AN EXAMINATION OF SOCIAL CONSCIOUSNESS IN THE CIVIL WAR THROUGH THE LENS OF PHOTOGRAPHY

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During the American Civil War, battlefield photography helped shape the Northern consciousness by shaking it free from preconceived ideas of martial glory and valor. This paradigm shift allowed the North to approach war with a modern mentality, mirroring the modernity of military tactics and hardware, which arose out of tactical necessity. The North was the main progenitor of photographic material during the war, and therefore shaped not only the contemporary interpretation of the war but the historical narrative as well. The Union's archive is substantial, but it consists of a bias that tends to focus on the Eastern Theater along the Atlantic coast and the Appalachian mountains. This bias shapes the historical framework in which historians view the war.

Due to the Northern naval blockade the South, on the other hand, was unable to obtain the chemicals and materials to produce photographs in any meaningful volume. They were able to capture and produce a few images in the beginning of the war but lacked the infrastructure to disseminate the images on a wide scale to the public. This limited access to material and markets hurt the South's ability to shape public opinion. Furthermore, much of the Southern photographic record has been lost due to the destructive capacity of the war and the ravages of time. The disparity between North and South resulted in an advantage for Union supporters with regards to photographic propaganda, enabling the North to maintain public support even when morale ebbed during 1862 and 1863. Photography also allowed the North to shift its war aims to meet the contingencies that resulted from the volatility of the conflict.

Through an examination of pre-Civil War expression, found in both photography and traditional artistic mediums, a clear change can be delineated that will illuminate both the role that photography played in conveying the Union's message and how this message changed and adapted over time. Additionally, an examination of the technological aspects of photography will elucidate the advantages the Union held over their Confederate counterparts as well as how this technology spurred a sense of unity throughout the North. Examining individual photographers and their artistic expression will further lend credence to the concept that photography morphed during the war, supplying the cultural material that was both overtly and covertly utilized to alter public opinion and enabled the North to fight the *total war* necessary for victory.

Nineteenth-Century Landscape Painting and Its Effects on Photography

American photographers during this period derived their artistic perspective from their counterparts in the art world. European and American landscape painters differed in their approach toward nature and the wilderness, which reflected their divergent experiences and relations with this realm. The former perceived danger and evil lurking in the ever-decreasing forested regions that harkened back to their medieval heritage. The latter saw a space for the rebirth of humanity, a second Eden that had been squandered in the Old World. Art historian Eleanor Harvey states, "As Americans began to see positive resonance in their own natural landscapes, they developed a wilderness aesthetic that linked America's prospects for her future with two things: the potential for progress in cultivating the raw landscape and the virtues found in pristine aspects of those wild aspects."[1] This aestheticism lingers in photographs captured during the war and only changes to compensate for the level of destruction after the battle of Antietam (1862) but is never completely

abandoned. Often, the photographic scenes of destruction wrought upon nature and man reverberated with an echo of this "new" Eden being lost or destroyed.

Harvey states that, "Balancing the awe-inspiring power of nature was a renewed awareness of nature's amoral state – its indifference to human suffering as a signal of god's displeasure – which insinuated itself into the vocabulary of landscape."[2] This metaphorical analogy can be seen throughout the photographic record of the Civil War in the landscapes, which often were scarred and seemed to consume the individual through the interplay of scope and perspective. Pre-Antietam photographs regularly depict the devastation of nature in the distance while the presence of man is posed in the fore as an ancillary element disconnected from the grand scale of death and maiming that had recently occurred. This was the result of the legacy of nineteenth-century respectability combined with the "aesthetically pleasing" art that preceded the war.

In the years leading up to the outbreak of the Civil War in 1861, photography struggled to gain recognition as a valid form of artistic expression. Many of the photographers of the era, one of the most famous being Mathew Brady, had professional training in traditional artistic mediums such as painting or sketch work, social connections to artists, or a personal interest in art. To produce photographs that were aesthetically pleasing and commercially successful, photographers imitated their brethren in the traditional arts.

At the time, the two most popular forms of paintings, and by extension photography, were portraiture and landscapes. Portrait painters were able to conceal unflattering aspects of individuals through the use of artistic license and the use of favorable lighting. Despite the realism of photography, photographers were able to manipulate the lighting, the positioning of the subject, and the development process in order to generate works that "painted" their subjects in a flattering way. An example of this is Mathew Brady's adoption of skylights, which he cut into the roof of his studio at 205 Broadway in Manhattan, increasing the natural light and resulting in the production of exceptional photographs.[3] This innovation enabled him to capture and manipulate the contrasts between light and dark and impress his clients, who tended to be political leaders and celebrities, with his final product.[4] Historian George Sullivan states that, "Brady's skillfully lighted portraits, simple and straightforward, usually displayed a heroic quality."[5] These techniques and thematic compositions would translate into his work during the war. Brady's work, which was modeled after the painters of his era, had a reputation for excellence, respectability, and artistic expression that gave him an advantage over his competitors at the start of the war.

Technical Aspects of Photography

One must first examine the technical difficulties faced by photographers in the field in order to understand how and why photographs were managed and staged, and how they represented the individual characteristics of the photographer in the same way that paintings and sketches did. Historian Alan Trachtenberg states, "Large cameras on tripods, lenses designed for landscape views, with the necessity of preparing the glass plate in a portable darkroom, then rushing with it to the camera-all these physical barriers to spontaneous pictures of action encouraged a resort to easily applied conventions of historical painting, casual sketches, and even studio portraits."[6] The process of capturing a photograph involved an eight step procedure which was nearly universal, despite the different cameras utilized. The Wet-collodion process, the most popular mode of production during this period, consisted of:

1. A clean sheet of glass was evenly coated with collodion.
2. In a darkroom or a light-tight chamber, the coated plate was immersed in a silver nitrate solution, sensitizing it to light.

3. After it was sensitized, the wet negative was placed in a light-tight holder and inserted into the camera, which already had been positioned and focused.
4. The "dark slide," which protected the negative from light, and the lens cap were removed for several seconds, allowing light to expose the plate.
5. The "dark slide" was inserted back into the plate holder, which was then removed from the camera.
6. In the darkroom, the glass plate negative was removed from the plate holder and developed, washed in water, and fixed so that the image would not fade, then washed again and dried.
7. Usually the negatives were coated with a varnish to protect the surface.
8. After development, the photographs were printed on paper and mounted.[7]

Photographers carried out this procedure in the least ideal situations, on dusty fields, surrounded by flies and other insects congregating to feed on the corpses of men and animal alike all of which could despoil the photograph. Then the photographer would have to rush into their "studios," which were actually wagons with blackout cloth stretched over the frame. Temperatures inside these Brady wagons[8] could be boiling in the summer or freezing in the winter and were full of noxious fumes generated by the chemical reactions.[9] In order to accomplish this in the field, a team of two men would be employed. The complexity of the process limited the abilities of the photographer to produce large volumes and had the effect of accentuating their desire to make deliberately meaningful artistic representations that at times, and in the proper artists' hands, would challenge their audience's preconceived notions of war. Also, any pretentions of spontaneity, which the pictures often suggest, was lost within the reality of the complexity of the procedures. This resulted in a methodical approach of staging photographs with deliberate intent to affect the audience's interpretation of the captured scene.

The technological advancements in the production and dissemination of photographs during the war amplified the change in the public's conceptions, a change that was essential to conducting a total war. Photographs produced with glass negatives and paper were cheaper than their predecessor, the daguerreotype. This new format could be sold cheaply and reach a greater audience in a quicker manner than previous modes of production. Furthermore, utilizing a glass negative facilitated the production of an unlimited number of pictures from a single negative. For these reasons, "The Civil War has been described as the first 'living room war' one brought home to viewers in the form of mass produced cartes-de-visite and stereographs."[10] These formats represented cutting edge technology in the 1860s and only further enhanced their desirability. The increased demand for this new technology, partnered with the realism of war, shocked viewers and aided in the shift from the traditional conceptualization of war as heroic to new perspective of war as the hell it was. Both cartes-de-visite and stereographs offered a rare glimpse of the war which most Northern audiences were far removed from and acted as a bonding agent that maintained social cohesion while simultaneously producing a catalyst for the acceptance of changes in war aims.

One of the most popular forms of photographs, stereographs, were based on the principle of binocular vision, which creates a sense of space and distance, an early form of 3-D.[11] "Made with a twin-lens camera, stereograph images are viewed in a lenticular device that allows virtual images to completely fill the viewer's perceptual field."[12] The twin lens cameras produced two

negatives, which were slightly offset from one another, producing a sense of suspended reality. Often, these negatives have been separated from their original mate over time, leading to the loss of their visual impact. Stereographs changed the way that practitioners of the art of photography "viewed the world both graphically and spatially."[13] Photographers considered the 3-D effect when choosing their subject matter and reference points. Staging photographic scenes so that the value of depth could be further enhanced resulted in the war coming alive for spectators in the safety of their private sphere far removed from the front line.

Due to its size, which lent itself for greater mobility on the battlefield, and ability to produce a more visually appealing product, the twin-lens cameras was used to photograph all the dead at Antietam and the majority of those at Gettysburg.[14] Trachtenberg contends that to understand the photographic popular culture that arose during the Civil War the art of producing stereographs must be entered into the equation; "Indeed so popular was this mode of dissemination that any discussion of the Civil War photographs and the problems of reading they pose must take the stereograph into account."[15] The fact that many of the photographs of the war dead were captured in this medium reveals the intent of the photographers as well as the desired impact they wanted to impart to their audience.

Another photographic form, the carte-de-visite, became popular in 1860-61 and quickly outstripped the popularity of all other forms of photography, creating a fad that swept the nation.[16] Carte-de-visites were easy to mass-produce and trade among the civilian population, and measuring $2^1/_8$ x $3^1/_2$ inches, they fit neatly into albums that could be found in nearly every home that could afford them.[17] Historian Keith Davis states, "The carte-de-visite further democratized the production and consumptions of portraits" and "spurred a vastly increased social circulation of photographs."[18] No longer were political and military leaders, battlefields or the death and destruction of the war abstractions muted by artistic renditions found in papers; they became real and entered the psyche of the individual and the public consciousness on an unprecedented level. These photographs became a form of cultural economy that was easily shared, spreading the realities of the war as well as the justification for the ever-greater sacrifices that would be needed to win a modern war of attrition. This shaped the consciousness of the civilian population, and as result of the photographs being produced by Union supporters with the explicit permission of the army, the message was controlled and uniform.

The Men behind the Photographs

Mathew Brady is arguably the most well-known Civil War photographer because of his foresight to finance and enlist photographers to travel with the army. However, many of the photographs attributed to him were from photographers' works that he purchased or by those he employed. Furthermore, he disliked going to battlefields because of their remote locations and limited amenities. As discussed earlier, Brady was renowned for both his ability to produce quality photographs as well as the social status of his clientele. When war broke he utilized his connections to gain access to the military and battlefields. Brady desired to be the "nation's historian" and with the breakout of hostilities "believed he would be contributing toward building a record of the war's events"[19]

Brady's exalted social status and penchant for aesthetically pleasing photographs resulted in an initial continuation of traditional artistic expression. American painters had "developed an American wilderness aesthetic, in which the landscape itself carried morally instructive overtones," and Brady continued within this heritage.[20] This formula, which had suited him before the war, hid the destructive nature of modern warfare and made it more palatable for him and his

audience's sense of respectability. Art historian Eleanor Harvey argues that "Beginning with [Brady's] pastoral and meditative photographs of the landscape at Bull Run taken 1862, Brady favored the metaphorical approach to the ravages of war, in keeping with the prevailing aesthetics of painting."[21] However, Brady was a shrewd, if in the end unsuccessful, business man, and when opportunities arose to purchase or display photographs that attracted audiences and customers to his galleries he was not averse to the ideal. However, Brady conformed to the traditional artistic values in which he was bred and did not deliberately challenge the conceptions of military heroism. He was in many regards an elitist whose art reflected his position by minimizing the human and destructive elements of warfare. In the end Brady was not the man who was going to break with convention and alter the public's concepts of war.

Brady's photograph of [*Pontoon Bridge at Bull Run, Va.*](#)[22] in 1862 follows the traditional landscape narrative; everything seems tranquil, bucolic even, and the casual observer might overlook the destruction on the hillside. The soldiers in the foreground are diminutive in scale when compared to the landscape in the background, a technique often employed by landscape painters. During peace time, these soldiers could fill in for a genial social gathering at a picnic after church services. The men's uniforms and the destruction of the landscape are the only indication that a battle had been fought at the site. However, even the loss of natural vitality in the photograph could be misconstrued and attributed to the taming of the wilderness via timber harvesting, another trope of prewar painting aesthetics. Perspective blurs the uniforms, making it difficult for the audience to grasp the nature and relationship of the human element. One would be hard pressed to distinguish any of the upheaval associated with war, so challenging of the preconceived public concepts of war through his photographic composition would be almost unfathomable.

Another, example of landscape aestheticism can be located in Brady's rendition of where [*General John F. Reynolds Was Killed*](#) at Gettysburg, 1863.[23] Lost again is the impact of modern warfare upon nature and man alike; without the caption it would be nearly impossible to delineate that one of the greatest struggles of the war had occurred on this spot. This photo could easily find its way into a carte-de-visite album in any respectable parlor due to its aesthetic beauty and picturesque landscape. A conclusion could easily be reached that the three fallen trees in the background collapsed due to a strong storm or other natural event, not as a result of the carnage of a struggle to the death between opposing armies. The men appear to be surveying the landscape as if they were planning where to plant crops. There is no indication that a general or for that manner anyone had died on the spot. The vista is awe-inspiring, but with regards to chronicling the historical record of the event, Brady misses the mark. In order to facilitate a paradigm shift of public consciousness other photographers would have to fill the void left by Brady's lack of vision.

Two photographers in the employment of Brady, and who would forever leave their imprint upon photo journalism, were Alexander Gardner and Timothy H. O'Sullivan. Due to their proximity to the death and destruction wrought by modern warfare, they both actually went to the scenes of battle immediately after the conclusion of hostilities, and they altered their artistic interpretations of battlefields and the resulting detritus. For example, in the aftermath of the Battle of Antietam (September 17. 1862), Gardner and O'Sullivan arrived together at the battlefield within two days of the Confederate Army's retreat. This allowed the men to capture photographs that capitalized on the realism of photography, resulting in a depiction of the carnage of the deadly struggle that still resonates with a modern audience as it did with their contemporaries.

The burial parties did not have the opportunity to intern the soldiers, which had sanitized the scene of previous other battlefields. Strewn across the landscape were the disfigured and

bloating bodies of young men from both the North and South. The pictures these men captured broke from the tradition of presenting war as respectable with heroic pageantry. Instead, the photographers decided to portray the *realities* of war, including men and horses in various degrees of decay and military supplies smashed, upturned and abandoned. There are some convincing arguments that some scenes were altered by the photographers, but their photographs at Antietam[24] (1862) and later Gettysburg[25] (1863) resulted in a landmark moment for photography and photojournalism that forever altered the way war was presented to the public. Gardner and O'Sullivan transfixed a historical moment into a visual expression that revealed the horrors of war to all that viewed the macabre scenes. Only the most self-delusional individual could claim that war was heroic and glorious once they had viewed these photographs.

Within in a month of the battle these photographs were placed on display at Brady's gallery in Manhattan, giving the public their first view of dead soldiers. The photographs measured 3 x 3 ¾ inches and were viewed through the use of a magnifying glass.[26] The astonishment of the spectators was palpable. The *New York Times* review of the exhibition stated, "They were shocking and terrible, yet at the same time they were mesmerizing and captivating."[27] The clarity of the scenes combined with the magnifying glasses brought the war to the individual spectators resulting in an up-close and personal experience. One can only imagine a mother, wife, or sister viewing the scenes and discerning their loved one's last moments, frozen in rigor mortis and captured for posterity. Many of these photographs were produced for public consumption as well and sold as stereographs, increasing the scope and effect of the gruesome vignette on the public's consciousness.

When viewing Garner's and O' Sullivan's photographs of Antietam it becomes crystal clear where their departure from Brady's aesthetically pleasing formula occurs. Gone are the sweeping vistas with merely hints of destruction. For example, in Alexander Gardner's photograph of dead confederate soldiers in "Bloody Lane" at Antietam, the corpses are stacked upon each other like cord wood.[28] Upon closer inspection via a magnifying glass, the individual bodies of the dead become untangled and visible. The *New York Times* review continued "Of all objects of horror one would think the battle-field should stand preeminent, that it should bear away the palm of repulsiveness. But, on the contrary, there is a terrible fascination about it that draws one near these pictures, and makes him loth [sic] to leave them. You will see hushed, reverend groups standing around these weird copies of carnage, bending down to look in the pale faces of the dead, chained by the strange spell that dwells in dead men's eyes."[29] The mutilated corpses left nothing to the imagination; it was both repulsive and enthralling, forever altering the audience's perspective. The ability to view photographed scenes of death was a novelty that enticed the voyeuristic nature of the men and women who lined up and paid to see these photographic scenes. These spectators were transported directly to the battlefield and any vestige of the conceptions of the concocted fallacy of military valor was challenged, if not expunged completely from their mind set.

After leaving the employ of Brady, and only ten months after Antietam, Gardner and O'Sullivan displayed their photographs of Gettysburg at Gardner's Washington gallery. These photographs focus even closer on the individualistic nature of war and have become the iconic visual images that many modern observers recall when reimagining the Civil War. Timothy H. Sullivan's *Field Where General Reynolds Fell, Gettysburg* stands in stark contrast to Brady's rendition of the same scene.[30] The most obvious departure can be gleaned from the lack of bodies in Brady's compilation. The discrepancy alludes to the fact that Brady was not on scene immediately following the battle. Furthermore, the artistic expression that Brady exhibits is

manifested in the power of nature and the landscape, similar to that of a painter or sketch artist. O'Sullivan's rendition focuses on the deadly struggle and its aftermath. The bloated bodies, the blood stained shirts, and the limbs frozen in time reflect the loss of life, which only moments before was vibrant. The stylistic difference of the opposing artists transcends time, and the effects on the viewing public were probably dialectically opposed. Brady's images would make a young man giddy at the prospect of war while O'Sullivan's image would shake the confidence of the bravest soul.

Gardner and O'Sullivan were artists and they did not necessarily capture the reality of war in its purest form, as their modern detractors will so poignantly point out, but they manipulated their medium to convey a message or feeling or even to produce an aesthetically "appealing" (if this word can apply to death images) experience. In Gardner's *[Dead Confederate Sharpshooter in the Devil's Den, Gettysburg, Pa.,](#)*[31] critics correctly argue that the sharp shooter's rifle and the shooter himself were more than likely moved to this locale and staged in this position. However, this does not eliminate the appeal or even the relevance of the photograph. The fact that the body in the photograph was moved and positioned reinforces the idea that Gardner and O'Sullivan were artists who constructed their artistic vision within their medium to meet their audience's expectations. The propping of the gun in the background would have added a layer of depth for the stereograph photos which only increased their appeal. The position of the face in the fore drew in the audience toward what would normally repulse a viewer, as well as personalized the death by adding a level of humanity that would remove the individual from the abstract construct purveyed by the statistics found in a newspaper. Modern art theorist Jonathan Crary proposes that nineteenth-century, "Photography [was] an element of a new and homogenous terrain of consumption and circulation in which an observer becomes lodged."[32] It was no longer possible to remove oneself from the carnage of the war, a war that was abstract and distant. Instead, the war became tangible and entered the universal lexicon of shared experience. Gardner and O'Sullivan were more keenly aware of this reality than the public and even most of their contemporaries, and they capitalized on this to shape public opinion. Nothing "lodges" a spectator into the realities of war more so than the images of disfigured dead bodies.

African American Representations in Photography, a Shift in Representation

Photography not only shaped public conceptions of the war, but even reshaped the justification for the war. Abraham Lincoln at the outset of his administration focused on preserving the Union because he realized that Border States and the majority of the population would not support a war fought over abolition of slavery. However, "On September 22, five days after the battle of Antietam, Lincoln called his cabinet into session," to advise them that he would be issuing the Emancipation Proclamation freeing slaves in rebel held territories.[33] The level of death and destruction up to this point in the war conflated with the unimaginable loss at Antietam created a need for the justification of the war to be raised to a higher plain. Much of this shift in Lincoln's perspective and that of the civilian populations came about as a result of the dissemination of photographs depicting the carnage of Antietam, first in newspapers, then in photographic installations at Brady's studio, and then in carte-de-visite and stereographs. The Emancipation Proclamation, in turn, resulted in a shift in the photographic record of African Americans from contraband and servants to noble warriors fit to wear the uniform and willing to fight for the Union. In order for this transition to be accepted by the public, the message transmitted via photography kept pace and often went beyond the written word.

Typical of early photographs of African Americans or "contraband" can be seen in the photograph of *A Black Family Crossing the Union Lines*.[34] The agents within the photograph look destitute, disheveled, and certainly devoid of any possibility of being or becoming productive citizens. They appear to be driving a broken-down, arguably stolen, wagon which is overloaded with individuals and materials. This picture and its caption does not explain their "true" circumstances or whether the individuals were skilled or not, when many former slaves were as skilled as Northern workers in agriculture and domestic services. This family might even appear to be to be a threat to Northern society and countered the predominant eighteenth-century idea of respectability. Based on this photo, only a worker or farmer with a deep sense of altruism would go off and fight to free slaves depicted in this manner.

Another theme prevalent in the early days of the war was of African Americans portrayed as servants, and in the case of *John Henry*,[35] retainers of their liberators in the army. Henry's position as servant to a white man, who was more than likely an officer, maintained the social and class hierarchy of white supremacy. The clothing he wears is torn at the shoulder and crudely repaired. It lacks martial vigor and seems to be of poor quality. As a result of the Emancipation Proclamation (January 1, 1863) these representations of African American decreased, and the ability to project upon African Americans a sense of honor, bequeathed to them through their duty to the Union, became more acceptable. This change allowed for many African Americans to serve the nation in the army and in many respects supported the ideas of racial equality for many. No longer were African America the alterity of American society, and this is reflected in the composition of photographs that were made available to the public.

An example of this shift can be found in the photograph of *Gordon*,[36] which acted as a rallying cry for many abolitionist and Union supporters. "Based on photographs taken in Baton Rouge in April 1863, the image gained notoriety originally as a carte-de-visite, before being published as an engraving in *Harper's Weekly* in a special Fourth of July issue that same year."[37] The ability to quickly produce and disseminate the carte-de-visite enabled the Northern cause for Union and abolition to rapidly spread its message; gaining support for the Emancipation Proclamation and garnering much needed support for the war effort, which was at its nadir. In an article entitled "Typical Negro", *Harper's Weekly* printed a triptych that presumed to show the transition of Gordon from Slave to Union soldier.[38] Although there is considerable skepticism today regarding the authenticity of the photograph or Gordon's rise to become a soldier, the photograph did act as a rallying point for the Union. The transition to a new representation of African Americans served the Union's propaganda needs by expanding a visual narrative that now promulgated the edict of racial harmony in joint sacrifice for the cause, but it must be noted not necessarily racial equality. This shift in public opinion, brought about by political expediency and supported by photographic depictions, allowed the Union to field a larger army and depleted the Confederacy of laborers, which hastened the end of the war.

The image of an African American *Burial Party at Cold Harbor*[39] is a haunting juxtaposition of death and life. The African American crew is collecting the dead remains of Union soldiers, who arguably could have died for the Union as well as for the emancipation of blacks. "Unlike popular notions before the Civil War of the United States as a place where American culture would civilize the world through progressive advances in technology and wealth, the *Burial Party at Cold Harbor* exposed death, wildly uncontrolled and wreaking havoc on the idea that humans at the time had developed a more humane way to live."[40] Lost was any reverence or any ceremony of remembrance surrounding death, the bodies were just tossed upon the stretcher with no regard for the humanity that the corpses once represented. This photograph, by John Reekie,

takes the visual expression of death and destruction, began by Gardner and O'Sullivan at Antietam, to a level that would have been inconceivable regarding public sensibilities concerning martial valor of the war before 1861. This connotative expression of war would justify the total war approach taken by General Grant and Sherman in their bid to conclude a peace as rapidly as possible. Any opposition to destroying the South's will to resist was buried with photographs such as *Burial Party at Cold Harbor.*

The shift in public consciousness became more accepted after 1863, and the photographs of African American men in uniform, carrying weapons, and resisting oppression played a role in this transition. The Emancipation Proclamation and the Militia Act (1862) "empowered the president to enroll 'persons of African descent' for 'any service for which they might be found competent' including service as soldiers."[41] The picture of African American troops[42] taking an aggressive military stance, armed with rifles, aiming presumably at white adversaries would have been just as radical for the North as it was for the South at the outset of hostilities. However, the pictures of the war's devastation and of slaves' horrific abuses at the hands of overseers conditioned the public to accept African American men as soldiers, if not on moral grounds then on practical. From the structure of the buildings and their condition it is not difficult to imagine that these soldiers found themselves in a slave quarters on a plantation. The former slave returning to avenge the misdeeds perpetrated upon their people. A reinforcement of and a final justification for the shift in war aims that would have resonated with Unionist or abolitionist alike.

Conclusion

The Civil War was a political battle fought with modern concepts of mass production and technological advances. Only the subjugation of the South or the bleeding white of the North would have resulted in a termination of hostilities. Historian Gerald F. Linderman states that, "Conceptions initially embraced by society at large- national war aims, attitudes toward the enemy, views regarding the character of fighting-retain vitality for civilians long after the experience of the soldier rendered them remote or even false."[43] Photography played an integral role in changing the public's conceptions of war resulting in closer assimilation of the ideas and justification that soldiers on the front had already determined. Without this change the war would have lasted longer, which might very well have jeopardized the Union's ability to win. General Grant's bloody refusal to retreat despite great loss of life and material, and General Sherman's "March to the Sea" might not have been acceptable to a population trapped in an ideology that perceived warfare as glorious. Without the ability of the camera to show African Americans in service to the Union, public opinion might not have supported the use of black soldiers. This would have deprived the Union of a valuable tool in weakening the Confederacy while strengthening the Union. Photography shaped the political and moral attitudes of Northerners during the Civil War, as its modern counterparts continues to do. The new technologies, which increased production and expanded dissemination, cannot be overlooked. The photographers who mustered their artistic and personal connections with the war caused a change in public opinion that was essential to conducting a total war. Northern society was prepared to embark on this path because of the realism of the destruction, which was transmitted to them via photographs that reshaped their consciousness.

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[1] Eleanor Jones Harvey, *The Civil War and American Art* (Connecticut: Yale University Press, 2012), 18.

[2] Harvey, *Civil War and American Art*, 19.

[3] George Sullivan*, In the Wake of Battle: the Civil War Images of Mathew Brady* (New York: Prestel, 2004), 22.

[4] Sullivan, *In the Wake of Battle*, 22.

[5] Sullivan, *In the Wake of Battle*, 22.

[6] Alan Trachtenberg, *Reading American Photographs: Images as History; Mathew Brady to Walker Evans* (New York: Hill and Wang, 1989), 73.

[7] "Civil War: Glass Negatives and Related Prints," Library of Congress, accessed July 3, 2017, http://www.loc.gov/pictures/collection/cwp/civilwarphotos.html.

[8] "Brady's Photographic Outfit in the Field near Petersburg, Va., 1864," photograph, from "Civil War Photos: Select Audiovisual Records at the National Archives," ed. Sandra Nickles and Joe D. Thomas, National Archives, last modified April 13, 2017, https://www.archives.gov/files/research/military/civil-war/photos/images/civil-war-067.jpg.

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[10] Keith F. Davis, *The Origins of American Photography: From Daguerreotype to Dry Plate 1839-1885* (Connecticut: Yale University Press, 2007), 173.

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[12] Davis, *Origins of American Photography*, 170.

[13] Davis, *Origins of American Photography*, 170.

[14] Emily Godbey, "Terrible Fascination: Civil War Stereographs of the Dead," *History of Photography* 36, no. 3 (August 2012): 267, doi: 10.1080/03087298.2012.672225.

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[16] Davis, *Origins of American Photography*, 172.

[17] Davis, *Origins of American Photography*, 172.

[18] Davis, *Origins of American Photography*, 172.

[19] Sullivan, *In the Wake of Battle*, 7.

[20] Harvey, *Civil War and American Art*, 5.

[21] Harvey, *Civil War and American Art*, 83.

[22] *Pontoon Bridge at Bull Run, Va.,* 1862, photograph, from "Civil War Photos," ed. Nickles and Thomas, https://www.archives.gov/files/research/military/civil-war/photos/images/civil-war-024.jpg.

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