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# "To see some few proofs of enormous wickedness": The Use of Photographs and Wood Engravings of Prisoners of War in Six American Civil War Publications, 1864-1865

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"TO SEE SOME FEW PROOFS OF ENORMOUS WICKEDNESS": THE USE OF PHOTOGRAPHS  
AND WOOD ENGRAVINGS OF PRISONERS OF WAR IN SIX AMERICAN CIVIL WAR  
PUBLICATIONS, 1864-1865

BY

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A THESIS

PRESENTED TO RYERSON UNIVERSITY AND THE GEORGE EASTMAN HOUSE  
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IN PARTIAL FULFILLMENT OF THE

REQUIREMENTS FOR THE DEGREE OF

MASTER OF ARTS

IN THE PROGRAM OF

PHOTOGRAPHIC PRESERVATION AND COLLECTIONS MANAGEMENT

TORONTO, ONTARIO, CANADA, 2010

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## **Abstract**

This thesis addresses the use of a set of photographs of returned prisoners of war (POWs) published both as tipped-in albumen prints and as wood engravings in six different publications from 1864 and 1865, including three versions of *Narrative of Privations and Sufferings of United States Officers and Soldiers while Prisoners of War in the Hands of the Rebel Authorities*, one pamphlet, and two magazine articles. The discussion focuses on the dissemination of these images by the United States Sanitary Commission, the ways in which the photographs were presented in the individual publications that contained them, the decisions that the engravers made in translating the photographs into wood engravings, and the visual codes that informed the photographs and the related engravings.

The illustrated essay situates these photographs and wood engravings within the political context of the American Civil War and the history of photography in the 1860s. The dissemination of photographic imagery via wood engravings before the widespread use of halftone reproductions, beginning in the 1880s, is presently under researched. The paper encourages consideration of wood engravings when examining the history of photographic reproduction during this transitional time period.



## **Acknowledgements**

Many thanks go to my first reader, David Harris, whose enormous insight was matched only by his patience. Marta Braun, my second reader, also provided valuable feedback on a later draft of this thesis. Credit is due to Rachel Stuhlman, as well, who discussed her own research on *The Narrative* with me. The reproductions are all courtesy of Barbara Galasso, who made them quickly and kindly, despite the lateness of a few of my requests.

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GEH 1998:1903:0001

Collection of the George Eastman House

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GEH 1998:1903:0002

Collection of the George Eastman House

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GEH 1998:1903:0003

Collection of the George Eastman House

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Collection of George Eastman House

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Collection of George Eastman House

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Collection of George Eastman House

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Collection of the Cornell Law Library

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Collection of the Cornell Law Library

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Collection of the University of Rochester Special Collections

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Collection of the University of Rochester Special Collections

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Collection of the University of Rochester Special Collections

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Collection of George Eastman House

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Collection of George Eastman House

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Wood Engravings, 17 x 11 cm. and 16.2 x 11 cm.

Collection of George Eastman House

## A Note on Terminology

For the purposes of this paper, standard shorthand for describing the texts is required. *Narrative of Privations and Sufferings of United States Officers and Soldiers while Prisoners of War in the Hands of the Rebel Authorities*<sup>1</sup> is printed in three editions. The King & Baird editions will be described as the K&B [Clothbound] *Narrative* and K&B [Paperbound] *Narrative*, with the former referring to the edition with tipped-in albumen prints, and the latter the edition with wood engravings. The Littell's Living Age edition will be referred to as the Littell's *Narrative*. When referring to the *Littell's Living Age* periodical, italics will be used; when referring to Littell's Living Age as a publishing house, italics will be omitted. *The Extract* refers to the pamphlet published in England in 1865.

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<sup>1</sup> Full information on *The Narrative* and its different versions is available in the bibliography.

## Introduction

No one anticipated the length or human cost of the American Civil War. Nor, presumably, could anyone foresee the degree to which the war would be present in the lives of everyday Americans. This was partially due to the scale of the conflict: 2.1 million northerners and 880,000 southerners took up arms during the conflict, and while most returned home without injury or incident, many others died on the battlefields or in hospitals of illnesses and injuries, or returned home debilitated, with missing limbs or worse.<sup>2</sup>

Those who did not see battle as soldiers on the battlefield saw photographs and other types of illustrations instead. Photography was a new addition to the visual representation of war, and the Civil War was the first war to receive comprehensive photographic coverage. While photographic technology and chemistry had not yet evolved to the point where photographs of actual battles were feasible, there was a healthy market for formal portraits of officers and politicians, stereographic views of post-engagement battlefields, and other illustrated materials, including weekly newspapers, books, and photographic albums.

In 1863, Oliver Wendell Holmes, himself a father to a soldier wounded at Antietam,<sup>3</sup> wrote of the photographs of that battle: “The honest sunshine...gives us, even without the crimson coloring which flows over the recent picture, some conception of what a repulsive, brutal, sickening, hideous thing it is, this dashing together of two frantic mobs to which we give the name of armies...the sight of these pictures is a commentary

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<sup>2</sup> Drew Gilpin Faust, *This Republic of Suffering: Death and the American Civil War*, (New York: Vintage Books, 2008): 3.

<sup>3</sup> Ibid, 121.

on civilization such as a savage might well triumph to show its missionaries.”<sup>4</sup> Holmes was reacting to the realism of the photographic views of Alexander Gardner and Mathew Brady, in addition to his own experience.<sup>5</sup> This was a war without critical distance, when the romantic notions of warfare were destroyed by modern technology and weaponry, and with a public exposed to images of battles and carnage at a level unprecedented in previous conflicts.

The Civil War occurred at a convergence of several different factors that allowed for this visual exposure. There was an adequate infrastructure to physically support the movement of people and media at a rate fast enough to encourage the trade of newspapers, pamphlets, books, and photographs. Moreover, there was a spike in literacy and a growth in primary education throughout the eighteenth and nineteenth century that resulted in a populace who purchased and perused such materials.<sup>6</sup> *Frank Leslie's Illustrated Newspaper*, and *Harper's Weekly: A Journal of Civilization* were two weekly periodicals that competed for a share of this audience. However, these were not the only sources of war reportage available to the public: the daily press and publishing houses also benefited from the same growths of infrastructure and literacy.

Photography, while not yet capable of being photomechanically reproduced alongside type in a common press, was still an important tool for disseminating information. Photographs by businessmen such as Mathew Brady, as well as smaller studios and individual practitioners, were rapidly being created, shared, sold, and traded.

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<sup>4</sup> Oliver Wendell Holmes, “Doings of the Sunbeams,” in Beaumont Newhall, *Photography: Essays & Images*, (New York: The Museum of Modern Art, 1980): 73. Originally published as “Doings of the Sunbeams,” *Atlantic Monthly*, 12 (July, 1863): 1-15.

<sup>5</sup> Michael Carlebach, *The Origins of Photojournalism in America*, (Washington and London: The Smithsonian Institution Press, 1992): 3.

<sup>6</sup> John Nerone, “The Media and American Society,” *Magazine of History*, 6, No. 4 (Spring, 1992): 17.



The introduction and adoption of wet collodion negatives in the early 1850s brought reproducibility to photography and allowed for the widespread use and exchange of cartes de visites (CDVs) and stereographic views. While this new reproducibility was important in introducing photographic prints into this new visual economy,<sup>7</sup> it was still insufficient for widespread dissemination within newspapers and books.

This reproductive limitation prevented photography from dominating the visual landscape of the Civil War. Historians have often overlooked the importance of wood engravings in disseminating visual information to the public, even though the northern public consumed engravings more often than they did photographs. While photographs were often important source documents for wood engravings printed in the illustrated monthly and weekly press, photographic prints were more often encountered as portraits of loved ones, exhibition pieces, and stereoscopic cards. Type compatibility, and the economic and technological infrastructure of pre-existing modes of reproduction, meant that photography had to be translated into a different format before it could be feasibly reproduced in the press. While less common in the daily press, with a news cycle too short to consistently create and use these images, wood engravings were an important part of the news in weekly and monthly periodicals, reproduced alongside and read in concert with text.

There has been extensive research into how photography came to be used by the illustrated press and by publishing houses in the 1880s after the introduction of halftone allowed for the simultaneous printing of mechanically derived photographic reproductions and text in a common press. Books, and particularly the illustrated press, certainly began to use photomechanical images in much greater numbers after the advent

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<sup>7</sup> Visual economy refers to the production, distribution, and consumption of images.

of halftone. Moreover, the types of war images printed in the 1880s began to change, as war photography changed from static representations of the aftermath of battle scenes and formal portrait sessions as dry plate negatives, flash photography, and new, portable cameras, began to change the ways in which photographers worked in the front.

The 1880s saw a change in the way that photographs were disseminated to the public, but there were precedents for this shift. Too often, historians have looked at wood engravings and photographs as two discrete types of images, comparing the effectiveness of one against the other in transmitting information about the Civil War.<sup>8</sup> In contrast, this thesis addresses the use of photographs to create wood engravings, showing the continuities and the similarities between the two mediums, as a case study in understanding how such images were variously disseminated and used to support political arguments during the Civil War.

This thesis examines the use of a set of photographs of returned Union prisoners of war (POWs) in six different extant publications. These POWs had suffered from extreme malnourishment and exposure during their internment at Belle Isle prison camp, and were not only being treated, but also investigated, by medical doctors intent on establishing that it was a deliberate act of war, and not lack of preparedness, that resulted in the suffering of the POWs. It was these doctors, who were commissioned to investigate these abuses, that recommended that the soldiers be photographed. These photographs were initially printed and distributed as cartes de visites (CDVs), a format that will be discussed later in this thesis, but it is through these six publications that these images were disseminated to the largest numbers of viewers. It is clear that these images were

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<sup>8</sup> Joshua Brown, *Beyond the Lines: Pictorial Reporting, Everyday Life, and the Crisis of Gilded Age America*, (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2002): 48-49.

designed to be persuasive objects, to be produced, distributed, and consumed in large quantities. *The Crutch*, the hospital newsletter in Annapolis where the soldiers were convalescing, leaves this in no doubt:

Let every one endeavor to secure one of the card-pictures exhibiting the condition of many of our paroled prisoners, immediately upon their arrival here — and then we wish to be informed whether any observer will consider the reports hitherto circulated, exaggerated or colored in the least. After you have looked at the picture yourself, send it to your friends, choosing first any rebel sympathiser you may know. We are positive that all boasters of Southern chivalry will be compelled to hide their heads for shame. We are glad that Major General Wallace and the Committee from Washington, on the Conduct of the War, when here last week, suggested the propriety of photographing the men in their actual condition as the best means of bringing before the people, the truth in the matter.<sup>9</sup>

Three of these texts are versions of the United States Sanitary Commission's *Narrative of Privations and Sufferings of United States Officers and Soldiers while Prisoners of War in the Hands of the Rebel Authorities* (all 1864). The Sanitary Commission wrote *The Narrative* in the form of an official report, and later abridged and republished it as a pamphlet in Britain (1865). Also examined in this thesis are two uses of these photographs in the illustrated press. *Harper's Weekly* and *Frank Leslie's Illustrated Newspaper* both reproduced these photographs as wood engravings in two articles, both published on June 18, 1864. This thesis explores how these photographs were used, mediated by text, to create political arguments, acting as proof and emotional appeal. There are three units of analysis in this thesis: the publications that housed the photographs or their reproductions, the texts that augmented and contextualized the images, and the photographs or reproductions themselves.

This thesis is organized into eight parts. "Chapter 1: The Literature Survey" situates this paper within contemporary scholarly research. "Chapter 2: Historical

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<sup>9</sup> *The Crutch*, (May 14, 1864), 243.

Context,” examines the broader cultural and political currents during the period these publications appeared. This chapter investigates the political climate, and the organizations that created these publications as artefacts from a period of political volatility, when stakes were high and the future of the war uncertain. The American versions of the publications appeared before the presidential election in 1864, when pro-war Abraham Lincoln was running against George McClellan, who was running on a platform that advocated for a negotiated peace. While it was apparent to many that the North was going to win the war, there was still a raging debate between those that advocated for an absolute victory and those that preferred a negotiated peace. Moreover, the terms and timing of the peace process, including provisions for the abolition of slavery, were far from decided.<sup>10</sup>

The United States Sanitary Commission, the organization responsible for the report, was far from an apolitical organization. Throughout its history, the Sanitary Commission augmented sanitary and medical care with humanitarian and benevolent care, but also gave partisan support for the war effort. This chapter will demonstrate, through examining the historical background and context of this period, that these publications are political documents and not unbiased official reports.

“Chapter 3: The Dissemination of Photography in the Civil War” focuses on the new and different ways to disseminate photographs and photographic reproductions in order to illustrate why photographs and wood engravings were viable choices for crafting political and emotional arguments. Moreover, the complexity of the visual economy of the period is examined, showing the ways in which handmade wood engravings and photographs coexisted.

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<sup>10</sup> Mark E. Neely, “Was the Civil War a Total War?” *Civil War History*, 50, No. 4 (December 2004): 435.

This thesis considers each publication as an important unit of analysis. “Chapter 4: Descriptions and Analyses of the Six Publications,” examines the interplay between text and image, and how each influences the reading of the other. By examining each publication both as a discrete entity, and in comparison with the others, it is argued that these publications are far from apolitical, official reports.

“Chapter 5: Analyses of the Images” examines the photographs and wood engravings, examining the aesthetic traditions that influenced the photographs and their reproductions, and the choices that engravers made when translating these photographs into wood engravings. By exploring the aesthetic traditions of medical images and portraiture, this thesis addresses the continuities between engraving, portrait painting, and photography, further demonstrating how photography and illustration coexisted in the 1860s. While this section contextualizes these images within different aesthetic traditions, the classification of these photographs is slippery, and it is their use that ultimately determines how they are defined. The final chapter, “Conclusion,” summarizes the thesis and suggests further areas for research. The thesis finishes with two appendices, the first with illustrations, and the second with a timeline, giving additional details regarding the creation of these publications.

## Chapter 1: Literature Survey

Since this thesis addresses a set of photographs and the diverse ways they were used, the research that informs this thesis is necessarily varied. Correspondingly, my research has focused on the following four areas: books and articles that have reproduced these images, or discussed the publications addressed by this thesis; books and articles on the Civil War, the United States Sanitary Commission, and the political context of these publications; publications discussing the new means of disseminating photographs in the 1860s, specifically photographically illustrated books and illustrated newspapers; and, finally, research on medical photography and portraiture that influenced the creation of the photographs and wood engravings.

### *Publications Discussing the Photographs or their Reproductions*

The K & B [Clothbound] and [Paperbound] *Narratives* are both in the collection of the Richard and Ronay Menschel Library at the George Eastman House International Museum of Film and Photography (GEH). The authors of *Imagining Paradise*,<sup>11</sup> a publication describing the treasures of the library's collection at GEH, selected these two books as examples of early photojournalism. The earliest reference to the K & B [Clothbound] *Narrative* as an important photographically illustrated text was in Stanley Burns' *Early Medical Photography in America*,<sup>12</sup> which listed it as the first American book published with tipped-in clinical photographs. While this thesis contends that these

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<sup>11</sup> This publication included illustrations of the covers, and two photographs compared with two wood engravings, both from the King & Baird editions. Sheila J. Foster, Manfred Heiting, and Rachel Stuhlman, *Imagining Paradise: The Richard and Ronay Menschel Library at George Eastman House*, (Rochester, New York, and Göttingen, Germany: Steidl, 2007): 180-181.

<sup>12</sup> Stanley Burns, *Early Medical Photography in America, 1839-1883*. (New York: The Burns Archive, 1983): 1232. This monograph is a series of seven articles originally published in the *New York State Journal of Medicine* between 1979 and 1981.

photographs were not actually clinical photographs, Burns does provide a chronological listing of photographically illustrated medical texts that provides valuable context for the use of these photographs.

Jan Zita Grover's "The First Living Room War: The Civil War in the Illustrated Press,"<sup>13</sup> was the earliest article to address the wood engravings taken from these photographs and published in *Harper's Weekly* in the context of the comprehensive visual reportage of the Civil War. Similarly, Michael Carlebach's 1992 *The Origins of Photojournalism in America*,<sup>14</sup> discusses the reproductions of these photographs in *Leslie's Illustrated* and later examples of POW photographs published in *Harper's Weekly*, as examples of some of the first visual records published that explicitly ascribed atrocities to the Confederate Army during the Civil War.

*Publications on the Civil War, the Sanitary Commission, and the Political Context of these Publications*

The literature on the Civil War is vast and continually growing. Two recent general histories provided the background for this paper: Drew Gilpin Faust's *This Republic of Suffering*<sup>15</sup> and Mark E. Neely's *The Civil War and the Limits of Destruction*.<sup>16</sup> The former book presented the background of the work of the Sanitary Commission. Other scholarly articles published elsewhere augmented this general

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<sup>13</sup> Jan Zita Grover, "The First Living Room War: The Civil War in the Illustrated Press," *Afterimage*. 11 (February 1864): 8-11.

<sup>14</sup> Michael Carlebach, *The Origins of Photojournalism in America*, (Washington and London: The Smithsonian Institution Press, 1992).

<sup>15</sup> Drew Gilpin Faust, *This Republic of Suffering: Death and the American Civil War*, (New York: Vintage Books, 2008).

<sup>16</sup> Mark E. Neely, Jr. *The Civil War and the Limits of Destruction*, (Cambridge, Massachusetts and London, England: Harvard University Press, 2007).

research.<sup>17</sup> Neely's work offered a greater political context for the POW abuse allegations towards the end of the Civil War. These allegations were levelled by both the Union and Confederate government against each other, particularly as the war progressed and the numbers of POWs on both sides grew, occasionally outstripping the resources available to feed, clothe, and house the captured troops. These allegations have been examined by several historians beginning in the 1990s, as scholars debated the veracity of many of the claims of premeditated abuse, and reoriented these claims as propaganda in a complicated political climate as the war dragged on.<sup>18</sup>

As it is for the Civil War, the literature on Civil War photography is enormous and growing. Keith Davis' research is notable in this field for discussing the relationship of famous photographers, including Alexander Gardner and Mathew Brady, to the illustrated press during the Civil War.<sup>19</sup> Anthony Lee and Elizabeth Young attempt to analyze other "imagetexts,"<sup>20</sup> including *Harper's Weekly* and *Leslie's Illustrated* in their analyses of Civil War photography in Alexander Gardner's *Photographic Sketchbook of the Civil War*. My research is informed, most notably, by Alan Trachtenberg's essay on

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<sup>17</sup> Donald H. Mugridge, "The United States Sanitary Commission in Washington, 1861-1865," *Records of the Columbia Historical Society, Washington D.C.* (Washington: The Historical Society of Washington, 1973/74): 134-149; Elizabeth Stevenson, "Olmsted on F Street: The Beginnings of the United States Sanitary Commission," *Records of the Columbia Historical Society, Washington D.C.* (Washington: The Historical Society of Washington, 1973/74): 125-136.

<sup>18</sup> William Marvell, *Andersonville: The Last Depot*, (Chapel Hill and London: The University of North Carolina Press, 1994); John F. Chappo, "Recollection, Retribution, and Restoration: American Civil War Prison Policy in Union and Confederate Prisoner of War Memory," *Madison Historical Review*, 2 (September, 2004): 1-19; Bruce Tap, "Amateurs at War: Abraham Lincoln and the Committee on the Conduct of the War," *Journal of the Abraham Lincoln Association*, 23, No. 2 (2002); Neely, "Total War?": 434-458.

<sup>19</sup> Keith Davis, *The Origins of American Photography 1839-1885: From Daguerreotype to Dry Plate*, (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2007): 176-177.

<sup>20</sup> Anthony Lee and Elizabeth Young, *On Alexander Gardner's Photographic Sketchbook of the Civil War*, Berkeley: University of California Press, 2007.



Civil War Photography, “Albums of War: On Reading Civil War Photographs.”<sup>21</sup> Other research into Civil War photography, which focuses on medical photography, portraiture, and photography in the illustrated press, is described below.

*The Dissemination of Photography in Publications: Photographically Illustrated Books and the Illustrated Press*

The Civil War occurred in a time where photographs and reproductions of photographs were being disseminated in new and important ways. Photographically illustrated books were one way in which photographs, and reproductions of photographs, could be distributed to the public. The K & B [Clothbound] *Narrative*, and *The Extract*, both use tipped-in albumen photographs to disseminate images. However, the former uses the original albumen photographs, and the latter reproduces wood engravings using photography. This thesis therefore addresses two different uses of tipped-in photography in books, and requires extensive research on that practice. Some of the early scholarship on photographically illustrated books was concerned with creating catalogues of known examples of this type of work.<sup>22</sup> There is also interest on photographically illustrated book within the discipline of art history, which give general and not specific information for this thesis.<sup>23</sup> More recent historians and critics have begun to examine the socio-cultural aspects of the medium, relating it to economics and other factors, and also

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<sup>21</sup> Alan Trachtenberg, “Albums of War: On Reading Civil War Photographs,” *Representations*, No. 9 (Winter, 1985): 1-32; reprinted in altered version in his *Reading American Photographs: Images as History, Mathew Brady to Walker Evans*. New York (Hill and Wang, 1989): 1-32

<sup>22</sup> Helmut Gernsheim, *The Incunabula of British Photographic Literature, 1839-1875*, (London and Berkeley: Scholar’s Press, 1984); Stanley B. Burns, “American Medical Publications with Photographs,” *New York State Journal of Medicine*, 81, No. 7 (1981); reprinted by Stanley Burns, (New York: The Burns Archive, 1983).

<sup>23</sup> Alex Sweetnam, “Photographic Book to Photobookwork: 140 Years of Photography in Publication,” *California Museum of Photography Bulletin*, 5, No. 2 (1986): 1-32.

examine different types of photographically illustrated books created for reasons outside of art.<sup>24</sup>

There is also a lively and growing literature on the illustrated press. These include general histories with a broader historical focus<sup>25</sup> as well as narratives that focus specifically on the Civil War.<sup>26</sup> Some of the early scholarship on the conflict focused on the illustrations and the illustrators, without discussing the work of the photographers.<sup>27</sup> More recent scholarship on the illustrated press during the conflict often focuses on the visual culture of satirical comics by artists who were informed by work as sketch artists in battle.<sup>28</sup> Other histories of photojournalism often discuss the work of photographers like Roger Fenton and Mathew Brady and their respective work in the Crimean and Civil Wars as precursors to photojournalism without much discussion of how their photographs were translated into engravings before they were published in illustrated weeklies.<sup>29</sup>

More recently, there has been shift in examining the intersection between photography and hand-drawn illustration, in general and not with regards to the Civil War. These scholarly articles and publications illustrate the continuities between the use

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<sup>24</sup> Martin Parr and Gerry Badger, *The Photobook: A History*. Vol. 1. London and New York: Phaidon, 2004 and *The Photobook: A History*, Vol. 2 (London and New York: Phaidon, 2006); Carol Armstrong, *Scenes in a Library: Reading the Photograph in the Book, 1843-1875*, (Cambridge and London: The MIT Press, 1998).

<sup>25</sup> John Tebbel and Mary Ellen Zuckerman, *The Magazine in America, 1741-1990*, (New York and Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1991); Brown, *Beyond the Lines*.

<sup>26</sup> Alice Fahs, "The Feminized Civil War: Gender, Northern Popular Literature, and the Memory of the War, 1861-1900," *The Journal of American History*, 85, No. 4 (March, 1999): 1461-1494.

<sup>27</sup> William Fletcher Thompson, Jr. "Illustrating the Civil War," *The Wisconsin Magazine of History*, 45, No. 1 (Autumn, 1961): 10-20; William Fletcher Thompson, Jr. "Pictorial Propaganda and the Civil War," *The Wisconsin Magazine of History*, 46, No. 1 (Autumn, 1962): 21-31.

<sup>28</sup> Gary Bunker, "The 'Comic News,' Lincoln, and the Civil War," in *Journal of the Abraham Lincoln Association*, 17, No. 1 (Winter, 1996): 53-87; Christopher Kent, "War Cartooned/Cartoon War: Matt Morgan and the American Civil War in *Fun* and *Frank Leslie's Illustrated Newspaper*," *Victorian Periodicals Review*, 36, No. 2 (Summer, 2003): 153-181.

<sup>29</sup> Pierre Albert and Gilles Feyel, "Photography and the Media," in Michel Frizot, ed. *The New History of Photography*, Translated by Susan Bennett, Liz Clegg, John Crook, and Caroline Higgitt, (Köln: Könemann, 1998): 359-369; Carlebach, *Origins and American Photojournalism Comes of Age*, (Washington and London: the Smithsonian Institution Press, 1997); Jorge Lewinski, *The Camera at War: A History of War Photography from 1848 to the Present Day*, (New York: Simon and Schuster, 1978).

of photography and hand-drawn illustration, and discuss the ways they coexisted and informed each other while refuting the argument that photographs replaced hand-drawn illustration because they were considered more truthful, or, conversely, because hand-drawn illustrations were not truthful enough.<sup>30</sup> Kevin G. Barnhurst and John Nerone, in particular, present a case study of *Leslie's Illustrated*, and *Harper's Weekly* in which they discuss the use of photography as source material for wood engravings in illustrated newspapers. The conclusions of their study are compelling, but some of their observations about the lack of descriptive captions for illustrations taken from photographs do not apply to the Civil War where nearly all visual reportage is described as either drawn from a photograph or taken from a sketch.<sup>31</sup>

Despite some earlier work on the early use of photography to create engravings in the nineteenth century,<sup>32</sup> much of the information available on the use of photographs in the illustrated press comes from the literature on photojournalism and on social documentary photography produced after 1880. This body of literature focuses on the

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<sup>30</sup> Nerone, "The Media," 14-19; Kevin G. Barnhurst and John Nerone, "Civic Picturing vs. Realist Photojournalism: The Regime of Illustrated News, 1856-1901," *Design Issues*, 16, No. 1 (Spring, 2000): 59-79; Thierry Gervais, "On Either Side of the Gatekeeper: Technical Experimentation with Photography at *l'Illustration*, 1880-1900," *Études Photographiques*, 23 (May, 2009): 51-63.

<sup>31</sup> This observation stems from an analysis of all of the issues of *Harper's Weekly* and *Leslie's Illustrated* from 1864-1865, and does not include any issues that do not originate in the Civil War. During this period, almost all of the news images from the front are described as either coming from a photograph or from a sketch, and often names the photographer or the sketch artist, or in the case of sketches, gives a brief description of the artist if they are not a staff war correspondent. Images of buildings or events in the North are less likely to be attributed to a photographer or sketch artist. For a typical example, in *Leslie's Illustrated* on June 17, 1865, there were thirteen illustrations taken from sketches, with six wood engravings taken from "special artists" identified by name, two wood engravings of a captured Jefferson Davis sketched by "one of his captors," one sketch by a "correspondent," three unidentified sketches illustrating a short story, and an additional two unidentified illustrations on the front cover, one showing a façade of the Union Club in New York City and the other showing an event there. While Barnhurst's and Nerone's thesis is not disputed, it is evident that their observations do not necessarily extend towards war reportage and therefore a comparison study of war and regular coverage would be a valuable next step. See *Frank Leslie's Illustrated Newspaper*, 20, No. 507 (June 17, 1865): 193-208.

<sup>32</sup> William M. Ivins, Jr. *Prints and Visual Communication*, (New York: Da Capo Press, 1969); Estelle Jussim, *Visual Communication and the Graphic Arts: Photographic Technologies in the Nineteenth Century*, (New York and London: R.R. Bowker Company, 1974).

1880s as a watershed moment in the history of photography when flash powder, gelatin dry-plate negatives, and the halftone process allowed for a new type of instantaneous photograph which could then be photomechanically reproduced and provided, inexpensively, to a much larger public. Thilo Koenig, for example, notes, “It was only with the use of half-tone printing, from the 1880s onwards, that photographs entered the printed media,” and, further, that “the usual wood engravings made from photographs totally lacked authenticity.”<sup>33</sup>

While the use of photographs as source documents for wood engravings begins as early as 1840 in book publishing, and as early as 1844 in American illustrated newspapers,<sup>34</sup> the halftone process and its introduction in the 1880s are often considered revolutionary new tools for illustration in print media. This thesis argues that wood engravings were, in fact, examples of photographs entering printed media, with this example dating back twenty years before 1880.

### *Medical Photography, Portraiture, and Other Works*

The visual conventions of medical photography have a long history that predates photography, and the early medical photograph was often a hybrid image containing hand-drawn illustration to highlight a medical abnormality or fix a shortcoming in the source photograph.<sup>35</sup> Photography played an important role in medical care during the Civil War, and many histories of medical photography, and Civil War medical

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<sup>33</sup> Thilo Koenig, “The Other Half: The Investigation of Society,” in Michel Frizot, ed. *The New History of Photography*, Translated by Susan Bennett, Liz Clegg, John Crook, and Caroline Higgitt, (Köln: Könemann, 1998): 347.

<sup>34</sup> Carlebach, *Origins*, 7.

<sup>35</sup> Mimi Cazort, “Photography’s Illustrative Ancestors: The Printed Image,” and Martin Kemp, “A Perfect and Faithful Record”: Mind and Body in Medical Photography before 1900,” in Ann Thomas, ed. *Beauty of Another Order: Photography in Science*. (New Haven and London: Yale University Press, 1997).

photography in particular, approach it from a physician's perspective.<sup>36</sup> Other historians examined these photographs as socio-cultural artefacts, and ascribed new meanings to Civil War medical photography, as well as the larger history of medical photography.<sup>37</sup> Interested more in material culture than cultural theory, Michael G. Rhode, of the National Museum of Health and Medicine, discusses the materiality of the photographs, and the ways in which different users used these photographs in multiple contexts. Rhode's familiarity with the photographic object as well as the photographic image, and his discussion of the former, is a crucial addition to the field.<sup>38</sup>

The intersection between medical photography and portraiture is an emerging area of research. Erin O'Connor has discussed the ways in which medical photography and portraiture intersect,<sup>39</sup> and one of John Tagg's essays is used in this thesis to compare the photographs and the reproductions taken from those photographs to conventions within portraiture.<sup>40</sup> The ability of these medical photographs to evoke an emotional response from the public is contingent on viewers recognizing in these images the soldiers they

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<sup>36</sup> Gordon Dammann and Alfred Jay Bollet, *Images of Civil War Medicine: A Photographic History*, (New York: Demos Medical Publishing, 2008); Stanley B. Burns, "Civil War Medical Photography," *New York State Journal of Medicine*, 80, No. 9 (1980); reprinted by Stanley Burns, (New York: The Burns Archive, 1983); Burns, *Early Medical Photography*; Stanley B. Burns, *A Morning's Work: Medical Photographs from the Burns Archive & Collections*, (Santa Fe: Twin Palms Publishers, 1998); Blair O. Rogers and Michael G. Rhode, "The First Civil War Photographs of Soldiers with Facial Wounds," *Aesthetic Plastic Surgery*, 19 (1995): 269-283.

<sup>37</sup> Meredith Browne, *The Currency of the Clinical Photograph: Science, Photography and the Dream of the Legible Body*, (Doct. Diss., Concordia University, 2005.); Lisa M. Herschbach, "Fragmentation and Reunion: Medicine, Memory, and Body in the American Civil War," DAI 58/09 (1998): 3693-A. (Doct. diss., Harvard University, 1997); Kathy Newman, "Wounds and Wounding in the American Civil War: A (Visual) History," *Yale Journal of Criticism*, 6, No. 2 (1993): 63-86.

<sup>38</sup> Michael G. Rhode, "The Rise and Fall of the Army Medical Museum and Library," *Washington History*, 18, No. 1/2 (2006): 78-97; J.T.H. Connor and Michael G. Rhode, "Shooting Soldiers: Civil War Medical Images, Memory, and Identity in America," *Invisible Culture: An Electronic Journal of Visual Culture*, 5 (2003).

<sup>39</sup> Erin O'Connor, "Camera Medica: Towards a Morbid History of Photography," *History of Photography*, 23, No. 3 (Autumn 1999): 232-244.

<sup>40</sup> John Tagg, "A Democracy of the Image," in *The Burden of Representation*, (Minneapolis: The University of Minnesota Press, 1988): 34-59. This is a revised version of an article published earlier, see "Portraits, Power and Production, *Ten*, 8 No. 14 (1984): 20-29.

depict, and portraiture was an important tool for Victorians, who believed that photographs depicted not only the appearance of a person, but also their essence.

Jan Zita Grover has discussed the emergence of the CDV photographs and their popularity during the Civil War, while others have written more broadly about the format.<sup>41</sup> While there are no extant card versions of the photographs, primary sources indicate that the first appearance of the photographs discussed in this thesis was as CDVs exchanged amongst hospital personnel at the United States General Hospital in Annapolis, Maryland.<sup>42</sup> How these photographs came to be taken at the hospital, and the organization that created them, are discussed in the next Chapter.

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<sup>41</sup> William C. Darrah, *Cartes de Visite in 19<sup>th</sup> Century Photography*, (Gettysburg: William C. Darrah, 1981).

<sup>42</sup> *The Crutch*, (May 14, 1864): 15.

## Chapter 2: Historical Context

The United States Sanitary Commission (hereafter the Sanitary Commission) initially began in 1861 as the Women's Central Relief Organization (WCRO), which was designed to promote women's voluntarism. The Sanitary Commission, led by men but representing the concerns of the WCRO, was originally intended to be an intervening body between the WCRO and the War Department, who were reluctant to negotiate directly with women. Ultimately, however, the Sanitary Commission subsumed the WCRO's activities under its purview.<sup>43</sup> The Sanitary Commission grew quickly, creating offices in most major cities in the North, as well as a western branch located in California, all of which fell under the jurisdiction of the Sanitary Commission's head office in New York City.

The Sanitary Commission's original mandate was to act as a commission of inquiry reporting to the Army Medical Bureau on the health screening of new recruits. In 1861, the board members strongly opposed these limited powers in a letter to the Surgeon General, who responded by giving the Sanitary Commission powers that supplemented the Army Medical Bureau, but limited its purview to helping volunteer troops.<sup>44</sup> An important development occurred in the spring of 1862, when Henry W. Bellows, the President of the Sanitary Commission, obtained President Lincoln's support for a bill that suspended the seniority system in the Army Medical Bureau, allowing the Sanitary Commission's chosen candidate William Hammond to become the surgeon general. This cemented the relationship between the two organizations, allowing for greater

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<sup>43</sup> Judith Ann Giesberg, *Civil War Sisterhood: The US Sanitary Commission and Women's Politics in Transition* (Lebanon, New Hampshire: Northeastern University Press, 2006): 31-38.

<sup>44</sup> Charles Stillé, *History of the United States Sanitary Commission Being the General Report of its Work During the War of the Rebellion*, (Philadelphia: J.B. Lipincott & Co., 1866), 52-54.

cooperation for the duration of the war.<sup>45</sup> While the Sanitary Commission was a private organization responsible for raising its own operating budget, the Sanitary Commission did receive office space, stationary and office supplies, and free postal service from the state.<sup>46</sup>

The scope of the organization broadened from providing sanitary and medical aid to volunteers serving in the Union Army to offering a range of services to all servicemen and medical personnel, including researching and disseminating clinical information to doctors and nurses, supplying medical and nursing aid for all soldiers and sailors, providing emotional succour to wounded men, burying the dead, collating registries of the wounded and deceased, helping Northern families locate wounded and dead soldiers, and disinterring and shipping bodies to the North.<sup>47</sup> The Sanitary Commission was also an effective lobbying organization, able to convince President Lincoln, for example, to sign into law the “United States Allotment System,” which provided the infrastructure for soldiers to automatically remit portions of their wages to at-home dependents.<sup>48</sup> After the war ended, the Sanitary Commission continued to aid soldiers in receiving pensions, help families locate their wounded and dead, and assist with histories of the war.<sup>49</sup>

The organization was at first committed to assisting with delivering health and sanitary services to volunteer recruits as part of its firm commitment to scientific rationale and bureaucratic efficiency. While this work was important in substantively

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<sup>45</sup> Richard H. Peterson, “The United States Sanitary Commission and Thomas Starr King in California, 1861-1864,” *California History*, 72, No. 4 (Winter 1993/1994): 326.

<sup>46</sup> Stevenson, “Olmsted on F Street,” 126.

<sup>47</sup> Faust, *The Republic*, 87.

<sup>48</sup> Richard F. Miller, “For His Wife, His Widow, and His Orphan: Massachusetts and Family Aid during the Civil War,” *The Massachusetts Historical Review*, 6 (2004), 82.

<sup>49</sup> Susan P. Waide and Valerie Wingfield, *United States Sanitary Commission Records: 1861-1878*, (New York: The New York Public Library, Humanities and Social Sciences Library, Manuscripts and Archives Division, January 2006), 3, 6.



improving the soldier's experience, as well as the overall efficiency of the war effort, there was initially no consideration of other types of relief for the soldiers. Nonetheless, just as the scope of the organization changed over the course of the war, there was also a parallel movement towards including humanitarian efforts in its work as Sanitary Commission members reacted to the unexpected length and human cost of the war.

Commission members often described their work as belonging to two distinct streams, both at regional offices of the Commission and at its national level. For example, in the history of the Boston Sanitary Commission, the authors describe their "Christian philanthropic"<sup>50</sup> work, and their "systematic work"<sup>51</sup> separately. This was similar to the situation in described in reports from Philadelphia and elsewhere.<sup>52</sup> This separation between humanitarian and sanitary aid occurred even at the national levels: Mary Katherine Wormeley, in her 1863 history of the entire Sanitary Commission, described the Commission's work similarly, differentiating between the Sanitary Commission's "special" and "general" relief.<sup>53</sup> For almost all of the commentators, sanitary aid and the provision of medical supplies, personnel, and instruction was complemented by humanitarian or benevolent aid, which included fighting for soldiers' back pay, providing convalescent homes, and locating missing soldiers upon request from their families and loved ones.<sup>54</sup>

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<sup>50</sup> The Executive Committee of the Boston Associates of the United States Sanitary Commission, *Report Concerning the Special Relief Service of the U.S. Sanitary Commission of Boston, Mass. For the Year Ending March 31, 1864*, (Boston: Prentiss & Deland, 1864) 3,4.

<sup>51</sup> *Ibid*, 5.

<sup>52</sup> The United States Sanitary Commission, *Report of the General Superintendent of the Philadelphia Branch of the United States Sanitary Commission, to the Executive Committee*, (Philadelphia: King & Baird, 1866), 6.

<sup>53</sup> Katherine Prescott Wormeley, *The United States Sanitary Commission: A Sketch of its Purposes and Work. Printed by Permission*, (Boston: Little, Brown & Company, 1863), 58, 221.

<sup>54</sup> *Ibid*, 227, 130, 235-237.

Just as the Sanitary Commission's mission evolved to include more humanitarian aims, it also became more political. The Sanitary Commission hosted a number of fundraising events, but its Sanitary Fairs were the most successful. These occurred in most major northern cities, and the Western branch of the Sanitary Commission followed suit in California and elsewhere.<sup>55</sup> These social events were also political, with organized pro-war events and speeches. President Lincoln, known for limiting his public engagements, appeared at the 1864 Philadelphia Sanitary Fair less than one month before the release of the Union POWs discussed in this essay, and addressed the government's efforts to protect black Union soldiers and POWs from the Confederate Army after the Fort Pillow Massacre.<sup>56</sup>

*The Narrative* is the only publication of its kind produced by the Sanitary Commission. While the Sanitary Commission began to include more humanitarian and political concerns, most of their publications provided either medical instruction or were histories of the Commission and its activities. In order to understand the purpose of this publication, it is necessary to take into account several contemporaneous political developments that were sparked by an ongoing situation involving POWs. Neither side in the conflict were adequately prepared to care for the soldiers that they would capture during the Civil War, a situation which grew worse after prisoner exchanges were halted. A flourishing industry of Civil War accounts of abuses soon grew, as both North and

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<sup>55</sup> Dammann and Bollet, *Images of Civil War Medicine*, 40; Peterson, "The United States Sanitary Commission," 328.

<sup>56</sup> Neely, *The Limits of Destruction*, 172.

South argued that the situation was a deliberate, premeditated attack designed to enfeeble and kill able-bodied soldiers, and not an unfortunate result of poor planning.<sup>57</sup>

In 1863, the Union government suspended prisoner exchanges between the North and South, ostensibly because of the way black soldiers were being treated by the Confederates. This decision was also made for a compelling tactical reason, specifically the desire not to return able-bodied soldiers to the Confederate Army, where they would reinvigorate the depleted troops and possibly extend the war. This policy was unpopular in the United States and abroad. It has been suggested that Stanton consistently helped foster the spread of information regarding alleged prisoner abuse by the Confederate Army as a means of deflecting criticism stemming from the execution of ten Confederate soldiers in 1862, as well as this embargo, from Washington to Richmond, the capital of the Confederacy.<sup>58</sup>

The election of 1864 was also a tremendous political catalyst for what eventually became a heated debate about the treatment of Union POWs at the hands of Confederate officers, and the potential benefits of instituting retaliatory measures against captured Confederate officers in Union POW camps. This was an argument that pitted advocates for a total victory, with no concessions to the South, against those who promoted a peace treaty with the Confederates, with some concessions, to prevent further casualties and

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<sup>57</sup> There were some examples of atrocities committed by Civil War officers in the implementation of their duties. The execution of ten soldiers at Palmyra in 1862 by Union officers was an international diplomatic incident, resulting in near-universal censure of the Union government in Washington. However, documentary evidence seems to prove that there was often a sense of camaraderie between POW and captors. In December of 1863, the officers interred at Libby Prison presented a minstrel show to the citizens of Richmond Virginia, playing on shared racial prejudices between Northern and Southern soldiers. However, this thesis does not attempt to determine the relative merit of either side's claim to premeditated abuse against POWs. See Neely, *The Limits of Destruction*, 38, 44.

<sup>58</sup> Neely, *The Limits of Destruction*, 44; Chappo, "Recollection, Retribution, and Restoration," 5-6.

expense.<sup>59</sup> These debates were inextricably tied to the presidential election of 1864: *The New York Times* reported on a Philadelphia newspaper's assertion that a Union POW was returned from Belle Isle simply for pledging support for George McClellan.<sup>60</sup> McClelland was Lincoln's main competitor, and was campaigning on a platform that advocated for a negotiated peace. While Lincoln won the election, the start of serious peace talks in early 1865 heightened the debate as war hawks advocated continuing the war to the bitter end to force the Confederates to concede to a total Union victory.<sup>61</sup>

One opportunity to deflect criticism regarding the treatment of POWs from Washington onto the Confederate government in Richmond came in the spring of 1864. On May 2, a group of 400 Union POWs, chosen because they were all too ill to remain in prison, were traded to the North from the Belle Isle prison camp near Richmond, Virginia. The men were transferred immediately to the United States General Hospital in Annapolis, Maryland upon the recommendation of Major General Benjamin F. Butler.<sup>62</sup> Their transfer to the Annapolis Hospital is significant, because it illustrates just how enfeebled all of these men were: most returned POWs were returned to convalescent hospitals, whereas major hospital facilities were reserved for soldiers suffering prolonged disabilities, or who were recovering slowly from severe wartime injuries.<sup>63</sup>

Secretary Stanton encouraged the Joint Committee on the Conduct and Expenditure of the War (hereafter the Joint Committee), the Sanitary Commission, and the United States Christian Commission to publish and disseminate reports on suspected

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<sup>59</sup> This degeneration into a war of attrition possibly explains the reason why Ulysses S. Grant, the Union General, is often credited with coining the term "unconditional surrender." See Neely, "Total War?" 434.

<sup>60</sup> "General News," *The New York Times*, October 18, 1864.

<sup>61</sup> Neely, *The Limits of Destruction*, 189.

<sup>62</sup> Benjamin F. Butler to Hon Edwin M. Stanton, letter, May 1, 1864. Published in The United States War Department, *The War of the Rebellion: A Compilation of the Official Records of the Union and Confederate Armies*, Series 2, Volume 7, (Washington: The Government Printing Office, 1899): 101.

<sup>63</sup> Dammann and Bollet, *Images of Civil War Medicine*, 59, 133.

prisoner abuses because the men were so obviously ill.<sup>64</sup> On May 4, 1864, he personally requested that the Chairman of the Joint Committee “immediately proceed to Annapolis” to examine the prisoners and enclosed with that letter a description of their condition that ended with a recommendation that “retaliatory measures be at once instituted by subjecting the officers we now hold as prisoners of war to a similar treatment.”<sup>65</sup> The Joint Committee on the Conduct of the War was sympathetic to these extreme goals; initially begun to investigate early Union losses, it later became an organization notorious for politicizing the war and promoting extreme partisanship.<sup>66</sup>

Two reports, the Congressional report written by the Joint Committee, and the Sanitary Commission’s report, were the main publications that described the conditions in Confederate prison camps, alleging abuse.<sup>67</sup> However, it was only *The Narrative*, the Sanitary Commission’s report, which reached the public; the Congressional Report was limited in circulation to members of Congress.

*The Narrative* also directly addressed the international accusations against the North for suspected prisoner abuse in Northern POW camps, citing this as the reason for including additional depositions of Confederate POWs in the appendix of the report. Well into late 1864, Union commanding officers allowed Sanitary Commission members to investigate their camps and write reports on their findings, in one case directly stating

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<sup>64</sup> Neely, *The Limits of Destruction*, 187.

<sup>65</sup> Edwin M. Stanton to B.F. Wade, letter, May 4, 1864 and W. Hoffman to Edwin M. Stanton, letter, May 2, 1864. Both published in The United States War Department, *The War of the Rebellion*, 110-111.

<sup>66</sup> Daman Eubank, “Review [Over Lincoln’s Shoulder: *The Joint Committee on the Conduct of the War* by Bruce Tap,]” *Michigan Historical Review*, 24, No. 2 (Fall, 1998): 188.

<sup>67</sup> The United States Christian Commission did not produce a report on the prisoner abuse allegations, but did produce a registry of the dead from the prison camps after the war ended. See *Record of the Federal Dead Buried from Libby, Bell Isle, Danville & Camp Lawton Prisons, and at City Point, and in the Field before Petersburg and Richmond*. (Philadelphia: James B. Rodgers for the United States Christian Commission, 1866).

that this was for “the purpose of correcting the impression that seems somehow to have gotten abroad that the prisoners here are cruelly treated.”<sup>68</sup>

These two publications, and the soldiers’ depositions they contained, became the basis for the abuse scandal of 1864, and the debate about retaliation against Confederate prisoners in 1865.<sup>69</sup> These reports were shocking and while there is no record of Sanitary Commission members commenting on retaliation, it is known that the authors of the Congressional report supported the idea of retaliating against Confederate prisoners. One of the original members of the Joint Committee, Zachariah Chandler, even went on record stating, “the committee on the conduct of war has been labouring for years to induce the Administration to adopt the system of retaliation.”<sup>70</sup> The press was more circumspect, and while *Harper’s Weekly* never supported retaliation outright, the author of an article debating the relative merits of abstaining from retaliation did state that “we are at war with men whom the long habit of enslaving other men has imbruted and barbarized... with us the object of retaliation would be to put an end to the torture of loyal men.”<sup>71</sup>

It is unsurprising that the authors of *The Narrative* chose to use photography to illustrate their account of alleged prisoner abuse and to appeal to the public’s emotions.

The Sanitary Commission would again use photographically illustrated books to

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<sup>68</sup> This request was later rescinded on the grounds that it was “highly improper,” despite the fact that the Sanitary Commission members had already entered the camp and made their depositions. It should be noted that Sanitary Commission members received similar high levels of access earlier in 1864 when writing their report. For correspondence regarding this request, see B.F. Tracy to H.W. Wessells, letter, December 3, 1864 and H.W. Wessells to B.F. Tracy, letter, December 6, 1864. Both published in The United States War Department, *The War of the Rebellion*, 1180, 1195.

<sup>69</sup> This debate regarding the treatment of POWs on either side of the conflict is one that had continued resonance in the post-war years, reaching another peak after the release of a House report (Number 45) in 1869, but with continued coverage in the popular press and elsewhere into the 1880s. See Chappo, “Recollection, Retribution, and Restoration,” 15-16.

<sup>70</sup> Quoted in Neely, Jr. *The Limits of Destruction*, 195.

<sup>71</sup> “Retaliation,” *Harper’s Weekly*, 9, No. 419 (January 7, 1865): 2.

disseminate information about its organization, albeit to report on the success of the Sanitary Fair held in New York City in 1864.<sup>72</sup> This volume, released in 1867, is substantially more lavish than the K & B [Clothbound] *Narrative*, and contains eight tipped-in albumen prints. While only three years had elapsed since the publication of the K & B [Clothbound] *Narrative*, the *Record of the Metropolitan Fair* is more sophisticated in its use of photographs, listing the photographs in the table of contents and providing the name of the photographers. The photographs are also more completely integrated with text, and printed on pages designed specifically for tipped-in images, surrounded by decorative borders. Unlike *The Narrative*, there are no other editions containing less expensive wood engravings, suggesting that this lavish book was not intended for mass dissemination.

Photography was emerging alongside established visual mediums as a viable and important way to transmit information in a rapidly evolving visual economy. So why did the members of the Sanitary Commission choose to use photography for these publications? In order to understand this choice, it is necessary to first examine how images were disseminated during the Civil War.

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<sup>72</sup> See *A Record of the Metropolitan Fair in Aid of the U.S. Sanitary Commission held at New York, in April, 1864*, (New York: Hurd & Houghton, 1867).

### Chapter 3: The Dissemination of Photography in the Civil War

The years of the Civil War were concurrent with new shifts in the ways photographs were disseminated. The Civil War accelerated new technologies, as well as resurrected some older ones. The portability and reproducibility of photography were important requirements for enlisted soldiers, and the transmission of visual information from the frontlines of the war to the public in the north and south were also important impetuses for the use of photography and photographic reproductions. Some of these new trends in photographic dissemination, such as the use of CDVs and stereoviews, reached the pinnacle of their popularity during or soon after the Civil War, whereas others, such as the photographically illustrated book, and the use of photographs in the illustrated press, were emerging and evolving during the conflict into practices that would reach their maturation later after 1880.

The format of the original CDVs that were used to illustrate the K & B [Clothbound] *Narrative* was a relatively new innovation in portraiture, introduced by André Adolphe-Eugène Disdéri in Paris in late 1854. By 1857, the CDV format was flourishing in the United States.<sup>73</sup> CDVs were important both in commercial and clinical portraiture during the Civil War, with the latter type of portrait often functioning as documentary proof of a soldier's disability for pension purposes.<sup>74</sup> While stereographic views using daguerreotypes were occasionally produced in the 1840s and 1850s, stereography was not commercially widespread until the advent of collodion and the introduction of Oliver Wendell Holmes' lightweight viewer in 1861.<sup>75</sup> These two photographic formats brought war imagery into the homes of many Americans, bringing

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<sup>73</sup> Darrah, *Cartes de Visite*, 1-4.

<sup>74</sup> Burns, "Civil War Medical Photography," 1461.

<sup>75</sup> Carlebach, *Origins*, 50.



to the public the first photographic views of a war fought on home soil that defied pre-existing beliefs about the romantic nature of battles and conflict.<sup>76</sup>

The American illustrated press was modelled after European illustrated weeklies such as *The Illustrated London News* and the Parisian *L'Illustration*. These two weeklies had covered the Crimean War, employing sketch artists Constantin Guys for the former and Jean Baptiste Henri Durand-Brager for the latter.<sup>77</sup> *Leslie's Illustrated* was the first of the American periodicals to achieve commercial success, starting publication in 1855.<sup>78</sup> Fletcher Harper established *Harper's Weekly* in 1857, intending it to be an illustrated weekly newspaper designed for a less sophisticated audience than that of *Harper's New Monthly Magazine*, begun in 1850.<sup>79</sup>

The audience for illustrated weekly newspapers was wide and diverse. Over the course of the eighteenth and into the early nineteenth century, there was a wide expansion of literacy due to increased primary education. An expanding transportation network increased the commercial viability of books, newspapers, and pamphlets as they could be reliably shipped over land and across the ocean to an audience large enough to justify their production.<sup>80</sup> The illustration of these materials was integral, not incidental. In 1857, a commentator from the *Cosmopolitan Art Journal* wrote that “nothing but ‘illustrated’ works are profitable to publishers; while the illustrated magazines and newspapers are vastly popular.”<sup>81</sup>

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<sup>76</sup> Grover, “The First Living-Room War,” 10.

<sup>77</sup> Albert and Feyel, “Photography and the Media,” 21.

<sup>78</sup> Brown, *Beyond the Lines*, 7.

<sup>79</sup> *Harper's New Monthly Magazine* began in 1850. See Carlebach, *Origins*, 64-65.

<sup>80</sup> Nerone, “The Media,” 17.

<sup>81</sup> Brown, *Beyond the Lines*, 7-8.

The illustrated weekly newspapers were enormously influential in the United States in terms of shaping popular opinion about the war. *Harper's Weekly*, the more popular of these two illustrated weekly newspapers, had a circulation of about 120,000 and an estimated readership of 750,000 to 1,250,000 every week. Ten people on average saw each copy of an illustrated newspaper, continuing a tradition for sharing newspapers and other printed material seen first during the American Revolution.<sup>82</sup>

Photographically illustrated books were also beginning to emerge as an important commodity. In the 1860s, books with photographs affixed to the pages ("tipped-in") were an expensive luxury item, and this type of illustrated book only reached its peak of popularity in the 1870s and declined in use afterwards with the advent of halftone and other photomechanical processes.<sup>83</sup> Tipping in albumen prints was not a feasible way to reproduce images en masse. Existing types of photomechanical processes, such as woodburytypes or carbon prints, had similar limitations. While these were images capable of being printed in a press, they had to be trimmed and mounted individually on a page. This was an expensive and time-consuming limitation, and it was not until the 1870s that photomechanical processes began replacing tipped-in photographs in photographically illustrated books.<sup>84</sup> Wood engraving, while not technically a photomechanical process, was used extensively to reproduce photographs both during the 1860s and during the early emergence of the halftone.<sup>85</sup> For the K & B [Clothbound] *Narrative*, only a small number were produced, quite likely as mementoes for people or

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<sup>82</sup> Thompson, Jr. "Pictorial Propaganda," 22; Nerone, "The Media," 16.

<sup>83</sup> Sweetnam, "Photographic Books to Photobookwork," 3.

<sup>84</sup> Alex Sweetnam, "Photographic Books to Photobookwork," 7.

<sup>85</sup> Jacob Riis' *How the Other Half Lives*, (New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1890) was one of the first books to use the halftone process to reproduce photographs. However, the book used both wood engravings and halftones, as the halftone process had yet to render fine enough results to publish the book entirely with that process.

organizations considered significant by Sanitary Commission members. Instead, it was the wood engravings that were primarily used to illustrate the reports.

For the illustrated weeklies, wood engravings were the chief means of reproducing images in their printed pages. Arguably the biggest advantage of wood engraving was the ability to print images simultaneously with text. The photograph, much like a wartime sketch made by an artist at the front, was a source document for an engraver (or team of engravers) working from an engraver's studio. The use of a sketch or a photograph as inspiration for a wood engraving was not necessarily exclusive: occasionally, a wood engraving could be taken from both photographs and sketches.<sup>86</sup> The creation of a wood engraving was a complicated process, often undertaken by several workers on small sections of a larger block that were later reassembled to create a finished plate.<sup>87</sup> This work resulted in a special division of labour in engraving workshops. In an 1870 article on the introduction of a new process that transferred a photograph onto a woodblock to ease engraving published in *Anthony's Photographic Bulletin*, the author stated that it is difficult to "translate flat tints into line" and suggests allocating the sketching to "the draughtsman accustomed to such work, who will, without much labour, indicate, by a few lines from his pencil, the kind of treatment in cutting by which the effect is to be produced."<sup>88</sup>

Two of the publications examined in this thesis used tipped-in albumen prints, whereas the remaining four reproduced the photographs using wood engravings. Wood engraving was the less expensive choice for reproducing photographs in *The Narrative*,

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<sup>86</sup> For an example of this practice, see "Home From the War—Grand Review of Returned the Armies of the United States," [Illustration from sketches by W.T. Crane and photographs by Mathew Brady,] *Frank Leslie's Illustrated Newspaper*, 20, No. 506, (June 10, 1865): 184.

<sup>87</sup> Albert and Feyel, "Photography and the Media," 361.

<sup>88</sup> "Photography for Wood Engraving," *Anthony's Photographic Bulletin*, 1 (August 1870): 139.

and it was the only choice available for setting the images alongside type in *Harper's Weekly* and *Leslie's Illustrated*. While the limitations and advantages of both tipped-in albumen prints and wood engravings have been explored in this chapter, it is now the publications themselves that must be described and analyzed.

## Chapter 4: Descriptions and Analyses of the Six Publications

This section is arranged chronologically to follow the order in which the public encountered these images. While these photographs were taken in early May 1864 as part of the investigation undertaken by the Sanitary Commission's standing committee, the Sanitary Commission's final report was not the first publication to publish these images as proof of alleged abuse against Union POWs by the Confederate army. While the intention of the standing committee might best be understood by examining the K & B versions of *The Narrative*, the two versions directly commissioned and published by the Sanitary Commission, this chapter nonetheless examines each publication as it appeared between June 1864 and February 1865.<sup>89</sup> As stated earlier, italics are used to denote the periodical *Littell's Living Age*, and are not used when discussing the publishing house of Littell's Living Age.

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<sup>89</sup> For a more detailed timeline of the appearance of these publications, see Appendix 2.

*Harper's Weekly and Frank Leslie's Illustrated Newspaper*

Both *Harper's Weekly* and *Leslie's Illustrated* published reproductions of the photographs on Saturday, June 18, 1864. *Harper's Weekly* and *Leslie's Illustrated* were the first two of these six publications to print wood engravings reproduced from the photographs taken under the instruction of Dr. Brandon A. Vanderkiefte and Dr. Ellerslie Wallace. *Harper's* published two photographs, and *Leslie's* published eight<sup>90</sup> (Figures 17 and 18.) One of *Harper's Weekly's* source images, and two of *Leslie's Illustrated* images also appear in *The Narrative*, although both *Harper's Weekly* and *Leslie's Illustrated* each created their own wood engravings from the photographs.

The presentation of these images is very different from their presentation in the published versions of *The Narrative* and *The Extract*. Both of the periodicals omit much of the background information of the original photographs. Extraneous furniture is omitted, and all are printed with dramatic chiaroscuro. This was possibly done to highlight the figures, but it also adds a dramatic effect that is missing in the original photographs. In *Harper's Weekly*, two photographs are printed vertically along the bottom half of the front page of the newspaper underneath an unrelated engraving of a naval battle scene. There is no frame provided for either photograph, and the edges appear painterly and amorphous. In *Leslie's Weekly*, eight photographs are printed in a latticework frame. Shadowing is also used, although the images are close-cropped around the figures, limiting its effect.

With three rows of figures, *Leslie's Weekly's* reproductions are presented typologically and not as individual portraits. *Harper's Weekly* printed the two images

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<sup>90</sup> At least eleven soldiers were photographed during the investigation. It is likely that more soldiers were photographed, and the Library of Congress holds at least three photographs of returned Union POWs that could have come from this series. See Lot 4181 Numbers 5524, 5525, and 5526.

larger, and with greater individual detail in the faces of the soldiers and the attending physician—detail so great that it is possible to tentatively identify the attending physician as B.A. Vanderkiefte himself.<sup>91</sup> Perhaps to temper the typological and anonymizing renditions of the soldiers, *Leslie's Weekly* printed numbers alongside each figure that related to the names, and, where relevant, the death dates of each soldier printed along the bottom edge of the engraving. These names were not included in the text block, but the decorative script was carved into the boxwood itself. This also indicates that whoever sent the photographs to *Leslie's Illustrated* included the names of the pictured soldiers.

Both of these periodicals note that these images were taken from photographs, a fact which is noted in the captions for the wood engravings as well as in both issue's accompanying articles. They are presented very similarly: *Harper's Weekly* described them as "irrefutable proof," and *Leslie's Illustrated* "irrefragable proof."<sup>92</sup> The repeated references to the photographic origin of the wood engravings are significant, as is the reference to the photographs as "proof." However, it is possible to overstate the importance of this reference to the proof offered by these photographs as is seen by the often similar language used to describe images taken from eyewitness sketch, artist's imagination, and photographs thus contradicting Koenig's claim on page fifteen.

In *Leslie's Illustrated* the editors describe a sketch of the Belle Isle POW camp published previously in the *London Illustrated News* and state that the sketch is evidence of the truth of the soldier's statements. While the statements were sworn depositions

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<sup>91</sup> B.A. Vanderkiefte is identified as the seated physician shown in the group photograph printed in *The Narrative* and tentatively identified as the standing physician in the second engraving printed in *Harper's Weekly*. Identification stems from examining known photographs of Vanderkiefte from the William Smith Ely Manuscript Collection at the University of Rochester Medical Library.

<sup>92</sup> "Further Proofs of Rebel Inhumanity," *Harper's Weekly*, 8, No. 390 (June 18, 1864): 386; "The Diabolical Barbarities of the Rebels in the Treatment of Union Prisoners," *Frank Leslie's Illustrated Newspaper*, 45, No. 18 (June 18, 1864): 199.

taken and witnessed by high-ranking members of the Sanitary Commission, the sketch is nonetheless considered more reliable. While the editors note that the *London Illustrated News* favours the Confederate side, presumably nullifying any tendency to exaggerate Southern abuses and Northern valour in the face of such poor treatment, it is significant that it is the testimony that substantiates the evidentiary power of a news illustration.

*Harper's Weekly* received the photographs from Dr. Ellerslie Wallace, who wrote a letter published in that issue containing statements from Dr. Vanderkiefte and excerpted depositions taken by the Sanitary Commission members in Annapolis. The editors of *Harper's Weekly* wrote additional editorial text on the following page with unrelated articles printed between Dr. Wallace's letter and the editorial statement. The editors assert, "the pictures we publish today of the effect of rebel cruelty to our prisoners are fearful to look upon; but they are not fancy sketches from description; they are photographs from life, or rather from death from life, and a thousand fold more impressively than description they tell the terrible truth." The editors claim "there is no civilized nation in the world which we could be at war which would suffer the prisoners in its hands to receive such treatment as our men get from the rebels." Showing their intractability with regards to the South, the author asks, "shall we lop off the branches, or shall we uproot the tree?"<sup>93</sup>

*Leslie's Illustrated* received the photographs alongside a letter from the Joint Committee on the Conduct of the War. While *Harper's Weekly* excerpted some of the testimony from *The Narrative*, *Leslie's Illustrated* excerpted a section of the Joint Committee's report. There are some discrepancies between the treatment described in the Joint Committee's report and the Sanitary Commission's report, but what really

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<sup>93</sup> "Rebel Cruelty," *Harper's Weekly*, 8, No. 390 (June 18, 1864): 387.



differentiates this article not only from *Harper's Weekly* but from all the other publications is *Leslie's Illustrated's* identification of the soldiers in the engravings. This inscription identifies the soldiers, returning specificity to the images and tying them to real people. This makes them, in a sense, portraits – something that will be explored, alongside medical photography, in the next chapter.

*King & Baird [Clothbound] and King & Baird [Paperbound] Narrative*

King & Baird published two versions of the *Narrative of Privations and Sufferings of United States Officers and Soldiers While Prisoners of War in the Hands of the Rebel Authorities* in September of 1864. Both versions are 283 pages, with the K & B [Clothbound] *Narrative* bound in brown leather and measuring 25 x 13 cm, while the K & B [Paperbound] *Narrative* is paperbound and measures 24.5 x 12.5 cm. Only the K & B [Paperbound] *Narrative* lists a price, 25¢, on the front cover, suggesting that perhaps the K & B [Clothbound] *Narrative* existed only in special editions that were not sold on the open market, and may have only been circulated to the commissioners and government officials.<sup>94</sup> Both editions contain the title page, followed by the list of the members of the standing committee. Opposite this page is a paraphrased bible quotation, followed, on the next page, by the table of contents, after which the report itself is printed. There are extensive appendices in both editions.

The first section of *The Narrative* comprises the official report of the Sanitary Commission. The resolutions of the standing committee of the Sanitary Commission preface the images, which appear after page 15, and the official narrative and medical reports follow. These sections encompass the first 124 pages of the 283 page volume. In the K & B [Clothbound] *Narrative*, the four photographs are tipped in, two to a page, facing each other on a single spread (Figures 1 - 4). In the K & B [Paperbound] *Narrative*, the reproductions of the same four photographs are printed on four pages, two

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<sup>94</sup> The limited circulation of these texts is assumed because of the relatively few surviving editions with tipped-in photographs. The only copies that I have located are held at Princeton and the Richard and Ronay Menschel Library at the George Eastman House International Museum of Photography and Film. The latter copy is stamped with "The New York Club," which might refer to the Union League Club of New York, an organization whose founders were instrumental in creating the Sanitary Commission. Thomas Nast of *Harper's Weekly* was also a member. See the organization's website for more information: <http://www.unionleagueclub.org/>.

to a spread, with a blank spread preceding each pair of images (Figures 5-8). There is no ornamentation in the K & B [Clothbound] *Narrative*, but for the paperbound edition a rectangular frame has been printed in light yellow ink under the wood engravings, giving highlight areas a warm life-like glow and creating a border of roughly a centimetre around the images that separates the images from the rest of the page.

Both editions are printed with an internal title page preceding the photographs or the wood engravings. For the K & B [Clothbound] *Narrative* with tipped-in albumen prints, this page announces that they are photographs of Union soldiers, “Printed from the original negatives now in the possession of the United States Sanitary Commission,”<sup>95</sup> whereas the wood engravings are prefaced with a statement that they are “Accurately copied from the original photographs taken at United States General Hospital, Division No 1, Annapolis, Maryland, and now in the possession of the United States Sanitary Commission.”<sup>96</sup>

While the photographs appear differentiated by an internal title page, they are not listed in the table of contents of either the K & B [Clothbound] or [Paperbound] versions of the *Narrative*. The table of contents for these two editions is very detailed, offering chapter headings and titles as well as more detailed information on each of the depositions contained in *The Narrative*. Given that the table of contents is so thorough, the omission of information on the photographs or the wood engravings is significant.

Not only are these images not mentioned in the table of contents in either edition, they are also not provided with page numbers. This is more than a typesetting omission –

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<sup>95</sup> United States Sanitary Commission, *Narrative of Privations*, Philadelphia: King & Baird, 1864. [Clothbound], n.p.

<sup>96</sup> United States Sanitary Commission, *Narrative of Privations*, Philadelphia: King & Baird, 1864. [Paperbound], n.p.

the pagination of both editions continues as though the photographs or engravings do not exist: in both volumes, page 15 prefaces the images and page 17 follows, disregarding entirely the pages of images. King & Baird were engravers as well as printers, printing images for Thomas Nast, of *Harper's Weekly*, among others.<sup>97</sup> While the wood engravings were presumably made at the publishing house, it does seem apparent that these tasks were separate, and that the book was assembled without originally considering the inclusion of these images within final layout of the editions.

Moreover, both editions use different paper stock for these images. In the K & B [Clothbound] *Narrative*, the paper is of a heavier weight and a stiffer stock than the rest of the pages. This is likely due to the structural requirements for pasting photographs directly onto the page. For the K & B [Paperbound] *Narrative*, the paper is finer, smoother, and slightly more acidic than the rest of the pages, which could be related to printing requirements. While the K & B [Clothbound] *Narrative* inserts these images into a pre-existing signature, the K & B [Paperbound] *Narrative* uses a separate signature for this section.

The Appendix contains depositions taken during the inquiry, with sworn testimony from Union officers and soldiers, doctors who treated returned Union POWs, and evidence from eyewitnesses, including Dorothea L. Dix, the superintendent of nurses for the Union Army during the Civil War, and an early member of the WCRO. The Sanitary Commission amended the Standing Committee's resolutions to include an

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<sup>97</sup> King & Baird was a reasonably prolific publishing house in the mid-19<sup>th</sup> century. It is not known whether they published other books with tipped-in photographs, but they were known for their wood engravings. Other books and pamphlets printed with wood engravings include medical texts, political pamphlets, and assorted other works. Prints include, for example, *Emancipation*, by Thomas Nast, printed by King & Baird and published by S. Bott of Philadelphia c. 1865 (see PGA - King & Baird--Emancipation (C size) [P&P] at the Library of Congress Prints and Photographs Division, Washington D.C.) and political envelopes (see the John A. McAllister Collection at the Library Company of Philadelphia.)

investigation of the treatment of Confederate POWs in Union camps soon after first passing the motion to investigate abuses of Union POWs in Confederate camps. As a result, the Appendix also contains testimony from Confederate soldiers held at three Union prison camps, as well medical personnel treating Confederate soldiers in three Union hospitals. The appendices are slightly longer than the Report, at 128 pages. A twenty-six page supplementary section follows the first appendix, and deals with emerging information on the Andersonville POW camp, which remains to this day one of the most controversial prison camps of the Civil War.

The structure of both King & Baird editions conforms to an official report, although there are some idiosyncratic elements that hint at the emotional appeal contained within the narrative and accompanying testimony. Most obviously, there is an appeal to religion: printed directly across from the list of commission members is a verse, paraphrased from Matthew 42:45.<sup>98</sup>

King & Baird published this report in September of 1864, and was paid \$3,000 by the Sanitary Commission for the undertaking.<sup>99</sup> Since these are the only two editions where the publishers accepted remuneration for their printing of *The Narrative*, I conclude that these two versions are the closest to the original intentions of the Sanitary Commission and the six commissioners appointed to undertake this investigation.

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<sup>98</sup> From *The Narrative*: “For I was an hungred, and ye gave me no meat; I was thirsty, and ye gave me no drink; I was a stranger, and ye took me not in; naked, and ye clothed me not; sick, and in prison, and ye visited me not. Lord, when saw we thee an hungred, or athirst, or a stranger, or naked, or sick, or in prison, and did not minister unto thee? Verily I saw unto you, inasmuch as ye did it not to one of the least of these, ye did it not to me.”

From *The King James Bible*, Matthew 42:45: “For I was hungred, and ye gave me not meat: I was thirsty, and you gave me no drink: I was a stranger, and ye took me not in: naked, and ye clothed me not: sick, and in prison, and ye visited me not. Then shall they also answer him, saying, Lord, when saw we thee an hungred, or athirst, or a stranger, or naked, or sick, or in prison, and did not minister unto thee? Then he shall answer them, saying, verily I say until you, Inasmuch as ye did it not to one of the least of these, ye did it not to me.”

<sup>99</sup> The United States Sanitary Commission, “Nineteenth Session,” from *The Minutes of the United States Sanitary Commission: 1861-1864*, (Washington[?]: 1867), 207.

### *Littell's Living Age*

The office of *Littell's Living Age*, located in Boston, published a version containing the complete text but printed on fewer pages than the King & Baird version of the *Narrative*, in November 1864. While it contains fewer pages, the edition is roughly the same size as the King & Baird editions of *The Narrative*, at 22 x 14.5 cm. This edition was released on November 12, 1864, very shortly after the presidential election resulting in the re-election of Abraham Lincoln. Unlike King & Baird, the office of *Littell's Living Age* was not a standard publishing house. Instead, *Littell's Living Age* was a general interest periodical that reprinted literature from British and European magazines. Accustomed to republishing material, *The Narrative* was, nonetheless, an anomaly in their publishing policies.

There are eighty-seven numbered pages and ninety-six pages in total, which follow the same structure of the King & Baird editions, however, the wood engravings are printed at the end of the volume on the ten pages beginning on page 87. Unlike the King & Baird edition, the page announcing the reproductions of the photographs is provided with the correct page number, although the rest of the pages are unpaginated. Like the King & Baird editions, the four reproductions are prefaced with nearly identical text<sup>100</sup> and are printed facing each other in two spreads with blank pages included between each spread<sup>101</sup> (Figures 9 - 12). They are in the same sequence as the K & B [Paperbound] *Narrative*, and all appear to be printed from the same woodblock. The only

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<sup>100</sup> All that is missing from the *Littell Narrative* is punctuation: a period at the end of "United States General Hospital, Division No[.] 1" and another period completing the sentence.

<sup>101</sup> At this time it is not known whether or not these images were printed on a different paper stock than the rest of the volume.

major difference between the reproductions in Littell's *Narrative* and those in the K & B [Paperbound] *Narrative* is the omission of the light yellow border and background.

It is unsurprising that Littell's *Living Age* would be interested in reusing the King & Baird woodblocks. As *Littell's Living Age* was not an illustrated magazine, it is unlikely that its publishers would have access to the skilled craftsmen required for such work. The internal title page prefacing the photographs, however, is consistent with the rest of the type in the *Littell Narrative* and not the K & B [Clothbound] and [Paperbound] *Narrative*, so it is likely that the offices of Littell's *Living Age* used only the engravings from King & Baird.

The editors of *Littell's Living Age* priced this book at 20 cents a copy, only five cents less than the K & B [Paperbound] *Narrative*, but offered package deals for \$15 for 100 and \$125 for 1000 copies. These prices might partially explain the book's popularity: the editors claim that orders for the book came in at a rate of 1000 per day. The publishers intended to create a "very large and very cheap" edition of *The Narrative*, and did so in concert with the members of the Sanitary Commission. This popularity was not limited to the United States: in early 1865, the office of Littell's *Living Age* noted that they were intending to print close to 50,000 more editions of the *Littell Narrative*, and with an additional 30,000 copies intended for Great Britain.<sup>102</sup>

In advertisements printed in *Littell's Living Age*, the publishers state that "a knowledge of the facts so calmly and clearly stated herein, is indispensable to every man who wishes to form a true opinion of the Rebels and the Rebellion. It contains photographs from the yet living forms of some of the victims, showing the effects of

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<sup>102</sup> "Destroying of Prisoners," *Littell's Living Age*, 84, No. 1082 (February 25, 1865): 382.

starvation.”<sup>103</sup> This advertisement is misleading in that the *Littell Narrative* contains engravings taken from photographs, and not photographs.<sup>104</sup> While mentioning the photographs might reflect the editors’ belief of their evidential and emotional power, it might also be a reflection on the competitive market for books and the public’s desire for illustrated material. It could also be a reflection of the public’s understanding or acceptance of engravings as photographs.

There are considerably fewer pages in this version, although it contains all of the content from the two King & Baird editions. To compensate for the fewer pages, *Littell’s Living Age* printed their *Narrative* with smaller text, closely arranged in two columns a page. This condensed text is not always successful: at least one footnote references a page number from the King & Baird edition, and not the *Littell Narrative*.<sup>105</sup> Not only does it contain all of the original text, it also includes additional information about the publisher and the *Littell’s Living Age* periodical, as well as additional proselytizing commentary inserted into the report.

While the text in the King & Baird edition is closer in tone to an official report, the additional text in the *Littell’s Narrative* is more explicitly political. Appending the official report is a note addressed to the readers of the *Living Age*. This note links the practice of slavery to the alleged abuses against Union POWs, stating that Confederates “believe they have a Divine right to do as they please, not only to their slaves, but to all mankind who differ from them. These effects have legitimately flowed from Slavery.

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<sup>103</sup> “New Books Published at the Office of the *Living Age*,” *Littell’s Living Age*, 83, No. 1074 (December 24, 1864): 673.

<sup>104</sup> This is not the first advertisement to make such claims. An earlier advertisement, repeated for several weeks, claimed, that the book contained “photographs of the starved prisoners,” see “New Books Published at the Office of the *Living Age*,” *Littell’s Living Age*, 83, No. 1069 (November 26, 1864): 433.

<sup>105</sup> See *Narrative of Privations and Sufferings of United States Officers & Soldiers While Prisoners of War in the Hands of the Confederate Authorities: Being the Report of a Commission of Inquiry Appointed by the U. S. Sanitary Commission*, (Boston: *Littell’s Living Age*, 1864): 13.



You must remove the cause, if you wish to have peace and union.”<sup>106</sup> In the King & Baird edition, the authors were more circumspect about the issue of slavery, stating briefly in the narrative section of the report:

Perhaps the social theory, already so widely accepted, may yet be fully established, which attributes the alienation of the Southern people to a simple difference of feeling on a question of humanity. A too positive denial of humanity to another race, and a too positive contempt for a poor class of their own race, have fostered those perverted principles, which would undermine a government filled with a more generous idea, and excite a hatred toward the people who would uphold it.<sup>107</sup>

These notes propose, with varying degrees of openness, a total abolition of slavery.<sup>108</sup>

This ultimately underscores the pro-war sentiments of the texts, as abolitionist politics were far more popular in pro-war quarters.<sup>109</sup>

Other supplementary texts augment the narrative and discuss the photographs. In particular, a note with the heading “Office of Littell’s Living Age, Boston” immediately precedes the plates, directing the reader to “lift the next leaf, and see some few proofs of the enormous wickedness.”<sup>110</sup> Going further, it addresses the publishers’ open support for Lincoln’s administration and once again addresses the issue of slavery and their disapproval of that institution and defends their choice to print this material.

The publisher likely felt compelled to defend its right to make this material available to the public. Also in November of 1864, *Littell’s Living Age*, the periodical, published the “Report” section of *The Narrative* in its first issue of that month. This issue appeared on the fifth of November, three days before the 1864 presidential election.

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<sup>106</sup> Ibid, 32.

<sup>107</sup> K & B [Clothbound and Paperbound] *Narratives*, 97.

<sup>108</sup> The Emancipation Declaration, which consisted of two separate pieces of law enacted separately in 1862 and 1863, only abolished slavery in the Confederate states and the Union-occupied South. Instead, slavery was finally abolished under the Thirteenth Amendment to the Constitution (December 1865), which made slavery illegal throughout the United States.

<sup>109</sup> Tap, “Amateurs at War,” 26.

<sup>110</sup> Littell’s *Narrative*, 86.

Recognizing that the material deviated from their usual literary fare, the editors printed the text in addition to their ordinary issue, despite the length of the extract. In spite of its claim that the appendix was too long to print in the November 5 issue, the following week the editors provided it separately, and at no extra charge to the subscriber. Neither section contained the images.

The note contained in the 96-page book defended the publishers against criticism for Littell's *Living Age*'s support of abolitionist politics, suggesting that some subscribers to *Littell's Living Age* were offended by its partisanship and support for pro-war factions, possibly reflecting some fall-out from the earlier publication of this material within the pages of the regular editions of *Littell's Living Age*. Regardless, the office of Littell's *Living Age* still chose to print a large, cheaper edition of *The Narrative*, separately from its ordinary weekly journal.

*Extract (London)*

*Extract from a Narrative of Privations and Sufferings of United States Officers & Soldiers While Prisoners of War in the Hands of the Confederate Authorities: Being the Report of a Commission of Inquiry Appointed by the U. S. Sanitary Commission* was published by A.W. Bennett of London, England, in late February 1865.<sup>111</sup> This smaller pamphlet measures only 15 centimetres high compared to the King & Baird and Littell *Narratives*, which were all roughly 22 cm in height, and contains only 65 pages. The text is structured as an account of the Commission, and includes verbatim excerpts of relevant testimony from Union soldiers and officers. There is no price listed.

This text directly addresses the use of photographs. Like the K & B [Clothbound and Paperbound] *Narrative* and Littell's *Narrative*, the pamphlet includes an internal title page preceding the four photographs that describes them as copies of photographs held by the Sanitary Commission, and structures the section of photographs in the same manner as the aforementioned publications. The pages containing the photographs are unpaginated, although the photographs are consecutively numbered and captioned (Figures 13 - 16).

The pamphlet contains four tipped-in albumen prints of the wood engravings used in the K & B [Paperbound] *Narrative* and Littell's *Narrative* versions. Regarding the emotional reaction to the photographs of engravings, the author of *The Extract* states:

The photographs of these diseased and emaciated men, since so widely circulated, painful as they are, do not, in many respects, adequately represent the sufferers as

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<sup>111</sup> Date inferred from the British Library's Copyright Receipt Office's acquisition of this material on February 23, 1865.

they then appeared. The best picture cannot convey the reality, nor create that startling and sickening sensation which is felt as the sight of a human skeleton.<sup>112</sup>

This quotation highlights an elision unique to this particular publication. Unlike the three published versions of *The Narrative*,<sup>113</sup> which scrupulously identify the photographs as either photographs, or reproductions of photographs, *The Extract* describes the photographs as “accurate copies” in the page preceding the photographs of the wood engravings and as “photographs” in the text (as above) and in the captions underneath each wood engraving, all of which read “Photograph of a Union Soldier after his Return from Imprisonment at Belle Isle.”<sup>114</sup>

While the albumen prints in *The Extract* are photographs, they are in many ways a hybrid object somewhere between the original albumen prints from the K & B [Clothbound] *Narrative* and the wood engravings from the K & B [Paperbound] and Littell’s *Narratives*. They are simultaneously images of emaciated POWs, and photographic reproductions of a wood engraving taken from a photograph of emaciated POWs—they are not, however, photographs of emaciated POWs. Moreover, the fact that they are photographic prints seems relatively immaterial: the use of photographs seems to be more about the reproducibility of the imagery rather than the intrinsic qualities of photography (either its truthfulness, mechanical accuracy, novelty, or other attributes.)

What is perhaps the most evocative element of the preceding quotation is the assumption the authors have that these images will have the power to move their readers. While the publishers of Littell’s *Narrative* emphasize the importance of seeing “some

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<sup>112</sup> *Extract from a Narrative of Privations and Sufferings of United States Officers & Soldiers While Prisoners of War in the Hands of the Confederate Authorities: Being the Report of a Commission of Inquiry Appointed by the U. S. Sanitary Commission* (London: A.W. Bennett, 1865): 13.

<sup>113</sup> This is true only of the text contained in the published versions of *The Narrative*, and not in advertisements. See page 43 of this text.

<sup>114</sup> *The Extract*, 17-20.

few proofs” of the abuse of POWs, the authors of *The Extract* emphasize the emotional quality and power of these photographs of wood engravings. While the inclusion of these photographs in all of these texts is as much about proving the abuse as it is about seeing and experiencing it, engaging the subjectivity of the reader as well as her or his intellect, it is only this publication that directly states this purpose.

There was reason to be so persuasive in this particular text—England was officially neutral in the war and was described as being in a “querulous and puzzled state of mind. Between questions of neutrality...the government is fidgety, and, more cautious of giving offence, it contents itself with giving virtuous, motherly advice.”<sup>115</sup> While there was extensive popular support for Lincoln,<sup>116</sup> and England was unlikely to support the Confederate government as it became more apparent that the Union Army would exact a victory, gaining the support of the English public was still an important goal. As stated previously, Littell’s *Living Age* received a sum of money to send 30,000 copies of the *Littell Narrative* to Great Britain<sup>117</sup> shortly after the Copyrights Receipts Office received this pamphlet in February of 1865. While there is no evidence that these two publications were connected, the demand for these publications appears to be significant.

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<sup>115</sup> This quotation is taken from the introduction to the *Record of the Metropolitan State Fair*. While it is written in 1867, several years after the end of the war, the statement is prefaced with an admonition for the reader to “Look back over the daily papers about the end of March, 1864.” This statement is given to immerse the reader in order to more fully recreate the experience of the Sanitary Fair three years earlier. See *A Record of the Metropolitan Fair in Aid of the United States Sanitary Commission*, (New York: Hurd and Houghton, 1867): 15.

<sup>116</sup> Kent, “War Cartooned,” 154.

<sup>117</sup> “Circular Letter from the Rev. Dr. Bellows, President of the Commission,” *Littell’s Living Age*, 84, No. 1081, (February 25, 1864): 382.

## Chapter 5: Analyses of the Images

Just as there was a shift in photographic technology, and the ways in which photography was disseminated, there was also a shift in medical and clinical imagery during this period. Photography, after its invention in 1839, gradually became an important tool in depicting the diseased body. Its “instrumental objectivity”<sup>118</sup> was one element of photography that seemed uniquely suited to depicting medical specimens, although it is important to note that photographs often required additional diagrams, retouching, or added colour in order to visually isolate the condition and make it legible to the viewer.<sup>119</sup> Medical drawings or engravings used a visual code that predated medical photography, and while photography was quickly used in medical practice, there still remained debate lasting into the 1890s over the comparative intelligibility of medical photographs and medical illustration.<sup>120</sup>

However, there were considerable benefits in using photography as a clinical tool in Civil War medical practice. These were manifold: Civil War photographs of clinical subjects were used for medical research, evidence for disability and pension claims, requests for information from specialists far removed from the patient and their attending physician, personal mementoes for both doctors and patients, historical records, or as scraps of available paper on which to make notes on treatment options and outcomes.<sup>121</sup> Photography was unevenly adopted during the Civil War, with some practitioners, such

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<sup>118</sup> Kemp, “A Perfect and Faithful Record,” 120.

<sup>119</sup> Ibid, 122.

<sup>120</sup> Ibid, 125.

<sup>121</sup> Connor and Rhode, “Shooting Soldiers.”

as Dr. Reed Bontescu<sup>122</sup> and others, using it more extensively when compared to their colleagues.

At the Annapolis General Hospital, Dr. Vanderkiefte could use the services of a medical illustrator to record his particularly difficult cases. There was a paid artist at that hospital, E. Stauch, whose services Vanderkiefte required on at least one occasion to illustrate a case of hospital gangrene.<sup>123</sup> However, it was Dr. Ellerslie Wallace,<sup>124</sup> a physician and Sanitary Commission member, and not Dr. Vanderkiefte, who suggested the importance of photographing the condition of soldiers at the time of their return to the North. While the failure to create a record of their condition at the time of their arrival might be considered an oversight in Vanderkiefte's treatment of these men, it might also indicate that he believed that these cases would not receive any clinical benefit from the creation of a visual record.

When analyzing the images themselves, it is apparent that they borrow from the visual vocabulary established by medical imaging as well as studio portraiture. Several authors have recently noted the shared visual vocabulary of medical photography and portraiture.<sup>125</sup> Certainly, these images share many similarities with photographic portraiture as it was practiced in the 1860s, particularly in the way that the figures are posed and the setting in which they are photographed.

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<sup>122</sup> Burns, "Civil War Medical Photography," 1462.

<sup>123</sup> Frank R. Freeman, *Gangrene and Glory: Medical Care during the American Civil War*, (Urbana and Chicago: University of Illinois Press, 2001): 49-50.

<sup>124</sup> Ellerslie Wallace was a notable surgeon as well as a Sanitary Commission member during the Civil War, and it was his son and not he who wrote *The Amateur Photographer: A Manual of Photographic Manipulation Intended Especially for Beginners and Amateurs*. (Philadelphia: Porter & Coates, 1880). This important manual for amateur photographers was reprinted in at least five editions. The younger Wallace was also a physician, and authored an important article on medical photography. See "Photography in Medicine," *The Journal of the American Medical Association*, 28, No. 17 (1897): 775-776.

<sup>125</sup> For a more detailed discussion, see Connor and Rhode, "Shooting Soldiers," and O'Connor, "Camera Medica," 235-237.

Backdrops were one important element of studio photography as practised in the second half of the 19<sup>th</sup> century. Absent in these photographs is a studio backdrop, but instead a blanket has been draped over a chair and a table or bed in order to focus attention more clearly on the “articulated skeletons”<sup>126</sup> of the POWs. In studio portraiture, backdrops provide an attractive and often opulent background for the sitter, raising the sitter’s social level to depict them in ways they wished to present themselves. The decorative function of the draped blanket in these photographs of POWs seems minimal, however, and it seems likely that it was done to focus attention on the figures shown and not to augment any desirable social, cultural, or economic characteristics.

This is in keeping with the most important difference between medical photography and studio portraiture: in medical photography, the sitter represents a physical abnormality, a condition, or a disease, whereas in studio portraiture, the subject is individualized and tied to a unique identity. This personal identity was shaped by societal values, and was reinforced by introducing modes of representation from painting into the photographic studio. Like medical photography, commercial studio photography used these conventions to legitimize and refine photographic practices. These practices introduced a different kind of legibility—cultural legibility. By examining how these photographs used and subverted these visual codes from painting and portraiture, it is possible to get a better sense of how these images utilized portraiture to encourage the viewer to recognize the soldiers as individuals. By emphasizing the individuality of the soldiers, the makers of the photographs could engage the viewer’s subjectivity, even while highlighting the soldier’s medical conditions.

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<sup>126</sup> Littell’s *Narrative*, 51.



Studio backdrops and props were tools available to the photographer. In studio portraiture, they provided the sitter with a set of values transmitted through visual cues such as books, ornate furniture, or a stately scene painted on oilcloth. Medical photography normally dispenses with these props and backgrounds, removing these distractions so as not to imbue the sitter with a set of implied emotional and intellectual characteristics; instead, the absence of these trappings is a visual cue that highlights the patient as object and not person, and in its absence of ornamentation, transmits the evidentiary intention of these images—the visual rhetoric of “truthfulness,” reality unadorned. The photographs themselves, in the King & Baird [Clothbound] *Narrative*, are not decorated with gilt borders or any other ornamentation; there is some retouching evident, but the retouching fixes deficiencies in the negative, and to conceal the pubic area of one of the soldiers. This is the only photograph that introduces a prop, a book, and it as well is used for the same concealing function (Figure 1). Likewise, the engravings fix deficiencies in the original photograph, bringing details into focus and further concealing the aforementioned soldier’s state of undress (Figure 5). In the third wood engraving in the K & B [Paperbound] and Littell’s *Narrative* (Figures 7 and 11) the ribcages of the soldier are accentuated, heightening the appearance of his condition. While retouching was used extensively in commercial portraiture, especially with the advent of wet collodion negatives, it was almost universally done to fix problems in the negatives, and blemishes and wrinkles in the faces of the sitters—to erase abnormality and not to heighten it. In this case, the engravers are acting in ways similar to photograph retouchers, but with the quixotic aim of emphasizing the soldier’s disabilities.

However, there is some ornamentation present in the King & Baird [Paperbound] *Narrative*. The engravings are printed directly onto a light yellow rectangle printed in ink onto the paper (Figures 5 - 8). This background serves at least two functions: it frames the image, and provides colour in the highlight areas of the images. This light yellow brings a warm glow to the figures, giving a sense of life and depth that is missing in the Littell *Narrative*, (Figures 9 -12) which does not utilize this effect.

While some of the images are portraits of individual soldiers, two contain POWs being treated by medical personnel. One image from the King & Baird *Narratives*, Littell's *Narrative*, and *The Extract* (Figures 2, 6, 10, and 15), and the second photograph reproduced in *Harper's Weekly* (Figure 17 [right image]) feature a subject undergoing some form of treatment, by Dr. Vanderkiefte and two others in the first four images, and by Dr. Vanderkiefte alone in the final. Stanley Burns has noted that it is uncommon to see physicians posing with their patients before the advent of antisepsis later in the nineteenth century.<sup>127</sup> While there are a number of medical photographs from the Civil War that do show physicians, nurses, and other medical workers posing with patients, it is more often to demonstrate new medical techniques for combat situations or for treating war wounds.<sup>128</sup> While there are some well-known exceptions to this generalization, most Civil War medical photographs featuring medical workers were didactic images used to

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<sup>127</sup> The first known photograph of a physician examining a patient at bedside was a daguerreotype taken in 1849, ten years after the invention of photography. See Witkin and Burns, *Masterpieces*, n.p. [Notes on Plate 3]; Burns, *A Morning's Work*, n.p. [Notes on Plate 1]

<sup>128</sup> This lack of photographs of doctors and nurses with their patients can also be explained by the photographic limitations of the period. Just as there could be no photographs of battle scenes because of the technical specificities of the wet collodion negative, photographing medical treatment as it occurred would be too daunting a task. While physicians did not often include themselves in these photographs, there are extant prints of doctors and nurses with their patients. A notable example is Dr. Reed Bontecou, who commissioned posed pre-, post-, and intraoperative photographs, although he is the only known physician to create these types of records of operations. See Burns, *A Morning's Work*, n.p. [Notes on Plate 17]. This drive to photograph new types of treatments, and not routine clinical treatments, is also consistent with larger trends in photography. See Burns, *A Morning's Work*, n.p. [Notes on Plates 9, 12, 36] and Witkin and Burns, *Masterpieces*, n.p. [Notes on Plates 6, 7, 23].

demonstrate new or complicated techniques, and not to demonstrate either a medical specimen or a new disease.

This photograph of a group of figures treating a soldier (Figure 2) and its translation to a wood engraving (Figures 6, 10, and 15) illustrates one challenge that faces engravers of medical photographs and sketches. Like almost all photographs, the source photograph contains significant visual information extraneous to the medical subject, including details from the chair upon which Dr. Vanderkiefte is seated, or the stripe on the blanket covering the soldier. The photograph of a seated soldier, (Figure 4) also has additional details transcribed from the photograph to the reproductions (Figures 8, 12, and 13) published in the various editions of *The Narrative*, and missing in *Harper's Weekly* and *Leslie's Illustrated* (Figures 17 and 18 [second row, right image]) that add little to the meaning of the image.

Martin Kemp, when discussing the technical choices that engravers made in translating a photograph to a drawn medical illustration, asks “are those parts of the scene caught by the lens whose aspects are medically redundant to be excised or masked out, or may they be included with impunity, on the assumption that they have no effect on our understanding of the intended content of the image?”<sup>129</sup> The chair in the fourth photograph (Figure 4), and the table behind the soldier in the first photograph (Figure 1), are aspects of the image that are not necessary to understanding the intended medical or clinical message, but they are nonetheless translated from photograph into wood engraving for all versions of *The Narrative*. These images are not reproduced in *Harper's Weekly* or *Leslie's Illustrated*. While *Leslie's Illustrated* only reproduced photographs of

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<sup>129</sup> Kemp, “A Perfect and Faithful Record,” 123.

soldiers facing the camera, it is possible that Figure 4 was too complicated a composition for *Harper's Weekly*.

The reproductions in King & Baird [Paperbound] and Littell's *Narratives* are very faithful to the original photographs. The major dissonance between the two occurs in the reproduction of the second photograph, where the engraver has brought the face, shoulders, and feet of the soldier into focus, as well as the lower part of the blanket, fixing technical deficiencies with the original photograph, and making the soldier appear more distinct and individualized (compare Figures 2 and 5). The camera captures all the visual information present in the scene before it, but the engravers have the choice about what to include within the frame of the image they are creating. The engravers' fidelity to the photograph, including extraneous information that adds nothing to the intended subject of the photograph, is not typical of clinical or medical illustration, where the focus is strictly on the subject. It is a characteristic, however, of documentary photography, a tradition where the mechanical nature of photography is a part of an aesthetic code of truth without supposed mediation. While some of the changes have been made because the out-of-focus parts of the soldier and blanket would be an incomprehensible visual effect in a wood engraving, and irreproducible in line, other elements have been faithfully transcribed. While the documentary aesthetic emerges later than these pictures, it is possible that the engravers made a conscious decision to include this extraneous visual information not to enhance the viewer's understanding of the subject, but to illustrate to the viewer the mechanical, and photographic, nature of the source of these reproductions. While this commitment to a faithful transcription falls short of a total translation of photographic flaws into the final wood engraving, this

impulse does illustrate that the impulse to improve, and the impulse to transcribe, coexisted.

This is not true of the images in *Harper's Weekly* and *Leslie's Illustrated*. In both periodicals, the engravers chose to omit most of the extraneous or superfluous background details, isolating the figures in a sketch-like manner as recently defined by Barnhurst and Nerone, as a style using “irregular shading, deep shadow as from ink washes, and the position rather than the edges of forms...containing signs of the human hand, such as smudging and scribbling.” Nerone and Barnhurst note that there was a representative style for reproducing photographs in this period that employed a limited range of grey tones, with regular shading, all done in a clean and mechanical style.<sup>130</sup> In addition, this style also utilized the rectangular frame of the photograph, which is used and emphasized in the K & B [Paperbound] and Littell's *Narratives*, and omitted in *Harper's Weekly* and *Leslie's Illustrated*. The aesthetic of the engravings used in the two editions of *The Narrative* was far more photographic, whereas *Harper's Weekly* and *Leslie's Illustrated* both embrace an aesthetic that highlights the handwork of the engraver.

The second photograph (Figure 2) is also reproduced as the seventh figure in *Leslie's Illustrated* (Figure 18 [lower row, middle image]), where the image is modified to pull the blanket under the figure over the soldier's groin, replacing the book that inadequately covers the area in the original photograph. The extant print in the King & Baird [Clothbound] *Narrative* required retouching on the print to completely mask the area. This is not the only time that clinical photographs from the Civil War would have been retouched to account for the sensibilities of an intended audience: in 1876, for

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<sup>130</sup> Barnhurst and Nerone, “Civic Picturing vs. Realist Photojournalism,” 65.

example, medical photographs of combat wounds were shown at a Centennial Exhibition in Philadelphia. Negatives depicting male nudes were retouched with artificial fig leaves so that the photographs would not offend the audience.<sup>131</sup> These interventions suggest that the two publications were geared towards a readership that was less comfortable with nudity than most physicians, and the presence of artfully draped blankets, shirts, and books reflects the fact that these photographs were never intended to serve only a clinical function.

The degree to which these images seem to borrow from a clinical aesthetic varies. The images in *Harper's Weekly* and *Leslie's Illustrated* look far less like medical or clinical images than the source photographs or the reproductions in the King & Baird [Paperbound] and Littell's *Narratives*. More specifically, those in the periodicals appear less photographic than those in the aforementioned *Narratives*. They do not look either mechanical or unmediated, but instead are shaped by their maker's editorial decisions and bear the marks of their maker's hands via dramatic chiaroscuro, ink washes, and scribbling in the margins.

For a viewer in 1864, however, this artistic mediation would not have been a conceptual barrier to recognizing these images as news reportage and as fact. While photography would later replace illustration in visual reportage,<sup>132</sup> it had not yet come to the point where illustration and artistry were considered incompatible with journalistic integrity. Instead, the aesthetics of the handmade illustration still prevail in these and other images. While these images are far more evidentiary than, for example, Thomas

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<sup>131</sup> Connor and Rhode, "Shooting Soldiers."

<sup>132</sup> Barnhurst and Nerone, "Civic Picturing vs. Realist Photojournalism," 78.

Nast's rendition of Belle Isle prison in December of 1863 (Figure 19),<sup>133</sup> they were all presented as uniformly honest, true, and representative of what was happening in the war. The authors present Nast's image by writing, "We illustrate...the condition of our poor fellows who are so unfortunate as to be prisoners of the rebels at Richmond Virginia."<sup>134</sup> Eyewitness testimony is provided to "explain our picture," in much the same way that the Sanitary Commission testimony explained the condition of the Union POWs pictured in the periodical. *Harper's Weekly* printed a mixture of images of POWs taken from sketches as well as photographs well into 1865, culminating with engravings taken from photographs of Union POWs, one year after the publication of the Sanitary Commission's, on June 17, 1865 (Figure 20).<sup>135</sup> This material also included illustrations based on imagined or allegorical situations.<sup>136</sup> *Leslie's Illustrated's* coverage was similar.

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<sup>133</sup> Thomas Nast, [The Prisons at Richmond—Union Troops Prisoners at Belle Isle,] [illustration] in *Harper's Weekly*, 7, No. 362 (December 5, 1863): 781. See also "Interior View of Libby Prison," illustration, in *Harper's Weekly*, 7, No. 355 (October 17, 1863): 669-670 for an early illustration of Confederate POW camps.

<sup>134</sup> "Union Prisoners at Richmond." *Harper's Weekly*, 7, No. 362 (December 5, 1863): 779.

<sup>135</sup> The author of the accompanying article selected these images along a theme. Noting that there was a plethora of images of returned POWs that showed signs of starvation and abuse, he chose to show only images of returned POWs with infected or amputated feet. The wood engravings were described as "the exact facsimiles of photographs," and they were presented as proof that "these cruelties were not the result of accident but a deliberate purpose." Like the photographs examined in this thesis, Harper and Brothers published these engravings in an article and a book-length account of rebel cruelties. Unlike the photographs in this thesis, however, it is possible that they were taken from a series of stereoviews created by Mathew Brady, and not from CDVs created by unknown photographers. See "Rebel Cruelties," [with illustrations from photographs] *Harper's Weekly*, 9, No. 442, (June 17, 1865): 379-380 and Allen O. Abbott, *Prison life in the South: at Richmond, Macon, Savannah, Charleston, Columbia, Charlotte, Raleigh, Goldsborough, and Andersonville, during the years 1864 and 1865*, (New York: Harper and Brothers Publishing, 1865); Burns, *Masterpieces*, n.p. [Notes on Plate 25].

<sup>136</sup> See "Quarters of the Union Officers Exposed to Federal Fire in Charleston," [illustration from sketch] *Harper's Weekly*, 8, No. 400 (August 27, 1864): 549; Thomas Nast, "The Blessings of Victory [allegorical illustration] *Harper's Weekly*, 8, No. 404 (September 24, 1864): 609; William Waud, "Serving Out Rations to Our Exchanged Prisoners on Board the 'New York,'" and "Thank God! Reception of our Exchanged Prisoners on Board the Eliza Hancox," [illustrations from sketches] *Harper's Weekly*, 8, No. 415, (December 10, 1864): 788, 798; "Exterior View of the Prison-Pen at Millen, Georgia," and "Interior View of the Prison-Pen at Millen, Georgia," [illustrations, exterior possibly from photograph, interior from sketch] *Harper's Weekly*, 8, No. 419, (January 7, 1865): 9; William Waud, "Our Released Prisoners of War at Charleston, S.C., Exchanging Their Rags for New Clothing," and "The Sanitary Commission Dispensing Tobacco to our Released Prisoners at Charleston, S.C." [illustrations from sketches] *Harper's Weekly*, 9, No. 420, (January 14, 1865): 29; F. Millward, "Jail. Workhouse-Military Prisons, Charleston, South

While artistic interpretation was compatible with truth in visual depictions of the war in the illustrated press at this time, there were some readers who were sceptical of the images they were seeing. In the spring of 1864, the editors of *Leslie's Illustrated* responded to criticism from the New York Historical Society, who had castigated *Leslie's Illustrated* and other illustrated magazines by claiming that “the illustrated newspapers are full of sketches purporting to be pictures of important scenes, but the testimony of parties engaged shows that these representations, when they are not taken from photographs, are not always reliable.”<sup>137</sup> Despite this criticism, however, there was no shift towards using photographs exclusively, nor did *Leslie's Illustrated* cease to advertise the expertise of their sketch artists or the dangers inherent in their work. Moreover, the editors continued to print many images without describing their origins, photographic or otherwise, or their makers. During a war as divisive as the Civil War, it is perhaps inevitable that all sources of visual material were suspect—whether from photograph or from eyewitness sketch.

This artfulness in *Harper's Weekly* and *Leslie's Illustrated* ensured that the images of the POWs did not appear entirely as medical photographs, but borrowed from the conventions of photographic studio portraiture. These engravings shared similarities both in their style and in their layout to the portraits of Generals Warren and Wright that were published the week prior (Figure 21),<sup>138</sup> and of Governor Andrew Johnson and

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Carolina,” [illustration from sketch] *Harper's Weekly*, 9, No. 425 (February 18, 1865):108; “Home Again – The Story of a Life in Rebel Prison,” [illustration from imagination] *Harper's Weekly*, 9, No. 426, (February 25, 1865): 120-121; G.W. Simmons, “Camp Ford, Texas,” *Harper's Weekly*, 9, No. 427, (March 4, 1865): 132; “Scenes in South Carolina, the Morning After the Fire,” [Illustrations from sketches] *Harper's Weekly*, 9, No. 431, (April 1, 1865): 200-201.

<sup>137</sup> Quoted in “Frank Leslie's Artists in the War,” *Frank Leslie's Illustrated Newspaper*, 18, No. 451, (May 21, 1864): 130.

<sup>138</sup> “General Gouverneur K. Warren” and “General Horatio Gates Wright,” [illustrations] *Harper's Weekly*, 8, No. 389 (June 11, 1864): 369. Both portraits are reproductions of photographs.



Joshua R. Giddings the week following (Figure 22).<sup>139</sup> All of these portraits, taken from photographs, were engraved sketchily, with dramatic shadowing and without a clearly defined border.

*Harper's Weekly* and *Leslie's Illustrated* treated the images of POWs more like portraits than in the King & Baird and Littell's *Narratives* and *The Extract*. The eradication of external information, and the decorative flourishes, made these less clinical documents and more artistic images; indeed, the naming of the soldiers in *Leslie's Illustrated* returned further specificity to the soldiers. However, there was a limit to how completely these images can be transformed into portraits.

While the reproductions of photographs of Union POWs did bear some resemblance to the formal portraits of Warren, Wright, Johnson, and Giddings, there were important differences. Those four portraits were all busts, and the soldiers' full figures were shown in both of the engravings in *Harper's Weekly* and two in *Leslie's Illustrated*. The first of the *Harper's Weekly* images was taken from the same photograph as the fifth of the figures in *Frank Leslie's* (Compare Figures 3, 17 [right images], and 18 [middle row, right image]). The rest of the figures in *Leslie's Illustrated* were shown either from the knees or the waist up. All of the bodies in both periodicals were laid bare to the viewer, and all were presented directly facing the camera.

The emphasis on the full, bare, bodies of the soldiers, and in the way that they faced the camera, indicated that these were not formal portraits. While the lack of background has already been discussed, the way in which the figures were posed must also be taken into account. Marcus Aurelius Root, a prominent American portraitist,

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<sup>139</sup> "Governor Andrew Johnson, of Tennessee" and "The Late Joshua R. Giddings" [illustrations] *Harper's Weekly*, 8, No. 391 (June 25, 1864): 402. Both portraits are reproductions of photographs.

advised in 1864 that “the [portrait] should not embrace much over half the length of the body,”<sup>140</sup> a feat that would be inadvisable when trying to depict a clinical subject for medical practitioners who were interested in the physical manifestation of disease and disorder on the body. While physiognomists believed that the character could be read in the face of the sitter, the nineteenth century’s positivist construction of disease suggested that it manifested itself visually on the body.<sup>141</sup> By focusing not on the faces of the soldiers, but on their bodies, the photographer had chosen to depict their hunger and disease, and not their personalities. While Root’s admonitions were clear, it should be noted, however, that many commercial portraits did depict a full-length subject.

In portraiture, the emphasis was on the face and not the body. Root wrote “the face is to a man what the dial is to a clock, or a table of contents to a book, viz., the index of the soul.”<sup>142</sup> On posing the figure, Root instructed the photographer that “the eyes should be directed a little farther to the left or right than the face, and if a front view be taken, to some object above or near the camera, in a nearly front direction of the face...but rarely toward the lens or tube, as the face would thus take on a *stare* or a dissatisfied or dolorous look.”<sup>143</sup> Two of the photographs (Figures 2 and 3) and wood engravings from *The Narrative* (Figures 5, 6, 9, 10, 15, and 16) presented a soldier looking directly at the camera, one of the *Harper’s Weekly* engravings (Figure 17 [right image]), and all but one of the eight engraved figures in *Leslie’s Illustrated*, faced the camera directly (Figure 18).

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<sup>140</sup> Marcus Aurelius Root, *The Camera and the Pencil or the Heliographic Art: Its Theory and Practice in all its Various Branches*, (Philadelphia: M.A. Root, J. B. Lippincott & Co., and D. Appleton & Co., 1864): 110.

<sup>141</sup> The idea that disease and disorder manifested themselves externally led to the idea that one could read not only disease symptoms on the body, but also that there were disease “types” in much the same way that there were criminal “types.” See Erin O’Connor, “Camera Medica,” 235.

<sup>142</sup> Root, *The Camera and the Pencil*, 85.

<sup>143</sup> *Ibid*, 106.

It is arguably the emaciated state of the soldiers that would make them appear “dolorous,” but their direct stares do further differentiate these images from conventional portraits of the period. However, there were attempts to return some humanity to these soldiers, forcing readers to recognize the identity and plight of the photographed soldiers, much as they would do with a portrait of a loved one. The two most obvious examples of this are in the refocusing of various features of the subject of the second photograph (Figure 2) in subsequent engravings (Figures 5, 9, 16, and 18 [lower row, centre image]), and the naming of the soldiers in *Leslie’s Illustrated* (Figure 18).

John Tagg has noted that, buried in all portraits, are “elaborate codes of pose and posture readily understood within the societies in which portrait images had currency.”<sup>144</sup> These images were not formal portraits, but in *Harper’s Weekly* and *Leslie’s Illustrated*, they were not medical images either. Imbued with enough individuality to engage the viewer’s subjectivity, they were a hybrid of both. These codes of pose and posture conveyed enough of the depicted soldiers to appear as portraits, without diminishing the effect of their diseased states.

It is finally the use of the photographs that defines how they can be characterized, if at all. Perhaps the best source on the subject is the personnel of the hospital itself. As stated previously in the introduction, on May 14, 1864, in *The Crutch*, the editors of the in-hospital newsletter wrote these photographs were the “best means of bringing before the people, the truth in the matter.”<sup>145</sup> These pictures were simultaneously proof, and emotional appeal. They appeared in a complicated visual environment that used photography and other forms of illustration in tandem, and they embodied a number of

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<sup>144</sup> Tagg, *The Burden of Representation*, 35-36.

<sup>145</sup> *The Crutch*, (May 14, 1864): 243

different meanings. This was perhaps inevitable, when one considers the different makers responsible for bringing the photographs to the attention of the public in a politically contentious period.

These photographs of POWs were designed to be disseminated: from the CDV portraits that preceded the publications, to their appearance in *Harper's Weekly* and *Leslie's Illustrated*, to the creation and dissemination of the three published version of *The Narrative* in the United States, and to the publication of *The Extract* in London, these photographs moved through a complex visual economy. While the photographs themselves were created in a tradition with pre-photographic conventions from medical imaging and painted and engraved portraits, they were reproduced in a medium that used photographs and sketches, separately and in tandem, as source material for handcrafted prints.

## Conclusion

Throughout the history of illustrated media, the demand for images has occasionally outstripped the ability of professional image-makers to provide them.<sup>146</sup> The use of Civil War images led to a demand for a variety of different military and nationalistic images, and while there were some protests regarding the veracity of the some of the images shown to the public, they were important carriers of visual information during the conflict. Wood engravings, drawn from sketches, photographs, and occasionally both, were the only images that could be printed in a common press alongside type, and so were the primary form of photographic reproduction in the weekly press and in illustrated books. While photography would, over time, surpass these media, it did not at first dominate them, and in fact did not compete with wood engravings but was an important tool for that practice.

This transitional period, when photography's technological limitations occasionally circumscribed its functions, is an important moment for understanding how photography came to dominate the reproduction of images for print and news media. While the 1880s are viewed as the watershed moment in the movement towards photography's hegemony in the visual economy, there were important antecedents for the use of photography in books and the illustrated press in the 1860s and 1870s.

For the United States Sanitary Commission, photography was an important tool for documenting alleged abuses against Union soldiers in Confederate POW camps. While Dr. Vanderkiefte had access to an illustrator at the General Hospital in Annapolis, Maryland, he saw photography as the best tool for documenting these extreme medical

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<sup>146</sup> Michael Carlebach, "Tabloids, Magazines, and the Art of Photojournalism," in *American Photojournalism Comes of Age* (Washington and London: Smithsonian Institution Press, 2007): 180.

cases. While this choice could be the result of either the volume of photographs required or that the impending deaths of several of these soldiers required fast action, it seems likely that these contingencies were not the primary reason for using photography.

The Civil War was the first major conflict that was extensively and systematically photographed. While photographic emulsions were not fast enough to capture battle scenes, there were plenty of famous figures requiring portraits and the aftermath of battle scenes requiring documentation—and audiences willing to pay for these photographs. However, these photographs were not always presented to the public as individual albumen prints. Photographically illustrated books were still expensive to produce, and it was more often books, illustrated pamphlets, and the illustrated press that presented photographic reproductions deliberately sequenced and mediated by text—wood engravings that were taken from photographs, but were not photographs.

Scholarly literature often disregards these images, choosing instead to privilege either photographs or photomechanical reproductions over these illustrations taken from handmade blocks. To reiterate Koenig's assertion, discussed earlier in this paper, there is a tendency to suggest that "it was only with the use of half-tone printing, from the 1880s onwards, that photographs entered the printed media," and that "the usual wood engravings made from photographs totally lacked authenticity."<sup>147</sup> This thesis discussed one example of photographs in the print media, and argued that, far from lacking authenticity, these images were not only compelling proof of the abuse the texts in these publications describe, but also functioned as a powerful emotional appeal designed to shock the audience they reached.

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<sup>147</sup> Thilo Koenig, "The Other Half," 347.

This is an area that clearly requires further research. What is missing is sustained research on the use of photography to create wood engravings in the American illustrated press and books from the 1850s to the 1880s. While the introduction of collodion emulsions helped bring photographers into the field in far greater numbers than before, and its reproducibility sent photographs into the world in a much higher volume than previously, its incompatibility with type still limited its dissemination in the press and in other publications. However, members of the Sanitary Commission still considered photographs the best means of documenting the abuses they investigated, and wood engravings the most efficient means of bringing these photographs to the public. While they might seem to lack authenticity to viewers today, they were clearly an effective way to visually communicate charged political messages.

Regardless of the difficulties of transcribing “flat tint into line,” the illustrated press and publishing houses still required source images from which their engravers would create a final picture. Photographs fulfilled that function, but they also did more. Whether these images were reproduced as faithfully as the King & Baird engravers, or as artistically as the *Harper’s Weekly* and *Leslie’s Illustrated* engravers, these wood engravings are still as important for study as the photographs from which they are taken. While not photomechanical, these final wood engravings are nonetheless photographic reproductions. This important use of photography is insufficiently addressed in the history of the medium, something that should be rectified in order to understand this early and important use of photography in visual communication. By examining the use of these photographs, and their translation into wood engravings, this thesis has shown that there were longstanding antecedents for the use of photography in the illustrated press

and in publications in the 1880s and beyond. By placing later developments into context, halftone engravings can be historicized within a “slow assimilation” beginning long before 1880, and not a “media revolution”<sup>148</sup> after 1880, which resulted in the widespread adoption of photography for news illustration at the end of the nineteenth century.

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<sup>148</sup> Gervais, “On Either Side of the Gatekeeper,” 51.



## Appendix A: Illustrations



**Figure 1: Photograph 1 in K & B  
[Clothbound] *Narrative***

Albumen Print, 9.1 x 5.8 cm.

GEH 1998:1903:0001

Collection of the George Eastman House

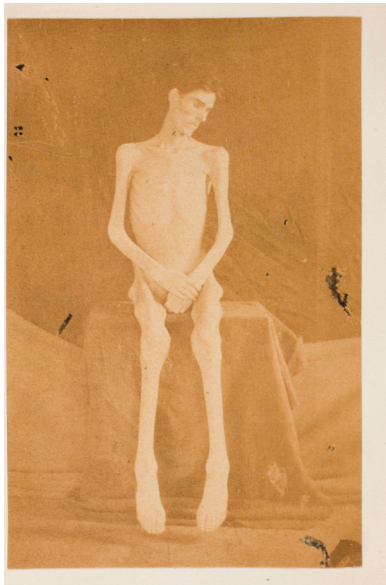


**Figure 2: Photograph 2 in K & B  
[Clothbound] *Narrative***

Albumen Print: 8.9 x 5.7 cm

GEH 1998:1903:0002

Collection of the George Eastman House



**Figure 3: Photograph 3 in K & B  
[Clothbound] *Narrative***

Albumen Print, 8.9 x 5.8 cm

GEH 1998:1903:0003

Collection of the George Eastman House



**Figure 4: Photograph 4 in K & B  
[Clothbound] *Narrative***

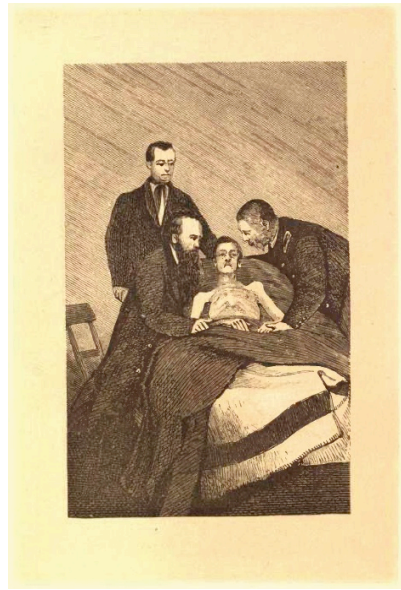
Albumen Print, 9.3 x 5.7 cm

GEH 1998:1903:0004

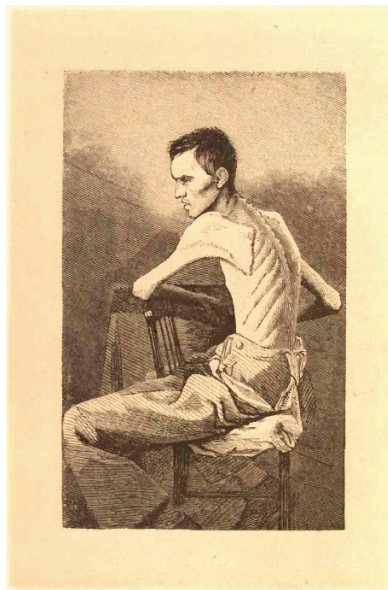
Collection of the George Eastman House



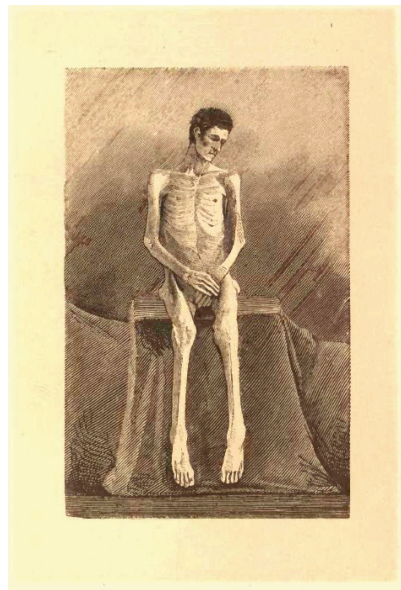
**Figure 5: Image 1 in K & B  
[Paperbound] *Narrative***  
Wood Engraving, 9 x 5.6 cm.  
Ink Mount, 11.3 x 7.6 cm.  
Collection of George Eastman House



**Figure 6: Image 2 in K & B  
[Paperbound] *Narrative***  
Wood Engraving, 9 x 5.6 cm.  
Ink Mount, 11.3 x 7.6 cm.  
Collection of George Eastman House

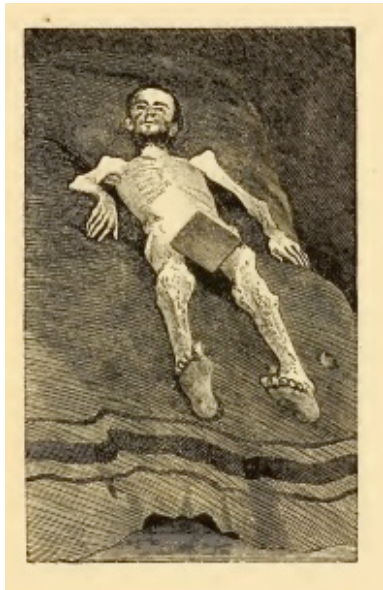


**Figure 7: Image 3 in K & B  
[Paperbound] *Narrative***  
Wood Engraving, 9 x 5.6 cm.  
Ink Mount, 11.3 x 7.6 cm.  
Collection of George Eastman House

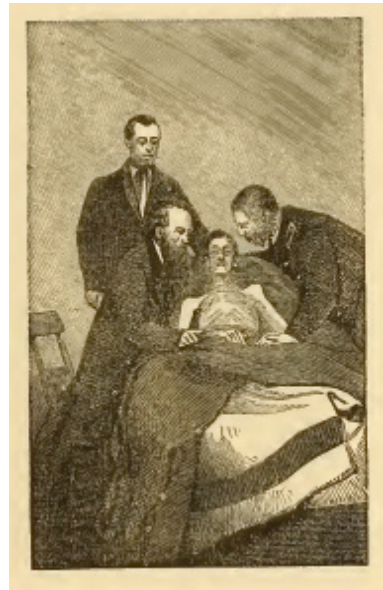


**Figure 8: Image 4 in K & B  
[Paperbound] *Narrative***  
Wood Engraving, 9 x 5.6 cm.  
Ink Mount, 11.3 x 7.6 cm.  
Collection of George Eastman House





**Figure 9: Image 1 in Littell's *Narrative***  
Wood Engraving, 9 x 5.6 cm.  
Collection of the Cornell Law Library



**Figure 10: Image 2 in Littell's *Narrative***  
Wood Engraving, 9 x 5.6 cm.  
Collection of the Cornell Law Library



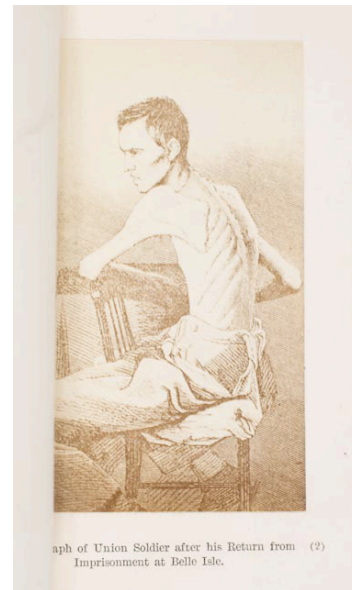
**Figure 11: Image 3 in Littell's *Narrative***  
Wood Engraving, 9 x 5.6 cm.  
Collection of the Cornell Law Library



**Figure 12: Image 4 in Littell's *Narrative***  
Wood Engraving, 9 x 5.6 cm.  
Collection of the Cornell Law Library



**Figure 13: Photograph 1 from *The Extract***  
 Albumen Print, 9 x 5.6 cm.  
 Collection of the University of Rochester  
 Special Collections



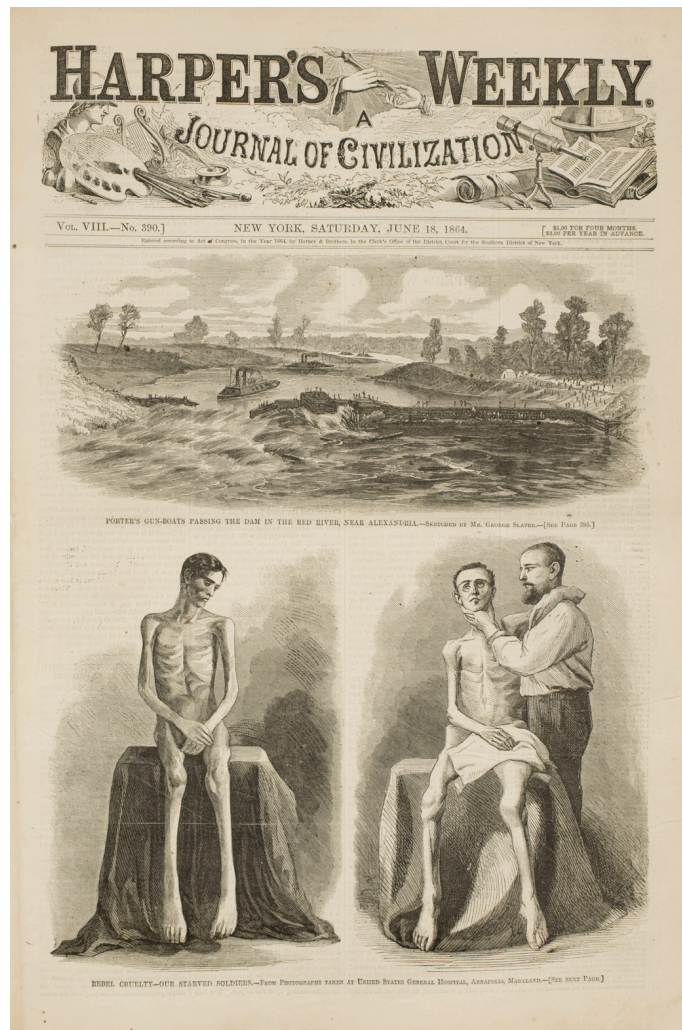
**Figure 14: Photograph 2 from *The Extract***  
 Albumen Print, 9 x 5.7 cm.  
 Collection of the University of Rochester  
 Special Collections



**Figure 15: Photograph 3 from *The Extract***  
 Albumen Print, 8.9 x 5.7 cm.  
 Collection of the University of Rochester  
 Special Collections



**Figure 16: Photograph 4 from *The Extract***  
 Albumen Print, 9 x 5.8 cm.  
 Collection of the University of Rochester  
 Special Collections

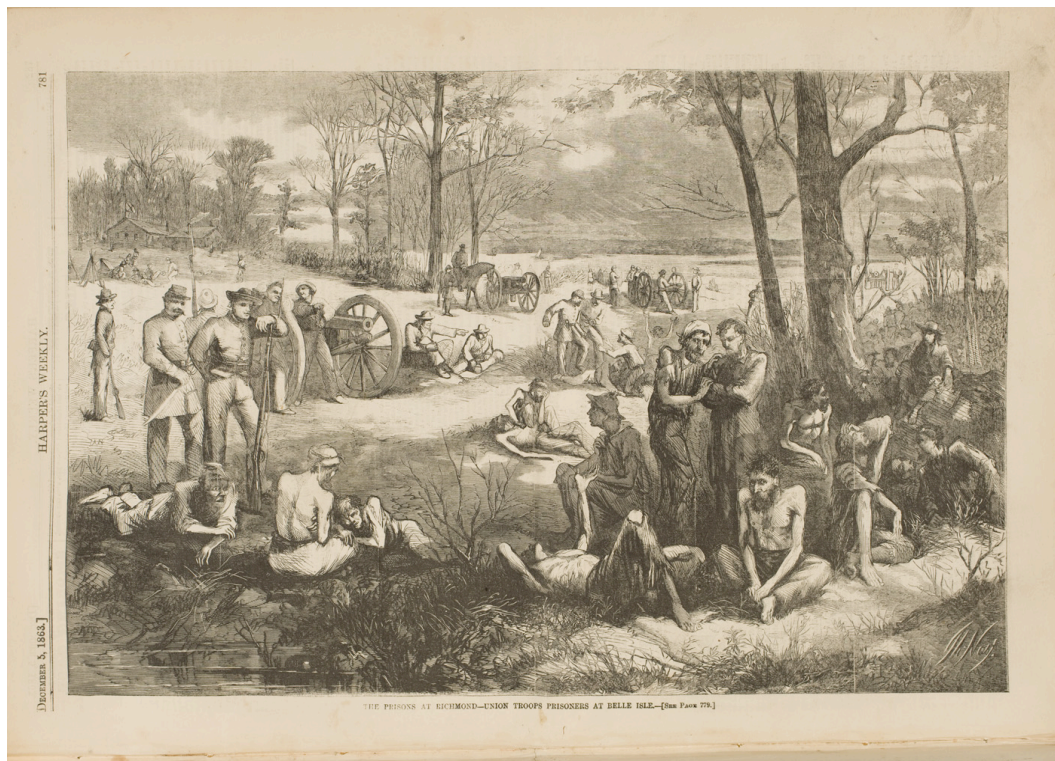


**Figure 17: *Harper's Weekly* on June 18, 1864**  
 Wood Engravings, 17 x 11 cm and 17 x 11.7 cm.  
 Collection of George Eastman House



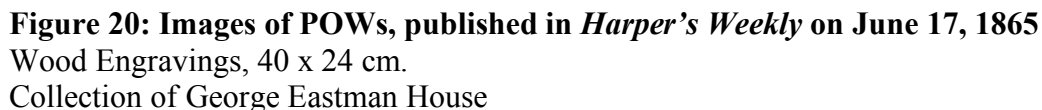


**Figure 18: *Leslie's Illustrated* on June 18, 1864**  
 Wood Engraving, 24 x 20cm.  
 Collection of the Queen's University Library



**Figure 19: Thomas Nast's rendition of Belle Isle prison in December of 1863**  
Wood Engraving, 22 x 34 cm.  
Collection of George Eastman House

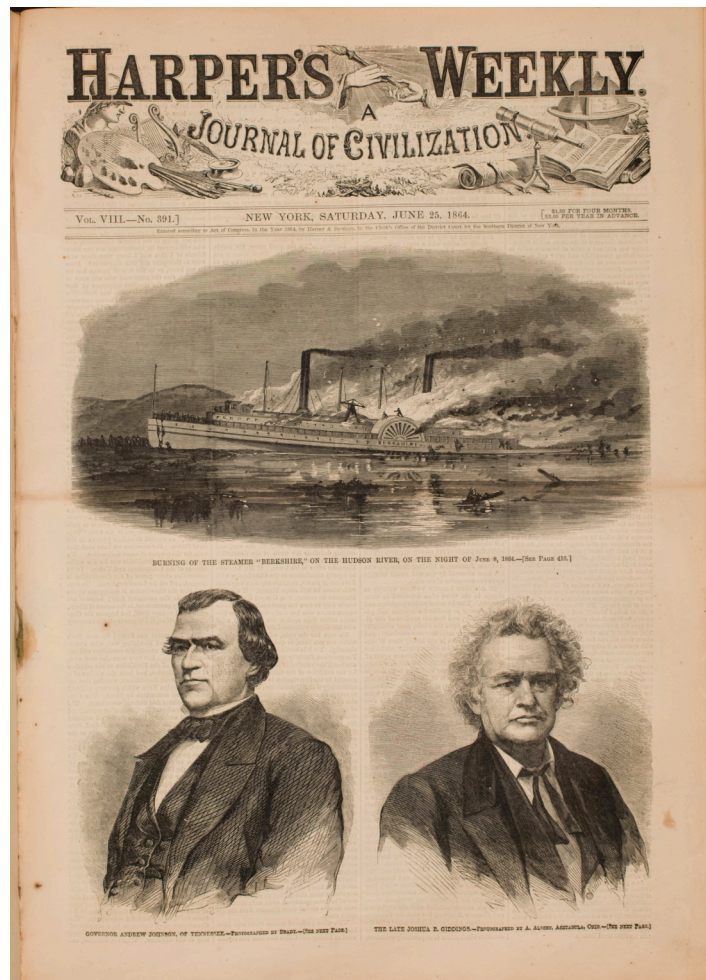








**Figure 21: Portraits of Generals Warren and Wright, published in *Harper's Weekly*, June 11, 1864**  
Wood Engravings, each 16 x 11 cm.  
Collection of George Eastman House



**Figure 22: Portraits of Generals Warren and Wright, published in *Harper's Weekly*, June 11, 1864**

Wood Engravings, 17 x 11 cm. and 16.2 x 11 cm.

Collection of George Eastman House

## Appendix B: Timeline of the Commission of Inquiry and Related Publications

The following timeline has been created from the four published versions of *The Narrative*, and the articles printed in *Harper's Weekly* and *Leslie's Illustrated*. Not all commissioners were present at each of the hearings where evidence was given, which is recorded in the meeting notes. Where testimony was provided at a later date, a justice of the peace or a notary public verified the accuracy and the authorship of the statement given or letter provided.

| Date                  | Activity   |
|-----------------------|--|
| May 2, 1864           | Prisoners received from Bell Isle by Dr. B.A. Vanderkiefte. Prisoners were transferred immediately to the General Hospital in Annapolis, Maryland, because they required immediate medical attention.  |
| May 2-4, 1864         | Prisoners photographed.<br><b>Note:</b> Exact date is unknown, but the range of dates is inferred from the date of their admission, and the dates of death of two of the subjects (Francis W. Beedle, and Private John Q. Rose) recorded in <i>Leslie's Illustrated</i> .  |
| May 19, 1864          | The standing committee of the United States Sanitary Commission votes a special Commission of Inquiry into existence. The Commission of Inquiry is given the responsibility to interview returned POWs regarding their treatment in Confederate POW camps in order to investigate alleged abuses.  |
| May 31, 1864          | Mandate of Commission of Inquiry modified: the Commission is now required to interview to Confederate prisoners in Union prisons to ascertain their treatment.   |
| May 31 – June 3, 1864 | The Commission hears evidence from officers and soldiers from the Union Army returned after their internment in Confederate prisons.<br><b>Note:</b> additional testimony taken either by letter or statement into June and July. All additional testimony verified by a Justice of the Peace, and not members of the Commission of Inquiry. |
| May 31 – June 2, 1864 | The Commission hears evidence from Union army surgeons in charge of the four hospitals in Annapolis and Baltimore to which returned soldiers were brought.<br><b>Note:</b> additional testimony taken either by letter or statement into June. All additional testimony verified by a Justice of the Peace.                                  |
| June 3, 1864          | The Commission hears evidence from staff at the hospitals in Johnson's Island, Ohio. The evidence relates to the treatment of Confederate POWs requiring hospitalization either because of injury, infection, or disease.  |
| June 4, 1864          | The Commission hears evidence from confederate soldiers detained by the Union Army at the Lincoln Hospital in Washington, DC.  |

|                             |   |
|-----------------------------|---|
| June 16 – 17, 1864          | Commission hears evidence from staff at the De Camp General Hospital in David's Island, New York. The evidence relates to the treatment of Confederate POWs requiring hospitalization either because of injury, infection, or disease.  |
| June 18, 1864               | <i>Harper's Weekly</i> publishes an article on the returned prisoners from Belle Isle, and publishes wood engravings of two photographs, taken under the direction of Dr. B.A. Vanderkief (interviewed by Commission), and provided by Dr. E. Wallace (Commissioner). Commission testimony, and an excerpt of a letter from Dr. Wallace, are printed as well.                 |
| June 18, 1864               | <i>Leslie's Illustrated</i> publishes an article on the returned prisoners from Belle Isle, and publishes wood engravings of eight photographs, identifying their names, the date they were returned and, where applicable, when the soldiers died. The editors of <i>Leslie's Illustrated</i> received these photographs from the Joint Committee on the Conduct of the War. |
| June 21, 1864               | Commission hears evidence from confederate soldiers detained by the Union Army at the Fort Delaware POW camp.   |
| June 21, 1864               | Commission hears evidence from Union Army officials in charge of the Fort Delaware POW camp about the treatment of Confederate POWs.  |
| July, 1864                  | Commissioner Dr. Ellerleslie Wallace presents his medical report to the United States Sanitary Commission, presumably (although not verified to be so) in New York.   |
| September, 1864             | The Commission submits its final report. King & Baird releases the two versions of <i>The Narrative</i> .   |
| November 4, 1864            | Abraham Lincoln is re-elected for a second term as president.   |
| November 5, 1864            | <i>Littell's Living Age</i> publishes the Report and Narrative of <i>The Narrative</i> .  |
| November 12, 1864           | <i>Littell's Living Age</i> publishes the Appendix to the Report of the <i>Narrative</i> .  |
| November 12, 1864           | The Office of Littell's Living Age releases their version of <i>The Narrative</i> to the public.  |
| January – February 22, 1865 | <i>The Extract</i> is published in Great Britain.<br><b>Note:</b> Date inferred from the British Library's Copyright Receipt Office's acquisition of this material on February 23, 1865.  |
| February 25, 1865           | <i>Littell's Living Age</i> proposes publishing another edition of <i>The Narrative</i> , and notes that 106 copies have been ordered for Brazil, and 30,000 have been ordered for Great Britain.   |
| April 9, 1865               | General Robert E. Lee surrenders at Appomatox, marking the end of the Civil War.  |

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