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<p style="text-align:center">Mathew Brady Photography</p>

Before the American Civil War, people's views of war were imagined through writings

or drawings, but the Civil War marked the first major event that utilized photography to capture

its events in real-time and get the public's attention. The Civil War was the bloodiest war in

America and took place between Northern and Southern forces. It began at Fort Sumter in

Charleston, South Carolina in 1861. The Civil War happened as a result of disagreements over

the morality and spread of slavery in the United States of America. Abolitionists wanted to get

rid of slavery permanently while Southerners depended on slavery for their economy. Many

factors contributed to the controversy over slavery such as the book *Uncle Tom's Cabin* by

Harriet Beecher Stowe. The book is about a slave who is promised his freedom when his master

dies, but instead is sent to another man who is cruel to him. This book caused controversy

because the Northerners thought that most of the Southerners were cruel to their slaves.

Southerners became defensive about the book, creating more anger between the North and

South.   Next, California applied for its statehood. As Americans bought more land (westward

expansion) and added it to our country, people wanted to know if the states were going to be

free states or slave states creating more anger between Northern and Southerners.   Eventually all

of these events along with others would erupt into a bloody civil war. During the time of the

Civil War, not only were battles being fought, but they were being captured permanently because

of the improvements in photography.

Photography played a big role in the Civil War because after the photographers took the pictures they would bring the photos to the people and show them what the soldiers were going through. Photographers risked their lives to take pictures during the war. They would have to carry all of their supplies in a large wagon. They would disguise themselves as soldiers and follow the soldiers out to the battlefield. One of the first people to capture the war through his vivid images and pictures was a photographer named Mathew Brady. Mathew Brady was born near Lake George, New York in 1823. Before being a photographer, Brady was a wealthy man. When Brady wanted to become a photographer, his family and friends discouraged him. Brady went against their wishes and pursued his dream. When the Civil War broke out, he ventured out into the various battles to capture the events of the war in real-time. Taking photos during the war was a very difficult task because he could have been killed in the battlefield. He once stated in reference to his photos, "No one will ever know what they cost me; some of them almost cost me my life"(Morgan, Mathew B. Brady). His photos would later become famous as they showed another side to war. Mathew Brady's photojournalism impacted how the Americans had a more informed and realistic view of the Civil War.

Mathew Brady once said, "My greatest aim has been to advance the art of photography and make it what I think I have, a great and truthful medium of history" (Morgan, "Mathew B. Brady"). According to Brady, his goal was to tell the truth about history. He wanted to show the public the ugly and painful aspects of war. In one photo, Brady captures a scene of a dozen dead soldiers lying on the ground (See Figure A). This photo shows the pain and horrors of the war. The picture makes one think about death because of the gruesome deaths that it depicts. Referring to the photos in Brady's gallery, Alexander Gardner, Brady's mentee stated the following, " It is designed to speak for itself. As mementos of the fearful struggle which the

country has just passed, it is confidently hoped that it will possess an enduring interest" (Civil

War Trust). He believed that there was no need to explain the photos because their images were

so gruesome and spoke louder than any words could express.

In another image, Brady captures a soldier standing next to the American flag (See Figure

B). This photo shows great patriotism and bravery, the kind that would drive a person to do

anything for their country. When the public saw images like this one, they may have seen just

how far a person would go to defend and fight for their country. In a different image Brady

captures soldiers marching into war (See Figure C). This image shows soldiers, ready for battle,

will stop at nothing to keep the United States together. In the background, the soldier's tents can

be seen, which shows just how hard their living conditions were. The soldiers look serious and

many of them look young. When the public saw photos like this one, they may have realized

how war kills the young.

In another image, Brady captures many soldiers sitting on the green grass resting (See

Figure D). This image is demonstrating that war is something exhausting and is hard work for all

men in the war. In another image Brady captures about five dead men on a stretcher (See Figure

E). This photo demonstrates that war kills great men and breaks families apart. In a different

photo it shows a wounded soldier on a stretcher and two people helping him (See Figure F). This

photo is explaining that war is a nightmare for everyone and that it causes pain and injury.

The public's response to Brady's photography went from a romanticized view of the war

to shock. One author wrote, "For the first time in history, citizens on the home front could view

the actual carnage of far away battlefields. Civil War photographs stripped away much of the

Victorian-era romance around warfare" (Civil War Trust). Later, once Brady's photos made it

into the public eye, the perception was quite different. A New York Times article, dated October

20, 1862, gives a description of a crowd at Brady's gallery as they view Brady's photos from the

battle at Antietam,

> *"Mr. Brady has done something to bring home to us that terrible reality and earnestness of war. If he has not brough bodies and laid them in our door-yards, and along the streets, he has done something very like it. At the door of his gallery hangs a little placard 'The Dead of Antietam'. Crowds of people are constantly going up the stairs. Follow them, and you find them bending over photographic views of that fearful battlefield, taken immediately after the action...there is a terrible fascination about it that draws one near these pictures and makes him loath to leave them. One of the most disturbing images displayed was titled "Dead: Horse of Confederate Colonel, both killed at Battle of Antietam." The photo shows the dead mount of Confederate Colonel Henry B. Strong of the 6th Louisiana Infantry. The horse looks as if it could still be alive, just lying down resting, in the photo. The haunting image disturbed people as they knew the horse was dead, as was the rider, but because the horse still looked alive, it was bothersome. The war at this point had gone on for much longer than originally anticipated and already people were starting to grow weary. This image just bothered them that much more that it could possibly be their husband or son or brother that had previously rode that horse" (New York Times, "Brady's Photographs: Pictures of the Dead at Antietam").*

We see that the public opinion changed with the help of Brady's photographs. They

thought that the war was going to be a fun event, but instead it became a blood-bath of a bunch

of dead bodies piled up on each other. The public was in more than just a shock. They were

disgusted, horrified, scared because the people in the photos could be their husbands, dads, or

even brothers. They also felt sorry for the family that had lost their loved ones.

In conclusion, Mathew Brady's photojournalism impacted how the Americans had a

more informed and realistic view of the Civil War. His photography showed us the truth of war,

which is ugly, heartbreaking, and painful. Photography is not only important in history but also

in society. It is important in history because the Civil War was the first war that used

photography to capture its events. Civil War photography is also important in society because

after the people saw the photos they would be surprised that war was uglier than they thought.

Mathew Brady left a legacy for all photographers and other journalists built on his photography

to show everyday realities to help society be informed. However, there are many questions that

can be asked about the truthfulness of Mathew Brady's photographs. Many critics and historians

believe that much of Brady's photographs were staged because he asked soldiers to pose or act

dead for pictures. This is a perspective that must need further research and investigation. Also,

this topic creates more questions about war photography today. Nowadays, photographers

capture war images by using digital cameras. Modern day photography is much different than the

photography they used during the Civil War period because in current society, mostly everything

is digital, which means that there are more pictures taken during war. Also, because of the

Internet, these pictures are broadcast to the world in a faster way. Overall, photojournalism today

is built on Mathew Brady's first developments because he created a path for photographers to

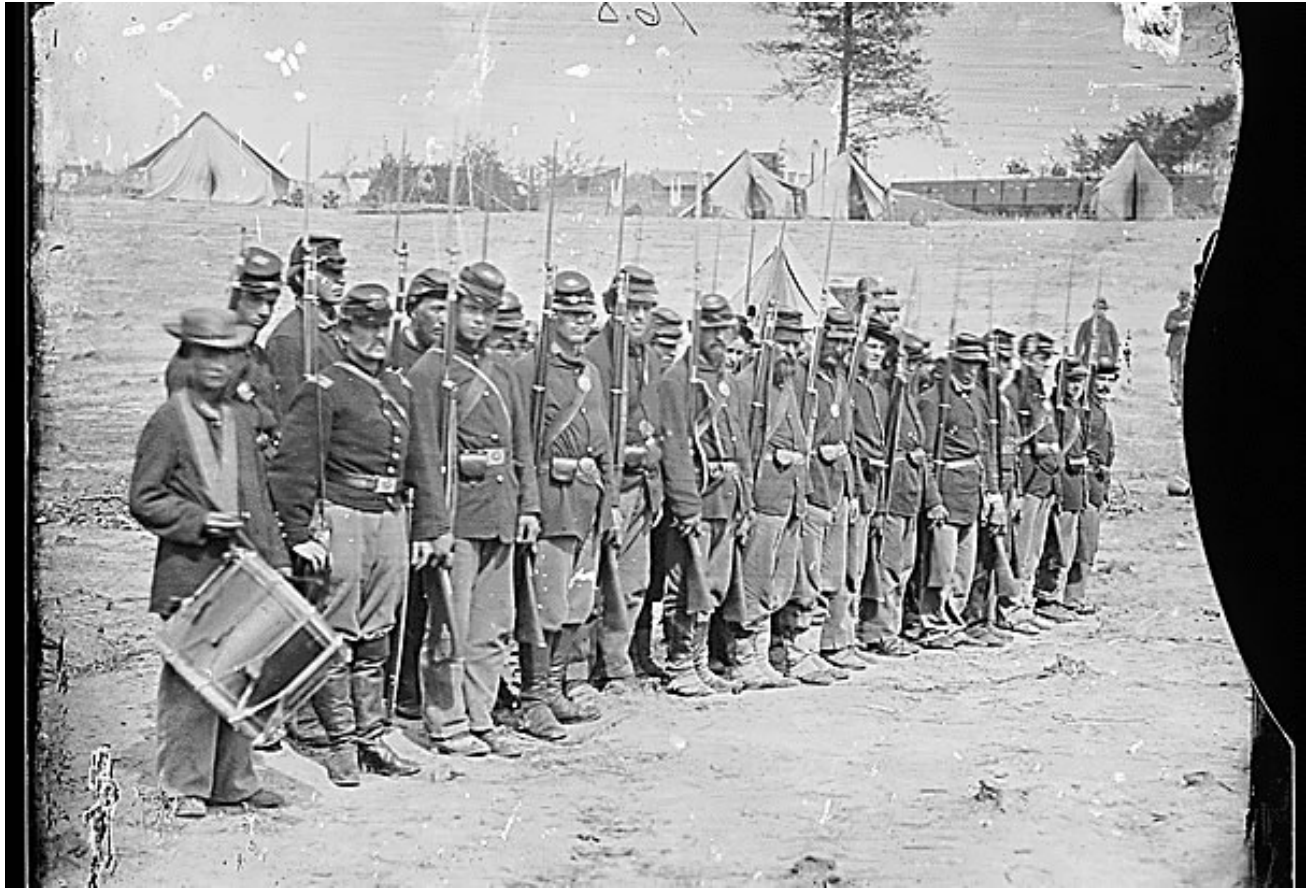show society what war is like.

Figure A

Mathew Brady Photography

Figure B

Mathew Brady Photography

Figure C

Mathew Brady Photography

Figure D

Mathew Brady Photography

Figure E

Mathew Brady Photography

Figure F

Mathew Brady Photography

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