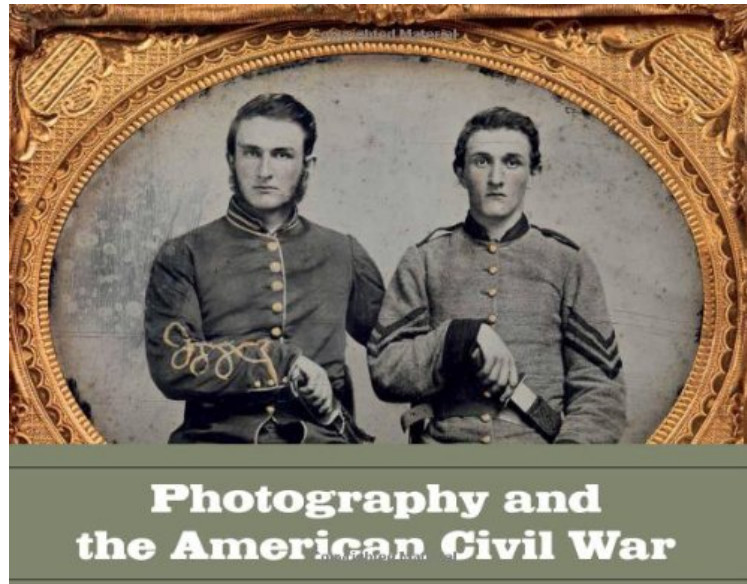


## Photography and the American Civil War

*Jeff L. Rosenheim*

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**Jeff L. Rosenheim : Photography and the American Civil War** before purchasing it in order to gage whether or not it would be worth my time, and all praised Photography and the American Civil War:

0 of 0 people found the following review helpful. The past illuminates the present.By Ed C. Fields Jr.I am enthralled with this book on so many different levels. It contains a wealth of information on both the history of photography and the history of the American Civil War and is incredibly well researched and well written. In the hands of a lesser author, it could have been a dry and boring treatise and not the fascinating story that Mister Rosenheim relates. Some of the anecdotes are somewhat appalling but stand to reason, given human nature and the pursuit of profit, like the fact that certain photographers were not above moving bodies to get a better picture. John Szarkowski, in his essay at the beginning of his book on Atget (I believe that's where I read it), points out that, as soon as photography was invented, commerce and the masses hijacked it-my term-and started using it to make money and record themselves and everything else, a reality that drove the fine art crowd crazy. Photography was and is a truly democratic art, a truth which Szarkowski also points out and this book beautifully illustrates. The photographs give the book its power and put a human face on a horrible and brutal war. It reminded me once again why I love photography and the visceral energy that emanates from a good photo. The faces of the soldiers are incredibly moving, especially since we have no way of knowing which and how many of those young men suffered and died in the course of the war. After receiving the book, I now see (and record) faces of young men at rodeos, biker rallies, and swap meets and cannot help but imagine their likenesses in a uniform and a tintype. Looking at this book and the photos therein transforms the past into the present and the individual into the universal and in the process transforms the viewer.0 of 0 people found the following review helpful. FascinatingBy Ed MoritzPhotographers of the Civil War actually invented modern photography and this book shows how they did it. In a wide range of photos spanning the war, you can see all the seeds of the modern. This is also a good book for Civil War students. It provides a lot of visual evidence of the war, some surprising, some depressing, some testifying to human folly.0 of 0 people found the following review helpful.

Four StarsBy John BThe photographic record of the civil war is fascinating.

Six hundred thousand lives were lost between 1861 and 1865, making the conflict between North and South the nation's deadliest war. If the "War Between the States" was the test of the young republic's commitment to its founding precepts, it was also a watershed in photographic history, as the camera recorded the epic, heartbreaking narrative from beginning to end—providing those on the home front, for the first time, with immediate visual access to the horrors of the battlefield. *Photography and the American Civil War* features both familiar and rarely seen images that include haunting battlefield landscapes strewn with bodies, studio portraits of armed Confederate and Union soldiers (sometimes in the same family) preparing to meet their destiny, rare multi-panel panoramas of Gettysburg and Richmond, languorous camp scenes showing exhausted troops in repose, diagnostic medical studies of wounded soldiers who survived the war's last bloody battles, and portraits of both Abraham Lincoln and his assassin, John Wilkes Booth. Published on the occasion of the 150th anniversary of the battle of Gettysburg (1863), this beautifully produced book features Civil War photographs by George Barnard, Mathew Brady, Alexander Gardner, Timothy O'Sullivan, and many others.

From Publishers Weekly Images as vast and as haunting as their subjects comprise the bulk of this collection, which accompanies a new exhibit at the Metropolitan Museum of Art. Moving in roughly chronological order through the Civil War years, Met photography curator Rosenheim attentively argues that the rise of popular photography coincided with the onset of the Civil War to signify the beginning of the modern era. Examining the use of war images in newspapers and political campaigns, the sentimental obsession over portraiture by soldiers and their families, and the national mourning enacted through mass images, Rosenheim weaves the rhetorical and material realities of the war years by attaching them to the photographic image. While his explanations of changes in photographic technology and methodology are of interest primarily to specialists, the majority of the text is gracefully directed toward the images themselves. Grandiose landscapes, macabre and sobering images of the wounded, portraits startlingly bare in their sentiment—the hundreds of images carry the heft of history. The Civil War has received plenty of attention in popular publications and, increasingly, in serious academic contexts; the bald reality captured in these diverse photographs, however, manages still to add an affecting contribution to the discussion. Color illus. (May) From Bookforum Smartly designed by Laura Lindgren, *Photography and the American Civil War* evokes nineteenth-century photo albums in which loved ones were preserved like flowers under glass. The Civil War severely tested the new medium of photography and produced some of nineteenth-century America's most iconic images. Familiar masters such as Brady, Gardner, O'Sullivan, and company are well represented, but anonymous photographers' studio portraits, often in elaborate period frames and hand-colored, are the glory of the book. —Christopher Lyon "Splendid . . . a wonderful enhancement of the show itself."—New York of Books