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Confederate Civil War Photographers Propagators and the Hero Myth

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CONFEDERATE CIVIL WAR PHOTOGRAPHERS:

PROPAGATORS OF THE HERO MYTH

by

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ABSTRACT

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Myths are metaphors. They are stories, sometimes handed down through hundreds of years, which help put man or a culture in accord with nature, to reconcile mankind to the harsh realities of life. Society's heroes, acting through the archetypal hero monomyth, serve as the personification of a culture's mythology. Through the hero, a society may reconcile with nature and those external forces which influence our lives.

This paper examines the historical development of the hero myth, the archetypal hero role that Robert E. Lee filled for the Southern people during the American Civil War and the role that photography played in forming that image of Lee, the development of photography in America from 1839 through the 1860s, the role of Southern photographers during the war, and the apotheosis and image of Lee.

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CHAPTER 1

MYTH AND THE MIND OF MAN

Neither in mind nor in body do we inhabit the world of the Paleolithic millennia, to whose lives and lifeways we nevertheless owe the very forms of our bodies and structure of our minds. Memories of their animal envoys still must sleep, somehow, within us; for they wake a little and stir when we venture into wilderness. They wake in terror to thunder. And again they wake, with a sense of recognition, when we enter any one of those great painted caves. Whatever the inward darkness may have been to which the shamans of those caves descended in their trances, the same must lie within ourselves, nightly visited in sleep.

Joseph Campbell, The Way of the Animal Powers

From the mind of early man came the beginnings of the myth of the hero. Myth has been a part of man's consciousness since there have existed conscious thoughts. The same basic impulses which governed the unconscious mind of early man govern the mind of modern man as well. As consciousness evolved, so did the collective unconscious and with it mythology.[1] The developing mythology in the mind of early man formed the genesis for the hero mold that modern man has inherited.

To begin to understand the meaning and role of the hero myth in society, it becomes necessary to first define myth.

Myths are metaphors. They are stories, sometimes handed down through hundreds of years, which help put man or a culture in accord with nature, to reconcile mankind to the harsh realities of life. According to scholar Joseph Campbell (1904-1987), "Myths are clues to the spiritual potentialities of the human life; what we are capable of knowing and experiencing within."[2]

These stories, often called legends, fairytales, and folktales relate to us personally and culturally. Through the ages they have been used as signifiers of rites of passage in a personal sense or, in a broader sense, to attune a culture to its natural surroundings. So it could be argued that myths put us in touch with ourselves, with what is at the very center of our being--what Carl Jung termed the collective unconscious.[3]

Because mythology is deeply embedded in our collective unconscious, it often manifests itself in dreams and mystic visions. Historically, it has been the function of the shaman or priest to relate his dreams or visions to the people of his culture, interpreting their meaning and illustrating their relevance to their lives through ritual. In The Power of Myth, Joseph Campbell writes, "The myths and rites were means of putting the mind in accord with the body and the way of life in accord with the way that nature dictates."[4]

Ritual becomes the enactment of the myth. Aborigines in Australia perform a rite of passage in which the men of the tribe ceremonially abduct boys of the proper age from their mothers to physically and emotionally push them beyond the stage of boyhood toward manhood:

> . . . the boys are taken out to the men's sacred ground, and they're really put through an ordeal--circumcision, subincision, the drinking of men's blood, and so forth. Just as they had drunk mother's milk as children, so now they drink men's blood. They're being turned into men. While this is going on, they are being shown enactments of mythological episodes from the great myths. They are instructed in the mythology of the tribe.[5]

The rites of passage psychologically and mythically have been enacted and re-enacted for hundreds of thousands of years. When the reconciliation of the conscious and unconscious minds occurs, we are making a very real connection to the collective unconscious of all who have gone before. We are experiencing the enactment of the same myth that thousands before us have experienced. And though

the enactment or ritual may differ from culture to culture, the basic myth is an archetype which is indigenous to the human psyche.

The myths of countless cultures are similar in many ways and contain recurring mythological motifs. Parallels between myths exist from all over the world. Joseph Campbell recounts in The Power of Myth:

> . . . when I deal[t] with myths from all parts of the world, I [found] the American Indian tales and narratives to be very rich, very well developed. . . . Later I became interested in Hinduism, and there were the same stories again. And in my graduate work I was dealing with the Arthurian medieval material, and there were the same stories again. So you can't tell me they're not the same stories. I've been with them all my life.[6]

Similar patterns can be ascertained from various kinds of myths. The hero myth is one which has become well known because of the analyses given it. The hero, whether he is a real person or a fictional character, serves as the personification of a culture's mythology.[7] Through the hero, a society can live its mythos. The hero enacts for society the necessary rites of passage, or in a real sense, the rites of passage in a human life emulate the hero acts.

In The Hero with a Thousand Faces, Joseph Campbell writes that all hero myths have the same plot, or form, and therefore the same metaphysical, not literal, meaning.[8] If each hero myth were to be taken literally as historical fact, then the commonality which exists between them could be deemed merely coincidence. For Campbell, there is only a solitary hero, though he appears to us in many guises,

behind a thousand masks.[9]

If this is true; if there are undeniable similar patterns between myths of different cultures spanning thousands of years, is there a common source from which all myths are taken?

In The Myth of the Birth of the Hero, Dr. Otto Rank postulates three theories for the similarities between myths.

1. "The Idea of the People." This theory, propounded by Adolph Bastian in 1868, assumes the existence of elementary thoughts,[10] so that the unanimity of the myths is a necessary sequence of the uniform disposition of the human mind, and the manner of its manifestation which, within certain limits, is identical at all times and at all places.

2. "Original Community." Originating in a favorable locality (India), these tales were first accepted by the primarily related (namely the Indo-Germanic) peoples, then continued to grow while retaining the common primary traits, and ultimately radiated over the entire earth.

3. The modern theory of migration, or borrowing, according to which the individual myths originate from definite peoples (especially the Babylonians) and are accepted by other peoples through oral traditions or through literary influences.[11]

Of the three theories of Rank, the two deemed most plausible by Campbell coincide with philosopher Carl Jung's

(1875-1961) explanation of the origins of archetypal imaging:

> There are . . . two possible explanations: independent invention and diffusion [Rank's #1 and #2]. Diffusion means that myth originates in a single society and spreads elsewhere from it. Independent invention means that every society develops its own myths. Neither explanation assumes that the myths of any two societies are identical, only that they are similar enough to suggest a common cause.[12]

To simplify what could be a lengthy and complex discussion, let us consider only these two possible explanations for the similarities in myths, the evidence of archetypes being accepted as fact in both.

Without deferring to him as the final word, Campbell states that Jung has come closest to grasping the meaning of myth, and, in fact, Jung's explanation of the archetype closely resembles Campbell's:

> The concept of the archetype . . . is derived from the repeated observation that, for instance, the myths and fairytales of world literature contain definite motifs that crop up everywhere. We meet these same motifs in the fantasies, dreams, deliria and delusions of individuals living today. These typical images and associations are what I call archetypal ideas. . . . They have their origin in the archetype, which in itself is an irrepresentable unconscious, pre-existent form that seems to be part of the inherited structure of the psyche and can therefore manifest itself spontaneously anywhere, at any time. Because of its instinctual nature, the archetype underlies the feeling-toned complexes and shares their autonomy.[13]

The independent invention theory supports the notion of the archetype being contained in the subconscious psyche, therefore maintaining that common link to all mankind and

manifesting itself as common form. The meaning of the archetypal images changes to reflect cultural differences.

If the diffusion theory were to hold true, the archetypes presented would summarily hold common meanings (metaphors) between cultures, as well as common forms (stories). Jung refutes this possibility:

> It is necessary to point out once more that archetypes are not determined as regards their content, but only as regards their form and then only to a very limited degree.[14]

Archetypes serve as universal symbols in myths. The meaning of the archetypal image does not. The meaning for each individual changes within his societal context. If it can be said that the meaning of primordial images is altered according to the cultural diversity of the individuals and that the development of a culture and the collective unconscious colors its content while its form remains constant, then it should not be too far a jump to conclude that these images have been relayed from the universal subconscious (independent invention) for ages, rather than radiating from the consciousness of a central society (diffusion).

Although the origin of myth may be attributed to the collective unconscious of man, the historical sources of the hero myth, as with all myths, are unclear. Certainly, the earliest myths grew from stories of the hunt, for the earliest known depictions of the hero are invariably connected to imagery of the hunt.

The magnificent caves at Lascaux, France, are a

series of caverns, or galleries, filled with the paintings of Paleolithic man (ca. 12,000 B.C.). They contain some of the most beautifully entrancing of these images. Running black stags, magical horned beasts, ponies, cows, and groups of animals of all types cover the walls and ceilings of the caves.

> Today it is impossible to imagine the mood of mystery and awe that the illumination of [the] great Rotunda of Lascaux must have evoked in those here participating in the men's rites. Impossible, also, to imagine by what miracle of inspiration this vision of an everlasting hunt ground was conceived, and by what art realized![15]

Majestic herds of wondrous beasts roam the walls of these grottoes just as they roamed the walls and the imaginings of the men who painted them millennia ago. What are the messages left for us on the meanings of these works? What mystic ceremonies took place under the gaze of the herds, and what connection could they have for modern man? Campbell writes:

> The very different groupings of the various animal messengers appeal to us aesthetically, and we feel joined in a kinship of experience with the artists who produced them. However, to the special mystical function that each of these galleries served--for millennia--we have no clue.[16]

There are differing theories as to the significance of each painting and to the site as a collective whole. The hunt to Paleolithic man was of prime importance, for the fate of the group rested on the success or failure of the hunt. Surely the bravest and most skilled hunters were deemed the most significant contributors to the group. The recordation of a successful hunt and hunter could be the

first record of the hero. Whether the purpose of the cave art was to pay homage to the hunt, the hunter, or the hunted, there is little doubt that the caves were mythological in significance. The heroic act of the hunt was envisioned and recorded, playing some life-affirming role in the hard natural world of early man.

Archetypal aspects of the hero myths of various cultures have become evident by comparative mythological study. In The Hero with a Thousand Faces, Joseph Campbell names the archetypes and searches for their mythological meaning:

> The standard path of the mythological adventure of the hero is a magnification of the formula represented in the rites of passage: separation--initiation--return, which might be named the nuclear unit of the monomyth.[17]

Details of the mythology of the hero vary widely from culture to culture. What follows are broad descriptions of the three parts to Campbell's nuclear unit.[18]

The Call to Adventure (separation)--When the potential hero has psychologically reached the stage of passage, for instance from boyhood to manhood, the call to adventure occurs. When he is ready for the transformation, the call may come by several means. He may be carried or sent abroad by a benign or malevolent spirit; he may venture forth of his own volition; or he may simply blunder into it. In any case, the hero enters a world of unknown mysteries, one in which he must deal with forces he does not understand.[19]

> This fateful region of both treasure and danger may be variously represented: as a distant land, a forest, a kingdom underground, beneath the waves, or above the sky, a secret island, lofty mountaintop, or profound dream state; but it is always a place of strangely fluid and polymorphous beings, unimaginable torments, superhuman deeds, and impossible delight.[20]

Sometimes the call is refused. But to refuse the call is to refuse the passage, thereby thwarting the life-path. In modern terms this may lead to an unfulfilling life, overwhelming depression, or psychosis.[21]

The hero who answers the call enters a nebulous world where he first encounters a supernatural helper who provides the adventurer with amulets against the dragon forces (trials) he is about to pass.[22] He arrives on the threshold where he confronts a shadowy presence guarding the gate. He may defeat the power and pass through, or he may be slain, to descend in death, only to be resurrected.

> The adventure is always and everywhere a passage beyond the veil of the known into the unknown; the powers that watch at the boundary are dangerous; to deal with them is risky; yet for anyone with competence and courage the danger fades.[23]

The Initiation--The hero enters the dark world to gain his prize but first must undergo and survive a series of trials or supreme ordeal.

> The triumph may be represented as the hero's sexual union with the goddess-mother of the world (sacred marriage), his recognition by the father-creator (father atonement), his own divinization (apotheosis), or again--if the powers have remained unfriendly to him--his theft of the boon he came to gain (bride-theft, fire-theft) . . .[24]

The initiation serves as the process of

psychologically dissolving an infantile past and gaining the right to pass into the next stage of personhood. To forego the trials is to remain dependent on the images of a child.

The Return--Like the call, the return is often refused. "Numerous indeed are the heroes fabled to have taken up residence forever in the blessed isle of the unaging Goddess of Immortal Being."[25] This could be called bliss, rapture, the inner being, or the unconscious mind.

If the reigning gods remain friendly, the hero returns with his boon to bestow it upon his fellow man, aided by the powers of the god. If the powers are not friendly, he likely must steal the treasure and take flight to the threshold.

> At the return threshold the transcendental powers must remain behind; the hero re-emerges from the kingdom of dread [return, resurrection]. The boon that he brings restores the world . . .[26]

The hero returns. Mythologically, the hero has met and slain the monster, survived the fire, and returned with the prize. He is celebrated as a superior being and serves as a model for all men. Psychologically, he has resolved an inner conflict and reconciled the conscious self with his unconscious mind.

Lyman Frank Baum (1856-1919) wrote The Wonderful Wizard of Oz in 1900. In this classic children's book, Baum takes Dorothy, a Kansas farm girl, restless because of the constraints placed on a child by the responsibilities of the adult world, on an adventure to another land. Over the rainbow and beyond the land of adult supervision, she

encounters a land of witches, monsters, dwarves, and magic. A land where the magic that is perceived is the magic one carries in one's heart.

For the purposes of discussion, the imagery in the 1939 MGM film, The Wizard of Oz, will be used. The storyline of the film is similar to the original book, but dissimilarities occur in the imagery throughout. For instance, who could imagine Dorothy wearing anything but ruby slippers? In the original book, Dorothy acquired silver slippers. It seems common sense to use the imagery so familiar to so many over the years that it has become a part of our modern consciousness.

Dorothy is thrust into the land of Oz when a tornado drops her house onto the Wicked Witch of the East. Glinda, the Good Witch of the North, places the ruby slippers on Dorothy for protection (supernatural helper/amulet). After the dead witch's sister (the Wicked Witch of the West) challenges Dorothy's right to the ruby slippers, Dorothy must seek out the great and powerful Oz for his aid in returning home (The Call to Adventure).

On her journey to the Land of Oz, Dorothy encounters three helpers, loyal side-kicks who aid in her quest. She arrives at the throne of Oz only to be sent on a mission of extreme danger. She must conquer the Wicked Witch of the West and return to Oz with proof of her deed--the witch's broom (supreme ordeal, Initiation).

After a series of trials, she returns to Oz to seek

her prize--home. What she finds is that the power to return home lies within her, not in the outer world with others, (The Return).

Dorothy awakes in her bed surrounded by the loved ones she left behind. The adventure in which she participated was the psychological transformation from child to adult. The prize she gains is not only home but also the rite of passage into adulthood. The problems she ran away from as a child, she must now cope with as an adult.[27]

The fairytale that Baum wove in 1900 draws parallels to the life of Confederate General Robert E. Lee (1807-1870). In 1861, after over 30 years in the service of the United States Army, Lee was offered two calls to adventure. One call was for the position of commander of the Union forces at the outbreak of the Civil War; the other was as commander of the Confederate forces. Though refusing one call, he accepted another.

Lee indeed entered a world of unknown mysteries in accepting his call. Though morally loyal to the country he served for so long and opposed to secession and slavery, he nevertheless was unable to fight against his native Virginia and thus found himself leading the fight for the right to secede--and slavery.

His initiation, of course, was the war itself. In four long years of trial in battle and supreme ordeals, Lee experienced moments of triumph before defeat. Though not literally slain, Lee suffered the defeat of his army and

surrender to Union forces. But if Lee suffered the humiliation of the death of his cause, he was resurrected in the views of the people of the United States of America and abroad, for few men in American history have attained the divinization assigned to Robert E. Lee.

Lee's return from the trials of war was one of little fanfare. He settled quickly into a sedentary life as president of a small college in Virginia. His reward was the peace not known to him during a long life in the military.

Chapter five deals with the life of Robert E. Lee as the essential hero. This brief introduction as Lee the hero will suffice at this juncture.

It remains immaterial whether the hero is historical or fictional. The story is merely the form, the meaning is in the message. Over the millennia the message has always been the same. Hero myths, as integral parts of any culture's mythology, are one because essentially man is one. We share the same physical and psychological needs of all men.

As we are told in the Vedas: "Truth is one, the sages speak of it by many names."[28]

NOTES

1. "I term collective all psychic contents that belong not to one individual but to many, i.e., to a society, a people, or to mankind in general. The antithesis of collective is individual." (C. G. Jung, Psychological Types; quoted in Joseph Campbell, Historical Atlas of World Mythology: Volume 1: The Way of the Animal Powers, Part 1: Mythologies of the Primitive Hunters and Gatherers, [New York: Harper and Row, Publishers, 1988], 47).

2. Joseph Campbell, The Power of Myth, (New York: Doubleday, 1988), 5.

3. Carl Jung, ed., "Approaching the Unconscious," in Man and His Symbols (London: Aldus Books, 1964; repr., New York: Dell Publishing Co., 1968), 41.

4. Campbell, Myth, 70.

5. Ibid., 81.

6. Ibid., 10.

7. Ibid., 134.

8. Campbell acknowledges the differences among myths but, in light of their similarities dismisses them as secondary. (Joseph Campbell, The Hero with a Thousand Faces, 2d ed., [Princeton University Press, 1968], viii). For examples of the differences in hero myths and explanations of them, see (Hero, 255-295 passim).

9. Robert A. Segal, Joseph Campbell: An Introduction, (New York: Garland Publishing, 1987), 26.

10. Adolf Bastian, a world traveler as well as a major ethnologist of the nineteenth century recognized in the myths and ceremonial customs of mankind a significant number of essential themes and motifs that were apparently universal. He termed these Elementargedanken, "elementary ideas." But he perceived also that, in their appearances they were clothed always in local forms, which he termed Volkergedanken, "ethnic ideas." (Campbell, Animal Powers, 9).

11. Dr. Otto Rank, The Myth of the Birth of the Hero, (New York: The Journal of Nervous and Mental Disease Publishing Company, 1914), 1.

12. Aniela Jaffe, ed., C. G. Jung, Word and Image, (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1983), 227.

13. Ibid., 7.

14. Ibid., 227.

15. Campbell, Animal Powers, 60.

16. Ibid., 63.

17. Campbell, Hero, 30.

18. There are many examples to illustrate aspects of the hero myth from all over the world. To cite them here would only serve to lengthen this discourse needlessly. There are myriad volumes of world mythology to illustrate the points made. It is my purpose to present the commonality of the mythic archetypes as pertains to early world culture, not to draw conclusions from specific world mythologies.

19. Campbell, Hero, 58.

20. Ibid.

21. Campbell, The Power of Myth, 40.

22. Campbell, Hero, 69.

23. Ibid., 82.

24. Ibid., 246.

25. Ibid., 193.

26. Ibid., 246.

27. Victor Fleming, The Wizard of Oz, (Hollywood, Metro Goldwyn-Mayer, 1939), film.

28. Segal, Campbell, viii.

CHAPTER 2

THE DEVELOPMENT OF PHOTOGRAPHY IN AMERICA AND ITS IMPACT ON THE CIVIL WAR

> But few persons have any conception of the vast amount of business transacted by the Daguerreotypists of America. There are millions of dollars worth of stock consumed yearly . . . our numbers are not less than ten thousand.
>
> Samuel Dwight Humphrey, Humphrey's Journal, 1 November 1850

Depictions of heroes and men have been with us from the dawn of man. Cave paintings were the first, followed by the epics of the Greeks. Oral traditions kept the hero as an important element in early Greek society, followed later by the written accounts of the hero. Sculpture followed. The concept of the hero was displayed in the Greek and Roman ideals. Men were depicted in stone as they should have been, often not as they were.

In Western culture, pictorial representation blossomed during the Renaissance. Though subjects were usually confined to religious or allegorical themes, the painted portrait nonetheless became the medium of representation persona. For centuries portraiture depended on the skill and accuracy of the painter for precise rendering of subject. It was not until the invention of photography in 1839 that portraiture became an exact science.

The first popular and successful form of photography was the daguerreotype, introduced in France by Louis Jacques Mandé Daguerre (1787-1851) in 1839.[1] Even today the luminescent beauty and exacting detail of the daguerreotype is unmatched. Overnight, affordable portraiture became available to everyman. The portrayal of everyman on a two-dimensional surface conveyed to that surface the essence of the hero in all. Prior to this new invention one had to be able to afford a rather expensive portrait painter or miniaturist to accomplish the task.

Daguerre sold the rights to the daguerreotype to the French government in exchange for a lifetime pension. In turn, the government made the process public knowledge and disseminated instruction manuals in order to develop the process and have it perfected more rapidly. The manual sold out of twenty-nine editions in six languages the first year.[2]

In 1839 American inventor and painter Samuel F. B. Morse (1791-1872) traveled to Paris to obtain patents for his telegraph. While in Paris Morse visited Daguerre in his studio and was introduced to the magic of the daguerreotype. Morse himself had experimented with the camera obscura[3] but gave up on the idea of fixing the image permanently.[4]

Samuel Morse was the first American to experiment with the daguerreotype. His contribution to the proliferation of photography is immeasurable. It was he who introduced daguerreotypy to this country and was its chief exponent in its formative years. He became an excellent operator and was responsible for teaching such well-known portraitists as Mathew Brady, Edward Anthony, and Albert Southworth. Morse operated a daguerreian studio from 1840 through 1841 while, at the same time, developing needed improvements to the process.[5]

In October 1839 the American Journal of Science and Art may have printed the first reference to the daguerreotype process in the new world: a notice that the steamship British Queen had arrived from England with copies

of the description of the process.[6] However, Samuel Morse had written his brother on March 9, 1839, describing the process with the words that no painting or engraving had ever approached the exquisite results of the daguerreotype. His letter may have been published in New York on April 20, 1839.[7] Whoever was first, it is clear that Morse was certainly on the cutting edge of photography in America.

From that date on, the growth of daguerreotypy in America can only be described as phenomenal. Nowhere was the daguerreotype more successful than in America. Nineteenth-century America and the American experience were primed for the phenomenon of "instant" portraiture. The new process suited the democratic and pioneering spirit of the new Republic. The steady growth in popularity of the new democratic medium coincided with the growth of the new democratic society. When we view daguerreotypes from that era today, the bold unflinching countenance of many pioneering Americans look back at us.

The daguerreotype is an image produced on a highly polished silver-coated copper plate. It is usually matted, sealed behind glass, and presented in a hinged leather or thermoplastic case to protect the delicate surface.[8] The surface of the image, being highly reflective, can be viewed from a certain angle only. At other angles it reflects only the visage of the viewer.

The biggest drawback to the daguerreotype process was its limitation of one image per exposure. It produced only

one positive reversed image on the metal. No negative was produced and therefore the image could be reproduced only by making another positive of the image. For all its beauty and exquisite uniqueness of image, the process had commercial limitations. The characteristics of the daguerreotype, though innovative for its time, were to be improved upon in the ensuing years.

At its height in popularity in 1853, it is estimated that three million daguerreotypes were produced in America. New York alone claimed more than one hundred daguerreian studios.[9] The American daguerreotypists soon held the finest reputations in the world as the absolute best photographic artists. The zeal of the American public and the enthusiasm of the daguerreian operators made the quality and growth of the art in America unequaled elsewhere.

The latter half of the decade ending in 1860 marked the beginning of a new direction for photography and the death of the daguerreotype. The limitations of the daguerreotype process helped to initiate the development of the wet collodion process. Improvements were sorely needed to make photography a profitable venture in which to speculate, and the almost fanatical ardor that existed between the photographer, the process, and the public created by the daguerreotype in 1839 continued without a pause upon the introduction of the new processes.

The dramatic growth of photography in America is borne out by the occupation figures from the U. S. Census,

1850-1900. The U. S. Census of 1840 contains no listing of individual occupations. The first such listing was published in 1850 and should give ample data from which to begin. Considering that there was not one practicing photographer in any format in 1839 and few could claim photographer as an occupation in 1840, this should not seem irregular. No doubt by mid-1840 there were quite a few learning the process, but how many burgeoning artists could claim daguerreotypist as their main source of income? Relatively few, but this would change in a short time.

The U. S. Census of 1850 reports 938 persons listing their occupation as daguerreotypist (see table 1). That is almost a one thousand percent increase over a ten-year span. Considering that the art was taught solely on an apprenticeship basis, this increase can be regarded as dramatic.

By 1860 the number had tripled to 3,154 practicing artists, and by 1870, considerably after the war during the reconstruction period, the number had doubled to 7,558 (see table 1).

Respectively, the demand for raw photographic materials was great. Not only had the new art created a demand for images, but it had also created a new industry: the photographic manufacturer and supplier. Again, the first figures are from 1850, and the development is as dramatic.

In 1850 the number of manufactures in the United

States was seventy-four, employing 158 hands. In 1860 two hundred forty-nine manufacturers met the needs of the photographic community while employing 653 hands. This was over a two hundred percent increase in the number of manufactures and over a three hundred percent growth in the number of hands nationally (see table 2). In The Daguerreotype in America, Beaumont Newhall writes,

> As the art and demand grew so did the need for improvements. By 1850, there were twenty patents out for plate holders alone.[10]

With the many improvements in photography and subsequent growth in industry, the need arose to standardize the process of making photographs. Samuel D. Humphrey saw this need clearly. In 1849 he wrote and printed with M. Finley, A System of Photography, "One of the first books on photography in America . . . printed on the press of the local newspaper."[11] The need for a second edition occurred two months later, as Humphrey himself noted:

> . . . in less than two months we found ourselves with orders for two hundred copies more than we could supply: the consequence was that we were so compelled to use all exertion to bring forth our second edition. . . . we found ready sale, and no doubt could sell one thousand more had we them on hand.[12]

Humphrey followed with the equally successful American Hand Book of the Daguerreotype in 1853 and A Practical Manual of the Collodion Process in 1857. It was one of ". . . the first American photography manuals covering the practice of the collodion wet-plate process."[13]

The wet-plate collodion process, invented in 1851 by

Frederick Scott Archer (1813-1857), contained two distinct advantages over the daguerreotype. It produced a negative on transparent glass, making the image reproducible countless times, and the light sensitivity of wet collodion reduced exposure times substantially. Photography at the dawn of the Civil War became faster and cheaper--key elements in any commercial venture.

The relative convenience of the wet collodion process yielded four principle types of photographs: the carte de visite, the stereograph, the tintype, and the ambrotype.

The Ambrotype--Often regarded as the poor man's daguerreotype, the ambrotype was a reverse negative on glass. When bleached and backed by a dark ground, it presented a positive, one-of-a-kind image and was usually presented in a protective daguerreotype case. Ambrotypes were popular from 1854 through the mid-1860s when the inexpensive and reproducible carte de visite caused its relative decline. Nevertheless, ambrotypes were produced through the 1880s.

The Tintype--Also known as the ferrotype or melainotype, the tintype held the longest range of manufacture of any of the early processes. From the early 1850s through the first few decades of the twentieth century, it served as an inexpensive portrait method. The tintype held an image on a darkly varnished iron plate and was often mounted in a daguerreotype case, or in a paper or copper mat.[14]

The tintype enjoyed an era of immense popularity in the 1860s among Civil War soldiers for it was virtually indestructible. It was often mailed home from the war as a memento.[15] This passage, titled, "Photography in the Army" is from Humphrey's Journal, 15 February 1862:

> The Post-Office Department is now doing a heavy business in the transportation of photographs and ambrotypes. The photographers accompany the army wherever it goes, and a very large number of soldiers get their "pictures" taken and send them to their friends. Friends at home in return send their portraits to the soldiers, and in this way an immense transportation business has been done by the Post Office. Not unfrequently a number of bags go out from the Washington office entirely filled with sun pictures, enclosed in light but bulky cases.
>
> Most of these pictures are taken on the Melainotype Plate for the reason that it is light, durable, and easily sent in a letter.[16]

The Carte de Visite--The carte de visite, or visiting card, was by far the most popular craze of the late nineteenth century. Cartes de visite are pocket-sized cards, usually 2¼-by-4 inches, upon which photographs are mounted. They were used as calling or visiting cards, and many households contained large collections of the cards, often kept in specially designed albums. The cabinet card is a larger version of the carte de visite and was used in a similar fashion.

André Adolphe-Eugene Disderi (1819-1890), first patented the carte de visite method in 1854 after photographing Napoleon III in this format. It was an instant success. The public, clamoring for increasingly cheaper methods of portraiture, seized upon the inexpensive

likenesses.[17] "Cartomania"[18] spread across Europe and America from 1854 through 1900. It reached its zenith in America in the mid-1860s at the height of the Civil War and after. With the ever-increasing diversity of the carte de visite, two circumstances moved the center of photographic innovation from Europe to the United States: the American Civil War and the expansion of the American West.[19]

This era in photography's development culminated in the combination of the wet-plate glass negative with the albumen paper print. In 1847 it was discovered that albumen, or egg whites could be used as a binder for silver salts to hold the photographic image on paper. The result was sharper, less grainy images. This system of photography soon supplanted all others. For the first time duplicate, clear images could be reproduced infinitely from a single negative.

The history of the carte de visite can be divided into three main stages. (1) The early development from 1857 to 1861 produced portraits primarily of royalty and nobility. (2) Rapid diffusion took place from 1860 to 1870. The era of cartomania produced a wide range of subjects, including portraiture, landscapes, and genre scenes. (3) Routine studio portraiture from 1865 to 1905.[20] Cartomania revolutionized the business of photography.

The carte de visite became for the nineteenth-century household much of what the business card and television is for us today. It was used as a reminder to the persons

visited just what the visitor looked like, and of course, as entertainment. A typical middle-class American household might retain a collection of cartes de visite from relatives, visitors, and celebrities of the day. Card images of presidents, kings, actors, military men, scientists, and politicians were produced by the millions. The E. and H. T. Anthony Company, New York, for instance, was set up to mass-produce cartes of celebrities, producing as many as 3,600 cartes a day.[21]

The enormous popularity of the carte de visite precipitated the production of photographs in books, magazines, and newspapers by over twenty years. One explanation for its overwhelming success was the conspicuous lack of photographic imagery available.[22]

The carte de visite created celebrities as well.[23] The first hero of the Civil War, Major Robert Anderson, was also the first hero to be immortalized largely because of the carte de visite:

> The Civil War began with Major Robert Anderson's final surrender of Fort Sumter on April 13, 1861. Anderson immediately became a national hero. His photograph, taken earlier by George S. Cook and sold to Edward Anthony, was the first of many war celebrity images to be offered for sale by Anthony.[24]

Literally thousands of cartes could be made from a single glass negative. Often a particular issue of a carte de visite by one manufacturer would be produced and distributed to other studios for resale. These were often sold with the reseller's stamp on the reverse.

On 24 May 1861, Colonel Ephraim Elmer Ellsworth was killed after removing a Confederate flag from the roof of the Marshall House hotel in Alexandria, Virginia. After personally removing the flag, he was fatally shot by the proprietor of the hotel as he descended the stairs.[25] Ellsworth became the nation's first martyred death in the Civil War.[26] He also became the first memorialized on a carte de visite.

Within a week after the assassination of Abraham Lincoln, a crude composite photograph appeared on the market entitled The Apotheosis of Lincoln, possibly produced by Tomlinson and immediately mass-produced by many photographers.[27] "The picture is composed of a bust of Lincoln in the embrace of a bust of Washington, the two enveloped in a field of clouds."[28]

Another famous carte de visite, Columbia's Indignation, features a portrait of Lincoln, the American eagle perched above his picture, with an indignant Columbia pointing at the portrait. This image is by Boston photographer H. W. Horton and dated 1865. The Stars and Stripes serve as shroud and backdrop to the scene.[29]

After Lincoln's assassination, the public clamored for images of the slain president, John Wilkes Booth, and the assassination conspirators. Shortly thereafter, an anonymously published carte de visite entitled, "Booth and his Associates," appeared widely. It is a composite photograph featuring Booth surrounded by vignetted portraits

of six of the conspirators.[30]

As a famous actor, John Wilkes Booth was photographed often by dozens of photographers. His photographs were plentiful before and during the war. Photographs were often given after performances to the ladies in an audience and to reserve seat holders. These photos were pirated after the assassination and sold at newsstands for 25 cents.[31] Lincoln's photographs at that time sold for a dime.[32]

Portraits of Federal Sergeant Boston Corbett, who, against orders, shot Booth, were also in great demand.[33]

As emotions ran high during the war, sentimental views with sad stories were used to great advantage by shrewd businessmen. This carte de visite caption simply entitled "History of a Picture" was found on the reverse of a family portrait:

> Come and sit upon your father's knee, my little one, for to-morrow I must leave you. This may be my "last visit home." And the soldier pressed the little girl of four summers close to his brave stout heart.--Seven days later, at sundown, the soldier slept on the battle field. His boy and girl were orphans. He went to meet her who but a few weeks before had gone to prepare the way for him. This was indeed the soldier's "last visit home." But ere he died the bright sun portrayed a living picture. Without the aid of imagination, every lineament is perfection; every line is life. Call at Evans' Photographic Parlors and see the group; it will cost you nothing. And when you are in your own happy circle, you will remember the "Soldiers last visit Home."[34]

The Stereograph--The stereograph consists of two three by three inch photographs mounted on a three and a

half by seven-inch card, that, when viewed through a specially designed viewer, gives the illusion of depth. It nearly rivaled the popularity of the carte de visite for twenty years. The stereograph was produced from 1851 to 1943 and featured a wide range of subjects. Niagara Falls and other natural wonders of the world, natural and man-made disasters, and any subject which lent itself to the illusion of depth were popular subjects.

The rapid and widespread use of the collodion negative-albumen print combination was due largely to the huge demand for the carte de visite and the stereograph.[35]

Practical use of the new method coincided with the commencement of the Civil War.[36] It is hard to imagine today the awkwardness of a method that would require the photographer to carry a portable darkroom with him in order to sensitize each plate just before exposure and develop each plate immediately after. In order to accomplish photography in the field, it became necessary to invent the portable darkroom. The most famous of these was the Brady "whatsit" wagons, so dubbed by Union soldiers in the field.[37] They were nothing more than horse-drawn wagons outfitted with light-tight hooded envelopments in the rear. Photographer George Rockwood described them some years after the war as ". . . ordinary delivery wagon[s] of the period."[38]

There are two distinct categories of Civil War photographs--those made in the field and those made in the

studio. There are extant countless numbers of photographic studio images. The studio photographer during the mid 1860s did a remarkable business in soldier portraiture. For most operators during the war, portraiture provided their primary source of income.

Field photography, those photographs of gun placements, forts, camp life, and the aftermath of battle was not immediately profitable. Those who attempted to gain financially from their efforts in the field found little or no interest in war scenes immediately after the war. The efforts of such notables as Mathew Brady, Alexander Gardner, and Confederate photographer, Jay D. Edwards, though considered collections of value today brought little reward to them in the 1860s.

In his landmark book on the carte de visite, William C. Darrah cites five distinct degrees of relationships between the armies of the war and photographers:

> (1) Army photographers specifically assigned to record military information, e.g. Capt. A. J. Russell.
> (2) Photographers who enlisted with local units and accompanied them in the war.
> (3) Photographers like Brady, who obtained official permission to engage in private business and took photographs of men and scenes for profit.[39]
> (4) Contract photographers who were employed briefly or part time to do documentary work for military hospitals, prison camps or as post photographers.[40]
> (5) Camp followers, by far the most numerous.[41]

Considering the proliferation of photography during the war, little is known of any military use of the medium.

It is known that Alexander Gardner developed a process for photographically copying maps in the field,[42] and Union Captain A. J. Russell was assigned to record scenes of military significance for the army.[43]

The ubiquitous carte de visite played little or no significant role in the war. Though spies abounded, cartes de visite used for identification purposes is not recorded. Abraham Lincoln directed the Union war effort from Washington, usually within two hundred miles of the Army of Northern Virginia and never knew exactly what his principal enemy, Robert E. Lee, looked like. It was only after the war that Lincoln received a picture of Lee.

In Twenty Days, Dorothy Meserve Kunhardt and Philip B. Kunhardt relate the story of Robert and Abraham Lincoln, the former's return from the war, and the latter's first look at the image of Robert E. Lee:

> Mr. Lincoln questioned Robert closely . . . on what he knew about the surrender and Robert was proud to give his father a first-hand report. As a member of Grant's staff he had been present when General Lee rode up [to surrender] . . . Robert showed his father a carte de visite of Lee and Lincoln studied it gravely. He said, "It is a good face. It is the face of a noble, brave man. I am glad the war is over at last."[44]

War photography was not a new idea. Daguerreotypes made by anonymous photographers during the Mexican War (1846-1848), are among the first known war photographs. They were made in Saltillo, Mexico, in late 1847 or early 1848. One of the first was "General John E. Wool and His Troops Pausing in Their March Down a Saltillo Street."[45] The

daguerreotypes made in Mexico during the war are extant.[46]

George Wilkins Kendall, regarded today as history's first war correspondent, reported the war in Mexico for the Florida Picayune. He was a full-time reporter advancing with the American forces and wired his on-the-spot reports to the paper as events unfolded. His reports were soon to be regarded as "dag photos" of the conflict because he reported with the accuracy and immediacy of a photographic view.[47] The Picayune regarded Kendall himself as a ". . . daguerreotype reporter of the first order."[48] The word daguerreotype entered the English language as a word connoting absolute accuracy.[49]

The practices which would define the reporting of war forever--on-the-spot correspondence coupled with photography--came together for the first time during the war with Mexico. Together, they presented accuracy that was unmatched by the drawings and woodcuts heretofore used for depictions of war.[50]

Roger Fenton (1819-1869), an English photographer under the commission of the print seller Thomas Agnew and Son, spent four months in 1855 photographing the Crimean War using the wet-plate collodion process.[51] He made over three hundred negatives, the prints of which were displayed in London and Paris upon his return.[52]

Although he was not the first, nor arguably the best, to photograph the American civil conflict, Mathew Brady is today the most famous of all war photographers. Mathew

Brady's accomplishment lies in his far-sighted endeavors to finance the photographing of the war in totality and document for the first time almost every major battle scene of the war. To do this Brady held in his employ, ". . . at one time or another more than three hundred civilian photographers [who] covered the actions of the Army of the Potomac alone."[53] Photographers known to have worked for Brady are Alexander Gardner, Timothy O'Sullivan, George N. Barnard, Egbert Guy Foux, James Gardner, James F. Gibson, Stanley Morrow, William Pywell, John Reekie, T. C. Roche, and David B. Woodbury.[54]

Alexander Gardner and Timothy O'Sullivan, both of whom achieved notoriety for their individual contributions to war photography and later for photographing the opening of the American West, left Brady's employ in 1862 but continued to photograph the war under Gardner's aegis. They were two of Brady's finest.[55]

Mathew Brady began the photographic chronicle of the war at the first Battle of Bull Run on 21 July 1861, with these words, "Destiny overruled me . . . a spirit in my feet said go, and I went - !"[56] But while Brady was contemplating his moves in July, no less than five Confederates were by then veteran war photographers.

History has all but ignored the accomplishments of the Southern Civil War photographers, perhaps because of the great singular feats of Brady, Gardner, and their respective companies, or perhaps because history is written by the

victors. But if history has awarded Brady the honor of Civil War Photographer, she has made the Confederates initiators of her memory.

Photographer S. T. Souder from Charleston, photographed the interior of Fort Sumter, South Carolina, on 14 April 1861, the day after its evacuation by Federal troops.[57] Frank K. Houston, 307 King St., Charleston, photographed the rebel banner over the parade ground of Sumter on April 15. In The Image of War, Shadows of the Storm, William C. Davis, named Houston, ". . . the first to bring a camera into Sumter after Anderson's surrender on April 14th."[58]

According to the daybooks of George S. Cook, noted Charleston photographer, he visited the famous fort on April 15.[59] A. A. Pelot photographed Fort Sumter on the 16th of April, a day after Cook's visit. The partners Osborn and Durbec of "Osborn and Durbec's Southern Stereoscopic and Photographic Depot, 223 King St. at the sign of the Big Camera" made an extensive series of photographs of Sumter and the Confederate batteries around Charleston on April 17, three days after the surrender of the fort. They also made a panorama of the fort from three separate images they claimed to have taken the day of the surrender.[60]

Regardless of who was first, it becomes apparent that Southern photographers' images predated Northern images by months. The Confederates showed great pluck in besting the Yankee endeavors, but their efforts were to be in vain, for

the impending Union blockade would soon effectively curtail photographers' work in the South.[61]

Perhaps he was writing on behalf of all photographers, Northern and Southern, when Captain Andrew J. Russell, Union officer and official army photographer for the Army of the Potomac, wrote in 1882:

> The memories of our great war come down to us and will pass on to future generations with more accuracy and more truthtelling illustration than that of any previous struggle. [And for that] . . . the world is indebted to the photographic art and a few enterprising and earnest men.[62]

NOTES

1. In 1826, Daguerre learned that Joseph Nicephore Niepce (1765-1833) was also experimenting in making sun pictures. By 1829, Niepce had invited Daguerre into partnership and shared with him the secret of heliography (sun-drawing). The two men worked separately but shared much information in the next four years. Two years after Niepce's death, Daguerre perfected the photographic process that carries his name. (The Chrysler Museum, Photography Remembered: A Selective View From the Robert W. Lisle Collection [Norfolk: The Chrysler Museum, 1990], 9).

2. Ibid., 10.

3. A camera obscura is a light-tight box with an aperture or lens through which light bouncing off external objects enters to reflect images of those objects on the opposite surface. Camera obscuras can be the size of a hand held camera or as large as a room and were used for centuries as aids in drawing.

4. Chrysler, Photography Remembered, 11.

5. Floyd Rinhart and Marion Rinhart, The American Daguerreotype (Athens: University of Georgia Press, 1981), chap. 5 passim.

6. Robert S. Sennett, The Nineteenth Century Photographic Press (New York: Garland Publishing, Inc., 1985), 14.

7. Chrysler, Photography Remembered, 11.

8. Daguerreotype cases were made from the mixture of heated shellac and sawdust and were called Union or composition cases. Many people erroneously call these gutta-percha cases today. Gutta-percha is a form of plastic derived from the latex of several Malaysian trees. It strongly resembles the composition material used in daguerreotype cases, but was not known in mid-nineteenth century America.

9. Chrysler, Photography Remembered, 10.

10. Beaumont Newhall, The Daguerreotype in America (New York: New York Graphic Society, 1961), 35.

11. William Welling, Photography in America: The Formative Years (New York: Crowell, 1978), 27, quoted in Robert S. Sennett, Photography and Photographers to 1900 (New York: Garland Publishing Co., 1985), 26.

12. Samuel D. Humphrey, ed., "Our Journal," Humphrey's Journal (15 November 1850), 50.

13. Welling, Photography in America, 123.

14. Because of their relative durability, tintypes were often sold with no mat or case around them.

15. Some artists, like George Cook, made few tintypes, considering them inferior. (A. Lawrence Kocher and Howard Dearstyne, Shadows in Silver [New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1954], 10).

16. Humphrey, Humphrey's (15 February 1862), 319.

17. Beaumont Newhall, The History of Photography (New York: The Museum of Modern Art, 1982), 64.

18. Estelle Marder and William Marder, Anthony: the Man, the Company, the Cameras (n.p.: Pine Ridge Publishing Co., 1982), 88.

19. William C. Darrah, Cartes de Visite in Nineteenth Century America (Gettysburg: William C. Darrah, 1981), 6.

20. Ibid., 10.

21. Marder and Marder, Anthony: the Man, 88.

22. The first newspaper photograph was published in the New York Daily Herald on 4 March 1880 in the half-tone process. (Giselle Freund, Photography and Society [Boston: David R. Godine, 1980], 104).

23. Notables in many fields literally owed a good measure of their popularity to the exposure obtained from the carte de visite. After Lincoln's assassination, a law was passed on 2 May 1865 which forbade the sale of assassin John Wilkes Booth's photograph in order to squelch the perpetuation of his name. However, the government found it impossible to enforce, and rescinded it on May 8th of the same year. (Marder and Marder, Anthony: the Man, 90; Richard J. S. Gutman and Kellie O. Gutman, John Wilkes Booth Himself [Dover: Hired Hand Press, 1979], 22-23).

24. Marder and Marder, Anthony: the Man, 169.

25. Ruth Painter Randall, Lincoln's Sons (Boston: Little, Brown and Company, 1955), 76.

26. William Davis, The Image of War, vol.1, Shadows of the Storm (New York: Doubleday, 1981), 171.

27. Darrah, Cartes, 85.

28. Ibid.

29. H. W. Horton, "Columbia's Indignation", albumen carte de visite, 1865, Massachusetts Historical Society, Boston, MA.

30. Gutman and Gutman, Booth Himself, 22-23.

31. In life, John Wilkes Booth's notoriety, and in death his infamy, was due in part to the proliferation of the carte de visite. It is an ironic note that at the time of his death, Booth had, among other items in his pockets, five cartes de visite of five different women, one of whom was his fiancee, Lucy Hale. (Dorothy Meserve Kunhardt and Philip B. Kunhardt, Twenty Days [New York: Harper and Row, 1965], 178).

32. Gutman and Gutman, Booth Himself, 23.

33. Darrah, Cartes, 85.

34. Ibid., 144.

35. Ibid., 2.

36. William C. Darrah lists five principal types of Civil War cartes de visite in Cartes (74): (1) Portraits of soldiers, officers, and others directly concerned with the war effort. (2) Scenic views: battlefields, camps, troops, prisons, naval vessels, and landmarks. (3) Contemporary war-related: Sanitary Commission and its Fairs, mascots, medical cases, etc. (4) War propaganda: cartoons, patriotic, sentimental, etc. (5) Post-war related: military cemeteries and their monuments, battlefields, reunions and encampments, Grand Army of the Republic, etc.

Eleven cemeteries were established during the war or immediately after: Antietam, 1862, Gettysburg, 1862, Vicksburg, 1865, Shiloh, 1866, et al. Arlington National Cemetery (1864) provided for the burial of military officers, government officials and their families. Cartes de visite of all of these are known. (Darrah, Cartes, 82).

37. Dorothy Meserve Kunhardt and Philip B. Kunhardt, Mathew Brady and His World (Alexandria: Time-Life Books, 1977), 201.

38. A detailed description by George Rockwood of the darkroom wagons used in the field may be found in Davis, Image, 1:413.

39. Mathew Brady entered the theater of war with a slip of paper from the Lincoln administration across which was scrawled, "Pass Brady." (Kunhardt and Kunhardt, Brady, 200).

40. G. H. Houghton photographed the 7th Vermont Infantry in Brattleboro, Vermont in September, 1864 and ". . . made scores of outstanding images with the Vermont regiments in McClellan's army on the Peninsula, then took them home to sell to friends and loved ones." (Davis, Image, 1:388, 412).

41. Darrah, Cartes, 78.

42. See William F. Stapp, "To . . . Arouse the Conscience, and Affect the Heart," note number 7 in Brooks Johnson, An Enduring Interest: The Photographs of Alexander Gardner (Norfolk: The Chrysler Museum, 1991), 117.

43. See Andrew J. Russell, Russell's Civil War Photographs (New York: Dover, 1982), passim.

44. Kunhardt and Kunhardt, Twenty Days, 19.

45. Unknown photographer, "General John E. Wool and His Troops Pausing in Their March Down a Saltillo Street," daguerreotype, 1847-48, The Amon Carter Museum, Fort Worth, TX.

46. Martha A. Sandweiss, Rick Stewart and Ben W. Huseman, Eyewitness to War: Prints and Daguerreotypes of the Mexican War, 1846-1848 (Washington, D.C.: Smithsonian Institution Press, 1989), 44.

47. On 9 May 1847, the editor of the New York Herald noted its desire to convey the leading stories of the day as "daguerreotype reports." (Sandweiss and others, Eyewitness, 17).

48. Ibid., 17-18.

49. Chrysler, Photography Remembered, 16.

50. Sandweiss and others, Eyewitness, 1.

51. Newhall, The History of Photography, 85.

52. Ibid., 85-88.

53. Kunhardt and Kunhardt, Brady, 56.

54. Davis, Image, 1:6.

55. For details of the circumstances involved in the departure of Gardner and O'Sullivan from Brady's employ, see Johnson, Enduring Interest, 22.

56. Roy Meredith, Mr. Lincoln's Cameraman: Mathew Brady 2d ed. (New York: Dover, 1974), 89.

57. Larry Gottheim, Photographic Brochure Number 11, (Binghamton: Privately printed, 1990), 25.

58. Davis, Image, 1:97.

59. George S. Cook, "Daybooks of George S. Cook," 1860-1862, Daily business record of the studio of George S. Cook, in the hand of George S. Cook, The Valentine Museum, Richmond, VA.

60. Davis, Image, 1:98.

61. Early in the war, President Abraham Lincoln allowed photographic supplies to be shipped through enemy lines to the South in crates marked quinine, which were sent Southward with medical supplies. (William C. Davis, ed., Touched by Fire: A Photographic Portrait of the Civil War [Boston: Little, Brown and Company, 1986], 1:3).

62. Ibid.

CHAPTER 3

CONFEDERATE PHOTOGRAPHERS

Vivas to those who have failed!
And to those whose war-vessels sank in the sea!
And to those themselves that sank in the sea!
And to all generals who lost engagements,
and all overcome heroes!
And to the numberless unknown heroes equal
to the greatest heroes known!

Walt Whitman

George S. Cook

On 8 February 1861 Charleston photographer George Smith Cook (1819-1902) photographed Major Robert Anderson, commanding officer at Fort Sumter, South Carolina.[1] Cook then sold the ambrotype of Anderson to Thomas Faris, Edward Anthony's photographic agent in the South, for $25. Anthony immediately copied, published, and marketed Anderson's photograph, making a thousand prints a day in early 1861 and selling them for 25 cents each.[2] They were advertised before the Civil War began in a humorous broadside style:

IMPORTANT FROM CHARLESTON.

MAJOR ANDERSON TAKEN!

ENTRANCE OBTAINED UNDER A FLAG OF TRUCE.

NEW YORKERS IMPLICATED!
GREAT EXCITEMENT.
What will the Southern Confederacy do next?

> On the 8th inst. about 12 hours before midnight under cover of a bright sun, Col. George S. Cook, of the Charleston Photographic Light Artillery, with a strong force, made his way to Fort Sumter. On being discovered by the vigilant sentry, he ran up a flag of truce. The gate of the Fortress being opened, Col. Cook immediately and heroically penetrated to the prescence of Maj. Anderson, and levelling a double barrelled Camera, demanded his unconditional surrender in the name of E. Anthony and the Photographic community.
>
> Seeing that all resistence would be in vain, the Major at once surrendered, and was borne in triumph to Charleston, forwarded to New York, and is now for sale in the shape of exquisite Card Photographs at 25 cts. per copy by
>
> **E. ANTHONY,**
> **501 Broadway.**[3]

George Smith Cook was born in 1819 in Stratford, Connecticut. Both of his parents died at an early age,

leaving young George to be raised by his maternal grandmother in Newark, New Jersey. At the age of fourteen, George Cook set out on his own to seek his fortune. He traveled to Pittsburgh, down the Ohio and Mississippi Rivers, and arrived in New Orleans several years later.

He showed great promise as an artist early on and began training as a painter. Cook spent his free time in the daguerreian studio of friends studying the effects of light and shadow on posed subjects. His photographic curiosity piqued, Cook learned the art of daguerreotypy sometime before 1843 and soon began managing the New Orleans gallery in which he had learned the art.

An accomplished artist and daguerreotypist by 1845, Cook left New Orleans in that year to pursue a livelihood on his own. For the next four years he zigzagged across the south setting up studios and teaching the daguerreian art to many students. He then turned each studio over to the most promising pupil before he moved on to the next town. As an itinerant operator, he traveled as far north as Nashville and St. Louis and extensively covered Mississippi, Alabama, Georgia, and South Carolina.[4]

In 1849, Cook opened his first permanent gallery in Charleston, South Carolina. Along the way he married Elizabeth Smith Francisco in September 1846 in Newark, New Jersey, and sired two children, Francisca and George LaGrange, born en route.[5] By 1851, Cook's reputation was so great that Mathew Brady chose him to take over operation of

his famous New York gallery when Brady left for his honeymoon trip to Europe. At that time Brady's gallery was located in the same building as the E. and H. T. Anthony Company. Cook and Anthony became close friends. When Brady returned to New York in 1852, Cook returned to Charleston.[6]

At various times George Cook operated a studio in New York City, two in Philadelphia, and one in Chicago with Canadian partner Samuel M. Fassett.[7] At the onset of the Civil War, Cook liquidated his assets north of the Mason-Dixon line and retreated to Charleston to wait out the war.[8]

Like all photographers of his era, George Cook's main enterprise, the staple of his business, was the studio portrait. He photographed such notables as Anderson, P. G. T. Beauregard, Tom Thumb, and hundreds of unknown persons.[9]

Many factors contributed to Cook's success as an artist and a businessman. By 1861, because his reputation brought many people to his studio for portraits, he was often called the "Brady of the South." Because of the war, the occupation of Charleston by troops from both sides caused a dramatic increase in uniformed portraiture. He cultivated his role as advisor and supplier to many smaller firms throughout the region; and during the war he wisely accepted only gold as payment for services, declining the inflated Southern currency.[10] He invested profits in real estate and shipping, and became somewhat of a wholesale

merchant, importing, along with photographic materials, staples such as sugar, soap, rice, coffee, salt, etc. from the North. His blockade-running investments paid handsomely.[11]

George Cook's personal accomplishments in the face of war are remarkable, but his accomplishments as a recorder of that war are equally notable. Cook was the first photographer to realize the significance of recording the events of that impending war and, arguably, the first Civil War photographer. He photographed Colonel Anderson and his staff in February of 1861, by far preceding any other photographer of the conflict.

Granting that his proximity to the first hotbed of action lent accessibility to the subject and opportunity to photograph, and that his mission actually took place in the cold war that formulated the events of the siege of Fort Sumter, the fact remains that although war was not officially declared, he photographed under conditions of war and thus should be considered the very first. If conditions of war did not exist at that time, it is doubtful whether he would have made the trip across Charleston Harbor, for Cook's daybooks reveal many sittings by Colonel Anderson in his Charleston studio.[12]

After Anderson's surrender, Cook made the trip by rowboat many times across the harbor to photograph the Confederate occupation of Fort Sumter. On two occasions he made history.

Photographing under conditions of war can be hazardous. Once, Cook climbed atop the wall of Fort Sumter to photograph the shelling of nearby Fort Moultrie by Union gunboats. In setting up for the shot, he placed a film holder on the wall beside him and, concentrating on the moment, failed to realize the federal artillerists began training their guns on him. They fired, blasting the film holder off the wall only inches from his feet. The result for Cook was the first photograph ever made of ironclad warships in action.[13]

On another occasion, as he was photographing the interior of the fort, an incoming shell exploded in the view of his camera:

> Cook's camera caught a clear image of the explosion and the flying debris, which can best be explained by assuming that he had the shutter open for a time exposure when the shell burst and that the accompanying flash was sufficiently intense to make the recording despite the slow speed of the plate.[14]

Cook managed to capture the ". . . first photograph of a bursting shell and one of the earliest examples of instantaneous photographs."[15]

In contrast to his many wartime accomplishments, George Cook suffered personal tragedy during the war. Because the Cooks lived in war-torn Charleston, well within range of Federal guns, their most valuable personal belongings were sent to Columbia, the state capital, for safe storage. Shortly after the arrival of Federal troops in the capital on 17 February 1865, the famous fire of questionable origin which decimated Columbia, also destroyed

the possessions of George Cook, among which were most of his prewar photographs and paintings.[16] Adding to his tragedy, Cook's wife Elizabeth died in the spring of 1864 after a lingering illness.[17]

After the war, George Cook resumed his associations and business in the North. He married his deceased wife's niece, Lavinia Elizabeth Pratt, in Newark in 1866. In 1880 Cook left Charleston for Richmond, Virginia, where he bought the studio of David H. Anderson. His purchase included some 20,000 Anderson glass plate negatives.[18] Cook operated the studio in Richmond until his death in 1902 in Bel Air, Virginia.[19]

George Cook's photographic career was a rare one. Known primarily before the war as a daguerreotypist and painter, he proved his artistry and dedication to his medium by mastering all the newest improvements and variations of the photographic art for sixty years. From the daguerreotype to the wet-plate collodion process he produced countless ambrotype and some tintype portraits. Glass plate negatives account for his work during the war. In his later years in Richmond, he mastered the dry plate negative and roll film, documenting Richmond and post Civil War life in that city for over twenty years.

Andrew D. Lytle

In 1911, New York's Review of Reviews Company published its ten volume set, The Photographic History of

the Civil War. Edited by Francis T. Miller, it contained thousandsof images from the Civil War era including many never before seen views. Miller corresponded with generals, private collectors, and historical societies in search of photographs, while his associates scoured the country for images.

While photographs from the North were easily obtained, Miller recognized the need for Southern representation.
He hired Roy M. Mason, a recent Yale graduate, to find Southern-made images. Mason visited more than forty Southern cities, searching armories, historical societies, and stacks of archival depositories. He received more than a few suspicious looks as a result of his requests.[20]

Mason wrote:

> My quarry was any and all photographs of war scenes taken by Southerners within the Confederate line during the war. . . . the presence of a man on the spot who could tell at a glance whether a photograph was one that was wanted, one that the history lacked, . . . [was necessary].[21]

It was in Baton Rouge, Louisiana, that Mason first became familiar with the wartime work of Andrew Lytle through Lytle's son, who had possession of hundreds of his father's glass-plate negatives.

A. D. Lytle was born in Deerfield, Warren County, Ohio on 4 April 1834, and married Mary Ann Lundy on 20 June 1855. Lytle possibly apprenticed as a daguerreotypist under fellow Ohioan William S. Porter as early as 1856.[22] His

activities for the next few years are unknown, but Baton Rouge newspapers on 18 December 1858 announced:

> The World Renowned Artists LYTLE & GIBSON have arrived in our city--where they are prepared to execute work in the various branches of the PHOTOGRAPHIC ART. They also make the celebrated LYTLEOTYPE which is made by them only.[23]

Lytle built a solid reputation as a leading portrait photographer in the ensuing years, but he is primarily known today as having made the first complete record of a city under occupation.

In May of 1862, the fleet of Union Admiral David G. Farragut and troops under the command of Brigadier General Thomas Williams occupied Baton Rouge. Most of Lytle's wartime work is known to have been taken in the spring or summer of 1862, the first period of Union occupation and between December 1862 and July of 1863.[24]

Along with the portrait work which naturally followed soldiers in camp life, Lytle extensively recorded the gunboats of the Federal fleet, making dozens of plates in the process. He also recorded the Federal Army's camp and drill formations. He made so many photographs of the occupying army in such a short time, it was rumored that Lytle was a spy for the Confederate Signal Corps or the Secret Service. Though there is no proof to substantiate the claim, the suspicion continues today.[25]

Whether or not Andrew Lytle was a spy is immaterial. What makes him important is that he was present when the war came to the Confederacy, he recorded the events as they

happened, and he kept the pictures.[26]

Lytle operated his gallery during the occupation of Baton Rouge and after the war became a leading citizen and the city's premier photographer. He died on 8 June 1917.[27]

Jay D. Edwards

After the surrender of Fort Sumter on 13 April 1861, attention shifted from Charleston Harbor to Pensacola Bay, Florida. Fort Pickens, which guarded the bay and was the last Union stronghold in the Confederacy, was considered by many to be the next focus of Confederate attack. Often overlooked because no major battle took place there, Fort Pickens is nonetheless important for other reasons.

Whoever held Fort Pickens, controlled the navy yard at Warrington, across the bay from the fort, and shipping to the Gulf Coast port. The fort was never taken by Southern forces and eventually became a Union base of operations against the Confederacy.[28]

In early 1861, as it awaited reinforcements, the small Union command of Lieutenant Adam Slemmer, occupied Fort Pickens and resisted the growing Confederate force which surrounded it. As the tension mounted, Southern men from New Orleans and all along the Gulf Coast poured into Pensacola. It was under these conditions that photographer Jay D. Edwards packed a wagon load of cameras, plates, chemicals, and equipment and set out from New Orleans for the coast of Florida.

Edwards arrived at the headquarters of Confederate

General Braxton Bragg and received permission to photograph the rebel installations. The body of work that resulted was the ". . . [most] comprehensive photographic panorama of the forts, guns, barracks, shipyards, and most importantly, the men who comprised the Confederate Army."[29]

Because Edwards numbered his negatives sequentially, his movements in and around the Confederate camps can be traced with some certainty. He started at the Navy Yard, photographed Fort Pickens across the bay, the steamer Fulton in dry dock, Fort Barrancas, Fort MacRae, and from the lighthouse, took views of the camps and coastline. He also photographed the Orleans Cadets and Coppen's Louisiana Zouave Battalion at drill.[30]

Edwards returned to New Orleans a week or more later with dozens of glass plate negatives, and on 14 May 1861, New Orleans newspapers ran this advertisement:

THE WAR!

> Views of Pensacola, Fort Barancas, MacRae and Pickens; of the Companies there--"Orleans Cadets" "Crescent Rifles" "Chasseurs a Pied," Mississippi and Alabama Regiments and of the U.S. Fleet--39 different photographic Views, taken by accomplished artist on the spot, will be on sale tomorrow at the Book Stores, Picture and Looking Glass Stores. They are very large and taken superbly. Price $1 per copy.[31]

Whether Edwards traveled to Pensacola and back for fame, profit, or adventure is unknown. No doubt he received a little of all three. Though his notoriety was brief, his accomplishments today stand as a long list of bold firsts and daring inventions. He was the first to photograph

actual war conditions in this country and the first to travel some distance to outdoor settings to photograph the war on-site. He was the only Confederate to travel to the war, driving his wagon over 200 miles and back. His views from the Pensacola lighthouse could be said to be the first aerial views of war.[32] His photographs were the first to be published as woodcuts in newspapers; the views somehow finding their way to the North.[33]

Along with an unknown daguerreotypist in Mexico in the mid-1840s, and Fenton in Crimea in the 1850s, Edwards must be regarded as among the very first photographers ever to enter the field of war and successfully return with a body of work; all of this months before the Northern photographers entered the field. Of course, Charleston photographers photographed before Edwards, but they did not venture far from their studios and homes, traveling no farther than across the bay.

Little is known of the life of Jay D. Edwards before the war or after his views went on sale in May 1861. He was born in New Hampshire in 1831. His wife Mary was a native Missourian and was 20 years old when they arrived in New Orleans with one son, Edouard, who was 8 months old.[34]

Edwards joined into business with E. J. Newton in 1861 and employed two assistants; B. Barker, 29, from Massachusetts, and Johnson, 24, a Canadian.[35] After 1862, Jay D. Edwards disappeared from public record. William C. Davis, in The Image of War, Shadows of the Storm, notes that

there is no trace of Edwards' connection to a photographic business in postwar New Orleans, no trace of him in Northern cities, or his burial or death sites.[36]

It is high irony that the three most prolific Southern photographers, working under conditions of war in the Union blockaded South were Northern born, had strong family ties in the North, and yet remained passive supporters of the rebel cause.[37]

NOTES

1. Cook, "Daybooks," 1860-1862.

2. Marder and Marder, Anthony: the Man, 171.

3. Ibid.

4. Kocher and Dearstyne, Shadows in Silver, 6.

5. Ibid.

6. The Daguerreian Journal of 15 August 1851 lists the following advertisement: "GEORGE S. COOK'S DAGUERREIAN GALLERY, WM. A. PERRY, OPERATOR. 923 Broadway, Lafarce Building, New York.," and in the same issue: "M. B. Brady leaves for Europe, per steamer of next Saturday. We understand he leaves his establishment in charge of Geo. S. Cook, of Charleston, S.C. Could not do better." (Marder and Marder, Anthony, the Man, 171).

7. Kocher and Dearstyne, Shadows in Silver, 7.

8. Ibid.

9. For more information on Cook's studio clientele, see George S. Cook, "The Daybooks of George S. Cook," 5 vols, 1860-1866, (The Valentine Museum, Richmond), and "A Daybook of George S. Cook," 20 June 1863-November 1864, (Manuscript Division, Library of Congress, Washington, D.C).

10. Kocher and Dearstyne, Shadows in Silver, 10.

11. George S. Cook owned stock in several blockade-running schooners, the China Do and the Cobia, which kept him supplied with photographic materials throughout the war. His supply surplus enabled him to act as a distributorship for most of South Carolina. (Cook, "Daybooks," 1863-1864).

12. Cook, "Daybooks," 1860-1861.

13. Kocher and Dearstyne, Shadows in Silver, 9.

14. Ibid.

15. Ibid.

16. Ibid., 10.

17. Ibid.

18. Ibid., 3.

19. Ibid., 14.

20. Davis, Image, 1:3.

21. Ibid., 1:4.

22. Davis, Touched by Fire, 2:198.

23. Ibid., 2:198-199.

24. Ibid., 1:199.

25. Ibid., 2:201.

26. Ibid., 2:201.

27. Ibid., 2:199.

28. Davis, Image, 1:345.

29. Ibid., 1:344.

30. Ibid., 1:345.

31. Ibid., 1:344.

32. Ibid., 1:346.

33. The June 15, 1861 Harper's Weekly ran a woodcut of Edwards' photograph entitled, "Interior of a sandbag Battery Bearing on Fort Pickens," and on June 22, "Bivouac of Rebel Troops at General Bragg's Camp at Warrington, Florida." (Davis, Image, 1:346).

34. Davis, Image, 1:344.

35. Ibid., 1:344.

36. Ibid., 1:346.

37. In fact, George Cook served in the Home Guard of Charleston. (Kocher and Dearstyne, Shadows in Silver, 10). A. D. Lytle was a possible spy and was known to have drilled two or three Confederate units, though he held no rank. (Davis, Touched by Fire, 2:199). And of course, J. D. Edwards made dozens of photographs of the New Orleans hometown boys at the front in Pensacola. (Davis, Image, 1:344-346).

CHAPTER 4

HUMPHREY'S JOURNAL

AND THE

WRITINGS OF SAMUEL HUMPHREY

Every hero is a bore at last.

Ralph Waldo Emerson

In 1850 Samuel Dwight Humphrey began to edit and publish what would be the very first journal dedicated to the art of photography. He named it the Daguerreian Journal, later Humphrey's Journal, and it served a multi-purpose function:

> Humphrey's Journal . . . was a patchwork of ideas: some original research provided by the editor, Samuel Dwight Humphrey, some articles reprinted from foreign . . . principally British . . . sources. The pieces were usually short and technical. At the end of many issues, Humphrey would post notices as to various daguerreotypists' activities; a network of communication was forged.[1]

Humphrey's Journal, published fortnightly, was begun on 1 November 1850 with a brief manifesto entitled "To the Public," and with it, announced the birth of photographic journalism: "Our bark is launched, the sails unfurled, and we are on the broad sea of journalism."[2]

By the end of the following year, 1851, there were two more journals: The Photograph and Fine Art Journal of Henry Snelling in New York and the very influential La Lumiere in Paris. By the end of the decade, there were at least one dozen. The age of the photographic press had begun.[3]

The great growth that occurred in the photographic industry between 1840 and 1860 is reflected in the many technical improvements in the processes, the number of photographs, primarily portraits, being made, the number of photographers and manufactures earning a living from the medium, and the beginnings of photographic journalism.

Humphrey's Journal set the standard for photographic

journals to follow in the nineteenth century. But the original format, which continued through the 1870s, emulated those of its predecessors in other fields, primarily scientific journals.

First, a society of fellows was formed around which the journal was published--in this case, the American Heliographic Association. The format consisted of a listing of members, minutes of the last meeting, publication of papers read before the society, selection of correspondence, rules for upcoming exhibitions, and later, names of those who won prizes.[4]

The Journal prospered for the next eleven years. Its growth in the first year was great and claimed 261 subscribers with the first issue on 1 November 1850. By the second issue, two weeks later, it boasted of letters from 2,000 prospective subscribers.[5]

Aside from his involvement with the Journal for many years, little is known about the life of Samuel Dwight Humphrey. He was a practicing daguerreotypist in the 1840s and was active in North Carolina, Ohio, New Jersey, and New York. Photographic historian Beaumont Newhall has written:

> A hundred years ago tonight [on 1 September 1849], at half past ten, two daguerreotypes of the full moon were taken in Canandaigua by Samuel Dwight Humphrey. They were experiments: the thing had only been tried by few others. Humphrey took nine exposures on each plate, moving the plate holder between each, ranging in time from two minutes ten seconds to less than a second. . . . Crude as they were, the daguerreotypes foretold the part that photography was to play in astronomy.
>
> . . . He [Humphrey] claimed to have established a record on December 26, 1853, by taking sixty four

daguerreotype portraits between 9:30 A.M. and 4 P.M. "We forgot to say," he added, "we eat dinner in the time above given."[6]

Despite this detailed account, most of Humphrey's life is a mystery. What is known of him is brought to life in the pages of Humphrey's Journal. By the onset of the Civil War, the Journal was eleven years old and Humphrey had hit his stride as a writer and a journalist. He wrote passionately about the war, photography, his country, and patriotism. Through the editorials of Samuel Dwight Humphrey, we can vicariously follow the tides of war as seen through the eyes of a Northern patriot and photographer. From the first mention of Brady's exploits at Bull run to the declaration on 1 May 1865: "The Great Rebellion is crushed; the war is virtually over," and in the same issue: "The National Bereavement," Humphrey echoes the national sentiment.

In the early editorials, optimism reigned. It was thought the rebellion should be over quickly and life would return to normal within thirty days. But as the war dragged on, thoughts of a swift end faded.

Humphrey's first announcement of the war ran on 1 September 1861, when it published a review of Mathew Brady's ". . . excellent views of 'grim-visaged' war," (the first battle of Bull Run). Questioning the ethics of newsmen from the North, South, and England, Humphrey displayed unflagging confidence in the photographer and integrity of the medium, writing:

> The correspondents of the rebel newspapers are sheer falsifiers, the correspondents of the Northern journals are not to be depended upon, and the correspondents of the English press are altogether worse than either; but Brady never misrepresents.[7]

Humphrey notes not only the integrity of the medium, but also applauds the photographer as well. This theme recurs throughout his writing: Photography is the noble art, the photographer the noble artist.[8]

Humphrey puts this theme to good use in his defense of the Southern photographer. Throughout four years of commentary on the war, Humphrey blasts the rebels and Confederate sympathizers, yet always portrays the Southern photographer as a hapless victim of the circumstances.

1 December 1861:

> Business is very good among both Dealers and Operators here in the city, and we believe the same is true of all loyal States. Of course, in all those sections of the country where traitorous rebels are, like vipers biting at a file, trying to bring ruin to the best government the world ever saw, in such places the photographic and all other business is good for nothing. In those States the Photographers, who are undoubtedly (?) all Union men, have been either pressed into Jeff's army, or they have come North where they can be somebody, and where people respect the laws and are quietly pursuing their various vocations, with the exception of half a million or more stalwart fellows who are gradually putting down the rebellion, and not making much fuss about it either.
>
> Nothing particularly new in the way of stock and materials.[9]

At this early stage in the war, Humphrey's editorial attitude is casual. Although the war is an inconvenience, interrupting southward sales of stock and subscriptions, it is nothing to get terribly upset about, for it will, no doubt, end shortly. This, written months after relative

inactivity by both armies, revealed an optimism toward a quick, bloodless end to the conflict, which would, of course, result in business as usual for the photographic trade. As for those Southern photographers caught in circumstances of war--"undoubtedly all Union men," is a light comment on the virtue of practitioners of the photographic art.

1 January 1862:

> We extend to all our readers the usual salutation of "A Happy New Year to you, and many of them!" The past year has been a sad one to, alas! too many. Hundreds are now mourning the loss of husband, brother, or dear friend! The number of such is happily much less than we had a right to fear it would be by this time. Considering that there is a million of men in battle array, the amount of fighting has been small indeed. One party is afraid, and the other daresn't!
>
> The Photographic art down South has completely died out in consequence of the war. The miserable rebels are shut up like a rat in a hole. A mighty power is compressing them on all sides, and they will soon be obliged to "give it up." (This is reliable!) The Photographic art here at the North is flourishing finely, and we positively hear no complaints of hard times among operators. A few galleries have been sold out to other parties, but we have heard of none being "slaughtered;" they have brought good prices. . . . Everybody feels pretty well just now over the Mason and Slidell affair, except the few "secesh" in our midst, who are dreadfully disappointed that the English Bull-Dog will do nothing more than bark at the American Eagle, the latter having no stomach for more than one fight at a time. None but fools or knaves on either side of the Atlantic wish to see England and America at war at any time.
>
> We hope our readers will all make ends meet during this year of Our Lord, 1862, and if they can do that, [t]hey will do as well as they can expect. Let all be economical, uphold the Union, and pay for their Photographic Journals, and they will come out all right. Pax vobiscum![10]

New Year's day 1862 brought a welcome to the New Year, regrets of lives lost, success of the blockade, and

allusions to the defeat of the Confederacy. Humphrey was expressing his fear and indignation over the secession and subsequent war. The common man in this country experienced shock at the realization of war with one's own countrymen. Humphrey's sentiments were those of the average citizen, who blamed and hated the other side, not for ideals, but for starting a war neither side could really win. The war interrupted the period of prosperity of the 1850s and the average citizen wanted the country as it was.

15 February 1862:

> According to accounts recently received the Union forces are making fearful havoc among the rebels; they must soon submit, surely. In a few months more we expect to see peace established, and our Southern photographic friends will then be "let out of jail," as it were. They must all be out of stock and materials, and our dealers here will then have their hands full of business. We shall expect our subscription list to double in a short time.[11]

The war in the West was beginning to escalate in January 1862. With relative inactivity in Virginia, reports of Union victories most assuredly refer to those of Grant in Tennessee and Kentucky. But Humphrey's optimism should not be contributed solely to Union victories in the field. He is determining the future of the photographic trade as synonymous with Union victory. If the Union should fade or lose in battle, so goes the national photographic trade.

15 October 1862:

> The endurance and heroism exhibited by the Union troops throughout the fearful carnage and suffering of these long protracted engagements impart to these memorials an enduring interest. As records of the great and vital struggle in which we are engaged, they possess a value far beyond that of any written

> descriptions; for they offer to the eye the dreadful actualities of scenes which the pen of the most skillful writer could only reproduce with a remote degree of accuracy. . . . a small . . . photograph, some seven inches square, which tells a tale of desperate contention. Traversing it is seen a high rail fence, in the foreground of which are a number of dead bodies grouped in every imaginable position, the stiffened limbs preserving the same attitude as that maintained by the sufferers in their last agonies. Minute as are the features of the dead, and recognizable by the naked eye, you can, by bringing the magnifying glass to bear on them, identify not merely their general outline, but actual expression. This, in many instances, is perfectly horrible, and shows through what tortures the poor victims must have passed before they were relieved from their sufferings.[12]

One month after Antietam, the horror of war was brought home. Humphrey's review of a series of photographs submitted for his inspection makes no reference to business or to the scoundrel rebels. It is an awe-inspired eulogy to the dead and the horrid beauty of war.

Never does Humphrey write so poignantly nor graphically about war. He states with utter clarity the futility and desperation of battle displayed by scenes of the aftermath, while prophetically applauding the contribution of the photographic art to the historic recording of that war:

15 October 1862:

> . . . Here and there are beautiful stretches of pastoral scenery, disfigured by the evidences of strife, either in the form of broken caissons, dead horses, or piles of human corpses. In one place a farm-house offers visible marks of the hot fire of which it was the center, the walls being battered in and the lintels of the windows and doors broken. . . . It can with truth be said that the photographic art has never contributed to the historic memorials of our time anything that at all approaches it in value.[13]

1 January 1863:

> The year just closed has been a very prosperous one for photographers generally. We suppose there never was a year so favorable to Operators, Stock dealers, and all engaged in the business, as the year 1862. The war has given a great spur to the business. Every soldier who went off South to fight for freedom must, of course, have his picture taken before he left, and this made business good.[14]

Humphrey greeted the New Year with salutations to the photographic community on a booming business year past. The business of portraiture was a large one. Photographers on both sides enjoyed a boost in sales from soldiers and those at home, each sending pictures to loved ones.[15]

1 January 1863:

> . . . The people are beginning to think that if our government cannot quell the Rebellion with the means at their command, that they cannot do so with more, and they are becoming discouraged. Our arms have met with no successes of any account since last May.[16]

The editorial press became discouraged by the apparent lack of leadership in the Federal army. Humphrey may have been referring to the Peninsula Campaign of General George McClellan or the exploits of Ulysses S. Grant in the West with ". . . no successes of any account since last May."

The Federals, with better equipped troops and superior numbers, failed to bring the Rebels to bay. Lack of the desired results ended in the frustration of Northern patriots, especially one as vehemently patriotic as Samuel D. Humphrey.

Realizing three years after Fort Sumter that there was to be no quick resolution, he wrote:

1 January 1863

> . . . the Rebels are stronger than ever and more encouraged to resistance. They have thousands of sympathisers here at the North who chuckle over a Rebel victory, and give no sign of rejoicing at any success of what they style the Abolition Army. They would rather see the country wrecked than see it saved by Republicans--by the party in power.[17]

For Humphrey, as for many Americans, loyalty to the United States was the overriding priority in the war. Party concerns were secondary considerations. The preservation of the Union was the primary concern of Humphrey and others, and those not abiding by the constitution were considered to be traitors. For him it was a black and white issue. For others, party concerns made many areas gray. He saw the split in the North as a weakness the South did not share:

1 January 1863

> . . . if the Union be dissolved, it will be party spirit that will do the accursed work. The country will never be saved so long as the North is not a unit, as is the South. There are no two parties in the South; they all think the same way there; they all support their President, their Congress, and their armies, and, until we do the same, we may fight for years and accomplish nothing but our ruin. We confess we are getting more into the Political than the Photographic vein, but no matter; everything hinges on politics, and Photography, like everything else, is affected by the political state of the country.[18]

These are the words of a discouraged patriot. He saw the prosperity of the past fade as the war dragged on. The divided North could not hope to defeat a unified enemy. Though the South, in actuality, may not have been as solid an enemy as he imagined, his fears were real as expressed throughout. In the last paragraph of this piece he warns,

"We are not hopeful of the future. We fear the country is going to ruin, and all branches of trade will suffer from the crash. All is now dark on the horizon."[19]

Humphrey's resignation is signaled by three elements in his writing: (1) he laments the ". . . thousands of [Confederate] sympathisers here at the North," and gives in to the dissenters of the official policy, acknowledging the split in the Northern attitude toward the war; (2) For the first time he capitalizes the word rebel, giving subconscious recognition to a worthy foe or conceding the rights of the secessionist South; and (3) For almost a year and a half after this piece was written, the fiery pen of Samuel Dwight Humphrey remained conspicuously silent.

Finally, 1 May 1865:

> The Great Rebellion is crushed; the war is virtually over: "Up like a rocket, down like a stick" although it was four years in coming down! All restrictions in trade are removed. Now is the time to extend the business of photography. Agents are wanted to procure subscribers to this journal all through the South, and we hope soon to get back some four or five hundred of the subscribers before the war. There must be a great demand for Photographic goods, South of Mason and Dixon's Line. Stock Dealers are you ready?[20]

In his writings, Samuel Humphrey was very much concerned with the existence and future of Southern photographers. As the war progressed, legal shipments of photographic supplies to the South ceased and subscriptions to Humphrey's Journal ended. After the placement of the blockade, Southern photographers all but ceased operations in the field. Blockade running existed, of course; but with

an urgent need for basic supplies, only small amounts of photographic supplies were brought in. The vast majority of photographic trade in the states took place in the North before, during, and after the war.

The nineteenth-century U. S. Census recorded ample data for the photographic profession, both practicing photographers and photographic manufacturers.

Noting the census breakdown of 1860, listing numbers of photographers by state, out of 3,154 photographers in the United States, only 405, or approximately 13 percent resided in the entire South. In the North, Pennsylvania alone had 385, or 12 percent of all U. S. photographers, residing there. The state of New York shows an even greater disparity, claiming 673, or a full 20% of the total (see table 1).

Seventy-four manufactures of photographic materials existed in 1850 in the United States. Only two of these, or 3 percent of the total were located in the South, specifically Virginia (see table 2).

The 1860 census does not list occupational breakdowns by state. The total number of manufactures in 1860 was 249. By projecting the 1850 state percentages onto the number of total manufactures in 1860, it can be estimated that the number of manufactures located in the entire South was approximately seven. Considering the lack of industrial strength and availability of raw materials in the South in 1860, the actual number could have been lower.

Southern manufactures no doubt relied in large measure on raw materials from the North before the war. Therefore, when the blockade was initiated, the manufactures failed to survive. Is it surprising that the art died out so quickly in the South after the initiation of the blockade?

After the war, photography's ranks continued to swell in the United States during the Reconstruction period. The numbers overwhelmingly favored the Northern states. By 1870, there were 7,558 photographers in the United States, 6,898 or 91 percent of them claimed Northern residence. The devastation of the Southern economy is reflected in these numbers. State occupational breakdowns in the census ceased after 1870, but the census of 1900 revealed a total of 27,029 photographers working in the United States (see table 1).

The contribution to Civil War photography by Southern artists was not a bombastic feat. It was at best, an independent, disjointed effort with no political sanction or official knowledge. Unlike Northern photographers who were granted a certain degree of sanction, the Southrons worked not for posterity, but for a living.

There is a conspicuous lack of extant Southern images of the Civil War. In Chapter 2 the best known Southern photographers and their work was discussed. Thousands of Northern images made by hundreds of photographers fill contemporary picture books while several hundred images by a

handful of Southern photographers are known to exist.

The reasons so few Confederate photographs exist are many, and I have tried to offer some explanation, partly through the writings of Samuel Humphrey. The blockade was surely an effective tool in keeping supplies out of the Confederacy, but the sudden death of the art can be contributed primarily to the disproportionately small number of manufactures and photographers working in the South before the war and the lack of raw materials to keep the manufactures operating.

Samuel Humphrey saw the problem of keeping photography alive in the South. There just wasn't much he could do about it. He wrote about the Union and photography and the brotherhood of photographers. In the end, he held no grudges toward his fellow photographers. His goal was to send enough photographic materials and manuals Southward so that his brethren photographers could get back to the business of photographing.

NOTES

1. Sennett, Nineteenth Century Press, 7.

2. Humphrey, Humphrey's (1 November 1850), 5.

3. Sennett, Nineteenth Century Press, 6.

4. Ibid., 7.

5. Humphrey, Humphrey's (15 November 1850), 50.

6. Beaumont Newhall, Rochester, To Editor, Rochester Times Union, Rochester, 1 September 1949, Typewritten letter, International Museum of Photography at George Eastman House, Rochester, NY.

7. Humphrey, Humphrey's (1 September 1861), 133.

8. In the mid-nineteenth century, photography was known for its veracity. The word daguerreotype became synonymous with truth. (Chrysler, Photography Remembered, 16 and 54).

9. Humphrey, Humphrey's (1 December 1861), 239.

10. Ibid., (1 January 1862), 271.

11. Ibid., (15 February 1862), 320.

12. Ibid., (15 October 1862), 143.

13. Ibid., 144.

14. Ibid., (1 January 1863), 222.

15. Ibid., (15 February 1862), 319.

16. Ibid., (1 January 1863), 222.

17. Ibid.

18. Ibid., 223.

19. Ibid.

20. Ibid., (1 May 1865), 16.

CHAPTER 5

ROBERT E. LEE, THE HERO

Always there have been men whom the world could not willingly let die.

George S. Bryan

The hero we know today as Robert E. Lee (1807-1870), attained that status primarily from his role as commander of the Confederate armies during the American Civil War. His record in battle in that war and his performance as a leader of men can be called exemplary. In life, he attained that status through his belief in honor, devotion to duty, and an overriding belief in God. In death, he attained even greater heights, reaching the level of idealized hero.[1]

In 1861, after thirty-seven years service in the United States Army, Robert E. Lee, then 54 years old, resigned his post rather than fight against his native Virginia. But to understand the man who was to become the myth during the Civil War and after, it is necessary to examine his ancestry and early history as it pertains to the hero-mythic we know as Robert E. Lee.

Richard Lee, the great-great-great grandfather of Robert, arrived in America from England in 1639 or 1640. The first Lee to settle in America, Richard was descended from six centuries of Lees dating back to the Norman conquest of 1066.[2] For twenty-five years after arriving in Jamestown, Richard Lee built a fortune by acquiring land and slaves. When he died in 1665, he was one of the wealthiest men in the colonies.[3]

The legacy that Richard left to the Lees was one not only of wealth, but also of public service.[4] He served in at least four offices during his lifetime, among them Secretary of State of Virginia. Douglas Southall Freeman in

his landmark biography, R. E. Lee, wrote that of the six generations from Richard to Robert Lee, fifty-four male members of the Stratford line are known to have lived to maturity. Thirty-seven of them held public office. "Five of them," he wrote, "were professional men who did not hold office. Of the remaining forty-nine, thirty-seven had some record of public service." Freeman continues,

> These thirty-seven included ten burgesses, ten members of the state legislature, six professional soldiers, three naval officers, six militia officers, six members of the colonial council, four members of Revolutionary conventions, three governors or acting governors, two signers of the Declaration of Independence, two diplomatists, three members of the Continental Congress, three members of the United States Congress, one member of the United States cabinet, one secretary of the colony, one London alderman, one town mayor, one judge, five justices of the peace, two clerks and one deputy of clerk of courts, and two prosecuting attorneys--a total of seventy-two offices.[5]

Robert Lee's father, "Light-Horse Harry" Lee, served with distinction in the Revolutionary War under the command of George Washington and Nathaniel Greene. The high degree of hero-worship that Robert Lee achieved in later life was due in no small measure to his connection to Washington and the hero-mystique of the Revolution. The lives of Lee and Washington parallel and touched on several levels, all of which added to the affinity Robert held for Washington and the mold of the Revolutionary hero that Robert sought to emulate.

Both Washington and Lee were descended from a long line of patriots from a single English immigrant. Both fought for the country they would eventually fight against:

Washington for, then against England; Lee for, then against the United States. Both commanded state troops under one army. "Light-Horse Harry" Lee was Washington's friend and Lee's father.[6] Lee married Martha Washington's great granddaughter, Mary Anne Custis, heiress to the estate of George Washington Parke Custis. When Robert and Mary Lee arrived to live at the Custis family home at Arlington in November 1834, Lee became surrounded by a collection of the personal possessions of Washington himself, for Custis had made his house a veritable museum of "Washingtoniana."

George Custis was proud of his connection with Mount Vernon and the great man who lived there. He called his collection the "Washington Treasury."[7] Both Washington and Lee fought to preserve their American ancestral home; both men remained loyal to Virginia first, regardless of the consequences. Light-Horse Harry Lee could have been speaking for Washington, his son Robert, as well as himself when he said, "Virginia is my country; her I will obey, however lamentable the fate to which it may subject me."[8]

At the time of Lee's birth, Washington had been dead for ten years; and by the time Lee was old enough to understand something of the spirit of the Father of his Country, Washington had been dead twenty years. But reminders of the great man were everywhere. Lee grew up with an awe of Washington and the heroes of the Revolution. When Washington's friend and comrade in arms, the Marquis de Lafayette, visited the United States in 1824, he paid his

respects to Lee's mother, the widow of Harry Lee. Young Robert no doubt met the French General "[further binding] the boy in spirit to the revolution."[9]

It becomes clear that the life and ideals of Robert E. Lee were entwined with the life of Washington from an early age, and the heroes of his ancestry and the Revolution gave Robert guiding influence through his life concerning honor, loyalty, and public service. Is it any wonder that when his time came, the role of the hero fit so perfectly with his persona, for he lived with the spirit of heroes his entire life? He set himself to be worthy of them, precisely as he had made Washington his model, almost without being conscious of it. "[For] in the home where Robert was trained, God came first and then Washington."[10] In "Washington and Lee: Father--and Son--of Their Country?," Edward C. Smith postulated:

> For Lee, the [Civil] [W]ar was much more than an attempt to settle the abstract issues of states' rights and whether the principle of government by consent of the governed was a constitutional covenant or a conditional convenience. For him and only him . . . the Civil War was the second American Revolution, and he, Robert E. Lee, was destined to become its George Washington.[11]

Many commonalities also existed between the heroes held by the North and South before and during the Civil War. For who would the people of either side hold in high regard but the heroes of the American Revolution, which gave birth to the country as a whole and as distinct regions?[12] George Washington was, and remains today, the supreme patriot of

the United States. During the Civil War, leaders from both sides identified with the ideal figure of Washington. For Abraham Lincoln and the North, George Washington exemplified the grand champion of democratic liberty. For Lee and the South, Washington symbolized the epitome of the soldier aristocrat of his beloved Virginia.[13]

In 1829 Robert E. Lee graduated second in his class from West Point. He was commissioned as a Brevet Second Lieutenant of the Corps of Engineers and served in the United States Army with distinction until his resignation in 1861. His only contact with the heat of battle in thirty-seven years was his experience with General John E. Wool and General Winfield Scott in the Mexican War (1846-1848). Lee's primary duties in the War with Mexico were the supervision of bridge building and scouting trips. Lee was highly praised for his performance: "Scott declared that his success in Mexico was due largely to the skill, valor, and undaunted courage of Robert E. Lee . . . the greatest military genius in America."[14]

Because most of his thirty-seven years in the army were spent with a nation at peace, Lee rose slowly in rank. However, when he resigned his commission in the U. S. Army on 20 April 1861, Lee was a full colonel of cavalry.[15]

On 18 April 1861, at the impending outbreak of full-scale civil war in the U. S., Robert E. Lee was offered command of the Union forces.[16] Lee disliked slavery and resisted secession. In a letter to his son Custis, on 23

January 1861, Lee writes of his feelings toward impending war. At the time, the states of South Carolina, Mississippi, Florida, Alabama, and Georgia had seceded and seized Federal fortifications within their borders.[17]

> The South, in my opinion, has been aggrieved by the North . . . As an American citizen, I take great pride in my country, her prosperity and institutions, and would defend any state if her rights were invaded. But I can anticipate no greater calamity for the country than a dissolution of the Union. It would be an accumulation of all the evils we complain of, and I am willing to sacrifice everything but honor for its preservation. I hope, therefore, that all constitutional means will be exhausted before there is a resort to force. Secession is nothing but revolution.[18]

Also on 23 January 1861, Lee writes of his dilemma in protecting states rights while avoiding civil war:

> . . . I received from Major Nicholls Everett's life of Washington, you sent me and enjoyed its perusal very much. How his spirit would be grieved could he see the wreck of his mighty labors! I will not, however, permit myself to believe till all ground of hope is gone that the work of his noble deeds will be destroyed, and that his precious advice and virtuous example will soon be forgotten by his countrymen. As far as I can judge by the papers, we are between a state of anarchy and civil war. May God avert us from both.[19]

Lee refused the command and resigned his commission. Though he detested slavery and secession, he could not bring himself to bear arms against his native Virginia. Shortly after, Lee accepted the command of the military and naval forces of Virginia with the rank of Major General.[20] Within two months Virginia's military was turned over to the Confederate States of America with Lee commissioned Brigadier General.[21]

For three years, 1 June 1862 to 9 April 1865, Lee led the Army of Northern Virginia. His reputation increased as the seemingly unbeatable army fought through three years of war. The Battle of Gettysburg (1-3 July, 1863), marked the first major defeat of that army and the turning point of the war. For a year after Gettysburg, Lee's army was doggedly pursued by Ulysses S. Grant and the Grand Army of the Republic. Lee finally surrendered at Appomattox Courthouse on 9 April 1864.[22]

The Confederate Hero Myth

Historically, there exists a need for cultural heroes. Whether that hero is one of legend or life is irrelevant. Often, the heroes of life become the heroes of legend through years of storytelling and often exaggerated truths. The hero in any culture serves to represent to that culture its rites of passage. The hero enacts for society the necessary rites of passage because the hero serves as the personification of the culture's mythology.[23]

The American Civil War began on 13 April 1861, when Confederate artillery, under the command of Pierre Gustav Toutant Beauregard, fired upon Union-held Fort Sumter in Charleston Harbor. Many Southerners, angry at the apparent lack of regard for their states rights, were angry and hot for war. Southern politicians and statesmen looked to the heroes of the Revolution for inspiration, for hadn't Washington and Jefferson fought for freedom from tyranny as well? Hadn't the patriots of old fought to preserve their

freedoms from an imposing force? The average Southerner, could not relate as easily to the planter-aristocrat military hero. Certainly Washington and Jefferson were heroes of the country, but the average citizen could not hope to attain the station that those men held. The nation needed heroes for its time and culture.

The Confederate States of America was a new nation. In the early months of the Confederacy, a jubilant feeling of freedom existed that was delivered with the ratification of secession throughout the Southern states.[24] The cultural ties that held the United States together before secession no longer held the same meaning for the South. The emerging cultural personality needed a face, a persona with which to identify.

When Robert E. Lee assumed command of the Confederate Army on 1 June 1862, he had never commanded an armed force of more than 300 men and had never commanded men in battle.[25] His first major task involved the fortification of Richmond. For months Confederate troops dug trenches for the defense of the city. He was so disliked that the men in his command dubbed him "the King of Spades."[26] The Richmond press also derided the new commander. The public did not know Lee as they knew celebrated fighters like Joseph E. Johnston and Beauregard.[27]

But as Lee was digging trenches outside of Richmond, he was also directing theaters in other parts of the country. "To reinforce Jackson strongly [in northern

Virginia]," he wrote, "would change the character of the war."[28] While sending troops to Jackson in the north, and holding Richmond against the Northern forces of McClellan, he ". . . endeavor[ed] to make a diversion to bring McClellan out."[29] Broad tactics and bold moves were to be Lee's trademark throughout the war. Those tactics, his decisive cool manner in battle, and devotion to duty and honor would win him the respect of his enemies and the love and adulation of a people. Lee, more than any other individual, personified the Southern hero.

Lee entered the realm of the hero for his accomplishments in the field. On his journey, he passed through the three phases of the Campbell monomyth: separation, initiation, and return.[30]

Separation (the call to adventure)--Lee was offered two calls to adventure. He refused the first call when he was offered command of U. S. forces and declined the appointment. He answered the second call--his true calling--when he accepted command of the Southern armies. To have answered the first call may have lead him on a journey with no fulfillment; for in answering his true call, he fulfilled the requirements of the hero reborn, the hero who re-emerged to bestow the boon on society.

Initiation--The hero must undergo and survive a series of trials or supreme ordeals. He must conquer the monster to attain the prize. Campbell has described the figure of the tyrant-monster as ". . . the hoarder of the

general benefit."[31] The U. S. Government at that time was seen as a tyrannical government trampling on states' rights. The states seceded to rid themselves of national government control. Secession though, was not entirely successful, for it led the new nation to civil war. The hero emerges to wrestle the tyrant-monster and wrest the boon (autonomous governance) from its grasp. As we know, Lee and the Confederate Army failed in its task.

The Return--If the gods that the hero encounters remain friendly, the hero returns, aided by the powers of the gods. If the gods are not friendly, the hero steals the prize and takes flight to the threshold. Lee's return from the world of his adventure ended not in triumphant return but in a psychological victory. The Confederacy lost a war that was, in Lee's mind, unbearable to contemplate. The loss was a complete one, but only a physical one. It must not be forgotten that Lee so loved the United States that he would do anything, other than risk his honor, to save the Union. On 22 January 1861, he wrote passionately:

> . . . I only see that a federal calamity is upon us, & fear that the country will have to pass through for its sins a fiery ordeal. I am unable to realize that our people will destroy a government inaugurated by the blood & wisdom of our patriot fathers, that has given us peace & prosperity at home, power & security abroad, & under which we have acquired a colossal strength unequalled in the history of mankind. I wish to live under no other government, & there is no sacrifice I am not ready to make for the preservation of the Union save that of honor.[32]

Lee avoided the fight as long as possible and fought only as a last resort. And though he tried his best but

lost the war, his victory was one of psychological superiority. The surrender of all Confederate forces by Lee brought about a calm dignity and resolution to peace in the aging general. Lee encouraged the Southern people and particularly the men in his command not to cause disruptions in the healing process of the nation.

Photography and Lee

It was a well-known fact of Lee's contemporaries that the General disliked having his picture made.[33] That fact, coupled with the limited amount of photographic supplies and photographers practicing in the South during the war, makes images of Lee scarce. Wartime images are almost non-existent. Sources vary in their accounts as to the number of extant images of Lee, and it is not the purpose here to quantify or catalog all known images. It is known that at least ten photographs were taken of Lee during the war, with many variants derived from these.[34] Of these ten, five remain from a sitting with Richmond photographer Julian Vannerson.[35]

Early in 1864, Vannerson produced at least five studies of Lee to be used as models for a sculpture to be executed by Richmond sculptor Edward V. Valentine, then studying in Berlin. Lee sat at the behest of a group of Richmond women and others. The resulting small statue was to be auctioned off at a Confederate Bazaar in England to benefit disabled Confederate veterans. It was hoped that

relations between the Confederacy and England might benefit as well.[36]

This was the first public occasion that Lee's image was used to elevate a cause. The hero worship that was begun early in the war took another step toward making the image of Lee immortal in the sequence of events surrounding the Vannerson/Valentine project. Whether Richmond society ladies, Edward Valentine, or perhaps Lee's wife, Mary Ann Randolph Custis Lee, coaxed the General into posing for the camera, it was recognized as early as 1864 that the image and persona of Lee could generate sympathy, compassion, patriotism, and loyalty enough to rally a mass of people around a cause.

The images that Vannerson made were of Lee at his most heroic (Figure 1). They were intended to arouse patriotism from Southerners and sympathy from the English. His stance exudes confidence and stoic heroism enough for a nation of people. Compare the photograph and resulting statuette of Lee (Figure 2) to the classic figure David (ca 1430-1432, Figure 3) by Italian Renaissance sculptor Donatello (1386-1466). The biblical hero David is poised, his left hand on hip, sword in his right hand, and his right leg bent at the knee as his foot rests on the head of the slain giant Goliath. The heroic stance of David is uncannily echoed in the pose of Lee. The archetypal heroic stance was employed by two artists working over a span of four centuries.

Figure 1, Julian Vannerson, Standing Pose of Lee, 1864

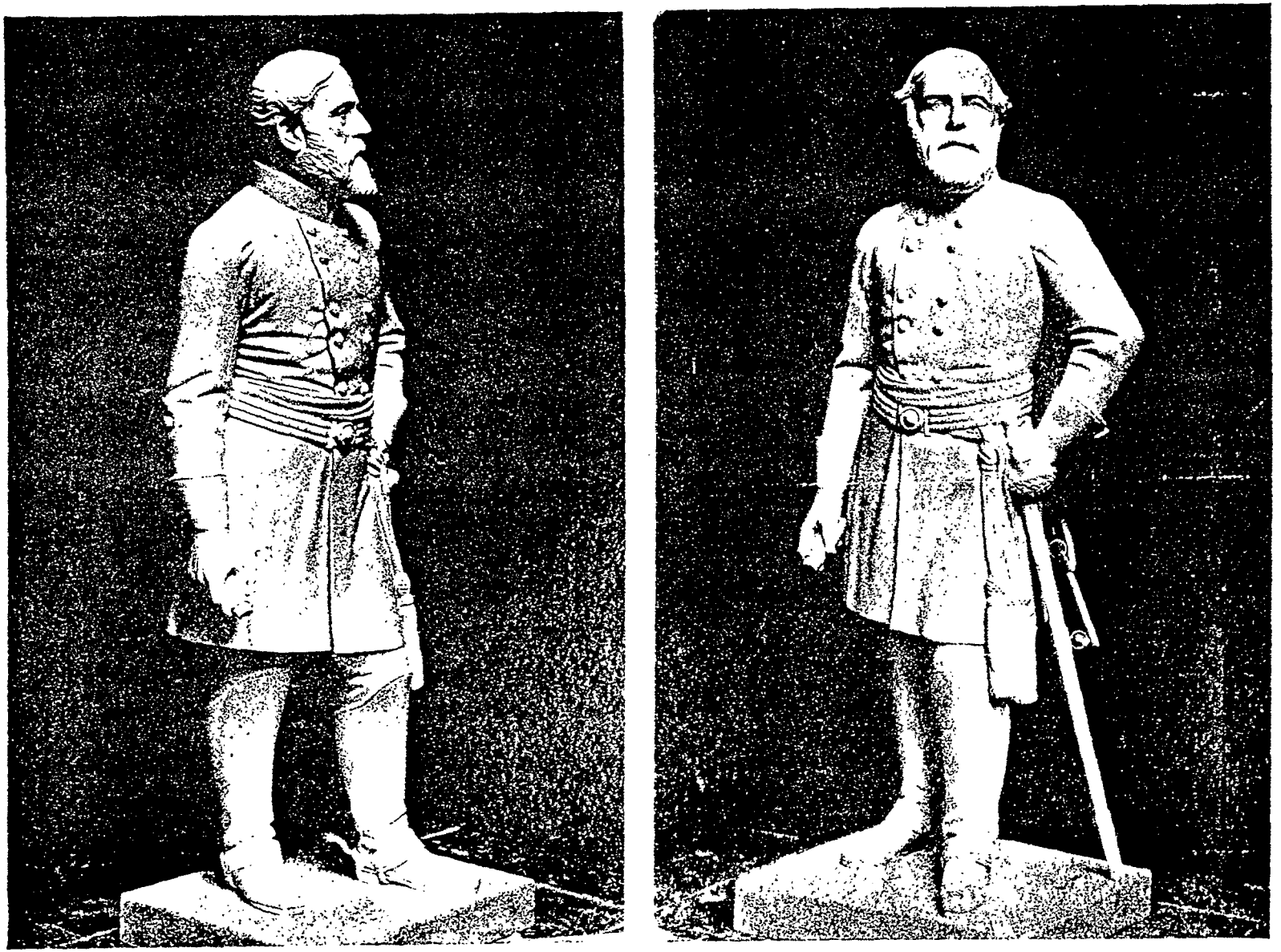

Figure 2, Edward V. Valentine, Statuette of Lee, 1864

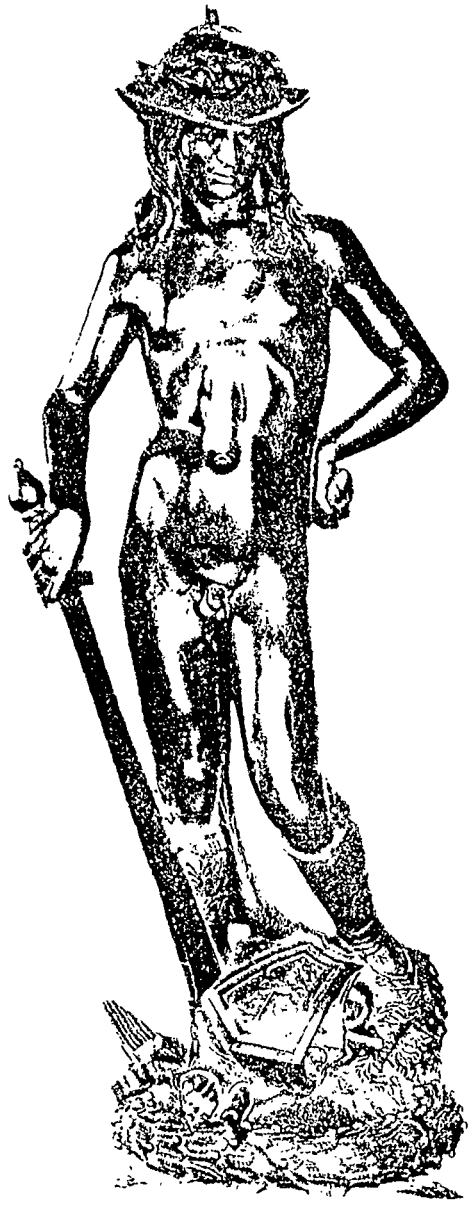

Figure 3, Donatello, David, ca 1430-1432

With so few photographs of Lee available, the only means of mass distribution was by Northern newspapers. Through these papers came the physical impression of Lee held by Northerners. In the 1860s the only means of reproducing photographs for publications was through an artist's interpretation in woodcut or steel engraving. For example, the August 1861, Harper's Weekly, published a wood engraving of "The Rebel General Lee." The engraving was retouched and rephotographed from a daguerreotype that was taken at least ten years before. It showed Lee as a clean shaven, much younger man.[37] Other renderings with equally dubious provenance appeared periodically in Harper's Weekly as well as Frank Leslie's Illustrated and The Illustrated London News.[38]

In January 1863 The Southern Illustrated News, published in Richmond during part of the war, ran a woodcut of Lee which was apparently appropriated from an early daguerreotype, the date of which is disputed in several publications. But it was at least ten years old when copied. It, too, showed a much younger, clean-shaven Lee. A later woodcut portrait which appeared in the same paper in October 1863 shows a bearded, older Lee.[39] But the woodcut is a handmade portrait which relies on the skill of the maker to resemble the subject. Woodcut artists' skills varied greatly. The artists used their own interpretation of a subject, often lessening the impact and, in Lee's case, the charisma of the person. Couple varying degrees of skill

with the copying and retouching methods that were common practice in the 1860s, and it is easy to understand why so few citizens saw the real Lee in reproductions.

Artists known to have photographed Lee before, during, and after the war include Mathew Brady, Washington, Richmond, and possibly New York; Alexander Gardner, Washington; Boude and Miley, Lexington; Minnis and Cowell, Richmond; Julian Vannerson, Richmond; Tanner and Van Ness, Lynchburg; J. W. Davies, Richmond; A. H. Plecker, itinerant; with Joseph E. Johnston by D. Ryan, Savannah; and many post-war sittings with Michael Miley, Lexington, often called "General Lee's photographer."[40]

Michael Miley

Michael Miley was just nineteen years old when he enlisted in the Confederate Army in 1860 and served in General Thomas J. Jackson's "Stonewall Brigade."[41] Miley was captured at Chancellorsville and spent the next two years as a prisoner of war at the island prison known as Fort Delaware.[42] The twenty-four-year-old veteran was released sometime after Appomattox and returned to his native Virginia to pursue a living.

Upon his return to Virginia, Miley spent some time in Staunton, presumably learning the art of the wet-plate collodion process. He worked about a year with a Mr. Burdett.[43] Miley had a brief association with Andrew Plecker, an itinerant photographer, who, together with

Miley, traveled to Rockbridge Baths, just north of Lexington, to photograph Robert E. Lee on Traveller in 1866.[44]

The hero figure of Lee on Traveller (Figure 4) has an antecedent in the Donatello work Equestrian Monument of Gattamellata (1445-1453, Figure 5). Probably influenced by ancient Roman statuary, Donatello created a massive monument to valor and heroic stature in the form of Gattamellata.[45] Though mounted sculptures were not new in the time of Donatello, he created a timeless tribute to the warrior hero. The same attributes can be seen in the mounted figure of Lee. Head erect, the hero gazes over the landscape toward unseen battles. This Miley pose was offered in recent years as General Lee on Traveller by the The American Historical Foundation in a limited edition. The advertisement reads, "The Most Important Equestrian Photograph of the Soldier Beloved by Many as 'America's Greatest General.' Its importance lies in the greatness of the man whose image is captured and in the scarcity of photographs of him."[46] The timelessness of Donatello's hero created over five hundred years ago in Renaissance Italy was recreated by Miley over a hundred years ago in post-Civil War Virginia. Both remain today icons of heroes past and models for heroes to come. The Rockbridge Baths session was probably the first meeting between Miley and Lee. As did most Southerners after the war, Michael Miley greatly admired the former general, and Lee grew to like and respect

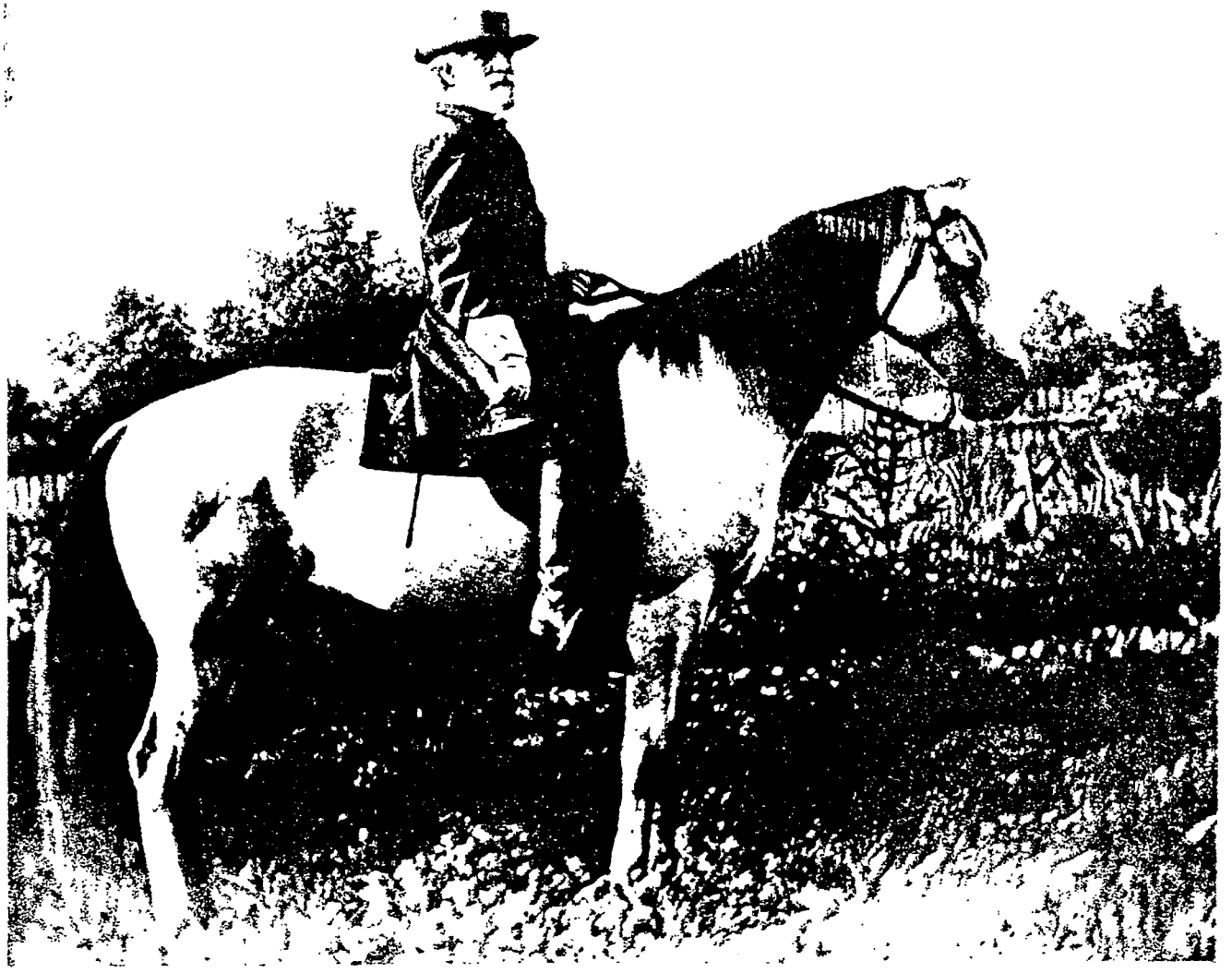

Figure 4, Michael Miley, Lee on Traveller, 1866

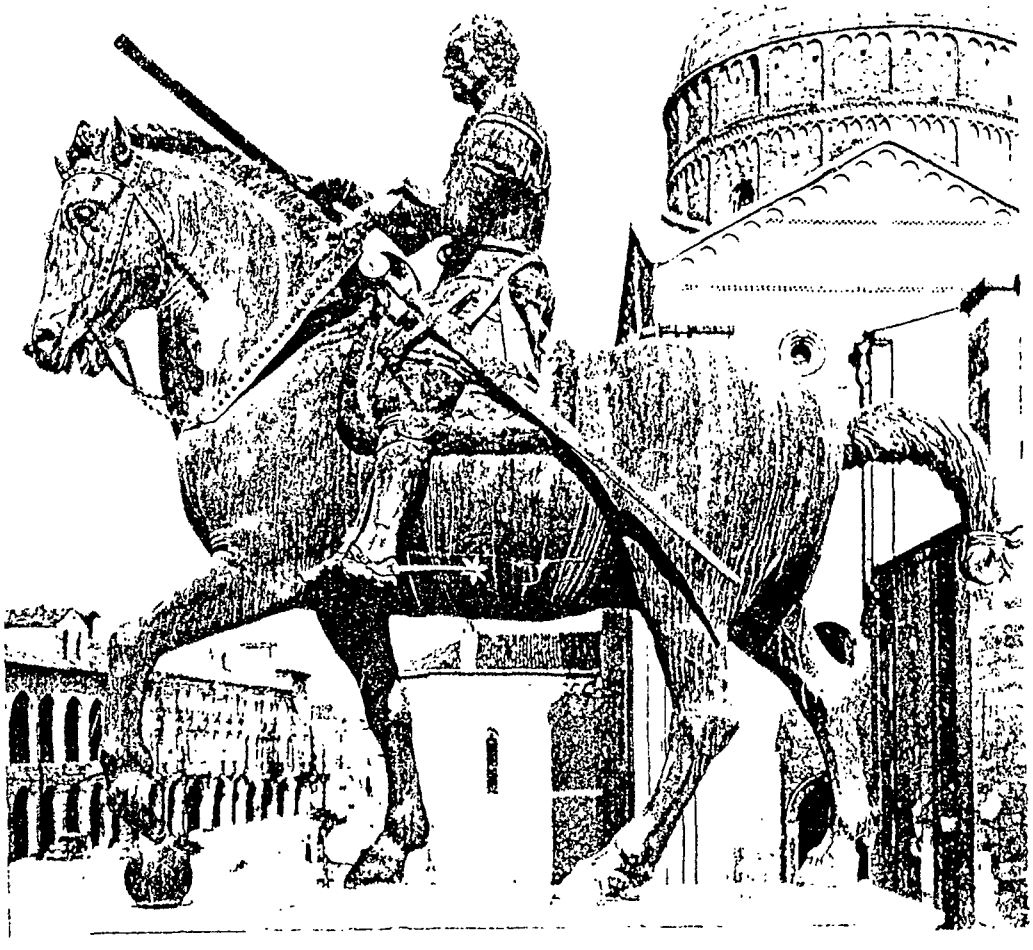

Figure 5, Donatello, Equestrian Monument of Gattamellata, 1445-1453

Miley over the years of their acquaintance.

Michael Miley was born 19 July 1841, in Rockingham County, Virginia. His family moved to Rockbridge County when Michael was young and settled just a few miles north of Lexington.[47] Upon his return from the war, Miley set up a photographic studio in Lexington and spent the rest of his life in that town, quietly practicing the art for which he held quite a talent. Aside from his Lee portraits for which he became well known, Miley is known to have made great personal and technical advances in photography.

In the 1880s, the dry plate method of making negatives was widely used. The dry plate process, using pre-packaged light-sensitive glass plates replaced the messy, time-consuming wet-collodion process. There were no time restraints with dry plates. But because of the high cost of commercially produced plates, Miley developed a method of making his own plates.[48] He also developed a process to enhance the quality of photographic negatives that is still in use by today's manufacturers of photographic film.[49]

In 1902 Michael Miley and his son Henry, were issued a patent on a color photography process. Though not the inventors of color photography, it is supposed that the pair were probably the first to produce colored photographic prints on paper in the United States.[50]

Miley photographed Lee at least ten times during the last five years of Lee's life. The first, with Andrew

Plecker, was Lee with Traveller at Rockbridge Baths, Virginia.[51] In 1868 Miley photographed Lee with Traveller at the General's request at his home in Lexington.[52] It was the only time that Lee requested his picture be made in uniform after the war.[53]

Miley also photographed Lee numerous times in his Lexington studio. The photographer and the General struck up a friendly association with which Lee felt comfortable. He often took notable figures with him to Miley's studio. Among them were Beauregard, Jubal Early, Jefferson Davis, and John C. Breckinridge.[54]

Miley was also the only photographer to record the funeral and procession of Robert E. Lee. He photographed Washington College in mourning, the gathering of mourners, the procession, Lee's office as he had left it, and later, the Lee Chapel with the Lee memorial installed.[55]

Death, Apotheosis and the Image of Lee

Robert E. Lee died in Lexington in October 1870 after a short illness. It was known by Lee and others for several years that his heart was failing.[56] Two phenomena occurred at the death of Lee which forever sealed the South's perception of the Civil War and after: (1) Lee's death served as the final step in his apotheosis--from Lee the mortal man to Lee the immortal hero, and (2) What followed in the decades after his death was the mythologizing of Lee and the Lost Cause.

Almost immediately upon the death of Lee, there sprang from the outpouring of grief for the hero, the first of many efforts to immortalize the image of Lee. The first such group to form, the powerful Lee Memorial Association, initially met in the Lexington courthouse during the Lee funeral procession in 1870.[57] Such former Confederate leaders as John C. Breckinridge and P. G. T. Beauregard held honorary positions in the Association, while, as Thomas Connelly writes in The Marble Man, "The real power lay in a cadre of determined Lee supporters in Lexington. . . . Like the college, it used fund-raising agents and massive publicity to canvas the South for funds."[58] The Lee Memorial Association devised three schemes to raise money in connection with the college: a mausoleum for Lee, a massive statue on the campus, and a projected book referred to as the Lee Memorial Volume. Mary Custis Lee took an active part in this association and helped raise money for its projects.[59]

Washington College also used the Lee name to raise funds. At one time the college's Board of Trustees entertained the notion of renaming the college Lee Memorial University. As it was, within a month after the death of Lee, the Board of Trustees changed the name of Washington College to Washington and Lee University and named R. E. Lee's eldest son Custis to take his father's place and carry on the Lee tradition in Lexington.[60]

A heated rivalry between the Lee Memorial Association

in Lexington and the Lee Monument Association in Richmond existed in the 1870s. The Richmond Association, led by Lee's former corps leader, General Jubal Early, contended that the definitive memorial to Lee should be placed in the capital and that Lee's remains should be moved to Richmond. He contended, "Lee should rest there, among the thousands of Confederate dead in the Hollywood Cemetery, so that 'when the first flush of the resurrection morn tinges the skies, may their unsealed eyes behold the grand figure' of their wartime chief."[61] The Lee Memorial Association, of course, wanted Lexington to be Lee's final resting place.

There was also a split in the Lexington Memorial Association as to where Lee should be buried in the town. One faction envisioned the college chapel as the proper burial site. Another, Grace Episcopal Church, where Lee worshiped, now named the Lee Memorial Church, wanted Lee buried there and raised funds to make it come about. In 1875 sculptor Edward Valentine completed and delivered his statue of Lee to Lexington. The statue portrayed Lee recumbent upon the field of battle and was to be placed in Lee's mausoleum. And though the Memorial Association raised enough money for the statue, the final place for the statue and Lee's remains had not been resolved. By 1877 the Association had decided to add a mausoleum to the rear of the college chapel. The lower level would contain the body of Lee; the upper level would contain the statue.[62]

In the 1870s and 1880s, six major groups employed

professional fund-raisers and volunteers to cover the South to solicit funds for various Lee projects. Among those were the Lee Memorial Association, the Lee Memorial Episcopal Church, and Washington and Lee University, all of Lexington, with the Lee Monument Association and Ladies Lee Monument Association from Richmond. The Southern Historical Society raised funds by delivering lectures on Lee's campaigns and rose to a level of power and prominence by denouncing anyone who dared write anything that deemed Lee less than infallible.[63]

Among veterans organizations which helped propel the myths, the Association of the Army of Northern Virginia and the Virginia Division were both loosely linked to the Lee Monument Association in Richmond and were the most influential. Major players in these organizations were Jubal Early, members of Lee's wartime staff, Colonels Charles Marshall, Walter Taylor, A. L. Long, and Charles Venable, Lee's son W. H. F. Lee, and many dozens of lesser known veterans.[64]

Scores of writings in historical journals, pamphlets, and books, as well as oratories at conventions and monument dedications for over three decades, helped solidify the Lee myths, often at the expense of such Confederate officers as Jackson, Johnston, and particularly the performance of Longstreet at Gettysburg.

Two important factors led to the over-zealous writings and actions of the Lee cult. (1) In the

Reconstruction years of the South, Southern apologists searched for reasons for the defeat of the Army of Northern Virginia. The question which needed to be answered in their minds was, "How could a just cause lose?" Certainly, Lee could out-general the best in the Union Army, but only by the use of overwhelming numbers and the lack of regard for human life did the Federals best the South's supreme commander.

Already revered as a man of high moral character and great ability as a commander, Lee served as the perfect symbol to justify the notion that even a just cause can be defeated. Lee became a symbol for a degree of success not realized during the war. What resulted from this deluge of over-praise was the oversimplification of Lee the man as the perfect gentleman-warrior who, were it not for mere superior numbers, could not be defeated and was defeated through the blunderings of subordinates and the luck of his enemies. In the romantic style of the day, Lee's life was often compared to the life of Christ--he sacrificed all for that which he loved--and Appomattox was his Gethsemane.

(2) Federal refusal to allow access to the Confederate war papers after the war prompted Southern writers to recreate the war from the Southern perspective for fear the view from the South would be lost forever. The writings centered on Lee and the battles of Virginia and were often filled with exaggerated numbers and battle details; for until Lee's fame was spread far and wide, the

Northern version of the war would prevail.[65]

By 1900 the writings about the war evolved and eventually made Lee the entire justification for the Southern cause. Writings from the era stressed Lee's sense of duty to Virginia, which was instilled by Virginia society and reinforced by his long and noble bloodline. He followed his principles as did no other man. They stressed Lee's strong character and de-emphasized his military prowess. They accentuated his nationalism, for he felt the trauma of leaving the Union more than anyone else because he loved it more; and after the war, he stressed moderation of action and a return to the educating of the youth of the South.[66]

With these three themes--environment, character, and nationalism--echoed in writings throughout the nation after 1900, the reassessment of Lee which occurred, brought about his acceptance as a national hero.[67]

Today the image of Lee continues to permeate our national consciousness and culture. USA Weekend recently featured two offers to own a piece of the Lee legacy. The December 2-4, 1994, issue features a full-page ad and offers a gold-edged porcelain plate depicting Lee at the very front of the entire Army of Northern Virginia crossing the Potomac River on its way to Gettysburg. The ad states:

> Revered for his gallantry as much as his battle-field strategy, Robert E. Lee's gray-coated troops would follow the General anywhere. . . . The Confederates would stall at Gettysburg, where three days of savage fighting turned the tide of the Civil War and sent Lee, still gallant in defeat, back to Virginia. . . . Just mail the coupon and soon the

pride of the Confederacy will be yours![68]

The January 20-22, 1995, issue featured a similar offer. For only $37.50 one could purchase a 5½ inch porcelain statue of the General ". . . showcased within a crystal-clear dome. He was the Confederate army's beloved leader, and one of the most brilliant military strategists of all time."[69]

The pose is a combination of the Vannerson/Valentine and the Minnis and Cowell full-standing portraits from the 1860s. Historical accuracy did not stand in the way of either commercial venture. But historical inaccuracies aside, the commercial properties inherent in both products is not so different from the Lee cultism of the late nineteenth century. Some may argue that the earlier endeavors held loftier goals, but the process, the use of the image of Lee to sell a product, remains the same. The amazing aspect of these products is that the image of Lee is strong enough after 125 years to attract commercial venture. Can anyone argue the durability of the Lee image to the present day?

Robert E. Lee's mythology has been permanently entwined with the American culture. From Southern hero to Southern demi-god to the hero-myth of a nation, Lee has passed into the realm of heroic Valhalla as few have before.

After the war, Lee became mythologized to the point of becoming a societal hero, one entering the domain of such as Achilles, King Arthur, and George Washington. He lived

the hero life and, in life as well as death, symbolized the hero needed by all societies. In death, his life's adventures were transformed by the storytellers into classic hero myths. The Lee mythology today serves as the classic hero myth for the modern age of American history.

NOTES

1. Dixon Wecter, The Hero in America, (Ann Arbor: The University of Michigan Press, 1941), 6.

2. Philip Van Doren Stern, Robert E. Lee, the Man and the Soldier, (New York: Bonanza Books, 1963), 11.

3 Ibid., 17-25.

4. Ibid., 25.

5. Douglas Southall Freeman, R. E. Lee, (New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1943), 1:165.

6. Light Horse Harry Lee, in his memorial address to Congress a few days after Washington's death, called Washington, "First in war, first in peace, and first in the hearts of his countrymen." (Freeman, R. E. Lee, 1:18).

7. Stern, Robert E. Lee, 55.

8. Freeman, R. E. Lee, 1:22.

9. Ibid., 1:45.

10. Gamaliel Bradford, Lee the American, (Boston and New York: Houghton Mifflin Company, 1912), 36.

11. Edward C. Smith, "Washington and Lee: Father--and Son--of Their Country?," Virginia Country 22 (1983): 18.

12. Samuel Davis, the father of Confederate President Jefferson Davis, named his son in honor of one of his heroes--Thomas Jefferson. (William C. Davis, Jefferson Davis, the Man and His Hour, [New York: Harper-Collins Publishers, 1991], 6).

13. Wecter, Hero, 228.

14. Fitzhugh Lee, General Lee, (New York, D. Appleton and Company, 1894), 42.

15. Ralston B. Lattimore, ed., Lee, (Philadelphia: Eastern National Park and Monument Association, 1964), 26.

16. Ibid.

17. Ibid., 23.

18. William J. Jones, Life and Letters of Robert Edward Lee, Soldier and Man, (New York: The Neale Publishing Company, 1906), 120-121.

19. Freeman, R. E. Lee, 1:420.

20. Stern, Robert E. Lee, 130.

21. Ibid., 132.

22. Ibid., 210.

23. Campbell, The Power of Myth, 134.

24. Stern, Robert E. Lee, 126.

25. Freeman, R. E. Lee, 1:451.

26. Stern, Robert E. Lee, 149.

27. Ibid.

28. Ibid.

29. Ibid.

30. Campbell, Hero, 30.

31. Ibid., 15.

32. Lattimore, Lee, 24.

33. Roy Meredith, The Face of Robert E. Lee, (New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1947), 6.

34. Ibid., 5.

35. According to Brooks Johnson in "Mr. J. Vannerson . . . remarkably successful in the matter of likenesses," "Four are in Richmond's Valentine Museum with the papers of Edward Valentine and are presumed to be the images Valentine used for reference [in sculpting the statue of Lee]. A fifth was discovered in a private collection three years ago and a copy is retained by this author [Johnson]." (Brooks Johnson, Mr. J. Vannerson...remarkably successful in the matter of likeness," The Chrysler Museum Journal 1 (1994): 21.

36. Meredith, Face of Lee, 44.

37. Ibid., 31.

38. Stern, Robert E. Lee, 138.

39. Ibid., 169.

40. Marshall Fishwick, General Lee's Photographer: The Life and Work of Michael Miley, (New York: Van Rees Press, 1954), i.

41. Washington and Lee University, Michael Miley: American Photographer and Pioneer in Color, (Lexington: Washington and Lee University, 1980), 2.

42. Fishwick, Lee's Photographer, 4.

43. Washington and Lee, Miley, 2.

44. Fishwick, Lee's Photographer, 6.

45. Frederick Hartt, History of Italian Renaissance Art, 3d ed., (New York: Harry N. Abrams, Inc., 1987), 239.

46. Advertisement Flyer, "General Lee on Traveller," The American Historical Foundation, Richmond, VA.

47. Washington and Lee, Miley, 2.

48. Fishwick, Lee's Photographer, 12.

49. Ibid.

50. Washington and Lee, Miley, 7.

51. Sources consulted vary as to the maker of these photographs. One view pictures Lee on Traveller, a second depicts Lee standing beside his horse holding the bridle. In The Face of Robert E. Lee, Roy Meredith gives an account of the taking of the photographs with no mention at all of Michael Miley and no source cited for the entry, giving full credit to A. H. Plecker. (Meredith, Face of Lee, 76).

Marshall Fishwick, in General Lee's Photographer, gives Miley credit for the idea of photographing Lee and gaining the interest of "a transient photographer named Andrew H. Plecker . . . in the task." According to Fishwick, Plecker stayed in Lexington a few weeks more before moving on. (Fishwick, Lee's Photographer, 6).

In Michael Miley: American Photographer and Pioneer in Color, essayist Mary Elizabeth Warren asserts that not only was Michael Miley the photographer of the Rockbridge Bath photographs, but that Miley taught Plecker, a tintypist, the wet-plate process by which they were made. This information is from an oral transcript by Miley's son, Henry, given in 1941. (Washington and Lee, Miley, 9).

52. Henry Miley recalled, "When [Lee] came up one morning and wanted to have his picture taken on his horse, he told father that was the first time that he had ever asked to have his picture taken in uniform, but he said he wanted to have his picture taken on Traveller as he went through four years of the war." (Washington and Lee, Miley, 10).

53. Fishwick, Lee's Photographer, 33-37.

54. Washington and Lee, Miley, 14.

55. Fishwick, Lee's Photographer, 31-37.

56. In July, 1869, Lee wrote to Mrs. Lee, upon reflecting on the death of his brother Sydney Smith Lee, "May God bless us all and preserve us for the time when we, too, must part, the one from the other, which is now close at hand." (Stern, Robert E. Lee, 235).

57. Thomas L. Connelly, The Marble Man: Robert E. Lee and His Image in Society, (Baton Rouge: Louisiana State University Press, 1977), 113.

58. Ibid., 33.

59. Ibid., 37.

60. Ibid., 30.

61. Ibid., 43.

62. Ibid., 40.

63. Ibid., 45.

64. Ibid., 48.

65. Ibid., 47.

66. Ibid., 108.

67. Ibid.

68. The Bradford Exchange, "Robert E. Lee." USA Weekend, 2-4 December 1994, 5.

69. The Franklin Mint, "General Robert E. Lee." USA Weekend, 20-22 January 1995, 12.

TABLE 1. U.S. PHOTOGRAPHERS BY STATE

	1850	%	1860	%	1870	%
Alabama*	8		39		48	
Arkansas*	0		19		45	
California	0		77		189	
Colorado	0		6		T	
Connecticut	53	5.6	72		156	
Delaware	0		6		14	
District of Columbia	4		32		T	
Florida*	1		5		19	
Georgia*	7		77		83	
Illinois	30	3	146		605	
Indiana	22	2	117		305	
Iowa	4		76		253	
Kansas	0		9		92	
Kentucky	20	2	65		159	
Louisiana*	3		41		63	
Maine	28	3	95		165	
Maryland	22	2	65		166	
Massachusetts	78	8	177		548	
Michigan	15		92		337	
Minnesota	0		0		102	
Mississippi*	10		37		46	
Missouri	15		84		257	
Nebraska	0		6		30	
Nevada	0		0		13	
New Hampshire	10		58		141	
New Jersey	15		63		149	
New Mexico	0		0		0	
New York	240	26	673	21	1298	17
North Carolina*	8		29		44	
Ohio	91	10	260		593	
Oregon	0		8		35	
Pennsylvania	153	16	385	12	759	10
Rhode Island	21	2	36		65	
South Carolina*	11		22		22	
Tennessee*	16		48		84	
Texas*	3		16		110	
Utah	0		2		T	
Vermont	12		35		90	
Virginia*	19		72		96	
Washington	0		0		0	
West Virginia	0		0		35	
Wisconsin	18		114		220	
Territories (all)	0		0		122	
TOTAL	938		3,154		7,558	
Northern States	851	91	2,749	87	6,898	91
Southern States	86	9	405	13	660	9

* denotes Confederate states.
T denotes all territories inclusive in 1870 census.

(Total number of photographers in 1880-9,990, 1890-20,040, 1900-27,029). Source: U.S. Census, 1850-1900

TABLE 2. U.S. PHOTOGRAPHIC MANUFACTURES

	# of Firms	Capital Invested	Raw Materials	# of Hands	Labor Cost	Product Value
1850*	74	89,925	99,789	158	70,500	250,267
1860	249	417,250	293,257	653	359,854	1.09m
1870**						
1880	1,287	3.13m	1.67m	3,977	1.75m	5.94m
1890	3,105	7.81m	3.89m	6,967	3.74m	15.49
1900	7,588	13.19m	6.84m	8,911	4.01m	23.24m
1850 Union States	72	66,925	88,789	155	69,420	246,267
Virginia	2	2,300	1,100	3	1,080	4,000

* The only Confederate state in 1850 to manufacture photographic materials was Virginia.

**Information unavailable for 1870.

m = millions of dollars.

SOURCE: U.S. Census, 1850 - 1900.

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