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Annotated Outline
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Title

Engaging with History: How Brady, Gardner, and Barnard Framed the Civil War

Abstract

The advent of wet plate photography in the 1850's changed the way American's perceived war by supplementing words with images. Civil War photographers used this new medium to directly translate the products of conflict--death, intrusion, and ravaged landscapes. Mathew Brady, Alexander Gardner, and George Barnard had specific roles, yet collectively, they frame the war from the perspective of the North through the 7000 negatives they produced. Mathew Brady established himself as the primary distributor of photographs to document the War as it was happening. He hired several photographers, including Barnard and Gardner, to expand his subject matter. While Brady had an established photography gallery in New York where he exhibited and sold photographs of the War, Barnard and Gardner published photographic albums after the War to create historical narratives. By analyzing three photographers and the ways in which they represented the War, I intend to reveal how their methods frame their ideas for the viewer.

Thesis

The Civil War was the first war in America to be captured by images. The essence of documentation within these images changed the way the War was perceived. I intend to study the way these images were presented to the public and how their presentation, along with the subject of the photographs, structured narratives of war. To do this, I will be focusing on three photographers, Mathew Brady, Alexander Gardner, and George Barnard, who are interconnected but presented their work in different fashions. Brady showed individual images as complete themes in a gallery. Gardner collected his images to show the historical narrative of the development of the War in his *Photographic Sketchbook of the Civil War*. Barnard collected his images to form narrative of War destruction in the South in his album *Photographic Views of Sherman's Campaign*. My thesis will explore how each photographer framed his images to convey how he understood and presented the complexity of the War.