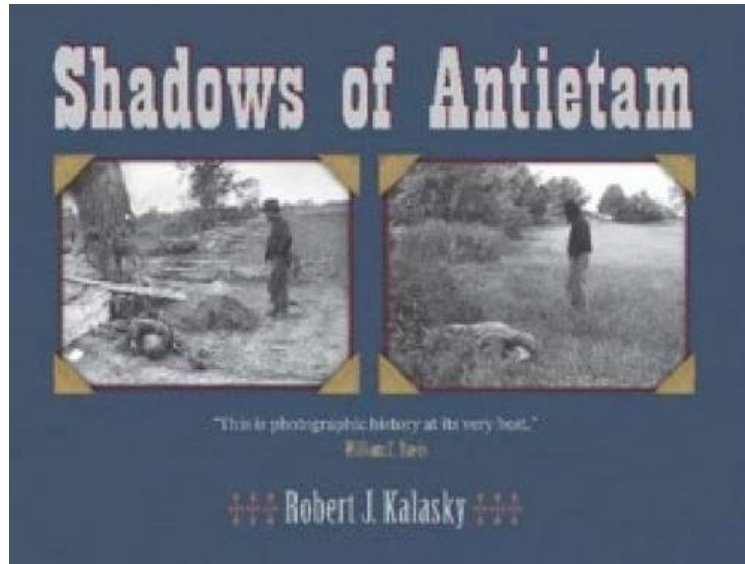


## Shadows of Antietam

Robert Kalasky

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**Robert Kalasky : Shadows of Antietam** before purchasing it in order to gage whether or not it would be worth my time, and all praised Shadows of Antietam:

1 of 1 people found the following review helpful. A book for certain fanaticsBy R. M. PetersonOn September 17, 1862 -- the bloodiest day in American military history (about 23,000 casualties, with nearly 4,000 killed) -- the Union and Confederate armies fought the Battle of Antietam. Over the following days Alexander Gardner and James Gibson, two photographers employed by Matthew Brady, took dozens of photographs on the Antietam Battlefield, including photographs of corpses and burial details. For thousands of Americans those photographs sharpened and intensified their understanding of the bloodshed and horror of the Civil War. Several of the photographs are now landmark images in the history of photography. The 1978 book, "Antietam: The Photographic Legacy of America's Bloodiest Day" by William Frassanito became a landmark in books about war photography. Frassanito tried to pin down exactly where the Gardner/Gibson photographs had been taken. More broadly, Frassanito showed how careful analysis of historical photographs could yield new historical information and resolve some historical debates. In SHADOWS OF ANTIETAM, Robert J. Kalasky takes the analysis of the Antietam photographs to yet another level. As a hobby, Kalasky began taking photographs at the places on the battlefield identified by Frassanito. That led him to ask questions, take more photographs, and then ask further questions, casting doubt on some of the information that Gardner and Gibson had provided about the dates and locations of their photographs and even a few of Frassanito's conclusions. Kalasky's hobby became a mission. From 1997 to 2009, while working a regular job in Ohio, Kalasky visited the battlefield at least fifty times for two or three days each visit. In the end, he reconstructed the route by which Gardner and Gibson toured the Antietam Battlefield between September 18 and September 25, 1862, and the sequence in which they shot their photographs. In the course of that effort, Kalasky also mined a few new tidbits of information about the battle and the battlefield. SHADOWS OF ANTIETAM is Kalasky's report on his meticulous forensic work and its conclusions. The "Shadows" of the title relates to the fact that the key data points for Kalasky

were shadows discernible in the Gardner/Gibson images. Kalasky then compared those shadows to the ones that he himself took at different times of the day (almost always calendar days between September 18 and 25). SHADOWS OF ANTIETAM is a book for fanatics -- fanatics of the Battle of Antietam, fanatics of Civil War photography, and fanatics of historical forensics. It is intelligently organized and presented, and for such a minutely focused and argued book it is well-written. My principle quibble has to do with the unacceptably high number (by my lights) of minor typographical errors given the rather high price of the book. 9 of 9 people found the following review helpful. Essential reading for students of Antietam Civil War photography. By Joel Manuel This book is a must for enthusiasts of the Battle of Antietam, Civil War photography, and the pioneering work of Civil War photographic historian William Frassanito. Kalasky sets out to pinpoint the exact dates and times at which Alexander Gardner and his assistants produced the groundbreaking series of photos in the days after the battle. For the most part, this is a fascinating book; I saw several Antietam pics which were new to me, and Kalasky does a good job of plotting Gardner's movements, mostly using shadows detected in the old pictures. I especially enjoyed seeing the magnified sections of some of the old photos, and updated "then and now" views (in 2009 I visited the National Park for the first time in 20 years, and Kalasky's present-day photos reflect the field as it is now, as opposed to when Frassanito's book came out in the 70s). For me the main flaw of "Shadows of Antietam" is in its prose; it begs for a copy editor, and typos abound. However, that does not detract from this book being essential reading for students of Antietam and Civil War photography; a labor of love from its author. 5 of 5 people found the following review helpful. Photoanalysis at its best By Richard F. Barnes Jr. As a longtime fan of Frasinio's earlier work, and always interested in what good photo analysis can reveal, I eagerly awaited the publication this new perspective on Alexander's photographs and I was not disappointed. This is great stuff. It is evidence of years of research and thought on the subject. Unlike Gettysburg, where there are so many recognizable landscapes and rock formations, it is difficult to picture rolling farmlands from 150 years ago and today. The Bloody Lane, the real focus of my attention on Sharpsburg, really looks nothing like the sunken road of 1862 with its bare ground, mud and ruts. The Park Service has neatly mowed grass banks and lane for the convenience and safety of the walking tourist, but the reality was an old farm lane. Only by substituting "bodies" can we begin to see the angles of the photographs and place the area in an historic perspective. I wish Kalasky had used an entire brigade of "corpses" to recreate the entire tableau, but a body here, a body there seems to work. And the most important part of his research is to finally come up with a good, well documented, thoughtful argument on the placement of Colonel Charles Courtenay Tew's body in the Bloody Lane. While his burial site will forever remain unresolved (yes, he is at Washington Cemetery in Hagerstown, Maryland, but where) I think Robert Kalasky presents a strong argument and enlargement to identify the brave Colonel in death. Buy the book and spend hours revising American's bloodiest day. Take your copy to Antietam as I will do with mine and walk the ground with a better perspective of how it was September 17, 1862. Well done, Robert and a must have library addition to anyone interested in The War.

A revolutionary re-creation of the historic Antietam Battlefield photographs The Battle of Antietam, fought in Sharpsburg, Maryland, on September 17, 1862, was the bloodiest single day of the Civil War, with 23,000 casualties on both sides. While the battle was tactically inconclusive, it resulted in two significant milestones. First, because Robert E. Lee failed to carry the war successfully into the North, Great Britain was dissuaded from recognizing the Confederate States of America diplomatically. Second, the battle gave President Abraham Lincoln the confidence to issue the Emancipation Proclamation. After the battle, two photographers sent by Mathew Brady? Alexander Gardner and James Gibson? recorded the horror of war with the first-ever images of dead American soldiers. Gardner's and Gibson's legendary photos have been the subject of debate for decades. The lack of information about locations, dates, and times in the thousands of photographs taken during the war has limited any thorough understanding of the photographers' work and led to much speculation. In Shadows of Antietam, Robert J. Kalasky has painstakingly re-created Gardner's and Gibson's output, retracing their footsteps by location, date, and time to chronologically and sequentially place their images. With the help of reenactors and black-and-white photography, Kalasky has assembled a comprehensive study, based on sunlight and shadow, of the 74 known glass plates recorded by Gardner and Gibson at Antietam. Civil War photography historians and buffs will appreciate this groundbreaking research for correcting previous errors and misjudgments made about the photographers' trek across the battlefield and for answering 150-year-old questions about their photographs. "Kalasky has produced a seminal study on the photography of Antietam. This important work should be required reading for all serious students of the battle." ?Ted Alexander, Chief Historian, Antietam National Battlefield "Kalasky brings to the living the dead of Antietam." ?Dennis Frye, author of Antietam Revealed

About the Author Robert J. Kalasky attended Kent State University and graduated from the Northeast Ohio School of Massotherapy. He is currently a practicing massotherapist and is a lifelong resident of Youngstown, Ohio.