ESSENTIAL CIVIL WAR CURRICULUM

Soldiers of the Press: Special Correspondents, Photographers, and Artists

By **James M. Volo**

South Carolina had promised to secede if Abraham Lincoln was elected President in November 1860, and beginning in December, with Lincoln President-elect, there was a rush of Southern states to form the Confederate States of America (CSA). It had been an eventful winter (1860-1861) that preceded the outbreak of the War Between the States. The salient feature of that time, apart from the palpable excitement of forming armed militias and the extravagant romanticism, was the uncertainty. A real shooting war seemed inevitable, yet the temporizing continued. Few observers at the time thought that the questions raised concerning the fundamentals of American society and government would come to be "settled only at the cannon's mouth."[1]

In response to secession, many northerners expected that the main Federal army would march on the main Confederate army before summer 1861, win the ensuing battle, take Richmond, and end the rebellion. Only gradually did the dire reality of the situation take hold. The lists of dead and wounded from the First Battle of Bull Run (July 1861)—the largest number of casualties in American history to that time—shocked the public and stunned the general staff. The federal Army of the Potomac—the largest American force ever to take the field in wartime—had lost the battle, and the US military went silent for several months thereafter while its generals absorbed the lessons they had learned.

But what of the output of the print media during the crisis? In the first months after secession, newspapers printed and reprinted finely structured speeches given by politicians declaring how the Federal forces would march on to Richmond or how the flower of the Confederacy would whip the clerks and street scum of the North on the first day of battle. Historically, Americans quickly lost interest in conflicts that were bloody, long, or indecisive—all characteristics of the Civil War. Nonetheless, civilian morale concerning the war remained unexpectedly high, and many soldiers in their naiveté exhibited more confidence and energy than their officers. [2]

[1] Calvin Colton, ed., *The Private Correspondence of Henry Clay* (Cincinnati: 1856), 313. From a letter written by former president John Quincy Adams to Clay.
[2] See James M. Volo, *The History of War Resistance in America* (Westport, CT: Greenwood Press, 2010).

The particular focus of this essay is the influence accorded journalists, authors, war correspondents, editors, engravers, and embedded photographers and illustrators during the nation's most devastating conflict. These have been deemed the *soldiers of the press* for the purposes of this discussion. The selection attends to the events of daily life as recorded in print and in the form of images available at the time—paintings, engravings, lithographs, cartoons, and eventually photographs. The number of active news publications had quadrupled in the Antebellum Period from a few hundred to approximately 3,300 in 1860. There were millions of newspaper subscribers in the country on the eve of the war, and the papers were particularly adept at bringing the war to the home front.[3]

Newspapers—depending on their partisanship—either boasted of expelling the invader or punishing the secessionists and slaveholders. The newspapers took no small part in these encounters and had a long history of political activism. Alexis de Tocqueville, commenting on the enormous circulation of the daily press in the United States during his visit in 1824, noted: "When men are no longer united among themselves by firm and lasting ties, it is impossible to obtain the co-operation of any great number of them unless you can persuade every man whose help you require that his private interest obliges him voluntarily to unite his exertions to the exertions of all the others. This can be habitually and conveniently affected only by means of a newspaper; nothing but a newspaper can drop the same thought into a thousand minds at the same moment."[4] During his visit to America in 1842, English novelist Charles Dickens found Americans omnivorous readers of newspapers, novels, and literary magazines. Hidden herein—disguised, if you will—was a good deal of propaganda and demagoguery. "I yet hope to hear," noted Dickens, "of there being some other national amusement in the United States, besides newspaper politics … I do know that I have never observed the columns of the newspapers to groan so heavily under a pressure of orations … having little or nothing to do with the matter in hand."[5]

As the war unfolded, however, giant armies trudged across the hinterland in efforts to defend the Confederacy or dismantle the Old South with its characteristic lifestyle. Ultimately one in four men engaged in battle were dead, wounded, or missing. Parts of the South were said to actually stink with the odor of death. War weariness finally set in, and an undercurrent of war resistance appeared in the press. The Civil War involved the entire population in a way paralleled by no other conflict since the Revolution. Photographs of war dead and almost instantaneous reports from the front by telegraph made the war years difficult for both soldiers and civilians. Those journalists and artists who endured throughout the war can almost be numbered on one hand. Most who worked

[3] Lawrence A. Cremin, *American Education: The National Experience, 1783-1876* (New York: Harper, 1980), 409.
[4] Alexis de Tocqueville, "Of the relation between public associations and the newspapers," in *Democracy in America*, trans. Henry Reeve, 2 vols. (London: Sanders & Otley, 1835 and 1840) 1:6. Also see http://xroads.virginia.edu/~HYPER/DETOC/ch2_06.htm
[5] Charles Dickens, *American Notes for General Circulation,* (London: Chapman & Hall, 1842), location 4250, Kindle edition. See also Charles Dickens, *Speeches: Literary and Social* (London: John Camden Hotten, 1870), locations 1179-1182, Kindle edition.

as "special artists" were in their 20s or early 30s, and even so, the conditions encountered on campaign took a great toll on them physically forcing them to leave the field to rest or return home permanently.

Correspondents

Reporters and war correspondents had accompanied the US Army during the war with Mexico (1846-1848), but there was only one professional artist, James Walker, present to make a pictorial record of the conflict. The *Associated Press* (NYAP) was a news cooperative formed in 1846 by five daily newspapers in New York City to share the cost of transmitting news of the Mexican War by boat, horse express, and telegraph. Organized by Moses Beach, publisher of the *New York Sun*, the owners of the *Herald*, the *Courier and Enquirer*, the *Journal of Commerce*, and the *Express* all agreed to share the expenses of gathering the news. The *Tribune* joined some time in 1849, and *The New York Times* became a member shortly after its own founding in 1851. The NYAP was widely criticized for the virtual monopoly it formed in gathering news and setting prices in an era when fresh news was a saleable commodity.

The *New York Illustrated News* was one of the leading illustrated weekly newspapers to pioneer picture journalism at the outbreak of the Civil War. They sent teams of "Special Correspondents" and "Special Artists" to cover the war of secession from the battlefield itself. On 4 May 1861, two months before Bull Run, the *News* announced: "We have made arrangements to obtain authentic sketches and information of the interesting and important events of the war. Alfred Waud, Esq., one of our most talented artists, and a special correspondent, will proceed to Washington, and will accompany the army through the campaign." Although he moved from newspaper to newspaper, Waud worked exclusively with the Army of the Potomac, and was the only "Special Artist" who remained on duty for the entire war. Waud made for himself a reputation, and became recognized as the best special artist in the field. His collection of sketches is by far the most complete and valuable made during the war. [6]

Theodore R. Davis, a "Special Writer" for *Harper's* was the only writer/artist to work there throughout the war. He accompanied Waud regularly, and wrote of his friend and companion: "Let me first attempt the description of the duties of a special artist … Total disregard for personal safety and comfort; an owl-like propensity to sit up all night and a hawky style of vigilance during the day; capacity for going on short food; willingness to ride any number of miles horseback for just one sketch, which might have to be finished at night by no better light than that of a fire–this may give an inkling of some of it."[7]

In July 1889, many years after the war, Davis wrote an article for *St. Nicholas Magazine* titled "How a battle is sketched." Herein he recollects the hazardous and

[6] *New York Illustrated News*, May 4, 1861. Also see "Civil War battle sketches," *Civil War Talk*, http://civilwartalk.com/threads/civil-war-battle-sketches.78647/

[7] Ford Risley *Civil War Journalism* (Santa Barbara, CA: ABC-Clio/Praeger, 2012), 33. Also see "Civil War battle sketches," *Civil War Talk*, http://civilwartalk.com/threads/civil-war-battle-sketches.78647/

inventive ways that pictorial journalists reported the Civil War. "Many persons have said that since my duty was only to *see*, and not to fight, they should think that I would not be shot at, and so did not incur much danger of being hit," wrote Davis. "Ordinarily, of course, the fact is that, in a general engagement, special individuals … are seldom selected as targets, but if your own chance is no worse, it is surely no better than that of others near you. To really see a battle, however, one must accept the most dangerous situations, for in most cases this cannot possibly be avoided. There have been occasions when some industrious sharpshooter troubled me by a too personal direction of his bullets." He further noted: "Infantry, cavalry, and artillery soldiers, each had their particular uniform, and besides these, their equipments, such as belts, swords, guns, cartridge-boxes, and many other things, were different … As many as ten different saddles were in use, and of the army homes—tents—there was a great variety." He wrote: "[I had] the necessity for a special sketch-book, in which to make, whenever I found an opportunity, memorandum sketches of every new thing. I thus provided myself with a reference book for use when active campaigning commenced; for then there would be no time to secure detailed sketches, and under some circumstances it would often be impossible to get more than a very rough sketch from which to finish a drawing of some very important occurrence."[8]

Photographers

The early history of photographic science in America transcends the 19th century. Although daguerreotype, tintype, and wet-plate photographic portraiture had been around for decades, (and a few glass-plates of the Mexican War had been taken in 1847) all these processes were ill-suited to outdoor use, and the practical use of photography to record large scale historical events was not attempted until the Crimean War of 1854. Here it met with limited success. Action shots were impossible, and the sketch artists could convey a sense of urgency in their drawings of which the photographers could only dream. Moreover, there were no published manuals for photographers prior to that printed by George B. Coale in 1858, and it is doubtful that the pocket-sized booklet could be used to successfully teach the intricacies of the photographic art in the absence of face-to-face instruction. The domination of the complicated wet-glass plate collodion process from 1855 to 1888 helps to explain why photography remained in the hands of professionals.

Among the many brave photo-journalists who recorded the battle scenes and war dead of America's Civil War were Alexander Gardner, George N. Barnard, and Captain Andrew J. Russell. Although he limited most of his work to the studio, Mathew Brady is possibly the best-known photographer of the period, and people flocked to him to have photographic portraits and *cartes de visite* taken in their best clothes. Historians continue to dispute Brady's active participation on the battlefields of the Civil War, but there is no question that the Brady studios sponsored many of the most productive photographers of the period. On 20 October 1862, the editors of the *New York Times* noted of these

[8] Theodore R. Davis, *St. Nicholas*, 16 (July 1889): 661–68. Also see *History Matters*, http://historymatters.gmu.edu/d/6833/

photographers: "If [they have] not brought bodies and laid them in our dooryards and along the streets, [they have] done something very like it."[9]

Mathew Brady pioneered many photographic techniques in the period. However, he was practically blind in the daytime and wore dark blue glasses to protect his eyes from the light. His assistants, sent out in photographic wagons with their wet glass plates and portable darkrooms, took most of the extraordinary pictures that were credited to his studio. One of these assistants, Alexander Gardner, left Brady's employ and struck out on his own. Gardner is said to have taken almost 75 percent of the extant photographs of the Army of the Potomac. Gardner served the needs of the army by photographically reproducing maps and other documents. By the war's end, Gardner had displaced Brady as the leading American photographer, and it was he who photographed the Lincoln funeral procession and the trial of the assassination conspirators.

Another Brady assistant was George N. Barnard, whose first war photographs were taken of the Manassas battlefield in 1862. Barnard was producing daguerreotypes at the age of twenty-three, and in 1846 he opened his first studio in Oswego, New York. In 1853, fire destroyed the massive grain elevators in Oswego, and Barnard, capturing the event with his camera, created some of the first "news" photographs known to historians. Finding employment with Edward Anthony's studio in 1859, Barnard worked in New York City on stereotypes (a double photograph that, when seen through a special viewer, appears as a three-dimensional image). Brady hired Barnard as a portrait photographer and sent him to Washington to photograph Lincoln's 1861 inauguration. When the Civil War broke out, Brady formed a crew of cameramen and assigned Barnard to "Brady's Photographic Corps" to document the conflict. Breaking with Brady in 1863, he moved to the western theater of war to document Major General William Tecumseh Sherman's march from Tennessee through Georgia and to the sea. Following the Confederate surrender to Sherman in 1865, Barnard revisited many key battle sites in Georgia to produce the body of work for which he is now best known. The majority of the 61 photos illustrate a landscape of trees shorn by gunfire, empty streets, and ruined buildings. He was the official photographer of the Military Department of the Mississippi. He went on to promote the new gelatin dry photographic process in collaboration with George Eastman in New York.[10]

Captain Andrew J. Russell, noted for his Union Pacific photographs after the war, was also an official army photographer during the war. As such he is the only such soldier-photographer of the period. Russell's duties included photographing the work of the Army Engineers and the reconstruction of damaged railways in order to create a visual record for the use of similar units in the future. Russell, who had become interested in photography in 1863, paid civilian photographer Egbert Guy Fowx to teach him the

[9] "Brady's Photographs: Pictures of the Dead at Antietam," *New York Times*, October 20, 1862. Also see, http://www.nytimes.com/1862/10/20/news/brady-s-photographs-pictures-of-the-dead-at-antietam.html?scp=84&sq=matthew+brady&st=p

[10] George N. Barnard, *Photographic Views of Sherman's Campaigns*, 1977 Dover ed. (New York: Wynkoop & Hallenbeck, 1866), preface.

collodion process. Fowx was a free-lance photographer who sold many of his negatives to Brady Studios, which subsequently copyrighted and published many of them. Russell's best known postwar photograph shows the joining of the rails of the Transcontinental Railroad at Promontory Summit, Utah on 10 May 1869. [11]

In this period individual images from negatives were almost exclusively made on chloride paper, and the technology of reproducing photographs for the printing press was almost nonexistent before the end of the century. The usual way of reproducing a photograph for a newspaper, magazine, or book was to have an artist redraw it and make a woodcut or engraving as with battlefield sketches. This process neutralized most of the advantages of photography for the print medium. Moreover, Americans seem to have favored the more romanticized full-page chromolithographs and engravings over the generally small black and white photographs made by contact printing. Nonetheless, hundreds of photographs of battlefields and personalities were shown in galleries in the major cities of the North during the Civil War years. The pictures, including some of the first to show war dead on the battlefield, were poignant and realistic, and may have helped to create an anti-war feeling in the North.

The Confederacy also had its photographers. George S. Cook, J. D. Edwards, and A. D. Lytle among others were able photographers committed to the Confederate cause, but their work was much more circumspect than that of their fellows from the North being generally limited to portraiture. The Confederacy's limited technical facilities forced the public to be content with rough woodcuts, engravings, and paintings. Lytle pulled off one of the great espionage feats of the war. Concealing himself, he was able to get two photos of Brigadier General Benjamin Henry Grierson's 1,700-man Northern cavalry encamping on their raid from Vicksburg to Baton Rouge in 1863.[12]

Artists

People wanted to know what was happening to their friends and relations on faraway battlefields, and they looked to newspapers such as *Leslie's* or *Harper's* to make sense of the confusion of war reports. New York publisher Frank Leslie produced amazingly moving woodcut illustrations for his *Illustrated Newspaper* from 1861 through 1865. His use of graphics and terse prose to interpret ongoing news events was a new concept in the American newspaper business that was quickly adopted by other news agencies. In a day when a partisan press was the rule, Leslie's stood apart. Except for tolerating anti-Irish sentiment and portraying "Negroes" in a stereotypical and condescending manner, Leslie's condoned little that was political.

Frank Leslie, whose true name was Henry Carter, had emigrated from Britain in 1848. There he had worked as an engraver for the *Illustrated London News*, which was the first newspaper to employ graphics. In London, Leslie learned the processes for

[11] Andrew J. Russell, *Russell's Civil War Photographs* (New York: Dover, 1982), preface.
[12] Francis Trevelyan Miller, ed., 1957 Castle ed., 10 vols. *The Photographic History of the Civil War*: (New York: Review of Reviews, 1911), 8:30.

turning pencil sketches into woodcut engravings that could be transferred to newsprint. In 1852, P. T. Barnum, the famed American showman, developed a process by which the sketch was divided into several pieces to be engraved on as many blocks by individual engravers, then carefully assembled into a single printing surface. This vastly speeded the process making the resultant image more immediate and impactful. A careful perusal of period prints will sometimes reveal the lines between blocks.

Barnum had hired Leslie as a supervising engraver for the short-lived *Illustrated News*. Leaving Barnum, by 1854 he had set up his own organization and published the first issue of *Frank Leslie's Ladies' Gazette of Paris, London, and New York*, one of the first illustrated fashion magazines in America. The *Illustrated Newspaper* quickly followed this in 1855. Leslie employed more than 130 engraving and print artists as well as a substantial number of roving sketch artists.

Frank Leslie introduced a number of papers to Civil War readers: the *Illustrated Zeitung*, a German-language edition aimed at the German immigrant population of the North; the *Budget of Fun*, a whimsical publication featuring cheap fiction (which competed with Beadle's Dime Novels); the *Ten Cent Monthly*; the *Lady's Illustrated Almanac*; and the *Lady's Magazine and Gazette of Fashion*. All of these bore his pseudonym: Frank Leslie's.

Within four years, two independent graphic newsweeklies were launched in competition with Leslie's newspaper empire: *Harper's Weekly* and the *New York Illustrated News*. Fletcher Harper, the well-financed publisher from Harper and Brothers, actively tried to recruit Leslie's artists and engravers, and aggressively tried to exceed Leslie's circulation. Leslie provided poor and erratic pay for his artists, many of whom he lost to competitors. By the opening of the war the two periodicals were within 10,000 copies of one another in circulation, with the *New York Illustrated News* a distant third.

Two of the best sketch artists of the period were the brothers William and Alfred Waud. William worked for *Leslie's* and Alfred for *Harper's*. William proved particularly adept at ingratiating himself with the social elite of South Carolina during the pre-war secession crisis. Because of the paper's uncommitted stance, wherever William Waud traveled he found individuals to be cooperative and helpful. Frank Leslie instructed him to use the utmost care in making his sketches and to avoid giving any indication of political sympathies toward one side or the other. Nonetheless, William left *Leslie's* in 1863 to work at *Harper's* with his brother Alfred and another fine artist, Theodore Davis.

Davis, who made a dangerously ill-conceived sojourn into the Confederacy in the summer of 1861 at age 20, was detained, and accused of spying. "The loyal tone of the *Weekly* had rendered it most obnoxious among the rebels," wrote Davis of the incident. "I permitted myself to be represented as an artist drawing for the *Illustrated London News*; and this so thoroughly satisfied the 'other gentlemen' that they withdrew. After they had gone, Mr. Russell [*London Times* reporter, Davis' companion] thoughtfully advised me to leave the Confederate States before copies of *Harper's Weekly* containing my sketches should reach the South." After the war, when the Cyclorama in Atlanta was being

painted, Davis, having traveled extensively with Sherman's army, was asked for his input. Davis is considered to have been the most widely traveled artist of the war. He had over 250 drawings published in *Harper's Weekly* during the conflict. After the war, he continued to submit work to *Harper's*, recording Southern reconstruction and traveling extensively in the Far West. He did many sketches of the Sioux, and helped to fight off an Indian attack on the Overland Stage. [13]

The Waud brothers' genius and Theodore Davis' discretion were matched by an army of artists who continued to be employed by *Leslie's*, including Eugene Benson, a young artist who eagerly went to the front to record the visual images of battle, and Arthur Lumley from Ireland, who was hired to follow the Army of the Potomac full-time. In the 1850s, Lumley had supported himself by doing illustrations for books and novels including *The Life and Adventures of Kit Carson* by DeWitt Peters (1858), and *Wild Life; or Adventures on the Frontier* by Captain Mayne Reid (1859). In 1861, he accompanied Irwin McDowell's army into Virginia where it engaged the Confederates at First Bull Run. Lumley sketched large panoramas of the Federals in their initially successful attacks and did close-up studies of the New York City Fire Zoaves. When Confederate reinforcements counterattacked and broke the Federal assault, Lumley vividly captured the resulting panic as the Union Army retreated to Washington. He was severely criticized as unpatriotic for the latter sketches. In 1862, he went to work for the *New York Illustrated*. In all, these papers published 298 of Lumley's wartime drawings. After the war, he did illustrations for *Kilpatrick and Our Cavalry* by James Moore (1865).

Besides being an active sketch artist, Eugene Benson also reviewed contemporary American art for the *New York Evening Post*, where he signed his pieces "Proteus," and for the New York weekly *The Round Table*, where he was a regular contributor from its founding in December 1863. The *Galaxy* (founded in 1866) provided a venue where writers and artists could join with others in exploring the meaning of literary nationalism and cultural democracy for the coming postwar era. Benson sought to carry forward the pioneering cultural criticism of such writers as Whitman, Thoreau, and Parker, and he enlisted himself in Emerson's project of tilting at a great many of the "vulgar mirrors in our industrial palaces." His articles for *Galaxy*, provided him with additional space to treat broader cultural themes. Benson's interest was in finding more modern and democratically appropriate modes of representing the human figure particularly "the private soldier, the man in the ranks, from the farm, the shop, the mill, the mine, still a citizen engaged in the sacred warfare of peace." [14]

In 1866, Benson wrote: "Our painters have worked in the midst of great events, and therefore have been subjected to the most tumultuous, shattering and ennobling experiences." Sketch artist Sanford Gifford carried both a sketchpad and a musket for self-protection. In 1861, Albert Bierstadt got a one-week pass to go to the camps to make

[13] *Harper's Weekly*, July 20, 1861, 450. Also see http://www.sonofthesouth.net/leefoundation/civil-war/1861/july/theodore-r-davis.htm

[14] Robert J. Scholnick, "'Culture' or Democracy: Whitman, Eugene Benson, and The Galaxy." *Walt Whitman Quarterly Review* 13 (Spring 1996), 192.

preliminary sketches. When he was drafted two years later, he paid a substitute to take his place in the ranks, but this circumstance was the exception. These artists would dress as civilians, hang out with the camp troops, and try not to fall ill with one of the many camp diseases or get shot. As long as they stayed out of the way, and occasionally sketched for the amusement of the troops, the army commanders didn't mind having them there.[15]

There were exceptions. In 1861, Frank Vizetelly, having just completed the pictorial recording of Garibaldi's nationalist campaign to unify Italy, was sent by the *Illustrated London News* to cover the Civil War in America. Nationalism was on the rise throughout Europe, and Confederates quickly drew parallels between their struggle and the Italian revolutions in Sicily and Naples led by Garibaldi as well as the ongoing Piedmontese struggle against Austria. Confederate diplomats held forth these examples to the world in the hope of gaining international support and recognition for their fledgling country. The bright red Garibaldi shirt—based on the unique garment of the freedom fighters that succeeded in uniting Italy in 1860—was a very distinctive style of shirt worn during the Civil War. Through diplomatic channels, Lincoln had offered Garibaldi a major general's commission in 1862. Garibaldi was ready to accept the offer but on one condition: that the abolition of slavery be declared the war's objective. Ironically, Lincoln was not yet ready to take that step. The Garibaldi Guard was the nickname of the 39th New York Infantry, a regiment of Italian-Americans recruited mostly from New York City. Vizetelly witnessed First Bull Run and sent his paper a sketch of the Federal Army in abject flight, which it published. The unfavorable publicity that followed incensed the Secretary of War Edwin McMasters Stanton, who refused Vizetelly permission to accompany Major General George Brinton McClellan in the Virginia campaign. Failing this, the artist went south and spent the remainder of the war sketching the fortunes of the Confederates.

Most of the studio artists (who worked in oils on canvas or in watercolors) made pencil or chalk sketches in the field from which to work later. English-born New Yorker James Walker was the only studio artist present with the Americans during the Mexican War. In the 1840s, Walker had traveled to Mexico City where he was living when the Mexican War began and teaching art at the Military College of Tampico. He hid for six weeks within the city before escaping to the American lines where he joined up as an interpreter under General Winfield Scott. Walker returned to New York City in 1848 and established a studio there. Walker then worked in Washington, DC, from 1857-1862. Here he painted the *Battle of Chapultepec* (1858), which hangs in the U.S. Capitol. He was also commissioned to render the *Battle of Lookout Mountain* (1874) for Major General Joseph Hooker. Walker witnessed the battle and sketched scenes to render the painting historically accurate. He produced 30 works on the Civil War encompassing images of camp life, individuals, and several battles. Walker sometimes employed a photographer to produce images for later reference. "I am confident that I can give our people here to the North a better idea of what has been accomplished down there than any report that can be written," wrote the artist. The painting for which he remains best

[15] Smithsonian American Art Museum, "War and Paint: The Art of the Civil War", http://eyelevel.si.edu/2012/11/war-and-paint-art-of-the-civil-war.html

known, however, is a large panorama of the Battle of Gettysburg showing the clash of Federal and Confederate forces on the climactic third day. The work was first exhibited in Boston in March 1870. [16]

Winslow Homer, who apprenticed as a lithographer, worked for *Harper's Weekly* magazine as a sketch artist and accompanied the Union army beginning in 1861. His original work was characterized by sharp outlines, the dramatic contrast of light and dark, and lively figure groupings. In 1859, Homer, like many other artists, had moved into the Tenth Street Studio Building near New York's Greenwich Village, which had been completed in 1857 specifically to serve their needs. Crowds often formed between 5th and 6th Avenues to view the art works displayed in the street by the tenants. Periodically returning to his studio in the city, he produced a series of war-related paintings based on his sketches, among them *Sharpshooter on Picket Duty* (1862), *Home, Sweet Home* (1863), and *Prisoners from the Front* (1866), which won an award in Paris at the International Exhibition of 1867. After the war, Homer turned his attention primarily to scenes reflecting nostalgia for simpler times. He converted many war photographs by Brady Studios into line art. Homer illustrated many groupings of women, children, and families in urban settings thereby recording the effects of the war on the home front. He was also interested in postwar subject matter that conveyed the tension between the victorious North and the unreconstructed South seeking to understand their mutual future as a single nation.

Prussian-born Henry Lovie, who found his fame in sketching George B. McClellan, recorded the war in northern Virginia. A long-time illustrator of books, he was sent in February 1861 to follow Abraham Lincoln from Springfield, Illinois to Washington DC for the presidential inauguration. Lovie joined McClellan's army there and produced a number of panoramic views of battle. He augmented his drawings by going onto the field to make sketches of battle debris, and he toured the Federal camps to interview and sketch the soldiers and the wounded. In 1861, Lovie obtained permission to join the Federal Expeditionary Forces going up the Missouri River under the command of Brigadier General Nathaniel Lyons. The campaign ended with a Union retreat after the Battle of Wilson's Creek where Lovie recorded the death of Lyons. Lovie then drew scenes of the combat in Kentucky and Tennessee. *Leslie's* published 148 of Lovie's wartime drawings. He returned to Philadelphia in 1868 to complete a life-size bronze figure of a soldier, which stands as a war memorial in Springfield, Ohio.

Edward S. Hall was born in England, but by 1860 he was a resident of New York and had established himself there as a book illustrator. In April 1861, he worked for *Leslie's* and was sent to Baltimore with Francis H. Schell to cover the copperhead riots where Federal troops fired in self-defense on antiwar mobs sympathetic to the South. Throughout the spring and summer of 1862, he covered the war in Virginia. *Leslie's* published 22 of his drawings from this period. *Leslie's* published 211 works by Francis H. Schell, and Schell became its art director after the war leaving its employ briefly late

[16]National Park Service "Walker, the Soldier Artist," http://www.nps.gov/history/history/online_books/civil_war_series/9/sec6.htm

in the war when he formed a lithography partnership with Thomas Hogan. He also did illustrations for *Century* magazine, and his drawings were included in *Beyond the Mississippi* (Hartford, 1869) and *Battles and Leaders of the Civil War* (1884-1887).

At Vicksburg, Frederic B. Schell drew the desperate hand-to-hand combat of the assault, detailing scenes of the subsequent siege of the city and the starving troops. On July 4, 1863, he sketched the stacking of Confederate weapons while Union troops sat watching the enemy file by through the shell-scarred streets of Vicksburg. Leslie published 43 of these drawings along with those of Edwin Forbes at Gettysburg in a special supplementary issue of *Leslie's* in late July.

Edwin Forbes became *Leslie's* most prolific artist. This twenty-two-year-old artist followed the Federal Army from Cross Keys in the Shenandoah Valley to the battles at Manassas in 1862 and the siege of Petersburg in 1864. He had a strategic view of Pickett's charge at Gettysburg, and he was the first of the "special artists" to publish drawings of the battle. Forbes was generally not interested in the great leaders and battles of the war, but rather in the day-to-day activities and lifestyle of the soldiers. So well-drawn were Forbes' sketches that "readers ... scanned the drawings in Leslie's for familiar faces." Many of his drawings were made into copper plate etchings and published as *Life Studies of the Great Army* (1876) for which he was awarded a medal at the Philadelphia Centennial.[17]

Frank Leslie dispatched a cadre of artists to the battlefield, many of whom served for only part of the war. Carl Joseph Becker was sent to accompany the Union Army in 1863. In addition to major events including the battles of Gettysburg and Petersburg, he drew Lincoln's address at Gettysburg. Becker recorded scenes of daily life in army camps throughout the eastern theater of war as well as civilian events. In all, approximately 88 of his wartime drawings were published. Between 1861 and 1865, Charles E. H. Bonwill worked as a "special artist" sketching scenes of the Civil War in Virginia, Maryland, North Carolina, and Louisiana of which 87 were published. William T. Crane drew a series of views of Fort Sumter in Charleston Harbor in the summer of 1863 depicting the stages of the fort's demolition during a prolonged Union bombardment. These detailed and shocking drawings appeared in the final report to the War Department on these operations, and were later reproduced in the government's *Official Records*. Crane had 244 drawings from North Carolina, South Carolina, Georgia, and Florida published. At the siege of Petersburg in the summer of 1864, Andrew McCallum and Edward F. Mullen arrived just in time to witness the explosion of a mine placed in a tunnel under the Confederate lines. In spite of the explosion, the Federal forces suffered terrible losses in their attack, especially among black troops trapped in the so-called Crater. McCallum recorded the extent of the carnage in detail. In the following months, Mullen, a well-established cartoonist before the war, continued to focus on the details of battle and its aftermath, particularly burial squads.

[17] William Forrest Dawson, ed. *Edwin Forbes, Civil War Etchings* (New York: Dover, 1994), preface. Forbes may have been the archetype of the young reporter featured in the TV miniseries The Blue and the Gray.

John H. F. Hillen joined the Union Army in 1861, was wounded in 1862, and discharged as disabled. In the same year, his scenes of war in West Virginia were published in *Harper's Weekly*. Thereafter, he worked for *Leslie's* until 1865 in Virginia, Georgia, and Tennessee. James E. Taylor enlisted in the Tenth New York Infantry (National Zouaves) in 1861. While a soldier, he sent his battlefield drawings to *Leslie's* and was hired as a "special artist" when he left the army in 1863. For the remainder of the war, he traveled with the Union Army in Virginia, West Virginia, South Carolina, and North Carolina focusing particularly on panoramas of battles and the settings of the war. *Leslie's* published 61 of his wartime drawings. William R. McComas was originally a *New York Illustrated* artist. He went over to *Leslie's* and was assigned as "special artist" to Grant's army, which he accompanied to Bowling Green, Kentucky and the Battle of Pittsburg Landing (Shiloh), Tennessee before enlisting as a 2nd Lieutenant in the 79th Ohio Infantry. He continued to send in drawings throughout his military career—21 in all. In 1863, he was detailed as a topographical engineer and cartographer for the duration of the war and received a commendation in dispatches at the Battle of Champion's Hill, Mississippi in May 1863. McComas was promoted to Captain in August 1863 and continued to serve in campaigns in Texas until he was discharged in 1865.

In 1863, in southeastern Kansas, a column of Federal cavalry under Major General James Gilpatrick Blunt was ambushed by the irregulars commanded by the notorious William T. "Bloody Bill" Anderson of Quantrill's Raiders. At the enemy's first charge, the Federal cavalrymen broke and fled before the vastly superior guerrilla force. Only a handful of men escaped. The rest were hunted down, captured, and then summarily executed and scalped. Among them was James R. O'Neill, actor, comedian, landscape painter and, at the moment, "special artist" for *Leslie's*, embedded with the command. Anderson was captured, executed and beheaded shortly thereafter.

By flattering the officers in his sketches, O'Neill had insinuated himself into the top military echelons of the Army in the Western Theater, and though records show he was never a real soldier, he presented himself, in full uniform, as a lieutenant in Jennison's Jayhawkers during a newspaper interview by a hometown editor back in Kenosha, Wisconsin. All the while, he was busily painting a huge "roller panorama" of the war. In fact, he had not seen any of the combat depicted thereon presumably basing his oversized battle scenes on sketches that appeared regularly in *Leslie's*. His Civil War "Panopticon," as it was called, first was shown publicly in October 1861, and periodically, O'Neill added hundreds more feet of fabric and more exciting war scenes. He then accompanied Blunt through southern Missouri and northern Arkansas through a series of skirmishes and minor battles. His written reports, but no battle drawings, appeared in *Leslie's* during these weeks. However, his major contributions to Leslie's were humorous political cartoons. His only signed battle sketch to appear in *Leslie's*, a Union cavalry charge at Honey Springs, Indian Territory (Oklahoma), 17 July 1863, was published some five weeks after it took place. There was a final postscript to his work, a posthumous showing of his Great Diorama of the War at Fort Leavenworth. On 27 January 1864, the *Daily Times* announced that the evening's showing would be "positively the last opportunity

that will be afforded our citizens of witnessing O'Neill's great work." The great work has since disappeared.

Reporting from the battlefield was exacting and dangerous work. Many artists fell ill with the same maladies that afflicted the troops. Two of Frank Leslie's artists were captured and released by Lee, and one part-time artist, O'Niell, was killed in combat. C.E.F. Hillen was badly wounded in the Atlanta campaign. The special artists often found it difficult to get their sketches from the battlefield to the engravers by messenger, and chose instead to go home with them in hand and recover for a time from the exhaustion of fieldwork. *Leslie's* thereby failed to have a correspondent with Sherman on his campaign to the sea, while *Harper's* artists accompanied the general. Consequently, by 1864 Harper's and other Northern journals had surged ahead of *Leslie's* in circulation.[18]

The Civil War Period attracted historians like no other time in American history. Immediately after the Civil War, the public was swamped with war stories, journals, memoirs, and battle descriptions. Former army commanders renewed wartime arguments about tactics and strategies in print—the pen and the printing press their only weapons. Battlefield opponents, and sometimes-former comrades, aired the dirty laundry of their respective commands before an awaiting public. The state and national governments kept generally precise records that could be found in the volumes of military correspondence and paperwork and among the data collected by the public census. This was particularly true of the Federal forces and less so of the Confederates—whose late war documents were more fragmented or lost in the collapse of the Confederate government.

The "special" artists, correspondents, and photographers of the American Civil War would not only directly affect how the war was viewed from the home front, but they would also inspire future combat photographers, videographers, and embedded reporters who would enter the trenches of Flanders in WWI, cross the black sands of Iwo Jima in WWII, sweat in the steaming jungles of Vietnam, and endure the desert environments of Afghanistan and Iraq to tell their stories.

In memoriam
William Edward Denneen
(1903-1965)

Photoengraver

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[18]Louis Shepheard Moat, ed. *Frank Leslie's Illustrated History of the Civil War* 1992 University Press of Mississippi ed.,(New York: Mrs. Frank Leslie, 1895), v-xii.