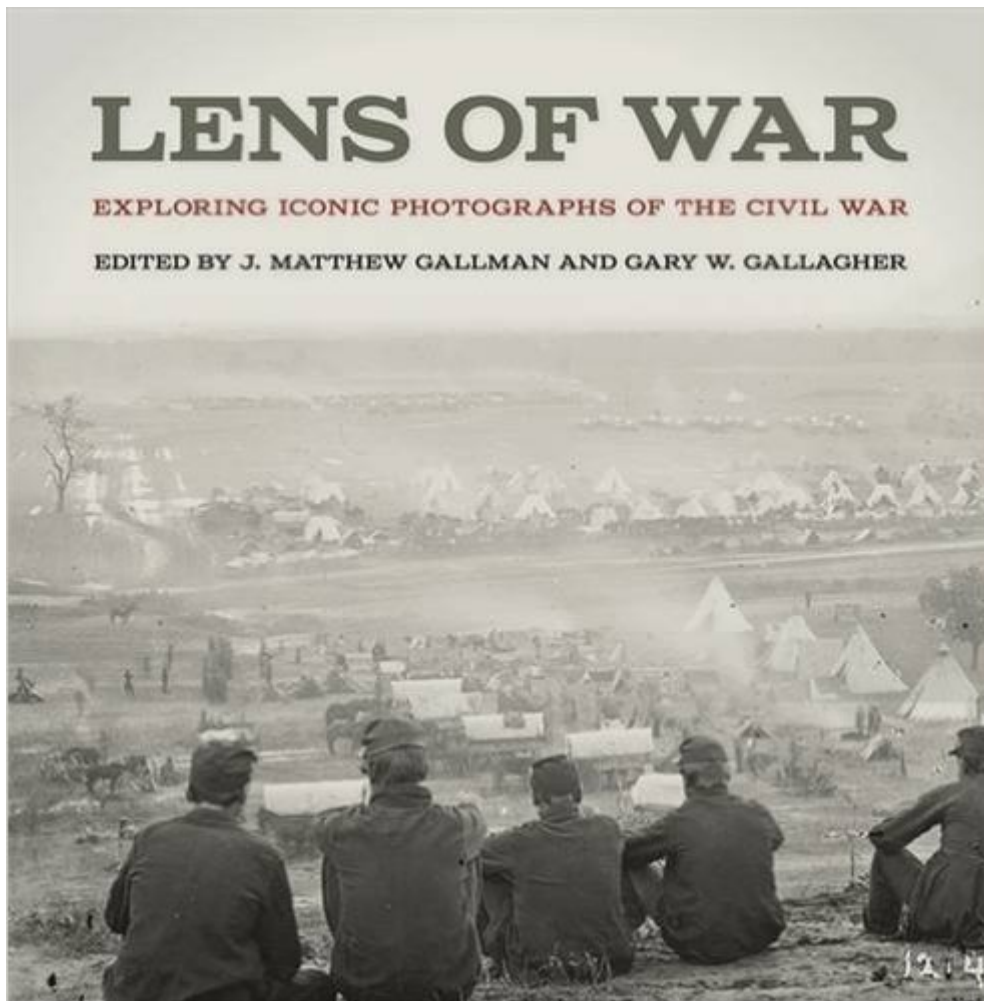


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# Lens Of War: Exploring Iconic Photographs Of The Civil War (UnCivil Wars Ser.)



## Synopsis

Lens of War grew out of an invitation to leading historians of the Civil War to select and reflect upon a single photograph. Each could choose any image and interpret it in personal and scholarly terms. The result is a remarkable set of essays by twenty-seven scholars whose numerous volumes on the Civil War have explored military, cultural, political, African American, women's, and environmental history. The essays describe a wide array of photographs and present an eclectic approach to the assignment, organized by topic: Leaders, Soldiers, Civilians, Victims, and Places. Readers will rediscover familiar photographs and figures examined in unfamiliar ways, as well as discover little-known photographs that afford intriguing perspectives. All the images are reproduced with exquisite care. Readers fascinated by the Civil War will want this unique book on their shelves, and lovers of photography will value the images and the creative, evocative reflections offered in these essays.

## Book Information

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## Customer Reviews

At the time of this writing there have been five reviews for "Lens of War: Exploring Iconic Photographs of the Civil War" - the majority of which are nicely written and helpful - so this review may not offer much more. Nonetheless, this is a very nice collection of 27 thoroughly well written articles - each by a different scholar/historian - discussing 27 interesting photographs chosen by the aforementioned contributors. The photographs precede each given article centered on a single

page upon a background of black. Whether it was the editors intention or not this gives the photos a bit of an appearance of being placed in a period photo album and is a nice touch. The photographs - categorized into five sections (leaders, soldiers, civilians, victims & places) - range from the instantly recognizable to the obscure and unfamiliar. Yet, each one, regardless of its familiarity, evokes a strong range of emotion which is certainly complemented by each authors respective contribution. The end of the book includes Suggested Readings and very short bios of all of the Contributors followed by an Index all of which are appreciated. One last small note: The very first photograph featured is one of the most well known even to those who may not be interested in the Civil War. It is the portrait of Abraham Lincoln taken by Alexander Gardner which has come to be known as the "Gettysburg" Lincoln since it was taken a little over a week before Lincoln made his speech there. For this volume, the well known and respected historian and author Harold Holzer chose this particular photograph and accordingly, it is he who provides the very interesting and enjoyable article. It is in this article that a small inconsistency appears.

What a great idea! Ask 26 of the most prominent historians of the Civil War to choose a Civil War photograph and write an essay on it. The choices are divided into five sections: photos of leaders, soldiers, civilians, victims and places. The variety of the results are terrific. Some essayists chose to provide a detailed analysis of the photo itself, such as Harold Holzer's exploration of why there are comparatively so many photos of Lincoln or Joan Waugh's insightful examination of what a casual pose of General Grant says about him as a man. Others choose to reveal why a particular photo inspired them to become an historian. Still others choose to illuminate an obscure corner of the Civil War, such as Elizabeth Varon's fascinating account of how City Point, Virginia, rose from hamlet to "nerve center of the Union war effort" to hamlet again, all in two years. The book ends appropriately with Steven Woodworth's superb account of the Grand Review, the North's victory parade. In fact, what I considered to be the weakest essay yielded, on reflection, the strongest lesson of the book. Jane Schultz writes about a photo of a woman named Annie Etheridge Hooks. Ms. Hooks appears to have had an unusual war. She accompanied a Michigan regiment through a large part of the war. She was apparently much beloved of the soldiers. Was she a nurse? A camp follower? A mascot? None of it is clear. Instead Ms. Schultz devotes her time to speculating whether Ms. Hooks was a Native American because of her "high cheek bones" (shades of Elizabeth Warren!) and a long abstract discussion about gender assignments in 19th Century America. What we don't get is much about Annie Hooks. Now perhaps there is not much in the historical records about Annie Hooks as Ms.

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