

“When This You See, Remember Me”:
Visual Culture and Civil War Soldiers’ Views of Permanence

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Thesis submitted to the faculty of the Virginia Polytechnic Institute and State University in
partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of

Master of Arts
In
History

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May 3, 2018
Blacksburg, Virginia

Keywords: American Civil War; Visual Culture; Mortality; Permanence; Religion;
Memorialization; Photography; Graffiti; Drawings

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ABSTRACT

The massive mortality rates of the American Civil War challenged mid-nineteenth century Americans’ understandings and relationship with death. Faced with inadequate methods of individual identification and record-keeping that were unable to keep up with the overwhelming mobilization of both men and resources that the war demanded, many soldiers simply disappeared or were buried under a stone marked “unknown.” Even soldiers who kept their names died far from home, away from family, in a manner that challenged nineteenth century traditions of death. These factors caused many soldiers to seek some manner of permanence to ensure that their name would not be forgotten following death. This project examines the ways in which soldiers used visual culture, particularly graffiti, drawings, and studio photographs, to find permanence amidst the destruction and death of war.

By looking at the subjects of and the ways that soldiers used the visual culture they created, this thesis seeks to understand the value of visual culture as both an outlet for soldiers of the Civil War and as an invaluable source for historical research today. This project first explores the role of religion as both a subject of and an influence on visual culture. It then moves on to examine how soldiers used visual culture as a means finding permanence, including as a means of claiming a place in and piece of the war and as a form of memorialization. By examining the power of visual culture for finding permanence, this project provides insight into the ways in which soldiers sought to remember each other and their own experiences while also adding to the human conversation on mortality.

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GENERAL AUDIENCE ABSTRACT

The American Civil War brought an unprecedented amount of death and destruction that left the military largely unable to keep up with the many dead and wounded. Overwhelmed by the logistical realities of war, many soldiers died unknown, far from home. As a result, many soldiers sought some means of permanence in the face of death. This thesis examines the visual culture, particularly the graffiti, drawings, and studio photography that soldiers created and the ways in which those pieces of visual culture reflect soldiers’ views of death and permanence. It begins by examining the “what” of visual culture, examining the place of religion as a subject and an influence on soldiers’ visual culture. It then studies the “how” by studying the ways in which soldiers used their visual culture to claim their place in the war and to remember each other and themselves in the event of death.

Acknowledgements

I would like to thank my thesis committee for all their assistance in this project. Thank you to Bailey Van Hook and Kurt Luther for agreeing to advise someone outside of their departments and walking to Major Williams Room 427 more than once for the various stages of this process. I would also like to thank Melanie Kiechle for hours of support, listening to my ideas and helping me think about my research in creative ways. Finally, I want to thank Paul Quigley, my committee chair, for not only assisting me with thesis research and spending hours reading and editing my work, but also for listening to my concerns across all aspects of my life.

My research would not have been possible without the incredible extent of the digitized collections of the Library of Congress, particularly the Adolph Metzner Civil War Collection and the Liljenquist Family Collection of Civil War Photographs. After working in archives for four years, I have learned how time consuming and frustrating digitization can be. The extensive work that the staff of the Library of Congress has done in making these collections available is amazing and made a large part of this research possible.

Finally, I would to thank Ellen Boggs, Emily Harmon, Grace Hemmingson, and Heather Ryan for all the conversations, Zaxby's trips, and companionship. They are all wonderful friends and historians and I am so glad I got to be the fifth person in such a tiny but strong cohort. Thanks also to my undergraduate advisor, Jonathan White, for his support even following my graduation. I would also like to thank my dad, Ken Brown, for his advice and support and for inspiring my love for the Civil War in the first place. And finally, thank you to Max Schneider for supporting and even joining me in my geeky love for the Civil War. I could not have done any of this without his constant patience and support through out all the long nights and countless Starbucks dates.

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INTRODUCTION

In June of 2017, as I was writing this thesis, the hip-hop artist Macklemore released a song titled *Glorious*. As well as having a catchy beat, the song captured my attention with one line: “I heard you die twice, once when they bury you in the grave/ And the second time is the last time that somebody mentions your name.”¹ I was struck by this line because it is one of many places where a fear of not only death, but also being forgotten, is expressed throughout popular culture today, and one of countless places where such fears are recorded throughout history. While hip-hop and Macklemore are new, the fear of disappearing is not, and this song lyric is only one among many means of creative expression of an age-old human emotion, one that I explore in depth in this thesis.

Over 150 years before Macklemore released *Glorious*, America erupted in civil war. Following the first shots of the American Civil War at Fort Sumter in April of 1861, tens of thousands of men drew together from across the country to volunteer for a war that would become far bloodier and world-changing than many imagined. The Civil War served as a major turning point in terms of wartime technology and tactics, a change that was most tangibly embodied in the rise of modern weaponry, such as the rifled cannons and muskets. The effects of the war were also visible in the sheer number of men who mobilized throughout the country, with a total of around three million men participating.² As the war wore on, this combination of more accurate and deadly technologies and the massing of armies resulted in a frightening rise of the mortality rate that was unprecedented in American history. As historian Drew Gilpin Faust

¹ Macklemore, featuring Skylar Grey, “Glorious,” Rec. 2017, *GEMINI*, Macklemore Studios, 2017, *Genius*.

² Earl J. Hess, *Civil War Infantry Tactics: Training, Combat, and Small-Unit Effectiveness* (Baton Rouge: Louisiana State University Press, 2015), 239.

writes, the Civil War saw Americans enter “a new relationship with death,” one where mass casualties were commonplace.³

In response to this unprecedented rate of death, some soldiers felt driven to assert their existence by attempting to seek some semblance of permanence. The creation of visual culture—physical images or objects that reflect a society’s culture—provided one method of finding permanence and serving as physical proof of individual soldiers’ service, life, and death. In this study, I focus on soldiers’ graffiti, photography, and drawings, arguing that these pieces of visual culture reveal some soldiers’ thoughts on mortality and methods of finding permanence in the face of overwhelming death and destruction created by the Civil War. These objects are rich resources with which to understand how those who lived through the war saw and understood it as it happened, providing insight into soldiers’ emotions and humanity in a way that few other resources can match. These sources also fill gaps in the textual sources almost entirely relied upon by historians. Even as the prevailing model of masculinity of the mid-nineteenth century prevented soldiers from openly admitting a fear of death, this same fear of death appears in the visual culture that these same soldiers created.⁴ In this way, visual culture has the potential to add another layer to subjects that are traditionally studied using only textual sources.

As Vanessa R. Schwartz and Jeannene M. Przyblyski demonstrate in their book *The Nineteenth-Century Visual Culture Reader*, visual culture itself can also stand as a powerful source base for historical study, particularly in the nineteenth century.⁵ Schwartz and Przyblyski

³ Drew Gilpin Faust, “The Civil War Soldier and the Art of Dying,” *The Journal of Southern History* 67, no. 1 (Feb. 2001): 3.

⁴ James M. McPherson, *For Cause and Comrades: Why Men Fought in the Civil War* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1997), 36.

⁵ Jeannene M. Przyblyski and Vanessa R. Schwartz, eds. *The Nineteenth Century Visual Culture Reader* (New York: Routledge, 2004). The practice of using drawings as a historical source can be seen in Ross M. Kimmel and Michael P. Musick, *‘I am Busy Drawing Pictures’: The Civil War Art and Letters of Private John Jacob Ommenhausser* (Annapolis: Maryland State Archives, 2014); Getty Foundation, Anthony W. Lee, and Elizabeth Young, *On Alexander Gardner’s Photographic Sketchbook of the Civil War* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2007);

argue that visual culture is an important subject of historical study because of the “consciousness of vision and visibility” of the time, in short saying that because people of the period valued visual objects, they provide unique insight into their lives and society.⁶ This importance of visual culture to people of the Civil War-era can be seen in the value soldiers placed on its creation. This value can be understood, at least partially, through the cost of these visual objects, whether in the form of discomfort, money, or time. As a form of visual culture that made the physical body part of its creation, photography required the investment of some measure of discomfort. Studio photographs required the subject to remain still as the photograph developed for a few seconds, a process that was highly uncomfortable despite being much shorter than the full minute of posing that early photography required. Alongside any discomfort posing could create, the photograph also required an investment of money that could otherwise be used by the soldier himself or by his family at home. As one Confederate prisoner of war who was imprisoned in Ohio for two years wrote about his and other prisoners’ determination to get their photographs taken: “I determined I shall not leave this dreary old isle without expending the enormous sum of fifty cents upon a photograph which I shall send to one of the warmest friends I have on earth.”⁷ The fact that many soldiers paid to have their photograph taken despite the relatively low disposable income, or even complete lack of income as in this soldier’s case, reveals a desire to find permanence amidst the overwhelming death and destruction of the war.

Judith Bookbinder and Sheila Gallagher, *First Hand Civil War Era Drawings from the Becker Collection* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2009). Other books use art for a similar purpose, including Kirk Savage, ed. *The Civil War in Art and Memory* (Washington, DC: National Gallery of Art, 2016); Harold Holzer and Mark E. Neely, *Mine Eyes Have Seen the Glory: The Civil War in Art* (New York: Orion Books, 1993); Eleanor Jones Harvey, *The Civil War and American Art* (Washington, DC: Smithsonian American Art Museum, 2012).

⁶ Przyblyski and Schwartz, *The Nineteenth-century Visual Culture Reader*, xxii.

⁷ John Dooley, *John Dooley, Confederate Soldier His War Journal*, ed. Joseph T. Durkin (Tuscaloosa: University of Alabama Press, 2005), 166.

The creation of visual culture also took time, which was also a cost not all soldiers could afford. Heyward Emmell of the 7th New Jersey Volunteers recorded the time-consuming process that soldiers faced in getting their photographs taken in his diary, writing “I had my likeness taken this morning to send home. It was quite a job to get one then as we had to stand in line & take our turns; it was noon by the time I got my chance.”⁸ The investment of time can also be seen in drawings, which vary from rough sketches to highly detailed, carefully drawn panoramas. As with graffiti, the amount of time that a soldier spent on a particular drawing can be seen in the drawing itself. Images of battles are typically rougher than images of camp due to the increased danger in spending time transferring a moment to paper. One prolific artist-turned-soldier, Adolph Metzner of the 32nd Indiana, has a range of drawings that reflect the time invested in this way. While his images of generals’ headquarters were clearly carefully drafted, a scene of a team of horses lost during the battle at Chickamauga is far less careful and carries the emotion and panic of the moment. In this case, the time spent sketching reveals how much a soldier was willing to risk in drawing that scene, a measure that can be directly translated into value.

⁸ Heyward Emmell, *The Civil War Journal of Private Heyward Emmell, Ambulance and Infantry Corps: A Very Disagreeable War*, ed. Jim Malcolm (Plymouth, UK: Farleigh Dickinson University Press, 2011), 51.



Figure 1: Adolph Metzner, *Lost on the Field of Chickamauga*, 1863, Library of Congress. Drawings reflect that amount of time the artist invested in their creation. This rushed feeling of this drawing reveals the emotion and panic Metzner felt during its creation.

In such cases, the value of the materials themselves also come to reflect some element of meaning. Unable to find a reliable source of paper while on the battlefield, Adolph Metzner scavenged for pieces of cardboard and mixed a range of natural dyes in order to draw his surroundings.⁹ Other soldiers used money that could otherwise have been spent at home to track down drawing materials. The creation of such drawings also replaced letter-writing, sleeping, eating, or other activities. The detail that such drawings contain give an idea as to how much time was spent on its creation rather than other activities and reflect what was on that particular soldiers' mind at a particular moment.

⁹ Michael A. Peake, *Blood Shed in this War: Civil War Illustrations by Captain Adolph Metzner, 32nd Indiana* (Indianapolis: Indiana Historical Society, 2010), 2.

Similarly, the cost of graffiti becomes extremely important when considering the situation in which much of it was created. Most of the remaining graffiti made by Civil War-era soldiers can be found in buildings that served as hospitals. One of the most famous sites of wartime graffiti in Brandy Station, Virginia served as a field hospital during and after the cavalry Battle of Brandy Station. As a result, many of the pieces on the walls were created by soldiers directly facing their own mortality. The value of visual culture in providing permanence for soldiers as they faced their own mortality can be seen clearly in the two wills that were scratched by wounded soldiers onto the walls of Ben Lomond, a house that served as a Civil War hospital during the First and Second Battles of Bull Run.¹⁰ In this setting, time was a commodity and the soldiers' decisions to carve their names, drawings, or even wills, rather than write letters home or otherwise spend the time, reveals an interest in establishing permanence and meaning to their or another's service and life in a place where it was sure to be found.

The value that soldiers attributed to the visual culture they created came in a number of forms, particularly emotional value and "soul" value, a concept introduced by economic historian Daina Ramey Berry's book *The Price for Their Pound of Flesh*. As Berry argues, typically economics assumes that "value" refers to the amount of money a good or service can be traded for on the market; however, the historic study of humans requires another term altogether. As a result, Berry introduces the idea of soul value, or an "intangible marker that often defied monetization yet spoke to the spirit and soul of who they were as human beings."¹¹ Unlike Berry, I will not be using this idea to understand how humans valued themselves; instead, I use the idea of soul value to explore how humans valued the items of visual culture they created. Like

¹⁰ "Ben Lomond" (National Register of Historic Places Inventory—Nomination Form, United States Department of the Interior, Washington, D.C., 1980), Section 8.

¹¹ Daina Ramey Berry, *The Price for Their Pound of Flesh: The Value of the Enslaved from Womb to Grave, in the Building of a Nation* (Boston: Beacon Press, 2017), 6.

emotional value, soul value cannot be monetized but is a crucial factor towards understanding the meaning that soldiers assigned to these objects. This value associated with graffiti, photography, and drawings provides insight into why creation was so important for soldiers and why these men turned to visual culture as a means of finding permanence in the face of death.

While all three types of visual culture reveal the value that soldiers placed in creation before death, each shows that value in a different way. This project uses the unique strengths and perspectives provided by each type of visual culture to analyze the physical pieces that soldiers left behind to understand their attitudes towards and understandings of death and mortality. Both historians Drew Gilpin Faust and Mark S. Schantz examine American understandings and traditions of death at the time of the Civil War. For mid-nineteenth century Americans, death was defined by the tradition of the “Good Death,” which defined death as an important religious event that should occur at home.¹² In *This Republic of Suffering: Death and the American Civil War*, Faust argues that the war challenged the tradition of the Good Death, forcing soldiers and their families to find alternative methods of fulfilling the requirements of “dying well.”¹³ Schantz builds on a similar idea in *Awaiting the Heavenly Country: The Civil War and America’s Culture of Death*, focusing on antebellum presentations of death and its prevalence as a topic in society, including how the theme of death appears in visual culture, such as newspapers and other published materials from the time.¹⁴ As both Faust and Schantz demonstrate, death and the traditions surrounding death played crucial roles in soldiers’ lives. These themes then became important elements of the visual culture they created by both

¹² Drew Gilpin Faust, *This Republic of Suffering: Death and the American Civil War* (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 2008), 6.

¹³ *Ibid.*, 7.

¹⁴ Mark S. Schantz, *Awaiting the Heavenly Country: The Civil War and America’s Culture of Death* (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 2008).

influencing and serving as the subject of the pieces. Visual culture provided both a means of following Good Death expectations and a means of coming to terms with the horror of death and complete lack of Good Death tradition on the battlefield.

Faust and Schantz's work on death in the Civil War-era provides the foundation for understanding why soldiers sought permanence and what they believed that permanence should look like. Across my three chapters, I use three different lenses with which to understand the ways in which visual culture offered permanence to soldiers afraid of death and being forgotten. One of the central themes is the presence and importance of religion within soldiers' views of death. Religion played a crucial part in shaping both traditions of death, such as the Good Death, and the ways in which soldiers sought to use visual culture as a means of finding permanence. As historian George C. Rable argued in *God's Almost Chosen Peoples: A Religious History of the American Civil War*, the closeness of death on the battlefield served as one of the most defining elements of wartime religion, with countless chaplains insisting that "one must always be prepared for death."¹⁵ This prevalence of death made religion both a social force and a personal journey for Civil War soldiers, a journey that appears in much of the visual culture of the time period. My first chapter explores the place of religion in soldiers' visual culture more completely, arguing that religion's promise of permanence for the soul made it a powerful theme in Civil War soldiers' visual culture.

Visual culture is an important window through which to look at religious belief in the Civil War because images have always had a strong connection to religion. As Sally M. Promey

¹⁵ George C. Rable, *God's Almost Chosen Peoples: A Religious History of the American Civil War* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2010), 166. For more on religion in the Civil War, see Randall M. Miller, Harry S. Stout, and Charles Reagan Wilson, eds. *Religion and the American Civil War* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1998); Steven E. Woodworth, *While God is Marching On: The Religious World of Civil War Soldiers* (Lawrence: University Press of Kansas, 2001). For a look at the broader ideological conflicts of religion and the war, see Mark A. Noll, *The Civil War as a Theological Crisis* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2006).

and David Morgan wrote in the introduction to *The Visual Culture of American Religions*, images have historically held religious power in their perceived ability to “communicate between human and divine realms.”¹⁶ Images have long become the objects of religious feeling, but they have also been shaped and influenced by religious devotion, as well. The pieces of visual culture studied here are less a means of communication between God and man and more artifacts of religious belief. The visual culture examined here is powerful in that it stands as a record of the religious influences and sentiments of a moment in history as the soldiers themselves experienced it.

In addition to the place of religion in both Civil War-era society and soldiers’ visual culture creations, this thesis also explores the motivations behind creation. My second chapter examines the ways that soldiers used visual culture to claim the war and assert their participation in the conflict and its outcomes. This chapter looks at the way that soldiers linked physical space and experience, whether by physically writing their name onto the space or drawing the area as they saw it. The act of having a photograph taken while wearing a uniform served to prove one’s place within the war while also immortalizing soldiers’ assertions of identity, masculinity, and service. Masculinity played a particularly important role in the ways in which soldiers chose to claim their place in the war and therefore in the visual culture soldiers created, particularly in the photographs they had taken. As historian Reid Mitchell wrote in his essay “Soldering, Manhood, and Coming of Age: A Northern Volunteer,” mid-nineteenth century definitions of masculinity made going to war an important event in asserting masculinity, where “the very ideas of man, soldier and citizen were inextricably linked...going to war [was] a proof of manhood.”¹⁷ These

¹⁶ David Morgan and Sally M. Promey, eds. *The Visual Culture of American Religions* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2001), 3.

¹⁷ Reid Mitchell, “Soldiering, Manhood, and Coming of Age: A Northern Volunteer,” in *Divided Houses: Gender and the Civil War*, ed. Catherine Clinton and Nina Silber (New York: Oxford University Press, 1992), 44. For more

photographs of soldiers in uniform also provide insight into soldiers' understandings of their masculine duties as a member and provider in a family, where soldierhood was seen as an extension of the masculine responsibility to protect home and hearth.¹⁸ In these and other ways, visual culture provided the means for soldiers to demonstrate their place in the war and therefore permanence and legacies in the outcomes and long-term legacies of the war itself.

The final chapter examines the ways in which visual culture was used as a means of memorialization. While scholars generally assume that memorialization is a process started by others for individuals who no longer have any say over how they are remembered, soldiers were able to exert some form of control over the memorialization of others through the visual culture they created. Alongside creating visual culture in the interest of memorializing fellow soldiers, some soldiers used visual culture to shape the methods by which others would memorialize the creator upon their death. This process of memorialization through visual culture was also influenced heavily by the Good Death tradition, particularly as soldiers sought to immortalize themselves to be remembered in ways compliant with Good Death ideals. This combination of religion, memory, and the Good Death granted soldiers permanence not only in their religious beliefs, as referenced in Chapter I, but also through the memory and meaning that their families then attributed the visual culture that they had left behind.

This analysis of religion and memorialization together challenges the way that most scholars of Civil War memorialization have approached the topic. In *Remembering the Civil War: Reunion and the Limits of Reconciliation* and *Race and Reunion: The Civil War in*

on the relationship between masculinity and military service, see David W. Blight, "No Desperate Hero: Manhood and Freedom in a Union Soldier's Experience," in *Divided Houses: Gender and the Civil War*, ed. Catharine Clinton and Nina Silber (New York: Oxford University Press, 1992); Stephen W. Berry II, *All that Makes a Man: Love and Ambition in the Civil War South* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2003); Lorien Foote, *The Gentlemen and the Roughs: Manhood, Honor, and Violence in the Union Army* (New York: New York University Press, 2002).

¹⁸ *Ibid.*, 50.

American Memory, Caroline E. Janney and David W. Blight advance contrasting interpretations about reconciliation; however, they share a similar conception of memorialization after the war, discussing it as a “new religion of nationhood” and martyrdom that white Americans, particularly white Southerners, subscribed to as they sought to reunite their broken country.¹⁹ This work challenges these assumptions that memorialization occurred only after the war was over and in a secular way. Instead, I argue that religion, and particularly the Good Death tradition, played a crucial part of the ways in which soldiers wanted themselves to be remembered and the way they sought to remember others during the war.

Alongside challenging the current conversation about memorialization, this thesis also seeks to address a gap in what and how scholars have written about the Civil War. The historiography on death in the Civil War is limited, and no one has used nontraditional sources, such as visual culture, to analyze the question of how soldiers came to terms with their own mortality. Visual culture has largely been treated separately, with books dedicated to studying just photography or just drawings. There has been a recent rise in books on photography, partially because of the recent sesquicentennial and as a result of scholars’ realization of the power of photography as a historical source. As historian Alan Trachtenberg wrote in *Reading American Photographs: Images as History*, photography provides insight into “what certain artists have had to say about their society.”²⁰ Jeff Rosenheim, Curator in Charge of the Metropolitan Museum of Art, wrote *Photography and the American Civil War* with a similar

¹⁹ David W. Blight, *Race and Reunion: The Civil War in American Memory* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2001), 221; Caroline E. Janney, *Remembering the Civil War: Reunion and the Limits of Reconciliation* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2013).

²⁰ Alan Trachtenberg, *Reading American Photographs: Images as History* (New York: Hill and Wang, 1989), xiii. Alan Trachtenberg comments on the relevance of photography to the larger nineteenth century in his book Amon Carter Museum of Western Art, Martha A. Sandweiss, and Alan Trachtenberg, eds. *Photography in Nineteenth-Century America* (Forth Worth, TX: Amon Carter Museum of American Art, 1991). The study of photography is largely based in the work of Susan Sontag, which can be found in Susan Sontag, *On Photography* (New York: Farrar, Straus, and Giroux, 1977).

intent, arguing that photography had a profound cultural impact during the war by shaping the national conversation and “collective memory making” of the war.²¹ This rising interest in photography has led to a number of books on Civil War photography designed for a popular audience, including books published by academic presses, art museums, magazines, and independent or personal publishers alike. Yet, as historians Gary Gallagher and J. Matthew Gallman point out in the introduction to *Lens of War: Exploring Iconic Photographs of the Civil War*, “People who study the Civil War era spend an enormous amount of energy thinking about and talking about photographs. Yet, we seldom take the photograph as our subject.”²² This is one of the few historical projects that does not look at the photograph as simply a companion with which to illustrate a larger narrative of the war; instead, I take these photographs as historical sources that have their own stories to tell.²³

This work also increases the visibility of the “ordinary” individual in the Civil War literature, a field that is becoming more and more popular; however, none of these works use

²¹ Jeff L. Rosenheim, *Photography and the American Civil War* (New York: Metropolitan Museum of Art, in association with Yale University Press, 2013), 1. See also the exhibition overview from the Metropolitan Museum of Art: *Photography and the American Civil War*, exhibition at the Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York, New York, April 2 through September 2, 2013, <https://www.metmuseum.org/exhibitions/objects?exhibitionId=9400f95d-89a4-4920-a05e-46ee3cedc9c0>. The Smithsonian American Art Museum also held a similar exhibition during this time which included 18 Civil War photographs: *The Civil War and American Art*, exhibition at the Smithsonian American Art Museum, Washington, DC, November 16, 2012 through April 27, 2013, <https://americanart.si.edu/exhibitions/civil-war>.

²² Gary W. Gallagher and J. Matthew Gallman, introduction to *Lens of War: Exploring Iconic Photographs of the Civil War*, ed. Gary W. Gallagher and J. Matthew Gallman (Athens: University of Georgia Press, 2015), 2.

²³ For more on Civil War-era photography see Smithsonian Institution, *The Civil War: A Visual History* (London: DK, 2011); Ron Field, *Silent Witness: The Civil War through Photography and its Photographers* (Oxford: Osprey Publishing, 2017); Bob Zeller, *The Blue and Gray in Black and White: A History of Civil War Photography* (Westport, CT: Praeger, 2005). The sesquicentennial also sparked an interest in Civil War photographers, including Theodore P. Savas, *Brady's Civil War Journal: Photographing the War, 1861-85* (New York: Skyhorse Publishing, 2012); Robert Wilson, *Mathew Brady: Portraits of a Nation* (New York: Bloomsbury Publishing, 2013). This project focuses on ambrotypes and carte-de-visites, the popular forms of studio photography during the period of study. For more on earlier forms of photography in America, see John Wood, ed. *America and the Daguerreotype* (Iowa City: University of Iowa Press, 1999); Mazie M. Harris, *Paper Promises: Early American Photography* (Los Angeles, CA: The J. Paul Getty Museum, 2018).

visual culture as a lens through which to understand soldiers' sense of individuality, either.²⁴

This project will add to this conversation by demonstrating how the war impacted soldiers' views of mortality and permanence, while also increasing the range of sources that scholars traditionally use in their analysis of the war. Graffiti has only recently become of interest to historians, with a majority of the work existing in the form of non-scholarly articles and theses or dissertations. However, graffiti deserves as much attention as photography because, as journalist Kim A. O'Connell argued in an article "American Graffiti" in the *Civil War Times*, "graffiti reflects an immediacy" and the thoughts of a man in one moment of time that otherwise may have been lost.²⁵ O'Connell's article sums up the recent interest of scholars in Civil War graffiti, including scholars such as Christopher B. Brown, who wrote in his Master's thesis at the University of Maryland to collect and interpret examples of graffiti from seven Civil War sites. Like Brown's thesis, this project seeks to illustrate the power of graffiti in granting soldiers permanence by, as Brown wrote, allowing them "to leave a part of their self behind."²⁶

Visual culture offers a massive and important source base for historical study that is currently not being fully utilized. Even essays such as Shawn Michelle Smith's "Photographic Remains: Sally Mann at Antietam" and Joshua Brown's "Our sketches are real, not mere

²⁴ While much of the literature on the Civil War has focused on the "great men," one of the recent trends has been to bring humanity back to the many other people who experienced the war. One of the ways in which individual soldiers have been studied is by examining their motivations for fighting and experiences of war. For soldiers' motivations, see James M. McPherson, *For Cause and Comrades: Why Men Fought in the Civil War* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1997). Other scholars have published individual diaries and letters in order to reconstruct one individuals' understanding and experience of the war.

²⁵ Kim A. O'Connell, "American Graffiti," *Civil War Times* (December 2012): 43. For more on Civil War graffiti, see Edie Wallace, "Marking Time: Civil War Graffiti in the Catocin Region," *Catocin History* (Fall 2003): 10-18; Katherine Reed, "American Civil War Graffiti (1861-1865): Conflict, Identity, and Testimony," Master's Thesis, University of Manchester, 2011; James S. Pula, "The Writing on the Walls: Badger Graffiti in Civil War Virginia," *The Wisconsin Magazine of History* 86, no. 3 (2003): 38-49; Katherine Reed, "'Charcoal Scribblings of the Most Rascally Character: Conflict, Identity, and Testimony in American Civil War Graffiti,'" *American Nineteenth Century History* 16, no. 2 (2015): 111-127.

²⁶ Christopher B. Brown, "The Writing on the Wall and Other Places: American Civil War Graffiti," Master's Thesis, University of Maryland, 2014, 29.

imaginary affairs’: The Visualization of the 1863 New York Draft Riots,” stand as examples of limited analysis of a narrow source base, revealing only the beginning of a massive and rich field still in need of exploration.²⁷ Combining a number of types of visual culture, like I have done here, allows for a greater and more thorough understanding of soldiers’ views of mortality and permanence.

This study of permanence through visual culture is just the beginning of a vast study. There is much that still needs to be understood about why soldiers created these pieces and what they tell us about the soldier and military experience. While I have argued that creation of drawings, graffiti, and photography filled a desire that many soldiers held to find permanence, there are countless other potential motivations for why this visual culture exists. For many of these soldiers, recording moments of death and destruction may have acted as a form of catharsis as they struggled to come to terms with the inhumanity of the war they were fighting. Others may have created this visual culture in the interest of finding fame following their time as a soldier. In the end, the soldiers who created these pieces were human and therefore impossible to completely understand. Despite this difficulty, I have attempted to separate out visual culture that I identified as created in part out of an interest in finding permanence. Far more work needs to be done to understand the vast range of motivations that inspired soldiers to create in the face of death.

Despite humans’ inherent complexity, there are also a few fundamental aspects to being human, including the eventuality of death. Beyond its contributions to the field of history, this thesis also adds to the human discussion on mortality and what it means to be human. Using

²⁷ Shawn Michelle Smith, “Photographic Remains: Sally Mann at Antietam” and Joshua Brown, “Our sketches are real, not mere imaginary affairs’: The Visualization of the 1863 New York Draft Riots,” in *The Civil War in Art and Memory*, ed. Kirk Savage (Washington, DC: National Gallery of Art, 2016.)

visual culture as a lens through which to understand the Civil War provides a powerful means of seeing the people behind the history, as these drawings, photographs, and graffiti reflect sentiments that humans can still relate to today. Lifespans are only getting longer and technology continues to change the conversation regarding longevity and anonymity, particularly in a time of social media and the internet where the ability to leave one's mark is becoming increasingly accessible. However, as songs like Macklemore's *Glorious* remind us, mortality continues to be a human experience, fueling both our traditions and beliefs about death, but also the ways in which we choose to live. Perhaps by understanding the soldiers and the visual culture they chose to create as they faced death, we can better comprehend our own personal and social relationships with death and the ways in which they inform our lives.

CHAPTER I

Religion and “Dying Well”

“May you and I In heaven meet And lay our crosses At Jesus feet.”²⁸

Every generation attempts to come to terms with mortality, often using religion as a crucial point of comfort. Civil War soldiers were no exception. One such soldier demonstrated his own belief in the importance of religion, the desire for permanence, and power of visual culture in a wartime photograph. Private William McAuley immortalized his religious belief by attaching a note to his wartime ambrotype which stated “Mr. Wm. McAuley War Picture May you and I In heaven meet And lay our crosses At Jesus feet.”²⁹ Despite not specifying a time of death, this note and photograph demonstrate that McAuley accepted his eventual death and signaled his expectation of and desire for the permanence that lies beyond the grave. McAuley’s image, like many other pieces of visual culture that soldiers left behind, provides insight into the link between religion, permanence, and traditions surrounding death that soldiers experienced.

In its most simple form, religion appealed to those close to death because it provided followers with faith in the face of the unknown. According to this belief, if they had maintained a good and righteous life, death would lead to something better and more permanent that could not be taken from them. Rather than simply disappearing, their soul would live on in a perpetual state of happiness, untouched by the sin and sorrow of the corporeal world. As Thomas B. Hampton, a private of the 63rd Virginia Infantry wrote to his wife in 1863, even the most horrific death on the battlefield or in a hospital offered “refuge in a ‘heaven where wars & rumors of

²⁸ Shane Kisner and Shannon Pritchard, *Confederate Faces in Color* (Self-published, 2013), 75.

²⁹ *Ibid.*

wars are no more,” as well as the opportunity to see lost loved ones again.³⁰ Religion served as a means for soldiers to draw meaning and purpose from their life, death, and service, while also finding permanence in the promise that their soul would live on even beyond their corporeal existence on Earth. The appeal of these ideas was particularly enticing for many soldiers who were overwhelmingly young and therefore unlikely to have fully come to terms with their own mortality. Similarly, the manner of death on a Civil War battlefield made the threat of mortality particularly prominent, as the battlefield increased the likelihood of dying without time for a last minute blessing or religious conversion.

As George C. Rable writes in *God’s Almost Chosen Peoples*, this “nearness of death and urgency of conversion” made religion a particularly important aspect of life and death.³¹ As a result, religion plays a crucial part of the visual culture of the war. Images like McAuley’s reveal a faith in both religion and the permanence of the photograph itself. Just as McAuley did not specify an expected date of death, he also did not address the photograph to anyone, allowing the “you” to apply to all viewers into the future. In this way, his photograph and the accompanying note continue to speak to the viewer, calling him or her to live and die religiously so that he or she may join McAuley in spiritual permanence. McAuley clearly wanted this photograph to last a long time and to carry his religious beliefs into the future with it. Unlike the other types of visual culture analyzed here, photography provides insight into the relationship between appearance and identity. McAuley’s photograph also serves to immortalize his belief, or religious nature, a facet of himself that he clearly saw as worth capturing permanently.

³⁰ Thomas B. Hampton, *Thomas B. Hampton to Jestin Hampton, August 9, 1863*. Letter. From the Briscoe Center for American History at the University of Texas at Austin, *The Thomas B. Hampton Papers* quoted in Drew Gilpin Faust, *This Republic of Suffering: Death and the American Civil War* (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 2008), 175.

³¹ George C. Rable, *God’s Almost Chosen Peoples: A Religious History of the American Civil War* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2010), 132.



Figure 2: William McAuley's photograph was accompanied by a religious poem (as seen on page 15) demonstrating faith in the permanence of an afterlife. Courtesy of Shannon Pritchard, *Confederate Faces in Color*. Used with permission.

Outside of serving as a facet of identity, religion also provided a crucial link to home in the strange new environment of camp and battlefield. Both George C. Rable and Drew Gilpin Faust describe religion as a “life-line” for soldiers seeking some connection to home and to some semblance of permanence in the face of death.³² This connection to home can be seen in Frank Morse’s *Sketch of a Chapel for the 37th Regiment* which he included in a letter home to his wife of January 1864.³³ The combination of letter and drawing reveals not only the pride that Morse held in the creation of this make-shift church by his fellow Fiftieth New York Engineers, but, as

³² Rable, *God’s Almost Chosen Peoples*, 131; Faust, *This Republic of Suffering*, 31.

³³ Frank Morse. *Frank Morse to Ellen Morse, January 18, 1864*. Letter. From the Massachusetts Historical Society, *Frank C. Morse Papers*, quoted in Megan Kate Nelson, *Ruin Nation: Destruction and the American Civil War* (Athens: University of Georgia Press, 2012), 129.

Megan Kate Nelson writes in *Ruin Nation*, also the “sense of community” that the church provided in making “the landscape of war feel more like home.”³⁴ In this case, both the drawing, the building, and the altered landscape of shorn trees stood as testaments to the importance that religion and the community it inspired held in these soldiers’ lives.

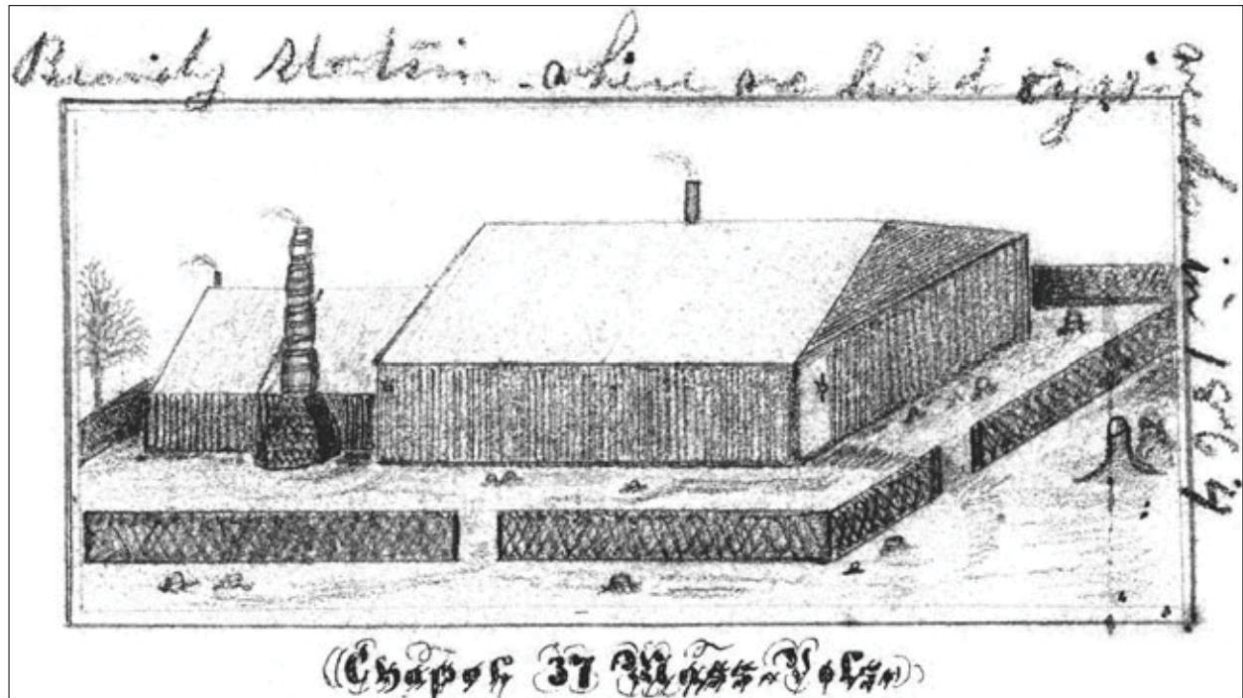


Figure 3: Frank Morse, *Sketch of a Chapel for the 37th Regiment*, January 2, 1864, Collection of the Massachusetts Historical Society, Boston. Morse’s inclusion of this sketch in a letter to his wife indicates the role that religion played as a “life-line” and form of community for soldiers. Used with permission.

Similarly, many of Adolph Metzner’s drawings combine the themes of death, religion, and community. Metzner was a private in the 32nd Indiana and, as a result, many of his drawings reflect life in the Western theatre of the war, including battlefield scenes and portraits of his fellow soldiers and officers. In his drawing *Private Xavier Blodier’s Funeral, Camp Nevin*,

³⁴ Nelson, *Ruin Nation*, 127.

Kentucky, Metzner portrays a group of men standing reflectively around a coffin bearing the deceased's name. While there are no obvious religious symbols included in the drawings, a man without a hat stands close to the coffin and appears to gesture in a way that suggests that he is delivering a eulogy or last blessing for the deceased. Other men also stand around the coffin in a reverential way that resembles the attitude of those attending a religious service. As well as being a moment of mourning for this particular group, this is also clearly also a moment of bonding for a community drawn together by the loss of a fellow soldier. Metzner's drawing serves to immortalize not only this man's funeral and death but also the moment of grieving that these men shared as they came together for comfort in religious ritual and community.

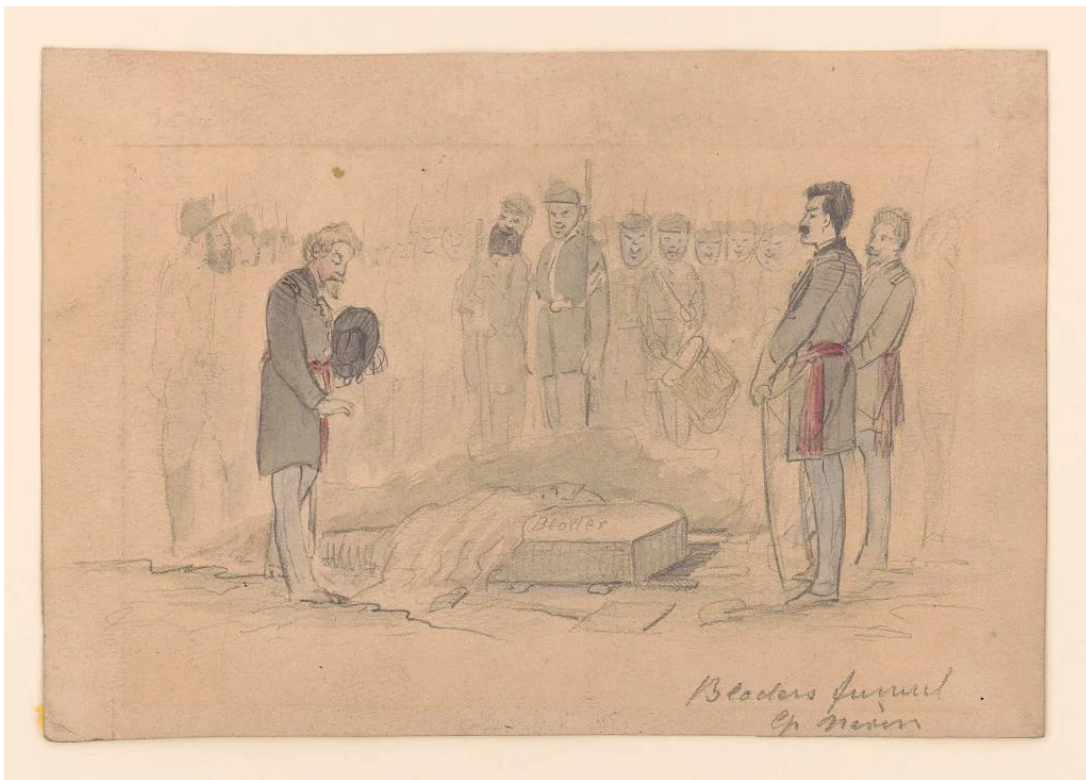


Figure 4: Adolph Metzner, *Private Xavier Blodier's Funeral, Camp Nevin, Kentucky*, 1861, Library of Congress. This drawing of a soldier's funeral reveals the link between community and religious ritual present within military life.

Alongside emphasizing themes of community and the importance of religion, Metzner's drawing also reveals important insights in the culture surrounding death during the Civil War, particularly a Christian tradition referred to by scholars as the "Good Death."³⁵ The tradition of the Good Death dictated that people of the mid-nineteenth century should die at home while surrounded by family who could witness their moment of passing into eternal life. A Good Death was ideally meant to epitomize how a person had lived while also standing as a testament to that person's permanent state in the afterlife. As a result, this tradition was used by antebellum Americans to understand life after, and therefore permanence after, death.

In *This Republic of Suffering: Death and the American Civil War*, Drew Gilpin Faust explores the methods that soldiers used to create this death either for themselves or their comrades, particularly through letters. Within her exploration of the Good Death through letters, she emphasizes the important phrases and assurances that letters recreating a death scene contained, including that the soldier had displayed "fortitude and Christian resignation" in the face of death.³⁶ Unlike the drawings that Faust mentions, Metzner's drawing of Private Blodier's funeral does not recreate the soldier's moment of death by showing him dying gracefully with faith and courage. Instead, Metzner builds on the Good Death by representing Blodier in another state of permanence by showing his final resting place and continued place within a community. Metzner has succeeded in drawing a visual representation of a community's memory and respect for the soldier. He must have died in an honorable and religious way to have merited so many visitors to his burial ceremony, all of which reflects these elements of the Good Death as

³⁵ Drew Gilpin Faust, *This Republic of Suffering: Death and the American Civil War* (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 2008), 6.

³⁶ John M. Coski, "Montgomery's Blood-Stained Letter Defines 'The Art of Dying' --and Living," *Museum of the Confederacy Magazine* (Summer 2006): 14.

referenced by Faust. As the link between religion, death, and permanence, the Good Death is another crucial element present within soldiers' visual culture.

Faust also discusses the shift in understanding of the Good Death that stemmed from military service in the Civil War, which largely took the form of blurring between responsibility to God and duty to country to the point that they were one and the same. This was partially due to the way religious institutions and representatives discussed the war as a holy conflict. Chaplains particularly framed death in conflict as a means of attaining spiritual permanence and glory, as well as an immortal claim to glory in the victory of the cause. This blending of God and country was also due to the apparent incompatibility of religion and military service, where killing was a requirement of one but a blatant violation of the other; while dying for a cause was something that had traditionally been associated with religious duty, killing was another question altogether. As a result, soldiers, and even the religious literature they were given, framed the conflict in religious tones, making killing a patriotic, and therefore religious, duty.³⁷

This association between military service and religion influenced the Good Death tradition by changing the criteria, altering it so that dying "bravely and manfully... almost served to take the place of the more sacred obligations of holy living that had traditionally prepared the way for the Good Death."³⁸ As a result, much of the visual culture reflecting elements of the Good Death contain both religious and patriotic themes, rather than the more traditional imagery of dying with faith in God. This transition towards emphasizing duty to country as well as to God also sparked a transition in the larger visual universe in which the soldiers' graffiti, drawings, and photographs were created, sparking an increase of imagery along a sacrificial theme that

³⁷ Faust, *This Republic of Suffering*, 33. For more information on the distinction between dying for a holy cause and killing for a religious cause, see Chapter 1 "Dying: 'To Lay Down My Life'" and Chapter 2 "Killing: 'The Harder Courage'" of *This Republic of Suffering*.

³⁸ *Ibid.*, 25.

appealed to either reinforcing or highlighting the contradictions in the relationship between religion and military service.

The link between God and country is a prevalent theme throughout the drawings and lithographs of James Fuller Queen. A resident of Philadelphia, Queen was an established artist prior to the war, when he enlisted in the 40th Pennsylvania Militia for 90 days in response to Confederate invasion of the state.³⁹ While most of his wartime drawings depicted Philadelphia during his time as a civilian, his period of time as a soldier resulted in a number of highly detailed scenes of military life. Speaking most clearly to the themes of patriotic and religious duty are his images of churches being used in non-religious ways, including as field hospitals and resting places. One particular image, *Sketches with Co. B 8th Reg. Pa. Ma. Under the Officers of the Old "Southwark Gaurd" in Chambersburg*, shows a group of Union soldiers settling down for a night's rest in a church. While the image does not contain any crosses or other obviously religious iconography, the details of the building itself, such as the pews, and vaulted ceilings reveal the building to be a church. As a result, the group of soldiers toting guns and lounging on the pews appears as a shock against the religious background.

Unfortunately, Queen did not include any kind of note to record his reaction to the strange scene; however, his decision to record it in such detail does reflect an awareness of its odd nature. Regardless, many of the facial expressions and body language in the image reveal that those pictured felt little to no remorse about the nature of their lodgings. One soldier in the foreground of the image lays easily in the pew with his legs casually crossed and boots on the pew. Another man in an unbuttoned coat with his musket leaning against the wall takes a moment to remove his kepi. The soldiers' comfort in settling down in a church is at least

³⁹ *Muster Roll of Co. C. 40th Pa Militia, August 16, 1863*. Muster roll. Ancestry.com, *Pennsylvania, Civil War Muster Rolls, 1860-1865*. <https://www-ancestrylibrary-com.ezproxy.lib.vt.edu> (accessed December 13, 2017).

partially due to the discomfort of military life that made a pew a blessing after numerous nights spent on the ground or on the march; however, this comfort is perhaps also inspired by the soldiers' view of themselves as soldiers of God as well as the United States. As soldiers of a holy cause, the church is a fitting place for rest and safety. From this perspective, the stacked muskets dotting the pews are far less shocking, instead representing the link between religion and military service. Similarly, the soldiers themselves appear in a religious light, accepted and welcomed by the church and therefore blessed both in life and death as soldiers of God.



Figure 5: James Fuller Queen, *Sketches with Co. B 8th Reg. Pa. Ma. Under the Officers of the Old "Southwark Guard" in Chambersburg*, 1863, Library of Congress. This drawings a group of soldiers preparing for a night's rest in a church reflects blurring duty to God and country.

This drawing also reflects the role of the physical church and holy spaces in the war. The focal point of the drawing is on four men, two of whom are clearly caught up in an animated conversation. To the left, a man is speaking and gesturing. He has removed his pack but otherwise remains fully clothed and ready for action. Another man stands and listens, not even having had the chance to put his gun down. Two other men to their right pause in their preparations for sleep to listen, one of whom is still completely prepared for the march. These men give a sense of urgency to the otherwise peaceful image, reflecting the tentative relationship that religion and patriotic duty held in that moment. For those soldiers lounging and relaxing, the church is fulfilling its role as a safe haven, sheltering the soldiers inside from both the elements and the enemy; however, it is unable to protect the soldiers from the war itself, a fact that is revealed in the concern embodied by those four central figures. By serving as a physical space and temporary home for these soldiers and their concerns, the church has become both an escape from and a piece of the war itself. This relationship as a place of peace and of war is particularly clear in that it will remain a haven only as long as these soldiers are willing to defend it from outside danger.

This particular image seems defined more by temporality than permanence, particularly in the idea of bivouacking in a church. It is clear that this is meant to be a temporary form of shelter, meant only as a brief respite before entering battle again. However, part of the strangeness of this image is that the urgency of even the calmest soldier's movements stands in contrast to the stillness of the church itself. Upon closer inspection of the image, the immediate sense of temporality reveals a deeper thread of permanence, just as the soldiers' status as Christian warriors fighting for a just cause while finding a home in the pews of the church bears its own elements of the Good Death and permanence. By framing the men as soldiers for both

God and country, their potential death gains new meaning in both the permanence of victory and eternal glory in the afterlife. Their night's rest in a church also lends them at least the appearance of religious sentiment that reflects the traditions of the Good Death. If any of those men died in the battle of Gettysburg shortly after, they did so having spent many of their last hours in a church, most likely finding peace and safety within its walls. While this is not a last minute confession or conversion, even the structure of the church itself likely provided a reminder to these soldiers of the permanence and stability offered by religion both in life and in death.

While the image described above does not make any clear references to death, Queen's similar image of the the regimental hospital in Chambersburg does. Unlike the sketch of Union soldiers' bivouacking in church pews, *Regimental Hospital 1863 View from Pulpit* is not colored and contains sparse detail. Despite this, the drawing presents very similar links between religion and military as those within his other drawing. Men lay on the pews, tables, beds, and even the floor throughout the church, taking refuge in the peace and safety provided by its walls; however, unlike before, the war is no longer distant for any of those in the picture. Instead, the war has become an internal battle, whether due to sickness or a bullet, and death hangs over the entire image. In this instance, the balance between religion and war has become one of religion and death, with the safety provided by the church serving more of a spiritual than physical purpose. Unlike in the former drawing, these soldiers' time in the church is characterized by its permanence rather than its temporality, as it is likely that for many this will be where they spend their final days and enter into spiritual permanence.

Queen drew both pictures of the scene from the perspective of the pulpit. This is one of a number of artistic choices that reflect Queen's emphasis and perceived relationship between religion and war. Throughout the majority of Christian tradition, the pulpit serves as the place for

the delivery of the sermon and God's word, making it one of the most important spots in the church and one that, for some, represents the voice and view of God himself. Queen's picture reveals that the majority of pews have been removed from the hospital with those few remaining being used as extra bedding for the wounded and sick. Based on this presentation of the church, it seems strange that the pulpit is one of the last remaining pieces of furniture to survive the transformation into use as a hospital. This reflects the value and symbology that such a piece of furniture holds and reveals insight into Queen's decision to adopt its viewpoint.

Queen's decision to draw both pictures from the pulpit, as well as the appearance of distance within his image of the hospital, gives the images a feeling of detachment. These drawings largely make the war feel far away and almost irrelevant, and certainly do not feel like a recording done by a person experiencing the moment for himself; however, Queen's service record reveals that he was in that hospital in Chambersburg recovering from an illness, a fact that gives new meaning to the image. Instead of feeling like a memory set to paper, these drawings appear more like a snapshot taken for the future viewer, as a means of keeping the moments perfectly preserved. The choice of using the pulpit as a point of perspective also frames the drawing with the symbology of the pulpit itself, perhaps designed to pose a question about God's perspective and role in the situation. Alongside preserving the moment, these drawings appear as an attempt to understand the forces driving such terrible circumstances. Ultimately, they serve as a recording of both Queen's doubts and certainties about permanence by carrying his own thoughts on the relationship between religion, military service, death, and permanence into the future.

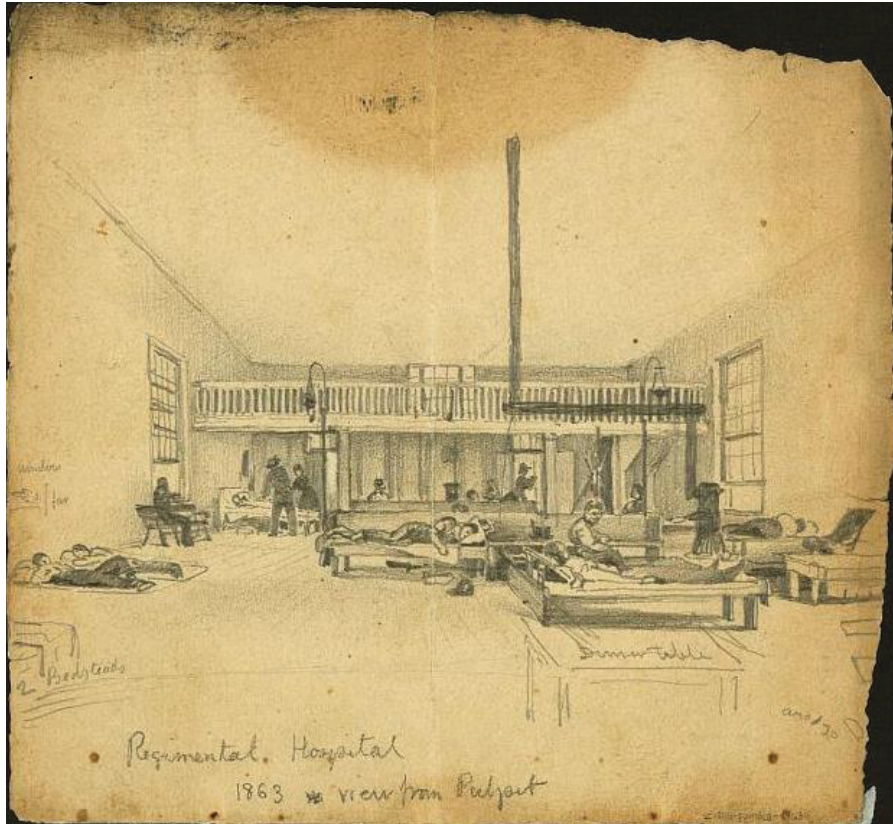


Figure 6: James Fuller Queen, *Regimental Hospital 1863 View from Pulpit*, Library of Congress. This image reveals the link between religion and military service, particularly with regards to the theme of death.

Alongside these themes, Queen's work also contains many references to sacrifice, a theme that speaks directly to the Good Death tradition and stems directly from the link between religion and military service that grew out of the Civil War. Queen's image *The Story of Gettysburg* contains the theme of sacrifice embodied in the inclusion of a small child dressed in a Zouave uniform and a woman dressed in mourning. These two stand amid a group including another woman and an older man listening to a wounded soldier tell a story of battle. Within this image, Queen draws on the symbol of childhood, to represent that which is at risk of being lost, such as family, happiness, and life itself. The image also includes a woman in black who cries for that which has already been lost. Beyond emphasizing sacrifice, this image also references the tradition of the Good Death in the group surrounding the bed of a wounded soldier.

While the people in this image are there to listen, the gathering of people around the soldier's bedside calls to mind the image of family witnessing the last moments of a loved one. It is unclear who the women in this image are and whether they are related to the soldier; regardless, they appeal to the common wish among women that if their soldier was to meet his death of the field, some woman would step in and fill their role in witnessing and comforting him in his last moments.⁴⁰ Sheet music, such as "Let Me Kiss Him for His Mother" reflected such sentiments and were usually accompanied by an image reflecting religious imagery that hinted at Mary's sacrifice of Jesus or pictures of angels lifting soldiers from the battlefield.⁴¹ Queen's image *The Story of Gettysburg* was also used as a cover for sheet music for a song that was later named "A Message from the Battlefield," a name which appears to reinforce the image's place as a visual representation of the Good Death. This image serves as an example of how visual culture could be used to reflect, reinforce, and even provide the Good Death for families far from their loved one.

⁴⁰ Faust, *This Republic of Suffering*, 12-13.

⁴¹ One such example of sheet music containing religious, sacrificial imagery is Charles Magnus, *Let Me Kiss Him for His Mother*. From Library of Congress, Rare Books and Special Collection. <https://www.loc.gov/resource/amss.hc00005d.0> (accessed December 13, 2017).

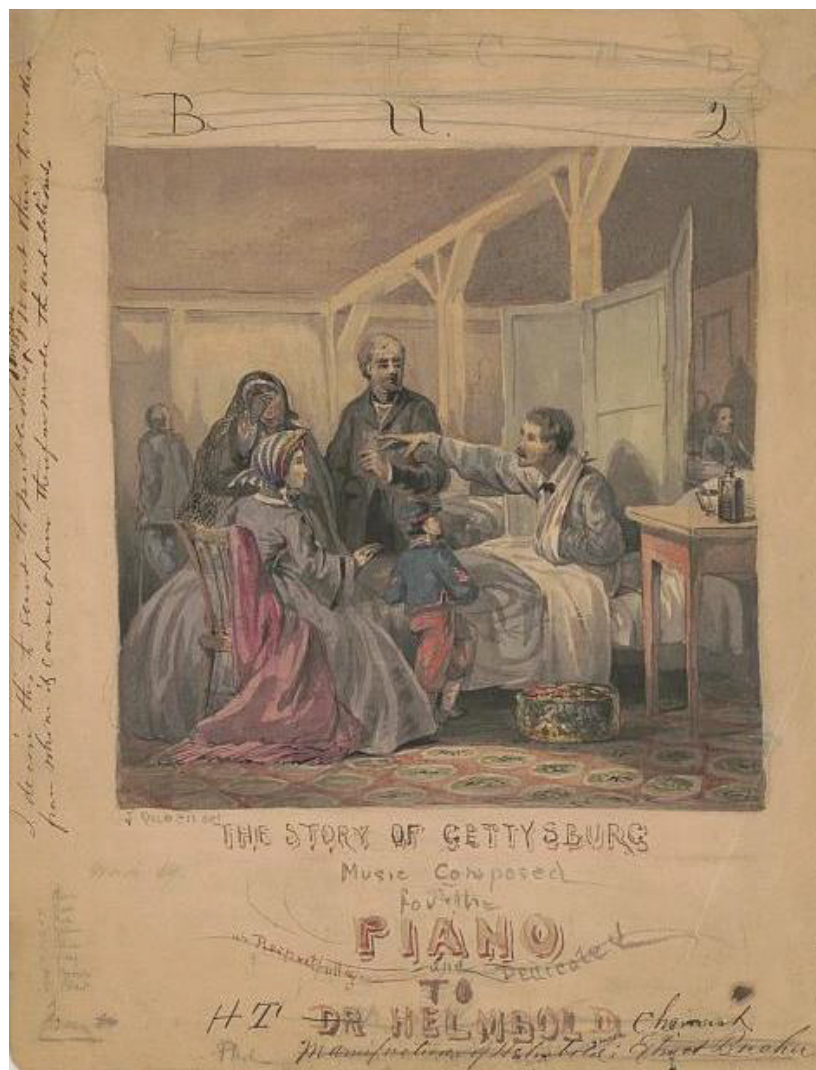


Figure 7: James Fuller Queen, *The Story of Gettysburg*, 1864, Library of Congress. This image reflects traditions of the Good Death and loss.

Photography also played an important role in supporting the Good Death tradition even from far away. In her book *This Republic of Suffering*, Drew Gilpin Faust examines how soldiers held photographs of their loved ones during their last moments as a means of seeking a Good Death.⁴² Studio photography also became a way for a soldier to remain with his family after death, perhaps, as in this sister's case, even becoming the object of affection previously directed

⁴² Faust, *This Republic of Suffering*, 11-12.

at the soldier himself. A photograph of one unnamed Confederate soldier was accompanied by a note that read “Prizeth with my most Mighty Possessions. Given to me by my Darling Bro. Bobbie. Died Oct. 5th 1862.”⁴³ These photographs were crucial for mourning families in that they provided a vision of what the soldier had looked like in life, and, following the Christian vision of heaven, what he must look like in the afterlife. Photographs like this one allowed soldiers who had died on the battlefield to find permanence in their family and friends’ memory, remaining permanently as visions of pride, glory, and a life that must surely have moved on to a better place.

As seen throughout James Fuller Queen’s pieces described above, visual culture reflects the prevalence of soldiers’ attitudes towards death, religion, and permanence, as well as its value in upholding the traditions of the Good Death. For some artists, visual culture also became the place to record reactions to the brutality of the battlefield and collapse of the Good Death tradition, or even the threat of the Bad Death. This was particularly true for the drawings of Adolph Metzner who served in the bloody battles at Shiloh, Chickamauga, and Chattanooga with the 32nd Indiana Volunteer Infantry Regiment. While many of Metzner’s early war drawings were light-hearted cartoons of his officers and fellow soldiers, following the battle at Shiloh, his drawings shifted towards more gruesome scenes of headless corpses, staring eyes on dead faces, and the stiff, unnatural poses of dead men and horses. Of his many violent images, one of the most disturbing is *Stone River Rebellion*, his portrayal of the dead of the 1862 battle of Stone’s River. Metzner’s drawing of Stone’s River is emphasized with the color red. Men lay in various, shocking poses with blotches of red highlighting the severity of wounds and the horrified expressions of the dying.

⁴³ Kisner and Pritchard, *Confederate Faces in Color*, 55.

One of the most striking elements of this image is that Metzner did not attempt to hide anything. His image graphically portrays the wounded and dead, with facial expressions of sheer terror, covered in blood, even blown to bits. His image does not attempt to make death any prettier or more acceptable to the expectations of the Good Death, instead even appearing to illustrate what historian Drew Gilpin Faust called the “Bad Death.”⁴⁴ Faust identified the Bad Death—the physical and spiritual death of a person who rejected faith even to the very end—as a result largely of atheism or shameful deaths such as executions; however, Metzner’s drawings of death seem to locate the Bad Death even on the battlefield among honorable and dedicated soldiers. This drawing highlights the fear that soldiers held of death regardless of their religious convictions or manly courage, as Metzner immortalized the horror of these soldiers’ last moments.

The imagery of the soldiers in this image also highlights the inhumanity of war, as many of them no longer look human; one sits with his back against the split rail fence, eyes wide and tongue stretched out. He looks more like a demon than the brave, Christian soldier who died peacefully with faith in the permanence of the afterlife. Similarly, another nearby soldier lays with his arms stretched out and eyes wide, looking almost as if he may rise again even if just to escape the terror of battle. This man was clearly not prepared for death, a theme that Metzner appears to be emphasizing in his portrayal of these men. As Metzner’s drawings relate, the Good Death was not a realistic expectation in a war with such a high number of men dying far from home in unknown and horrific situations. Whether these drawings helped Metzner remove the disturbing images from his mind or because he wanted to immortalize them for future viewers,

⁴⁴ Faust, *This Republic of Suffering*, 27.

these images ultimately became a tool of permanence unto themselves even as they responded to the lack of permanence that existed on the battlefield.



Figure 8: Adolph Metzner, *Stone River Rebellion*, 1863, Library of Congress. This drawing reveals the impossibility of the Good Death tradition on the battlefield.

Metzner focused much of his violent imagery on the human face, a tactic that works to emphasize the inhumanity of war while also emphasizing the humanity of the individuals in the picture. By assigning an identity to the dead, the faces that Metzner recorded embody everything that is wrong with war and hold a powerful permanence unto themselves, a power that Metzner immortalized here. The permanence of the faces of the men who Metzner saw fall on the battlefield is best displayed in his image *Shiloh Battlefield, April 9, 1862*. This image contains the sketchy drawing of a dead soldier surrounded by abstract shapes that appear to be trees and rocks. Despite this vague background, the soldier's body is carefully drawn, with particular care

devoted to drawing the face. The most detailed section of the drawing, however, are the soldier's eyes as they stare out at the viewer with a permanent look of disgust and fear.

It is clear from this drawing that when Metzner saw this dead soldier, he took particular notice of the eyes, an effect he carried into his drawing and forced upon the viewer. Metzner's focus on the eyes gives this image incredible power and immediacy that carries this man, Metzner's experience, and the horror of the war into the future. By drawing this man's face and emphasizing the strange presence yet lack of humanity within it, Metzner succeeded in finding permanence for both this dead soldier and himself even as he mourned the loss of the permanence promised by the Good Death. By focusing on the absence of religion and glory in these deaths, Metzner calls the blurring lines between military victory, religious glory, and permanence into question. These images pose the questions about sacrifice and loss, highlighting the growing uncertainty about whether death did result in the military victory and spiritual glory and permanence that had been promised in the Good Death tradition.



Figure 9: Adolph Metzner, *Shiloh Battlefield, April 9, 1862*, Library of Congress. This image reflects the lack of a Good Death faced by those who died on the battlefield, as well as Metzner's reaction to the death and destruction of the war.

The death and destruction of the Civil War changed Americans' relationship with death by shaking their faith in the afterlife. As soldiers died in droves, the promise of permanence in the afterlife was no longer a certain outcome, particularly as traditions surrounding death began to break down. Some soldiers, such as Adolph Metzner, recorded this social change in gory detail, mourning their destruction. Others, like James Fuller Queen, focused on the few instances where such traditions still continued while using their imagery to question society's continued dedication to such beliefs and practices. Others, like the unidentified soldier, Bobbie, whose sister cherished his picture, maintained the traditions in any way they could, using visual culture as a tool of achieving a Good Death, rather than as a means of reflection. Regardless of how individuals chose to use it, visual culture played an important role in immortalizing, reinforcing, and maintaining soldiers' views on death, religion, and dying well. As a result, these pieces of visual culture continue to stand as testaments to and examples of soldiers' methods of finding permanence, whether on earth or beyond the grave. Visual culture also held strength in allowing soldiers to find permanence in a physical space as a form of memorialization or personal claim, a topic that will be explored in the following chapters.

CHAPTER II

Claiming the War

“In every direction the walls bear evidence of the desires of different individuals for immortality.

They are literally covered with names...”⁴⁵

On March 16, 1863, Private Harry Wickes of the Confederate Stuart Horse Artillery carved his name onto a wall along with those of fifteen other men of the same regiment.⁴⁶ Less than a day later, Wickes’s regiment was fighting in the Battle of Kelly’s Ford near Brandy Station, Virginia. Across the areas of the United States that saw conflict during the Civil War are names like Wickes’s, carved into walls of churches, houses, courthouses, and prisons. These names, still visible at the Graffiti House in Brandy Station, Virginia, are accompanied by drawings, regimental numbers, and dates, standing as testaments to the men who fought, lived, and died within these buildings’ walls. Yet, how are these pieces of history to be interpreted? What was Wickes thinking as he carved his name into that wall? This piece of graffiti stands as one example of the many pieces of visual culture that soldiers used to link physical space with memory and experience, a theme that will be explored in this chapter.

Part of the power of visual culture for soldiers attempting to find permanence was in its physical form. Even for those certain of their spiritual permanence, visual culture presented a way of proving one’s physical existence and guaranteeing a place in others’ memories, serving as a physical reminder even after its creator’s death. In some cases, visual culture also served as a claim to physical space, allowing soldiers to assert ownership of a space and the memories that

⁴⁵ Letter by unnamed soldier quoted in Bradley Gernard, *A Virginia Village Goes to War: Falls Church During the Civil War* (Virginia Beach, VA: The Donning Company, 2002), 124.

⁴⁶ James Breathed’s Battery, “Maryland Scroll,” graffiti, March 1863, Graffiti House, Brandy Station, Virginia.

had been created within it. Creations such as graffiti could turn a wall into a piece of visual culture that then became a link between soldiers' interest in permanence and the physical realm of war. This method of claiming space could be used for a variety of purposes, including memorialization of the dead, the assertion of one's existence and individuality, and as a claim to a role in the war and its results. In this way, visual culture served as a link between the tangible remains of the war, such as the physical landscape where graffiti was written or photographs were taken, and the intangible space of soldiers' minds, recording their desires, and wishes. In short, visual culture is the translation of something as impermanent and flawed as memory onto something permanent, such as a physical space. This chapter will focus on the creation of visual culture as a claim to physical space and memory and therefore means of finding permanence through claims to the war as a whole. Chapter three will examine a similar linking between space and memory, focusing on the ways in which linking space and visual culture allowed soldiers to both memorialize others and control how others remembered them in the event of their death.

Part of the power of visual culture is in its ability to provide a means of claiming the war, or asserting ownership over a moment in time by claiming a physical space, such as through the carving of one's name onto it. This practice can still be seen today on trees, posts, and railings that bear scratched initials, symbols, and phrases such as "Jimmy was here." Physical markers, such as buildings and trees, continue to offer the promise of longevity to visitors seeking permanence and proof of the time spent there. Similarly, many places that are known for their wealth of Civil War-era graffiti are covered in people's names and regimental associations that clearly identify their creator. Like soldiers' photographed portraits, such inscriptions reflect the soldiers' stake and place in the war; by writing their names in that physical space or having their

image taken in uniform, they are immortalizing not only their physical presence in that spot and in that moment, but also their larger place as a participant and a stakeholder in the war itself.

All three types of visual culture provided different strengths and were more or less accessible for soldiers interested in claiming the war. Methods of claiming the war can be found in all three in different ways; whereas photography and graffiti immortalized a person, whether the creator or the subject, drawings were largely dedicated to recording a moment of observation. Despite their differences, however, each one reveals the methods through which soldiers sought permanence amidst the destruction of war.

One of the most powerful methods of claiming the war was the relatively new technology of photography. Compared to graffiti and drawings, physical space plays a less important role in the soldiers' photographic claims. Instead, the uniforms that soldiers wore played the most important role. Where the physical space either used or reproduced in graffiti and drawings lent the image credibility as proof of the creator's role in the war, the uniform of a photographer's subject was that same proof. The uniform was what marked a soldier as a soldier, regardless of the physical space he happened to be in that moment. This emphasis on the uniform and all the accoutrements that went with it reveals a particular interest in immortalizing the "military self" among soldiers, and in finding permanence in the larger results of the war by portraying themselves as a piece of the war.

In his book *Reading American Photographs*, Alan Trachtenburg argues that in a society accustomed to painted portraits over photographic representations, many people in the mid-nineteenth century expected photography to reveal a person's "inner essence," operating off the idea that "the exterior of a person might reveal inner character."⁴⁷ This belief made the posture,

⁴⁷ Alan Trachtenburg, *Reading American Photographs: Images as History, Mathew Brady to Walker Evans* (New York: Hill and Wang, 1989), 27-28.

clothing, facial expression, and even stance of a subject very important, all considerations that every soldier would have put thought into as he chose how to represent himself and his place in the war. Some soldiers opted for photographs of themselves bristling with weapons, while others chose to immortalize themselves holding a Bible or sitting beside their wives or comrades. Regardless of their differences, all of these images speak to the identity that each sitter wanted others to see, and many also speak to the prevalent model of masculinity that shaped how soldiers understood their own identity, service, and photographic image.

As historian Reid Mitchell wrote in his essay “Soldiering, Manhood, and Coming of Age: A Northern Volunteer,” soldiering was a means of proving patriotism and masculinity for men of the nineteenth century, as military service was seen as an extension of a man’s masculine duty to protect his family, as well as his country.⁴⁸ The nineteenth century was also a time of changing ideals of fatherhood, particularly in response to the rise of industrialization and time spent away from the home. As Stephen M. Frank wrote in *Life with Father: Parenthood and Masculinity in the Nineteenth Century American North*, “economic responsibility and earning money to support the family topped the list of masculine priorities. Whatever child-rearing responsibilities a father assumed had to conform to the availability and rhythms of work.”⁴⁹ While Frank was focusing on the rhythms and opportunities for work during peacetime, these ideas also apply to fathers attempting to fulfill parenting expectations during the Civil War. Soldiering was a deadly occupation that required the absence of the father for years at a time; however, according to

⁴⁸ Reid Mitchell, “Soldiering, Manhood, and Coming of Age: A Northern Volunteer,” in *Divided Houses: Gender and the Civil War*, ed. Catharine Clinton and Nina Silber (New York: Oxford University Press, 1992), 50. For more on the relationship between masculinity and military service, see David W. Blight, “No Desperate Hero: Manhood and Freedom in a Union Soldier’s Experience,” in *Divided Houses: Gender and the Civil War*, ed. Catharine Clinton and Nina Silber (New York: Oxford University Press, 1992); Stephen W. Berry II, *All that Makes a Man: Love and Ambition in the Civil War South* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2003); Lorien Foote, *The Gentlemen and the Roughs: Manhood, Honor, and Violence in the Union Army* (New York: New York University Press, 2002).

⁴⁹ Stephen M. Frank, *Life with Father: Parenthood and Masculinity in the Nineteenth Century American North* (Baltimore: John Hopkins University Press, 1998), 67.

nineteenth-century ideals of parenthood and patriotism, it was also an extension of the father's duties and responsibilities.

This additional layer of gender and masculinity reveals new meaning particularly for portraits of soldiers with their loved ones, such as images of soldiers with their children, a subject that will be discussed in depth in the following chapter. Photographs of soldiers with their family members can be interpreted as both claims to the larger meaning of the war and as an assertion of masculinity, in which soldiers sought to immortalize themselves in their role as a protector and provider. One striking example of this can be seen in a photograph of a Confederate first lieutenant posing with his wife and baby. In the image, the couple sit next to each other and the baby sits on the father's lap, encircled by the soldier's arms. Another, similar image of a different couple has the child seated on the mother's lap with the soldier's arms circling both.

In images like these, the positions of the soldiers' arms serve as powerful representations of this theme of protection; along with helping to keep the child still for the photograph, the physical embrace reflects the larger promise of the safety of home and hearth. By posing in a physical representation of military protection, the soldier asserts his masculinity and his stake in the war overall, immortalizing his dedication to both family and country. The encircled grasp on baby and wife adds to this assertion of masculinity by serving as a physical reminder of the link between family and nation that these soldiers experienced. These images also carry the reminder that this may have been one of the last times the soldiers saw their loved ones. In cases like this, these soldiers would be able to find permanence not only in the memory of their families but also in the act of having sacrificed themselves so that their family could live on. In this way, these

images also held the potential to operate as both a claim to the war and a means of memorialization if necessary.

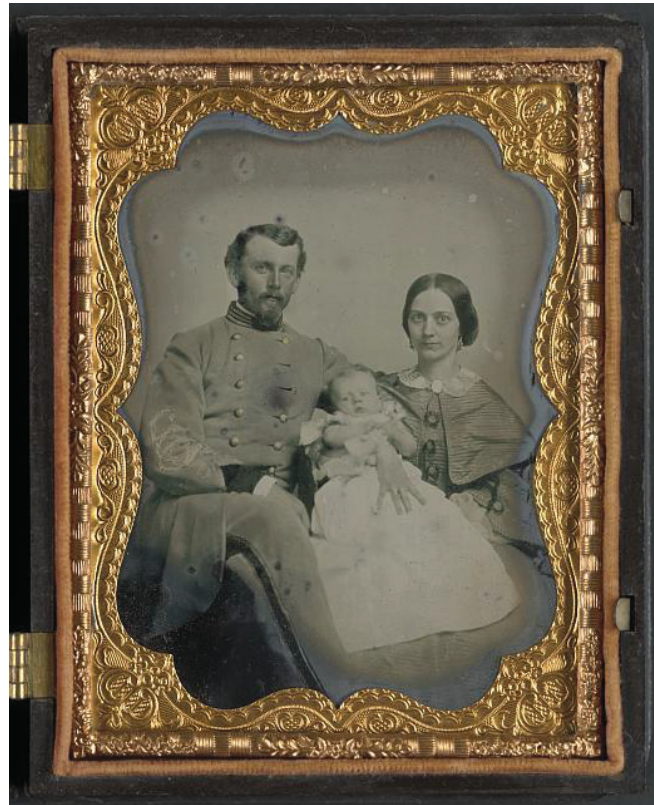


Figure 10: *Unidentified Officer in Confederate Uniform with Wife and Baby*, ca. 1861-1865, Library of Congress.



Figure 11: “Unidentified Soldier in Confederate 1st Lieutenant’s Uniform with Wife and Baby,” ca. 1861-1865, Library of Congress. The physical pose that soldiers in these images adopted reveal a link between masculinity, military service, and familial duty.

Alongside images with family members, some soldiers also chose to have their image taken with other soldiers. Group portraits allowed soldiers to claim a piece of the war in part through a sense of belonging to a select group, particularly one made up of people who were similarly engaged in the war. Whereas the portraits of soldiers with their families emphasize the vulnerability of the other subjects within the image, these group portraits show the men as brothers, sitting or standing as equals. The physical touching between soldiers in these portraits typically emphasizes a feeling of belonging. One such portrait shows a soldier standing next to another with his hand resting on the other’s shoulder; another shows two soldiers sitting with linked arms. These portraits represent what historian James McPherson called “group cohesion,”

a bonding of soldiers that was crucial in shaping soldiers' military loyalties and experiences.⁵⁰ Rather than wrapping a fellow subject with arms as a representation of national safety, these poses reveal a shared set of values and experiences and a shared commitment not only to their cause but also to each other.



Figure 12: "Two Unidentified Soldiers in Union uniforms with Linked Arms; One Holding Bugle," ca. 1861-1865, Library of Congress.

⁵⁰ James McPherson, *For Cause and Comrades: Why Men Fought in the Civil War* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1997), 91.



Figure 13: "Two Unidentified Soldiers in Union Sack Coats in Front of Painted Backdrop Showing Tent and Pine Trees," ca. 1861-1865, Library of Congress. Group portraits reflect a different purpose and means to the war through a claim to belonging.

Many of these group portraits also include weapons, with some men choosing to stand at attention with bayoneted rifles and others sitting with swords. War and masculinity were inextricably linked even for young soldiers who did not associate war with protecting their family, within whom “the very ideas of man, soldier and citizen were inextricably linked” and the act of “going to war [was] a proof of manhood.”⁵¹ For young soldiers like these, the uniform

⁵¹ Mitchell, “Soldiering, Manhood, and Coming of Age,” 44.

itself, along with any knives, guns, or weapons they could find, served as a means of asserting manhood. Even the painted backdrops of camps and military scenes that some studios had served to enhance the militaristic nature of these portraits. Both weapons, backdrops, and uniforms lent the subject of the photograph a fierceness and an appearance of power and manhood that was crucial to young men who had not yet had a chance to prove their masculinity. Confederate diarist Lucy Rebecca Buck described the changes lent by such props in her diary upon looking at a photograph of her [brother?]: “Irvie sent me the promised photograph so like his own dear self and yet so unlike with that grey, earnest face and officer’s uniform.”⁵² Photography served a crucial purpose in proving masculinity for soldiers both with and without a powerful sense of familial duty by allowing soldiers to immortalize their military self. This strength of photography as a means of claiming the war can still be seen today, as families continue to keep and take pride in pictures of their ancestors in uniform.

⁵² Lucy Rebecca Buck, *Shadows on My Heart: The Civil War Diary of Lucy Rebecca Buck of Virginia*, ed. Elizabeth R. Baer (Athens: University of Georgia Press, 2012), 184.



Figure 14: "Unidentified Soldier in Union Uniform with Three Remington Revolvers, Two Bowie Knives, and a Springfield Rifle Musket," ca. 1861-1865, Library of Congress. Many of these weapons would have been largely useless in battle and were most likely chosen by the soldier simply to add to his photograph.

Along with photographs, whether of individuals or groups, drawings of moments and spaces of the war also stand as examples of another method of claiming the war. Unlike photography, drawing was used less as an assertion of masculinity and patriotism and more as a documentation of a particular moment that otherwise would have remained unrecorded. This spontaneous nature of drawing made it well-suited for revealing the artist's emotion in response

to their experience and are one of the closest ways that modern researchers get to seeing through a soldier's eyes. Adolph Metzner serves as a particularly strong example of an artist who used his talent for drawing to reflect his emotions in response to moments of the war. Along with other drawings of casualties as mentioned in previous chapters, Metzner was adept at portraying movement that reveal the chaos of war. One such example of this, *Lost on the Field of Chickamauga*, is a roughly-sketched portrayal of an artillery team attempting to find their way amidst the chaos of the battle. Metzner's quick, sketchy lines reveal a team of horses and artillerymen, lost, disorganized and out of control. While the subject of the image is clear, the image contains little detail, with the men and horses both represented as general shapes. Incoherent lines surrounding the team suggest action and movement happening all throughout the scene. This motion captured in the image reveals the chaos and fear felt by both the humans and horses, as the animals rear and attempt to scatter. Compared to many of his carefully drawn images, this drawing appears to have been drawn in the moment, as his style of drawing mimics the panicky feel of the scene itself. This emotion becomes stronger considering that Metzner was wounded at Chickamauga, likely after drawing this scene.⁵³ His wounding led to his discharge and Metzner's abandonment of drawing Civil War scenes. As one of his last wartime drawings, it stands as a clear claim to Metzner's place in the war and evidence of his presence at the battle that ended his career as a soldier.

⁵³ Michael A. Peake, *Blood Shed in This War: Civil War Illustrations by Captain Adolph Metzner, 32nd Indiana* (Indianapolis: Indiana Historical Society, 2010), 3.



Figure 15: Adolph Metzner, *Lost on the Field of Chickamauga*, 1863, Library of Congress. Drawings allowed soldiers to capture particular moments and emotions as proof of their presence.

Prior to the action-filled image of Chickamauga, Metzner also drew many calmer scenes of generals' headquarters and towns through which he passed while a soldier. Despite representing idyllic scenes of small towns seemingly untouched by the war, these images permanently link Metzner to the towns' physical spaces, as well as the larger moment in time and context of the war. This is particularly true for his representations of generals' headquarters, as by drawing the house in which a general was staying, he was implying his physical proximity to the leadership of the war that in turn added to his own importance as a recorder of history.⁵⁴

⁵⁴ Adolph Metzner, "General R.W. Johnson's Headquarters at [Stone's River], Murfreesboro, Tenn," 1863, Library of Congress, Washington, D.C., <https://www.loc.gov/pictures/item/2017646917/>.

The strength of a drawing to create physical, permanent evidence of a moment, emotion, and physical space made it particularly powerful for prisoners of war seeking to document their experience and place within the war. One such POW who used drawing as a means of claiming the war from within a prison was John Henning Woods, a Confederate conscript who was tried and imprisoned for attempted mutiny. While imprisoned in Atlanta, Woods drew a highly detailed, overhead view of the prison within which he was being kept, including detailed labels of dimensions and other elements of the space that reflected his personal interaction with the prison, such as “Prisoners wanting out” and “Playing cards.” People are also included in his drawing, talking, smoking, pumping water, and guarding the prisoners. The drawing is followed in his journal by a description of the prison and its inhabitants, qualified by the statement “I was confined here about 9 months myself hence I’ve a good chance to know about it.”⁵⁵

Woods’ papers are unique in that all of his writings reveal an awareness of his place in history and the value that his drawings would have for future viewers, a state of mind he reveals with his careful and thorough explanation of both his biographical information and his perspectives on the origins and events of the war. His drawing of the Atlanta Barracks is accompanied by numerous pages of descriptions of not only the physical aspects of the prison, but also the injustices suffered by its residents and by those under the rule of the Confederacy generally. As a result, this drawing serves two important purposes: as proof of his presence and claim to the war for people of his own time, and as proof and record for modern viewers. Woods’ status as a Confederate mutineer and prisoner made this proof particularly valuable during his own lifetime, as it stood as evidence of his Unionist sentiment and suffering, classifying him as not just a scared Confederate deserter attempting to tell a brave story. This drawing, paired with

⁵⁵ Diary of John Henning Woods, July 4, 1864, Ms2017-030, Box 1, Blue Diary, page 47, Virginia Tech Special Collections, Blacksburg, Virginia.

Woods' obvious interest in the future, also reveals his interest in permanence. Throughout his journal, Woods writes about his role as a martyr for the Union. By capturing a moment from inside a Confederate prison where he was kept as a mutineer, on the 4th of July no less, Woods was claiming not just a piece in the war, but also in the ultimate success of the Union, an attitude that is echoed throughout his memoir. In this way, Woods' drawing grants him permanence as a former Confederate prisoner of war who suffered for his country and ultimately persevered.

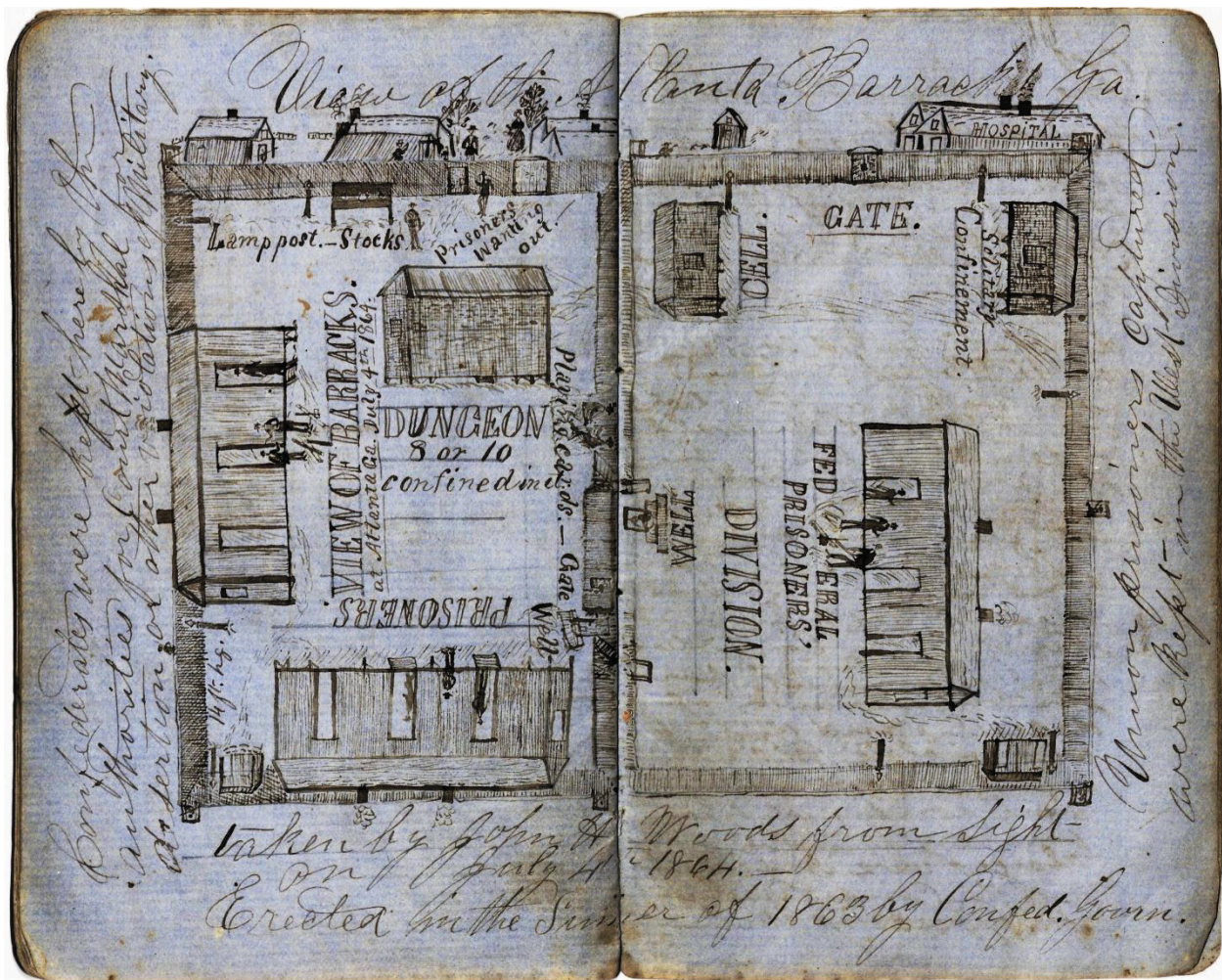


Figure 16: John Henning Woods, *View of the Atlanta Barracks, Ga. July 4, 1864*, Virginia Tech Special Collections. Drawing was particularly accessible for prisoners of war as a means of capturing their suffering.

While John Henning Woods, a Union sympathizer, celebrated with the end of the war, fellow artist and Confederate soldier John Jacob Omenhausser lamented the war's results. Like Woods, Omenhausser was a prisoner of war who used drawing as a means of claiming the war. Many of his drawings of his time at Point Lookout, Maryland from June 1864 to June 1865 focus on the interactions between the prisoners and prison guards and include context through dialogue that is drawn into the image. Some are humorous, but others reflect some of the hardships of prison life, including images of prisoners asking a passing Union officer for shoes, cooking rats for lack of better food, and fighting for a drink of water from the camp pump. As in Woods' journal, these images serve as proof of Omenhausser's role in the war; however, unlike Woods, Omenhausser could not also use his drawings to claim a place in the Union victory. Instead, in the very back of his sketchbook, Omenhausser found meaning in the end of the war by mourning "the ashes of our noble dead," and hoped for change with "joyful anticipation of the future."⁵⁶ This statement by Omenhausser reflects a larger trend among white Southerners following the war who, in the words of historian David Blight, "converted their defeat into a triumphant remembrance."⁵⁷ These drawings stand as proof of Omenhausser's time and suffering as a soldier and prisoner of war, but also as a testament to the suffering of all the soldiers who died or struggled who were now to be remembered and honored following the war.⁵⁸

⁵⁶ John Jacob Omenhausser, *Civil War Sketchbook*, Point Lookout, Maryland, 1864-1865, University of Maryland Digital Collections, College Park, Maryland.

⁵⁷ David W. Blight, *Race and Reunion: The Civil War in American Memory* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2001), 40.

⁵⁸ For more on white Southern interpretations of the war in memory, see David W. Blight, *Race and Reunion*, and Gary W. Gallagher and Alan T. Nolan, eds. *The Myth of the Lost Cause and Civil War History* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 2000).

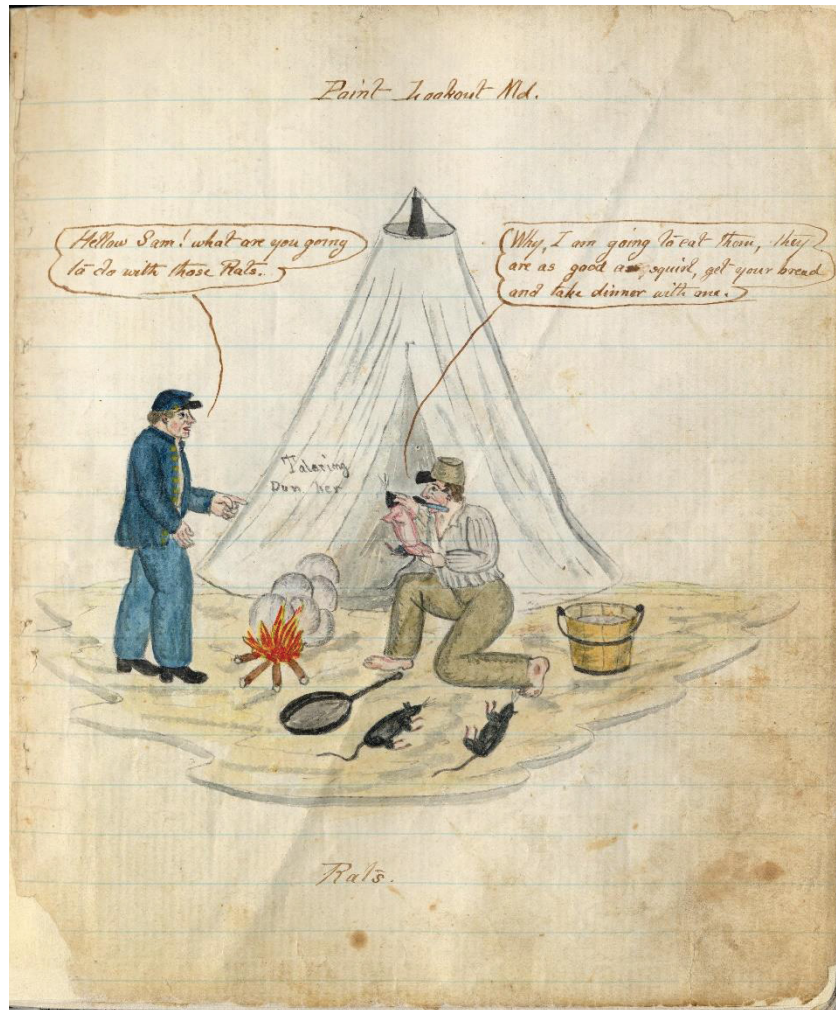


Figure 17: John Jacob Ommenhausser, *Rats*, ca. 1864-1864, University of Maryland Special Collections. Ommenhausser's drawings reflect his presence and the suffering of all prisoners within a POW camp.

Alongside drawing, prisoners of war also made use of graffiti as a tool of proving their place in the war. One prisoner who was held in the courthouse in Winchester, Virginia, spent a good amount of time carving a curse on Jefferson Davis into the walls in which he wished that the Confederate president be “set afloat on a boat without compass or rudder then that any contents be swallowed by a shark the shark by a whale whale in the devils belly and the devil in hell the gates locked the key lost.”⁵⁹ Other than serving as a means of passing time, this carefully

⁵⁹ “To Jeff Davis,” graffiti, 1861-1864, Old Courthouse Civil War Museum, Winchester, Virginia.

carved curse also served to immortalize both this prisoner's presence there and his hatred for the Confederate president. Many other soldiers, both imprisoned and free, spent time in houses or churches scratching things into the walls; however, most of these soldiers chose to carve their names and regimental associations instead of curses. For these soldiers, carving a name or initials was an act of claiming possession and of linking an experience to a physical space while finding permanence in the solidity of the building itself. This interpretation of graffiti as a claim to permanence was acknowledged even then, as one unidentified soldier wrote in a letter home that graffiti served as "evidence of the desires of different individuals for immortality."⁶⁰ The remaining piece of graffiti gives names to the people who lived and died in that particular space, serving as evidence of their experiences and memories made within.

Soldiers found permanence in many places, however, as seen in an article from the *Los Angeles Times* in June of 1908, which focused on a turtle that had been found near Gettysburg with a name and an American flag carved into its shell. A local resident, H.H. Mentz, had found the turtle and tracked down the former soldier who had carved his name, J.D. Lee of the US Engineers. Upon being asked by the newspaper, Lee justified his carving on a live animal by saying that while in camp near Gettysburg prior to the battle, "the notion to carve my initials and the American flag on the shell took such powerful possession of me that I could not resist."⁶¹ This strange urge to carve a name on a turtle was not an isolated incident, as another man, J.T. Keel, also carved his name into a turtle in 1862, only to have his son find it fifty-one years later.⁶² While not as horrific as carving a name onto an animal, trees and rocks also bore the

⁶⁰ Letter by unnamed soldier quoted in Bradley Gernard, *A Virginia Village Goes to War: Falls Church During the Civil War* (Virginia Beach, VA: The Donning Company, 2002), 124.

⁶¹ "After Forty-five Years: A Turtle's Shell is Sent the Man Who Carved Thereon His Name," June 21, 1908, *Los Angeles Times*, ProQuest Historical Newspapers.

⁶² "War-time Turtle: Boy Finds One with his Father's Name Cut on its Back in 1862," July 13, 1913, *The Washington Post*, ProQuest Historical Newspapers.

carvings of soldiers' names, regiments, and dates. Countless rocks were carved following the end of the war to mark the deaths of officers and individual soldiers' positions during various battles, some of which can still be seen today.

Just as the images that Civil War soldiers chose to inscribe revealed important insight into their understandings of permanence, the medium which these soldiers chose as their canvases merits consideration. Buildings lend an obvious sense of permanence and visibility, as buildings are typically long-lasting and inhabited by people. This is particularly true for buildings such as churches and courthouses, as the institutions that such buildings were associated with held their own associations with permanence. Soldiers' use of rocks, trees, and turtle shells presents a different definition of permanence that is associated with nature, rather than society and the presence of people.⁶³ Other soldiers found a balance between permanence in nature and humanity by carving their names into landmarks and natural tourist attractions at the time of the war. The Grand Caverns of the Shenandoah Valley (known as Weyers Cave at the time of the war) bear the signatures of over 200 Civil War soldiers, including the names of members of both the New York 38th and Pennsylvania 14th Cavalries who visited the caverns during campaigns in the area.⁶⁴

Regardless of whether soldiers chose buildings, caverns, or turtles as their canvas, true permanence is impossible, as every possible medium has a lifespan associated with it. Even the oldest turtles eventually die, trees get struck by lightning or cut down, and rocks can be moved or

⁶³ People have found permanence in nature through graffiti for eons; as a result, there is a number of scholarly works within the field of archaeology on historic graffiti in nature. For the place of graffiti in archaeology and a number of essays on nature and graffiti, see Jeff Oliver and Tim Neal, eds. *Wild Signs: Graffiti in Archaeology and History* (Oxford: Archeopress, 2010). For more on the relationship between nature, graffiti, and identity, see John M. Chenoweth, "Natural Graffiti and Cultural Plants: Memory, Race, and Contemporary Archaeology in Yosemite and Detroit," *American Anthropologist* 119, no. 3 (July 2017): 464-477.

⁶⁴ "About Grand Caverns: History," Grand Caverns, accessed April 22, 2018. <http://www.grandcaverns.com/learn-more.html>.

crushed. The act of carving one's name on a physical space can serve as a means of control, as a claim to possession and the attachment of meaning and emotional value to a physical space; however, it also required trust that a particular piece of space will not be moved or destroyed. This natural limit that the lifespan presented meant that those soldiers who did not write their names on manmade spaces instead found the closest thing to natural permanence they could in turtles, trees, and rocks.⁶⁵

Many soldiers carved their name by itself, sometimes accompanying it with a drawing or other means of identification; however, as with photographs, some soldiers also used graffiti as a means of finding permanence as a part of a group. One example of this is the Maryland Scroll, a piece of graffiti that shows a scroll of paper containing the names of sixteen soldiers from Breathed's Battery of the Confederate Stuart Horse Artillery. This scroll was carved the day before the Battle of Kelly's Ford by men who had entered the house while on picket duty in Brandy Station. By carving their names together in this way, these men claimed permanence not only through the building itself but also through association with each other and their unit. This particular example of graffiti also reveals the process through which a piece of visual culture that was initially created as a claim to the war can become memorialization following the death of its creator, a process which will be explored further in the next chapter.

⁶⁵ For more on Americans' relationship with nature during the Civil War, see Brian Allen Drake, ed. *The Blue, the Gray, and the Green: Toward an Environmental History of the Civil War* (Athens: University of Georgia Press, 2015).



Figure 18: James Breathed's Battery, *Maryland Scroll*, 1863, Graffiti House, Brandy Station, Va. Soldiers sometimes used group graffiti, like this image, to claim moments and physical spaces.

Whether created as a group or by an individual, all of the pieces of visual culture discussed above reveal soldiers attempting to find permanence through a claim to the war itself. While drawing provided soldiers the means to record and claim a particular moment and emotion, graffiti gave them the ability to preserve their name, and photography allowed them to immortalize their larger stake in the war and masculine identity. All of these forms of visual culture were powerful in the link between physical space and memory that they created. The pieces of visual culture that soldiers created as claims to the war provided permanence by

serving as both proof of involvement and soldiers' individual stakes in the war itself and its results. These soldiers could never be disassociated with the war or completely forgotten as long as their photographs, drawings, or carved names remained.

Examination of soldiers' claims to the war through visual culture also reveals the desire to both remember and be remembered for their place in the war. As a result, memory plays an important role in the soldiers' decisions to create visual culture, and in some cases, memory played a central role to this creation process. Death had a particularly strong role in the creation of visual culture, as it carried the ability to redefine a piece of visual culture that had been made as a claim to the war into a memorial instead. This theme of memory and memorialization in soldiers' creation of visual culture will be explored in the next chapter.

CHAPTER III

Memorialization

“When this you see, remember me.”⁶⁶

On February 4, 1862, Homer Harris Jewett of the 7th Missouri Cavalry went to a local photographers’ studio to have his portrait taken. Like most Civil War soldiers, he chose to go in uniform, picked out a handful of weapons to hold for the portrait, including a sword and a revolver, and immediately sent the result home to his family. This image looks fairly unremarkable, particularly when compared to the many photographs of fierce, heavily armed soldiers that still exist; however, what defines this image is not what Jewett chose to carry or wear. Instead, this image is set apart by Jewett’s recorded reasoning for having the picture taken and then sent home, as he writes “I will send mine to my Mother so that when I am gone she can have that to gaze upon instead of me. If I die fighting for my Country in noble battle fond memory will have to cling around it.”⁶⁷ Jewett saw his photograph as an extension of himself and had gotten it taken as a placeholder for himself and as a point of comfort for his mother in the event of his death. In short, Jewett saw his photograph as a tool of memorialization for his mother that could she could use in her remembrance of him were he to die.

Like Jewett, many soldiers saw visual culture as a powerful way of finding permanence through the memorialization either by or of others, though few put that sentiment into such

⁶⁶ “Private David Bowman of Company I, 7th Virginia Cavalry Regiment, or Private Michael Bowman of Company B and Company H, 7th Virginia Cavalry Regiment, in Uniform with Knife.” 1861-1865, photograph, Library of Congress, Washington, D.C., <http://www.loc.gov/pictures/collection/lilj/item/2012645974/>; “Private Charles M. Judkins of Company A, 9th New Hampshire Infantry Regiment, and Company G, 6th U.S. Veteran Reserve Corps Infantry Regiment with Bayoneted Musket.” 1862-1865, photograph, Library of Congress, Washington, D.C. <https://www.loc.gov/item/2012646974/> .

⁶⁷ Homer Harris Jewett, *Failed Ambition: The Civil War Journals & Letters of Cavalryman Homer Harris Jewett*, ed. Tom Jewett (self-pub., CreateSpace, 2008), 86.

moving language. This chapter will focus on this process of soldiers' memorialization of each other and of their methods of control over others' means of memorialization following their death. In this chapter, memorialization is defined as "an act of remembrance" that, when applied to a physical space, "imposes sites of memory on sites of historic activity," assigning a layer of memory and context onto otherwise unknown physical space.⁶⁸ Much of the literature that exists on memorialization focuses on the application of memory onto a physical space, such as monuments or shrines, in the interest of retaining memories for future viewers. Physical sites and spaces also play an important part of soldiers' methods of memorialization through visual culture, though not always in the straightforward, physically imposing way of monuments or shrines. The assignment of value by memorialization could also work for moments as opposed to physical space, as in photography physical space was less important than the moment in time which it was meant to immortalize. The method of attaching meaning to a space or moment in time differs based on the medium of visual culture that the creator chose; as a result, this chapter will be organized by type of visual culture.

As in the last chapter, the three types of visual culture examined here all provided different capacities for acts of memorialization. Unlike the process of claiming the war, purposeful memorialization was largely limited to drawings and photography. Strangely, graffiti was not used as a means of memorialization, a fact that seems rather odd, especially considering that some sites of Civil War graffiti allow modern visitors to use graffiti as a form of memorialization for ancestors who were involved in the war. The Graffiti House in Brandy Station has a wall on the first floor where modern descendants of Civil War soldiers can write a brief description of their ancestor's service, regardless of whether that ancestor was at the Battle

⁶⁸ Richard Crownshaw, "History and Memorialization," in *Writing the History of Memory*, ed. Stefan Berger and Bill Niven (London: Bloomsbury Academic, 2014): 219. (219-238)

of Brandy Station.⁶⁹ Why would Civil War soldiers be reluctant to use graffiti as a method of memorialization for fallen comrades in a way that their descendants now embrace?

One possible explanation is that even though many soldiers did create graffiti, they still saw it as a form of destruction, a view that one ironic soldier immortalized on a wall in a Virginia home, writing “It seems to bad to destroy property in this way.”⁷⁰ As Megan Kate Nelson describes in her book *Ruin Nation: Destruction and the American Civil War*, destruction both fascinated and horrified the population on both sides, using it “to contemplate the ‘savage’ behavior of humans and the invasions of domestic privacy during wartime.”⁷¹ This view of destruction as a reflection of humanity’s capacity for barbarity redefines the act of creating graffiti as one of destruction, rather than creation. As a result, graffiti seems like an odd place for memorialization, as memorialization emphasizes respectful memory in a way that does not coexist easily with graffiti’s destructive qualities.

An article in the *New York Times* written by Civil War graffiti scholar Kim A. O’Connell also suggested that graffiti was a light-hearted past time designed to be a way for soldiers to announce their existence and “their very aliveness.”⁷² While Civil War graffiti included insults and references to sex, it did not include any references to more painful topics, including slavery. O’Connell argues that this may have been because soldiers saw these temporary shelters as their home, even if only for a short period of time and “therefore not a place where soldiers wanted to

⁶⁹ Derek H. Alderman and Terri Moreau, “Graffiti Heritage: Civil War Memory in Virginia,” in *Geography and Memory: Explorations in Identity, Place and Becoming*, ed. Owain Jones and Joanne Garde-Hansen (London: Palgrave Macmillan, 2012), 139.

⁷⁰ Katherine Reed, “‘Charcoal Scribblings of the Most Rascally Character’: Conflict, Identity, and Testimony in American Civil War Graffiti,” *American Nineteenth Century History* 16, no. 2 (2015): 111.

⁷¹ Megan Kate Nelson, *Ruin Nation: Destruction and the American Civil War* (Athens: University of Georgia Press, 2012), 3.

⁷² Kim A. O’Connell, “Graffiti and the Civil War,” *The New York Times*, July 25, 2014, <https://opinionator.blogs.nytimes.com/2014/07/25/graffiti-and-the-civil-war/>.

be reminded of the most difficult aspects of the war.”⁷³ If this was soldiers’ way of thinking, the death and remembrance of fallen comrades would certainly be too painful to be immortalized as graffiti.

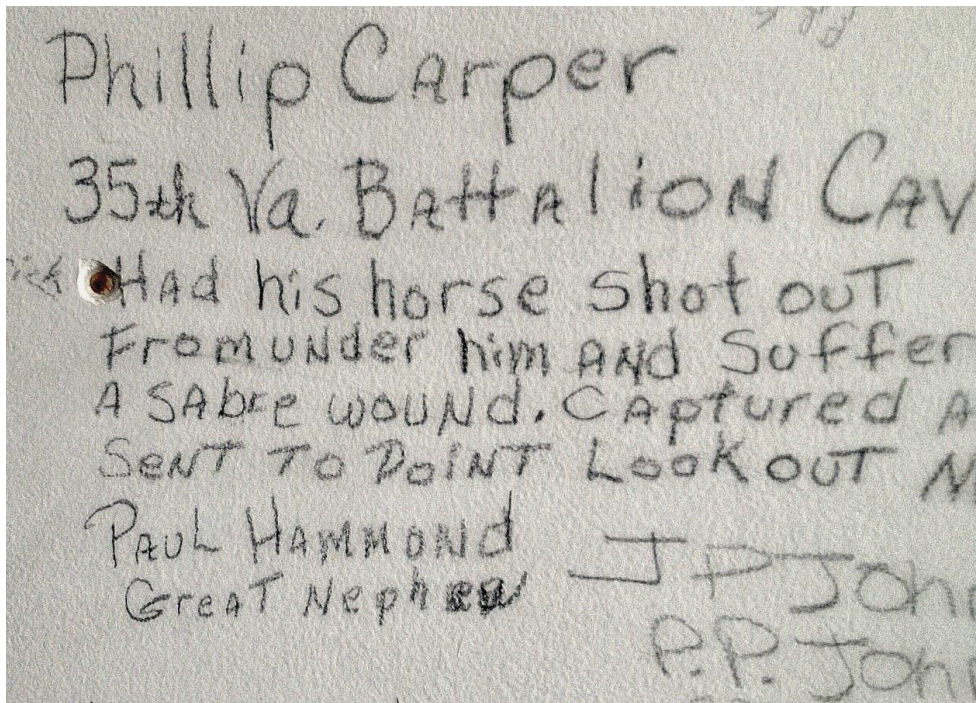


Figure 19: Paul Hammond, *Phillip Carper*, Graffiti House at Brandy Station, Va. Modern visitors’ use of graffiti as a form of memorialization would have likely been strange to their Civil War ancestors. Photo credit: John Banks. Used with permission.

This potential reservation about the sanctity of graffiti made it a poor medium for memorialization; however, both drawings and photography did serve as powerful means of memorialization. While their differences made them more attractive for different purposes, the ways in which both kinds of visual culture were used to memorialize are crucial to understanding the methods through which soldiers sought permanence amidst the destruction of war. This

⁷³ O’Connell, “Graffiti and the Civil War,” *New York Times*.

chapter will examine the creative ways in which both soldiers and their families found to remember and honor the fallen despite the limitations presented by the war.

Drawing offered a unique means for soldiers to memorialize each other. One example of this can be seen in Adolph Metzner's drawing *Burial Place of the First Victims of the 32nd Ind[iana], Green River*, a simple pencil and paper drawing of a small cemetery plot. While the background of the drawing is quite sketchy, revealing only that the burial plot is on a slight hill and surrounded by a few tents, the cemetery itself is very detailed. Metzner has carefully recorded the appearance of the cemetery, including the bare tree, the large plaque in the middle of the plot, and the neat gravestones, giving the drawing a feeling of order and stillness. Within this drawing, Metzner has made the dead of the 32nd Indiana his subject of memorialization by carefully reconstructing the ground in which they lay. In this way, he has imposed his site of memory and remembrance onto an otherwise simple historic site via pencil and paper, without needing the physical land itself. The physical space that allowed for memorialization and permanence became the subject of Metzner's drawing, rather than the medium, as in other methods of visual culture.

One of the crucial elements of memorialization is the people "who visit it, in whom memory is invoked."⁷⁴ This act of remembering is where permanence comes from; visual culture gathers no meaning or permanence from simply existing unseen. Recognition and the act of remembering by another human plays a crucial role in granting visual culture power and permanence. While all methods of visual culture hold this potential, drawings such as Metzner's hold a particular power in that they allow for permanence in two distinct ways: first through the act of memorialization itself and second by serving as a reminder for those who continue to view

⁷⁴ Crownshaw, "History and Memorialization," 219.

the drawing. By recording the burial place of those men of the 32nd Indiana, Metzner's drawing serves as a reminder of that little cemetery by the Green River, speaking for the men who are buried within it and reminding people of their death in a way that the physical space itself never could. In this way, Metzner's drawing is like a forced memory, granting these men permanence by preventing them from ever being completely forgotten, regardless of the fate of their bodies and the physical space in which they are interred.

Memorialization, such as that seen within this drawing, is shaped largely by the tradition of death that exists within society. As mentioned in the first chapter, a central tradition surrounding death during the Civil War period was the tradition of the Good Death, or dying with faith in God and the world beyond the grave. This tradition plays a large part in the manners of memorialization employed, particularly in visual culture. Metzner's drawing of the cemetery plays into both methods of memorialization and the Good Death, particularly in the still nature that he has imbued in the scene. The cemetery appears as a serene and beautiful place to remain after death, a setting that seems only to fit those who settled into death peacefully along the lines of the Good Death tradition. Regardless of how the men buried there died, Metzner's portrayal of the scene assures the viewer that those laid to rest there are at peace. His decision to draw this spot also assigns value to not only the moment but also the people represented within. This assignment of value implies that not only did those people die according to the Good Death tradition, but also lived good lives that made them worth remembering and therefore peaceful in death. As Mark S. Schantz argues in his book *Awaiting the Heavenly Country*, Metzner's drawing reflects the likelihood that "the memory of the fallen soldier will live on in the bodies of his comrades," including Metzner himself.⁷⁵

⁷⁵ Mark S. Schantz, *Awaiting the Heavenly Country: The Civil War and America's Culture of Death* (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University, 2008), 179.

The memory of these fallen soldiers is also shaped by the fact that they were buried alongside each other. Had any of these soldiers been buried alone, their grave would no longer have the same military association that it does in Metzner's drawing. By recording this scene, Metzner immortalized the deceased as a group, where others must remember them together as the fallen of the 32nd Indiana. This association has its own relationship to the Good Death; as mentioned in the first chapter, the realities of war redefined dying well to encompass social definitions of masculinity and military service by allowing soldiers to achieve a Good Death through courageous service, rather than strictly religious living.⁷⁶ Soldiers who were buried and memorialized, alongside their fellow servicemen in this way are assumed to have died soldiers' deaths, therefore fulfilling wartime definitions of the Good Death tradition. Metzner did not choose to immortalize just one grave or each grave individually; instead, he drew all the graves together and clearly identified those within the small cemetery as members of the 32nd Indiana, forever granting them association with military service and therefore the Good Death traditions shaped by this service.

⁷⁶ Faust, *This Republic of Suffering*, 25.

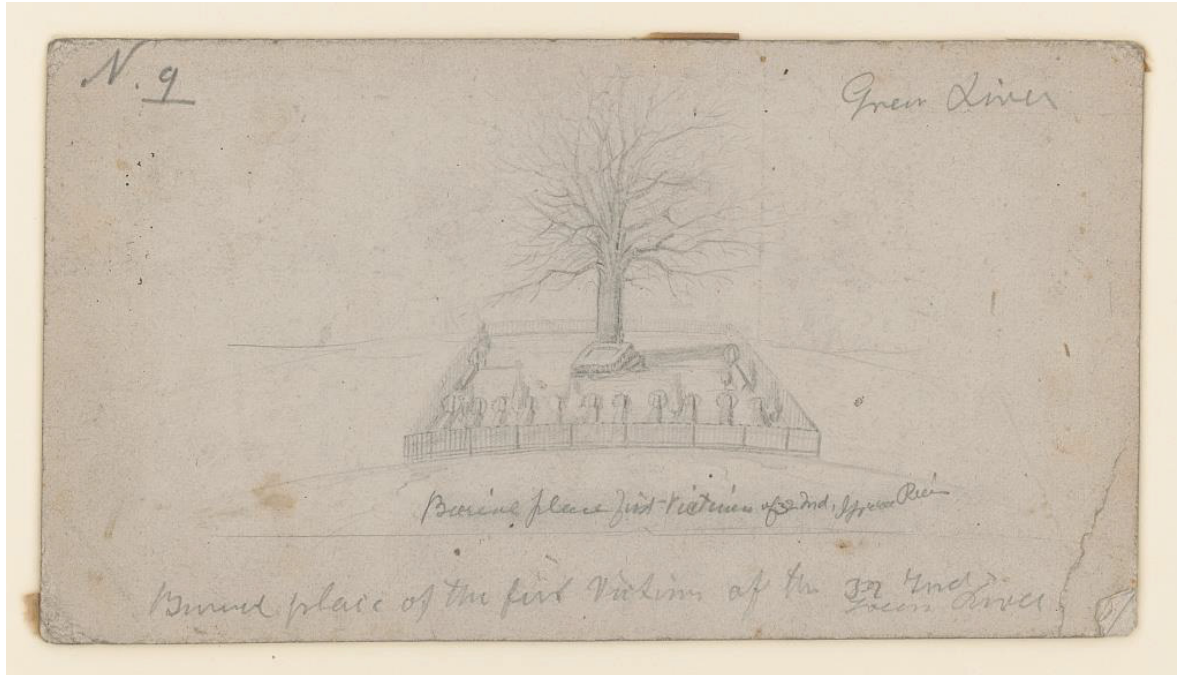


Figure 20: Adolph Metzner, *Burial Place of the First Victims of the 32nd Indiana*, Green River, ca. 1862, Library of Congress. This sketch of these soldiers' grave site reflects the link between physical space and memory in memorialization through visual culture.

Other drawings by Metzner also reflect the importance of the Good Death tradition in soldiers' methods of memorialization through visual culture, including his drawings of one fellow soldier's funeral and another's eulogy. In the image of Xavier Blodier's funeral, Blodier is shown in relation to his regiment as they stand sadly around his grave. It is clear from these images that Blodier was a good soldier and man deserving of a respectful burial and reflection. As mentioned in the first chapter, Metzner's images of Blodier's funeral also reflect important themes of community and religious ritual that speak to the expectations for death as presented by the Good Death tradition. Metzner's portrayal of the passion in Lieutenant Colonel William G. Mank's delivery of a eulogy for fellow officer Jacob Glass also reveals the deceased man's character and importance within the community. In examples like these, memorialization is found in the bodies and memories of the soldiers who knew Blodier as well as a place in space.

While Metzner chose to focus on recording the moment as a means of memorialization, he is careful to attach a place to the moment in his description on the bottom of the page. As a result, his drawings serve as the link between the Good Death, the memory of his funeral, and the physical space in which he is buried, promising both Blodier and Glass permanence through remembrance, as well as the possibility of allowing others to find their graves at a later date.

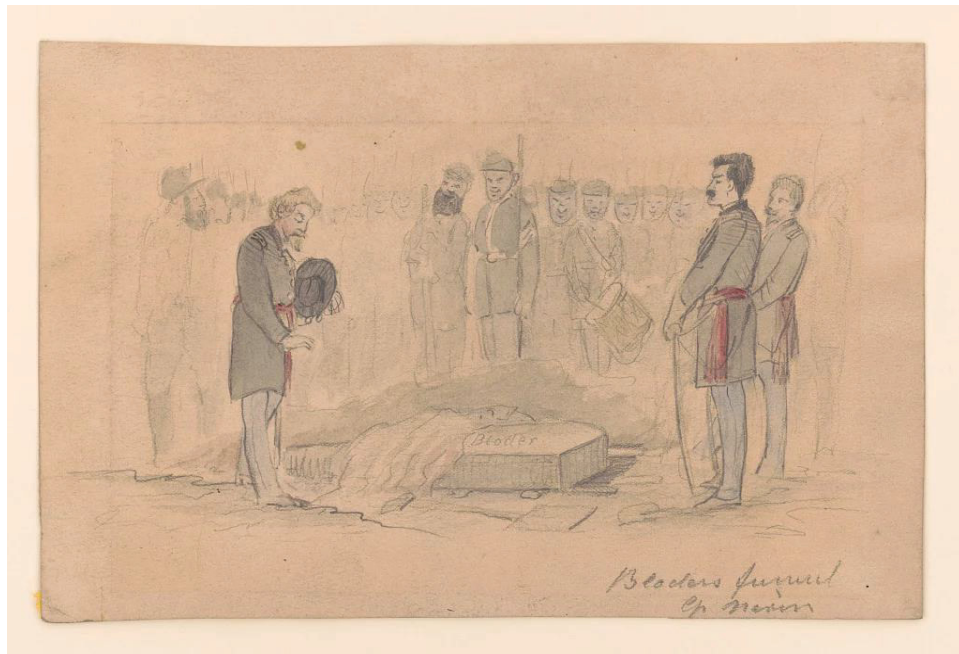


Figure 21: Adolph Metzner, *Private Xavier Blodier's Funeral, Camp Nevin, Kentucky, 1861*, Library of Congress.

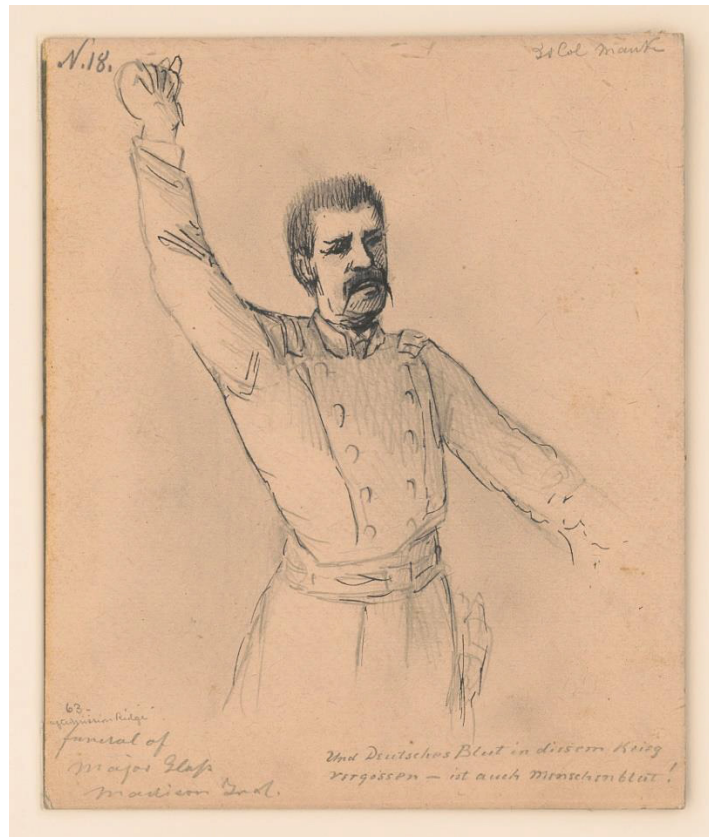


Figure 22: Adolph Metzner, *Lieutenant Colonel William G. Mank Provides the Eulogy at the Funeral of Lieutenant Colonel Jacob Glass, Madison, Indiana, 1863*, Library of Congress. Metzner used drawing to link memory, physical space, and the Good Death in providing permanence to fellow soldiers.

Drawing lends itself particularly well to memorialization of others; however, it was not the only means of memorialization during the war. As Mark S. Schantz discusses in his book *Awaiting the Heavenly Country: The Civil War and America's Culture of Death*, an early application of photography was used to take pictures with the recently deceased. According to Schantz, this postmortem photography was designed to “comfort the living with their realistic images of the deceased.”⁷⁷ Like memorialization in drawings, these photographs contained elements of the Good Death tradition, assuring family members of “the peacefulness of their

⁷⁷ Schantz, *Awaiting the Heavenly Country*, 182.

loved ones after death” and that “the process of death had been an easy one.”⁷⁸ While this practice did continue throughout the war, it was made more difficult. As Schantz explains, this tradition of photographs of the dead also evolved into the practice of battlefield photography where the dead were posed on the fields where they had fallen.

The few studio photographs of dead soldiers that still exist resemble the memorial photograph of the deceased and their family as included in Schantz’s book. Two images from 1865 show a dead soldier, John Peter Bailey, in uniform, one with his mother and the other with his father. While this image reflects the use of photography as a method of memorialization, it also shows the logistical difficulties that met families seeking a postmortem photography with their loved ones during the war. Despite having died during the war on March 31, 1865, Bailey died at home after being released from a Confederate prisoner of war camp. The end of the war presented the opportunity for Bailey’s release and trip home but the harsh conditions faced by Bailey during the war ultimately ended his life while leaving his body intact enough for the photographs to be taken. Bailey’s death and subsequent photographs with his family members reflect the variety of factors working against families seeking the return of a soldier’s body. Poor record keeping by the military and the overwhelming number of dead made identification of the dead was difficult, a process that was made even more complicated by the destructive technologies of the war that left some bodies unrecognizable or even completely destroyed.⁷⁹

⁷⁸ Schantz, *Awaiting the Heavenly Country*, 182.

⁷⁹ Drew Gilpin Faust, *This Republic of Suffering: Death and the American Civil War* (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 2008), xvi.

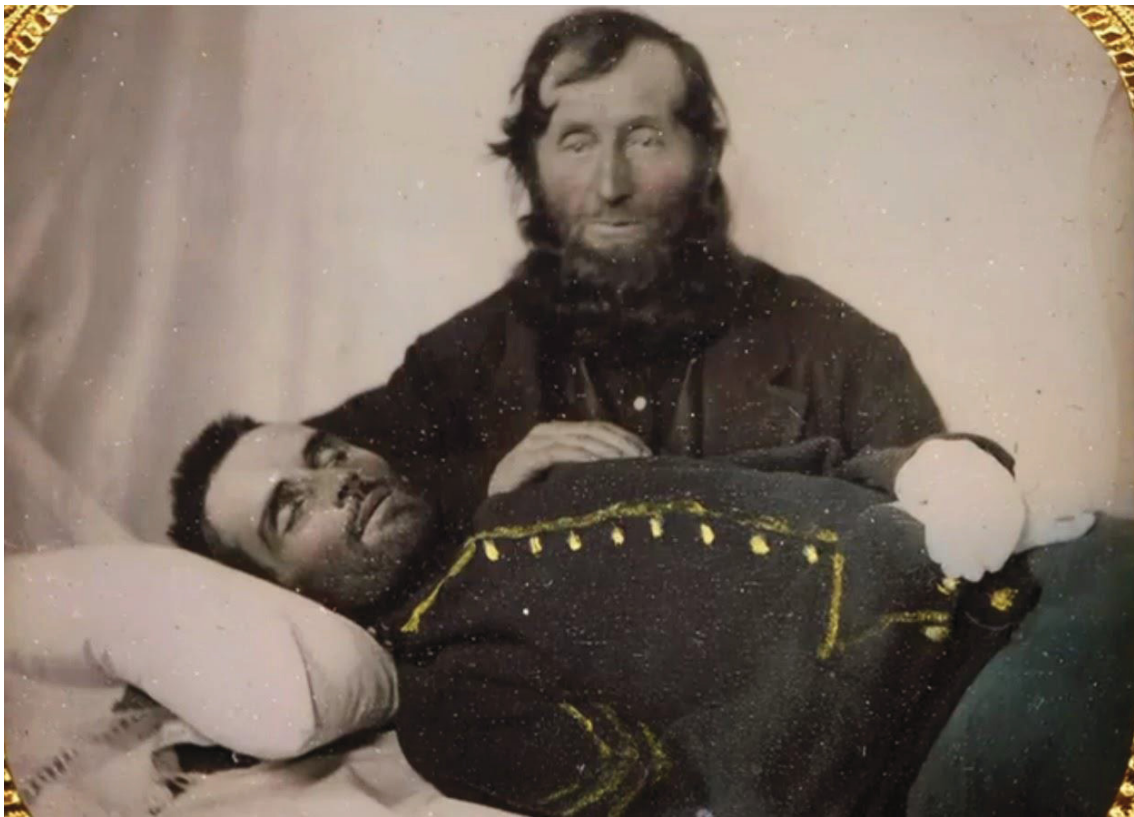


Figure 23: John Peter Bailey with parents Rebecca and Reuben Bailey, 1865, <http://chubachus.blogspot.com/2015/02/two-hand-colored-postmortem-portraits.html>. This image of Bailey is one of a few examples of memorialization through wartime postmortem photography.

Just as portmorte photography provided the means for memorialization prior to and for a few families during the war, the war also reframed it as a means of negative memorialization, or the disrespectful portrayal of a dead person that stood in opposition to Good Death traditions. Three grotesque postmortem portraits of Confederate leaders Turner Ashby, William H. Stuart, and William T. Anderson serve as key examples of this, as they show the three leaders dead, covered in blood, with their faces bloated and distorted by death. Another, highly disturbing image exists of a newly executed deserter, perched against his coffin and framed by his execution squad.⁸⁰ None of these images contain the careful maintenance of peace that Schantz describes as the photographer's "lie that the dead body was merely asleep."⁸¹ Just as postmortem photography promised the assurance that a person had died a Good Death, it also could easily display the horror of death, shaping both how they are remembered and how their life after death is imagined. Images like these, as well as the new brand of battlefield photography, began to use the permanent nature of photography for a different, more morbid purpose, moving from memorialization towards political "photographs that had the potential to terrorize those who encountered them."⁸²

Despite this new anti-memorialization photography of the dead body, another method of memorialization did exist, where a family member would have a likeness taken while holding a photograph of the missing soldier. One well-known example of this shows a young girl looking

⁸⁰ "Turner Ashby," 1862, photograph, American Civil War Museum, Richmond, VA, <http://moconfederacy.pastperfectonline.com/photo/2156FC5E-5FA2-4BBD-B218-184841442325>; O.D. Edwards, "Post Mortem Portrait of Confederate Guerilla Captain William H. Stuart," 1864, photograph, private collection, <https://historical.ha.com/itm/military-and-patriotic/civil-war/post-mortem-portrait-of-confederate-guerilla-captain-william-h-stuart/a/6034-52445.s>; Robert B. Kice, "William T. 'Bloody Bill' Anderson," 1864, Wilson's Creek National Battlefield, Republic, MO, <http://ozarkscivilwar.org/photographs/anderson-william/>; "The Deserter's Fate," 1861-1865, photograph, unknown collector, <http://chubachus.blogspot.com/2015/02/two-hand-colored-postmortem-portraits.html>

⁸¹ Schantz, *Awaiting the Heavenly Country*, 182.

⁸² *Ibid.*, 192.

mournfully into the camera while holding an image of her father.⁸³ While these images did not offer the same assurance of peace and appearance of sleep as in the photographs of the newly deceased, these portraits still offered “realistic images of the deceased” as they once had been.⁸⁴ As Alan Trachtenberg wrote in *Reading American Photographs*, the appeal and power of handheld photographs was in its “sympathetic magic—the likeness producing a sense that its original sitter was present.”⁸⁵ In cases where returning bodies was impossible, some families turned to their likeness in an attempt to immortalize both their life and their absence.

Drawing and postmortem photography served as important tools for the memorialization of others; however, memorialization was not limited to only granting permanence to others. Photography provided a unique power to also grant soldiers permanence for themselves through the memory of others. While the process of memorialization and the resulting permanence for the deceased were largely beyond the control of the soldier, this did not stop soldiers from seeing photography as a method of memorialization for themselves. The “sympathetic magic” of photography made it an important commodity for soldiers who knew that their likeness would be an important tool for mourning and remembrance in the event of death. Confederate diarist Lucy Rebecca Buck saw this firsthand, writing that prior to leaving, one soldier “promised me the photograph which I asked him for last spring. He thinks he’ll never come back, poor fellow.”⁸⁶

One way that soldiers sought to control the way they were remembered was by having photographs taken of themselves with family prior to leaving for the war. Many examples of this

⁸³ “Unidentified Girl in Mourning Dress Holding Framed Photograph of her Father as a Cavalryman with Sword and Hardee Hat,” 1861-1870, photograph, Library of Congress, Washington, D.C., <http://www.loc.gov/pictures/item/2010648759/>.

⁸⁴ Schantz, *Awaiting the Heavenly Country*, 182.

⁸⁵ Alan Trachtenberg, *Reading American Photographs: Images as History, Mathew Brady to Walker Evans* (New York: Hill and Wang, 1989), 32.

⁸⁶ Lucy Rebecca Buck, *Shadows on my Heart: The Civil War Diary of Lucy Rebecca Buck of Virginia*, ed. Elizabeth R. Baer (Athens: University of Georgia Press, 2012), 189.

practice exist, in which a soldier posed for a last image with his wife, child, parent, or sibling in uniform. As mentioned in the previous chapter, soldiers in photographs like these chose to immortalize not only their soldierhood but also their position as a protector, whether in the role as husband, father, son, or brother. One particularly touching example shows an unidentified soldier in full uniform with a young child in a Zouave uniform holding a cavalry saber. Even as the child stands on a chair, he still stands a full head shorter than his father, a difference in size that is made still more obvious by the very large saber that the child is holding. The father stands looking down at his son, arms crossed, as if the child is one of his soldiers that he is inspecting. The photograph is playful and endearing, immortalizing the bond that these two had.⁸⁷ Another, similar image shows a soldier in uniform with his young daughter, where the father's face perfectly captures his pride and love, while the girl's face shows strain and concern. These images particularly highlight the realism that photography provided, as they show each soldier fulfilling a role to the others in the image. In this way, the viewer is forced to remember the soldier in relation to the other people in the picture. Like in soldiers' inclusion of others in their photographs as a means of claiming the war, taking photographs with loved ones granted the soldier both permanence, while also providing soldiers a bit of control over others' methods of memorialization in the event of their death.

⁸⁷ C.L. Howe, "Unidentified Soldier in Union First Lieutenant's Uniform and Child in Zouave Uniform with Model 1860 Cavalry Saber," 1861-1865, Library of Congress, Washington, D.C., <http://www.loc.gov/pictures/item/2013645812/>.



Figure 24: C.L. Howe, "Unidentified Soldier in Union First Lieutenant's Uniform and Child in Zouave Uniform with Model 1860 Cavalry Saber," ca. 1861-1865, Library of Congress.



Figure 25: "Unidentified Soldier in Uniform with Young Girl," ca. 1861-1865, Library of Congress. Images of soldiers with their family members held particular strength as methods of memorialization.

These cases reveal how photography allowed soldiers to set up their own memory and create their own memorial and means of permanence prior to death. These cases also reflect the power that photography held in serving both as a means of memorialization and as a claim to the war, where the perceived purpose of creation becomes difficult to separate. In these photographs, soldiers sought to provide photographs for their loved ones that, if they survived, would serve as claims to the war, and if they died, would function as tools for memorialization. As a result, the purpose of photography and a photograph's intended meaning changed depending on the death of the soldier himself. Quite a few subjects of Civil War-era photographs demonstrate this changing meaning, accompanying their likenesses with phrases that defined their service as a claim to the war while also urging viewers to see their photograph as an extension of themselves in the event of their death. One photograph of Private William P. Haberlin was accompanied by the poem "Now to the field again I'll go, for the union to defend, until Jeff Davis is made to know, his kingdom is about to end. And now if I would not live, to hear [r]eemen shout for joy, this miniature to you I give, in memory of a soldier boy."⁸⁸ Two separate photographs reveal that this use of photography in memorialization was a human desire not shaped by regional loyalties, as one of either Private David Bowman or Private Michael Bowman, both of the 7th Virginia Cavalry, and another of Private Charles M. Judkins in the 9th New Hampshire Infantry, included the brief but touching note "When this you see remember me."⁸⁹ Yet another unidentified soldier

⁸⁸ "Private William P. Haberlin of Battery B, Pennsylvania Light Artillery in Uniform with Shoulder Scales and Great Coat," 1861-1864, Library of Congress, Washington, D.C., <http://www.loc.gov/pictures/collection/lilj/item/2010650791/>.

⁸⁹ Private David Bowman of Company I, 7th Virginia Cavalry Regiment, or Private Michael Bowman of Company B and Company H, 7th Virginia Cavalry Regiment, in Uniform with Knife." 1861-1865, photograph, Library of Congress, Washington, D.C., <http://www.loc.gov/pictures/collection/lilj/item/2012645974/>; "Private Charles M. Judkins of Company A, 9th New Hampshire Infantry Regiment, and Company G, 6th U.S. Veteran Reserve Corps Infantry Regiment with Bayoneted Musket." 1862-1865, photograph, Library of Congress, Washington, D.C. <https://www.loc.gov/item/2012646974/> .

wrote a similar inscription directly onto the back of his portrait: "Cyrus hear i will send you my likeness to remember me dear brother."⁹⁰ In this way, soldiers were able to exert some control over memorialization by using the ability of photography to function as both a memorial and a claim to the war.



Figure 26: "Private David Bowman of Company I, 7th Virginia Cavalry Regiment, or Private Michael Bowman of Company B and Company H, 7th Virginia Cavalry Regiment, in Uniform with Knife," ca. 1861-1865, Library of Congress.

⁹⁰ "Unidentified Soldier in Union Uniform with Two Colt Revolvers and Cavalry Sword in Front of Painted Backdrop Showing Encampment," 1861-1865, Library of Congress, Washington, D.C., <https://www.loc.gov/item/2011661470/>.



Figure 27: "Private Charles M. Judkins of Company A, 9th New Hampshire Infantry Regiment, and Company G, 6th U.S. Veteran Reserve Corps Infantry Regiment with Bayoneted Musket," 1862-1865, Library of Congress. Both of these images were accompanied by the phrase "When this you see, remember me."

For soldiers like William Haberlin and David or Michael Bowman, photography became a clear link between memorialization and permanence, where permanence could be found through the creation of tools for remembrance even after death. Such images also represented a claim to the soldiers' permanent image, providing some protection against negative memorialization efforts as mentioned earlier. In this respect, one way that soldiers sought permanence was through their family and other viewers' remembrance and acts of memorialization. As a result, photography became an important, self-created method of memorialization for soldiers who feared being forgotten in the face of death.

Following the war's end, many examples of claiming the war became memorialization as soldiers died off and the meaning of the war began to be contested. Similarly, Union victory challenged many Confederate claims to the war through visual culture, redefining them instead

as fodder for Lost Cause memorialization of the South's "noble dead."⁹¹ By the time of the veterans' reunion in 1913, both white Northerners and Southerners saw such gatherings as the chance to remember and honor those that had fought, suffered and died. Memorialization began to take on a new appearance and battlefields slowly filled with monuments that granted permanence in new, impressive ways. These monuments proved to be powerful methods of memorialization, far more powerful than the visual culture that soldiers had left behind. Yet, these monuments stem from that tradition of claiming the war and memorialization, when soldiers used drawings, graffiti, and photography to link memory and space, asserting ownership both over a moment and the larger meaning of the war. These remnants of soldiers' desires for permanence are important in that they tell the story as it happened, rather than as it appeared years after through the hazy lens of memory. The people, moments, experiences, thoughts, and emotions that these pieces reflect reveal the soldiers' humanity and what they valued most as they faced death amidst the terror of war.

⁹¹ John Jacob Omenhausser, *Civil War Sketchbook*, Point Lookout, Maryland, 1864-1865, University of Maryland Digital Collections, College Park, Maryland.

CONCLUSION

The period after the Civil War led many pieces of soldiers' visual culture to be forgotten or even destroyed, overshadowed by the larger, more imposing monuments that began to appear across the former battlefields and in towns, cities, and cemeteries. In some places, graffiti was simply covered over and effectively erased as buildings began to be repurposed and recovered from the destruction of the war. Drawings joined larger trunks of papers that changed hands until ultimately being sent to attics or archives for future researchers' use. Photography is one of the few types of visual culture that continued to be prized even after the war, as many families saw it as a piece of the soldier who had left it behind; yet, many photographs have joined the papers and books of the archives, and a large amount of these images have since come only to show a nameless face, yet another soldier marked "unknown."

These pieces of visual culture that have been largely ignored by both the generations and historians since reflect a human aspect to the war that is becoming increasingly popular. Historians have begun to move beyond the traditional heroic narrative of the war, focusing more and more on the experience of low-ranking soldiers, women, and slaves, among others. This expanding narrative continues to challenge the traditional narrative of the war to include a variety of experiences and sources. Thankfully, visual culture is now becoming increasingly visible and appreciated, a shift that is crucial for the survival of the visual culture Civil War soldiers left behind. While soldiers turned to drawings, graffiti, and photography as a means of finding permanence, the mediums they chose are not truly permanent. The materials they recorded their emotions, appearances, and identities onto all have a lifespan associated with them. After 150 years, these pieces are understandably fragile and in need of careful

preservation. Thanks to the work of both private and institutional collectors, archivists, genealogists, and modern digitization technologies, we are able to preserve these materials more effectively than ever before.

Visual culture continues to be discovered, as well, with graffiti being found and, in some places, restored everywhere from the Lincoln Memorial in Washington, DC, to churches and homes across the South.⁹² Increased visibility and preservation of drawings and photographs, including a blog post from the Library of Congress about Adolph Metzner's drawings, an online exhibit about of the John Henning Woods Collection in Virginia Tech Special Collections, and a recent project that uses crowdsourcing technology to identify previously unidentified soldiers in photographs, have prevented these objects from being lost and forgotten altogether.⁹³ The recent sesquicentennial also inspired a number of books of photography and the photographers of the Civil War. The resistance to being forgotten is an emotion that people still understand, and many people now dedicate resources and time to giving these unknown soldiers their names and identities back, with many people dedicating years to tracking down genealogical records both for themselves and for others. It is equally important to *use* this visual culture as it is to preserve it, as all of these pieces lose their powers of permanence when they simply exist unseen. It is now up to us to see, remember, and preserve the visual culture that soldiers created so that their memories may live on.

Despite the new rise in visibility of and interest for visual culture, it still has a long way to go in becoming a source base for historians. While writing provides a crucial foundation for

⁹² Alan Taylor, "Historic Photos of the Lincoln Memorial," *The Atlantic*, February 16, 2016, <https://www.theatlantic.com/photo/2016/02/historic-photos-of-the-lincoln-memorial/462990/>.

⁹³ Julie Stoner, "Artwork from the Western Front: Adolph Metzner Civil War Drawings," *Picture This: Library of Congress Prints & Photos* (blog), July 5, 2017, <https://blogs.loc.gov/picturethis/2017/07/artwork-from-the-western-front-adolph-metzner-civil-war-drawings/>; John Henning Woods Papers, Ms2017-030, Special Collections, Virginia Tech, Blacksburg, Va; Kurt Luther, "Photo Sleuth: New Digital Tool Redefines Photo Sleuthing," *Military Images* 35, no. 3 (Summer 2017):18-19.

historical analysis, both visual culture and historical writings become increasingly powerful when partnered, as they both reveal insights the other does not. Pieces of visual culture like those explored in this project provide a new means with which to view history and the people who lived through it. Visual culture has the potential to reveal emotions that have otherwise remained unrecorded, whether by showing the battlefields in disturbing new ways like in Adolph Metzner's sketches of dead bodies at Shiloh, or by revealing the value of photography as a means of memorialization as in the Homer Harris Jewett's photograph and matching diary entry about the "fond memory" that will cling around his photograph in the event of his death.⁹⁴

Overall, though, these pieces of visual culture are powerful in their ability to reflect soldiers' fear of being forgotten, and particularly their desire for permanence in the face of death. The soldiers who stood for photographs, carved their names onto walls, and recorded their surroundings on paper felt similar reservations about death and dying as we do today. These pieces of evidence show us the soldiers' humanity and highlight the human element of the war. Yet, one of the realities of being human is that we are complex. We contradict ourselves and struggle between logic and emotions, a conflict that Robert I. Hogue, a soldier from Ohio, recorded on a wall in Morgan's Chapel in Bunker Hill, West Virginia. Inspired by the many signatures on the walls around him, Hogue wrote "[Who]ever shall read this wall, please remember me in prayers and excuse me for writing this in the house of God, for I should not of written on these walls had it not of been all marked up."⁹⁵ Just as the words that Hogue carved show his conflict over this action, I was unable to completely identify this piece as stemming from one motivation over another. The truth is, we'll never know what Hogue was thinking as he

⁹⁴ Homer Harris Jewett, *Failed Ambition: The Civil War Journals & Letters of Cavalryman Homer Harris Jewett*, ed. Tom Jewett (self-pub., CreateSpace, 2008), 86.

⁹⁵ Kim A. O'Connell, "Graffiti and the Civil War," *The New York Times*, July 25, 2014, <https://opinionator.blogs.nytimes.com/2014/07/25/graffiti-and-the-civil-war/>.

scratched this into a wall in September of 1864. While I have tried to distinguish between the many possible motivations that soldiers experienced as they created pieces of visual culture in an attempt to find permanence, the men who created all of these pieces were human and therefore do not fit neatly into any box. This is just the beginning of the work that needs to be done in understanding the countless motivations and emotions of soldiers like Hogue who felt driven to create in the face of horrible destruction.

Despite the difficulties, the analysis of visual culture is crucial because these pieces show us how those people who lived through the war experienced and sought to record and remember it, a far different perspective than those monuments that now stand as testament to how later generations wanted to remember and imagine the war and the people who lived through it. As the nation now struggles to agree about how to talk about our shared history and the complexity of the people who lived through it, I hope this project will contribute to the larger conversation on *how* the war can be remembered. Perhaps the time for public square monuments is coming to an end, but I hope that the visual culture that Civil War Americans created and the stories these pieces now contain will provide some guidance as we work together to build a new narrative on the meanings, experiences, and lives of the people who saw it firsthand.

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