DC from 1800 until it closed in 1869. Throughout its history it maintained a largely Whig focus (later Republican) and covered the broader Washington, DC area. The publication was the precursor to the later *Washington Star* and the *Washington Post*.¹⁷⁵ In his weekly advertisements, Gardner advertised not only the publication of photographs but also promoted the publication of his catalog which was scheduled to be released in the late summer, 1863. Gardner's advertisements are telling. By specifically stating that consumers could purchase his images, as well as obtain his catalog, he makes it clear that a part of his intent in creating images was the marketability of photographs of the war, including those of dead soldiers.

Although most of Gardner's direct advertisements appeared in the *Daily National Intelligencer*, the paper's smaller distribution did not compromise the dissemination of his photographs. At its height, the tri-weekly version of the Washington paper had a distribution of roughly 6,000. However, Gardner was also using E.&H.T. Anthony Co. as his wholesale agent in 1863 and through at least part of 1864.¹⁷⁶ As such, he was able to significantly expand the reach of his images because of the consistent publication of E.&H.T. Anthony advertisements in newspapers like *Harper's Weekly*, which had a much greater distribution than did the *Daily National Intelligencer*. A June 20, 1863 edition of *Harper's Weekly* includes an advertisement of its own which states that the paper's distribution was over 100,000 extending across the country. Moreover, the advertisement's declaration that an additional eight to ten people beyond the direct

¹⁷⁵ William E. Ames, "The National Intelligencer: Washington's Leading Political Newspaper," (*Records of the Columbia Historical Society*, Washington, DC, vol. 66/68, 1966/1968: 71-83

¹⁷⁶ Katz, 1991, p. 73

subscribers also looked at the paper further extended their distribution to between 800,000 and 1,000,000 people on a regular basis.¹⁷⁷ Every one of those people would have had access to E.&H.T. Anthony's advertisements for photographs of the war, including Gardner's views. This means that the total dissemination of information about the photographs could reach a substantial part of the Northern population. Add to this the fact that E.&H.T. Anthony Co. was the agent or financier for a number of other photographers as well, including Brady and Roche – expanding the collection of available images of the conflict even more.

The publication of sales catalogs which included pages of lists of available photographs of the war was also critical to the marketing of images for Gardner and E.&H.T. Anthony. Gardner's first catalog was published in September 1863 after a months-long advertising campaign in the newspapers. When it was released, the catalog contained the sizes and prices of available images, as well as an extensive list of photographs that consumers could choose from. Included in that list were lists of generals, groups, batteries, and fortifications. The catalog also listed detailed images from the battles of Cedar Mountain, Antietam, and Gettysburg. With the exception of Cedar Mountain, the collections from each of these battles included views of dead soldiers. Also included were photographs of the wounded at Savage Station in 1862 as well as fresh graves at Manassas and at Burnside Bridge (Antietam). The catalog could be easily obtained – it required only the sending of a request for one in the mail in response to the advertisements in the *Daily National Intelligencer*.

Not content to settle for the sale of individual prints during the war, Gardner also published a two-volume album called *Gardner's Photographic Sketchbook of the Civil War* in 1866.

¹⁷⁷ In January 1863 *Harper's Weekly* was sold for .06 cents per individual copy. A one-year subscription cost \$3.00 while a two-year subscription cost \$5.00. Moreover, the paper declared that their editions were often saved in libraries and homes for future readings, extending the life of the advertisement, and the photographs still further.

Interestingly, O'Sullivan's photographs of the dead at the Battle of Spotsylvania do not appear in *Gardner's Sketchbook*, although other images from the battle do appear. Gardner's publication was not without precedent because E.&H.T. Anthony Co. had also published a volume of Brady's photographs earlier in the war. Likewise, photographer George Barnard published a book of his photographs of Sherman's campaign across Georgia after the war ended. Importantly, neither Brady nor Barnard included photographs of the dead in their volumes or any other part of their documentation of the war. Rather, the interest for both men lay elsewhere, and they concentrated on depictions of camp life, group portraits, architecture, and the physical destruction of landscape. On the other hand, Gardner's book presented a comprehensive account of many of the photographs that he and his team had taken, including photographs from Antietam, Gettysburg, and Spotsylvania.¹⁷⁸ Overall, Gardner's *Sketchbook of the Civil War* included around 100 images, each custom printed and glued to thick *carte de visite*-like paper. With images ranging from the *Slave Pen in Alexandria, VA, August 1863* (**Fig. 34**) and *Ruins of Stone Bridge, Bull Run, VA, March 1862* (**Fig. 35**) to *Group of Confederate Prisoners at Fairfax Court-House, June 1863* (**Fig. 36**) and *Battery Wagon, Front of Petersburg, September 1864*, (**Fig. 37**) Gardner consolidated both the physical and the human side of the war because he was so focused on capturing photographs of fallen soldiers and distributing them to the public.

Included in Gardner's volumes as well were several photographs of dead soldiers at Gettysburg including O'Sullivan's *Harvest of Death* (**Fig. 22**) and *Home of a Rebel Sharpshooter* (**Fig. 23**). Interestingly, while Gardner included several views from the Battle of Antietam, he did not include any photographs of the dead from that encounter. Nor do any of O'Sullivan's six photographs of the dead from the Battle of Spotsylvania appear. Accompanying each photograph

¹⁷⁸ Because Roche was a direct employee of E.&H.T. Anthony Co., and not of Gardner, his death series from Fort Mahone at Petersburg is not included.

in the collection was a text, written by Gardner, that described the photograph and the condition surrounding it. *Harvest of Death* is a particularly compelling example as Gardner writes:

Slowly, over the misty fields of Gettysburg – as all reluctant to expose their ghastly horrors to the light – came the sunless morn, after the retreat by Lee’s broken army. Through the shadowy vapors, it was, indeed, a “harvest of death” that was presented; hundreds and thousands of torn Union and rebel soldiers – although many of the former were already interred – strewed the now quiet fighting ground, soaked by the rain, which for two days had drenched the country with its fitful showers.

A battle has been often the subject of elaborate description; but it can be described in one simple word, *devilish!* and the distorted dead recall the ancient legends of men torn in pieces by the savage wantonness of fiends. Swept down without preparation, the shattered bodies fall in all conceivable positions. The rebels represented in the photographs are without shoes. These were always removed from the feet of the dead on account of the pressing need of the survivors. The pockets turned inside out also show that appropriation did not cease with the coverings of the feet. Around it is scattered the litter of the battle-field, accoutrements, ammunition, rags, cups and canteens, crackers, haversacks, &, and letters that may tell the name of the owner, although the majority will surely be buried unknown by strangers, and in a strange land. Killed in the frantic efforts to break the steady lines of an army of patriots, whose heroism only excelled theirs in motive, they paid with life the price of their treason, and when the wicked strife was finished, found nameless graves, far from home and kindred.

Such a picture conveys a useful moral: It shows the blank horror and reality of war, in opposition to its pageantry. Here are the dreadful details! Let them aid in preventing such another calamity falling upon the nation.¹⁷⁹

The description, written from a decidedly Northern point of view, details the isolation and tragedy of death seen in the image. Not only are the soldiers to be buried, unknown, miles from home, but in death they have also been robbed of some of the most basic elements of dignity – shoes, personal belongings and the like as they lie nameless on the field. The description also eloquently points to the loneliness of dying on the battlefield – “the majority

¹⁷⁹ Alexander Gardner, *Gardner’s Photographic Sketchbook of the Civil War*, (New York City: Dover Publications, 1959, originally published in 1866) plate 36

will surely be buried unknown by strangers, and in a strange land...”¹⁸⁰ Moreover, in his last sentence Gardner tells us his true intent in the creation of the pictures – so that by presenting these soldiers in gruesome, detailed death, it might sway those with power to never let such a calamity occur again.

Gardner’s *Sketchbook* was published by Philp & Solomon in a small run of just 200 copies. It sold for \$150 (roughly \$2,246 in 2018) and was offered only by subscription. The book was not profitable (perhaps because the hefty price excluded all but the most well-off from purchasing it).¹⁸¹ Today, only a few copies survive, and those exist in private collections or museums. However, despite its small circulation, Gardner’s publication goes far in confirming his pursuit of marketing his photographs of the war, including images of the dead. Moreover, it solidifies the fact that Gardner was trying to create a comprehensive account of the conflict that could be presented to Northern viewers in a useable format, and by doing so grant those who saw his images a realistic idea of the war and the devastation that it caused.

E.&H.T. Anthony Co. similarly promoted their own catalogs with photographs of a number of photographers who were contracted with them in some way, either directly as Roche was for part of the war, or by using the photography company as agents as Gardner did for a time, or agents and financiers as Brady did. The various editions of E.&H.T. Anthony catalogs included listing of the photographs of all photographers connected to them in some capacity at the time of the catalog’s printing. The catalogs were released throughout the war and after. Each included extensive lists of views from landscapes to portraits in Europe and America. In at least two catalogs published in 1862 and 1865 E.&H.T. Anthony Co. listed several photographs from the Civil War. In a November 1862 edition, under a listing of “Brady’s

¹⁸⁰ Gardner, 1866, plate 36

¹⁸¹ Zeller, 2005, p. 182

Views of the War,” we find several of Gardner’s views of the dead from the Battle of Antietam.¹⁸² Since the catalog would have been released during or just after Brady’s studio exhibition of Gardner’s photographs, it stands to reason that the images would appear in the E&HT Anthony Co. catalogue at this time because Gardner was likely still working for Brady and had not separated from him yet.

The 1865 edition of E.&H.T. Anthony’s catalogue includes even more telling information. In a section titled “Photographic History. The War for the Union,” an interested reader can find several more views of the conflict. Included are photographs of graves at Bull Run (the closest Brady ever got to photographing the dead). Even more telling, this catalogue also lists several of Roche’s photographs of dead soldiers from the trenches of Fort Mahone at Petersburg for sale. Each entry is highly descriptive, as titles typically were among photographs, and gives the potential buyer a clear idea of what kind of photograph they can purchase. Like Gardner’s catalogs, the E.&H.T. Anthony Co. catalogs also list sizes and prices of views that can be purchased as well as additional information for shipping and the obtainment of additional catalogues.¹⁸³

The use of catalogs to sell photographs, combined with the publication of many of the images as prints in newspapers like *Harper’s Weekly*, presents a framework around which we can understand the motivations and tools available to people like Gardner and Brady, and companies like E.&H.T. Anthony Co. to market and sell photographs of the Civil War. That images of the dead are included at every opportunity possible demonstrates a commitment to disseminating photographs of those killed in battle to the public via any potential avenue. It is through these mechanisms that the commodification of photographs of the dead, especially, would continue,

¹⁸² E.&H.T. Anthony, *Catalogue*, E.&H.T. Anthony Photographs, New York City, 1862

¹⁸³ E.&H.T. Anthony, *Catalogue*, E.&H.T. Anthony Photographs, New York City, 1865

even long after the war was over. The “marketing of the dead” would continue to remake public understanding of both battlefield death and death at large during the second half of the nineteenth century.

H. THE TRAUMA OF AN IMAGE

As discussed in chapter one, the connection between death and the photographic image has an extensive history and is well known. Jay Ruby compellingly discusses how photography and death became intrinsically linked in the nineteenth century because the photograph represented, and in fact functioned as, a way of prolonging life, and verifies that photographs from the Civil War that included dead soldiers forced people to confront the reality of war.¹⁸⁴ This can be seen in images like *Dead Confederate Sharp Shooter at the Foot of Little Round Top* (**Fig. 38**), which was taken in the area of the Gettysburg battlefield known as the Slaughter Pen where the fighting was particularly fierce and deadly. The photograph is wrenching in both its isolation of the subject and in the description of the field where it was taken. It depicts a single soldier who has fallen among several rocks as he died. Although we cannot see his face, we do see the contortion of his body as he lays sprawled against the rocks. The isolation of his death is poignant as there is no other indication of humanity in the photograph. In fact, it almost appears as if he has been left and forgotten on the field. It is this reality of war, among others, that Gardner’s photographs so candidly demonstrate. Although in this case, we do not see the gruesome nature of his death, (there is no blood and his body is intact), the perceived isolation of the last moments of the soldier’s life affect the viewer in a much more direct way than a simple written or spoken description of the body would allow.

¹⁸⁴ Jay Ruby, *Secure the Shadow: Death and Photography in America*, (Cambridge & London: MIT Press, 1995) pp. 1-7, 13

Gardner's photograph of a dead sharpshooter at Gettysburg is both similar and very different from O'Sullivan's photograph of the same after that battle. Both men are laid out on their backs in positions which, under different circumstances might seem peaceful. In this case, however, our context is taken almost entirely from Gardner's descriptive title because there are no visual markers to tell us who the soldier is or what his role in the battle was. The soldier's head is thrown back against the pile of rocks he lays in so that his features are obscured from the viewer. In fact, he almost appears to be wedged among the rocks. His cloths are tattered and worn, but he does wear shoes. The position of his body is particularly interesting because it again reminds the viewer of a similarly placed body commonly found in early forms of the Christian Pieta. As before, the appearance of this artistic convention, whether accidental or intentional, speaks to the viewer by providing a visual connection to art with which they would have been familiar. The landscape is barren, adding to the feeling of desolation brought on by viewing the fallen soldier.

Roland Barthes focuses on the connection between death and photography by framing his argument around a photograph of his recently deceased mother. Barthes asserts that the "message artifact" of a life now gone holds a particular message that for him is inherent in the punctum¹⁸⁵ of the image, even though that message will almost certainly appear differently to others. In other words, while the studium (the physical characteristics) of the photograph remains the same (the physical representation of his mother and her surroundings), for Barthes, there is a very specific cultural and emotional attachment to the photograph that drives his own interpretation of it, and hence the message of the photograph itself. He argues, in fact, that the photograph of his mother, which he calls *The Winter Garden Photograph* in essence does not exist for anyone other than him

¹⁸⁵ According to Barthes, the punctum is the element in a photograph that "grabs" a particular viewer and gives the image meaning for that person. The punctum will not be present for all viewers, rather only for those who will maintain a particular connection to the message of the photograph.

but would rather appear as merely an “indifferent picture” that the average viewer will have no connection too. For Barthes though, it is an image that is heavy with meaning and emotion, the “punctum of the image.”¹⁸⁶

Susan Sontag adds further to this connection as she argues that the evidence of a photograph can actually contradict, and remake previously long held virtues or cultural understandings.¹⁸⁷

“Photographs of mutilated bodies certainly can be used...to vivify the condemnation of war, and may bring home, for a spell, a portion of its reality to those who have no experience of war at all. ... In fact, there are many uses of the innumerable opportunities a modern life supplies – at a distance, through the medium of photography – other people’s pain. Photographs of an atrocity may give rise to opposing responses. A call for peace. A cry for revenge. Or simply the bemused awareness, continually restocked by photographic information, that terrible things happen.”¹⁸⁸

Although Sontag frames her argument as one that emphasizes a temporary effect of awareness in viewing a potentially traumatizing photograph that belies the ongoing effect that an image can have on cultural understandings, her words demonstrate the visceral response that a photograph can evoke in a viewer. Taken with Barthes’ conviction of the effect of the punctum on a viewer who finds an emotive connection within a photographic image, Sontag’s more fleeting assertion of the momentary effect begins to make more sense and demonstrates the longer lasting cultural influence that photographs of war death, and specifically those from the Civil War as the first that were marketed in this way, can have on a cultural understanding like death and mourning for a public.

¹⁸⁶ Roland Barthes, *Camera Lucida: Reflection on Photography*, (New York City: Farrar, Straus, & Giroux, 1980), p. xiii, 63-73 passim

¹⁸⁷ Sontag, 2003, pp. 10-12

¹⁸⁸ Sontag, 2003, pp. 12-13

Gardner's photographs of the dead at Antietam and Gettysburg, O'Sullivan's views from Spotsylvania, and Roche's images at Petersburg function in just this way, and Roche's photographs of the dead are a particularly effective example to consider here. His image, *A Rebel Soldier Killed in the Trenches Before Petersburg. The Spots and Marks on His Face are Blood Issuing from his Mouth and Nose...* (**Fig. 39**) harkens back to the isolation seen in O'Sullivan's photographs from the Battle of Spotsylvania. The artilleryman here appears to be alone, surrounded by the rocks and dirt of the trenches. He lies on his back and his face is turned toward the viewer, his eyes slightly open and fixed in death. Blood from his mortal wound coats the left side of his face and streams from his mouth. His left hand is on his chest and he looks stunned, as if he was not sure in his final moments just what had happened. The blood from his wound covers his face, created as the description tells us from the shell fragment that ended his life. His half open eyes and mouth further add to the narrative of the picture as he seems as if he is still in thought in his moment of death. A broken artillery sponge lies next to him and gives the viewers a clue about his role in the battle, and of what he was doing in the moments just before he was hit. Here the isolation of dying in combat seems even more confirmed because there is no one left around him. Notably, this does not mean that he died in isolation, but that is the perception the photograph lends to anyone who sees it. The candid, brute reality of Roche's photograph, and the fact that images like this were being marketed and sold by E.&H.T. Anthony as well as Gardner, speaks strongly to a narrative that was rewriting and redefining the understanding of what it means to die at war.

Far removed from paintings like West's *The Death of General Wolfe* Roche's photographs, like Gardner's, O'Sullivan's, and Gibson's, showed the northern public, or anyone who saw them, what a truly terrible thing it was to die on the battlefield. Photographs like Roche's continuously broke down the old understanding, to Sontag's way of thinking, "remaking long-held

understandings and cultural norms.”¹⁸⁹ In a culmination of the trend that began with Gardner’s photographs of the dead after the Battle of Antietam, Roche’s photographs demonstrate that war death could no longer be thought of as a grand event full of dignity and heroism but was something to be feared, avoided, and critically, respected for the ultimate sacrifice that it was. Finally, the popularity of postmortem photographs in the two decades leading up to the Civil War and during the conflict speaks to the strength of the nineteenth-century culture of death that predominated the era, and which the photographs of fallen soldiers on the battlefield inserted themselves into, influencing that culture of death with their rawness.

Even more significant than the inherent connection that the photograph holds with nineteenth-century ideas of death is the traumatizing effect that the marketing and dissemination of views of the dead from Gettysburg, Spotsylvania, and Petersburg and other battles had on the Northern public. Critically, the traumatic power that images of the dead held was multi-faceted and affected people on several levels. Moreover, the dissemination of these images meant that it was not just soldiers that were traumatized by the brutality of the war. The fact that the long prevailing understanding of a battlefield death was based on the grand, dramatic representations of traditional art mediums meant that the images of dead soldiers captured at places like Gettysburg, Spotsylvania, Petersburg and other battles undid more than peoples’ understanding of that method of dying. The viewing of these images literally rent that understanding asunder in one of the most traumatic ways possible. If we consider again the grandeur of West’s painting *The Death of General Wolfe* (**Fig. 10**) and compare that to the isolation and harshness of Roche’s *A Rebel Soldier Killed in the Trenches Before Petersburg. The Spots and Marks on His Face are Blood Issuing from his Mouth and Nose* (**Fig. 39**) from the Petersburg trenches we can begin to

¹⁸⁹ Sontag, 2003, pp. 10-13

understand the mental and emotional fissure that took place for those who saw these photographs, whether they saw them as photographs, or saw woodcut prints based on them in *Harper's Weekly*. West's painting bleaches battlefield death and sanitizes it into a performance of sorts. It gives no indication of the pain, the terror, or the gruesomeness of such a death that we see clearly in Roche's photograph. Here again Barthes' punctum is an effective tool to use in understanding the difference – Roche's photograph (and other photographs of fallen soldiers) has the ability to connect with a viewer in a way that is felt on an intuitive, visceral level that the sanitized view of death in West's painting does not allow for. A nineteenth-century viewer can look at the image and imagine that it could be their own loved one, because of the authentic understanding of the photograph as real, and because of the detailed reality of death that the photograph depicts. Even if the soldier in the photograph is not understood as their own, the viewer sees the destruction of the body clearly and connects it to the potential fate of those close to them. It is here Roche's photograph and other like it function as objects that influence the very understanding of war death and death more generally. The commodification of the photographs in the market further confirms their ability to influence this cultural understanding of death.

Each of Roche's photographs of the trenches at Petersburg tell a different story. Many of the soldiers are alone. They are contorted into what seem like inhuman positions. Several are missing shoes or other pieces of clothing. In a few photographs, like *A Dead Rebel Soldier, bare footed, killed by a shell, which tore his side out, the entrails are protruding from his side. Shows a foot passage half way up the side of the bank. The View was taken the morning after the storming of Petersburg, VA, 1865. (Fig. 31)* it is even possible to see entrails spilling from the wounds that caused the death of the soldier who is the subject of the image. These images, as well as those of O'Sullivan, Gibson, and Gardner, are riveting, not because they are beautiful or aesthetically

composed, but because they grip the viewer in a cycle of not wanting to look at the destruction of human life, but not being able to look away from it either. Here too, Roche's particularly candid photographs of dead soldiers lying in the mud as if their bodies had been thrown away in addition to their lives adds an additional complexity to the push and pull of not wanting to look, yet not being able to not look. James Polchin writes about this compulsion to look and the simultaneous repulsion of looking in his article on the popularity (among some sects of society) of lynching photographs from the late nineteenth and early twentieth century. For Polchin, this back and forth places the viewer in a position of active participation with the photographs, and as a result makes them a player in the reliving and reperforming of the ghastly phenomenon of racialized lynching.¹⁹⁰ To be sure, there is an element in the lynching photographs that Polchin deals with that is not as present in the photographs of dead soldiers from places like Gettysburg, Petersburg, and Spotsylvania. The lynching photographs, and the phenomenon of marketing and distributing them as postcards that surrounded them, existed solely for the purpose of celebrating and further demoralizing a population that had spent centuries in slavery, and then decades more being subjugated and mistreated by the majority population. They are horrific both in their content and in their commitment to a white supremacist ideal. The photographs taken during the Civil War are much different in that they were created in an effort to document and make known what was happening on the battlefield, and they were marketed and distributed with the same intent in mind. Although they are often gruesome, their subjects are typically granted a particular dignity in death that is not attributed to the victims of lynching photographs.

¹⁹⁰ James Polchin, "Not Looking at Lynching Photographs," in *The Image and the Witness: Trauma, Memory and Visual Culture*, ed. Frances Guerin and Roger Hallas, (London & New York City: Wallflower Press, 2007) pp. 207-220

It is also important to note that the way that these two kinds of photographic images of death were marketed and distributed is significant and points to the differences in the way that the death of white soldiers was treated versus African American citizens, even though the sets of photographs are removed in time by several years. The photographs of fallen soldiers taken during the Civil War were marketed and sold as a kind of remembrance, a memorial, and a record of the terrible thing that it is to die at war. Later photographs of lynched African Americans, however, were marketed and distributed through the mail as postcards as way of further cementing the white supremacist ideal, subjugating the victims of a horrific act, and mocking the very lives of African Americans in the Jim Crow era. Because of this there is an added layer to the argument that Polchin makes that points to the inadvertent involvement of the viewer of those photographs of death. Even so, Polchin's argument has some use in the context of the photographs of dead soldiers taken during the Civil War because they are also traumatic images that have the power to instigate the push and pull of Polchin's attraction/repulsion argument. This power stems from the shock value they possess when they are seen by a viewer, and the potential mental and emotional ramifications that reverberate every time the photographs of dead soldiers are seen and experienced. Polchin's argument holds true then in this case as well, in spite of the stark difference in the intent of the two kinds of photographs of the dead.

The expanded serialization and marketing of the photographs of the Civil War also meant that citizens in the North were confronted with images of death on multiple levels and across time. Not only were they re-exposed to images from the Battle of Antietam as they were marketed, sold, and discussed in writing by Oliver Wendell Holmes and others, for example, but were also exposed to photographs of the dead from the Battles of Gettysburg, Spotsylvania, and Petersburg, among others. This continued exposure further adds to the potentially traumatic effect of this kind of

imagery. Trachtenberg's discussion on the criticality of understanding the photographs of the Civil War, and more specifically those of fallen soldiers, is again prudent to remember here.¹⁹¹ It is only when the images are experienced and understood as a cohesive group that they can be adequately grappled with and their impact is notable. While a single photograph from the trenches of Fort Mahone might be devastating for the viewer who must realize the enormity of the death it represents, that impact only reaches full potential when that viewer is faced with the entire series of Roche's images of Petersburg, or O'Sullivan and Gardner's photographs of Gettysburg, or O'Sullivan's views of Alsops Farm at Spotsylvania. When these series are considered together, and added to Gardner's photographs of Antietam, the potential for a traumatic impact is magnified based on Trachtenberg's argument. Add to that the continuous marketing of the photographs from each of these battles in newspapers, illustrated journals, and catalogs, and their recurring exhibition during the war, and the traumatic potential of the photographs increases exponentially.

For example, in June of 1864 Fallon's Stereopticon launched a show of Gardner's Civil War photographs at the Irving Hall in New York City.¹⁹² **(Fig. 40)** The advertisement, published in the *New York Times* stressed that among the images for viewing were views of "Rebel dead at Antietam," almost two years after that battle and one year after Holmes wrote about them in *The Atlantic Monthly*. This exhibition of the photographs of Antietam then, recreated the traumatic effects of both the photographs AND the battle. Photographs from other battles, also marketed since their creation, were also included in Fallon's Stereopticon. This expanded promotion of serialized photographs of the war, and of the dead specifically, speaks to the profound effect that

¹⁹¹ Alan Trachtenberg, "Albums of War: On Reading Civil War Photographs," (*Representations* 9, Winter, 1985), p. 1

¹⁹² "Advertisement for Fallon's Stereopticon," *New York Times*, June 27, 1864; A stereopticon was a magic lantern, or early slide projector that allowed for the projection of photographs on a screen or wall for an audience to see. Fallon's was an exhibition framed around the projection of Gardner's photographic images of the war.

they had on Northern viewers. The exhibition also further demonstrated a desire to position the images in the public sphere, while at the same time exposing viewers to the horror of battlefield death over and over, an experience that was magnified by the serial nature of the images.

I. CONCLUSION

The photographs of the dead taken after the Battles of Gettysburg, Spotsylvania, and Petersburg, and their sale and dissemination afterward, further demonstrate the interest that photographers had in bringing this new kind of imagery to the Northern public. Gardner, O'Sullivan, Roche, and others were well aware that they had something new and riveting to present and that there was a public desire to see the reality of the conflict, even if it meant viewing photographs of the fallen. The impulse to see visual accounts of current events, including war, that the introduction of photographs sparked meant that there was an increased desire, and an expectation, to be able to see and understand the world as it really was, not as it was shown in paintings or other earlier art forms. The photographs taken of fallen soldiers accomplished this on both a documentary and a cultural level. Moreover, this impetus was not merely driven by the direction of a savvy studio owner or company. O'Sullivan and Roche (in addition to Gardner's already established awareness when he worked for Brady) both understood the enormity of what they could capture on film if given the opportunity to do so. When that opportunity arose, they each took the initiative to capture photographs of the dead at Spotsylvania (O'Sullivan) and Petersburg (Roche). In both cases, Gardner and E.&H.T. Anthony Co. were then anxious to provide the necessary tools to market and disseminate the views to the public as quickly as possible, and in the case of O'Sullivan's death studies from the Battle of Spotsylvania, have them transformed into woodcut prints and published in *Harper's Weekly*.

The advertising strategies of Gardner and E.&H.T. Anthony Co. speak even further to the commitment to distribute photographs from the war, including images of the dead, widely. A look through the advertisements in publications like *Harper's Weekly* and the *Daily National Intelligencer* provides a literal map of the increasing frequency of the advertisements of both Gardner's studio and E.&H.T. Anthony Co. Critically, Gardner's particularly frequent emphasis on the availability of views of dead soldiers for sale leaves no question as to the kind of images he was promoting, and what he felt would both make a successful sale and remain an important part of his offerings to the public. Catalogs as well worked to distribute images of the dead even further by promoting the distribution of later editions even inside the pages of each catalog. Fallon's Stereopticon also placed a distinct importance on the fact that a viewer to the exhibition would be able to see photographs of the "rebel dead" from Antietam. All of these factors solidified the development of images of dead soldiers from the Civil War as a commodity that could, and in fact should, be marketed and sold. Here, the marketing of the dead reached full development and would continue to help define the understanding of death even years after the war was over.

It would be remiss to gloss over the potential for traumatic effect that photographs of the dead could have on viewers across the Union. The images that Gardner, O'Sullivan, and Roche, among others created when they had a chance to capture the unburied dead are almost without exception, graphic, and sometimes even grotesque. In the face of a viewing public that had never seen such terrible imagery before (and even in the case today of those that have and do) the experience of viewing photographs like this can be destabilizing to say the least, and outright traumatizing in many cases, because the viewer is forced to confront a horrible reality of humanity in the visages of war death that are presented. For many, this means that the Civil War and its human destruction was relived time and time again. It also means that in today's world the viewing

of these photographs keeps that trauma alive every time an image of a dead Civil War soldier is viewed, even for viewers removed from the conflict by more than 150 years. Sontag's assertions of the potential that photographs can have to redefine a cultural idea, and to influence and help to build cultural norms, and Barthes' argument about the power of the punctum of the image, have never been more applicable. In this case, the cultural norm that was, and is, being reshaped is the understanding of war death, and more broadly, death over all.

The influence of photographs in the deconstruction and reshaping of a cultural norm did not end with the signing of a treaty at Appomattox Courthouse. Just days after Grant and Lee met, Abraham Lincoln was assassinated, and photographs and other images connected to his death and the ramifications of it were spread across the Union, not unlike the photographs of dead soldiers from the Battles of Antietam, Gettysburg, Spotsylvania, Petersburg, and others. These photographs too, would contribute not only to the reshaping of the cultural idea of death, but would also serve to further confirm the commodification of photographs of the dead as a marketable commodity to be bought, sold, and distributed broadly.

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V. THE ASSASSINATION OF ABRAHAM LINCOLN: CIVIL WAR PHOTOGRAPHS AS INFLUENCERS OF CULTURE

In May of 1865, a series of woodcut prints appeared in *Harper's Weekly*, detailing the pageantry surrounding Abraham Lincoln's wake and burial (**Fig. 41a&b**). The President had been assassinated on April 14th by John Wilkes Booth, plunging the already reeling country into a state of deep mourning. The prints were eloquent in their representation of Lincoln's wake. In the first image, published on May 6, 1865 (**Fig. 41a**), the Rotunda of New York City Hall is the focus, with Lincoln's body placed in its casket in the center and easily recognizable both to viewers of the images and to the lines of people within the frame that trail up and down the stairs as they pass by him to pay their respects. The stage is framed by an elaborate bunting that is topped by classically inspired wreaths and a bust of an unknown figure. Chandeliers provide light and allow the bunting to be extended to further frame the scene. In the second print, published on May 20, 1865, the visitation for the President in Chicago, Illinois is on view. (**Fig. 41b**) Here we see well organized lines and crowds of mourners filing across the composition. In the background, an awning is visible, framed by a Baroque canopy of buntings and pillars. The direction of the flow of people tells us that the President lies underneath the awning. In both prints, the pageantry of the moment is evident, emphasized by the many mourners and the classic architecture that give viewers of the prints a sense that this was an affair that has taken place not only in the present moment, but is distinctly connected to the classic traditions of history. This by extension connects the death of the President with the passing of significant historical figures from George Washington to figures of antiquity. In both cases, the artist took significant liberties in composition and style to present a scene that would be interpreted by viewers in this very particular way which belies the reality of what either of these events looked like.

Interestingly, these public images were not the only images created or conceptualized around Lincoln's death. Photographer Jeremiah Gurney created two photographs of Lincoln lying in state when the president's funeral train visited New York City. (**Fig. 42**) Gurney's photographic images of the President are distinctly different than the romanticized pageantry of the prints in *Harper's Weekly*. Rather than showing a grand display they present a somber moment of reflection and respect, isolating Lincoln's death as something that should be contemplated, honored, and perhaps even revered in the most discreet way. Critically however, Gurney's two photographic images were not circulated in the public realm or even known about until they were discovered in the mid-twentieth century. For those who were not able to attend the many visitations to pay their last respects, the only visual they had of the proceedings came from the prints published by *Harper's Weekly*. Furthermore, in the summer of 1865, woodcut prints based closely on Alexander Gardner's photographs of the hangings of Lincoln's conspirators were published in *Harper's Weekly* to document that event. (**Fig. 43**) Gardner also sold the actual photographs through the same catalog method he had used throughout the war.

On April 9, 1865 General Lee surrendered to General Grant at Appomattox Courthouse, effectively bringing to an end the large body of the Civil War which had raged for four devastating years.¹⁹³ Over the coming months, additional regiments would follow suit and the war would finally end for good by late summer 1866. Just five days after Grant accepted Lee's surrender at Appomattox, Booth and several co-conspirators set out to execute a plot to kill Lincoln in retaliation for the recent defeat of the Confederacy.

¹⁹³ James McPherson, *Battle Cry of Freedom: The Civil War Era*, (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1988) pp. 848-849

A. THE DEATH OF A PRESIDENT

On the night that he was assassinated, President Lincoln, along with his wife, Clara Harris (the daughter of a New York senator), and her fiancé Major Henry Rathborne attended a performance at Ford Theater in Washington, DC.¹⁹⁴ Their decision to attend that night would unwittingly change the way that the United States recovered and rebuilt from the four-year conflict of the Civil War. John Wilkes Booth was a well-known actor and a staunch supporter of the Confederacy who had developed a plan to assassinate the president as well as several prominent members of his administration. Booth was not acting alone. In fact, several people were involved in the plot to one degree or another, including George Atzerodt, Lewis Paine, David Herold, Mary Surratt, and Michael O’Laughlin, although it is somewhat ambiguous how extensive each of their involvement was.¹⁹⁵ Each of the men and women involved were committed to the Confederacy and bitter about the outcome of the war. They were desperate to recoup pride for the South and to reestablish the Confederate States of America as a sovereign nation separate from the Union.

After gaining entry to the box area of the theater Booth entered the President’s box and shot Lincoln in the back of the head, then jumped to the stage amidst the ensuing confusion. Booth was heard to have shouted “Sic semper tyrannis!” (Thus always to the tyrants) before escaping out one of the back doors of the theater.¹⁹⁶ Mortally wounded, Lincoln was quickly carried from the Theater to a boarding house across the street that was owned by William Petersen. After a nine-

¹⁹⁴ Martha Hodes, *Mourning Lincoln*, (New Haven & London: Yale University Press, 2015) p. 1

¹⁹⁵ *The Trial: The Assassination of President Lincoln and the Trial of the Conspirators*, ed. Edward Steers Jr, (Louisville, KY: The University of Kentucky Press, 2003) p. vii

¹⁹⁶ Nicholas Pistor, *Shooting Lincoln : Mathew Brady, Alexander Gardner, and the Race to Photograph the Story of the Century*, (New York : DaCapo, 2017) pp. 83-84

hour vigil, Lincoln passed away and the country lost what some (although certainly not all) thought of as the “savior of the nation.”¹⁹⁷

For a nation plunged deep into mourning, the wake of President Lincoln surpassed anything ever held before in its length and pageantry. A train was commissioned to transport the body from Washington, DC to Lincoln’s home in Springfield, Illinois. Rather than taking a direct route, the train stopped in several major cities in the North along the way so that mourners could pay their final respects to the President. In each place, the body was touched up and dressed for a public wake, then displayed as hundreds of citizens passed by his casket to pay their last respects.¹⁹⁸

B. THE CONSPIRATORS

After Booth jumped from the President’s box to the stage and escaped from the theater, he was able to attain a significant head start on his pursuers due to the confusion and commotion as those in the theater struggled to make sense of what had happened to and tend to Lincoln. He was finally captured fourteen days later near Port Royal, Virginia where he was shot and killed after a standoff.¹⁹⁹ The remaining members of the conspiracy were captured by late April and held in custody.. All eight of the conspirators were placed on trial in Washington, DC, not long after Lincoln’s death. All of the conspirators were found guilty of plotting to assassinate the President on July 5, 1865. Four of the conspirators were sentenced to death, George Atzerodt, Lewis Paine, David Herold, and Mary Surratt, whose role in the plot has always remained controversial. Three others, Samuel Mudd, Samuel Arnold, and Michael O’Laughlin received life in prison. Edman

¹⁹⁷ Harold Holzer & Frank Williams, “Lincoln’s Deathbed in Art and Memory: The ‘Rubber Room’ Phenomenon,” in *The Lincoln Assassination: Crime and Punishment, Myth and Memory*, ed. Harold Holzer, Craig Symonds, & Frank Williams, (New York: Fordham University Press, 2010) pp. 11-12

¹⁹⁸ Richard Wightman Fox, *Lincoln’s Body: A Cultural History*, (New York & London: WW Norton & Company, 2015) pp. 97-101

¹⁹⁹ D. Mark Katz, *Witness to an Era: The Life and Photographs of Alexander Gardner, the Civil War, Lincoln, and the West*, (New York City: Viking Penguin, 1991) pp. 156-157

Spangler received six years in prison for his role.²⁰⁰ Mary Surratt's son, John Surratt was arrested in 1866 as well but his trial resulted in a hung jury. President Andrew Johnson pardoned Samuel Arnold and Samuel Mudd in 1869. Michael O'Laughlin died in prison prior to Johnson's pardon.²⁰¹

The execution of Surratt, Atzerodt, Paine, and Herold was held on July 7, 1865. Tickets were sold to the event and a small crowd gathered at the Old Arsenal Prison in Washington DC where the executions would take place. Surratt was the first female to be executed by the United States government in spite of the questions by some of her guilt, giving the event particular notoriety.²⁰² The executions were recorded by Alexander Gardner who created a series of photographs depicting the sequence of events. In his photographs, even a viewer far removed from the event of the day by space and time could gain a sense of what it might have been like to see the executions first hand. The images bring the viewer into the moment in a way that is not unlike the photographs of dead soldiers taken by Gardner, O'Sullivan, Gibson, and Roche during the war.

C. PHOTOGRAPHING AN EXECUTION

After Lincoln's assassination, Colonel Lafayette Baker, who was chief of the Secret Service, asked Alexander Gardner to duplicate already existing portraits of Booth, Harold, and John Surratt.²⁰³ The images were to be used to aid in the capture of the three men – one of the first times that photographs were used specifically for this purpose. The use of Gardner's photographs on the wanted posters for Booth, Harold, and Surratt is distinctive in its own right. All three photographs are half or full length portraits in which Gardner posed his sitters in an active way that gives the viewer a sense of the person and a likeness that is easily identifiable. For example,

²⁰⁰ Hodes, 2015, p. 263

²⁰¹ Hodes, 2015, pp. 263-264

²⁰² Hodes, 2015, p. 264

²⁰³ Katz, 1991, p. 152

Booth sits with his right arm resting on his leg and his left arm placed at his hip. He looks to his right, past the viewer as if in contemplation. This pose connects Booth to his occupation as an actor by suggesting the creativity and ability to assume any role that are critical to his work. At the same time, his face (and the faces of Harold and Surratt) is clear and easily recognizable. The decision to use photographs to advertise the search for these three fugitives also confirms the role of photographs as a documentary object that presents an accurate representation of a person or an event, and one that is a reliable record that could aid in the capture of the men. To add further to the veracity of the photographs, the images were placed alongside text which provided details for each fugitive as well as the award promised for bringing them in. The original wanted posters were published on April 20, 1865 and included the photographs of Surratt and Booth taken at Gardner's studio as evidenced by mounts which were specific to Gardner himself.²⁰⁴ (**Fig. 44**)

Gardner was also commissioned to photograph each of the conspirators aboard the battle ship the USS *Montauk* after they were captured. (**Fig. 45a-c**) Interestingly, only three of the accused were photographed without handcuffs - Paine, Joao Celstino (who's role was never confirmed and he was released), and Samuel Arnold. The remaining fugitives were photographed aboard the *Montauk's* companion ship, the USS *Saugus* on the same day.²⁰⁵ Gardner took more photographs of Paine than any of the other fugitives, capturing ten images rather than the standard two or three images, most likely out of simple fascination with him. Of all the conspirators, Paine had the sketchiest past, and his brooding, careless personality captured the imagination of many who encountered him. Gardner decided to copyright six of the ten photographs of Paine on May 17, 1865. Paine was also the only conspirator to be photographed both with and without handcuffs.

²⁰⁴ Katz, 1991, p. 152

²⁰⁵ Katz, 1991, p. 164

More than simply documenting those responsible for the assassination plot, the photographs of Paine and the other conspirators represent an important shift in the use of photographs in the nineteenth century, because it was the first time that a photographic criminal lineup was created.²⁰⁶ In fact, Gardner's series set a precedent for what would become the standard lineup format consisting of one frontal and one profile image. This arrangement of images (what we think of today as mug shots) is significant because it allows for a more thorough likeness of the person. While fully frontal poses are useful, they can be manipulated with the addition or subtraction of features like facial hair, hair color, style, and length, or the hiding of birthmarks or scars. A profile view is much harder to change because while features can be manipulated, the general shape and composition of a person's head cannot be, so it is a more consistent way to document a person's appearance that will be recognizable and unchanged over time. By photographing each prisoner in both frontal and profile views, Gardner was able to create a much more accurate document of their appearance for use by legal or government bodies. That Gardner copyrighted even a few of the images (Paine's) speaks volumes as well because it confirms his intent (by virtue of protecting them as intellectual property) to market and sell the photographs.

In addition to photographing the prisoners after capture, Gardner was the only photographer to be issued a pass which authorized him to not only attend, but also to photograph, the executions on July 7th.²⁰⁷ The commission was important, because it demonstrated the status that Gardner had attained as a prominent photographer in Washington, DC, and because it would be the first time that an event like the execution of those responsible for the assassination of a President would be documented photographically. The groundbreaking nature of Gardner's

²⁰⁶ Katz, 1991, p. 164; Gardner would later develop the "rogues gallery" for the Washington DC Metropolitan Police Department in 1873.

²⁰⁷ Katz, 1991, p. 177

commission should not be overlooked. While it is not freelance journalism in that he did not take it upon himself to photograph the event but rather was commissioned, Gardner's series serves as a verifiable document of the executions in a way that is similar to his photographs of bodies at Antietam, Gettysburg, and other battles. Although photography was understood as a documentary tool or medium from its outset, the practice of capturing an event like an execution in a way that would be used to verify the progression of the event as well as its occurrence was relatively new. It would pave the way for the serial photographic documentation of other important events in the twentieth century like the inauguration of a President or atrocities that occurred during World War II or the Vietnam War (to name just a few). As such, it placed Gardner at the forefront of the development of modern photojournalism as we know it today.²⁰⁸

When the day of the executions arrived, Gardner and O'Sullivan (working as his assistant) arrived at around eleven in the morning. Gardner placed an 8x11 camera inside one of the windows directly across from the gallows and close to the corner of the building for O'Sullivan to use for the event. In a manner similar to their strategy when photographing events like the aftermath of the Battles of Gettysburg and Antietam, Gardner planned to use a stereograph camera in the adjacent window. While they waited for the moment when the prisoners would arrive, O'Sullivan circulated outside photographing the grounds and the inside of the courtyard as spectators and officials arrived. **(Fig. 46)** He also photographed the testing of the gallows drops in preparation for the executions. Finally, he was able to photograph the officers responsible for carrying out the execution. **(Fig. 47)** As the executions took place, Gardner and O'Sullivan diligently captured the event on film. It was the longest single photographic series of an historic event of the period.²⁰⁹

²⁰⁸ Katz, 1991, p.177

²⁰⁹ Katz, 1991, pp. 177, 192

Like the photographs of battles such as Antietam, Gettysburg, and Petersburg, Gardner's photographs of the conspirators' executions are best understood as a series. In fact, Alan Trachtenberg's emphasis on the seriality of photographs demonstrates that it is impossible to understand these photographic images, and the event they capture, individually.²¹⁰ Gardner recorded the hangings from beginning to end and the images read as a visceral narrative of the executions. (**Fig. 48a&b**) In the first frame, Gardner captured the empty gallows. Despite the chairs placed on them and the fact that they are surrounded by people, they encompass a kind of desolation that speaks of the impending loss of life that the hangman's noose will soon be responsible for. The framework of the gallows and the photograph is simple and without decoration, emphasizing the strictly utilitarian function that the gallows are about to perform and focusing the viewer's attention even more directly on the reality of the death that it will be responsible for.

In the second frame of the series, the prisoners have been brought out and led up the gallows stairs to prepare for death. They are each seated in one of the chairs seen in the first frame, but the individual figures are hard to discern because of the mass of people standing on the platform with them. Umbrellas shield several of the figures from the sun, making the scene appear cluttered. In the third frame, the conspirators have stepped forward to receive judgement. Here too, it is hard to discern the details of the image and to separate the doomed from their handlers. Most of the information about the photograph is taken from Gardner's caption. Yet at the same time, it is easily understood because the function and foreshadowed action are clear in the first frame of the series. Here too, we see the criticality of a developing precedent which reverberates into the

²¹⁰ Alan Trachtenberg, "Albums of War: on Reading Civil War Photographs," (*Representations*, No. 9, Winter 1985: 1-32) p. 1

present day. In a photojournalistic image the way in which the subject is represented, what can be seen, how it is framed, and what is left out is crucial to the way the photograph will be read and understood. The message of the photograph, however, is also enrobed in the action of a real-time moment when the photographer releases the shutter and so it is not always possible to capture an image with the greatest clarity. The way the photograph is captioned, as in the case of the views of the conspirators on the gallows platform, is especially critical to establishing an account of the event that can be understood as accurate, or documentary.

The fourth frame of the series isolates the moment when General John Hartranft read the decision of the military commission prior to the drop. In the next frame, white canvas hoods are placed over the conspirators in the final preparations before death. The next frame is perhaps the most dramatic of the series as it captures the moment when the platform is released and the prisoners fall. A viewer of the photograph can see the blurred bodies as they swing and imagine the force with which the nooses tightened around the throats of the condemned. The group of figures still standing on the platform watches from above. The following frame focuses on a now empty platform, with the bodies of the executed silently hanging before being cut down. A crowd made up of officers, soldiers, and other spectators interested in witnessing the executions is visible in the foreground of the image, watching the result of the executions. Several soldiers can be seen in the close foreground standing at attention in an orderly formation. To the left, a more scattered group of spectators stand, some with umbrellas to shield them from the sun. Finally, a line of figures (most likely soldiers or officers), stand in a line on top of the wall behind the gallows. These witnesses to the executions, whether willing or not, serve as sources of further verification that the prisoners will indeed meet their judgement, and that all will go according to procedure. Finally, Gardner and O'Sullivan captured one more frame which expands the viewers

understanding of the moment as it shows both the edge of the gallows and the coffins and graves that have been prepared to the right of them into which the executed will be placed.

In contrast to some of the photographs taken during the peak of the war, Gardner and O'Sullivan's photographing of the executions of the conspirators of Lincoln's assassination was not commercially motivated, largely because of Gardner's was commission by General David Hunter. However, Gardner kept both the photographs and the rights to them after he turned over the images which the government had requested. He then offered the photographs for sale in the form of *carte de visites* as well as in larger formats.²¹¹ Gardner's decision to sell the photographs in this particular format is interesting for a few reasons. For one, the *carte de visite*, while still popular, was on its way out of favor as a sought-after photographic format. Moreover, although the *carte de visite* had been used throughout the war to sell images from the front, it was still overwhelmingly a portrait format, and one which promoted the inexpensive sale to private citizens as well as the portability that their small size made possible. By definition, *carte de visites* were intended to be experienced or viewed in an intimate format due to their small size. They were often carried in breast pockets or purses or placed into photo albums for viewing in a parlor. This was perfectly reasonable in the case of a portrait or travel destination. However, it was a much more unusual function for photographs from the war front, and especially for images of an execution – which would then also be viewed in the same intimate way that a *carte de visite* portrait would be seen. In addition, at least two of Gardner's larger format prints of the photographs were marketed under the title "Incidents of the War," which was stamped on the front of the image.

According to Gardner's biographer, Mark Katz, the photographs did not sell well.²¹² This was perhaps due to the absolute saturation of death that Northern citizens had been subjected to

²¹¹ Katz, 1991, pp. 177, 192

²¹² Katz, 1991, p. 192

over the course of the war. As Susan Sontag argues, there is a point at which the continual viewing of traumatic images like death in war results in a contradictory reaction for the viewer. “Shock can become familiar. Shock can wear off. Even if it doesn’t, one can *not* look. People have means to defend themselves against what is upsetting. ... As one can become habituated to horror in real life, one can become habituated to the horror of images.”²¹³ Sontag’s insight is useful - this constant exposure can breed a desensitization to the disturbing imagery. At the same time, she asserts, it can also result in an aggressive aversion to seeing or being exposed to any image that even slightly deals with the traumatic subject matter (fallen soldiers on a battlefield for example).

Sontag notes,

But do people want to be horrified? Probably not. Still there are pictures whose power does not abate, in part because one cannot look at them often. Pictures of the ruin of faces that will always testify to a great iniquity survived, at that cost, ... Harrowing photographs do not inevitably lose their power to shock. But they are not much help if the task is to understand. Narratives can make us understand. *Photographs do something else – they haunt us.*”²¹⁴

It is this second reaction in Sontag’s discussion that holds particular weight here and helps us to understand why Gardner’s photographs of the war, and of the executions, especially, failed to bring in profits. By the time Gardner marketed the photographs of the executions, there had been too much death, some of which had been seen in photographic or printed form, and the desire to see additional images was more than many could fathom. Even so, Gardner continued to advertise photographs of the war throughout 1865.²¹⁵ Considering the thoroughness of his marketing earlier in the war, it stands to reason that the photographs that he and O’Sullivan took of the executions would have been included in his catalogs of images for sale. In fact, Gardner published a catalog of images in late summer 1865, although no physical copy of the book is known to survive. The

²¹³ Susan Sontag, *Regarding the Pain of Others*, (New York City: Farrar, Straus, & Giroux, 2003) p. 82

²¹⁴ Sontag, 2003, pp. 83-89, Emphasis added

²¹⁵ “Advertisement,” *Daily National Intelligencer*, July 6, 1865, Washington, DC

catalog was noted in an article published by *Harper's Weekly* that expounded on Gardner's next venture – the documentation of parts of South America, where the unknown writer saw fit to include that Gardner's "Memories of the Rebellion" would also be published in their own volume in August of that year.²¹⁶ The mug shots of the conspirators that Gardner took after their capture were also converted into woodcut prints and published in *Harper's Weekly* on July 1, 1865, just before the trial verdict was handed down in early July.²¹⁷ (Fig. 49) The photographs of the execution were similarly converted into woodcut prints and published in *Harper's Weekly* on July 22, 1865.²¹⁸ (Fig. 43)

D. A FALLEN PRESIDENT - A CONFLICTED IMAGERY

When Lincoln's body arrived in New York City on April 24th as part of his "funerary tour" it was laid out at New York City Hall. Two officers were assigned to watch over the body while thousands of mourning citizens passed through the Rotunda. Jeremiah Gurney was a prominent New York photographer who had made a name for himself in the studio portrait industry in the years leading up to and during the war. Although he had focused on his studio practice and was not known to have photographed the war itself, he was a direct rival to Mathew Brady's studio. Gurney was not an underdog to Brady, however. He had won both national and international awards and had exhibited his work at the Great Exhibition at the Crystal Palace in London in 1851 among other places. His studio, the "New Photographic and Fine Art Gallery" had been acclaimed by New York writer John Werge as "the most lavish new gallery in New York City" in the 1850s.²¹⁹

²¹⁶ "Gardner's Photographs," *Harper's Weekly: A Journal of Civilization*, July 22, 1865, New York City

²¹⁷ *Harper's Weekly: A Journal of Civilization*, July 1, 1865, New York City

²¹⁸ *Harper's Weekly: A Journal of Civilization*, July 22, 1865, New York City

²¹⁹ Bob Zeller, *The Blue and Gray in Black and White: A History of Civil War Photography*, (Westport, CT & London: Praeger Publishers, 2005) p. 19

Gurney's photographs of Lincoln lying in state were created quickly after the funeral train arrived in New York City. He initially received permission to create them. The photographs were to be composed respectfully and taken from a distance so as not to desecrate the memory of President Lincoln, or his physical body.²²⁰ Gurney was skilled and tactful in his work. A look at the photograph shows the President's coffin, with his body inside sitting on the Rotunda well below the viewpoint of the camera. **(Fig. 42)** Just enough detail is present that Lincoln is easily identifiable as the fallen President, yet not so much detail was captured to record any decomposition or other compromising of the body. The figures of Admiral Charles H. Davis and General Edward E. Townsend stand at the head and the foot of the coffin, respectively as if keeping watch. In fact, they had been tasked with tending to the president's body during the New York viewing by Secretary of War, Edwin Stanton.²²¹ The feeling of the image is one of honor and respect that presents itself in a way that is distinctly different in tone from the often gruesome pictures of death taken at Antietam, Gettysburg, and Petersburg. It is the epitome of a postmortem photograph done in the most careful taste. Too, the fact that Gurney's photographs of Lincoln can (and should) be characterized as postmortem photographs helps us to better understand their function as mechanisms of mourning as well as a document to confirm his loss, especially for those citizens who could not attend his many wakes. That Stanton rescinded the permission originally granted to Gurney and suppressed the photographs dismantled that intended purpose and made Lincoln's passing all that much harder to comprehend for many people because they had no access to a physical remnant of him. Overall, Gurney took two photographs, both similar in composition, both equally respectful and discrete.

²²⁰ Zeller, 2005, p. 166

²²¹ Zeller, 2005, p. 166

After Gurney had taken his photographs, Townsend received an unexpected but urgent telegraph from Stanton. The telegraph read:

I see by the New York papers this evening that a photograph of the corpse of President Lincoln was allowed to be taken yesterday in New York. I cannot sufficiently express my surprise and disapproval of such an act while the body was in your charge. You will report what officers of the funeral escort were or ought to have been on duty at the time this was done, and immediately relieve them and order them to Washington. You will direct the provost-marshal to go to the photographer, seize and destroy any plates and any pictures or engravings that may have been made, and consider yourself responsible if the offense is repeated.
Edwin Stanton,
Secretary of War²²²

Stanton's overt disapproval of the creation of the photographs was evident, driven largely by a request from Mary Todd Lincoln that no photographs of the President be taken. More than simply stating his disapproval of Gurney taking the photographs, Stanton directed Townsend to immediately seize the negatives and any prints and destroy them. Not convinced that destroying the images was necessary or beneficial, Townsend replied, arguing that the photographs might actually help ease the pain of mourning for the public. This was particularly important for the thousands of citizens who could not come to view the President's body lying in state. Moreover, Townsend's conviction that the photographs only gave a sense of the scene of the wake, rather than clear details of the President, further supported his argument.²²³ The success of a postmortem photograph of the President relied on the ability to present him in a very particular way – in this case if he could merely be asleep rather than dead, one of the techniques used by postmortem photographers when they created photographs of the deceased for families to hold onto. Gurney was careful to frame the composition of his photographs in this way, even succeeding in minimizing the fact that the President lay in a casket, by capturing the body from a position that

²²² Telegraph of Edwin Stanton, Taken from Zeller, 2005, pp. 166-169

²²³ Zeller, 2005, p. 166-169

was physically removed from the scene, thereby avoiding the inclusion of details like skin pallor and decomposition. Gurney's careful attention to the framing and composition of the photographs that ensured the respect and reverence owed to Lincoln supported Townsend's argument for the importance of the public being able to view and have access to the photographs.

Townsend was not the only person to argue for the preservation of Gurney's photographs, or to be convinced of their importance to the public. *New York Times* owner, Henry Raymond, also issued an appeal to Stanton. So did Gurney himself. Even Mathew Brady. All were convinced that the public needed to be able to see the President in state and that doing so would help move people forward in their public grief. Finally, Stanton was asked to modify his order and preserve the negatives. He was immovable, insisting that because the Lincoln family had not consented to the taking of the photographs, both the prints and their negatives must be destroyed. Ultimately, one print was preserved but the negatives and second print did not survive.²²⁴

The suppression of Lincoln's postmortem photographs differs markedly from the determined marketing and publication of images of the dead during the war because it was an overt attempt to remove an image from the public sphere, or rather, prevent it from entering the public sphere at all. In fact, this suppression is an illustration of the broad trend developing out of the Civil War in which people began to avoid, rather than embrace, (or at least accept) death. This further demonstrated that the cultural shift in the understanding of death and mourning was in fact composed of complex layers, which were not entirely based on the physical catastrophe of the Civil War. Rather, it points to a much more general move wherein the only acceptable way to deal with death was in the public sphere, and only if publicly confronted with it as photographs of war

²²⁴ Zeller, 2005, p. 169; After Stanton's decision, the remaining print fell into obscurity and was not even known to exist until it was found in 1952 at the Illinois State Historical Society by 14 year old Ronald Rietvald and finally brought to public attention. (Zeller, 2005, p. 196)

dead forced one to do, and as the sale, marketing, and conversion into prints published in *Harper's Weekly* and other papers accomplished. The general experience of death then became public, and the suppression of the photographs of Lincoln lying in state demonstrates one of the last vestiges of the older, more private understanding. It is also important to note that this is a dilemma which would continue on well into the 20th century with the suppression of images occurring in most, if not all, American conflicts from this period forward, including the Gulf War of the 1990s when photographs of flag draped coffins of fallen soldiers were banned out of concern for the families of the deceased and out of a fear that they would spark protest. The suppression of the photographs also, however, points to a newly developing inference that death has not happened if there is not some kind of a visual record of it.

Lincoln's death sparked a resurgence of interest in portraits of him as well, some of which were published in *Harper's Weekly* and/or were sold as *carte de visites*. Over the course of his life as a politician, and especially his term as President of the United States, dozens of portraits of Lincoln were taken by Gardner, Brady, and other photographers. With his assassination, photographs like his famous "Cooper's Union pose" from 1860 (**Fig. 50**) were brought back into public view. A print of a photograph by Brady of Lincoln at home with his son was published in *Harper's Weekly* on May 6, 1865. (**Fig. 51**) Gardner for his part marketed and sold portraits of the fallen President throughout that spring, including prints of his last sitting in February 1865. Several of Gardner's advertisements in the *Daily National Intelligencer* point directly to the availability of *carte de visites* of Lincoln, and especially prints of his last sitting with Gardner, which citizens could purchase.²²⁵ (**Fig. 52**) At least one advertisement published on April 19, 1865 read:

²²⁵ "Advertisement," *Daily National Intelligencer*, Taken from Katz, 1991, p. 133

THE LATE PRESIDENT. – CARTES DE VISITES OF ABRAHAM LINCOLN,
 Photographed from Life by Gardner – Mr. Lincoln's last sitting. Price, 55 cents,

PHILP & SOLOMONS²²⁶

Philp & Solomon also advertised on April 27th “Photographs of President Lincoln. The Last Picture He Sat For” in a text that included specific sizes available and their pricing information.²²⁷

The fact that the advertisements specify that the photographs for sale are of the “late President,” and that they are of his last known sitting, is significant. They isolate the purchase of these *carte de visites* as a way of holding on to the President in a physical way that is not unlike the purchase or publication of photographs of dead soldiers from the battlefield. After Lincoln was assassinated L. Prang & Co., a Boston lithographic firm, commissioned artist Matthew Wilson to duplicate an earlier portrait that had been based on Gardner's photographs. This further placed the last photographic portraits of the President firmly within the realm of memory for the public because they were used both as a tool for the creation of prints and paintings and sold by agents like Philp & Solomon (working for Gardner) to the public for private viewing in the home. Gardner and others were well aware of the public fascination with death and the importance that was placed on retaining a physical remnant or photograph of a loved one who had passed (or at the very least, a stand-in for them in the instances when no actual photograph was available). They had been able to use this fascination to promote the sale of photographs during the war and to display them in exhibitions like that held by Fallon's Stereopticon in New York City in 1864. The reappearance of Lincoln's photographic portraits in Gardner's advertisements gave the public the stand-in, or proxy, that they needed in the absence of a postmortem photograph, and the marketing of the images built off of the same fascination and desire for closure that the photographs

²²⁶ “Advertisement,” *Daily National Intelligencer*, Taken from Katz, 1991, p. 133

²²⁷ Katz, 1991, p. 119

of dead soldiers had in previous years. Lincoln's portraits became a memorial of sorts, and a proxy for the act of bidding him goodbye particularly for those who were not able to attend his wake in one of the many cities that the funeral train visited.

The fact that Gardner was advertising the President's portrait image for sale so soon after his assassination also demonstrates how aware Gardner was of the impact that the portraits could have on a mourning public, and of the potential that they held for additional profits for his studio. Importantly, rather than combining his advertisement of the President's *carte de visites* within his regular advertisement in the Classified Section of the paper which also appeared that day, Gardner's advertisement appeared in the Personals Section and focused solely on the President's portrait image. This set the sale of that memorial portrait out, giving it a primary focus by drawing its availability to the eye of the reader. Once again, Gardner was adept as both a business man and as a reader of the cultural importance of the visual image. In addition to the *carte de visites*, Gardner sold "memorial cards" of the President to the grieving public which were based off of *carte de visites* but were specially framed for display.²²⁸ Through the sale of his *carte de visite*, the President could live on, belying death for a period of time in the minds of his mourners. The trend of reviving the sale of Lincoln's portraits was not, and is not, unusual in and of itself *per se*. To be sure, the death of a statesman or other luminary frequently prompts a renewed interest in their portraiture, even today. In the case of Lincoln, the portraits became a way for a grieving public to remember him, and to try to grapple with the magnitude of his death and what it meant for a country which had been torn apart by war.

The absence of literal photographs of Lincoln's death might have meant a return to a time when text was the only avenue of information and understanding in the earliest days after a death

²²⁸ Advertisement," *Daily National Intelligencer*, Taken from Katz, 1991, p. 133

of such magnitude. Yet because Gardner was savvy enough to quickly advertise portraits of Lincoln for sale, and particularly images from his last known sitting, the public was offered a visual way to connect with the deceased President and to begin to absorb their loss. In the absence of an actual postmortem photograph of the President that the public could look to in the process of mourning, these last portraits from life functioned as a more symbolic kind of postmortem image and avenue for remembrance. Ultimately, the sale of Lincoln's portraits and the publication of prints of them in *Harper's Weekly*, served as a proxy for the real and stood in for a public that had few other ways of dealing with their loss in the first days after the assassination.

It is unfortunate that we do not have sales records or direct accounts of how the memorial photographs of Lincoln, or any of the imagery surrounding his death, were used in the weeks and months after his assassination. In the absence of this, we can look to the popularity of postmortem photographs, as well as the history behind other kinds of memorial imagery to better understand how these photographs were received by the public. As Jay Ruby notes:

Pictures portraying a public figure, such as a pope or king, were sometimes publicly displayed, thus allowing society at large to acknowledge and mourn the passing of an important person. The custom continues today and is to be found in virtually every pictorial medium. One could fill a book with the variety of mourning and funeral mortuary or memorial images of John F. Kennedy or Martin Luther King Jr.²²⁹

Ruby makes an important point, and his argument can be extended to include the photographic portraits of Lincoln that were sold after his death. Importantly, it also points to the way that these memorial images would almost certainly have been sought after, received, and used by the mourning public, in keeping with the historical (and forward looking) tendency of holding onto an image as a way of coming to terms with the death of a public figure. These memorial portraits, or

²²⁹ Jay Ruby, *Secure the Shadow: Death and Photography in America*, (Cambridge & London: MIT Press, 1995) p. 30

memorial cards, were popular for the remembrance of private citizens as well from the 1860s on. Typically, a photograph taken while the deceased was alive would be printed on a card, sometimes with the vital stats included on either the front or the back.²³⁰ A memorial card for a twelve-year-old girl named Maria Jane Hurd shows that the family chose to include the date of her death as well as a list of her goals for the new year and a verse from the Bible. (**Fig. 53**) As with public figures, these memorial cards were held onto as a way of remembering and grieving for the lost.

The popularity of postmortem photographs in the second half of the century discussed in chapter one gives us an even better idea of how the photographs of Lincoln would have been sought after and used in the time after his death. As Josiah Southworth noted in 1873, “When I began to take pictures, twenty or thirty years ago, I had to make pictures of the dead. We had to go out then more than we do now...”²³¹ A letter written by a woman named Eva Putnam to her aunt after the death of her cousin confirms the importance of these postmortem images, “I am glad you could get so good a picture of the little darling dead Mabel as you did, the fore head and hair look so natural.”²³² As is shown, photographs of the dead, and other mediums of memorial imagery, were and are an important tool for remembering the dead, and for grappling with the loss of a loved one, or of a public figure of the magnitude of Lincoln. By looking to these other examples we can speculate on how the photographs that surrounded Lincoln’s death were used and received, even in the absence of more direct statistics.

The Lincoln imagery extends even further beyond a literal representation of him. Within the first few days after his assassination, Gardner went to work to record several of the physical

²³⁰ Ruby, 1995, p. 122

²³¹ Josiah Southworth, “A Panel Discussion on Technique,” *Philadelphia Photographer*, vol. 10, 1873, pp. 279-280, Taken from Ruby, 1995, p. 53

²³² Eva Putnam, *Letter of Eva Putnam to Adelaide Dickinson*, from The Grace Cleveland Papers, Special Collections, The John Hay Library, Brown University, Providence RI, February, 1870, Taken from Ruby, 1995, p. 59

sites around Washington, DC which were tied to his death. Gardner's intent in creating these photographs was distinctly different from the commissioned photographs he took of the executions of the conspirators in July, or Gurney's initial commission to photograph Lincoln lying in state in New York. It was much closer in intent to the photographs that Gardner and his colleagues took at Antietam, Gettysburg, Spotsylvania, and Petersburg. Rather than being commissioned, Gardner took the initiative on his own to capture these locales because he felt that it was important to document them in the wake of the President's murder.²³³ For example, Gardner photographed Ford's Theater where Booth shot the President. He took the same comprehensive approach here that he had during the war, creating images of both the exterior and the interior of the building. In photographing the interior, Gardner focused on the President's box. **(Fig. 54)** He positioned his camera so that he was looking down on the box and the viewer can easily see the chair where the President sat. Also evident are the buntings that Booth was said to have caught his leg on as he leapt to the stage, and the portrait of George Washington, which hung in front. Gardner then photographed inside the theater box and captured Lincoln's chair from a closer perspective. **(Fig. 55)** On the exterior of the building, Gardner captured the black muslin draped across the building façade. **(Fig. 56)** Gardner then went on to photograph John Howard's stables, where Booth had stored his horse while inside Ford's Theater, **(Fig. 57)** and the Navy Yard Bridge where Booth escaped the city that night. **(Fig. 58)** Gardner also photographed the telegraph office where the message of the President's assassination was sent out across the Union. **(Fig. 59)** Finally, he photographed the Lincoln funeral train as it traveled through Washington, DC at the beginning of its tour.

²³³ Katz, 1991, p. 149-153

The photographs that Gardner took of significant locations in the saga of Lincoln's assassination served as proxy for the representation of Lincoln's death, and ultimately his deceased body as well. Like the photographic portraits of Lincoln that Gardner reinserted into his advertising and marketing immediately after the President's death, the photographs of locales gave people a reference point for the assassination. They showed where the sites of importance were from the theater itself to the bridge that Booth used to escape, giving a visual language to an event that was, for many, incomprehensible. In the absence of access to postmortem photographs they quite literally stood in the place of them – providing a platform and mechanism by which to mourn and to grapple with the reality of the assassination as well as the reverberating effects of it.

There is a precedent for this function of a photograph that was established from the medium's earliest decades. Photographs from the 1840s forward quickly began to fill in the visual spaces of events and people that their viewers did not have direct access to. The photographs taken during the war serve as an early example of this, because they gave visual form to the physicality of the battlefield and the reality of dying there. Similarly, as discussed in chapter one, the popularity of postmortem photographs in the second half of the nineteenth century gave a presence and continuation to loved ones who had passed on. In the case of Lincoln's assassination, a metaphorical and visceral understanding of the President's death was solidified by the visual image of the physical spaces in and around which it happened. Gardner's photographs gave the public, shocked and mourning both the President as a person and what he had come to stand for as a symbol of the Union, a physical remnant to hold onto as they grappled with yet another new reality. As Roland Barthes' writings on photography demonstrate the punctum of these images, in this case the physical reminders of the President and his death, ascribes a particular, often emotional,

meaning and understanding to the symbolism displayed.²³⁴ “Very often a *Punctum* is a detail,’ *i.e.* a partial object. ... This kind of *punctum* arouses great sympathy in me, almost a kind of tenderness. Yet the *punctum* shows no preference for morality or good taste. ... There is another ... expansion of the punctum: when paradoxically, while remaining a “detail,” it fills the whole picture.”²³⁵ The detail that can be found in the visual knowledge of the locations shown in these photographs created a specific understanding of the whole image and gave the nineteenth-century viewer something to connect to in the wake of Lincoln’s death, even if that knowledge was a disturbing reminder of the event.

As Sontag notes, “Something becomes real – to those who are elsewhere, following it as “news” – by being photographed a photograph is “literally a trace of something brought before the lens,” and serves as a “memento of the vanished past and the dear departed.”²³⁶ Sontag’s words reverberate in the context of Gardner’s photographs of the locations surrounding Lincoln’s death. Although Sontag’s argument focuses more on the documentary “realness” of the photograph while Barthes focuses more on the emotional pull of the image with his discussion of the punctum, the two are not so divergent as they might first appear. In fact, the effect of something becoming “real” that Sontag refers to here is reliant on the execution of the punctum that Barthes is committed to for its effect. Too, in the discussions of both scholars, it is the indexicality, or physical materiality, of the photographs that make them function as they do for a mourning public. Because Gardner’s photographs of the theater, telegraph office, and other locations are absent of any humanity or action, they depict a particular stillness that translates in this context into the mournfulness of the assassination. The lack of action, especially, is magnified by the slight

²³⁴ Roland Barthes, *Camera Lucida: Reflections on Photography*, (New York: Farrar, Straus, & Giroux, 1980) pp. 63-73

²³⁵ Barthes, 1980, pp. 43-45

²³⁶ Sontag, 2003, pp. 21 & 24

graininess or blurring of the photographs, which stems from the state of photographic technology at the time and further magnifies the impact of the punctum and the real that Barthes and Sontag discuss. The photographs of the locales of the assassination document, they remind, they eulogize, and they serve as a record and memorial object for Lincoln himself, or more specifically, his body. In essence, Gardner's photographs of the locales of Lincoln's death recreate his life and death and function as death photographs in the absence of the images of the body which were lost to Gurney.

Interestingly, Lincoln's photograph was not the only one that Stanton suppressed in the weeks after his assassination. After Booth was captured and killed on April 26th an autopsy was scheduled to be performed aboard the *Montauk*. On April 28, 1865, the *New York News Tribune* reported that a photograph of Booth's body had been taken during the autopsy by none other than Gardner, who had been given permission to create the image, "Yesterday, a photographic view of the body was taken before it was removed from the *Montauk*."²³⁷ In fact, a woodcut print published in *Harper's Weekly* is thought to have been based on Gardner's autopsy photograph, although this has never been definitively proven. (**Fig. 60**) According to a statement by James A. Wardell, who was present at the autopsy, however, the photograph and its negative were ordered destroyed by Stanton, much like Gurney's photograph of Lincoln lying in state in New York City. Wardell's statement read in part,

Under no circumstances was I to allow him (Gardner) or his assistant out of my sight until they had taken a picture and made the print, and then I was to bring the print and the glass back to the War Department and give it only to Col. [L.C.] Baker or Secretary of War Stanton..... I hope you are able to find the plate but I doubt you will. The War Department was very determined to make sure that Booth was not made a hero and some rebel would give a good price for one of those pictures of the plate.²³⁸

²³⁷ *New York News Tribune*, April 28, 1865, New York City, Taken from Katz, 1991, pp. 156-160; Katz references the article in the *New York News Tribune*, April 28, 1865, New York City

²³⁸ *Statement of James A. Wardell regarding the Booth Autopsy*, 1896, Taken from Zeller, 2005, p. 170; See also Katz, 1991, p. 162

Wardell's account demonstrates the lengths to which Stanton was willing to go, and what he felt was necessary, to keep the Booth photograph from reaching the public. For Stanton and others grieving the loss of the President, the idea that his assassin would be remembered and revered in a similar way as Lincoln himself was unfathomable. The possibility of the photographs reaching the public would open the door to that possibility and he could not, should not, under any circumstances be made into a hero, a role that was reserved for the victim of such a terrible act. Gardner's photograph of Booth was never seen by the public, nor was it ever recovered or brought to their attention. Although the reasoning behind Stanton's insistence that the Booth photograph be destroyed is quite different than his proclaimed reasoning for treating Gurney's photograph of Lincoln in a similar manner, the suppression of the Booth photograph is telling because it represents a broader developing trend in the desire of government bodies to control the narrative of a potentially politically charged event in the same way that the suppression of Gurney's photographs of Lincoln did.

According to Katz, the fact that Stanton ordered the destruction of both the print and the negative of Booth's autopsy suggests that there was concern that Booth would be seen as a martyr if his postmortem image became public. This seems a valid argument because there was a sect of the Northern population who sympathized with the Confederacy and who were upset at the outcome of the war, and not about the loss of the President.²³⁹ The suppression of the Booth photograph from the public sphere by this logic functioned as a protective barrier to both the memory of the President and the tenuous mending of the nation in the post-war period. In contrast, the suppression of the Lincoln photograph was directly related to concerns over the respect and

²³⁹ Thomas Lowry, "Not Everybody Mourned Lincoln's Death," in *The Lincoln Assassination: Crime and Punishment, Myth and Memory*, ed. Harold Holzer, Craig Symonds, & Frank Williams, (New York: Fordham University Press, 2010) pp. 95-102

privacy of the Lincoln family. In both cases, however, the suppression of the photograph speaks to the power of images on the public understanding and perception of an event. The power of photographic images like this can shift the perception of events that have occurred because of the understanding of the photograph as real. Here we can look back to the British government's desire to use photographs to influence the way the Crimean War was perceived in Britain in the 1850s – and the commission of Roger Fenton to create images that would present only a positive understanding of the conditions and events of the conflict. In that case, the effort was largely fruitless, but only because Fenton's photographs were ultimately not published until after the war was over. It is this same awareness of the ability to influence public opinion that caused Stanton to require that the photographs of Booth be suppressed and destroyed because he clearly felt that both images in varying ways would affect public discourse and opinion. They were seen as threatening to someone or something, whether the Lincoln family (Lincoln's photographs) or the federal government (Booth's photograph). Moreover, the ability of photographs such as this to move public thought demonstrates how photographs can work as extensions of cultural ideas and norms, including an understanding of death which, in this case, was being shifted and redefined as a result of the war.

E. PUBLIC MOURNING/PUBLIC TRAUMA

There is a kind of psychic numbing in the general population that occurred as a part of the fallout of the war by the time Lincoln was assassinated. The public had been assaulted by visages of death for four years in a conflict that had destroyed landscapes, architecture, infrastructures, and most significantly, families and communities. The idea of psychic numbing has been described by psychiatrist Robert Lifton, who has spent the majority of his career studying the effects of traumatic events on the psyche of those affected by them. Lifton argues that when a person (or a

community) is confronted by a horrific event like war or political violence over an extended period of time, the trauma of the event eventually dulls the reaction a person has to its continued horror.

The second is psychic numbing, which I see as a process of desymbolization and deformation. The image which accompanies psychic numbing is that “if I feel nothing, then death does not exist; therefore I need not feel anxious about death either actually or symbolically; I am invulnerable.” ... The continuous reliving of the unconscious conflicts aroused by the traumatic situation. ... more recently, emphasis has been placed on imagery of death aroused by trauma, rather than the trauma *per se*. This the syndrome has been called by some observers “death anxiety neurosis.”²⁴⁰

Lifton’s idea of psychic numbing is seen often in soldiers who have experienced the terrible nature of battle and have seen the death that it causes firsthand.²⁴¹ A letter to his wife written by Union Major and Surgeon William Child after the Battle of Antietam gives us an idea of the trauma of living through the aftermath of a battle:

The days after the battle are a thousand times worse than the day of the battle – and the physical pain is not the greatest pain suffered. How awful it is - you have not can have until you see it any idea of affairs after a battle. The dead appear sickening but they suffer no pain. But the poor wounded mutilated soldiers that yet have life and sensation make a most horrid picture. I pray God may stop such infernal work - through perhaps he has sent it upon us for our sins. Great indeed must have been our sins if such is our punishment.²⁴²

Child’s talks of the horrors of the days after the fighting ends and explains that it is not always the physical wounds that are suffered that are the most significant. Rather, it is the mental trauma of seeing and being exposed to the death and dismemberment of the battle that necessitates Lifton’s psychic numbing in order to survive.

²⁴⁰ Robert Lifton, *The Life of the Self: Toward a New Psychology*, (New York: First Basic Books, Inc., 1983) pp. 41, 79-81

²⁴¹ Lifton, 1983, pp. 79-81

²⁴² *Letter of William Child, Major and Surgeon with the 5th Regiment New Hampshire Volunteers to his Wife*, September 22, 1862, <https://www.nps.gov/anti/learn/education/classrooms/antietam-letters-and-diaries-of-soldiers-and-civilians.htm>, Accessed on January 4, 2019

The idea of psychic numbing is also salient and important to consider when thinking about the exposure to gruesome photographs of death on a public that is continuously confronted with such a loss over a period of time. This psychic numbing became evident after the Civil War ended, as people tried to move past the conflict and the terrible memories of it. It was particularly evident in the ways that people dealt with the simultaneous grief of the loss of their loved ones and the assassination of a President as scholar Martha Hodes notes:

“Through the jubilation of Union victory the next spring, Nellie Brown was never far from her parents’ minds. ‘It is a comfort to talk with one who loved our dear Nellie,’ Sarah wrote a few days after the fall of Richmond, following a visit with friends. A week later, the Brownes found the death of President Lincoln unfathomable, while the loss of Nellie remained unbearable. With the first anniversary approaching, and as Lincoln’s funeral train neared its destination, Sarah tried hard to conjure her daughter’s ‘sweet presence,’ ‘I cannot feel that Nellie is dead – her presence is ever with me,’ she wrote some weeks after Lincoln’s burial.”²⁴³

The words that Hodes quotes were taken from the diary of Sarah Browne of Massachusetts and refer to the experience of the Browne family who lost their daughter Nellie in June 1864. The connection that Hodes makes between the memories of loss and Lincoln’s death a year later demonstrates the reverberations that the President’s death (admittedly in this case that of a civilian child rather than a soldier) magnified on the already reeling public. Gardner’s lack of sales for his *Photographic Sketchbook of the Civil War* and for photographs of the hangings of the conspirators are also demonstrative of this shift in public perception and the aversion caused by the effects of a kind of psychic numbing.

At the same time, these effects also demonstrate a newly developing understanding and method of dealing with death. The mourning of a loved one had already begun to move out of the home, a movement that gradually solidified itself over the course of the war and was magnified by

²⁴³ Hodes, 2015, pp. 191-192

the many instances of soldiers who did not make it home, even for burial. Another way this shift manifested, however, was in the withdrawal to an avoidance of death that would become even more evident by the close of the century.²⁴⁴ It is reasonable to presume that a part of this new tendency toward avoidance stemmed from the bloodshed of the war, as if people had finally seen too much. Because Gardner and others had been so determined in their marketing and sale of photographs of dead soldiers from 1862 forward, those visceral visual images played a notable part in the preponderance of death, and especially people's exposure to it, particularly for those who did not see the battlefields first-hand. The resulting loss of sales seen from the summer of 1865 on serves as a crucial example of this secondary shift in the broader cultural understanding and lexicon of death.

There are at least two ways in which the psychic numbing directly related to the photographs that Gardner and others took which can be seen occurring in the public sphere after the war. The first of these is the reception that Gardner's *Photographic Sketchbook of the Civil War* received when it was published in late 1865/early 1866. Of course, this was very likely due in part to its exorbitant price tag. But it is also likely that the lack of sales stemmed from an exhaustion in being confronted by gruesome and otherwise devastating photographic images of war death, in addition to the trauma of losing so many to the destruction of the war. People had become numb to the horrors that they had been confronted with on a regular basis, and one of the ways in which they dealt with that was to turn away from photographic reminder of the casualties that had been suffered as is evidenced by the fall-off of sales for photographers and their agents like Gardner and E. & H.T. Anthony.

²⁴⁴ Jay Ruby, *Secure the Shadow: Death and Photography in America*, (Cambridge & London: MIT Press, 1995) p. 2

Another way in which this psychic numbing manifested was in the lack of sales of photographs of the execution of the conspirators of Lincoln's assassination. This becomes much more complex, however, because it is also important to consider the level of aggression felt by many toward those responsible for Lincoln's assassination. It would be shortsighted to assume that these photographs were viewed in the same way as photographs of fallen soldiers, or those surrounding Lincoln's death, whether literal representations or otherwise. Yet at the same time, the photographs that Gardner took of the executions, and the mug shots of the accused, were still ultimately images of a kind of death that most people were not used to being exposed to. The sheer graphic nature of a photograph in which the swinging bodies of those punished by a hangman's noose is disturbing when it is seen and experienced by a viewer, despite the relationship between the viewer and the executed. It is here where Lifton's idea of psychic numbing can be used to better understand why Gardner's photographs of that event did not sell. Even in the context of vengeance or justice (certainly a feeling shared by many), the photographs functioned as a reminder of the trauma, both visual and otherwise, that had been experienced throughout the war. That visual trauma had been slowly helping to shift the broader cultural understanding of death over the course of the war into something best grappled with on a public level. The lack of sales of these images speaks to that shift by virtue of the fact that the it could no longer be tolerated.

The idea of psychic numbing in relation to people's interest in, or reaction to, photographs, especially those of fallen soldiers, was further complicated by the fact that the war had so completely decimated families, communities, and the country as a whole as thousands of soldiers on both sides had not returned home, even to be buried. For those who did return home, life could not go back to normal as soldiers suffered from the lasting effects of physical, mental, and

emotional wounds. By extension, their families and communities suffered along with them.²⁴⁵ This made the photographs of the war, and especially those of fallen soldiers, even more difficult to bear. Lifton notes that psychic numbing is frequently the result of an OVERSATURATION of the traumatic experience – in this case, the viewing of photographs of war and death.²⁴⁶ Lifton's ideas of psychic numbing then help us to better understand the effect that images like the dead on a battlefield, the executions of conspirators, or even Gardner's much more nuanced photographs of Lincoln's assassination have on the human psyche.

In terms similar to Lifton, Susan Sontag argues that continuous exposure to a terrible image will result in a desensitization to the trauma that is being visually displayed. In other words, the more that a person sees a horrific image, the less that kind of imagery will be understood as traumatic. A person can become acclimated to the horrors of an image just as they can become acclimated to the occurrence of a traumatic event in a kind of learned habituation to the stimulus.²⁴⁷ "Photographs of an atrocity may give rise to opposing responses. A call for peace. A cry for revenge. Or simply a bemused awareness, continually restocked by photographic information, that terrible things happen."²⁴⁸ Here again, Lifton's idea of psychic numbing, which he discusses as a kind of survival mechanism is in play as well.

Man is psychologically flexible enough to come to terms with almost anything, so long as it is presented to him as an ordained element of his environment. But such adaptation is achieved at a price, and achieved only partially at that. ... Their frequent insistence that nuclear weapons are 'nothing special' is their form of emotional desensitization, or what I call psychic numbing...²⁴⁹

²⁴⁵ In today's terms, the reverberating psychological effects on soldiers who did return would be called Post Traumatic Stress Syndrome (PTSD) but there was no such term for the lasting effects of the trauma of war in the nineteenth century. Rather, families and friends spoke of the fact that their loved ones were never the same after they returned, even if they managed to survive the war physically unscathed.

²⁴⁶ Lifton, 1983, p. 79

²⁴⁷ Sontag, 2003, pp. 12-18, 82

²⁴⁸ Sontag, 2003, p. 13

²⁴⁹ Robert Lifton, *History and Human Survival: Essays on the Young and Old, Survivors and the Dead, Peace and War, and on Contemporary Psychohistory*, (New York City: Vintage Books, 1971) p. 339

The habituation that Lifton talks about here has a reverberating effect then because the “shock value” gradually wears off, and the person eventually ceases to see the image, or at least to see it as disturbing. Although Lifton is discussing the reverberating psychological effects of the atomic bombs on Hiroshima after World War II, his argument is compelling because the same sense of desensitization can be applied to the effects of war in the nineteenth century. Sontag further notes that the question of how to respond to information about a war, especially images of war that were increasingly graphic and disturbing dates back at least as far as the end of the nineteenth century.²⁵⁰ Even more importantly, Sontag compellingly extends this timeline to encompass the mid-century and to think about the advent of photographs of the dead, and the increasingly deadly warfare, that was used during the Civil War. This is especially pertinent in the context of Gardner’s and others’ photographs of fallen soldiers and those surrounding Lincoln’s assassination. In contrast to descriptions of warfare and the dead that texts like a newspaper report provide, which are by necessity more nuanced and usually targeted at a specific, smaller audience (even if that audience is simply anyone who is literate), a photograph, according to Sontag, “has only one language” – that is, a visual one, and the potential audience expands to anyone who may come into contact with that image. Anyone who can look at a photograph can see and understand what is in it and garner a meaning from it. This privileges the function of the photograph as one that is significantly more universal than written text could be. Because of this, Sontag claims, the photograph makes the event more real, more visceral, especially for those far removed from the action. “Something becomes real – to those who are elsewhere, following it as “news” – by being photographed.”²⁵¹

Sontag and Lifton together make a significant point. The photographs that surround Lincoln’s assassination, from the execution of the conspirators to the views of Ford’s Theater, are

²⁵⁰ Sontag, 2003, p. 18

²⁵¹ Sontag, 2003, pp. 19-22

understood in a way that text might not be and give a visual understanding to a series of events that was beyond comprehension. Their theories also help us to understand the reverberating impact that these photographs, as well as the photographs of dead soldiers, had on both the personal and the cultural understanding and method of dealing with death at the end of the war. The push and pull of the more public dealing with death (and the simultaneous growing avoidance of it that comes from an underlying continued sensitivity to it) stems in part from the psychic numbing caused by the desensitization of the constant exposure to these traumatic photographs.²⁵² It bears remembering as well that there is no way for us to “relive” this experience in the nineteenth-century mind. However, this is exactly why Lifton and Sontag become so critical to our ability to comprehend the impact that these photographs had on nineteenth century people as individuals, and on a much broader cultural level.

The suppression of the photographs of Lincoln lying in state, and arguably even those of Booth’s autopsy, form yet another layer of this discussion. It is in this moment that the official suppression of images by a government body began to play a role in determining the kind of content that the public will see and/or be exposed to. This suppression indicates an awareness by those in power that images of a disturbing or traumatic event, or reminder thereof, could have on the public. Lincoln’s postmortem photographs were kept from the public because of a concern for his family based on Stanton’s proclaimed reasoning. In the case of the Booth photograph, it was destroyed because there was concern over the power that the photograph might have on the public’s perception of the assassination. As such, not only were the photographs of the battlefield influential in the broad shift of understanding death and mourning as a public rather than a private event as is demonstrated by the determined marketing efforts of Gardner and others and their

²⁵² A more detailed explanation of this avoidance of death by the 20th century is discussed in Chapter 2.

circulation in the public realm, the later suppression of the photographs of Lincoln and Booth helped to spark a secondary, more disturbing trend. That secondary trend was the control of government bodies over the message that this new kind of imagery could and did communicate.²⁵³

There is also a bilateral trauma effect that occurs when we compare the reactions to the execution of the conspirators of Lincoln's assassination and Lincoln's assassination itself, and the photographs which were associated with each event. For many people, the act of executing those involved in Lincoln's assassination was a cry of justice, even vengeance. Gardner did not hesitate to market the photographs that he and O'Sullivan took of the event, and in fact specifically captured some of the images in stereograph. Moreover, the fact that some of the images were converted into woodcut prints and published in *Harper's Weekly*, further solidified the photographs as commodities for public consumption. (**Fig. 43**) Although sales were poor, Gardner's attempts to sell the images further confirms that photographs of graphic death had become a recognizable commodity. It is a trend that has continued through the twentieth and twenty-first centuries. On the other hand, Lincoln's death sparked a nationwide period of grieving in which many citizens in the North took part. His death was viewed as the loss of an icon, a national father, an emancipator, and a benefactor.

After Lincoln's death many quickly came to view him as a martyr to the larger cause of preserving the Union. Stanton's refusal to allow the display of the photographs of Lincoln's body lying in state speaks to the sacred nature of these events. Moreover, Gardner's decision to take (and sell) photographs of the locales that were related to the assassination provided the public with a metaphorical vision for their grief. The juxtaposition of this effect causes confusion among people who were confronted with both the assassination and the executions as they wrestled with

²⁵³ There is much more to be said about this topic that does not fit within the scope of this dissertation. It will be addressed in greater detail in a later paper.

the feelings prompted by both events. In some cases, it sparked an open wound and even a desire for revenge, in other cases, a desire for justice. As Horatio Nelson Taft, of Washington DC wrote in his diary after Lincoln was assassinated, “O fatal day. O noble victim. Treason has done its worst. The President has been assassinated.”²⁵⁴ In the words of Orville Hickman Browning, a US Senator and friend of Lincoln’s, on hearing the news of the assassination:

We were overwhelmed and horrified. ... It seemed to me that the people in rebellion had many reasons for desiring the continuance of his life – none to wish his death – and I did not think any of the disaffected among us could be insane and fiendish enough to perpetrate the deed. It is one of the most stupendous crimes that has ever been committed, and I pray to God that all the guilty parties may be ferreted out and brought to condign punishment.²⁵⁵

These two accounts demonstrate the complex feelings of mourning and a simultaneous desire for justice that surrounded Lincoln’s assassination, and the pursuit of the conspirators. The contrasting photographs (Lincoln’s portraits and images of the executions) then become a physical manifestation of grief expressed by Taft and Browning, and felt by many citizens across the Union.

Lifton’s discussion of psychic numbing, which he also talks about as a psychic “closing off,” is also applicable to people who have experienced a close encounter with death (their own or someone else’s) go through.²⁵⁶ It is not hard to connect this kind of an occurrence to those who survived the Civil War, both combatants and noncombatants. Importantly, this can also be seen as occurring among those who did not experience the reality of death firsthand during the war but viewed the photographs of fallen soldiers, the symbolic photographs of Lincoln’s assassination, and of the executions of the conspirators. The 1862 reporter’s account of Brady’s “Dead of

²⁵⁴ Horatio Nelson Taft, *The Diary of Horatio Nelson Taft, 1861-1865. Volume 3, January 1, 1864-May 30, 1865*, April 14, 1865, <https://www.loc.gov/resource/mtaft.mtaft3/?sp=104>, Accessed January 4, 2019

²⁵⁵ Orville Hickman Browning, *Diary of Orville Hickman Browning*, April 14-19, 1865, <http://rememberinglincoln.fords.org/node/1098>, Accessed January 4, 2019

²⁵⁶ Robert Lifton, *History and Human Survival: Essays on the Young and Old, Survivors and the Dead, Peace and War, and on Contemporary Psychology*, (New York: Random House, 1970), pp. 120-143

Antietam” exhibition illustrates how this traumatic effect when viewing photographs of the dead can impact the overall perception of the moment, and the cultural norm. “If he has not brought bodies and laid them in our dooryards and along the streets, he has done something very like it. ... We would scarce choose to be in the gallery, when one of the women bending over them should recognize a husband, a son, or a brother in the still, lifeless lines of bodies, that lie ready for the gaping trenches.”²⁵⁷ This effect is also applicable to the photographs of the executions when they were viewed or published as prints in *Harper’s Weekly*. These photographs served as a reminder of multiple tragedies, of all that had been lost on both a personal and a national level, and of the destruction of the war, and critically the reality of what it meant to die in combat or as the result of a related violent act (Lincoln). The occurrence of psychic closing off occurred then on both a literal and a figurative level because of the exposure to direct photographs of battlefield deaths and the much more obscure reminders of Lincoln’s death seen in Gardner’s photographs of Fords Theater and other places closely tied to the assassination, as well as his portraits. The specter of death did not subside with the surrender at Appomattox but continued to force a reliving of the trauma of the conflict through Lincoln’s death and the executions of the conspirators. This continued reliving ultimately resulted in a similar kind of closing off (or psychic numbing) seen in the aftermath of an event like the bombing of Hiroshima. Death was increasingly becoming something to avoid at all costs, and when it occurred, it was critical to deal with it on a public level more than a private one.

F. CONCLUSION

The relationship between the nineteenth-century understanding of death, the mourning that inevitably accompanied it, the Civil War, and the photographs of dead soldiers from the battlefield

²⁵⁷ “Brady’s Photographs: Pictures of the Dead at Antietam,” *New York Times*, October 20, 1862

was complicated and ever evolving. Although just one of many pieces, the images taken after the battles of Antietam, Gettysburg, Spotsylvania, and Petersburg, and especially their conversion into a marketable commodity, influenced the broader cultural understanding of death and mourning because of the way the photographs were received, the prominence of the images in the public sphere through their sale, and their ongoing life as they were converted into prints for publication in *Harper's Weekly*. Importantly, this shift, spurred by the war itself, brought the experience of death out of the home and redefined it as a public experience rather than a private, familial one.

Just as important as the photographs of battlefield dead, however, the photographs taken surrounding the assassination of an icon of the Union like Abraham Lincoln in many ways confirmed, rather than added to the impact of earlier photographs of death from the war. This confirmation was crucial to the development of a new understanding, and way of dealing with death that was already shifting from the private to the public sphere. The specter of death surrounding the assassination rocked the nation yet again, and the photographic documents that were created around, and brought forward after, Lincoln's death, even if figurative rather than literal (as in the case of Gardner's photographs of the locales), added to an already extensive flood of reminders of the conflict and the loss that it wrought. The photographs taken of the executions of the conspirators in Lincoln's assassination functioned to confirm this influence as well, albeit in a slightly different, more vengeful (or at least judicial) way because people were once again confronted with the reality of death, even if that death was viewed as justified by many.

Not unlike the physical photographs of death, the official suppression of specific images further confirms the impact that these images were having on the way that death and mourning were both understood and coped with as the war came to an end. In fact, the suppression of the postmortem photographs of Lincoln and the autopsy photograph of Booth shed further light on the

many layers that influenced the movement of death from the private to the public sphere. Specifically, the insistence that grew out of the war and was developing in the last part of the century that death was something to avoid at all costs, both in terms of actual loss, and in the compulsion to try to understand and cope with it, was reified by the suppression of the photographs. The suppression of photographs also set a precedent for the treatment of potentially sensitive photographs and the message that they might communicate that would play a role in the imagery of every US conflict in the twentieth and twenty-first centuries. Critically, this continuation demonstrates even further the impact that these Civil War photographs of the dead had, and would have, on the understanding of death and mourning.

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VI. CONCLUSION: THE REVERBERATING EFFECTS OF CIVIL WAR PHOTOGRAPHS OF THE DEAD

The photographs of death that encapsulate the Civil War with their depictions of fallen soldiers from battles like Antietam, Gettysburg, Spotsylvania, Petersburg, and others did more than just bring the news home to a population that was anxious to hear about the events of the war, and especially to receive news of loved ones. They helped to spark, and more importantly solidify, a trend that had begun with the cemetery movement of the 1830s – the movement of the experience of death and mourning from a private, familial event to a life experience that took place largely in the public sphere. This broad cultural shift involved the coalescence of several factors, from the redefinition of cemeteries to the adoption of embalming as a common way of preparing a body for burial, and of course, the rise of the funeral industry by the 1880s. Although many of these factors focus on the practical aspects of death the photographs of fallen soldiers were more esoteric, and their influence harder to pinpoint. Even so, they had the ability to influence the cultural feelings and norms of the second half of the nineteenth century because they presented death in a way that was raw, often horrifying, real, and visceral. As Susan Sontag notes “Photography has become one of the principal devices for experiencing something, for giving an appearance of participation.”²⁵⁸

The creation of photographs of dead soldiers like those from the Battles of Antietam, Gettysburg, Spotsylvania, and Petersburg was groundbreaking because of the photographs’ status (especially after Antietam) as the first photographic views of war death that gave viewers a more accurate idea of what it was to die in battle. These photographs illustrated a sense of the violence and arbitrary experience of war death. The marketing efforts of Mathew Brady, and especially

²⁵⁸ Susan Sontag, *On Photography*, (New York City: Farrar, Straus, and Giroux, 1977) pp. 5-10

Alexander Gardner and E.&H.T. Anthony, guaranteed that these images would be disseminated in the public sphere through exhibitions, catalogs and gallery sales. Moreover, the publication of prints based directly on photographs like *Federal Buried, Confederate Unburied, Where they Fell* in newspapers like *Harper's Weekly* further expanded the reach of the images to people across the Union after 1862. (**Fig. 17**) The continued marketing and sale of photographs of the dead from Antietam and other battlefields (even months and years after they were created) demonstrates the concerted effort of Gardner and his colleagues to keep the photographs in the public realm and, more importantly, furthered their ability to influence cultural trends like the understanding of death and mourning.

The cultural function of newspapers, as well as the place that photographs held in the cultural and public imagination, made the photographs of dead soldiers significant because of the way they were disseminated (in the form of prints based on the original images) and the way that photographs were understood from the beginning of the medium on. Photographs were read as accurate and real even as early as the end of the 1830s. People in the nineteenth century took these images at face value and latched onto the new photographic technology that could show them the world in a new way. By the 1850s photographs like *Jerusalem, Site of the Temple on Mount Moriah, and Jerusalem, Court of the Mosque of Omar* (**Fig. 61**) and *Niagara Falls* (**Fig. 62**), gave people in the United States a sense that they, too, could travel the world, simply by being able to view the photographs. Current events like a fire in Hamburg, Germany were captured in photographs in 1842, and for the first time the public could visualize a historic event and feel that they had been there, even if they were miles (or continents) away. (**Fig. 63**)

Alan Trachtenberg's words on Civil War photographs resonate to help us understand the impact of photographs of the dead, "photographs perpetuate a collective image of the war as a

sensible event, what it must have looked like had we been there. ... Photographs are the popular historicism of our era; they confer nothing less than reality itself. ... the *Civil War enjoys a physical presence, a palpable cultural reality*, entirely the legacy of a handful of photographs.”²⁵⁹ Trachtenberg once again makes a crucial point. The realness of the photographs of the Civil War, especially those of dead soldiers, define the reality of the war and its impact on cultural and social norms as much as they provide documentation of the conflict. Critically, photographs defined the world by the 1860s as we can see in an 1862 reporter’s words when talking about the Battle of Antietam in the *New York Times*, “You will see hushed, reverent groups standing around these weird copies of carnage, bending down to look on the pale faces of the dead, chained by the strange spell that dwells in dead men’s eyes.....The pictures have a terrible distinctness....”²⁶⁰ With his eloquent words the reporter expounds on the power of the photographs of dead soldiers from the Battle of Antietam. People who saw the images on Brady’s studio wall were entranced, “chained by the strange spell that dwells in dead men’s eyes.” The pictures had a “terrible distinctness,” and it was this detailed aspect of the new technology of the photographs that had the ability to influence not only the way people understood their world in general, but specifically the way they understood the death of war.

Susan Sontag’s words are compelling as well and can also help to further our understanding of the effects of photographs on the cultural norms of the nineteenth century. “A photograph passes for incontrovertible proof that a given thing happened. The picture may distort, but there is always a presumption that something exists, or did exist, which is like what’s in the picture.”²⁶¹ As Sontag’s words demonstrate, photographs can be distorted or biased, but they also stand as

²⁵⁹ Alan Trachtenberg, “Albums of War: On Reading Civil War Photographs,” (*Representations* 9, Winter, 1985) p. 1; Emphasis added

²⁶⁰ “Brady’s Photographs: Pictures of the Dead at Antietam,” *New York Times*, October 20, 1862

²⁶¹ Sontag, 1977, p. 5

documents of the existence of an event or a person because they are created by a photographer who was there, who saw the scene and had to comprehend what was happening in order to record it. Moreover, newspapers disseminated the events of the world to communities near and far. These factors are what made it possible for the photographs of fallen soldiers, or photographs surrounding Lincoln's death, to help influence the already building cultural shift in the way that death and mourning were experienced and understood in the nineteenth century. Too, the evolution of photographs of fallen soldiers as marketable commodities, driven by the business savvy of Gardner and others, as well as the prominent place of newspapers as shapers of culture, meant that it was not just the photographs that were commodified. Quite simply, it was a development of the marketing of death itself that became a sought-after remnant of a traumatic event like the Civil War (or any war).

Since the nineteenth century, the photographs have continued to impact the way we understand the Civil War, and war death in general, as prints are still bought and sold in auction houses and on eBay, and held in private collectors. Museums like the Art Institute of Chicago hold copies of photographs like *Harvest of Death* as well as some of the few remaining copies of Gardner's *Photographic Sketchbook of the Civil War* in their collections and display them occasionally for viewing by a constantly changing population of visitors. A vast majority of the original glass-plate negatives as well as prints that were made from them are held at The Library of Congress. In 2001, the Library of Congress began to digitize its entire Civil War photographic print collection. Completed in 2003, this digitization project granted access of the photographs to even more people via the Internet. As a result, the impact of photographs of the dead from the Civil War continue to have a reverberating impact on the American public as the avenues of exposure to the image increase and are constantly revived. This perpetual rebirth further solidifies

the documentary status of the photographs and increases our understanding of the Civil War. It also reconfirms the cultural influence that the photographs of death have because the images serve as a conduit to try to understand and come to terms with the loss of life that comes from war, and death more generally in the nineteenth century and today.

The creation of photographs of the dead, their dissemination in the public sphere, and critically, their placement as a marketable commodity, can also help us to understand how photographic images have been used not only as documentary evidence throughout the twentieth and twenty-first centuries, but also how they have functioned as objects that can actually help to influence cultural ideas and shift the way that we understand the world at large today. Gardner's photographs of the dead of the Battle of Antietam, as well as the photographs of the dead from later battles, broke down an important cultural barrier to the kind of imagery that it was acceptable to create and to see. No longer was viewing a maimed and tortured body unfathomable – it had been done during the Civil War. By the end of the nineteenth century an industry that was built around the creation of photographic postcards of the racialized lynchings that became so prominent by the 1870s prospered across the United States. (**Fig. 64**) This industry, which was based on white supremacy and the oppression and torture of African Americans, was able to capitalize on the disintegration of the prohibitions against gruesome images of death that the photographs of Civil War death made possible in a terrible way. The postcards typically depict the lynching of one or more African Americans, and in many cases, include crowds of white citizens gathered around in what can only be described as an overt illustration of the power of white supremacy, sometimes looking at the body(ies), sometimes at the camera, but always taking part in the event by virtue of their presence. The photographs were taken across the United States, not confined to the South or any other particular area, and the postcards that were made from them were distributed

through the mail until a ban on their distribution was put in place in 1908. They were also collected as “family heirlooms” and passed down through generations in the twentieth century.

Photographs of war in the twentieth century also take as their model the photographs of the dead of the Civil War. From the low-res photographs of World War I and photographs of the Spanish Civil War like Robert Capa’s *Loyalist Militiaman at the Moment of Death*, (1936) to the horrifying photographs of Buchenwald Concentration Camp taken by Margaret Bourke-White at the end of World War II (1945) and the “live action” photographs of the Vietnam War like Nick Ut’s *Terror of War, South Vietnamese forces follow after terrified children, including 9-year-old Kim Phuc, center, as they run down Route 1 near Trang Bang after an aerial napalm attack on suspected Vietcong hiding places, June 8, 1972*, (1972) the Persian Gulf War, and recent world conflicts today, photographers feed the public desire to see for themselves the gruesomeness of war. Although the images have changed over time with the advances in photographic technology, shifts in government censorship, and the advent of television, the template for the documentation of these traumatic events, as well as many others, comes from the work of Brady, Gardner, and the many photographers who were committed to capturing photographic images of the dead of the Civil War, as well as documenting events like the executions of those responsible for Lincoln’s assassination. Quite literally, they brought the images into the homes of people in the United States and beyond.

The creation of photographs that depicted the locales around which Lincoln’s assassination occurred and the sale of photographic portraits of the late President further confirm the influence of photographic images of the dead as memorial portraits and physical locations continue to take the place of direct associations with traumatic events. For example, photographs of the memorials placed in a field in Pennsylvania now serve as a reminder and a proxy for those lost on 9/11, as do

photographs of churches which served as staging and recovery locations for firefighters and others in the midst of searching for survivors and remains in New York City in the days following the terrorist attacks. All of these photographs function as photographs of death whether they are literal or figurative representations, and they continue to influence our cultural understandings of the end of life and to continually redefine it, just as the photographs of dead soldiers lying on the Battlefields of Antietam, Gettysburg, Spotsylvania, and Petersburg, or the photographs surrounding Lincoln's death, did for a traumatized public in the second half of the nineteenth century.

There is a final, disturbing trend in the evolution of photographic imagery that takes as its starting point the photographs of the Civil War, or more specifically, the photographs surrounding Lincoln's assassination. That is the practice of official government suppression of images as a way of trying to control the message and perception of national events. General Edwin Stanton's suppression of the photographs of Lincoln lying in state in New York City, as well as his suppression of any photographs of Booth's autopsy, represent a direct desire to mediate the image that the public received of these events as a way of controlling public understanding, perception, and opinion. To be sure, the reasons for suppressing potentially sensitive photographs like these is always complex and multi-layered. In the case of the photographs of Lincoln's body, Stanton's stated reason was respect for Mary Todd Lincoln and the Lincoln family. He even argued that the photographs were not permitted because of a direct request from the grieving widow, stating "The taking of a photograph was expressly forbidden by Mrs. Lincoln, and I am apprehensive that her feelings and the feelings of the family will be greatly wounded."²⁶² In the case of the Booth

²⁶² *Telegraph of Secretary of War Edwin Stanton to General Edward Townsend*, April 26, 1865, Taken from Bob Zeller, *The Blue and the Gray in Black and White: A History of Civil War Photography*, (Westport, CT & London: Praeger Publishers, 2005) p. 169

photograph, Stanton's reason was very much a concern that the image would shift the understanding of the assassin to characterize him as a martyr to the Confederate cause if seen by the wrong people (Northern or Southern). James Wardell's account of the Booth autopsy leaves little doubt about Stanton's stated concern,

When I appeared before the commission I told them about this [the Booth photograph] but they seemed to doubt me. They had no picture and the Secretary of War [Stanton] denied that one had been taken but I know that it had been. ... I did not actually go forward to see the body but I did look at the picture after I left Gardner's studio and I think it was Booth. I hope that you are able to find the plate but I doubt that you will. The War Department was very determined to make sure that Booth was not made a hero and some rebel would give a good price for one of those pictures or the plate.²⁶³

Stanton's treatment of these two photographic events set a precedent for the suppression of photographs that could be seen as nationally sensitive which has since occurred in some capacity in every conflict that the United States has been involved in through the twentieth and twenty-first centuries, although the level of censorship and control has ebbed and flowed over the course of time. In many cases, one of the principle reasons for this kind of suppression has been a concern that the publication of disturbing photographs (or photographs that did not fit the official narrative) would spark protests or other outcries.

During the Vietnam War for example, photographs were heavily censored, but resolute photojournalists also made a determined effort to get their photographs to the public through whatever means possible, as was the case when photographs of the My Lai Massacre were released to the public in the United States in 1968. (**Fig. 10**) The photographs of the My Lai Massacre, as well as other images from the war front, did spark protest but they also gave the public a better

²⁶³ *Statement of James A. Wardell regarding the Booth Autopsy*, 1896, Taken from D. Mark Katz, *Witness to an Era: The Life and Photographs of Alexander Gardner: The Civil War, Lincoln, and the West*, (New York City: Viking Publishing, 1991) p. 162

idea of the horrors of a conflict that was occurring on the other side of the world, and which cost over 58,000 US lives. During the Gulf War, photographs of the coffins of soldiers being taken from the plane at Dover Air Force Base in Delaware were similarly suppressed, and the creation and dissemination of similar images was banned by the US Department of Defense under “The Dover Ban” from 1991 until the ban was lifted by President Barack Obama in 2009.²⁶⁴ In this case, the official reason given was similar to the Lincoln photographs – concern and respect for the families of the fallen. It is important however, to recognize the complexity of an attempt to suppress photographs such as this.

In the suppression of both the Lincoln photographs and the coffins of fallen soldiers being returned from Iraq it is safe to assume that it was to some degree sparked by the stated concern for the grieving families. It would be short-sited, however, to believe that there was not also a level of concern that photographs that depicted the returning coffins of the fallen of war would spark protests or otherwise shift the public perception (the public narrative) in a way that did not support the official reason behind the engagement in the same way that there was concern over the public message that a photograph of Booth’s autopsy would communicate. In both the nineteenth century and today photographs such as this DO influence public understanding, whether by confirming the stated message or serving as a flash point for protest as in the Vietnam War photographs of the My Lai Massacre, or a soldier’s coffin being returned home for the last time. Here again, the photographs of the Civil War, or more specifically here the photographs surrounding Lincoln’s death, reverberate and serve as a cultural measuring stick (as well as a political one) for the potential that photographs of war have to influence not only public opinion, but cultural norms as a whole. By making these connections here in the twenty-first century, we see how the

²⁶⁴ Elizabeth Bumiller, “US Lifts Photo Ban on Military Coffins,” *The New York Times*, New York City, December 7, 2009

photographs of the dead created by Gardner and others were able to influence cultural understandings of death and mourning, as well as national narratives, from the nineteenth century to today.

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Fig. 1 William Sydney Mount, *California News*, 1850



Fig. 2 Richard Caton Woodville, *War News from Mexico*, 1848



Fig. 3 *The Imaginary and the Actual Prince: (Scraps from a Collector)*, *Harper's Weekly: A Journal of Civilization*, September 22, 1860



Fig. 4 Alexander Gardner, *Bodies in Front of Dunker Church*, Battle of Antietam, 1862



Fig. 5 Felice Beato, *Bodies of Chinese soldiers on the ramparts of the North Taku Forts*, 2nd Opium War, China, 1860



Fig. 6 *Postmortem photograph of a young girl with eyes propped open or painted, 1850*



Fig. 7 *Postmortem photograph of an unknown girl, c 1859*



Fig. 8 *Deceased Baby with Parents*, nd



Fig. 9 Alexander Gardner, *Dead of Stonewall Jackson's Brigade by the rail fence on the Hagerstown Pike, Battle of Antietam, 1862*



Fig. 10 Benjamin West, *The Death of General Wolfe*, 1770

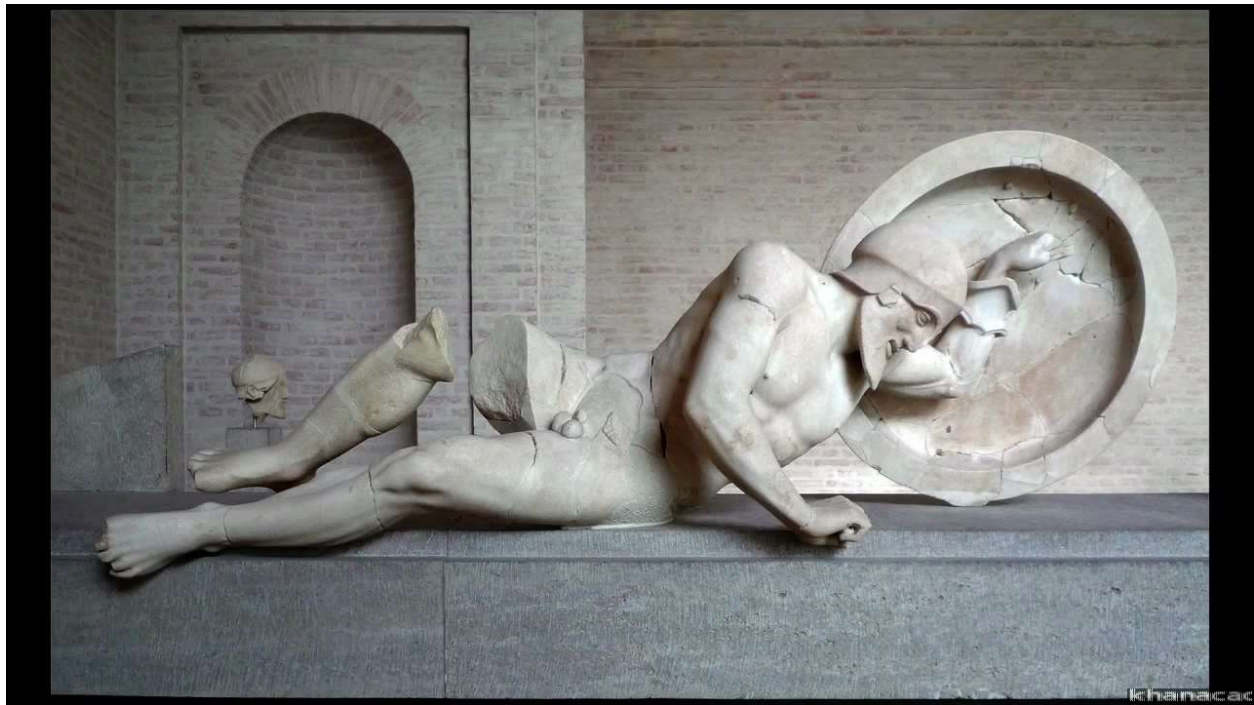


Fig. 11 *Dying Warrior* at the *Temple of Aphaia*, Greece, c 7th -5th century BCE



Fig. 12 *The Dying Gaul*, Roman copy of Hellenistic Greek original, c 3rd century BCE



Fig. 13 Bayeux Tapestry, *Depiction of the Battle of Hastings and the death of Harold*, 11th century



Fig. 14 John Trumball, *The Death of General Warren at the Battle of Bunker Hill*, 1786



Fig. 15 John Singleton Copley, *The Death of Major Peirson*, 1783



Fig. 16 Alexander Gardner, *The "Sunken" Road at Antietam*, Battle of Antietam, 1862



Fig. 17 *Harper's Weekly: A Journal of Civilization*, October 18, 1862

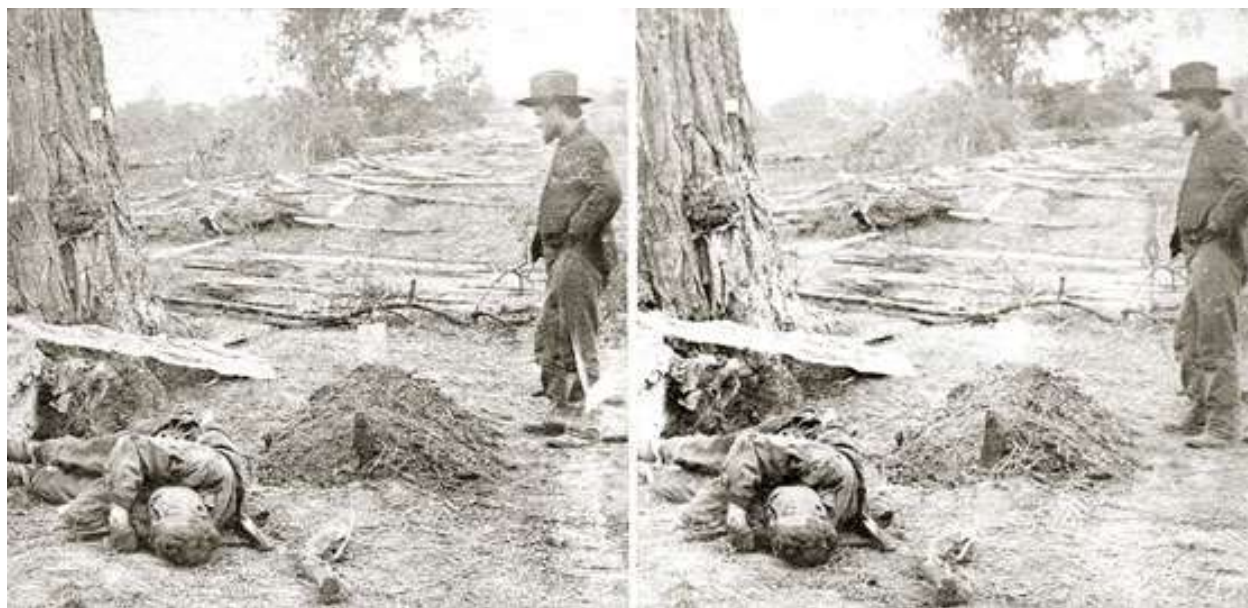


Fig. 18 Alexander Gardner, *Federal Buried, Confederate Unburied, Where they Fell*, Battle of Antietam, 1862

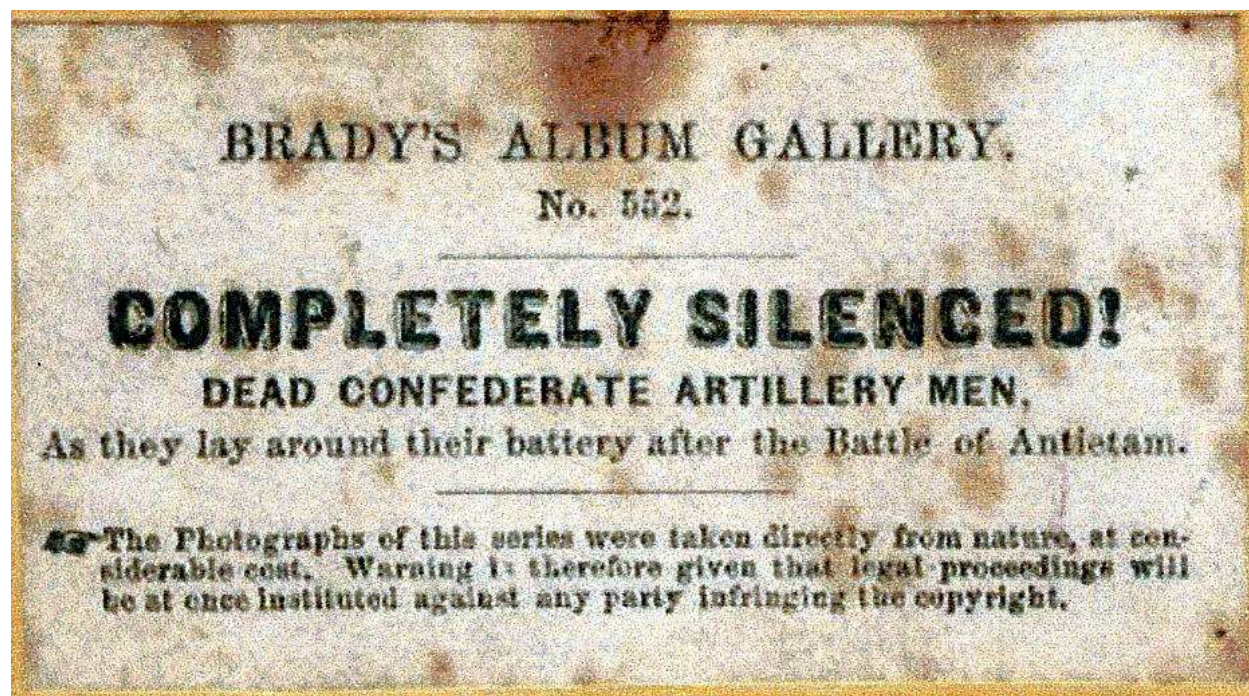


Fig. 19 Brady back mark on verso side of a photograph from the Battle of Antietam



Fig. 20 Alexander Gardner, *Dead of Stonewall Jackson's Brigade by the rail fence on the Hagerstown Pike, Battle of Antietam*, (blood added), original image created 1862, color added to later copies



Fig. 20 Detail with Blood Added



Fig. 21 Alexander Gardner et al, *Farmer's Inn and Hotel Emmitsburg*, Battle of Gettysburg, 1863



Fig. 22 Timothy O'Sullivan, *Harvest of Death*, Battle of Gettysburg, 1863



Fig. 23 Timothy O'Sullivan, *Home of a Rebel Sharpshooter*, Battle of Gettysburg, July, 1863



Fig. 24 Timothy O'Sullivan, *The Field Where General Reynolds, Fell*, Battle of Gettysburg, 1863



Fig. 25 *Harvest of Death*, *Harper's Weekly: A Journal of Civilization*, July 22, 1865



Fig. 26 Timothy O'Sullivan, *One of Ewell's Corps as He Lay on the Field After the Battle of the 19th of May, Spotsylvania, Battle of Spotsylvania, 1864*



Fig . 27 Timothy O'Sullivan, *Dead Confederate Infantryman Near Alsop's farmhouse*, Battle of Spotsylvania, 1864



Fig. 28 Timothy O'Sullivan, *Dead Confederate Soldier Near Mrs. Alsop's House, Spotsylvania, Battle of Spotsylvania, 1864*



Fig. 29 Timothy O'Sullivan, *Confederate Dead Laid Out for Burial Near Mrs. Alsop's Farm, Battle of Spotsylvania, 1864*

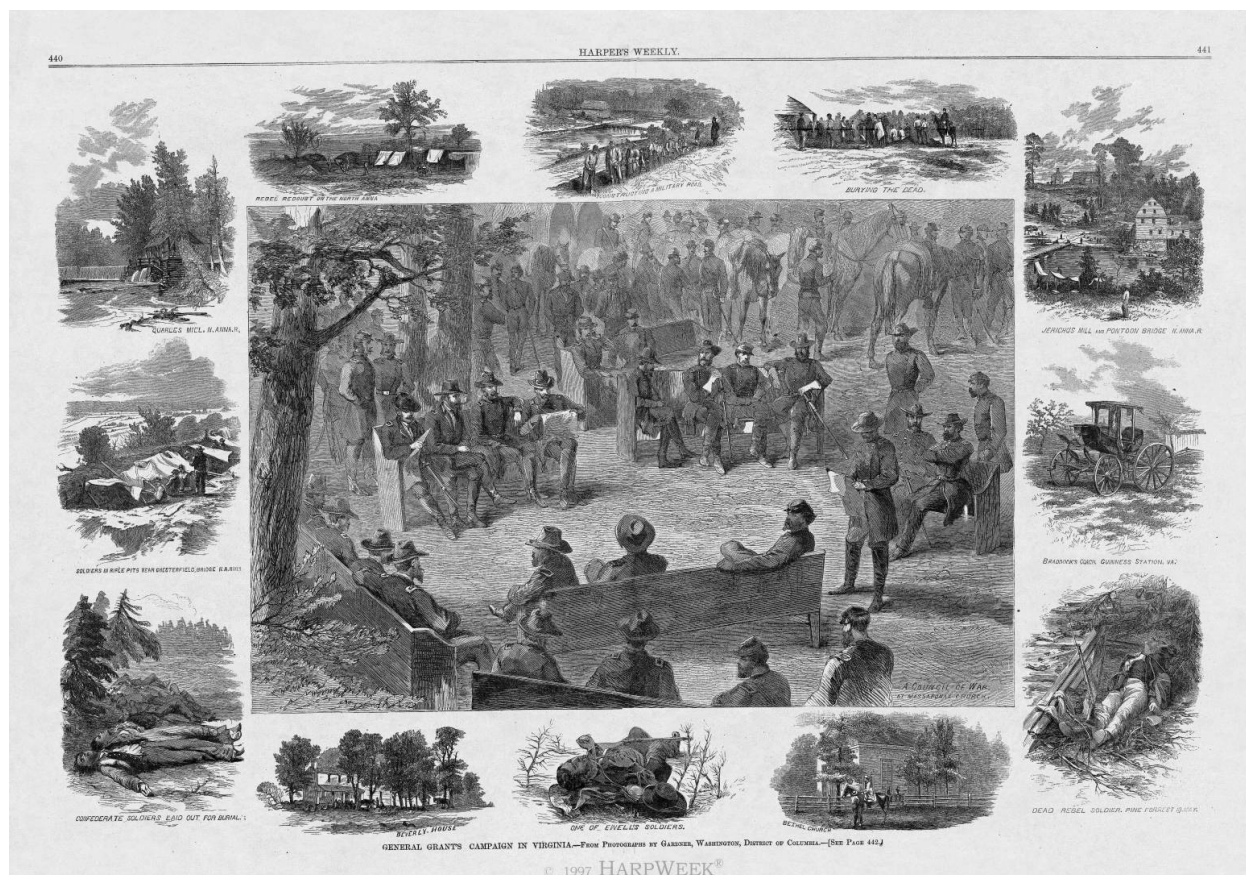


Fig. 30 *General Grant's Campaign in Virginia, Harper's Weekly: A Journal of Civilization, July 9, 1864*

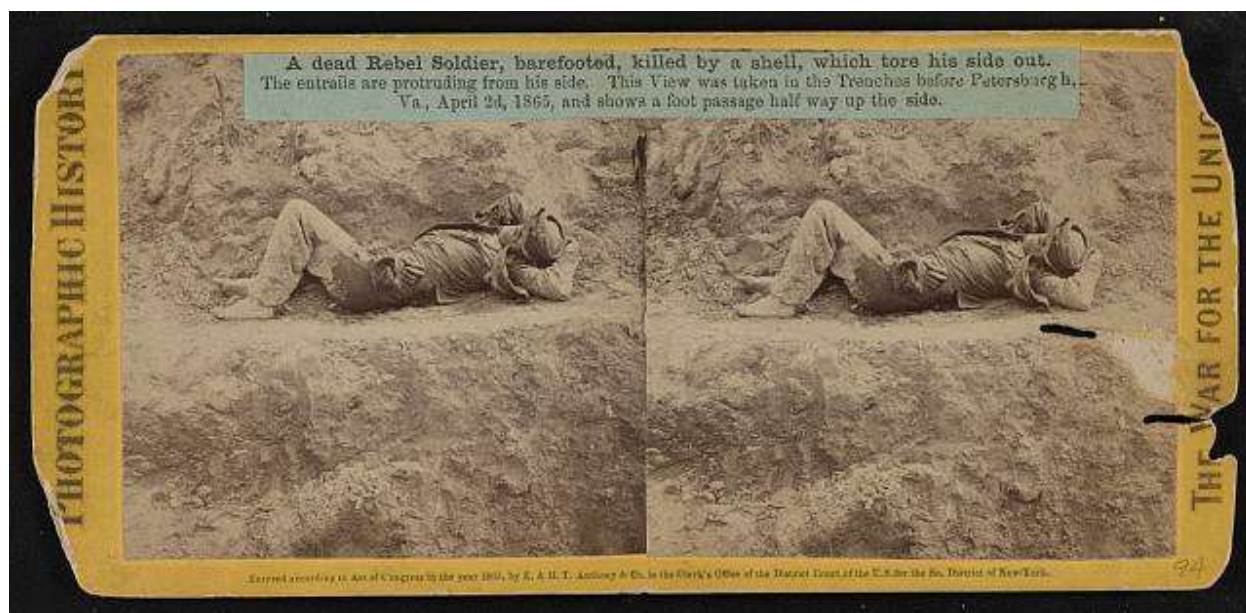


Fig. 31 TC Roche, *A Dead Rebel Soldier; bare footed, killed by a shell, which tore his side out, the entrails are protruding from his side. Shows a foot passage half way up the side of the bank. The View was taken the morning after the storming of Petersburg, VA, Battle of Petersburg, 1865*



Fig. 32 TC Roche, *A Dead rebel Soldier as he Lay in the Trenches of Fort Mahone, called by the Soldiers "fort Damnation." This Soldier must have been killed by a fragment of shell that exploded close by, as he is covered all over with mud and blood. This View was Taken the morning after the storming of Petersburg, VA, Battle of Petersburg, 1865*



Fig. 33 TC Roche, *Rebel Soldiers Killed in the Trenches of Fort Mahone, called by the soldiers "fort Damnation". The View Shows construction of their bomb proofs and covered passages, which branch off in every direction. This View was taken the morning after the storming of Petersburg, VA, Battle of Petersburg, 1865*



Fig. 34 William Powell, *Slave Pen*, Alexandria, VA, 1863



Fig. 35 James Gibson, *Ruins of Stone Bridge, Bull Run, VA*, March, 1862



Fig. 36 Timothy O'Sullivan, *Group of Confederate Prisoners at Fairfax Courthouse, 1863*



Fig. 37 David Knox, *Battery Wagon, Front of Petersburg*, 1864



Fig. 38 Alexander Gardner, *Dead Confederate Sharp Shooter at the Foot of Little Round Top,*
Battle of Gettysburg, July, 1863

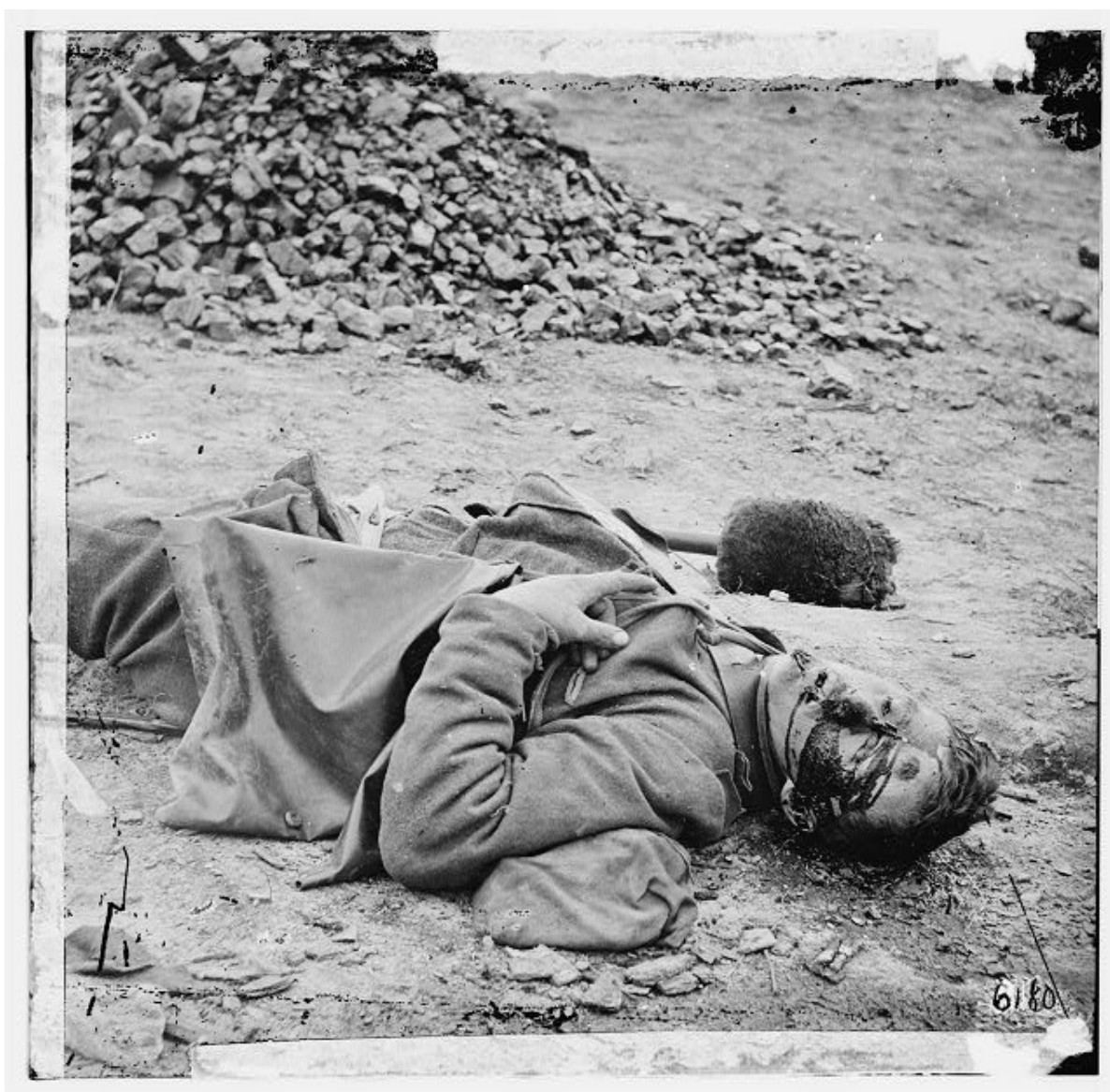


Fig. 39 TC Roche, *A Rebel Soldier Killed in the Trenches before Petersburg.* The Spots and marks on his face, are blood issuing from his mouth and nose. The wound is in the head, caused by a fragment of shell. This view was taken the morning after the storming of Petersburg, VA, Battle of Petersburg, 1865

TUESDAY, (last time,)

AMERICANS IN PARIS

AND

RURAL FELICITY.

WEDNESDAY, (in compliance with numerous requests
at the box office,)

LONDON ASSURANCE.

THURSDAY,

Last night of the season,
and 125th and final representation of
ROSEDALE.

the most attractive play ever acted in America.

WAR IN IRVING HALL.

ILLUSTRATIONS OF THE ARMY OF THE POTO-
MAC, at Irving Hall, EVERY NIGHT for this week
only, by FALLON'S STEREOPTICON, from original
photographs taken in the field during the last three
years. By Mr. ALEXANDER GARDNER, Photo-
grapher of the Army of the Potomac, and his
corps of celebrated artists. The views illustrate the
Army from the first battle of Bull Run up to its present
position, under the commands of Gen. McDowell, Gen.
McClellan, Gen. Burnside, Gen. Hooker, Gen. Meade,
and Lieut. Gen. Grant; are vouched for by all our Gen-
erals, and bring the battle-fields, their incidents and lo-
calities before us in the most faithful and vivid manner,
each view being reproduced on a canvass covering a sur-
face of over 600 square feet. Among others the following
views will be shown: Rebel dead at Antietam, View in
Fredericksburgh, Burnside Bridge at Antietam, View
in Culpepper, Irish Brigade at Antietam, Wounded at
Fredericksburgh, Pontoon Docks at Belle Plain, Gen.
Patrick and Staff, Battle at Antietam, Views of Aquia
Creek and Bull Run, Marye House taken by the Irish
Brigade, 1862, The first Contrabands flying to the Union
lines, Grant's pontoons on the James River. &c., &c.,
&c. Tickets 25 cents. Doors open at 7½. Commence at
8 o'clock.

SITUATIONS WANTED.

FEMALES.

WANTED—BY A YOUNG GIRL, AN AMERI-
can, a situation as chambermaid and seamstress;
would prefer to wait on an aged lady, or take care of

Fig. 40 Advertisement for Gardner's
Exhibition by Fallon's Stereopticon,
New York Times, June 27, 1864

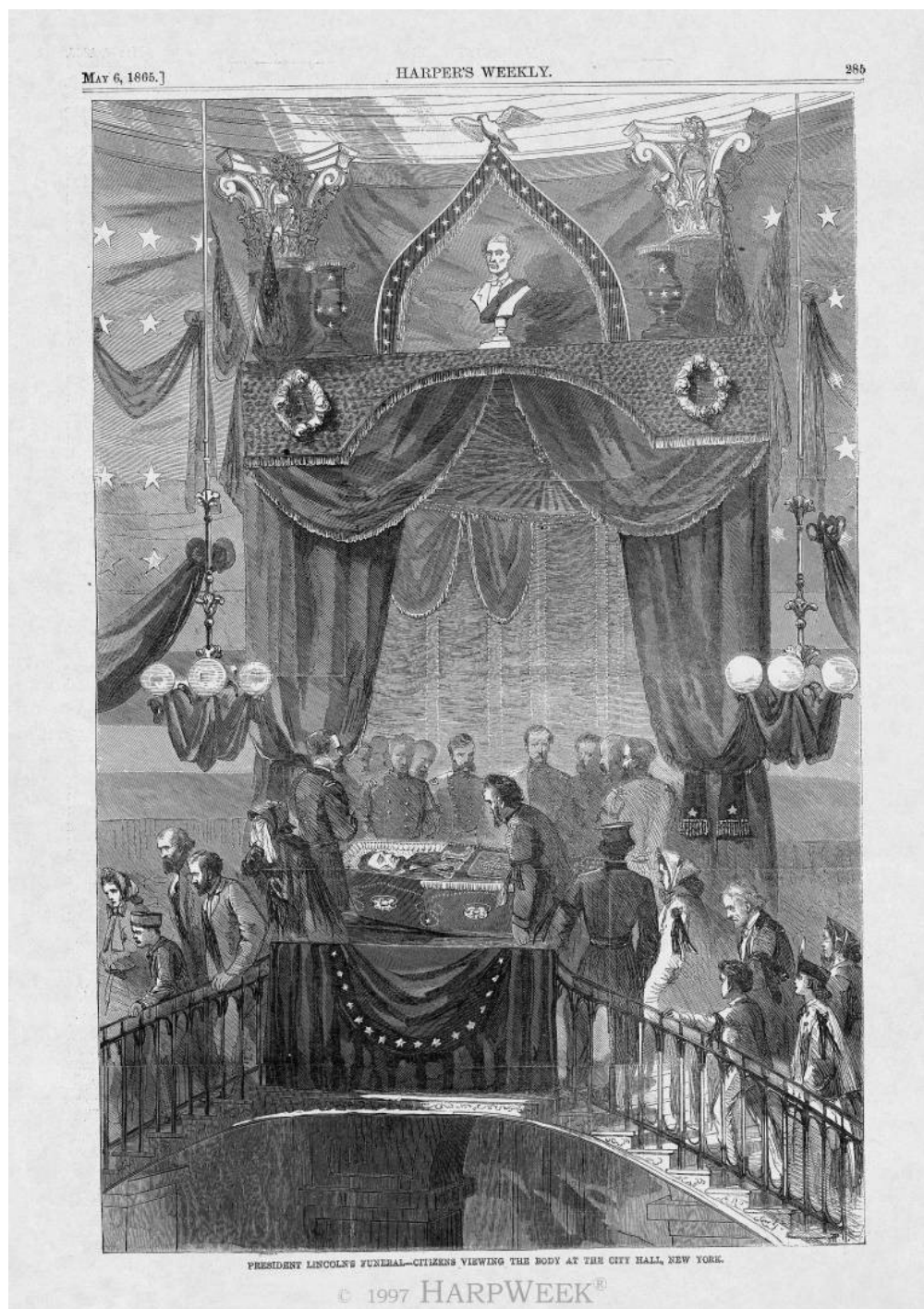


Fig. 41a *Lincoln's Funeral – Citizens Viewing the Body at the City Hall, New York, Harper's Weekly: A Journal of Civilization, May 6, 1865*

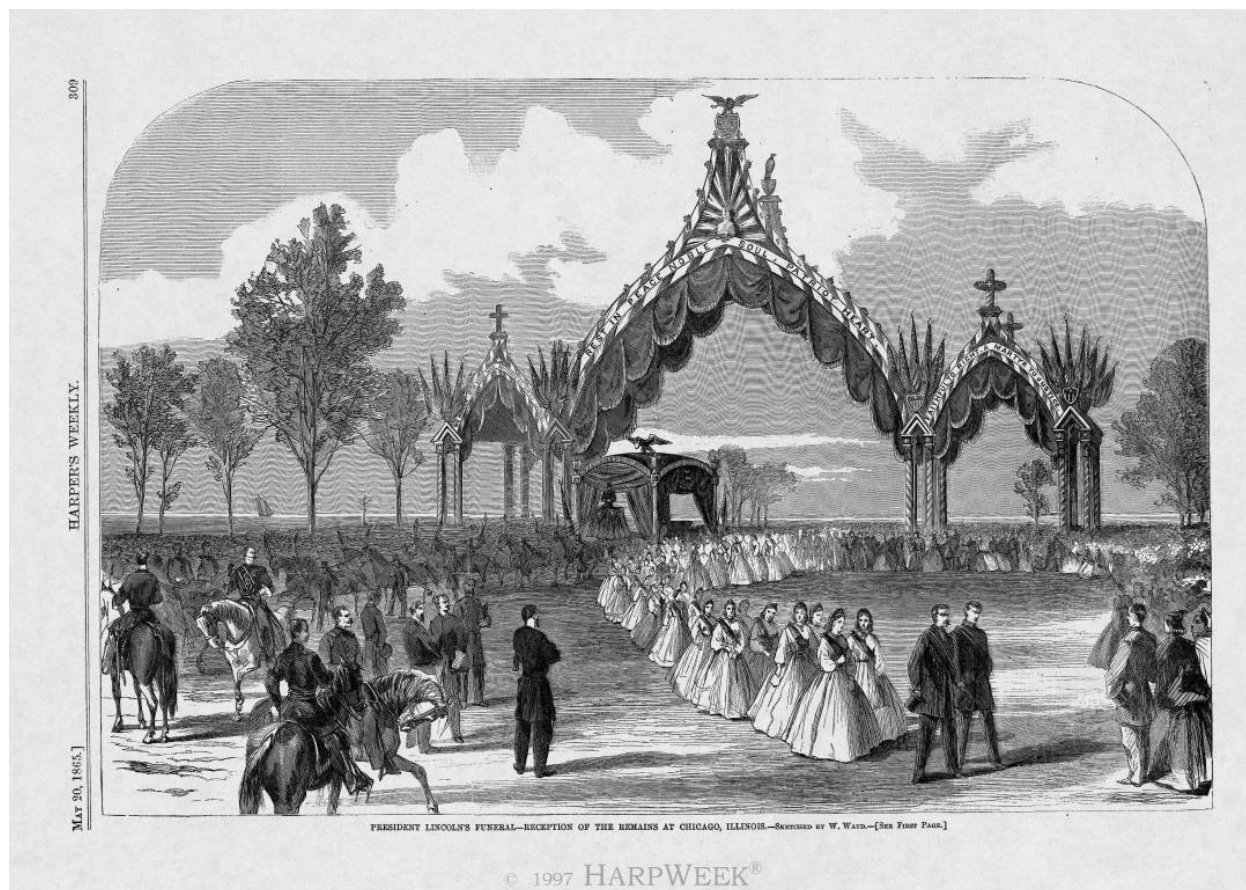


Fig. 41b *Lincoln's Funeral – Reception of the remains at Chicago Commons, at Chicago, IL, Harper's Weekly: A Journal of Civilization, May 20, 1865*

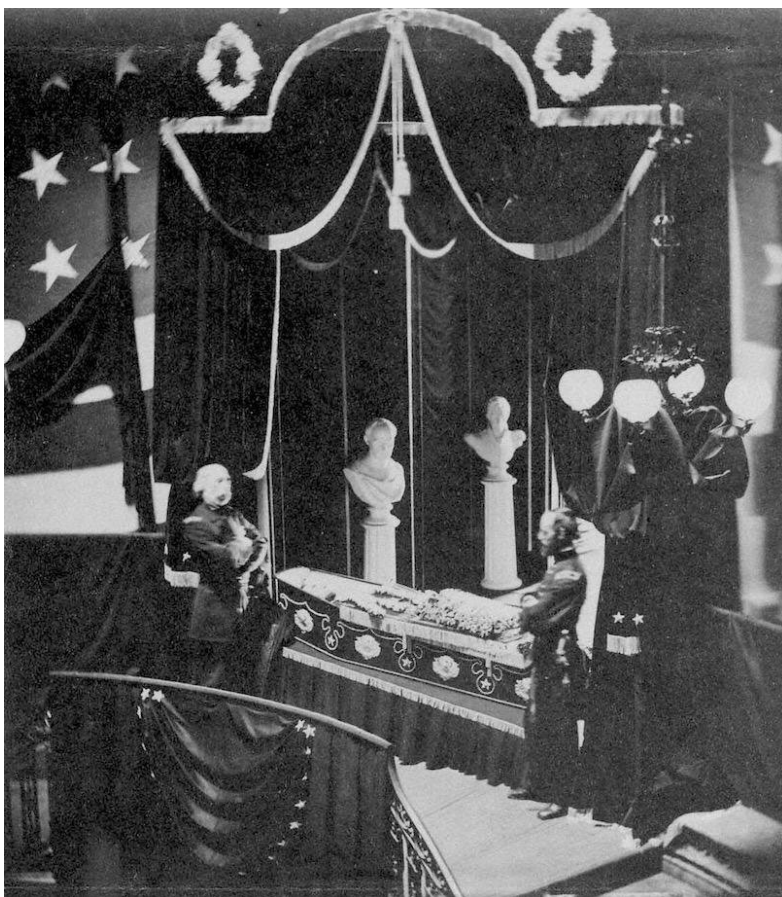
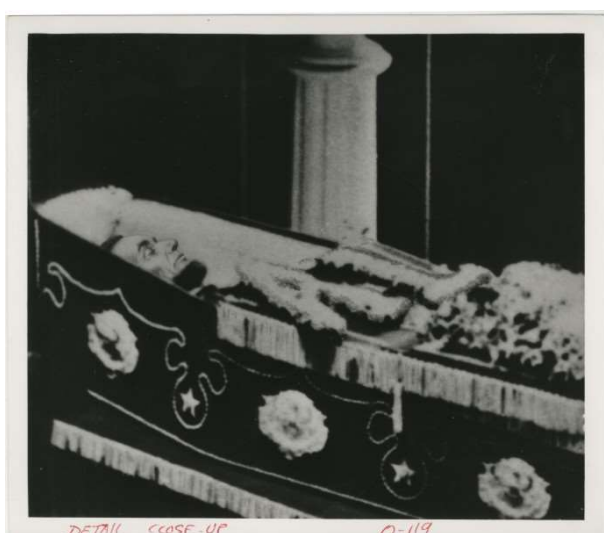


Fig. 42 Jeremiah Gurney, *Abraham Lincoln Lying in State, New York City Hall, New York City, April 24, 1865*



Detail

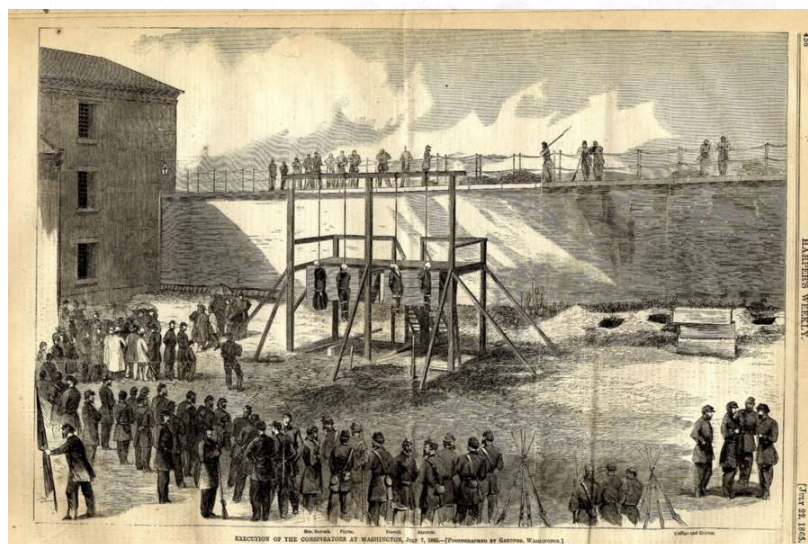
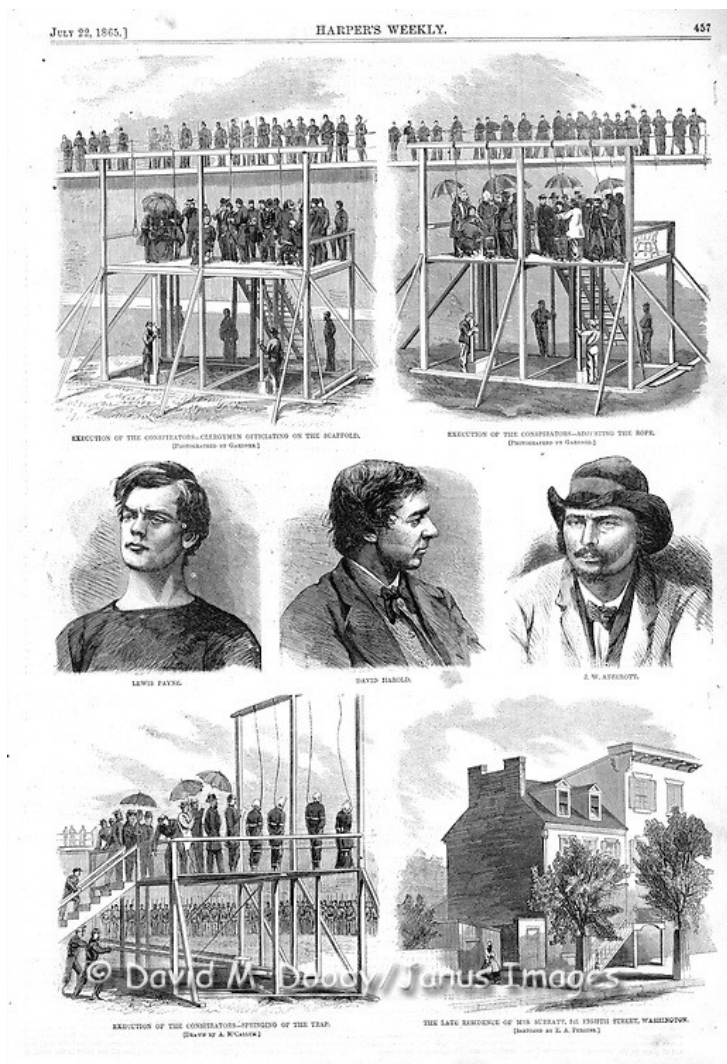


Fig. 43 *The Execution of the Conspirators*, Harper's Weekly: Journal of Civilization, July 22, 1865

SURRATT. **BOOTH.** **HARBOTTLE.**

War Department, Washington, April 20, 1865,

\$100,000 REWARD!

THE MURDERER

Of our late beloved President, Abraham Lincoln,
IS STILL AT LARGE.

\$50,000 REWARD

Will be paid by this Department for his apprehension, in addition to any reward offered by Municipal Authorities or State Executives.

\$25,000 REWARD

Will be paid for the apprehension of JOHN H. SURRATT, one of Booth's accomplices.

\$25,000 REWARD

Will be paid for the apprehension of David C. Harbottle, another of Booth's accomplices.

EDWIN M. STANTON, Secretary of War.

DESCRIPTIONS.—**BOOTH** is Five Feet 7 or 8 inches high, slender build, high forehead, black hair, black eyes, and wears a heavy black mustache.

JOHN H. SURRATT is about 5 feet 8 inches. Hair rather thin and dark; eyes rather light; no beard. Would weigh 145 or 150 pounds. Complexion rather pale and clear, with color in his cheeks. Wears light clothes of fine quality. Shoulder square; chest broad; neck prominent; chin square; ears projecting at the top; forehead rather low and square but broad. Prom. hairline on the right side; neck rather long. His legs are fairly set. A fine man.

DAVID C. HARBOTTLE is five feet six inches high, fair skin; eyes dark, eyebrows rather heavy, full lips, nose short, broad and flat. Hair rather light, sandy, wavy, thick, somewhat grizzled; somewhat quick and active, slightly about his nose when looking at a person.

NOTES.—In addition to the above, State and other authorities have offered rewards amounting in almost one hundred thousand dollars, making an aggregate of about **TWO HUNDRED THOUSAND DOLLARS.**

Fig. 44 Wanted Poster for Three of the Conspirators in Lincoln's Assassination, 1865



Fig. 45a Alexander Gardner, *David Harold*, 1865

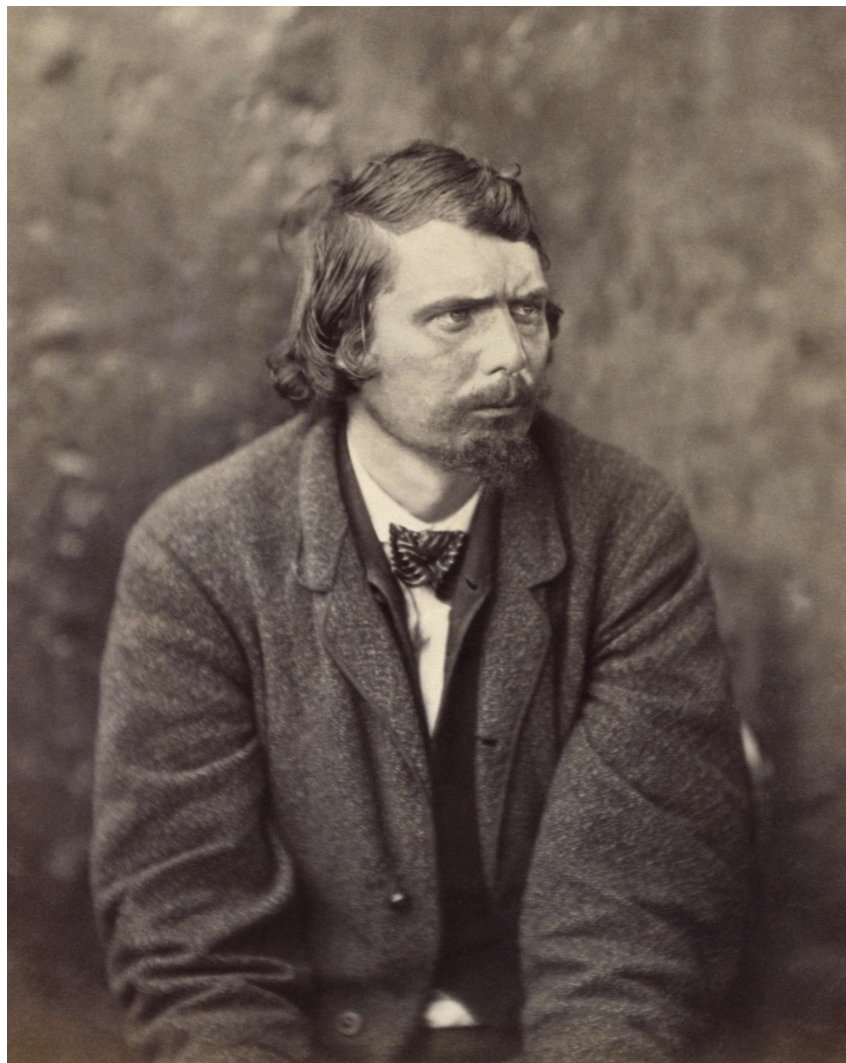


Fig. 45b Alexander Gardner, *George Atzerodt*, 1865



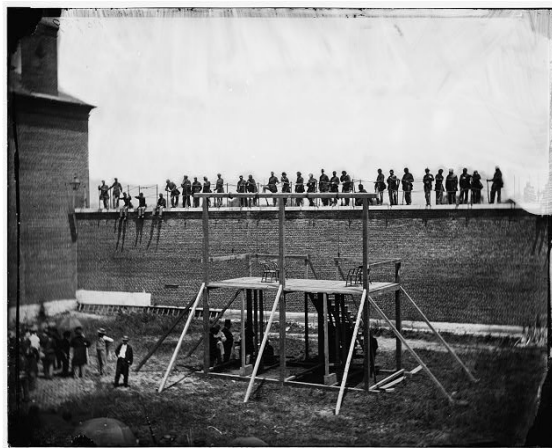
Fig. 45c Alexander Gardner, *Lewis Paine*, 1865



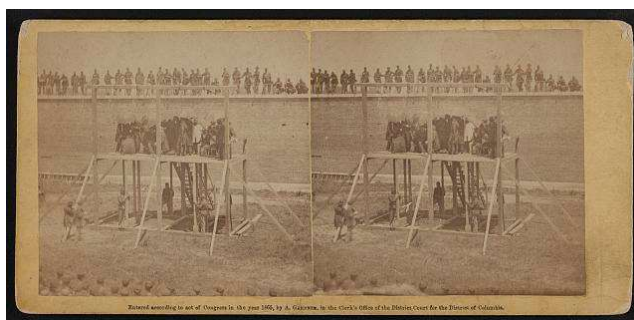
Fig. 46 Timothy O'Sullivan, *The Courtyard of the Old Arsenal Prison Just Before the Executions*, Washington DC, July, 1865



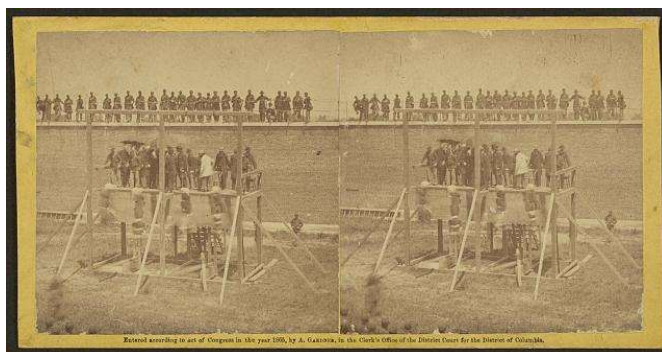
Fig. 47 Timothy O'Sullivan, *The Men Who Hanged the Conspirators*, Washington DC, July, 1865



View of the Scaffolding

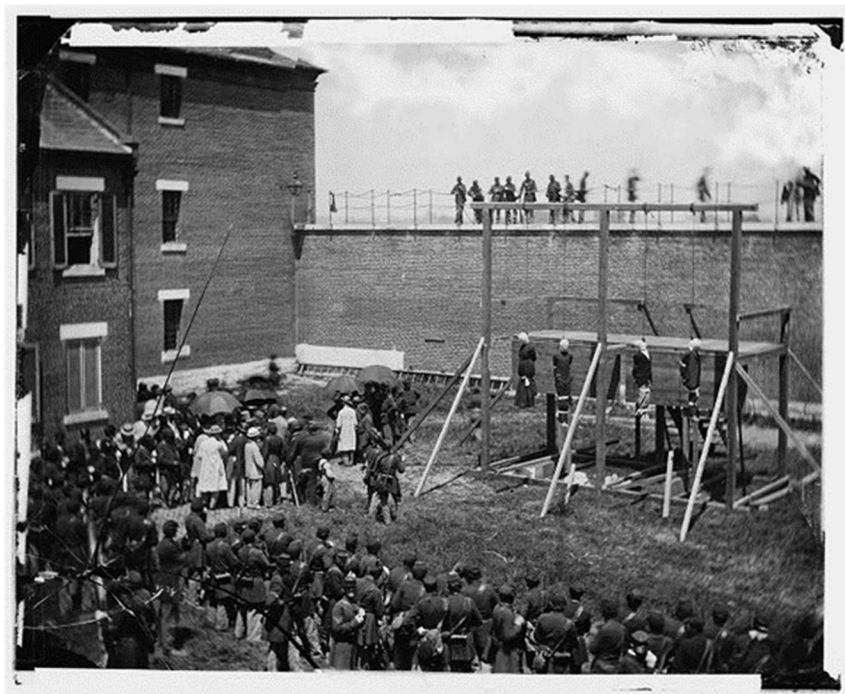


Arrival on the Scaffolding

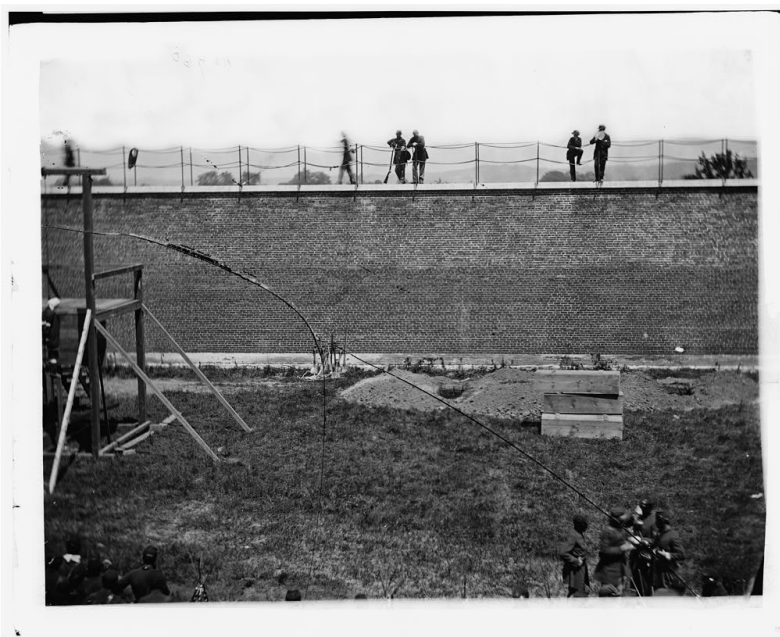


The Drop

Fig. 48a Alexander Gardner & Timothy O'Sullivan, *The Execution of Lincoln's Conspirators*, Old Arsenal Prison, Washington DC, July 7, 1865



The hanging bodies of the conspirators



The coffins and graves of the Conspirators

Fig. 48b Alexander Gardner & Timothy O'Sullivan, *The Execution of Lincoln's Conspirators*, Old Arsenal Prison, Washington DC, July 7, 1865

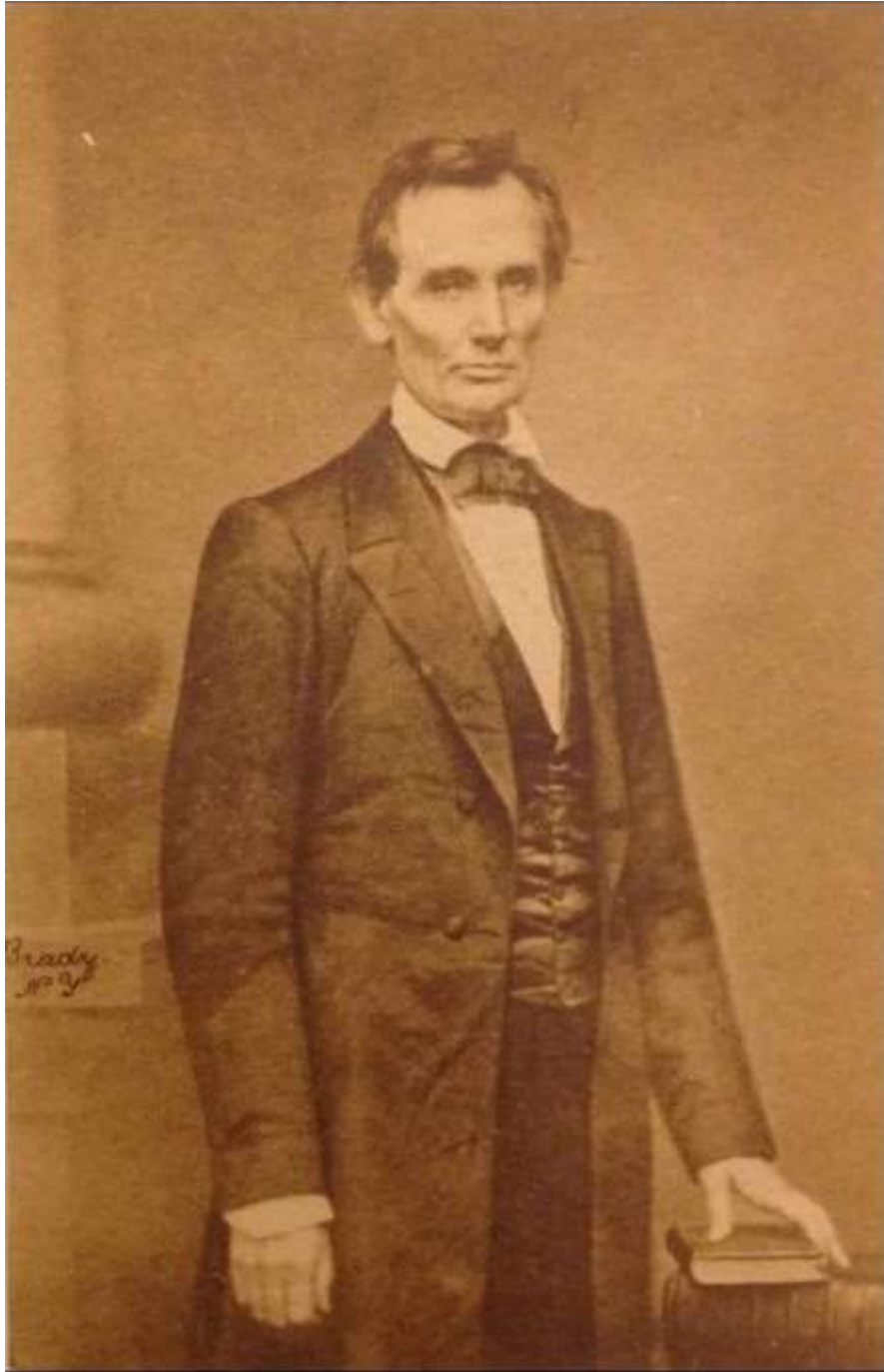


Fig. 50 Mathew Brady, *Abraham Lincoln "Cooper's Union Pose,"* February, 1860

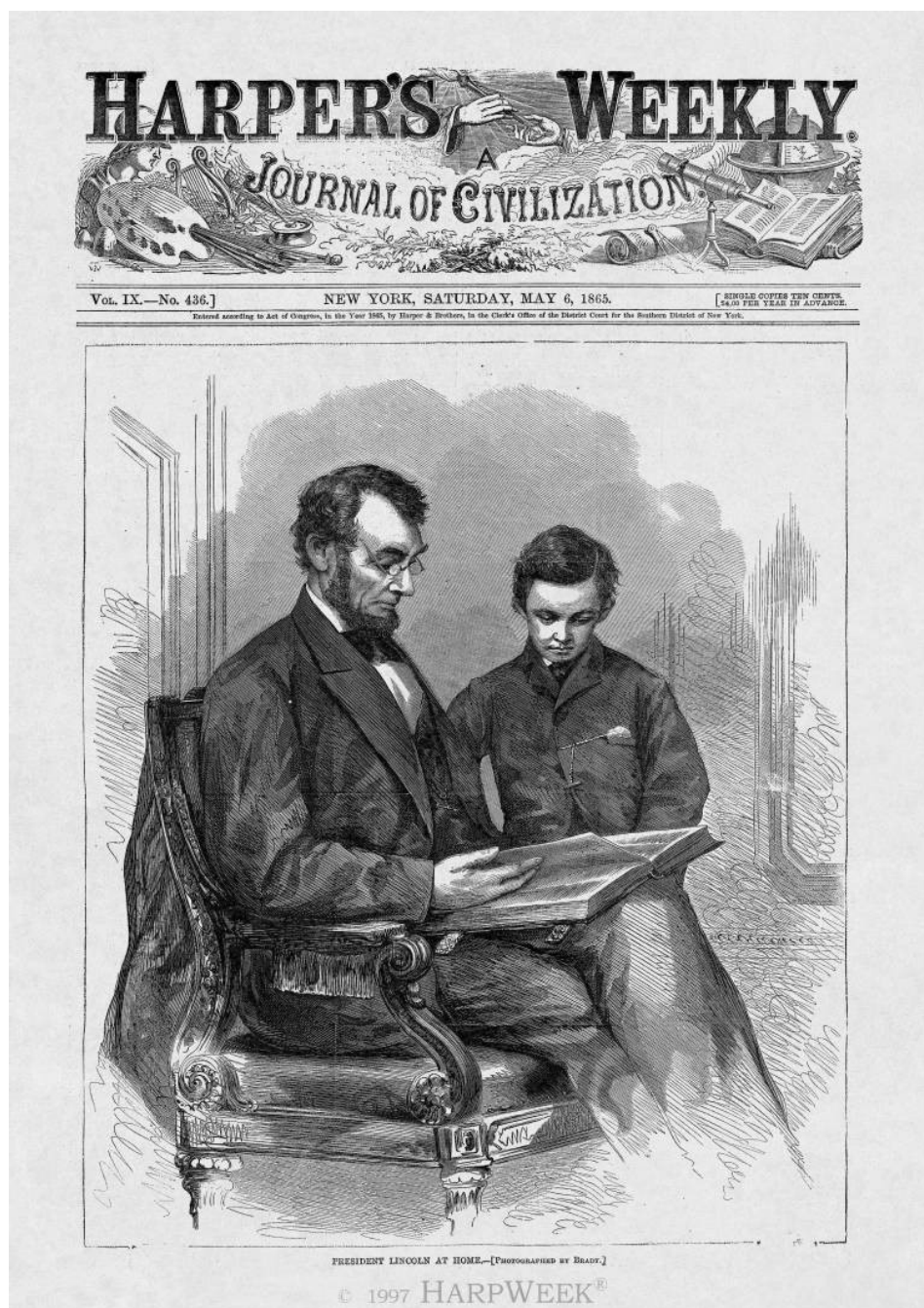


Fig. 51, *The President at Home* (photograph by Brady),
Harper's Weekly: A Journal of Civilization, May 6, 1865

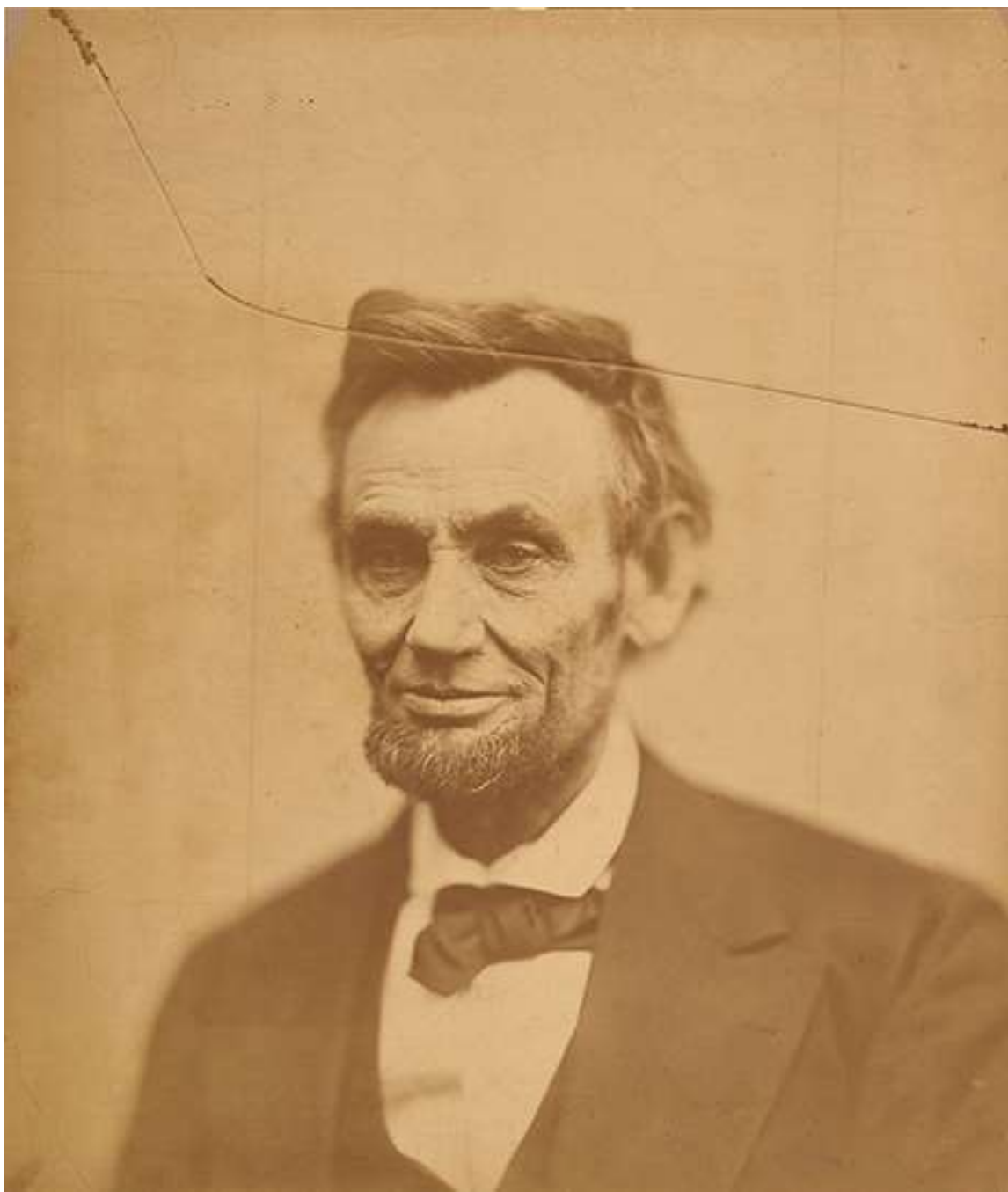


Fig. 52 Alexander Gardner, *Last Known Portrait of Abraham Lincoln*, February, 1865

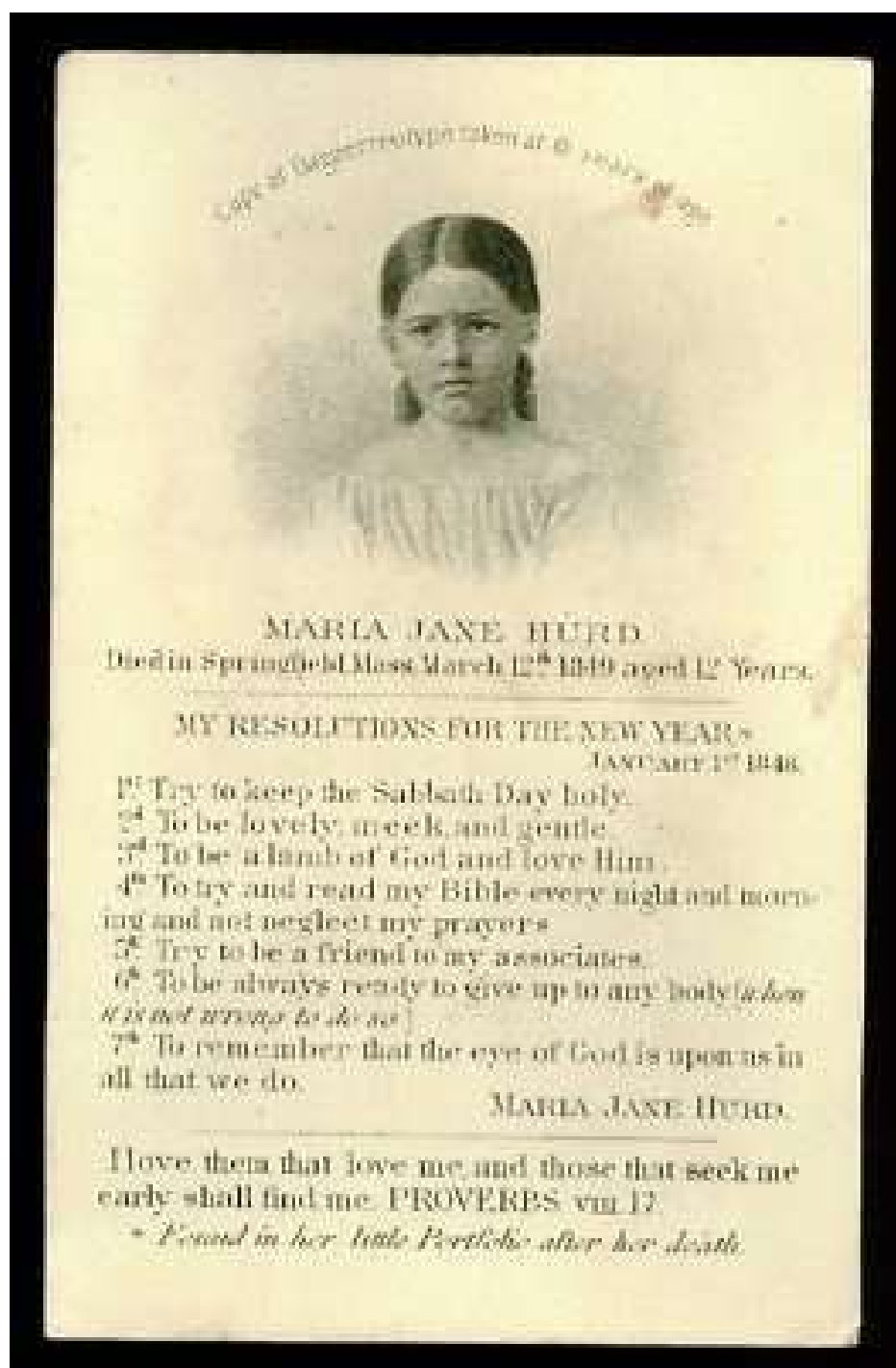


Fig. 53 Maria Jane Hurd Memorial Card, 12 years old

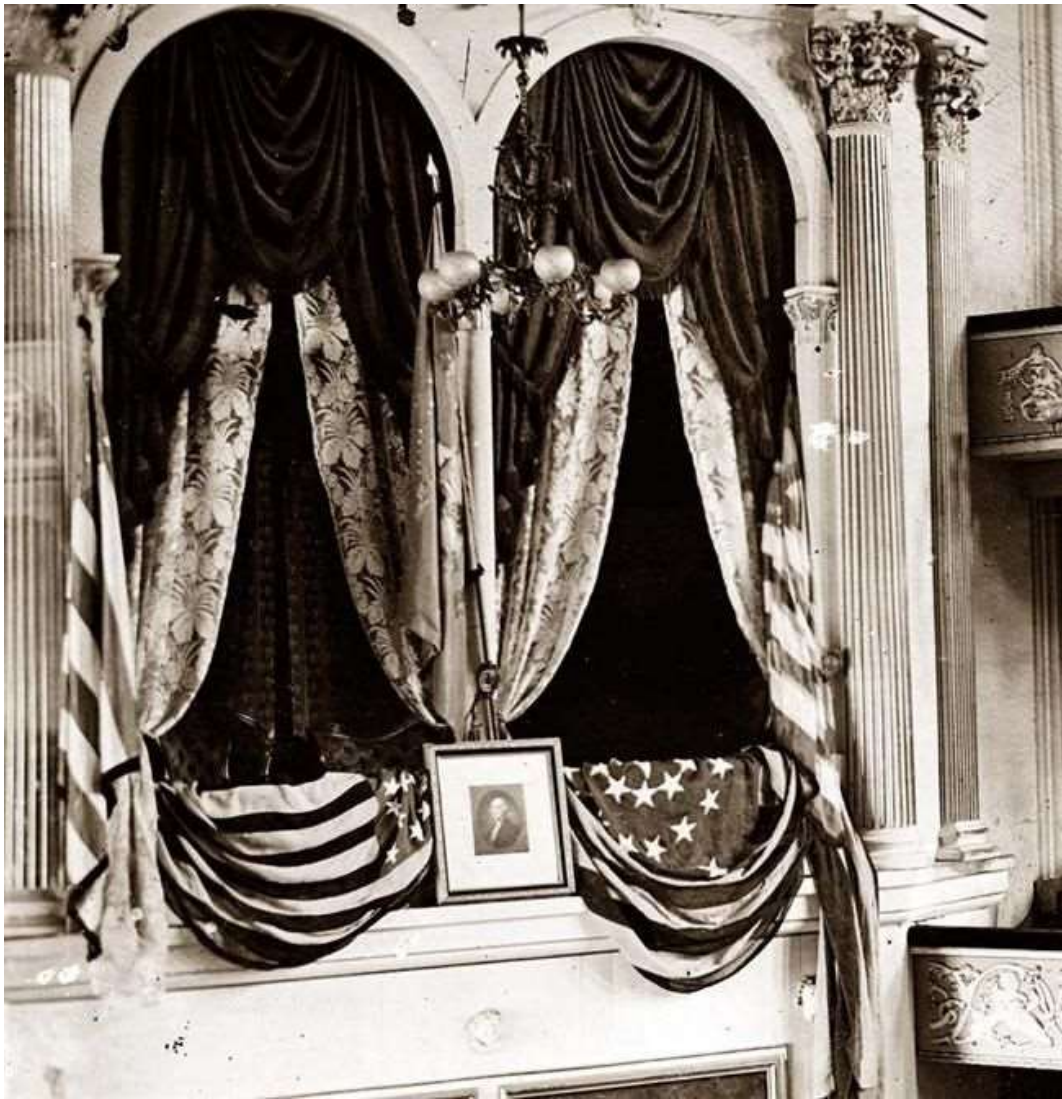


Fig. 54 Alexander Gardner, *Lincoln's Box Seat*, Ford's Theater, 1865



Fig. 55 Lincoln's Rocking Chair



Fig. 56 Alexander Gardner, *Exterior of Ford's Theater*, 1865

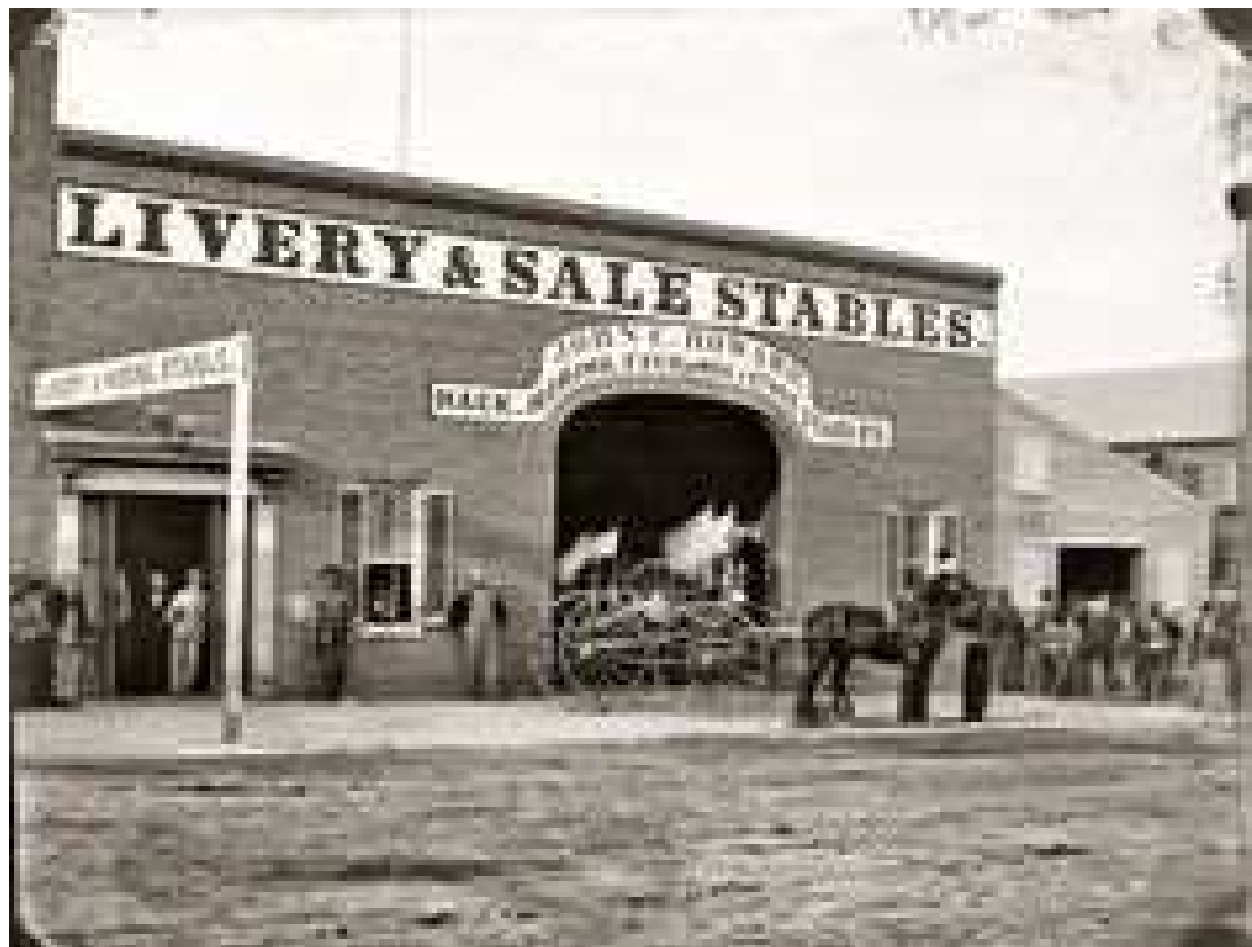


Fig. 57 Alexander Gardner, *John Howard's Livery Stable*, 1865



Fig. 58 Alexander Gardner, *Navy Yard Bridge*, 1865

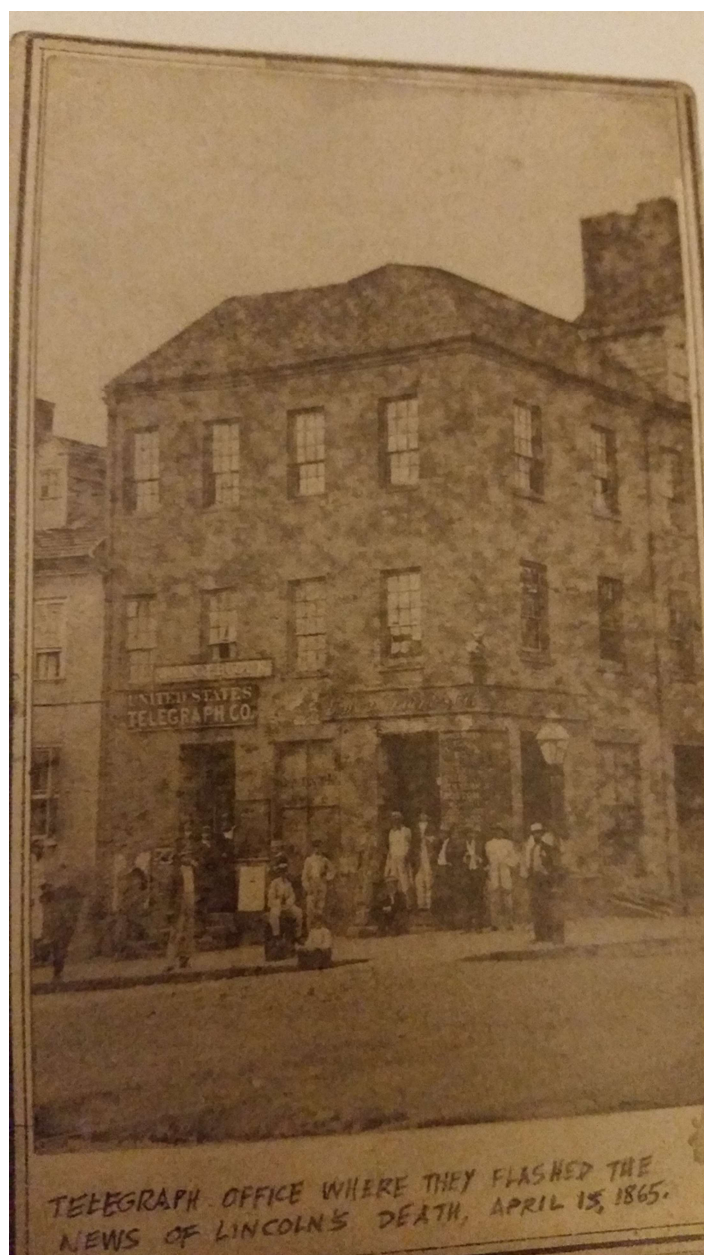


Fig. 59 Alexander Gardner, *Telegraph Office Where News of Lincoln's Assassination was Dispatched*, April 1865

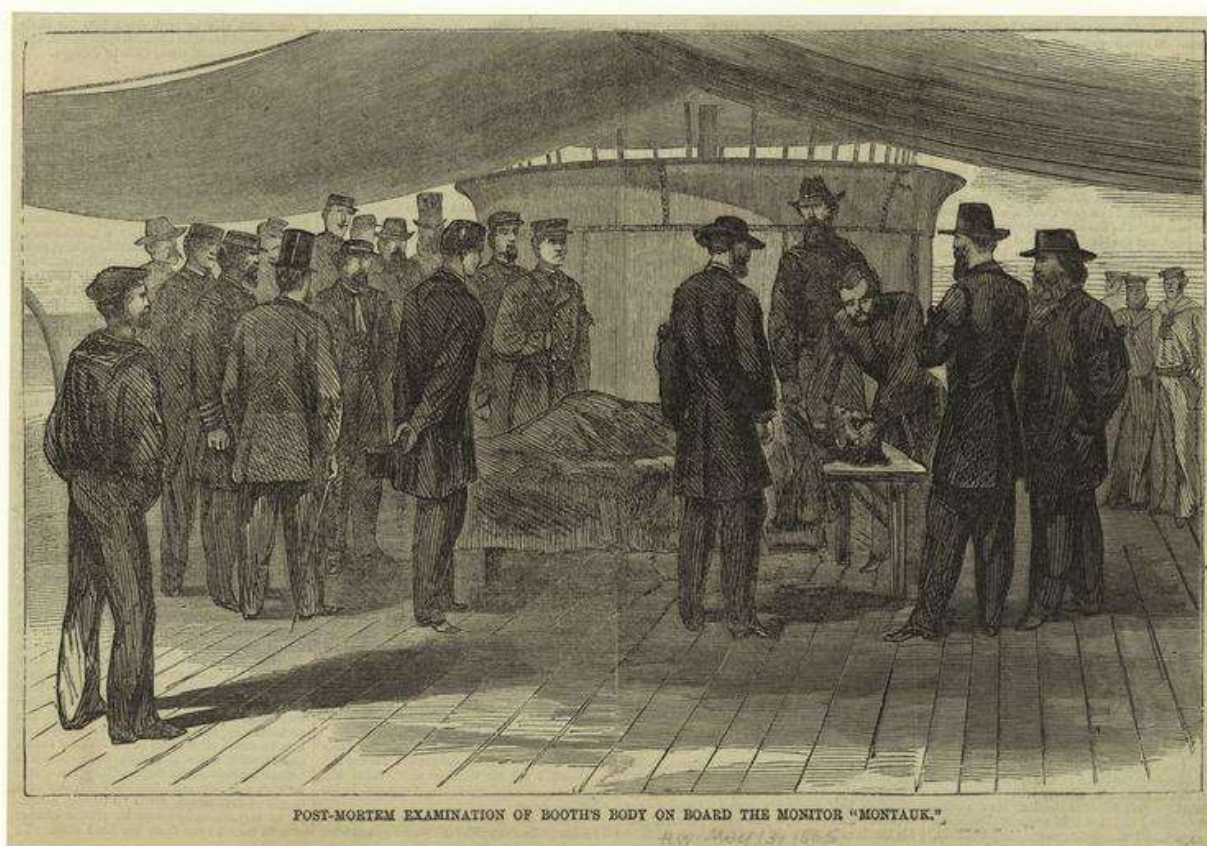


Fig. 60 *Postmortem Exam of John Wilkes Booth, Based on Lost Booth Photograph, Harper's Weekly: A Journal of Civilization, May 13, 1865*



Fig. 61 *Jerusalem, Site of the Temple on Mount Moriah, and Jerusalem, Court of the Mosque of Omar, 1857*



Fig. 62 William Notman, *Niagara Falls*, 1858



Fig. 63 Hermann Biow, *Ruins caused by the Hamburg Fire, 1842*



Fig. 64 *George and Ed Silsbee Hanged by a Mob of Citizens in Front of Jail. Jan. 20, 1900*

VITAE

Education:

- PhD May 2019 University of Illinois at Chicago, Art History
 Qualifying Exams Passed – April 20, 2015
 Dissertation Defense Passed – February 22, 2019
 Dissertation Committee Chair – Prof. Hannah Higgins, Department
 of Art History
- MA 2010 University of Wisconsin-Milwaukee, Art History
 Master's Thesis – “Educational Imagery in the Work of Pierre-
 Auguste Renoir”
- BA 1998 Luther College, Decorah, IA

Grants/Fellowships/Awards:

- 2017 University of Illinois at Chicago Graduate Student Council Travel Award
- 2016 2016-2017 Newberry Library Graduate Scholar-in-Residence
- 2014 University of Illinois at Chicago Graduate Student Council Travel Award
- 2014 University of Illinois at Chicago Graduate College Presenter Award
- 2014 University of Illinois at Chicago Department of Art History Graduate Research Grant
- 2008 University of Wisconsin-Milwaukee Department of Art History Lawrence R. Hoey
 Memorial Prize, Graduate Student Essay Prize, Nominee
 Paper: “Pierre-Auguste Renoir’s Children”
- 2008 University of Wisconsin-Milwaukee Graduate Student Travel Grant

Publications:

- “Renoir’s Children,” *Apollo Magazine*, (July/August, 2011)
- “The Newhaven Collection by David Octavius Hill and Robert Adamson: Examining
 Community Dynamics through Archival Photographs,” 33rd *European Studies Conference
 Selected Online Conference Proceedings*, <http://www.unomaha.edu/esc/proceedings.htm>, Edited
 by Dr. Juliette Parnell (2009)

Conferences:

- 2017 University of Michigan Graduate Student Conference on United States History:
 “Sightlines of History: Surveillance, States, and Mobility”
 Paper: “ ‘The Dead of Antietam:’ Civil War Photographs, the Illustrated Press, and
 Redefining Cultural Ideas of Death and Mourning in the Nineteenth-Century
 North”

- 2017 Newberry Library Colloquium, Chicago, IL
Paper: "Marketing Antietam: Civil War Photographs and their Function as Cultural Commodity in Nineteenth-Century America"
- 2014 NEH Summer Institute: *The Visual Culture of the American Civil War*
 Organized by the American Social History Project/Center for Media and Learning,
 The Graduate Center, City University of New York
- 2014 2014 Popular Culture Association/American Culture Association National Conference
Paper: "The 'Good Death,' the Grieving Widow, and Conceptions of Loss in Civil War America"
- 2013 Indiana University Art History Association 23rd Annual Graduate Symposium
 "Creative Agency: Visual Responses to Moments of Crisis"
Paper: "Artistic Response in a Time of War: The Impact of "Foreign" Artistry on Art in Civil War America"
- 2008 33rd European Studies Conference, University of Nebraska – Omaha
Panel: "Snapshots of European Life"
Paper: "The Newhaven Collection by David Octavius Hill and Robert Adamson: Examining Community Dynamics through Archival Photographs"

Teaching Experience:

University of Illinois at Chicago: Spring 2019: Instructor, Department of Art History.
 Courses: Photographs as History

School of the Art Institute of Chicago: Fall 2016-Present: Part-time Instructor, Department of Art History, Theory, and Criticism
 Courses: World Cultures/Civilizations: Prehistory -19th Century (traditional curriculum)
 World Cultures/Civilizations: Prehistory -19th Century (new pilot curriculum)
 Survey of Modern to Contemporary Art/Architecture
 History of Photography

University of Illinois at Chicago: Spring 2018: Instructor, Department of Art History.
 Courses: History of Photography I

University of Illinois at Chicago: 2014-2017: Teaching Assistant, Department of African American Studies.
 Courses: Introduction to African American Studies

Columbia College Chicago: 2015-2016: Part-time Faculty, Art and Art History Department.
 Courses: Introduction to Visual Culture

The University of Chicago Graham School of Continuing Liberal and Professional Studies:
2012-2013, Spring 2016: Instructor in Art History, Department of Humanities, Arts, and Sciences.

Courses: Introduction to Art History
19th Century Art
American Art
Impressionism
Van Gogh

University of Illinois at Chicago: Summer 2015: Instructor, Department of Art History.

Courses: History of Photography II

University of Illinois at Chicago: 2011-2012: Teaching Assistant, Department of Art History.

Courses: Survey of Art History: Ancient to Medieval Art and Architecture
Survey of Art History: Renaissance to Contemporary Art and Architecture

University of Wisconsin-Milwaukee: 2010-2012: Associate Lecturer, Department of Art History.

Courses: History of Photography

University of Wisconsin-Milwaukee: 2009-2010: Course Assistant/Grader, Department of Art History.

Professional Service:

2012 Planning Committee for the University of Illinois at Chicago, Department of Art History Graduate Student Symposium
Title: "In Sight/On View: The Museum as Site of Inquiry"

Professional Affiliations:

American Historical Association (AHA)
American Printing History Association (APHA)
American Studies Association (ASA)
College Art Association (CAA)
Organization of American Historians (OAH)
Society of Civil War Historians (SCWH)

Languages:

French
German
Hebrew (basic knowledge)