

SILENT WITNESS

— RON FIELD —



THE CIVIL WAR

THROUGH PHOTOGRAPHY AND ITS PHOTOGRAPHERS

SILENT WITNESS

OSPREY
PUBLISHING

DEDICATION

*To my wife, Jane, for her understanding and patience,
helpful advice and steadfast support.*

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RON FIELD

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Battlefield photographer David B. Woodbury holds a full-plate sized piece of photograph glass as he sits by his wagon in a Union army campsite near Cold Harbor, Virginia, in 1864. An assistant for ambrotypist Edward Whitney, at Fairfield, Connecticut, before the Civil War, he was working for Matthew Brady when this photograph was produced. (Library of Congress)

INTRODUCTION

A silent witness to history, the Civil War photographer has left a treasure trove of images providing an invaluable record of the dramatic events that helped to shape the American nation. The albumen prints produced by these intrepid individuals under extraordinarily difficult circumstances on battlefields such as Manassas, Antietam and Gettysburg encapsulate the tragedy of war. In small cased images or in *cartes de visite*, they also preserved the pride, determination and courage of the individual soldier as he left home for the war or struggled with adversity in camp or on campaign. In 1882, veteran cameraman and artist Andrew J. Russell wrote one of the most fitting dedications to the battlefield photographer who left the comfort of the studio and gallery to follow the armies in the field to record victory and defeat:

The memories of our great war come down to us and will pass on to future generations with more accuracy and more truth-telling illustration than that of any previous struggle of ancient or modern times; and the world is indebted to the photographic art and a few enterprising and earnest men, who were not backward in furnishing means, and to a score or less of daring workers – men not afraid of exposure and who could laugh at fatigue and starvation, could face danger in odd shapes, and were at all times ready to march, often between the two armies, in the trenches, on the ramparts, through the swamps and forests, with the advance guard, and back again at headquarters – not a flank movement, but the willing and indefatigable artist at his post of danger and adventure.¹

Although few in number, the likes of George N. Barnard, Alexander Gardner and David B. Woodbury created the first extensive photographic record of war, often arriving in their flimsy wagons within hours of the last shot of the battle being fired. Beyond the battlefield photographers working for Matthew Brady and Edward and Henry T. Anthony, there

existed countless “daguerrean artists,” “ambrotypists,” and “photographists” who operated in small attic galleries in virtually every city and town throughout the Union. A similar situation existed in the Confederacy, but to a lesser extent during the Civil War years as the Union naval blockade increased in efficiency and prevented essential chemicals, paper and other supplies from reaching their destination. Before the war many photographers North and South hit the road during the summer months in “cars,” or wagons, carrying portable dark rooms. Traveling from town to town, they set up their studios wherever there was sufficient custom for their art. When the war began these adventurous entrepreneurial souls took readily to the idea of setting themselves up in cabins and tented galleries in the thousands of military encampments established in 1861.

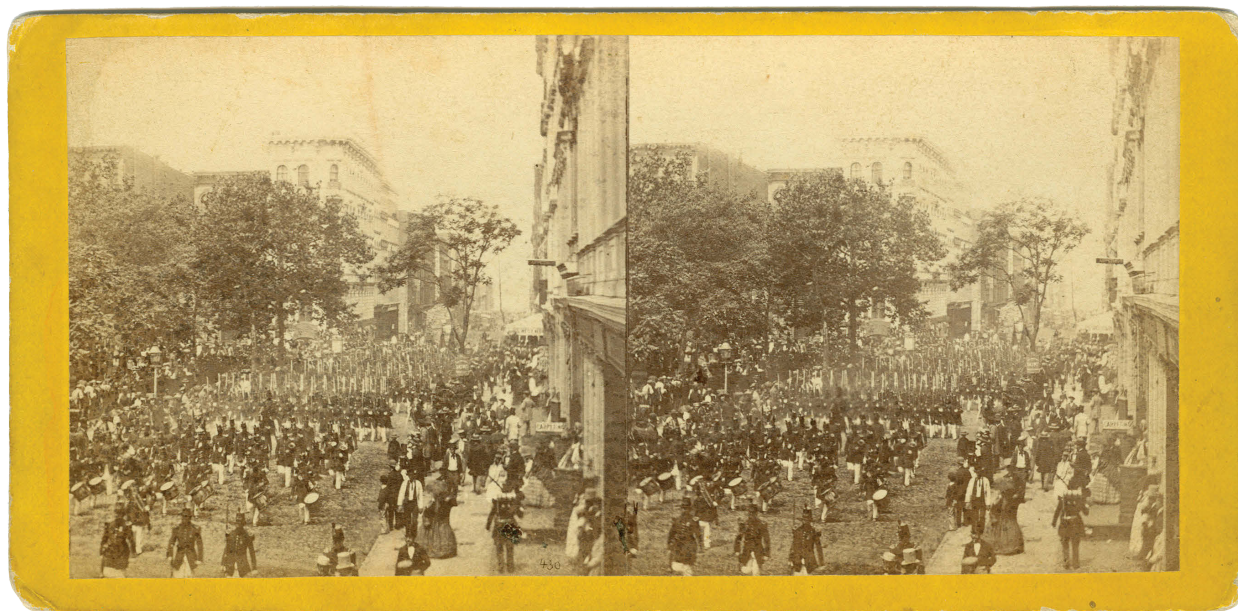
As with the many daguerreotypists of the 1840s and 1850s who were portrait painters and “drawing masters” before they took to photography, so the Civil War photographer was talented in other art forms such as painting, engraving, music, or writing. Andrew Russell painted panoramas as well as flags in 1861. Henry P. Moore was an engraver, fine singer and banjo player, and would entertain the New Hampshire men around the camp fire during his visits to Port Royal, South Carolina, in 1861 and 1862. William D. McPherson was an accomplished flautist and singer and charmed audiences in the Phoenix Hall in Concord, New Hampshire, before the war. No doubt countless other Civil War photographers possessed similar additional talents which have gone unrecorded.

A surprising number of antebellum photographers enlisted in the ranks of either the Union or Confederate armies during the war. This was particularly the case in the South, where a growing shortage of man-power, the threat of the invader on their doorsteps, and a lack of photographic supplies meant that artists such as George S. Cook and C. J. Quinby in South Carolina, Charles R. Rees and Nathaniel Routzahn in Virginia, and Gustave and Bernard Moses in Louisiana volunteered to join the ranks, albeit for a short period of time in most cases. In the North, “enlisting artists” such as William C. Cady of Albany, New York, and William B. Roper of Curlsville, Pennsylvania, tragically did not survive the conflict for very different reasons. The soldier turned photographer also seems to have been more the case in the North, as Captain Andrew Russell began his classic work for the United States Military Railroad in 1862, and Private William Frank Browne became an army photographer in 1863.

Because of the chemicals required for the “art,” photographic galleries were often situated above or near a chemist shop. Some photographers, such as Ira C. Feather, who established a gallery in 1862 at Union-occupied Port Royal on the South Carolina coast, were chemists in their own right. Others often advertised that they prepared their own chemicals, which probably indicated to prospective customers that costs were reduced. Being constantly exposed to dangerous chemicals, photographers and their assistants occasionally suffered as a result. In 1859, Edward T. Whitney was forced to close his gallery in Rochester, New York, having succumbed to cyanide poisoning. The inflammable nature of the chemicals meant photographers’ premises were vulnerable to fire. Indeed in 1856, Anthony’s chemical factory at the Harlem Railroad Depot in New York City was destroyed by fire. On a smaller scale during the Civil War years, a bottle of collodion was accidentally dropped in the chemical room of the gallery owned by Case & Getchell in Boston, Massachusetts, on March 1, 1864, and the fumes caused a fire that seriously burned the face and hands of several operators. The “Photographic Rooms” of the Moore Brothers, in Springfield, Massachusetts, caught fire during the same year, destroying about 15,000 wet-collodion negatives.²

As traveling “artists” set up tented galleries in virtually every Union army camp within months of the beginning of the war, the Federal government saw this as another source of revenue to help pay for the war effort. As a result, by October 1862 all photographers were required to apply for a license to operate their studios within specific brigades, divisions and corps of the army. Hence, even the likes of Matthew Brady and his assistants presumably had to pay for the privilege of having a camera at the headquarters of General Ulysses S. Grant at City Point in 1865. On April 24, 1863, a tax act passed by the Confederate government required all photographers to pay \$50 plus 2½ percent of the gross amount of sales made in a year. However, monies collected must have been small, with few photographers working in the South by that time.³

Out of necessity, some of the more determined photographers operating in the Confederacy, such as W. J. McCormack in Tennessee, were prepared personally to smuggle essential supplies from the North through enemy lines in order to carry on their work. Georgia-based Andrew J. Riddle was twice arrested by the Federal army provost guard for such activity but persisted until successful. In Virginia, Nathaniel Routzahn would probably



A regiment of New York State militia, plus regimental band, march along Chambers Street in Manhattan during the Fourth of July Parade in 1860. Many of the militiamen marching by the stereoscopic camera of the Anthony brothers that day would be defending the Union, and in some cases dying for it, in about ten months' time. (Author's collection)

not have produced the classic images of General Thomas "Stonewall" Jackson in November 1862 had he not "run the blockade" through Northern lines. Photographers in the South caught up in Union occupation manifested differing attitudes toward the invading armies. Known as "the camera-spy of the Confederacy," Andrew D. Lytle photographed the Union encampments and gunboats at Baton Rouge, Louisiana, and is believed to have passed valuable visual intelligence to Confederate authorities. Others, such as Jesse L. Cowling at New Bern, North Carolina, were happy to have Union as opposed to Confederate soldiers in front of their cameras.

The shortage of accurate and up-to-date maps caused the military in both North and South to employ photographers such as George N. Barnard

and Richard S. Sanxay to reproduce multiple copies of maps in various photographic forms for use by field commanders. Similarly, important documents and orders were photographed for widespread distribution, and the reproduction of the “Dahlgren” letter by the latter artist in June 1864 had dire repercussions during the days after the surrender of the Army of Northern Virginia on April 9, 1865.

Much of this story has been painstakingly gleaned from unpublished soldiers’ diaries and letters, plus the newspapers of the day. In particular, the latter is a resource hitherto not fully considered. The thousands of daily and weekly journals often reported, or mentioned briefly, the activities of photographers both North and South. Advertisements in these newspapers provided detail of photographic studios with exotic names such as the “Temple of Fine Art” or “Excelsior Sky-Light Gallery.” Soldiers’ letters submitted for publication in their news columns also occasionally supplied gems of information concerning visits to galleries or the activities of photographers in military camps.

The images created by these intrepid “artists” of the camera, explored in the pages that follow, were produced by four photographic processes: the daguerreotype, ambrotype, melainotype or ferrotype (also known as the tintype), and wet plate collodion glass negative from which positive albumen prints could be made. In order to provide a greater understanding of the challenges and difficulties faced by the Civil War photographer in producing these beautiful time capsules of history, a brief explanation of each process follows.

Named after Frenchman Louis Jacques Mandé Daguerre, and invented by 1839, the daguerreotype was a unique, one-off reversed image produced on a polished sheet of silver-plated copper made light-sensitive by a combination of bromine and chlorine fumes. When exposed to light in the camera, the resulting “latent image” left on the plate was made visible by fuming it with mercury vapor. Any further sensitivity to light was removed by liquid chemical treatment, following which it was rinsed and dried, and sealed behind a protective brass mat and glass cover in a case. A painstaking process, this method was outdated by 1861 due to the widespread introduction of cheaper types of photography, and by the eve of the Civil War photographic artists were more likely to offer to copy old daguerreotypes into *cartes de visite*, ambrotypes or tintypes.⁴ Nonetheless, leading studios such as Matthew Brady’s Gallery in New York City,

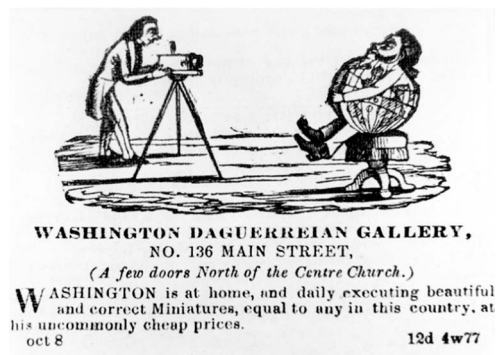


INTRODUCTION

(Left) African American photographer Augustus Washington produced one of the most significant daguerreotypes of the antebellum period. Abolitionist John Brown posed for this image *circa* 1846–47 at the “Washington Daguerreian Gallery” in Hartford, Connecticut. Making an oath to support the cause of abolitionism, Brown was probably told by Washington to raise his left hand instead of his right to compensate for the reversed effect of the daguerreotype process. In his other hand Brown holds what is believed to be the flag of the “Subterranean Pass Way,” which was a 2,000-mile-long secret escape route for slaves also later known as the “Underground Railroad.”

(Smithsonian Institute)

(Below) Published in the *Connecticut Courant* of October 8, 1852, this advertisement for the Gallery operated by Augustus Washington is accompanied an engraving showing “the world” having its picture taken at his studio. (Author’s collection)



Manchester & Brothers in Providence, Rhode Island, and R. L. Wood at Macon, Georgia, still seem to have been offering to produce daguerreotypes as well as other forms of the art.⁵

In 1851, Englishman Frederick Scott Archer invented the wet collodion process that was so essential to the photographic revolution going on during the Civil War period. Collodion consisted of a mixture of gun cotton, alcohol, ether and potassium iodide, which produced a negative image on a glass plate when exposed to the light in a camera. A positive albumen print could then be produced from the negative. Within a few years, collodion could also be used to create a direct positive image on glass, called an ambrotype, or on metal as a tintype.

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Invented in 1851, the ambrotype, also known as a collodion positive in Britain, was named from the Greek for “immortal impression.” Apart from being a cheaper and quicker form of photography, the glass image was in reverse like the daguerreotype, but could be turned the correct way round and made positive by placing it against a backing, either in the form of a black velvet cloth or a black painted metal plate. Some “ambrotypists” applied black

Depicted in this sixth-plate ambrotype on magenta-colored glass, this militiaman wears the elaborate uniform of the Black Hussars. Although Black Hussars existed in Philadelphia, Chicago, and San Francisco before the Civil War, this is the only known image of a member of one of these mounted militia companies. (Author's collection)



paint to the back of the glass, which eliminated this possibility if they did not turn it before the paint was applied. By 1854 ambrotypes could be made using ruby, magenta, blue or dark green colored glass, which eliminated the need for black backing but meant the image could only be viewed in reverse. Making a wet-plate collodion ambrotype required a series of steps from coating to developing that had to be completed within ten minutes before the plate dried.

Ambrotypes first came into use in the US during the early 1850s. In 1854, James Ambrose Cutting of Boston took out three patents relating to the improvement of the process, and may have been responsible for coining the term “ambrotype.” Opening his first gallery in Chelsea, Vermont, in August 1855, future soldier and battlefield photographer William D. McPherson stated that “Cutting’s Ambrotypes” were “Beautiful and Never-Changing Pictures” that worked in “less than one fourth the time of the quickest Daguerreotype process.” However, this new form of photography was slow to replace the daguerreotype. Recalling when he opened a small gallery in Syracuse, New York, in 1857, Jacob F. “Jay” Coonley commented that the ambrotype was still considered fairly “new at that time.”⁶

The melainotype or ferrotype, also known as the tintype, began to supersede the ambrotype during the late 1850s. Invented in 1853 by French academic Dr. Adolphe-Alexandre Martin, the process was patented in the US by Professor Hamilton L. Smith, but not until 1857. Dr. Martin originally used the collodion process to produce a direct positive image on a black varnished, or “japanned,” metal plate as an aid to picture engravers who worked on copper and steel. In collaboration with Peter Neff, Jr., Professor Smith developed the idea further for use in photography and patented it on February 19, 1856. He subsequently awarded the patent to Neff, who manufactured the plates which were called “melainotypes” after the Greek word *melas*, meaning black. A similar idea of producing japanned metal plates for photography was developed by Victor Griswold, who called his plates “ferrotypes,” after the Latin for *ferrum*, meaning iron. Cheaper to produce, the melainotype and ferrotype became very popular during the Civil War period. Unlike ambrotypes, they could not be reversed to produce a positive image, which caused many Civil War soldiers to compensate for this by wearing their equipment on the wrong side. Tintypes were also unbreakable and very light in weight. Thus, thousands of soldiers and sailors were able to send their portraits in this format through the mail to their loved ones at home.

(Right) Photographed on a sixth-plate melainotype plate made by Peter Neff, Jr., this unidentified Pennsylvania militiaman wears an unusual fringed frock coat. Neff worked in galleries in Cincinnati, Ohio, in the mid-1850s, and opened his own studio and factory to make photographic plates in 1856. Civil War-period images on Neff plates are rare as he went out of business in 1860. Impressed on the top edge of this image is “Neff’s Pat 19 Feb 56”. (Author’s collection)

The first practical negative-positive photographic process was invented in 1839 by Englishman William Henry Fox Talbot. Named the talbotype, or calotype, a word derived from the Greek *kalos*, meaning “beautiful,” this process involved treating a sheet of good-quality paper with light-sensitive silver compounds before exposure in a camera. The latent image thus produced was a translucent original negative image from which multiple positive copies called salt prints could be made. But this process produced a very soft photograph compared to the crisp daguerreotype image. Thus portraits could not be made easily with this method.

The albumen print, also called albumen silver print, was invented in January 1847 by Louis Désiré Blanquart-Evrard, and became the first commercially produced photographic print on paper from a glass negative. This process involved floating paper on a mixture of albumen, or egg white, and sodium chloride, or salt. When dry this was floated on silver nitrate, which combined with the chloride to create photographic paper that was placed in contact with the glass plate negative and exposed to sunlight. The resulting image was then fixed in a bath of sodium thiosulfate to prevent darkening. It was then toned with a gold-containing solution to produce a dark, purple-black hue which turned brown over time.

Although it was not possible to use earlier clear glass ambrotypes as negatives from which to produce albumen prints, they could be rephotographed with reflective light against a black background, thereby producing a collodion glass negative from which multiple positive paper copies could be produced. The advent of the glass negatives also made it possible to produce larger and more impressive images. Always at the forefront of new ideas in the photographic art, the well-known Matthew Brady created a high-end portrait format image prized by the elite and known as the “Imperial Photograph” that cost several hundred dollars, a

RELIANT THE PLANK
FOR NEFF'S PAT 19 FEB 56





A dealer in daguerreotype cases before the Civil War, German-born Andrew Wenz, alias Wenc, was photographed in this hand-colored *carte de visite* by an unknown artist before he enlisted for three years in the Marine Artillery, a New York regiment organized for naval service on the North Carolina coast and sometimes called “The Horse Marines.” Hence the unusual uniform he wears in the second *carte* by Philip Rupp, “Photographic Artist” at 13 Avenue A, New York City. (Author’s collection)

tremendous sum in the mid-19th century. Usually measuring 17x20 inches, the most extravagant examples were meticulously colored by artists employed by the photographer.

The *carte de visite* became one of the more popular uses of the albumen method. Although Louis Dodero, of Marseilles, had suggested various uses of *carte*-sized prints, the *carte de visite* was patented in Paris during November 1854 by photographer André Adolphe Eugène Disdéri. Slow to gain widespread use, the *carte de visite* finally achieved mass appeal following the visit of Napoleon III to the studio of Disdéri & Co. at 8 Boulevard des Italiens, Paris, in 1859. Thus began a craze known as “cardomania,” which

spread throughout Europe and then to America and the rest of the world. Disdéri also patented a method of producing eight separate negatives on a single plate, which dramatically reduced production costs. Cut out and mounted on a card backing, millions of *cartes de visite* were bought, sold and traded among families and friends. Albums for their display became a common feature in Civil War parlors and the immense popularity of these photographic cards led in particular to civilians on the home front collecting images of prominent persons, as well as of family and friends, especially those in the military.⁷

The stereograph, or stereoscopic view, was another very popular development in the use of the daguerreotype, ambrotype, and albumen photograph. Invented by Englishman Sir Charles Wheatstone in 1838, this involved using a viewer composed of mirrors to create the illusion of depth in an image by stereopsis or binocular vision in which two offset photographs were shown separately to the left and right eye. When these two-dimensional images were combined in the brain, they gave the perception of three-dimensional depth or 3D. Wheatstone used drawings in his rather bulky viewer as photography had yet to be invented, although his original paper on the subject presented to the British Royal Society, with the rather lengthy title “Contributions to the Physiology of Vision—on Some Remarkable, and Hitherto Unobserved, Phenomena of Binocular Vision,” seems to have foreseen the invention of a more realistic form of stereoscopic view.

In 1849 Scotsman Sir David Brewster made the first portable 3D viewing device incorporating glass lenses, and “Brewster Stereoscopes” were much admired by Queen Victoria when demonstrated to her at the Great Exhibition of 1851. Unable to find a British instrument maker capable of working with his design, Brewster took his stereoscope to France, where it was improved by Jules Duboscq. Patented in the US by Philadelphian John F. Mascher on March 8, 1853, “Mascher’s Improved Stereoscope” incorporated the use of two ordinary lenses set in a supplementary flip-up panel in a photograph case, which allowed two slightly different daguerreotypes of the same subject shot in sequence to be viewed as one 3D image. Later stereoscopic cameras with dual lenses set at approximately the distance between a typical human’s eyes exposed two slightly different negatives that produced a 3D effect when positive albumen prints developed from them were seen in a viewer. In 1861 American writer and poet Oliver Wendell Holmes, Sr., invented a simple handheld wooden stereoscope

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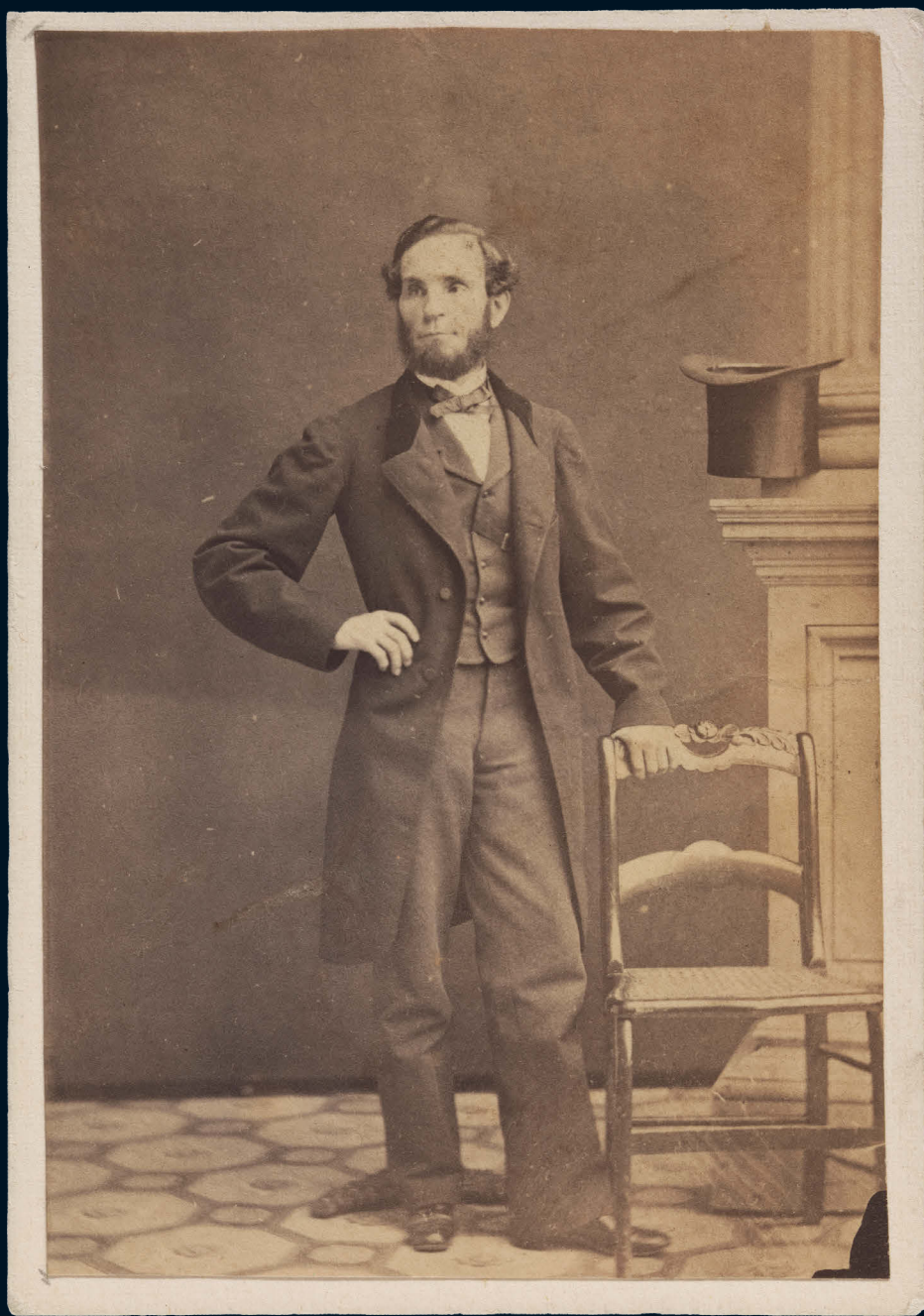
consisting of two prismatic lenses set in an eye-piece with sliding stand to bring the stereo card into focus, which remained in production for nearly a century. By the eve of the Civil War, E & H. T. Anthony, of New York City, were producing “Instantaneous Stereoscopic Views” that, in the words of a company advertisement, were taken in “the fortieth part of a second,” and everything, “no matter how rapidly it may be moving,” was “depicted as sharply and distinctly as if it had been perfectly at rest.”⁸

Thus, as the result of a remarkable period of invention, a host of artistic, enterprising and entrepreneurial individuals were able to provide for the first time in the history of mankind a comprehensive photographic record of war.

Situated at 501 Broadway, in New York City, Anthony’s “Stereoscopic Emporium” was opened in 1860. Visiting this establishment in April of that year, English photographer John Werge exclaimed, “What a wonderful place New York is for photographic galleries! Their number is legion and their size is mammoth ... and the most mammoth of all is the “Store” of Messrs. E. & H. T. Anthony, on Broadway.” Including Anthony, a total of 95 photographers operated studios in New York City during the Civil War years.

(Author’s collection)





Photographed in 1860 by Matthew Brady, Edward Anthony established the "National Daguerreotype Miniature Gallery" in New York City in 1843. He first opened a daguerreotype stock house in 1847, and went into partnership with his brother Henry T. Anthony five years later. During the Civil War he employed artists such as George Barnard, Jacob Coonley, and Thomas Roche, who created some of the most iconic views of the period. (National Portrait Gallery: gift of Larry J. West)

CHAPTER 1

OPENING SHOTS, 1859–61

Many of the tumultuous events leading to civil war in the United States were silently recorded by the cameras of both Northern and Southern photographers from the autumn of 1859 through the early spring of 1861. Following the failed raid on Harper's Ferry in 1859, William Lloyd Garrison, editor of *The Liberator*, pronounced that its leader, the fanatical white abolitionist John Brown, had signaled it was "high noon" for the abolition of slavery, and many thought that civil war seemed inevitable in its wake. At least twelve original photographs of John Brown survive, the last having been produced in May 1859 by John B. Heywood, whose gallery was at 173 Washington Street in Boston. By that time known as "Osawatimie" Brown as a result of a battle with pro-slavery forces in Kansas in 1856, the abolitionist was reluctant to be photographed again. However, he agreed; on the insistence of Dr. Thomas H. Webb, secretary of the New England Emigrant Aid Company, an organization which helped transport immigrants to Kansas to ensure that they entered US territory in a free rather than a slave state. The resulting three-quarter length daguerreotype made by Heywood was probably produced while Brown was in Boston to deliver a fund-raising speech to the Church Anti-Slavery Society at the Tremont Temple on May 24, 1859.¹ In this classic image, the 59-year-old abolitionist has a full beard grown as a disguise after plans for his raid had been disclosed by one of his associates. In this and other earlier photographs, Brown's face shows signs of the mild stroke he probably suffered in the late 1850s, yet his steadfast gaze indicated a determination to carry through his fateful raid on Harper's Ferry.

The Heywood daguerreotype of John Brown was later lost, but not before it was rephotographed as an albumen print in New York City by Martin M. Lawrence, a well-respected New York photographer and

(Right) Produced from a negative made by Martin M. Lawrence from a lost daguerreotype probably taken by Boston photographer John B. Heywood during May 1859, this oval salt print is the only image of John Brown with a beard, and the last photograph of the fanatical abolitionist. Despite Brown's protests, it was produced on the insistence of Dr. Thomas Webb, the secretary of the New England Emigrant Aid Company. About six months after this image was taken, John Brown launched his fateful raid on Harper's Ferry.

The card mount has a blind stamp at the bottom right corner stating "Lawrence's Photographs/381/Broadway/Cor. White St./New York." (Library of Congress)



Your Friend
John Brown



president of the American Daguerre Association. Copied possibly at the behest of the subject himself, it has a short inscription on a separate label pasted to the card mount stating "Your Friend John Brown." Thus the iconic view of a full-bearded John Brown was preserved for posterity about six months before he led the fateful raid into Harper's Ferry. After his execution he was martyred in Northern minds; thousands of albumen prints and vignetted reproductions of the same were sold for one dollar as a benefit to Brown's young widow, Mary Brown.

Brown's plan to end slavery had involved arming a small force with the most up-to-date weaponry in order to spark off a rebellion among the nearly four million slaves in the Southern States. Crossing the Potomac River from Maryland into Virginia on October 16, 1859, with a small band of followers consisting of 16 whites and 5 blacks, he captured the US arsenal, Hall's Rifle Works and the fire-engine-house at Harper's Ferry. He also took hostages, including Colonel Lewis Washington, a local slave-owner and great-grandnephew of George Washington, and held them to ransom. According to John Brown, each could be exchanged for a freed slave, but the captives refused, and the expected slave rebellion failed to take place.

With the alarm raised, local militia and armed citizenry drove the raiders from their separate strongholds and surrounded them in the engine-house. Meanwhile, having received news of the insurrection via telegraph, President James Buchanan sent a detachment of US Marines under Lieutenant Colonel Robert E. Lee, 2nd US Cavalry, to Harper's Ferry to quell the insurrection. Faced with a refusal to surrender, Lee ordered his men to batter down the engine-house door, after which Brown and other survivors were captured. During the two-day siege, John Brown received nine wounds, whilst ten of his followers were killed, including one of his sons. Seven of the assailants died. Also present during the siege as an aide to Colonel Lee was future cavalry commander in the Confederate Army of Northern Virginia, J. E. B. Stuart of the 1st US Cavalry.

The surviving insurrectionists were handed over to the Virginia state authorities and charged with treason, insurrection, and murder. During their week-long trial at Charles Town, county seat of Jefferson County, which began just 10 days after the raid, Brown conducted himself with dignity from the cot on which he lay in the court room nursing his wounds. Found guilty, he was hanged on December 2, 1859, whilst

surviving followers were similarly executed by the end of that month. Actor John Wilkes Booth was present at the execution of Brown within the ranks of the Richmond Greys, one of the militia companies sent to police the proceedings. An ardent supporter of slavery, Booth was to assassinate Abraham Lincoln as a last act of vengeance at the end of the Civil War in 1865.

Although Governor Henry A. Wise banned photographs of John Brown or his followers, and prevented photographers from entering the vicinity of Charles Town during the trial and execution, five images of the Virginia militia on duty during the trial have survived, all of which are believed to have been taken by local part-time photographer and clerk Lewis Dingle, who operated a combined “Mercantile and Daguerreotype” establishment in the township. On November 21, 1859, a correspondent of the *Baltimore American*, of Maryland, wrote that he observed a group of militiamen “in the street, in front of a daguerreotype wagon, three lying on the ground and three others in a standing position, who were having their pictures taken to send to their families and friends ... in the event of their not being able to return to them until after the close of the war.”² The cameraman involved is believed to have been Lewis Dingle, and the soldiery photographed consisted of enlisted men of the Richmond Greys and Virginia Rifles of the 1st Regiment of Virginia Volunteers. The remark about war indicates that the correspondent, like many others, believed the trial and forthcoming execution of John Brown and his associates would lead to civil war.

Based on a thorough examination of three of the images believed to have been produced by Dingle, one of the men in the group photographed bears a striking resemblance to John Wilkes Booth. A well-known and successful actor in both North and South, Booth was drawn by the drama unfolding since the failure of the John Brown Raid and, having friends in the Richmond Greys, borrowed a uniform and joined their ranks as they left Richmond on a special train for Charles Town on November 19. According to his sister, Asia Booth Clarke, who claimed that she later saw a photograph of her brother in the uniform of the Richmond Greys at Charles Town, he “left Richmond and unsought enrolled himself as one of the party going to search for and capture John Brown. He was exposed to dangers and hardships; he was a scout and I have been shown a picture of himself and others in their scout and sentinel dresses.”³



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(Top) Born near Charles Town in 1840, James M. Trussell was one of thousands of Virginians who joined the militia in response to the threat posed by the John Brown Raid. Enlisting in the Letcher Riflemen of Jefferson County, he was mustered into state service as a member of Co. H, 2nd Virginia Infantry at Harper's Ferry on May 12, 1861. The 2nd Virginia was one of the five regiments forming the famed "Stonewall Brigade," which turned the tide at First Manassas on July 21, 1861. Wounded during that battle and sustaining a broken leg, Trussell never fully recovered and was listed as "absent, sick" on November 15, 1861. (Author's collection)

(Bottom left) A daguerreotypist in Charles Town, Virginia, Lewis Dingle probably produced this sixth-plate ambrotype of a group of Virginia militiamen gathered outside the Jefferson County Jail on November 21, 1859. The man brandishing a knife at top left bears a striking resemblance to John Wilkes Booth, future assassin of Abraham Lincoln, who joined the ranks of the Richmond Greys as they left via railroad for Charles Town to police the trial and execution of John Brown on November 19, 1859. Those positively identified in the image are Aylett Reins Woodson, kneeling second from left; Albert Hartley Robins, kneeling at right; and Julian Alluisi, of the Virginia Rifles, standing second from right. (Virginia Historical Society)

(Bottom right) Published in the "Charleston Business Directory" in 1860, this advertisement shows the varied types of images produced by photographers Osborn & Durbec at their Photographic Mart at "the place in the bend" on King Street in Charleston, South Carolina. (Author's collection)

Although the John Brown Raid had failed, its effect on relations between the Northern and Southern states was catastrophic. Throughout the South, slave-owners were horrified at the perceived prospect of servile insurrection. Thousands of new military companies were organized, whilst older ones with previously thinning ranks received a fresh influx of volunteers. Many in the South believed that so-called Black Republicans were behind the Raid. Despite Republican disclaimers, many Southerners were convinced that if they won the 1860 presidential election, the Republic Party would abolish slavery. Hence, Southern extremists believed the only course of action left in this eventuality would be secession.

Following news of the election on November 6, 1860, of Abraham Lincoln as the 16th President of the United States of America, the secession movement was further spurred into action. On December 20,