

**“FEATURES OF CRUELTY
WHICH COULD NOT WELL BE DESCRIBED BY THE PEN”:
THE MEDIA OF ATROCITY IN *HARPER’S WEEKLY*,
c. 1862 – 1866**

by

Anne Strachan Cross

A dissertation submitted to the Faculty of the University of Delaware in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy in Art History

Summer 2023

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Anne Strachan Cross

Approved: _____
Sandy Isenstadt, Ph.D.
Chair of the Department of Art History

Approved: _____
John A. Pelesko, Ph.D.
Dean of the College of Arts and Sciences

Approved: _____
Louis F. Rossi, Ph.D.
Vice Provost for Graduate and Professional Education and
Dean of the Graduate College

I certify that I have read this dissertation and that in my opinion it meets the academic and professional standard required by the University as a dissertation for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy.

Signed:

Jason E. Hill, Ph.D.
Professor in charge of dissertation

I certify that I have read this dissertation and that in my opinion it meets the academic and professional standard required by the University as a dissertation for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy.

Signed:

Wendy Bellion, Ph.D.
Member of dissertation committee

I certify that I have read this dissertation and that in my opinion it meets the academic and professional standard required by the University as a dissertation for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy.

Signed:

Jennifer Van Horn, Ph.D.
Member of dissertation committee

I certify that I have read this dissertation and that in my opinion it meets the academic and professional standard required by the University as a dissertation for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy.

Signed:

Matthew Fox-Amato, Ph.D.
Member of dissertation committee

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ABSTRACT

This dissertation explores the visual culture of violence and its reproduction within *Harper's Weekly's* reporting of the American Civil War by analyzing the relationship among wood engraved illustrations, their photographic sources, and text. During the Civil War, *Harper's Weekly* increasingly relied on photographic sources for its illustrated reporting, and this included images of abused enslaved persons, disabled soldiers, and other injured bodies. At *Harper's Weekly* these photographs were manually transformed from their original medium into wood engravings, a necessary step in the publication process until the 1880s. As these images moved across media, they not only attained their widest circulation, but also were combined with text and other images to serve particular rhetorical ends. In this dissertation I contend that *Harper's Weekly* strategically employed photographs of atrocity at critical moments during the Civil War and Reconstruction to persuade readers of Confederate inhumanity and thereby define the bounds of civil discourse and democratic participation. In doing so, *Harper's Weekly* drew upon photography's evolving documentary status as well as the aesthetics of sentimentalism.

Importantly, this project considers the circulation of photographs of atrocity prior to their appearance in *Harper's Weekly* and approaches the publication of these images as wood engravings in *Harper's Weekly's* illustrated newspaper as part of a broader network of photographic circulation, and the circulation of images of atrocity, during the Civil War. This project follows recent interventions in photographic history that have emphasized reproduction and circulation, and that have decentered the

photographic print as the primary site for the production of meaning. This project also demonstrates how *Harper's Weekly* relied upon an existing public archive—of text and images, and particularly *cartes de visite*—to report the news and to further its rhetorical position.

Chapter 1

INTRODUCTION

What does the exposure of the violated body yield?

— Saidiya V. Hartman, *Scenes of Subjection*, 1997¹

To some the record will be distasteful—for there are many who desire to believe no evil of Davis and his fellows, however indisputable the proofs. To many a tender-hearted reader it may seem too horrible for decent recital. Yet it is a true record, and in the history of the rebellion will form an important chapter, to be read with tears, indeed, but written in adamant. The illustrations...will bring to the eye features of cruelty which could not well be described by the pen.

— “Rebel Cruelties,” *Harper’s Weekly*, June 17, 1865²

On September 19, 1862, two days after the end of the Battle of Antietam—the single bloodiest day of the American Civil War and one of the deadliest days in American history—the photographer Alexander Gardner (1821–1882) and his assistant James F. Gibson (b. 1828/1829) took to the field and produced approximately 100 images of the awful scene on behalf of Mathew Brady’s photographic studio.³

¹ Saidiya V. Hartman, *Scenes of Subjection: Terror, Slavery, and Self-Making in Nineteenth-Century America* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1997), 3.

² “Rebel Cruelties,” *Harper’s Weekly*, June 17, 1865, HarpWeek.

³ On the statistics that make Antietam the bloodiest day in American history, see James McPherson, *Battle Cry of Freedom: The Civil War Era* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1988), 544. Regarding the number of known images taken at Antietam, William Frassanito has given a figure of 95 different photographic negatives, including 72 stereographs. William Frassanito, *Antietam: The Photographic Legacy of America’s Bloodiest Day* (Gettysburg, Pa.: Thomas Publications, 1997), 61.

Gardner and Gibson's unflinching images of bloated corpses, bodies piled in mass graves, and animal carcasses awaiting burial captured the horror of modern warfare in all its grim corporeality and are credited as the first known photographs to display American military dead.⁴ Gardner's elegiac photograph of a Confederate rifle pit (fig. 1) is representative of this larger group of works. In this image, the consequences of battle devolve into an indiscernible mass of contorted corpses and discarded clothing; above the sunken trench, a burial party looks on apprehensively, a visual surrogate for viewers' own profound efforts to make sense of the horrific scene.

Two weeks after their initial production, Gardner and Gibson's photographs were placed on public display at Mathew Brady's New York gallery. Then, on

Meanwhile, the scholar Bob Zeller has cited a figure of 105 known images, including 78 stereographs. Bob Zeller, *The Blue and Gray in Black and White: A History of Civil War Photography* (Westport, C.T.: Praeger Publishers, 2005), 80. On the evolving attribution of the Antietam photographs see, among others, Frassanito, *Antietam*, 53–54; D. Mark Katz, *Witness to an Era: The Life and Photographs of Alexander Gardner; The Civil War, Lincoln, and the West* (New York: Penguin, 1991), 45–47.

⁴ Notably, while the photographs of the dead at Antietam are the first known images to be taken of dead American soldiers, they were not the first images to show the carnage of war, nor did they represent the American public's first exposure to the imbrication of photography and violence. Precedents include a stereograph of the dead from the Battle of Melegnano, Italy, during the Franco-Austrian War of 1859, which the American essayist Oliver Wendell Holmes mentioned in his essay "Sun Painting and Sun Sculpture," *Atlantic Monthly* 8, no. 45 (July 1861): 13–29. A year later, in 1860, Felice Beato took several images of the dead scattered around North Taku Fort during the Second Opium War in China. Some of these photographs were exhibited in London in the summer of 1862; a review of that exhibition appeared in the American magazine *Littell's Living Age*. "Photographs of Indian Mutiny and Chinese War," *Littell's Living Age* (Boston), August 2, 1862, HathiTrust. See David Harris, *Of Battle and Beauty: Felice Beato's Photographs of China* (Santa Barbara, CA: Santa Barbara Museum of Art, 2000), xx; Kirk Savage, "The Unknowable Dead: The Civil War and the Origins of Modern Commemoration," in *The Civil War in Art and Memory*, ed. Kirk Savage (Washington, DC: National Gallery of Art, 2016), 100.

October 18, 1862, the New York-based *Harper's Weekly* illustrated newspaper published a series of wood engraved illustrations that were derived from the photographs (fig. 2).⁵ Although the newspaper had previously published sketches from Antietam, this was the first instance in which Gardner and Gibson's photographs could be widely seen by a broad audience.⁶ Featured across two pages, the eight engravings occupy the newspaper's centerfold, a position of priority that allowed the images to be reproduced without interruption by text. Framed by thin black lines that mimic the edges of the photographs themselves, the salon-like arrangement of *Harper's* page layout effectively recreates the experience of viewing the original objects in Brady's gallery. In an accompanying article entitled "The Battle of Antietam," *Harper's* places additional emphasis on the illustrations' photographic origins by reproducing the text of an earlier review of Brady's exhibition published by the *New York Herald* on October 5, 1862.⁷

The reproduction of this prior article produces a sense of discord between *Harper's* text and images, as the unnamed *New York Herald* author describes neither the Battle of Antietam nor the wood engravings printed in *Harper's Weekly*, but rather

⁵ Importantly, although the issue is dated October 18, 1862, it appeared on newsstands a week earlier. For the advance-dating of illustrated newspapers, see Joshua Brown, *Beyond the Lines: Pictorial Reporting, Everyday Life, and the Crisis of Gilded Age America* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2002), 255.

⁶ For *Harper's* publishing of sketches of the battlefield of Antietam, "The Battle of Antietam," *Harper's Weekly*, October 4, 1862, HarpWeek; "The Battle of Antietam," *Harper's Weekly*, October 11, 1862, HarpWeek.

⁷ "The Battle of Antietam," *Harper's Weekly*, October 18, 1862, HarpWeek; "Fine Arts: Brady's Incidents of the War—The Battles of South Mountain and Antietam, &c., &c.," *New York Herald*, October 5, 1862.

the public display of the photographic prints. For example, the author, identified only as one “who knew the ground,” describes the photograph of the bridge across Antietam Creek as “artistically speaking...one of the most beautiful and perfect photograph landscapes that we have ever seen,” writing that “the tone is clear and firm, but soft, and every object is brought out with remarkable distinctness.”⁸ However, the precise visual experience described by the author would not have been accessible to many readers of *Harper’s Weekly*. Principally, the illustration which occupies the center of *Harper’s* page layout is, in fact, a modified version of Brady’s original photograph of Burnside’s bridge (fig. 3). In *Harper’s* wood engraved reproduction, the photograph has been enlarged from its original format to show more of the road, and a horse-drawn wagon now appears on the bridge, in addition to two military figures that have been added to the foreground. The “remarkable distinctness” and clarity of tone that the *New York Herald* author describes would have also been less visible to *Harper’s* readers, as the manual translation of the images from photographs to wood engravings required a syntactical transformation that resulted in a loss of detail.

This lack of congruency between text and image is further reflected in the disconnect between the logic of the newspaper layout and the narrative logic of the accompanying article.⁹ Beginning with the analysis of the photograph of Burnside’s

⁸ “The Battle of Antietam.”

⁹ William Stapp has argued that the text is intended to compensate for the illustrative failures of the wood engravings. Stapp writes, “To ensure their maximum effect upon the imaginations of *Harper’s* readers, therefore, the commentary that accompanied these pictures carefully described details that had been necessarily obscured or deleted in making the wood engravings.” See William Stapp, “‘Subjects of strange...and of fearful interest’: Photojournalism from Its Beginnings in 1839,” in *Eyes of Time*:

bridge, the author goes on to describe the smaller image showing bodies in front of a high rail fence (which appears in the upper left corner of *Harper's* layout) and that of a deep trench filled with rebel dead (lower right), before concluding with the scene of a man standing before a newly made grave (center, top).¹⁰ In recounting the author's experience of viewing the photographic display at Brady's gallery, the text thus requires the reader to move about the page searching for each relevant image, scanning for recognition, as one might scan the battlefield for fallen soldiers. It follows then that the meaningful content of *Harper's Weekly's* reporting on October 18, 1862 was the visual encounter with the Antietam photographs, not the fact of the battle itself, even though *Harper's* reproduction of the photographic images was not entirely faithful to the original source.

In the past, historians and art historians have ascribed tremendous importance to Gardner and Gibson's Antietam photographs, arguing that the images' unprecedented realism and the abject horror they display radically transformed the way the Civil War was understood by the broader American public, which was

Photojournalism in America, ed. Marianne Fulton (Boston: Little, Brown and Company, 1988), 18. Meanwhile, Keith Davis has attributed the incongruencies between the text and the wood engravings—which he refers to as “bland transcriptions of the originals”—as unintended irony, rather than evidence of the reprinting of news from other sources. Keith F. Davis, “‘A Terrible Distinctness’: Photography of the Civil War Era,” in *Photography in Nineteenth-Century America*, ed. Martha Sandweiss (Fort Worth, TX: Amon Carter Museum, 1991), 151–152.

¹⁰ On the modifications that the image of the man standing before a grave underwent in the translation between photograph and wood engraving, see Savage, “The Unknowable Dead”; Anthony W. Lee, “Antietam Sketches and Photographs, 1862,” in *Getting the Picture: The Visual Culture of the News*, eds. Jason E. Hill and Vanessa R. Schwartz (London: Bloomsbury, 2015): 26–31.

accustomed to a more romantic view of battle.¹¹ For example, in the catalogue for the 2013 exhibition *The Civil War and American Art*, Smithsonian curator Eleanor Jones Harvey writes that “The exhibition of these photographs forever altered viewers’ idealized perceptions of the war as a gallant fight for moral causes.”¹² In support of such arguments, scholars often cite a review of the exhibit at Brady’s gallery, which was published in the *New York Times* on October 20, 1862, and which extolled the impact that the photographs would have on a public that was otherwise removed from the war’s devastation. Of the Antietam photographs, the *Times*’s unattributed author famously wrote that “Mr. BRADY has done something to bring home to us the terrible reality and earnestness of war. If he has not brought bodies and laid them in our dooryards and along the streets, he has done something very like it.”¹³

¹¹ For examples of scholarship that has argued that Gardner and Gibson’s photographs radically transformed the way the war was understood by noncombatants, see, among others, William Stapp, “To...Arouse the Conscience, and Affect the Heart,” in *An Enduring Interest: The Photographs of Alexander Gardner*, ed. Brooks Johnson (Norfolk, Va.: Chrysler Museum, 1991), 23–24; John Stauffer, “The ‘Terrible Reality’ of the First Living-Room Wars,” in *War/Photography: Images of Armed Conflict and Its Aftermath* by Anne Tucker, Will Michaels, and Natalie Zelt (Houston: Museum of Fine Arts 2012), 80–91; Eleanor Jones Harvey, *The Civil War and American Art* (Washington, D.C.: Smithsonian American Art Museum, 2013); Shawn Michelle Smith, “Photographic Remains: Sally Mann at Antietam,” in *The Civil War in Art and Memory*, ed. Kirk Savage (Washington, DC: National Gallery of Art, 2016): 103–124; A. Maggie Hazard, “Marketing *The Dead of Antietam*: Photographs of Death as a Cultural Commodity,” *Civil War History* 69, no. 1 (March 2023): 9–41. Notably, Stauffer draws a distinction between the impact of the photographs and the wood engraved reproduction. See Stauffer, “The ‘Terrible Reality’ of the First Living-Room Wars,” 85.

¹² Harvey, *The Civil War and American Art*, 156.

¹³ “Brady’s Photographs—Pictures of the Dead at Antietam,” *New York Times*, October 20, 1862, PQHN.

Certainly, by framing the cost and spectacle of the war in human lives, Gardner and Gibson's photographs helped to make military casualties graphically tangible and transformed the fact of wartime death, as reported by the daily newspapers, from the abstract to the painfully material. However, as the scholar Franny Nudelman has noted, published reviews do little to tell us about how audiences actually reacted to such photographs, as they are the opinion of just one person.¹⁴ Similarly, scholarship that relies on sources like the aforementioned *New York Times* review to argue that viewers were shocked by these gruesome images supposes not only that the American public encountered these representations of atrocity as a single monolithic audience, but also that the public was able to access this visual information in an unmediated way. In fact, more Americans encountered the Antietam war imagery as wood engraved reproductions in *Harper's Weekly* illustrated newspaper—where the accompanying article and the dynamics of page layout attempted, however discordantly, to recreate the critic's viewing experience—than as original photographic prints in Brady's gallery. It was also in the pages of *Harper's Weekly* that many Americans came to understand the casualties at Antietam as imbricated with President Abraham Lincoln's decision to issue a preliminary version of the Emancipation Proclamation, as the illustrations were preceded by several articles that

¹⁴ Nudelman further contends that such analyses construe nineteenth-century responses through the lens of our own tendency to be shocked by images of dead bodies, and that nineteenth-century viewers were not likely to be shocked by corpses or to expect unadulterated realism from photographs. Franny Nudelman, *John Brown's Body: Slavery, Violence, and the Culture of War* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2004), 103–107.

commented on the policy.¹⁵ Past scholarly emphasis on the realism of photographs has thus deferred attention from the fact that the majority of the American public encountered such photographs of Civil War violence within the context of editorial sensibilities, in which the totality of all available images was edited and combined with text to tell stories with specific points of view.¹⁶

I have begun this dissertation with a brief historiographic analysis of the photographs of the Battle of Antietam because, in the history of photography, they are often positioned as a canonical example of the relationship between photographic realism, the circulation of images of atrocity, and the formation of public opinion. However, the above example also opens a space for us to think about how the public encountered images of Civil War violence differently, and in particular the ways in which the circulation of information about such violence was mediated by the popular form of the illustrated press. My project thus proposes new considerations for looking

¹⁵ Although from a military standpoint, the Battle of Antietam was effectively a stalemate, the conflict resulted in General Robert E. Lee abandoning his plan to further invade the North. Considering this a victory, then-President Abraham Lincoln took this as a sign to issue the Emancipation Proclamation, which freed all enslaved persons in Confederate territories. Notably, the lead editorial that appears before *Harper's* reproductions of the Antietam photographs is one that comments on the president's proclamation. See "The President's Proclamation in Secessia," *Harper's Weekly*, October 18, 1862, HarpWeek. On the conflict setting the stage for the preliminary issuance of the Emancipation Proclamation, see McPherson, *Battle Cry of Freedom*, 545.

¹⁶ Here I paraphrase Andrea Volpe's work on Civil War albums. Andrea L. Volpe, "Collecting the Nation: Visions of Nationalism in Two Civil War-Era Photographs Albums," in *Acts of Possession: Collecting in America*, ed. Leah Dilworth (New Brunswick, NJ: Rutgers University Press, 2003), 95.

at Civil War news pictures.¹⁷ In particular, I seek to examine the visual culture of violence and its reproduction within *Harper's Weekly's* reporting of the American Civil War by analyzing the relationship among wood engraved illustrations, their photographic sources, and text. With an estimated readership of 750,000 to 1,250,000 per issue, *Harper's* served as an important tool for the dissemination of information and the shaping of a shared text public during the American Civil War, particularly in the North.¹⁸ In the 1860s, *Harper's* increasingly relied on photographic sources for its

¹⁷ In *Getting the Picture: The Visual Culture of the News*, Jason E. Hill and Vanessa R. Schwartz describe “news pictures” as “images crafted with a commitment to transmit timely and reliable information held by journalists to be of consequence to a viewing public. News is information thought to be worthy of attention by those reporting it, with the idea that it will be of interest to the public they address.” Jason E. Hill and Vanessa R. Schwartz, eds., *Getting the Picture: The Visual Culture of the News* (London: Bloomsbury, 2015), 4.

¹⁸ For statistics on *Harper's* circulation, see William Fletcher Thompson, Jr., “Pictorial Propaganda and the Civil War,” *The Wisconsin Magazine of History*, 46, no. 1 (Autumn 1962): 22. Here I employ a definition of a “shared text public” that is derived from Ellen Gruber Garvey, in addition to the work of Benedict Anderson and Michael Warner. In her study of Civil War scrapbooks, Garvey describes how the reading, sharing, and clipping of newspapers allowed people to participate, both intellectually and materially, in an imagined public sphere in which their awareness of others consuming the same publications created a sense of belonging to a community or nation, and to define themselves in relationship to that textually constructed sense of nation. Benedict Anderson, *Imagined Communities: Reflections on the Origin and Spread of Nationalism* (London: Verso, 1983; 2016); Michael Warner, “Publics and Counterpublics,” *Public Culture* 14, no. 1 (Winter 2002): 49–90; Ellen Gruber Garvey, *Writing with Scissors: American Scrapbooks from the Civil War to the Harlem Renaissance* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2013). However, I deviate from some of these other scholars in that I do not suppose that a “shared text public” signified consensus. On the lack of public consensus that is illustrated by localized antebellum print culture, see Trish Loughran, *The Republic in Print: Print Culture in the Age of U.S. Nation Building, 1770 – 1870* (New York: Columbia University Press, 2007).

illustrated reporting, and these included gruesome portraits of human suffering that spoke not only to the horrors of war but also to slavery's violation of human rights. At *Harper's*, the selected images were transformed from their original photographic medium into wood engravings; before the widespread adoption of the halftone reproduction process in the 1880s, it was necessary for publishers to employ wood engravers to translate photographs into a reproducible form that could be printed with handset type.¹⁹ However, such technological limitations did not prevent the photographic object from serving as an important tool for the circulation of information and the formation of public opinion during the Civil War. As *Harper's* skilled engravers translated the tones and shadows of the photographs into the lines and cross-hatching of the woodblock, pictures of abused enslaved persons, disabled soldiers, and other injured bodies not only attained their widest distribution, but also were combined with text and other images to serve particular rhetorical ends. In focusing on this interpretive process, this project grapples with timely issues such as the social construction of violence as news, the role of the media as moral arbiter, and the ethics of reproducing images of violence, particularly racialized violence, in mass visual culture.

In this dissertation I contend that *Harper's* strategically employed photographic illustrations of atrocity at critical moments during the Civil War and Reconstruction, despite their ambivalence regarding the photographic medium, to

¹⁹ For a history of wood engravings in nineteenth-century newspapers see, among others, Brown, *Beyond the Lines*; Gerry Beegan, *The Mass Image: A Social History of Photomechanical Reproduction in Victorian London* (Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2008).

persuade readers of Confederate inhumanity and thereby define the bounds of civil discourse and democratic participation. Building upon recent scholarship that has reconsidered the relationship between photography and other media, this project refutes the argument that photographs replaced hand-drawn illustrations because they were more “truthful.”²⁰ During this time of media transition, photographs were not privileged over other forms of illustration, such as sketch reporting or cartoons, but rather used as one of many sources to fulfill publishers’ editorial goals.²¹ *Harper’s Weekly’s* own ambivalence toward the unique communicative advantages of the photographic medium is evidenced by the infrequency with which the wording “from a photograph” appears within *Harper’s* illustration captions during the American Civil War; as the scholar Kate Addleman-Frankel has determined, eighty percent of the engravings published in *Harper’s Weekly* between 1861 and 1865 were derived from sources other than photographs.²² However, I argue that *Harper’s* drew upon photography’s evolving evidentiary status, as well as the aesthetics of sentimentalism, to use photographic images of atrocity to orient readers to its increasingly Republican

²⁰ Among others, see Jason E. Hill, *Artist as Reporter: Weegee, Ad Reinhardt, and the PM News Picture* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2018).

²¹ Kevin 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, “D’après photographie: Premiers usages de la photographie dans le journal *L’Illustration* (1843–1859),” *Études photographiques* 13 (2003): 56–85; Thierry Gervais, *The Making of Visual News: A History of Photography in the Press*, trans. John Tittenson (London: Bloomsbury, 2017).

²² Kate Addelman-Frankel, “Photographic Engravings During the American Civil War,” in *Dispatch: War Photographs in Print, 1854–2008*, ed. Thierry Gervais (Toronto: Ryerson Image Centre, 2014), 65.

and pro-Union point of view.²³ Ultimately, this project demonstrates how an aesthetic of atrocity evolved within the Civil War mass press not as a result of the advent of photography, but from the interaction of photography, engraving, and text within a system of interdependence and collaboration.²⁴ My research also makes an important contribution to Civil War scholarship by demonstrating how *Harper's* relied upon an

²³ Regarding the admissibility of photography as visual evidence during the nineteenth century see Jennifer L. Mnookin, "The Image of Truth: Photographic Evidence and the Power of Analogy," *Yale Journal of Law and the Humanities* 10, no. 1 (1998): 1–74. On the aesthetics of sentimentalism, including the ways in which sympathy was utilized to protest enslavement, see, among others, Shirley Samuels, ed., *The Culture of Sentiment: Race, Gender, and Sentimentalism in Nineteenth-Century American Literature* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1992); Elizabeth Maddock Dillon, "Sentimental Aesthetics," *American Literature* 76, no. 3 (2004): 495–523. For the ways in which sympathy promotes processes of otherment, see Karen Sánchez-Eppler, *Touching Liberty: Abolition, Feminism, and the Politics of the Body* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1993); Marianne Noble, "The Ecstasies of Sentimental Wounding in *Uncle Tom's Cabin*," *Yale Journal of Criticism* 10, no. 2 (1997): 295–320; Martha J. Cutter, *The Illustrated Slave: Empathy, Graphic Narrative, and the Visual Culture of the Transatlantic Abolition Movement, 1800–1852* (Athens, GA: The University of Georgia Press, 2017). On the mingling of sentimentalism and the visual empiricism associated with photography in images of atrocity, see especially Cassandra Jackson, *Violence, Visual Culture, and the Black Male Body* (New York: Routledge, 2011); Courtney R. Baker, *Humane Insight: Looking at Images of African American Suffering and Death* (Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 2015), 25–28.

²⁴ Here I employ a definition of "aesthetics" similar to that of Matthew Fuller and Eyal Weizman. In their publication *Investigative Aesthetics: Conflicts and Commons in the Politics of Truth*, Fuller and Weizman describe aesthetics not as an act of beautification, but rather as a "mode of perception, a combination of sensing and sense-making, one scaffolded by assembling multiple perspectives and situated registers." I thus use the term "aesthetic of atrocity" to denote not *Harper's* beautification of atrocity, but rather the ways in which the newspaper constructed atrocity within a framework of human observation and the adjudication of relations between persons and things. Matthew Fuller and Eyal Weizman, *Investigative Aesthetics: Conflicts and Commons in the Politics of Truth* (London: Verso, 2021), 28.

existing public archive of text and images to report the news, in addition to employing a staff charged with gathering new information.

Today, it may seem surprising, or even shocking, that a newspaper would so blatantly employ images of human suffering for political purposes. However, *Harper's* use of photographic images of atrocity was aligned with the newspaper's belief that images of all kinds could be morally and politically instructive. This position is perhaps best articulated in an article entitled "The Business of Illustrated Newspapers," published in its March 12, 1859 issue. In "The Business of Illustrated Newspapers," an unnamed author addresses accusations that *Harper's* published graphic images only to sell papers, in spite of the negative impact that they may have on the moral character of readers.²⁵ The article was written in response to criticisms that *Harper's* had received from a letter to the *New York Times*, in which an author identified only as "J.C.H." characterized the publication of images of murder and crime in the illustrated weeklies as a "prostitution of the fine arts" that would impede the forward progress of civil society.²⁶ Referring specifically to illustrations in *Harper's* that represented the murder of the Gouldy Family in New York and that of a "deaf and dumb boy" in Utah—as well as the anticipation that both *Harper's* and its primary competitor, *Frank Leslie's Illustrated Newspaper*, would publish pictures of the salacious Sickles-Key affair—J.C.H. argued that such illustrations degrade the publications, causing them to fail to live up to their edifying potential as "journals of

²⁵ "The Business of Illustrated Newspapers," *Harper's Weekly*, March 12, 1859, HarpWeek.

²⁶ "Some Strictures Upon a Class of Illustrated Weekly Newspapers," *New York Times*, March 4, 1859, PQHN.

civilization.”²⁷ Describing his own experience with the weekly illustrated papers, J.C.H. writes:

We take them up with a feeling of satisfaction after the business of the day is ended, when with slippers on we sit with wife and children around the fireside; and the disappointment is great to find them ranged on the side of barbarism, so that instead of ministering to the pleasures of the household, the best thing to be done is to put them between the bars of the grate. This we have been compelled to do more than once—much to the astonishment of the little ones, who wonder “Why Papa burns all the pretty pictures.”²⁸

Asserting his own faith in the press as a “great engine for good,” J.C.H. points to the pedagogical role that illustrated papers play in the moral construction of the household, “for the little ones who clamber about our knees...drink in education from the pictures, of which they never tire.”²⁹ The article then concludes by imploring the illustrated weeklies to give readers “scenes of beauty and joy and love” rather than bloodshed and murder, remarking that “it may be very consoling to the publisher that

²⁷ On October 26, 1858, in New York City, Frank Gouldy attacked his family with a hatchet, eventually killing his father and a female servant. *Harper's Weekly* published graphic images of the attack, including illustrations of the blood-stained bodies, in the November 6, 1858 issue. See “Horrible Tragedy in 30th Street,” *New York Tribune*, October 28, 1858, 6; “Terrible Tragedy in New York,” *Harper's Weekly*, November 6, 1858, HarpWeek. On the murder of Andrew Bernard in Utah, which may be considered part of Harper's anti-Mormon bias, see “The Murder of the Deaf and Dumb Boy in Utah,” *Harper's Weekly*, February 26, 1858, HarpWeek. On February 27, 1859, Senator Daniel Sickles (D-NY) murdered U.S. attorney Philip Barton Key II, after discovering that Key was having an affair with his wife. Notably, Harper's coverage of Key's murder appears in the same issue as “The Business of Illustrated Newspapers.” The description of illustrated newspapers as “journals of civilization” is a reference to *Harper's Weekly's* subtitle as “A Journal of Civilization.”

²⁸ “Some Strictures.”

²⁹ *Ibid.*

his paper sells, but there are things more comforting than prosperity and more durable than money.”³⁰ Inviting a direct response from the offending papers themselves, the author asks: “What good can it do? what end of justice will it answer? What great aim will it hold up?”³¹

Almost immediately *Harper’s* responded to these accusations in “The Business of Illustrated Newspapers,” which forcefully labels the request that they devote the whole paper to “scenes of beauty of joy and love” as pathetic.³² Describing the critic as being under a misapprehension, *Harper’s* asserts that it is “a newspaper, not a nursery tract or a child’s hymn-book.”³³ According to *Harper’s* unnamed editorialist, the purpose of the newspaper is to present readers with illustrated accounts of the events of the day, whatever they may be, noting that “If we see nothing around us but ‘scenes of beauty and joy and love,’ then our pictures shall reflect those pleasing themes...if, on the contrary, crime, violence, and wrong continue to constitute a large share of the mass of daily events, then we shall illustrate them too.”³⁴ The clarity with which *Harper’s* article then articulates the newspaper’s editorial and pedagogical position compels lengthy quotation. The author writes:

³⁰ “Some Strictures.”

³¹ *Ibid.*

³² Note that, although the issue is dated March 12, 1859, it would have appeared on newsstands on March 5, 1859—only a day after the letter was printed in the *New York Times*. The alacrity with which *Harper’s* responded to the letter is compelling.

³³ “The Business of Illustrated Newspapers.”

³⁴ *Ibid.*

We hold, in opposition to our critic, that pictures of terrible scenes of bloodshed and violence are calculated to do more good than harm. We do not believe that crime is stimulated by light, and that darkness and secrecy are necessarily favorable to virtue. We can not admit that newspapers are agents of evil because they publish full accounts of terrible crimes, with or without illustrations. We have never supposed that sons would be induced to murder their fathers by the sight of the Gouldy pictures, or that the shocking spectacle of the homicide of a young and promising man like Key was likely to enlarge the circle of adulterers. On the contrary, we are quite satisfied that the tendency of such pictures is to lead the erring to pause; to warn the wayward youth of the goal to which he may be tending; to remind thoughtless women and eager men of the terrible consequences of guilty love; to drive home the lessons which the pulpit and moralists can but mildly urge.³⁵

Though *Harper's* shares the view that pictures of violence or atrocity had the potential to impact readers' sensibilities, the periodical diverges from J.C.H.'s opinion in the belief that such disturbing pictures would actually prevent readers from committing sinful error. In the article *Harper's* also asserts that the publication of such pictures could have practical, material consequences by helping to bring criminals to justice by sparking public outcry, as they claim to have done in the case of the murder of the young boy in Utah. This exchange demonstrates not only the ways in which the publication took seriously its role as a moral arbiter but also its pictorial self-awareness in the time immediately preceding the American Civil War, thereby laying the groundwork for our inquiry. This dissertation proceeds from the above example and extends *Harper's* editorial engagement with questions of nineteenth-century morality beyond scenes of petty crime and murder to the deeper framework of American identity, including questions of freedom, unfreedom, and "who counts" in the democratic experience.

³⁵ "The Business of Illustrated Newspapers."

Structure of the Dissertation

In the following three chapters, this project considers how the material and discursive space of *Harper's Weekly* illustrated newspaper mediated the public's relationship with Civil War and Reconstruction-era violence. I also explore how *Harper's* used illustrations of atrocity to teach readers how to think about civic and moral issues during a tumultuous period in American history. Each chapter is anchored by case studies of articles in which *Harper's* has published a photographic illustration of atrocity and employed photography's growing evidentiary authority to characterize the Confederacy as barbarous and inhumane, and therefore unworthy of political compromise. Here the word "atrocity" is used to signify a cruel or violent act, or other extreme violations of universal notions of humanity. Often atrocity is shown as an action on the human body; examples of atrocity include murder, injury, torture, amputation, burning, and massacre. Images of atrocity are often intended to demonstrate, or illustrate, the fact of such a cruel or violent act. Importantly, as Jay Prosser writes in his introduction to the publication *Picturing Atrocity: Photography of Crisis*, the word "atrocity" "implies an agent, and we thus look for a victim, so as to identify, name and condemn an inhumane act—in order to make sense of what we have seen."³⁶ Photographs of atrocity most often figure the victim of such violation, with the unseen perpetrator merely implied; in this way, the victim's body is used as evidence of another's civic transgression.³⁷ This dissertation examines photographic

³⁶ Jay Prosser, "Introduction," in *Picturing Atrocity: Photography in Crisis*, eds. Geoffrey Batchen, Mick Gidley, Nancy K. Miller, and Jay Prosser (London: Reaktion Books, 2012), 11.

³⁷ Elizabeth B. Clark, "'The Sacred Rights of the Weak': Pain, Sympathy, and the Culture of Individual Rights in Antebellum America," *The Journal of American History* 82, no. 2 (Sept. 1995): 473.

images of atrocity in order to understand how images of atrocity were used as particular political tools in the nineteenth-century, while also considering the ways in which spectacular violence is central to the enactment of subjugation and the constitution of particular subjects of abjection.³⁸

The three major chapters following this introduction examine *Harper's* publication of photographic images of atrocity at critical inflection points in the direction of the nation: in 1863, as the enlistment of Black soldiers in the Union army caused a crisis in definitions of masculinity and American citizenship; in 1864, as the presidential election offered the American public an opportunity to determine whether to continue the war or pursue peace with the Confederacy; and in 1866, as the policies of Reconstruction fomented anxieties about reconciliation and democratic participation after the Civil War. These case studies weave formal considerations and material practices with the newspaper's positions on issues such as the war and Emancipation and provide crucial contrasts through *Harper's* approach to the suffering of Black and white bodies. My inquiry begins with the year 1863 as it represented a turning point not only in the war, but also in the political culture of *Harper's Weekly*. In the early days of the war, *Harper's* had faced criticism for its neutrality on many issues; this nonpartisan editorial position is often credited to Fletcher Harper, the brother in charge of publishing the *Weekly*, whose desire to maintain the business of Southern subscribers led the newspaper to declare, in 1862, that "*Harper's Weekly* has no politics."³⁹ However, by 1863, the editorial tone of the

³⁸ Hartman, *Scenes of Subjection*, 3–4; Ariella Azoulay, *Civil Imagination: A Political Ontology of Photography* (London: Verso, 2012).

³⁹ "Who is Who?," *Harper's Weekly*, October 11, 1862, HarpWeek.

newspaper had shifted considerably. This is attributable, in part, to Harper's own increased recognition of the political and social implications of the war, as well as the hiring of two important figures in 1862: cartoonist Thomas Nast (1840–1902) and political editor George William Curtis (1824–1892). Though Nast and Curtis had vastly different approaches—Nast produced scathing, satirical cartoons of political opponents, while Curtis was considered more restrained and well-reasoned in the writing of his editorials—they were united in their political positions.⁴⁰ Together, they steered *Harper's Weekly* to adopt a more vocally Republican stance, which thereby impacted the context in which *Harper's* illustrations of atrocity appeared, and the ways in which they were perceived by *Harper's* readers.⁴¹

The first primary case study, examined in chapter two, focuses on the article entitled “A Typical Negro,” which was published in *Harper's Weekly* on July 4, 1863. The article notably featured a wood engraving after a famous *carte de visite* known as *The Scourged Back*. This photograph, which was taken in Baton Rouge in April 1863, depicts a formerly enslaved man known as Gordon contorting his frame to present the scars of past abuse.⁴² Originally produced as a *carte de visite*, a 2 ½ x 4-inch albumen

⁴⁰ On the differences between Nast and Curtis, see J. Henry Harper, *The House of Harper: A Century of Publishing in Franklin Square* (New York: Harper and Brothers, 1912), 240–241.

⁴¹ Regarding the shift in *Harper's Weekly's* editorial tone, which coincided with George William Curtis assuming the editorship, see Edward Cary, *George William Curtis* (Boston: Houghton, Mifflin and Company, 1894), 168–182; Frank Luther Mott, *A History of American Magazines; Vol. 2: 1850–1865* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1938), 474. J. Henry Harper also described Curtis as “growing into the heart of the House.” Harper, *The House of Harper*, 198.

⁴² This figure is perhaps best known as Gordon, the name given him to by *Harper's Weekly*, although there are copies of his *cartes de visite* that identify him as “Peter.”

paper print adhered to card stock, Gordon's image was circulated, copied, collected, and displayed as part of abolitionist visual campaigns in the North and in Europe. In *Harper's*, Gordon's scarred back appears framed by two other illustrations that show his transformation from an escaped bondsman to a soldier, therefore demonstrating the redemptive power of military service and the potentialities of citizenship for Black Americans. This recuperative presentation was strategically used by *Harper's* not only to strengthen public support for the war effort and emancipation, but also to justify the enlistment of Black soldiers at a crucial moment during the war. Building upon the work of scholars such as David Silkenat, Bruce Laurie, and Cassandra Jackson, this chapter provides new insight into the production and circulation of Gordon's photograph prior to its appearance in *Harper's Weekly* and considers how networks of interpersonal exchange contributed to the formation of news, while also providing a framework for the case studies explored in the subsequent two chapters.

Chapter three explores photographs of Union soldiers that were taken shortly after their release from Confederate prison camps, and which were reproduced as wood engravings on the June 18, 1864 cover of *Harper's Weekly*. The images featured on *Harper's* June 18, 1864 cover are, in fact, part of a larger series of photographs taken in Annapolis and Baltimore, Maryland following the release of Union soldiers from Confederate prisons in Richmond, Virginia in the spring of 1864. Also produced as *cartes de visite*, these horrifying photographs were intended to both document the prisoners' physical condition upon their arrival at U.S. army hospitals and provide

Recent unpublished scholarship by Carol DeGrasse and Anthony J. Cade has identified the man's correct name as "Peter Gordon." Hereafter I will therefore refer to him as "Gordon," in reference to his surname.

additional visual evidence to support claims of Confederate cruelty. The photographs were then circulated, collected, copied, and displayed across the North as a part of a political campaign against the South in the run-up to the 1864 presidential election. This election represented a critical moment in the Civil War because it provided American voters with an opportunity to determine whether the nation was to continue the war or to negotiate for peace, as the incumbent President Abraham Lincoln (1809–1865) faced a serious challenge from the Democratic candidate, former Union General George B. McClellan (1826–1885), whose party advocated immediate compromise. Drawing upon the work of scholars such as Ann Fabian, Katherine Fein, and Mary Niall Mitchell, who have carefully attended to the racial politics of the Civil War and abolitionist movements, this chapter argues that those who circulated the Annapolis prisoner photographs, including *Harper's Weekly*, did so in part to divert viewers' attention away from the interests of Black Americans when the war and emancipation were becoming increasingly divisive issues within the context of the presidential election.

The fourth and final chapter focuses on *Harper's* publication of a portrait of Martha Ann Banks, a young African American woman who was abused by her former enslaver, which appeared in *Harper's Weekly* on July 28, 1866. An accompanying article entitled “A Cruel Punishment” identifies Banks's engraved image as made after a photograph that was sent to *Harper's* by a “gentleman” in Richmond, Virginia, along with a letter that provides further context. According to the letter reprinted by *Harper's*, the photograph shows the effects of “punishment by a hot iron on the back of a negro girl about 13 years of age, inflicted by a virago by the name of Mrs. A— living in King William County.” The article goes on to report that the girl's abuser had

been arrested and that the case was now under investigation by the Bureau of Refugees, Freedmen, and Abandoned Lands, also known as the Freedmen's Bureau. Echoing the formal composition of *The Scourged Back*, the image of Banks enriches my investigation by focusing on the role of women, and particularly Black women, within this discussion of violence and atrocity and establishes how *Harper's* continued to adjudicate the war through the publication of images of atrocity during Reconstruction. In this chapter I also demonstrate how the representation of Banks's injured body, as both a photograph and a wood engraved reproduction in *Harper's Weekly*, was laden with the dispossessive violence of white supremacy, even though it was mobilized in the ostensible service of Black liberation.

Finally, this dissertation includes two appendices. Appendix A catalogs photographic prints of Peter Gordon, also known known as *The Scourged Back*, that I have located over the course of my research. Appendix B catalogs photographs of prisoners of war taken in U.S. General Hospitals in Annapolis during the American Civil War. By including these appendices, I demonstrate the volume of the photographs' production and circulation during the Civil War, in addition to providing a resource for future scholarship.

Methodological Approach

In my engagement with both engraved illustrations and their photographic sources, I consider not only the forms of the images but also the circumstances of their production, circulation, and publication by *Harper's Weekly*. My analysis asks: what were the motivations behind the photograph's initial production? What historical conditions informed the way that the photograph was circulated as an informational tool prior to its appearance in *Harper's Weekly*? What qualities did these photographs

possess—both materially and graphically—that made them the ideal form for the transmission of ideas? How was the impact of a photograph of atrocity framed by its circulation, display, and translation into other media, including as wood engravings in *Harper's Weekly*? Or, how did these images serve as indexes of human suffering and feeling even in the form of an engraving, and what role did *Harper's* rhetoric play in positioning them as such?

Interdisciplinary in scope and ambition, this dissertation is informed by methodologies in material culture and visual culture studies, as well as scholarship that addresses the history and operation of nineteenth-century periodicals; the relationship between newspapers and the shaping of public opinion; and questions of interracial identification and empathy as activated through sentimental narration. My own object-based research forms the foundation of this project, as I have traced the circulation of photographs of atrocity prior to their appearance in *Harper's Weekly*, working on site in collections across the United States. I also attend closely to the materials and infrastructures of print and the publishing of illustrated newspapers, such as they enhance our understanding of the ways in which readers apprehended these news-pictures.

Importantly, this dissertation considers *Harper's* “remediation” of these images as part of the broader network of photographic circulation during the Civil War.⁴³ The term “remediation” is used to signify not only the commercial practice of

⁴³ On the conceptual possibilities of circulation, I am especially indebted to the work of Jennifer Roberts and François Brunet. Jennifer L. Roberts, *Transporting Visions: The Movement of Images in Early America* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2014); François Brunet, “No Representation Without Circulation,” in *Circulation*, ed. François Brunet (Chicago: Terra Foundation for American Art, 2017).

translating images from one medium to another, but also the formal logic by which the photograph was refashioned by the wood engraving and the ways in which the meaning of the image was transmitted and determined by this process.⁴⁴ This analysis aims to intertwine photographic objects with their reproduction as wood engravings and, in doing so, follows the examples of scholars such as Stephen Bann, Geoffrey Batchen, Geoffrey Belknap, Estelle Jussim, and Michael Leja, among others, who have brought renewed attention to the ways in which the mediums and processes of reproduction contribute to the production of photographic meaning.⁴⁵ Drawing upon the work of scholars such as Abigail Solomon-Godeau and Thierry Gervais, as well as the anthropological studies of Elizabeth Edwards and Deborah Poole, this dissertation further situates photographs of atrocity in a larger cultural apparatus that accounts for the images' instrumentalities and social uses.⁴⁶ This approach differs from past studies

⁴⁴ I employ a definition of remediation similar to that of Jay David Bolter and Richard Grusin, who use the term to signify the representation of one medium in another, particularly in the context of digital media. However, I deviate in that I emphasize the creation of a new, material object, as an older medium (wood engraving), borrowed content from a newer medium (photography). See Jay David Bolter and Richard Grusin, *Remediation: Understanding New Media* (Cambridge, MA: MIT Press, 2002).

⁴⁵ Stephen Bann, *Parallel Lines: Printmakers, Painters and Photographers in Nineteenth-Century France* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2001); Geoffrey Batchen, *Apparitions: Photography and Dissemination* (Sydney: Power Publications, 2018); Geoffrey Belknap, *From a Photograph: Authenticity, Science and the Periodical Press, 1870-1890* (London: Bloomsbury, 2016); Michael Leja, "Fortified Images for the Masses," *Art Journal* 70, no. 4 (Winter 2011): 60–83.

⁴⁶ See, among others, Abigail Solomon-Godeau, "Ontology, Essences, and Photography's Aesthetics: Wringing the Goose's Neck One More Time," in *Photography Theory*, ed. James Elkins (New York: Routledge, 2007), 256–269; Thierry Gervais, ed., *The "Public" Life of Photographs* (Toronto: RIC Books, 2016); Elizabeth Edwards, *Raw Histories, Photographs, Anthropology and Museums*

of Civil War photography that have prioritized the photographic print over and above its reprographic engraving, and is influenced by recent work on contemporary photojournalism that has focused on the history of particular publications, as well as the infrastructures of circulation and journalistic networks.⁴⁷ Importantly, it was because these photographic images of Civil War atrocity were translated from photographs to wood engravings that they could be combined with text and other images to serve particular arguments. “Remediation” therefore opens up an important platform to think through the capacity of a photographic image to represent or convey the politics, trauma, and experience of the American Civil War.

As artifacts, newspapers and their supporting materials have generally not been well-preserved, and *Harper’s Weekly* is no exception. Given the lack of surviving primary documentation that would illuminate the political and editorial motivations of *Harper’s Weekly*, this dissertation takes the articles and images published by *Harper’s* to be the primary evidence of the journal’s editorial sensibility. Meaning for *Harper’s* illustrations is established by applying a method of intratextual reading—that is, by reading the illustrations in relation not only to the text that was written to accompany

(Oxford: Berg, 2001); Deborah Poole, *Vision, Race, and Modernity: A Visual Economy of the Andean Image World* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1997).

⁴⁷ On the prioritization that has been placed on the photographic print over wood engraved reproductions in the discourse of Civil War photography, see, for example, John Stauffer, “The ‘Terrible Reality,’ of the First Living-Room Wars.” There are, of course, exceptions to this historiographic trend. On recent art historical scholarship that has emphasized the infrastructures of circulation and publication, see especially Hill, *The Artist as Reporter*; Gürsel Zeynep Devrim, *Image Brokers: Visualizing World News in the Age of Digital Circulation* (Oakland: University of California Press, 2016); Nadya Bair, *The Decisive Network: Magnum Photos and the Postwar Image Market* (Oakland: University of California Press, 2020).

them, but also to the other contents of *Harper's Weekly*.⁴⁸ As the scholar Katy Chiles has written, an intratextual reading recognizes and examines the “friction, overlay, and conversations” that occur among individual texts and illustrations as they come together to form a larger whole; in our case, the periodical of *Harper's Weekly*.⁴⁹ This approach reflects the logic by which nineteenth-century readers themselves apprehended the contents of newspapers, as they were encouraged by editors to make thematic connections between the different features of the publication through the interweaving of news pictures with editorial content, serial fiction, cartoons, caricature, and even advertising.⁵⁰ Often this interweaving of content was done through the formal infrastructure of the magazine, through the juxtaposition of text

⁴⁸ For the application of an intratextual reading to nineteenth-century periodicals, see Katy Chiles, “Within and without Raced Nations: Intratextuality, Martin Delany, and *Blake; or the Huts of America*,” *American Literature* 80, no. 2 (June 2008): 323–352; as well as Molly Knox Leverenz, “Illustrating ‘The Moonstone’ in America: ‘Harper’s Weekly’ and Transatlantic Introspection,” *American Periodicals* 24, no. 1 (2014): 21–44. According to Molly Leverenz, an intratextual reading differs from an intertextual approach, as an intratextual reading recognizes individual texts and illustrations as working to compose a larger whole. As Leverenz writes: “While an intertextual approach recognizes interchange or interaction between one text and another that is seen as external to the first text’s own environment...an intratextual approach recognizes and examines the interactions among articles and images that are internal to the containing whole.” See Leverenz, “Illustrating ‘The Moonstone,’” 25.

⁴⁹ Chiles, “Within and without,” 325.

⁵⁰ According to Deborah Wynne, “Victorian readers were invited by editors to adopt an intertextual approach to magazines by reading each issue’s texts in conjunction with each other, encouraging the making of thematic connections between the serial novel and other features through the power of juxtaposition.” Leverenz has extended this argument to assert that nineteenth-century readers approached periodicals both *intertextually* and *intratextually*. See Deborah Wynne, *The Sensation Novel and the Victorian Family Magazine* (New York: Palgrave, 2001), 3; as well as Leverenz, “Illustrating ‘The Moonstone,’” 25.

and images in particular layouts, and “carry-overs” that would send audiences flipping to another page to finish a story started at the front.⁵¹ When analyzed alongside the broader contents of *Harper’s Weekly*, these photographic images of death and human suffering that are the focus of our inquiry become not just examples of *Harper’s* pictorial reporting of key events, but a part of the periodical’s ongoing efforts at teaching its readers how they should think about these key events.

It should be noted that the wood engraved illustrations that appear in *Harper’s Weekly* and which are derived from photographic sources are often identified as being made after photographs, with the photographer sometimes credited, though the wood engravers are not. This reflects the operational infrastructures of nineteenth century illustrated journalism, in which many of the newswriters remained anonymous. Rather than attempting to recover the identities of *Harper’s* once known, now unknown engravers, this dissertation takes the anonymity of *Harper’s* workers as an opportunity to move away from questions of authorship and to consider instead the politics and meaning embedded in the materials and technologies of image-making themselves.⁵² In this approach I am indebted to the work of art historians such as Michael Gaudio, who has argued that instead of “explain[ing] away the physical substance of the engraving as the neutral agent of symbolic meaning,” scholarship

⁵¹ On the significance of “carry-overs” see Hill, *Artist as Reporter*. On the interweaving of editorial and advertising content into a “coherently structured text,” see Sally Stein, “The Graphic Ordering of Desire: Modernization of a Middle-Class Women’s Magazine, 1919–1939,” in *The Contest of Meaning: Critical Histories of Photography*, ed. Richard Bolton (Cambridge, MA: MIT Press, 1993): 145–162.

⁵² Jennifer Y. Chuong, “Engraving’s ‘Immovable Veil’: Phillis Wheatley’s Portrait and the Politics of Technique,” *The Art Bulletin* 104, no. 2 (2022): 65.

must grant attention to the system of meaning making embedded within the work of the engraver. I am also inspired by the more recent research of Jennifer Chuong, who has argued for the “methodological and theoretical importance of engaging the physical surface of an artwork as a complement to unearthing its latent meanings via iconographic interpretation.”⁵³

A Note on Relevancy

This dissertation was read alongside the rise of the Black Lives Matter movement and the unfolding of a racial reckoning in the United States, as the recorded murders of too many Black Americans—including Eric Garner, George Floyd, Walter Scott, and Tyree Nichols—forced Americans to not only confront their own relationship to anti-Black violence, but also consider whether we had a civic duty or moral obligation to bear witness to these traumatic media events. As an art historian whose research engages with images of historic, anti-Black violence, my work has required me to ask difficult questions about what it means to navigate an archive of racial subjugation, and the political, ethical, and moral implications of circulating images of violence, and particularly images of racialized violence. How can we confront the silences and erasures that exist within the archive and advocate for a reading of history that creates space for the historically marginalized? How can we tell stories of racial subjugation and racialized violence without committing further violence in our own acts of narration? What steps can we take to extend care to our

⁵³ Michael Gaudio, *Engraving the Savage: The New World and Techniques of Civilization* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 2008), xxiv; Chuong, “Engraving’s ‘Immovable Veil,’” 65–66.

subjects and audiences in presenting challenging and/or disturbing images, including images of injured and suffering bodies? The approach I have taken, which focuses on unpacking the layers of mediation and political rhetoric that have determined an image's meaning and circulation, has helped me to speak to the inequity of the archive, as well as my own subject position. As a white female historian, I acknowledge my own inescapable role as a mediating force, in addition to my own privilege and the historic complicity of white people, whether knowingly or unknowingly, in anti-Black racism and racialized violence.

In this dissertation, I show images of atrocity and describe instances of violence which may be disturbing to some readers. These images show subjects in states of significant injury and vulnerability and were presumably taken without the subjects' full consent. Contemporary viewers of this dissertation may be compelled to look away, reminded, perhaps, of prior traumatic experiences of viewing images of human suffering, such as those of victims from the Nazi concentration camps or anti-Black violence, as well as attendant debates surrounding the political efficacy of the act of looking.⁵⁴ These pictures are shown as part of an effort to understand the ways

⁵⁴ For discourse surrounding the experience of looking at images of atrocity, including those that document the horrors of the Holocaust, see, among others, Ulrich Baer, *Spectral Evidence: The Photography of Trauma* (Cambridge, MA: Massachusetts Institute of Technology, 2002); Susie Linfield, *The Cruel Radiance: Photography and Political Violence* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2010); Susan Sontag, *Regarding the Pain of Others* (New York: Farrar, Straus & Giroux 2003); Barbie Zelizer, *Remembering to Forget: Holocaust Memory Through the Camera's Eye* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1998). For discourse surrounding the circulation of images of Black suffering and death, especially as the result of police violence, see Elizabeth Alexander, "'Can You Be BLACK and Look at This?': Reading the Rodney King Video," *Public Culture* 7, no. 1 (1994): 77–94; William C. Anderson, "Against Consuming Images of the Brutalized, Dead and Dying," *Hyperallergic*, June 1, 2018, <https://hyperallergic.com/445105/against->

in which images of atrocity were circulated freely in the nineteenth century, and, as such, requires that we consider the appropriateness of publishing and exhibiting such images both then and now.

In her book *The Cruel Radiance: Photography and Political Violence* the scholar and critic Susie Linfield argued that we should look at photographic images of violence, writing that “we cannot talk – at least in meaningful or realistic ways – about building a world of democracy, justice, and human rights without first understanding the experience of their negation.”⁵⁵ In advancing this argument, Linfield is responding to the work of earlier critics like Susan Sontag, John Berger, and Roland Barthes, who expressed skepticism that images of horror and human suffering had the potential to provoke political action.⁵⁶ Although I do not subscribe to the positions of Sontag and others of her more immediate postwar generation, I remain unresolved as to whether we need to advocate for audiences to look at these pictures in order to build a more

[consuming-images-of-the-brutalized-dead-and-dying/](#); Allissa V. Richardson, *Bearing Witness While Black: African Americans, Smartphones, and the New Protest # Journalism* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2020); Melanye Price, “Please Stop Showing the Video of George Floyd’s Death,” *New York Times*, June 3, 2020, <https://www.nytimes.com/2020/06/03/opinion/george-floyd-video-social-media.html>; Allissa V. Richardson, ‘The Problem with Police Shooting Videos’, *Atlantic*, August 30, 2020, <https://www.theatlantic.com/culture/archive/2020/08/the-problem-with-police-shooting-videos-jacob-blake/615880/>; A.O. Scott, “The Responsibility of Watching,” *New York Times*, January 28, 2023, <https://www.nytimes.com/2023/01/28/arts/television/body-cam-video-tyre-nichols-watch.html>.

⁵⁵ Linfield, *The Cruel Radiance*, xv.

⁵⁶ Although Sontag would later revise the skepticism she expressed in *On Photography*, Linfield is specifically responding to that earlier publication. Susan Sontag, *On Photography* (New York: Farrar, Straus & Giroux, 1973). For Sontag’s revisiting of her earlier work, see Sontag, *Regarding the Pain of Others*, 104–113.

just and equitable future. In this, I take seriously the argument set forth by Saidiya Hartman, among others, that the repetition and reproduction of spectacular violence in historical narration is itself a form of violence.

Throughout this dissertation I therefore endeavor to think imaginatively against the disciplinary framework of Art History, which has historically emphasized surety, resolve, and the acquisition of fixed knowledge, and to instead make space for irresolution, doubt, ambivalence, and speculation, especially when it comes to these images of atrocity. I have also tried throughout this project, and in public presentations and publications, to hold space for the difficult feelings which images of atrocity may evoke for audiences. It is my belief that a question of care and an ethics of looking, as well as a sense of creative possibility, must be at the forefront of any future critical engagements with images of violence, particularly if we are to build more just and equitable futures. I hope, in some small way, that this project contributes to such a future.

Chapter 2

“A TYPICAL NEGRO”: *HARPER’S WEEKLY* AND THE ICONICITY OF BLACK MALE SUFFERING DURING THE AMERICAN CIVIL WAR

The year 1863 represented a critical turning point for both the American Civil War and *Harper’s Weekly* illustrated newspaper. On January 1, 1863, President Abraham Lincoln signed the Emancipation Proclamation, an act that not only freed all enslaved persons in areas under Confederate control, but also altered the nature of the American Civil War by firmly wedding the goals of the union with those of abolition. As historian Eric Foner has written, the Emancipation Proclamation had the important effect of “Firing the northern war effort with moral purpose,” and crystallizing “a new identification between the ideal of human freedom” and the increasing power of the nation-state.⁵⁷ In addition to the transformative effect that it had upon the moral character of the Civil War, the Proclamation also included a radical provision which allowed for the enlistment of African American men in the Union army, thereby placing the question of Black male citizenship on the national agenda in a newly visible way.⁵⁸ It was also at this time that *Harper’s Weekly* illustrated newspaper hired the progressive writer George William Curtis to serve as its political editor. It was in the context of Curtis’s leadership that *Harper’s* then published one of the most iconic

⁵⁷ For a summary of the Emancipation Proclamation’s effect on the character of the war, see Eric Foner, *Forever Free: The Story of Emancipation and Reconstruction* (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 2005), 50–51.

⁵⁸ *Ibid.*, 51–53.

illustrations of atrocity, an image that still continues to resonate deeply with Americans, even today.⁵⁹

On July 4, 1863, *Harper's Weekly* published a shocking illustration of atrocity that was intended to demonstrate for its readers the horrors of enslavement and to ignite Northern support for both the war effort and for the Black men who now sought to distinguish themselves by serving in the Union army (fig. 4).⁶⁰ Appearing toward the end of the issue, the wood engraved illustration represents a middle-aged Black man seated upon a stool with his shirt removed and his clothing bunched at his waist. Positioned in a dramatic three-quarter pose, with his legs and torso turned to the left and his face registered in profile, the man contorts his frame to reveal a dramatically scarred back that testifies to the brutality of his enslaved past while simultaneously registering his identity. While the man's right hand is obscured by his body, his left hand rests at his side in a somewhat unnatural position, with the palm turned upward, the wrist slightly bent, and the fingers grasping the top of his left hip. As rendered by the linear character of the wood engraving process, the strong lines formed by the striking posture of the man's left arm and fingers direct the viewer's eye to the dramatic webbing of scars that cover his body, the physical evidence of his prior abuse.

Captioned "Gordon Under Medical Inspection," the image of the man's scarred back is framed on *Harper's* page by two other, slightly smaller illustrations which

⁵⁹ On the iconic character of this image, see chapter five.

⁶⁰ As *Harper's Weekly* was advance-dated by one week, this issue would have actually appeared on newsstands and in subscription offices on Saturday, June 27, 1863. On the advance-dating of *Harper's Weekly*, see Brown, *Beyond the Lines*, 255.

purport to show his embodied transformation from an escaped bondsperson to a soldier (fig. 5). Captioned “Gordon As He Entered Our Lines” and “Gordon In His Uniform As A U.S. Soldier,” respectively, the framing illustrations depict, on the left, a Black man in tattered clothes, and on the right, a Black man in a Union military uniform with his hands resting upon the barrel of a musket. An accompanying article entitled “A Typical Negro” reports that the three illustrations depict “the negro GORDON, who escaped from his master in Mississippi, and came into our lines at Baton Rouge in March last.”⁶¹ The article goes on to report that Gordon had escaped from his enslaver following a brutal whipping and endured a “long race through the swamps and bayous, chased...by his master with several neighbors and a back of blood-hounds.”⁶² *Harper’s* unnamed author also notes that Gordon “displayed unusual intelligence and energy” in engineering his escape, and had evaded detection by rubbing his body with onions stolen from the plantation, which “threw the dogs off the scent.”⁶³ He had since then served as a guide to Union troops in Louisiana, though he had been taken prisoner by the Confederacy and was beaten and left for dead, before “[coming] to life and once more making his way to Union lines.”⁶⁴ Aggregated in the lower register of the page, *Harper’s* Gordon triptych appears beneath a large sketch

⁶¹ “A Typical Negro,” *Harper’s Weekly*, July 4, 1863, HarpWeek.

⁶² Ibid. On the whipping of enslaved persons, see Edward E. Baptist, *The Half Has Never Been Told: Slavery and the Making of American Capitalism* (New York: Basic Books, 2014), especially 117–118, 121–122, 139–142; Marcus Wood, *Blind Memory: Visual Representations of Slavery in England and America, 1780–1865* (New York: Routledge, 2000), 260–271.

⁶³ “A Typical Negro,” *Harper’s Weekly*.

⁶⁴ Ibid.

illustration of the Combahee River Raid, in which the 2nd South Carolina Volunteer Infantry, an African American military regiment, liberated enslaved persons from South Carolina rice plantations. Taken as a whole, the dynamics of *Harper's* page layout are thus engineered to suggest the potentialities of Gordon's future military service.

“A Typical Negro,” the accompanying article in *Harper's Weekly*, further identifies the three engraved portraits that comprise the Gordon triptych as having been made after photographs derived from the Baton Rouge-based studio of McPherson and Oliver (figs. 6, 7, and 8). These photographs originated in the context of a military encampment and were part of an ongoing photographic practice that sought to document the fact and conditions of formerly enslaved individuals who sought refuge behind Union army lines.⁶⁵ Produced as *cartes de visite*, or 2 ½ x 4-inch albumen paper prints adhered to card stock, the photographs of Gordon were circulated, copied, and collected across the North, where they were folded into a preexisting discourse of sentimentalism that positioned the body of the enslaved within arguments for abolition. It was in this context that the photographs were later gathered and reproduced as wood engravings in the pages of *Harper's Weekly* illustrated newspaper.

In his 2014 article entitled “‘A Typical Negro’: Gordon, Peter, Vincent Colyer, and the Story Behind Slavery’s Most Famous Photograph,” the historian David

⁶⁵ On the practice of photographing enslaved fugitives who were considered “contraband” of war, see Matthew Fox-Amato, *Exposing Slavery: Photography, Human Bondage, and the Birth of Modern Visual Politics in America* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2019), 185–193.

Silkenat writes that *Harper's* Gordon triptych played an important role in the redemptive narrative of the war and helped to justify the enlistment of Black soldiers and later Black citizenship for a public uncertain about the merits of each.⁶⁶ This occurred at a low point in public support for the war effort and emancipation, as disastrous military defeats, including those at Fredericksburg in December 1862 and Chancellorsville in May 1863, had “pushed many Northerners to conclude that the war was unwinnable, or at least to question the merits of continuing to fight.”⁶⁷ However, Silkenat also argues that much of *Harper's* Gordon narrative is likely fabricated. Pointing to the existence of other photographs that identify the subject with the lacerated back as “Peter,” as well as the supposition that the men depicted in the accompanying illustrations are different individuals than the man with the scarred back, Silkenat writes that, in creating the image of “Gordon,” abolitionists and newspaper publishers “homogenized African Americans and their individual experiences in the service of the redemptive narrative.”⁶⁸ These historical actors thereby “dismissed the individual experience of the man” at the same time that they used his image to highlight slavery’s brutality and to ostensibly support Black liberation. Since the publication of Silkenat’s foundational essay the scholars Bruce Laurie, Carol DeGrasse, and Anthony J. Cade have shed additional light not only on

⁶⁶ David Silkenat, “‘A Typical Negro’: Gordon, Peter, Vincent Colyer, and the Story behind Slavery’s Most Famous Photograph,” *American Nineteenth Century History* 15, no. 2 (2014): 169–186.

⁶⁷ *Ibid.*, 170.

⁶⁸ *Ibid.* Carole Emberton also makes a similar argument. Carole Emberton, *Beyond Redemption: Race, Violence, and the American South After the Civil War* (Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 2013).

the origins of the iconic image of the man with scarred back, but also the subject's actual lived experience, thereby emphasizing the gap between *Harper's* meditation of Gordon's narrative and his unique lived experience.⁶⁹ In reflection of this ongoing work, the man with the scarred back will hereafter be identified by his full name of "Peter Gordon," or simply by his surname "Gordon."⁷⁰

As the first primary case study of this dissertation, this chapter will revisit the well-known example of "A Typical Negro" and its central illustration of the African American man with the lacerated back and establish a framework for analysis that will resonant across the subsequent two chapters. By aggregating more recent scholarship on the photograph's origins, as well as providing new insight into the image's copying by different photographic studios across the United States, this chapter will provide a clearer timeline of the photograph's production and circulation. In examining the circulation of Gordon's photograph prior to its appearance in *Harper's Weekly* on July 4, 1863, I will demonstrate how *Harper's* editors mediated information already in circulation in service of the periodical's own editorial goals. This discussion will also extend Silkenat's analysis of the redemptive narrative of *Harper's* page layout beyond the accompanying illustrations into a more thorough intratextual reading of the July 4, 1863 issue, including those illustrations which appear on the pages preceding that of

⁶⁹ Bruce Laurie, *"Chaotic Freedom" in Civil War Louisiana: The Origins of an Iconic Image* (Amherst: University of Massachusetts Press, 2021).

⁷⁰ I am indebted to Carol DeGrasse and Anthony J. Cade for sharing the results of their as-yet unpublished research with me. Zoom conversations with the author, January 2023.

the Gordon triptych. In so doing, I will provide a greater historical context for the appropriation of Gordon's image by the white media apparatus of *Harper's Weekly*.

In building upon Silkenat's argument that, in creating the iconic image of "Gordon," abolitionists and newspaper publishers homogenized the identities and experiences of individual African Americans in pursuit of a reassuring narrative, this chapter also draws upon the work of art historians Martin Berger and Darby English on the flattening effects of photographic iconicity.⁷¹ In his essay "Emmett Till Ever After," English examines a photograph of plywood sheets covering Till's grave site taken by the artist Jason Lazarus, and uses the image to open an expanded epistemological framework for thinking through Till's iconicity within the history of anti-Black violence. According to English, Lazarus had intended to photograph an exhumation at the site but arrived too late to capture the historically significant moment; the photograph thus depicts the void left behind in this failed event of photographic capture. By "placing a void where an icon should be," Lazarus's photograph compels English to explore the disconcerting gap between Till as an archetype of Black-white relation and Till as he really was—or "the Emmett Till we need and the Emmett Till who may have really existed"—and the ways in which iconic images foreclose our imaginative engagement with historical subjects.⁷² In

⁷¹ Martin A. Berger, *Seeing Through Race: A Reinterpretation of Civil Rights Photography* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2011). On the relationship between racial icons and public life in the United States, including how iconicity can obfuscate the often-dire conditions for Black subjects, see also Nicole Fleetwood, *On Racial Icons: Blackness and the Public Imagination* (New Brunswick, NJ: Rutgers University Press, 2015).

⁷² Darby English, "Emmett Till Ever After," in *Black Is, Black Ain't*, by Hamza Walker (Chicago: The Renaissance Society at the University of Chicago, 2013), 90–94.

English's formulation, by making space for interracial intimacy, desire, and transgression, themes that often go unexplored in the favored narratives of Till's life and death, we can begin to affirm some measure of the complex humanity which Till exhibited in life and thus give images of Till the space needed to extend his historical subjectivity beyond the "flat immediacy of iconic victimhood."⁷³ I begin this chapter with the example of English's essay in order to open up a conceptual or ideological space between what we know and do not know about the iconic subject of "A Typical Negro," and to bring additional attention to the ways in which the structures that mobilized *Harper's* moral pedagogy, and the racial subjects which it aimed to produce, contributed to the historical foreclosure of Peter Gordon's identity, and the identities of other subjects of images of atrocity.

The Photographs of Peter Gordon

In his 2014 article, Silkenat identifies that there are, in fact, three different photographs that show Gordon displaying his scarred back, each of which saw wide circulation in the nineteenth century. Although all three photographs show Gordon in a similar pose, shirtless and with his back facing the camera, several key features distinguish the images from one another. In two of the images—hereafter "version A" (fig. 9) and "version B" (fig. 10)—Gordon has his left hand at his waist facing downward, and he also displays a prominent peak in his otherwise short hair. However, in version A, the back of Gordon's chair is visible on the right side of the photographic frame; in version B, this detail has been excluded. Versions A and B are also distinguished from one another through Gordon's position. In version A, Gordon

⁷³ English, "Emmett Till Ever After," 93.

is turned more to the left, with his left leg positioned nearly parallel to the horizontal axis of the photographic frame. Gordon's head is also tilted slightly downward in version A; comparatively, in version B, Gordon's head is somewhat raised, and he gazes more directly outward, allowing a few inches of facial hair to be visible beyond the curve of his left shoulder.

The third picture—hereafter “version C” (fig. 11)—closely resembles the first two in pose and dress, however in version C Gordon's left hand is twisted upward in a more stylized position that accentuates the muscles in his left arm. Bracing his fingers against his back, in version C Gordon twists his frame to reveal his profile more fully to the camera; in this image, Gordon's body appears taught and tense, evoking an air of resoluteness and gravity. Gordon's hair is also noticeably longer in version C, indicating that it was likely photographed at a later date, perhaps even weeks after he sat for versions A and B.⁷⁴ It is possible, as Silkenat suggests, that the photographers developed and circulated the first two photographs and then “recalled Gordon to the studio [to recreate] the image with slight improvements.”⁷⁵ Whatever the reason, the minor changes made to the composition between versions A/B and C made the final image more arresting and affective, an aesthetic evaluation that is borne out by the photographic archive. It is also version C which was later reproduced as a wood engraving in *Harper's Weekly* illustrated newspaper.

⁷⁴ The historian Margaret Abruzzo has offered a different interpretation, suggesting that the photographs of Gordon with shorter hair were produced later. Margaret Abruzzo, *Polemical Pain: Slavery, Cruelty and the Rise of Humanitarianism* (Baltimore: The Johns Hopkins University Press, 2011), 202.

⁷⁵ Silkenat, “‘A Typical Negro’,” 172.

Over the course of my research, I have located twenty-four prints of the photographs of Peter Gordon in public and private collections in the United States and United Kingdom, with all three variations represented within this broader group (Appendix A).⁷⁶ Nearly all of these surviving images exist as *cartes de visite*, or albumen paper prints adhered to card stock, although in the case of one photograph in the collection of the Massachusetts Historical Society, the albumen paper print has been floated off its mount and pasted directly into an album created to memorialize the war.⁷⁷ The large number of photographs of Peter Gordon that survive today demonstrates the volume of their initial production, as well as the breadth of their

⁷⁶ Note that this does not include photographs of Peter Gordon that appear in auction records, or which otherwise exist in the “shadow archive” of private collections. I borrow the term “shadow archive” from the work of theorist Allan Sekula. In his influential essay “The Body and the Archive,” Sekula describes the “shadow archive” of photography as an all-inclusive corpus that “encompasses an entire social terrain while positioning individuals within that terrain.” It is through our knowledge of the “shadow archive” that zones of deviance and respectability are demarcated, and subjects are positioned within a social and moral hierarchy. Allan Sekula, “The Body and the Archive,” *October* 39 (Winter 1986): 3–64, especially 10. The scholar Leigh Raiford has more recently extended Sekula’s theorization of the “shadow archive” to argue that the multiple visual representations of African Americans, including positive and negative images, were always, and continue to be, in dialogue with one another. See Leigh Raiford, “Ida B. Wells and the Shadow Archive,” in *Pictures and Progress: Early Photography and the Making of African American Identity*, eds. Maurice O. Wallace and Shawn Michelle Smith (Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 2012), 300, 302. Here I use the term “shadow archive” to signify those photographic images which are unseen but that necessarily impact our reading of other images.

⁷⁷ This print appears inside an album created by Henry Bowditch to memorialize his son, Nathaniel Bowditch, who was killed at the Battle of Kelly’s Ford. For an insightful discussion of Bowditch’s memorial cabinet, of which this photographic album was a part, see Katherine Fein, “White Skin, Silvered Plate: Encountering Jonathan Walker’s Branded Hand in Daguerreotype,” *Oxford Art Journal* 44, no. 3 (2021): 357–377.

circulation. Of the twenty-four known prints, version C is the most widely reproduced, with fifteen identified prints, compared to four of version A, and five of version B. The greater reproduction and circulation of version C suggests that audiences, if not simply photographic proprietors, found the later image to be the most compelling of the three variations.

Despite this vast photographic archive, relatively little is known about the production of Gordon's photographs. According to the narrative published in *Harper's Weekly*, the wood engraved illustration of Gordon's scarred back that appeared in their July 4, 1863 issue was derived from a photograph by the Baton Rouge-based studio of William McPherson (1833–1867) and A.J. Oliver (dates unknown).⁷⁸ Born in Boston, William McPherson had first operated studios in Vermont and New Hampshire, before suspending his business to become a recruiter for the Union army.⁷⁹ After his regiment suffered heavy casualties at the Battle of Antietam on September 17, 1862, the company regrouped and went into camp in Virginia; shortly thereafter, McPherson submitted his resignation and was discharged in October 1862.⁸⁰ Upon his discharge, McPherson resumed his prewar occupation as a photographer. In late 1862, McPherson traveled to New Orleans, arriving by ship alongside reinforcements for the

⁷⁸ "A Typical Negro," *Harper's Weekly*.

⁷⁹ For a summary of William McPherson's photographic career, including McPherson and Oliver's work around the siege of Port Hudson, see Lawrence Lee Hewitt, *Port Hudson: The Most Significant Battlefield Photographs of the Civil War* (Knoxville: The University of Tennessee Press, 2021), 23–25. For additional biographical details for McPherson, see Ron Field, *Silent Witness: The Civil War Through Photography and Its Photographers* (Oxford, UK: Osprey Publishing, 2017), 199–206.

⁸⁰ Hewitt, *Port Hudson*, 24.

Union's Department of the Gulf, which now occupied the Confederate state of Louisiana. Shortly after the Union army took control of Baton Rouge on December 17, 1862, McPherson opened a studio in the state capital, and by early 1863, he entered into a partnership with an A.J. Oliver.⁸¹ Together, McPherson and Oliver produced studio portraits, as well as numerous views of the city, including photographs of troop encampments and African Americans who may or may not be contrabands, or fugitives from enslavement who sought protection behind Union army lines (fig. 12).⁸² Later, after creating the various photographs of Gordon's scarred back, McPherson and Oliver would travel to Port Hudson, Louisiana, where they photographed the Union siege of that city in June and July of 1863 (fig. 13).⁸³ According to Port Hudson historian Lawrence Lee Hewitt, McPherson and Oliver continued to work together in Baton Rouge and New Orleans until the spring of 1865, when their partnership was dissolved by mutual agreement.⁸⁴

At the time of his 2014 publication, Silkenat appears to have been unaware of any surviving *cartes de visite* of Peter Gordon that featured the McPherson and Oliver backstamp. Indeed, the historian remarks that the absence of a copy with the studio's backmark, "a common feature in all of their other known images," "should cause us to

⁸¹ For evidence of McPherson's practice in Baton Rouge, see the advertisements featured in the city's local newspaper, *The Weekly Gazette and Comet*. "Ambrotypes and Photographs," *The Weekly Gazette and Comet* (Baton Rouge, LA), December 31, 1862.

⁸² Other than his association with McPherson, all that is known about Oliver is that he was drafted into the Union army in the spring of 1865. See Hewitt, *Port Hudson*, 24.

⁸³ *Ibid.*, 25–33, 185–186.

⁸⁴ *Ibid.*, 185–186.

doubt whether McPherson and Oliver were responsible for the photo.”⁸⁵ However, I was able to locate a *carte de visite* of version A of Gordon’s photograph with the McPherson and Oliver backstamp in a private collection in England (figs. 14 and 15). The presence of the studio’s backstamp on a print of version A, which shows Gordon with shorter hair and was presumably made around the same time as version B, supports the notion that McPherson and Oliver were responsible for the production of some of the earlier versions of Gordon’s photographs, if not all. As photographers working alongside the Union occupation of Baton Rouge, it is not implausible that McPherson and Oliver would have produced photographs of troops within the military encampment, including African American soldiers whose enlistment remained a relative novelty in early 1863.

The production of Gordon’s photographs as *cartes de visite* points to both their likely production in a military encampment, as well as their intended distribution. A form of negative-positive photography, *cartes de visite* consisted of 2 ½ x 4-inch albumen paper prints adhered to card stock. The invention of the *carte de visite* enabled multiple, inexpensive copies of small images to be produced from a single exposure, creating objects that mimicked the portability and ubiquity of the calling card.⁸⁶ *Cartes de visite* were a popular form of photography during the Civil War, and they were commonly created in military encampments so soldiers could send them

⁸⁵ Silkenat, “‘A Typical Negro’,” 171.

⁸⁶ Elizabeth Anne McCauley, *A.A.E. Disdéri and the Carte de Visite Portrait Photograph* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1985). For a history of paper photography, see Mazie M. Harris, *Paper Promises: Early American Photography* (Los Angeles: The J. Paul Getty Museum, 2018).

back home, thus enabling the maintenance of affective ties between the battlefield and the home front.⁸⁷ The unique format of the card mount also provided space for text to be included on the object's recto or verso, and this space was often used to advertise the object's creator or to provide information about the subject. For Sojourner Truth, a formerly enslaved woman turned abolitionist orator, text was applied to the mount of her *cartes de visite* to signify the subject's copyrighting of her own image (fig. 16). In this way, the unique format of the *carte de visite* enabled Truth to financially profit from the production and circulation of her image, and thereby support the abolitionist cause.⁸⁸

In the case of the *cartes de visite* of Peter Gordon, the photographs offer varied information about his escape from enslavement and his character, as well as insight into the copying of Gordon's images by different photographic studios across the United States and England. Much of what is known today about Gordon derives from the text appended to the versos of his *cartes de visite*. This information appears almost exclusively in typewritten text, which has either been pasted or engraved directly on to the back of the card mount. For example, the text that is engraved on the verso of the print in the collection of the Schomburg Center at the New York Public Library locates the production of the original photograph in Baton Rouge in early April 1863, and provides an evaluation of Gordon's character based on his appearance. The author, who is unnamed on the verso of the Schomburg Center's print but is identified

⁸⁷ Rosenheim, *Photography and the American Civil War*, 65.

⁸⁸ On Truth's exercise of photographic copyright, see Darcy Grimaldo Grigsby, *Enduring Truths: Sojourner's Shadows and Substance* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2015), 63–84.

elsewhere as Samuel Knapp Towle, a Surgeon for the 30th Massachusetts Volunteers, is quoted as stating that “Nothing in [Gordon]’s appearance indicates unusual viciousness; on the contrary, he seems intelligent and well-behaved” (figs. 17 and 18). By stating that Gordon seemed “intelligent and well-behaved” and not “vicious,” Towle underscores the unjustified and brutal nature of Gordon’s abuse.

In other examples, the text applied to the verso of the *cartes de visite* positions Gordon’s scarred body as broadly representative for the conditions of formerly enslaved persons in the South. For example, all of the extant prints of version B of Gordon’s photograph that I have been able to locate include a facsimile reproduction of a letter written by J.W. Mercer, a surgeon of the 47th Massachusetts Volunteers, to Colonel Lucius Bolles Marsh (1818–1901), formerly of the same regiment. The text, which has been engraved directly on to the photographic mounts, even reproduces the form of the author’s handwriting (figs. 19 and 20). It reads:

FROM LIFE, Taken at Baton Rouge, La. April 2nd 1863.
Camp Parapet, La.
August 4th 1863.

Colonel.

I have found a large number
of the four hundred contrabands examined
by me to be as badly lacerated as the specimen
represented in the enclosed photograph.

Very respectfully
Yours
J.W. Mercer
Asst. Surgeon 47th M.V.

Notably, Mercer’s letter does not refer to Gordon’s unique experience, or any interaction that the surgeon had with Gordon himself, but rather uses Gordon’s body to stand for the bodies of hundreds of formerly enslaved persons that he had encountered.

It is the text that is appended to the verso of the *cartes de visite* has also led historians to doubt *Harper's* Gordon narrative, and to express uncertainty about the accurate identification of the subjects pictured in *Harper's* triptych.⁸⁹ As stated above, in *Harper's Weekly* the man is identified as “Gordon,” and the article describes him as having escaped from bondage in Mississippi following a brutal whipping “on Christmas-day last.”⁹⁰ However, backmarks on the verso of several extant photographs of the same subject—located in the collections of the National Archives and Records Administration and the San Francisco Museum of Modern Art (SFMOMA)—identify the man as “Peter” and indicate that he escaped from bondage in Louisiana, not Mississippi (figs. 21, 22, 23 and 24). Typewritten text appended to the verso of these two *cartes de visite* state that “Peter” had been enslaved on the cotton plantation of Captain John Lyons on the Atchafalaya River, near Washington, Louisiana. These inscriptions employ first-person pronouns, thereby suggesting that the text reproduces the story as told by “Peter” himself, and also conclude by attributing the words to the subject. The typewritten text on the verso of these two photographic prints reads:

Baton Rouge, La., April 2, 1863.
Ten days from to-day I left the plantation. Overseer Artayou Carrier whipped me. My master was not present. I don't remember the whipping. I was two months in bed sore from the whipping and my senses began to come—I was sort of crazy. I tried to shoot everybody. They said so, I did not know. I did not know that I had attempted to shoot every one ;

⁸⁹ Silkenat, “‘A Typical Negro’.”

⁹⁰ “‘A Typical Negro,’” *Harper's Weekly*.

they told me so. I burned up all my clothes ; but I don't remember that. I never was this way (crazy) before. I don't know what make me come that way (crazy). My master come after I was whipped ; saw me in bed ; he discharged the overseer. They told me I attempted to shoot my wife the first one ; I did not shoot any one; I did not harm any one. My master's Capt. John Lyon, cotton planter, on Atchafalya [sic], near Washington, La. Whipped two months before Christmas.

The very words of poor PETER, taken as he sat for his picture.

Census records confirm that there was a John Lyons who resided in Opelousas in Louisiana's St. Landry Parish, whose eastern edge borders the Atchafalaya River.⁹¹ Recent, as-yet-unpublished scholarship by Carol DeGrasse also substantiates the text appended to the "poor Peter" *cartes de visite* by asserting that the subject's name was actually "Peter Gordon," and that he was, in fact, enslaved on the plantation of John and Bridget Lyons. DeGrasse's research, as well as that of historian Anthony J. Cade, further indicates that there was a man named "Peter Gordon" who enlisted in the 1st Louisiana Native Guards, one of the first all-Black regiments in the Union Army, and served in Baton Rouge and Port Hudson.⁹² Significantly, the photograph of "Peter" / "Gordon" in the collection of SFMoMA also contains a backstamp from the photographic studio of A.I. Blauvelt in Port Hudson, Louisiana, thus suggesting an

⁹¹ John Lyons, Opelousas, St. Landry Parish, Louisiana Census of Population; *Eighth Census of the United States*, 1860 (National Archives Microfilm Publication M653, Roll 424, page 954); Records of the Bureau of the Census, Record Group (RG) 29; National Archives, Washington, D.C.; Ancestry.Com Library Edition.

⁹² Zoom conversations with Carol DeGrasse and Anthony J. Cade, January 2023.

additional layer of proximity to the origination of the subject's story and its potential accuracy in relating Gordon's narrative as such.⁹³

The Circulation of Gordon's Photographs

Recent scholarship by the historian Bruce Laurie provides further insight into the production of Gordon's photographs in the context of the occupation of Baton Rouge by Union forces in the spring of 1863, as well as the early circulation of Gordon's photograph. In his book-length essay "*Chaotic Freedom*" in *Civil War Louisiana: The Origins of an Iconic Image*, Laurie not only revealed previously unknown prints of the photographic sources for *Harper's* illustrations of Gordon as an escaped bondsperson and soldier located in the collection of Historic Northampton, but also the role that two (comparatively) ordinary soldiers from the 52nd Massachusetts played in the production of Gordon's image. Drawing upon the personal correspondence of Lieutenant Marshall S. Stearns (1824–1902), who served as the Superintendent of Negro Labor during the Union occupation of Baton Rouge in 1863, as well as letters sent by his fellow soldier Henry S. Gere (1828–1914) to the *Hampshire Gazette and Northampton Courier*, Laurie provides evidence that Stearns and Gere were closely involved in the project of photographing Gordon's scarred body. Among Laurie's discoveries are a letter in which Gere, a newspaper publisher before the war, explained in a letter to readers of the *Hampshire Gazette and Northampton Advertiser* that, among the many cruelties of slavery that he had witnessed during his enlistment in the South, he had seen the bare back of a former

⁹³ On the photographic practice of Abraham I. Blauvelt and William Brooks in Louisiana, see Hewitt, *Port Hudson*, 207–211.

bondsman that had been beaten by an overseer. Gere characterized the man's back as "one of the most horrid and singular objects [he had] ever beheld," and that his fellow soldier "Lieutenant Stearns took him to an artist and had a picture made of his back."⁹⁴ In the letter reprinted by his local Northampton newspaper, Gere notes that, according to Gordon, it was "last fall when he received beating," and "notwithstanding the long time intervening, his back was still a complete mass of blisters, the sight of which could hardly fail to make one shudder."⁹⁵ Indeed, it is the "unmistakable evidence" of the scars upon Gordon's back which persuades Gere of the veracity of Gordon's account, as he otherwise "could not have believed his story."⁹⁶ Gere then concludes this passage of the letter by stating that he had purchased several copies of Gordon's photograph to send home to Northampton, and that the photograph "speaks for itself."⁹⁷ Importantly, though Gere's letter was not reprinted in the local newspaper until May 5, 1863, the headline includes the date of Gere's writing as April 6, 1863, thus placing his correspondence in close proximity to the production date of April 2, 1863 that is suggested by the inscriptions on several of the *cartes de visite*.

⁹⁴ "Army Correspondence; From the 52nd Regiment; Correspondence of the Gazette & Courier. Baton Rouge, April 6, 1863," *Hampshire Gazette and Northampton Advertiser*, May 5, 1863; Quoted in Laurie, "Chaotic Freedom," 66.

⁹⁵ "Army Correspondence."

⁹⁶ *Ibid.*

⁹⁷ *Ibid.* Notably, the collection of Historic Northampton contains several photographs that were collected by Gere during his deployment in the Southern United States, including several by McPherson and Oliver. It is in the Gere Collection of Civil War Photographs that Laurie located the previously unknown prints of the photographic sources for "Gordon As He Entered Our Lines" and "Gordon In His Uniform As A U.S. Soldier."

A week after Gere's own letter, the aforementioned Lieutenant Stearns also wrote to his wife and friend that he would send them photographs of a whipped enslaved person.⁹⁸ In an April 12, 1863 letter to his wife Sula, Stearns writes that he will send her a photograph of a "whipped darkey" that came into his contraband camp, so that she "can have some idea of the looks of the poor fellow."⁹⁹ Later, in an April 14, 1863 letter to a friend, Stearns indicated that he had sent a photograph of an African American man that was whipped to his wife. Of the man's back, Stearns wrote: "It was such a horrid sight that I would have a picture of it you ought to see it."¹⁰⁰ Stearns also sent photographs of African Americans in rags to his wife, with the hope that she would show them and the photograph of Gordon's scars to their friends.¹⁰¹ Although no photographs of Gordon survive in the Stearns family archive, one can imagine Marshall Stearns folding up one of the small *carte de visite* portraits of Gordon inside a letter that was then sent back home to friends and family in Massachusetts. Notably, the dates of Gere and Stearns's respective correspondence also situates the initial material circulation of Gordon's photograph nearly three

⁹⁸ Laurie, "*Chaotic Freedom*," 66–67.

⁹⁹ Marshall S. Stearns to Sula Stearns, April 12, 1863. Marshall Spring Stearns and Stearns Family Papers, 1862–1863, Special Collections, State Library of Massachusetts, State House, Boston, MA.

¹⁰⁰ Marshall S. Stearns to unidentified friend, April 14, 1863. Marshall Spring Stearns and Stearns Family Papers, 1862–1863, Special Collections, State Library of Massachusetts, State House, Boston, MA.

¹⁰¹ Marshall S. Stearns to Sula Stearns, April 14, 1863. Marshall Spring Stearns and Stearns Family Papers, 1862–1863, Special Collections, State Library of Massachusetts, State House, Boston, MA.

months before the reproduction of his image in the July 4, 1863 issue of *Harper's Weekly* illustrated newspaper.

In "*Chaotic Freedom*", Laurie asserts that Gere and Stearns's interaction with Peter Gordon and the production of his photograph impacted the soldiers' personal beliefs regarding emancipation. According to Laurie, Stearns likely entered the war as a Unionist, but became an Emancipationist because of his interactions with African Americans while serving as Superintendent of Negro Labor; Gere, meanwhile, was already an ardent abolitionist at the time of his enlistment, and his experience in Louisiana reinforced his preexisting views.¹⁰² In this, Laurie contextualizes his research within ongoing debates over why Northern men enlisted in the war, and the political transformation that they may or may not have undergone during the conflict, a framing that is further echoed in the circulation of Gordon's photographs. Inscriptions on the verso of extant prints of Gordon's photographs, outlined above, include reproductions of letters by other persons stationed in Louisiana in 1863, including Samuel Knapp Towle, a Surgeon for the 30th Massachusetts Volunteers, and J.W. Mercer, a surgeon for the 47th Massachusetts Volunteers. For these Northern soldiers, Gordon's photograph served as an illustration of the conditions of enslavement and formerly enslaved persons in the South, a visual supplement to that which they conveyed textually in letters to friends, family members, and colleagues back home. At the same time, the images of Gordon's lacerated back, particularly those that circulated in progressive Northern communities, provided additional visual evidence in support of arguments for the necessity to win the war in order to end

¹⁰² Laurie, "*Chaotic Freedom*," 25, 33–35.

enslavement. The choice of various photographic studios to reproduce facsimiles of correspondence on the verso of Gordon's *cartes de visite* indicates not only a creative desire to provide a genealogy of the photograph's origins, thereby reinforcing its supposed accuracy in representation, but also the role that interpersonal networks played in the formation of news, as the photographs' wide circulation set the stage for the later reproduction of Gordon's image in *Harper's Weekly*.

Public Reactions to Gordon's Photograph

Backmarks or backstamps located on the versos of the photographic prints of Peter Gordon provide evidence of the images' copying by different photographic firms throughout the United States and England after their initial production by McPherson and Oliver.¹⁰³ The extant prints that I have been able to identify include backmarks from photographic studios including those of McPherson and Oliver in Baton Rouge; Abraham Blauvelt in Port Hudson, Louisiana; Mathew Brady in Washington, D.C.; McAllister and Brother in Philadelphia; Chandler Seaver, Jr., in Boston; and Frederick Jones in London. The diversity and geographic reach of these studio imprints suggests the wide public interest in circulating Gordon's photographs, which would have occurred prior to or around the time of the publication of Gordon's image in the July 4, 1863 issue of *Harper's Weekly*. The lack of revenue stamps on the verso of these extant photographic objects indicate that all were purchased prior to August 1864, when the taxation of photographs became required.¹⁰⁴

¹⁰³ See Appendix A for a catalogue of the different photographic prints and their backmarks.

¹⁰⁴ Kathleen Fuller, "Civil War Stamp Duty; Photography as a Revenue Source," *History of Photography* 4, no. 4 (1980): 263–282.

Extensive press coverage indicates not only that Gordon's photographs circulated widely before the appearance of the wood engraved reproduction in *Harper's Weekly*, but articles from the daily press provide evidence of public reactions to the arresting sight of Gordon's lacerated back. Shortly after Gordon's photograph was produced in early April 1863, an article appeared in *The Independent*, the New York-based newspaper edited by abolitionist Henry Ward Beecher (1813–1887), that referenced Gordon's photograph. Entitled "The Scourged Back," the term by which the various photographs of Peter Gordon are now most commonly known, the article praised the ways in which the photographic object represented the deployment of the relatively recent technology in service of moral reform. Remarking upon the "photographic likeness of a slave's naked back, lacerated by the whip" which the newspaper had received from Baton Rouge, the unnamed author stated that "We have long blessed [photography] for strengthening family ties, and endearing kindred to one another [and] we bless it now for quickening the larger sentiment of humanity, and making us feel tenderly our brotherhood with the humblest."¹⁰⁵ The author further characterizes Gordon's photograph as a news picture by positioning its intervention in terms of the revelatory and informational promises of photography, noting that "we are grateful to [photography] now for dragging forth to the light those we knew not, but ought to know."¹⁰⁶

"The Scourged Back," the article in *The Independent*, also emphasizes the seeming truthfulness of the photographic image, and the power that that unmediated

¹⁰⁵ "The Scourged Back," *The Independent* (New York), May 28, 1863.

¹⁰⁶ *Ibid.*

visual information could have to morally influence viewers on the question of enslavement. Declaring that “the instrument can’t lie,” the author writes that “the fact stands before our eyes in the picture, that there is nothing covered which shall not be revealed, nor hid which shall not be known.”¹⁰⁷ The article also instructs its readers to empathize with the photograph’s formerly enslaved subject, likening him to a member of the Northern laboring class and thus equal to members of the newspaper’s audience. The author then concludes by couching this moral lesson in the aesthetic language of sentimentalism, declaring that:

This card-photograph should be multiplied by the hundred thousand, and scattered over the states. It tells the story in a way that even Mrs. Stowe cannot approach; because it tells the story to the eye. If seeing is believing – and it is in the immense majority of cases – seeing this card would be equivalent to believing things of the slave states which Northern men and women would move heaven and earth to abolish!¹⁰⁸

A few weeks after the article mentioning Gordon’s photograph appeared in *The Independent* in New York, a description of the photograph was published in *The Liberator*, a Boston-based anti-slavery newspaper run by leading abolitionist William Lloyd Garrison (1805–1879).¹⁰⁹ The article was published on June 12, 1863, still several weeks before the appearance of the Gordon triptych in *Harper’s Weekly* illustrated newspaper. Entitled “The Dumb Witness,” after the photograph’s powerful yet “mute” appeal, *The Liberator* attributes the photograph’s circulation to a surgeon of the 1st Louisiana Guards, who enclosed the photograph in a letter to his brother in

¹⁰⁷ “The Scourged Back,”

¹⁰⁸ Ibid.

¹⁰⁹ “The Dumb Witness,” *The Liberator* (Boston), June 12, 1863.

Boston. According to *The Liberator*, the unnamed surgeon indicated in an accompanying statement that he had seen hundreds of such gruesome injuries during the period he had been inspecting African American men for his and other regiments, and that such sights, while not new to him, may well be new to persons in the North. He then implores his brother to circulate the photograph, writing: “If you know of any one who talks about the *humane manner* in which the slaves are treated, please show them this picture. It is a lecture in itself.”¹¹⁰ Similar to the language enlisted in “The Scourged Back,” the article in *The Independent*, Garrison grounded the ability of the photograph to persuade viewers of the inhumanity of slavery in photography’s seeming truthfulness. “However much men may depict false images,” Garrison writes, “the sun will not lie. From such evidence as this there is no escape, and to see is to believe.”¹¹¹ In its own later reproduction of Gordon’s photograph, *Harper’s Weekly* did not repeat this same argument for photography’s truthfulness, perhaps because the writers for *The Independent* and *The Liberator* had already done so, or perhaps in reflection of its own dilution of photographic facticity through the interpretive process of remediation.

The Translation of Gordon’s Photograph into a Wood Engraving

Returning to *Harper’s* publication of the wood engraved illustration made after Gordon’s photograph in its July 4, 1863 issue, we might consider how the remediation of Gordon’s photograph contributed to the framing of his narrative and subsequent flattening of his identity. Importantly, the news-pictures that were featured in *Harper’s*

¹¹⁰ “The Dumb Witness.”

¹¹¹ *Ibid.*

Weekly, Frank Leslie's, and other illustrated newspapers in the mid-nineteenth century appeared in the form of wood engravings. Before the widespread adoption of the halftone reproduction process in the 1880s, wood engraving was perhaps the most common method for the reproduction and distribution of images, and the medium played a critical role in the development of a new mass visual culture—one that was defined by the dissemination of pictures with text. As scholars like Joshua Brown and Jennifer Roberts have observed, wood engraving abetted mass illustration because it was inexpensive; the blocks could withstand many impressions without breaking; and because, like letterpress, wood engraving was a relief print process, in which the image to be printed stands up from the block. This meant that wood engravings and handset type could be locked together in one form and printed at the same time, in the same press.¹¹²

Advanced by the English engraver Thomas Bewick in the late eighteenth-century, wood engraving differs from the woodcut. For example, while woodcuts are made of planks cut parallel to the direction of the tree's growth, wood engraving uses end-grain woodblocks which are cut perpendicular to the growth of the tree.¹¹³ End-grain blocks provided a dense and stable matrix into which one could incise fine lines, with reduced interference from the pattern of the woodgrain. To create a wood engraving, artists use a variety of sharp tools, including the engraver's burin, to create

¹¹² Brown, *Beyond the Lines*, 7–31; Jennifer L. Roberts, “Out of the Woodwork,” Paper presented at The Courtauld, London, UK (March 7, 2019), <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=PQsb98coYDA>.

¹¹³ For a summary of the mechanics of the wood engraving process, see Bamber Gascoigne, *How to Identify Prints: A Complete Guide to Manual and Mechanical Processes from Woodcut to Ink Jet* (New York: Thames and Hudson, 1989), 6.

furrows in the block. Working in the negative, the engraver cuts away the areas of the wood not meant to receive ink, leaving the intended image standing in relief. The syntax or code through which the wood engraving communicates is that of the line.¹¹⁴ For the purposes of publication, photographic sources—such as the portrait of Peter Gordon’s scarred back—were therefore subject to a process of syntactical mediation. As *Harper’s* engravers transferred the image from one medium to another, the tones and shadows of the photograph were translated into the linear, autographic logic of the wood engraving. The effects of photographic tonality are achieved by making the incised lines finer or coarser, or nearer or farther apart.

The production of wood engravings for the illustrated press involved many artists and engravers in industrialized work, characterized by the division of labor.¹¹⁵ The process would begin with the artist or photographer in the field, whose work would then be transferred on to the woodblock, or with a draftsman who produced an image directly on to the block, often working from a verbal or textual description. A series of tools would then be used to carve out the areas of the wood surface which were meant not to print. Because the preferred material, Turkish boxwood, rarely reached a diameter beyond six inches, in order to create large images—such as full-page or double-page engravings—several smaller blocks would be fitted together and fastened with bolts or screws, an innovation that is credited to the publisher Frank

¹¹⁴ On the syntax of wood engraving, see especially William Ivins, *Prints and Visual Communication* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1953), 128.

¹¹⁵ Regarding the division of labor between various artists and engravers, see “How Illustrated Newspapers Are Made,” *Frank Leslie’s Illustrated Newspaper*, August 2, 1856, NCN.

Leslie. This process allowed multiple engravers to work on one image at the same time.¹¹⁶ After the individual engravers had finished, the blocks were then once again fastened together and a supervising, master engraver was tasked with clarifying the lines that would visually unite the fragments.¹¹⁷ Even with the engravers' best efforts, however, large engravings often betray the methods of their production through the presence of ghostly, faint white lines.¹¹⁸ Following these procedures, the block would then be finished by electrotype and integrated with its intended text.

To transform a photograph like that of Peter Gordon into a wood engraving, *Harper's* would have employed skilled draftsmen who specialized in the translation of photographic images onto woodblocks.¹¹⁹ Although there were early experiments in developing photographs directly on to the wood block for the purposes of illustrated newspapers, this process was often unsuccessful and resulting in warping of the wood matrix.¹²⁰ It was therefore the job of *Harper's* artisans to render the photographic image on to the block, including enlarging or modifying it. In considering the interpretive role of *Harper's* unnamed engravers, or rather, the draftsmen who were charged with translating the images on to the wood block, we might speculate as to whether they purposefully sought to represent the three figures of *Harper's* Gordon

¹¹⁶ Brown, *Beyond the Lines*, 36–37.

¹¹⁷ *Ibid.*, 39.

¹¹⁸ *Ibid.*

¹¹⁹ Bethan Stevens, *The Wood Engravers' Self-Portrait: The Dalziel Archive and Victorian Illustration* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 2022), 277–278.

¹²⁰ "Photography and Wood Engraving," *Frank Leslie's Illustrated Newspaper*, December 16, 1865, NCN.

triptych in a similar manner, suppressing their distinctive facial features for the purposes of *Harper's* singular narrative. The interpretive quality of *Harper's* artisans is especially notable when comparing the photographic source for "Gordon In His Uniform As A U.S. Soldier" (fig. 8) with its subsequent reprographic engraving. Although some detail may have been lost in the printing process, upon close examination of the photograph located at Historic Northampton, it is evident that the man who served as the model for "Gordon In His Uniform" had much finer features than the other men depicted on *Harper's* page; indeed, the uniformed man appears to have a longer bridge to his nose, darker, more prominent eyebrows, and almost leonine eyes. Indeed, when we closely examine the photographic sources themselves it becomes readily apparent that the three men represented in *Harper's* "Gordon" illustrations are not the same men at all. The distinction between the men's features, however, is less apparent in their engraved forms.

Harper's Framing of Gordon's Photograph

In her book *Violence, Visual Culture, and the Black Male Body*, the scholar Cassandra Jackson argues that the case study of Peter Gordon represents an important site of negotiation between empiricist and sentimental aesthetics, as the realism associated with photography became comingled with the traditions of abolitionist literature, which compelled readers to identify with and be moved by the pain of the enslaved, to reveal the violence of enslavement.¹²¹ However, as Jackson argues, both aesthetics serve to objectify the subject. Jackson writes that "While the illusion of

¹²¹ Cassandra Jackson, *Violence, Visual Culture, and the Black Male Body* (New York: Routledge, 2011), 12.

realism usurps the voice of the slave by offering his body as readable proof, the image's sentimentalism offers that same body to viewers, encouraging them to appropriate the subject's pain."¹²² The problems inherent in this intersection between sentimentalism and visual objectivity become apparent in *Harper's Weekly's* presentation of the Gordon narrative in its July 4, 1863 issue, as the newspaper attempted to erode the gap between its readers and the depicted subject, or rather, between spectators and the spectated, in order to present a reassuring narrative of Black men's military service. In so doing, *Harper's* collapsed the subjects' individual identities into a single narrative.

Published several weeks after the articles referencing Gordon's photograph appeared in *The Independent* and *The Liberator* on May 28 and June 12, 1863, respectively, *Harper's* own textual framework does not take the same position as the more ardently abolitionist publications in emphasizing the truthfulness of the photographic object, but rather argues for the image's ability to stand for a broader pattern of the violence of enslavement. Hence the article's title, "A Typical Negro," which itself dismisses the specificity of Gordon's individual lived experience. Notably, the bulk of the text that comprises "A Typical Negro," the article written to accompany *Harper's* Gordon triptych, reproduces not the narrative of Gordon's own escape and enlistment, but rather an extract from a letter in the *New York Times*. This text, which details the brutal punishment and torture endured by enslaved servants on the estate of a "Mrs. Gillespie" on the Black River in Louisiana, is reprinted by *Harper's* in order to illustrate "the degree of brutality which slavery has developed

¹²² Jackson, *Violence, Visual Culture, and the Black Male Body*, 12.

among the whites in the section of country” from which Gordon came.¹²³ The text of the *New York Times* letter takes up several columns on the page with the Gordon triptych, and even continues on to the next page. “A Typical Negro” thus universalizes the violence of enslavement, equating that experienced by Gordon and the other men on *Harper’s* page with the enslaved servants on the Widow Gillespie’s estate, who are seemingly unrelated to them. As the scholar Kelli Moore has importantly argued, this thematization of enslaved experiences has also led scholars to prioritize an analysis of the male subject of *The Scourged Back* while occluding the experience of enslaved Black women whose lives are emblemized through the story of “Margaret,” a woman enslaved to and tortured by Mrs. Gillespie, as recounted in *Harper’s* text.¹²⁴

Harper’s Page Layout

Harper’s page layout positions Gordon’s scarred body in the liminal space between his former identity in bondage (as represented by the man in rags on the left) and the potential for him to distinguish himself through military service (as represented by the man in uniform on the right). Importantly, the before-and-after dynamic of *Harper’s* Gordon triptych drew upon a precedent of “contrast” imagery utilized by reformers and antislavery activists, in which a subject’s formerly abject state was contrasted with images that visualized their supposed progress.¹²⁵ By

¹²³ “A Typical Negro.” For additional analysis of this text, see Kelli Moore, *Legal Spectatorship: Slavery and the Visual Culture of Domestic Violence* (Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 2022), 43–51.

¹²⁴ Moore, *Legal Spectatorship*, 45–51.

¹²⁵ On “contrast” imagery, see Mary Niall Mitchell, *Raising Freedom’s Child: Black Children and Visions of the Future After Slavery* (New York: New York University Press, 2008), 119–129.

textually and visually collapsing the identities of these three African American men into that of a singular figure who has been redeemed by his military service, *Harper's* thus presented a reassuring narrative of the war in 1863, at a time when the fight to end enslavement had become wedded with the fight to preserve the union, but public support for both efforts had begun to wane. By figuratively covering Gordon's scars with his military uniform, *Harper's* triptych not only presents the potential of freedpeople to become civilized, but also the power of military service to domesticate Black men into the bounds of traditional notions of white citizenship. Concluding with Gordon as a man in uniform, *Harper's* seems to be asking its largely white Northern readers to identify with the formerly enslaved man as they would their own brothers and friends in arms. In collapsing the identities of these three men and omitting much information about Gordon beyond the recuperative narrative of military service, *Harper's* thereby affirms the fundamental premise of David Silkenat's argument, as outlined in the introduction to this chapter.

The illustrations which appear throughout *Harper's* July 4, 1863 issue, prior to the page featuring "A Typical Negro" further supports the interpretation that the true subject of the Gordon triptych is the man's distinguishment through military service. As noted above, the three portraits of "Gordon" are accompanied on *Harper's* page by a wood engraved illustration that represents the raid of the 2nd South Carolina Volunteers, an all-Black regiment, on rice plantations on the Combahee River (see fig. 5).¹²⁶ In the background of the scene, buildings are burned, evidence of the Union army's efforts to cripple the South Carolina economy. Proceeding from these

¹²⁶ Moore, *Legal Spectatorship*, 46–47.

buildings, in the righthand passage of the illustration, we see a column of figures who grow increasingly well-rendered as they approach the foreground, eventually leading into a group of Black men and women who dive after the nearby Union army boats that make their way downstream. The formerly enslaved servants of the Combahee rice plantations are thus represented in an act of self-emancipation not unlike that which Gordon himself had enacted. As the scholar Kelli Moore has written, *Harper's* page visualizes "the Constitution's dual obligation to guarantee a republic form of government and to protect against domestic violence," as Gordon's scarred body is positioned at the center of a Union army action to free enslaved persons.

Looking at the whole of *Harper's* July 4, 1863 issue, I offer an additional interpretation, one which centers the ways in which *Harper's* editors positioned Gordon's military service as an ideal expression of male citizenship, that which is in support of the Union. Notably, the cover of *Harper's* July 4, 1863 issue features another graphic illustration of violence, that of the hanging of Confederate spies by the Army of the Cumberland (fig. 25). As the Confederate Army had not yet enlisted Black soldiers at this time, it is presumed that the spies, identified here only as "Williams" and "Peters," were white men. In *Harper's* cover illustration, the men appear blindfolded, their dark figures hanging from a scaffold that has been erected next to a tree. With members of the Union army looking on in varying degrees of interest and disinterest, the illustration closely resembles later photographic recordings of the lynching of Black and Hispanic Americans that circulated in the twentieth century.¹²⁷ In the text written to accompany this gruesome illustration, *Harper's* has

¹²⁷ On photographs of lynchings in the United States, see James Allen, Jack Woody, and Arlyn Nathan, *Without Sanctuary: Lynching Photography in America* (Santa Fe, New Mexico: Twin Palms, 2000).

reproduced the content of a letter from a member of the 75th Illinois regiment, the same man that has provided the sketch. Notably, in his letter the soldier, James Magie, expounds upon the cunning intelligence exhibited by the spies before they were caught, an emphasis that echoes similar commentary which was made on the intelligence that Gordon exhibited in evading capture in “A Typical Negro.”

In comparing this cover illustration with others in *Harper's* July 4, 1863 issue, including one that depicts Black men serving with distinction at the Battle at Milliken's Bend (fig. 26), which appears directly opposite *Harper's* Gordon triptych, we might then read the example of the Confederate spies as representative of the antithesis of ideal citizenship and service to the Union, while Gordon is to be taken as inhabiting the ideal (or at least its potential). This interpretation is echoed in an editorial which appears near the start of *Harper's* July 4, 1863 issue, written by the political editor George William Curtis under his moniker of “The Lounger.” Entitled “Loyal Citizens,” the article remarks upon those who “In the beginning of the war... said that if we white men couldn't save the country it might go to pieces,” and argues that such attitudes were sure to change given the contributions of Black men to the Union cause.¹²⁸ Declaring, ambitiously, that “Our Government is not one of race or color,” Curtis concludes his editorial by stating that:

It [the Government of the United States] is not founded upon the points in which men differ, but upon the manhood in which they are all agreed. It does not aim at social equality, which is a mere phrase. It aims at the protection of the personal and political rights of man. The war for its maintenance, therefore, is not that of Americans, or

¹²⁸ “Loyal Citizens,” *Harper's Weekly*, July 4, 1863, HarpWeek.

Germans, or Irishmen, or of white, black, red, or brown races, but of every true man who lives under its protection.¹²⁹

In its presentation of the redemptive power of Gordon's military service and its utility for the Union, *Harper's* not only flattened his identity with those of other African American men, but also elided the very real racial violence to which he had been subjected, and from which he had heroically liberated himself.

Reactions to "A Typical Negro" and the American Culture of Reprinting

Just a few weeks after the publication of "A Typical Negro," the article which featured *Harper's* Gordon triptych, the newspaper's Confederate counterpart, the short-lived *Southern Illustrated News*, published its reaction.¹³⁰ Borrowing their title from *Harper's* text, the unnamed author reports how, under the caption of "A Typical Negro," *Harper's* had published an account "of the escape of a negro named Gordon from his master in Mississippi," accompanied by three pictures which showed Gordon "ragged and barefoot," "bare-back, showing stripes and sores," and in his uniform as a U.S. soldier.¹³¹ In summarizing *Harper's* content for their Southern subscribers, the *Southern Illustrated News* not only provided descriptions of the illustrations which comprised the Gordon triptych, but also noted that, after giving the account of Gordon's self-emancipation, *Harper's* published an extract from the *Times* featuring stories of alleged abuse recounted by refugees from the Gillespie estate. Several paragraphs within the *Southern Illustrated News's* version of "A Typical Negro" are

¹²⁹ "Loyal Citizens."

¹³⁰ On the history of the *Southern Illustrated News*, see Mott, *A History of American Magazines, 1850–1865*, 8–9, 112–113; Brown, *Beyond the Lines*, 50.

¹³¹ "A Typical Negro," *Southern Illustrated News* (Richmond, VA), July 25, 1863.

then devoted to reprinting these narratives of abuse which were originally reported in the *New York Times*. However, rather than allowing readers to take their reprinting of these accounts as an endorsement of their veracity, the Richmond-based publication takes care to conclude their article by stating that “A more palpable falsehood was never published in any Yankee paper.”¹³²

This remarkable recycling of text—or rather, the *Southern Illustrated News*’s reprinting of *Harper*’s own reprinting of a text originally from a letter to the *New York Times*—situates the publication and circulation of Gordon’s narrative, and *Harper*’s publication of narratives of atrocity, squarely within the broader culture of literary recirculation and reprinting in the nineteenth-century United States. As the scholar Meredith McGill has advanced, antebellum American print culture was characterized by the broad reprinting of foreign books and periodicals, and certain domestic texts, by uncopyrighted newspapers and magazines.¹³³ Often circulating without authors’ names attached to their work, this flourishing of reprinted texts, McGill writes, enables scholars to uncover “a literature defined by its exuberant understanding of culture as iteration and not origination.”¹³⁴ Though McGill argues that by the early 1850s structural changes in the book trades began to put an end to this culture of reprinting, the case study of Peter Gordon and “A Typical Negro” demonstrates that practices of circulation and re-circulation still characterized mass media during the Civil War period, and particularly the circulation of narratives of atrocity.

¹³² “A Typical Negro,” *Southern Illustrated News*.

¹³³ Meredith McGill, *American Literature and the Culture of Reprinting, 1834–1853* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2003).

¹³⁴ *Ibid.*, 4.

In addition to the recycling of the content of *Harper's* article entitled "A Typical Negro" by the *Southern Illustrated News*, the image of Gordon was later reprinted in another text, this time in the North. In October 1863, several months after both Gordon's photograph and *Harper's* reprographic wood engraving had circulated across the country, the Union League of Philadelphia published a pamphlet which featured a woodcut after version C of Gordon's image (fig. 27), the same image which appeared in *Harper's Weekly* on July 4. Produced in conjunction with the 1863 Pennsylvania gubernatorial elections, the Union League's publication combined passages from the memoir of actress Fanny Kemble (1809–1893), which boldly recounted some of the horrors of enslavement that she observed during her marriage to Southern slaveholder Pierce Butler, along with excerpts of proslavery speeches by the Democratic candidate for Pennsylvania Governor, George Washington Woodward (1809–1875), and Bishop John Henry Hopkins (1792–1868) of the Protestant Episcopal Church of Vermont.¹³⁵ In compiling this publication, the Union League took advantage of the prior visibility and reception of both Gordon's image and Kemble's memoir to promote the League's Republican political agenda; in the context of the League's anti-Democratic propaganda, Gordon's portrait and Kemble's firsthand observations serve as illustrations that are meant to refute Woodward and Hopkins's racist positions.

¹³⁵ Maxwell Whiteman, *Gentlemen in Crisis: The First Century of The Union League of Philadelphia, 1862–1962* (Philadelphia: The Union League of Philadelphia, 1975), 58–60.

Though the Union League's woodcut is certainly crude in its form when compared to *Harper's* more refined wood engraving, we might read the Union League's pamphlet as evidence of the impact that the Harper brothers' publications had on public discourse at this time. The combination of excerpts from Kemble's memoir and the portrait of Gordon is especially revealing. First published in London in May of 1863, Kemble's memoir was later copyrighted in the United States by abolitionist activist Francis George Shaw (1809–1882), a friend of Kemble's and the father-in-law of *Harper's* political editor George William Curtis. After obtaining Kemble's permission to take out an American copyright on her *Journal*, Shaw sold the rights to publish Kemble's memoir to the Harper brothers, who released the American edition in July of 1863.¹³⁶ Written during the time of her marriage to one of the largest slaveholders in the United States, Kemble's memoir was groundbreaking within the field of abolitionist literature not only for its frank description of some of slavery's most reprehensible practices, including the separation of families, squalid living conditions, and the sexual abuse of enslaved women, but also for its basis in firsthand observation.¹³⁷ Shortly after its publication in the United States, Kemble's memoir received praise by both American abolitionists and the Northern press, with Elizabeth Cady Stanton remarking that "No better blow has been dealt on our common foe

¹³⁶ Lorien Foote, *Seeking the One Great Remedy: Francis George Shaw and Nineteenth-Century Reform* (Athens, OH: Ohio University Press, 2003), 68, 105. See also Deirdre David, *Fanny Kemble: A Performed Life* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2007), 261–262.

¹³⁷ Wendy Hamand Venet, *Neither Ballots Nor Bullets: Women Abolitionists and the Civil War* (Charlottesville: University Press of Virginia, 1991), 89.

during the war than [Kemble] has given.”¹³⁸ It is perhaps not surprising that the Union League of Philadelphia elected to juxtapose excerpts from Kemble’s memoir with the woodcut after Gordon’s photograph, given the impact that both the text and the image was thought to have had on the Northern public. However, the inspiration for the Union League’s reprinted pamphlet may have come from *Harper’s Weekly* itself, as an advertisement for the American publication of Kemble’s memoir appears in the same July 4, 1863 issue of *Harper’s Weekly* as the Gordon triptych.¹³⁹ We might then read the Union League’s pamphlet on *The Views of Judge Woodward and Bishop Hopkins on Negro Slavery at the South* as evidence of the impact of *Harper’s Weekly*’s circulation of images of atrocity, as situated within the context of the American culture of reprinting.

“The Escaped Slave and the Union Soldier”

Perhaps the most compelling evidence of *Harper’s* high opinion of their own editorial effectiveness is their repetition of nearly the same visual narrative of “A Typical Negro” one year later. On July 2, 1864, *Harper’s* reproduced two illustrations which again purported to show the transformation of an escaped bondsperson into a soldier, thereby underscoring the redemptive power of military service in terms of domesticating Black freedom (fig. 28). According to the accompanying article, entitled “The Escaped Slave and the Union Soldier,” the man, who is unnamed in *Harper’s* narrative but is otherwise identified as Hubbard Pryor, had fled from

¹³⁸ Venet, *Neither Ballots Nor Bullets*, 91.

¹³⁹ “Mrs. Kemble’s Journal on a Georgia Plantation,” *Harper’s Weekly*, July 4, 1863, HarpWeek.

Montgomery, Alabama to Chattanooga, Tennessee with the express purpose of enlisting in the Union army.¹⁴⁰ A second picture, of Pryor in uniform, is then said to represent the man as “endowed for the first time with his birth-right of freedom,” as he is now allowed “the privilege dearer to him than any other—that of fighting for the nation which is hereafter pledged to protect him and his.”¹⁴¹ The article continues by instructing *Harper’s* readers to be affected by these images, particularly in the context of African American men’s recent displays of heroism on the battlefield, and at the same time gestures toward the uncertainty of public opinion surrounding the question of Black freedom at the time of the article’s publication in 1864. The unnamed *Harper’s* author concludes by asking its readers whether “the problem” of African American freedom in 1864 prevents them from having faith in the capabilities of Black Americans more broadly, writing:

Can we not at length have faith in that heroism which has been so gloriously illustrated at Wagner and Olustee and Petersburg, and which, in the face of the Fort Pillow massacre, yet offers itself afresh in the heart of the enemy’s country, gives himself, at the risk of death or of a

¹⁴⁰ “The Escaped Slave and the Union Soldier,” *Harper’s Weekly*, July 2, 1864, HarpWeek. The identification of the man in *Harper’s* illustrations as Hubbard Pryor is made possible through scholarship on Pryor’s military service, including the survivance of Pryor’s before/after photographs in the National Archives. See Robert Scott Davis, Jr., “A Soldier’s Story: The Records of Hubbard Pryor, Forty-Fourth United States Colored Troops,” *Prologue* 31, no. 4 (Winter 1999): 267–272; Maurice O. Wallace, “Framing the Black Soldier: Image, Uplift, and the Duplicity of Pictures,” in *Pictures and Progress: Early Photography and the Making of African American Identity*, ed. Maurice O. Wallace and Shawn Michelle Smith (Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 2012), 251–252.

¹⁴¹ “The Escaped Slave and the Union Soldier,” *Harper’s Weekly*.

torture worse than death, to a cause simply because it is inevitably associated with the problem of his freedom?¹⁴²

It is the “problem” of Black Americans’ freedom, and the representational and rhetorical strategies that *Harper’s* deployed to politically persuade its readers while simultaneously deflecting its readers attention from this “problem,” that we turn our attention to in chapter three of this dissertation.

¹⁴² “The Escaped Slave and the Union Soldier,” *Harper’s Weekly*.

Chapter 3

“THE PICTURES WHICH WE PUBLISH TO-DAY ARE FEARFUL TO LOOK UPON”: IMAGES OF WHITE PRISONERS OF WAR AND RACIAL MISDIRECTION AMIDST THE PRESIDENTIAL ELECTION OF 1864

A hundred descriptions of the massacres of our faithful soldiers will not strike home so deeply as a vivid picture of them.

— “Picture Preaching,” *Harper’s Weekly*, May 21, 1864¹⁴³

In the spring of 1864, after three years of brutal and divisive conflict with no immediate resolution, many Northerners began to express disappointment in the federal government’s prosecution of the American Civil War. At this time, heavy losses incurred by the Union army during General Ulysses S. Grant’s Overland Campaign (May 4–June 24, 1864) and dismal financial markets led to increased discouragement in the North and a greater disposition for peace, even if it meant compromising with the Confederacy. Indeed, although disagreements over the war’s purpose had divided towns and families since the early days of secession, it was in 1864 that many in the North began to question why they were fighting at all.¹⁴⁴ The presidential election set to take place in November of that year thus provided American voters with a unique opportunity to determine whether the nation was to continue the war or negotiate for peace, as the incumbent President Abraham Lincoln

¹⁴³ “Picture Preaching,” *Harper’s Weekly*, May 21, 1864, HarpWeek.

¹⁴⁴ On public opinion in the North in the spring of 1864, McPherson, *Battle Cry of Freedom: The Civil War Era*, 722–743.

(1809–1865) faced a serious challenge from the Democratic candidate, former Union General George B. McClellan (1826–1885).¹⁴⁵ It was in this context, with disaffection on the home front growing so profound that Lincoln himself became convinced that he would lose reelection, that *Harper's Weekly*, by then a staunchly Republican newspaper, again employed illustrations of atrocity to politically motivate its readers.

On June 18, 1864, *Harper's Weekly* published two gruesome images that were intended to demonstrate the need for a total Union victory over the South (fig. 29).¹⁴⁶ Featured prominently on the issue's cover, the wood engraved illustrations represent two Union soldiers shortly after their release from Confederate prisons. Arranged in a diptych in the lower register of the page, the anonymous white men are shown seated upon large pedestals in a frontal position, such as one might see in family portraits. The men, however, appear in states of horrific attenuation, with their arms and thighs reduced to the size of the bone beneath. On the left, the man is depicted alone; on the right, a doctor stands beside the soldier, supporting the weight of the young man's head with his hand. Completely naked, the men cover their genitals with their hands or a cloth. The contrasting color of the pedestal, which is covered with a dark blanket, throws the white skin and nude bodies of the subjects into stark relief, highlighting

¹⁴⁵ Although McClellan was himself a War Democrat, the conservative, antiwar wing of the Democratic Party, known as the Peace Democrats, had taken control at the Democratic National Convention in Chicago in August 1864 and adopted a platform of immediate peace with the Confederacy. For a summary of the rise of the Peace Democrats, who were often called “Copperheads” by their opponents, see Jennifer L. Weber, *Copperheads: The Rise and Fall of Lincoln's Opponents in the North* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2006).

¹⁴⁶ As *Harper's Weekly* was advance dated by one week, this issue would have appeared on newsstands on June 11, 1864. *Harper's Weekly*, June 18, 1864, HarpWeek.

their extreme emaciation and racial identities.¹⁴⁷ In these illustrations, the fine lines of the wood engraving process render the effects of the soldiers' imprisonment with painful precision, as sharp, confidently incised lines articulate the angularity of their jutting hip bones, and the effects of light and shadow are employed to define their protruding ribs. The linework on their faces suggests sunken eyes and cheeks, enhancing the soldiers' sorrowful expressions as they look down or upward, away from the viewer's gaze.¹⁴⁸

With each image measuring approximately 6 ½ x 4 ½ inches, the portraits of the paroled prisoners take up nearly half of *Harper's* page; their enlarged scale, coupled with their shocking content, draws viewers' attention away from the cover's other features, including a sketch illustration of gunboats on the Red River, part of a failed Union campaign.¹⁴⁹ The illustrations of these emaciated men served as evidence

¹⁴⁷ Christina Twoney has noted the employment of a similar device in photographs of victims of atrocities committed in the former Congo Free State (1885–1908). In that case, the bodies were Black and were frequently swathed in white cloth to emphasize the mutilation and amputation of their limbs. Christina Twomey, "Framing Atrocity: Photography and Humanitarianism," *History of Photography* 36, no. 3 (2012): 261.

¹⁴⁸ Before moving forward, I must acknowledge my own uncertainty as to whether the men that appear on the cover of *Harper's Weekly* were alive at the time of their photographs' production, or whether these are, in fact, postmortem images. Contemporary news reports indicate that at least three of the Annapolis prisoner photographs—those of Privates Rose, Beedle, and Parham—were postmortem images, while other archival sources discuss the paroled prisoners as being alive at the time of their photographs' production. While I have been able to confirm that the photograph on the left side of *Harper's* cover, that of Private John Q. Rose, is a postmortem photograph, I remain uncertain about the one on the right. For the identification of some of the images as being made postmortem, see "Death from Starvation," *The Press* (Philadelphia), May 16, 1864.

¹⁴⁹ This cover layout may have been designed to divert readers' attention away from the Union army's recent failures in Louisiana. On the Red River campaign conducted

for *Harper's* reporting on alleged rebel atrocities and were intended to inspire not only sympathy for prisoners of war, but also righteous anger toward the South at a critical point in the war. Captioned "Rebel Cruelty—Our Starved Soldiers," *Harper's* textual framing of these images points to the belief that these and other Union soldiers were the victims of deliberate cruelty enacted by the Confederacy, whose humanity, one unnamed *Harper's* author argued, had become "imbruted" by the institution of slavery.¹⁵⁰ For an American public that endowed the white male body with the ideals of citizenship, that is, the predominantly white American public of the mid-nineteenth century, the sight of the young men's deterioration would also have served as a compelling surrogate for the ongoing destruction of the nation itself.¹⁵¹

by Major-General Nathaniel Banks's Army of the Gulf in Louisiana in 1864, see McPherson, *Battle Cry of Freedom*, 722–723.

¹⁵⁰ "Rebel Cruelty," *Harper's Weekly*, June 18, 1864, HarpWeek. The idea that slavery corrupted or "imbruted" white enslavers has a long history. The concept appears in Thomas Jefferson's *Notes on the State of Virginia*, in which he writes that slavery "transforms [slave owners] into despots," and he considers the ill effects of this influence on American democracy (see Query XVIII). A similar argument is later made by Frederick Douglass. In his autobiography, Douglass describes the detrimental effect that slavery had on his enslaver Sophia Auld, as she is transformed from a "kind and tender-hearted woman" into a violent mistress. Thomas Jefferson, *Notes on the State of Virginia* (Philadelphia: Prichard and Hall, 1788), 172–173, <https://docsouth.unc.edu/southlit/jefferson/jefferson.html>; Frederick Douglass, *Narrative of the Life of Frederick Douglass, An American Slave. Written by Himself* (Boston: The Anti-Slavery Office, 1845), 37, <https://docsouth.unc.edu/neh/douglass/douglass.html>. Regarding the promotion of the idea that prisoners of war were the victims of deliberate cruelty by the Confederacy, see William B. Hesseltine, *Civil War Prisons: A Study in War Psychology* (Columbus: Ohio State University Press, 1998).

¹⁵¹ For the conflation of the abled, white male body with national identity during the Civil War, see Megan Kate Nelson, *Ruin Nation: Destruction and the American Civil War* (Athens, GA: The University of Georgia Press, 2012), 170; and Erin R. Corrales-

Significantly, *Harper's* caption identifies the wood engravings as made after photographs taken in the United States General Hospital in Annapolis, Maryland (figs. 30 and 31). The images featured on the June 18, 1864 cover are part of a larger series of photographs taken in Annapolis and Baltimore, Maryland following the release of Union soldiers from Confederate prisons in Richmond, Virginia in the spring of 1864. These horrifying photographs originated in a medical context and were intended to both document the prisoners' physical condition upon their arrival at U.S. army hospitals and provide additional visual evidence to support claims of Confederate cruelty. Produced as *cartes de visite*, the photographs were then circulated, collected, copied, and displayed across the North as a part of a political campaign against the South in the run-up to the 1864 presidential election. For those who circulated the photographs of the paroled prisoners, as well as their wood engraved reproductions, the images of these emaciated soldiers served as a powerful condemnation not only of the Confederacy, but also of those in the Union who advocated compromising with the enemy in the pursuit of immediate peace.

This chapter explores the history of the photographs made of paroled prisoners at Annapolis and Baltimore in 1864 and considers *Harper's* mediation of these images as part of the broader network of the photographs' circulation during the American Civil War. The volume of surviving archives that pertain to these images, including photographs, wood engravings, and text, illustrates the breadth and depth of the photographs' circulation. Over the course of my research, I have located forty-seven prints of the Annapolis prisoner photographs in public and private collections across

Diaz, "Remembering the Veteran: Disability, Trauma, and the American Civil War, 1861-1915," (PhD diss., University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill, 2016).

the United States, with fifteen unique images and seven or eight individual soldiers identified within this broader group (see Appendix B).¹⁵² Notably, there are no known surviving prints of the photographs taken of paroled prisoners in Baltimore in 1864; these images now exist only as wood engraved reproductions.¹⁵³ This chapter will therefore focus on the photographs taken of paroled prisoners at U.S. General Hospital, Division No. 1 in Annapolis in the spring of 1864, providing new insight into their production and circulation, and highlighting the multiple visual and narrative contexts in which they appeared, including in the pages of *Harper's Weekly*.

As with the prior case study of *The Scourged Back*, this chapter will detail the circulation of the Annapolis prisoner photographs prior to their appearance in *Harper's Weekly* and will demonstrate how *Harper's* editors willfully mediated images already in wide circulation for their own political purposes. Extensive press coverage demonstrates that *Harper's* publication of the wood engravings on its June 18, 1864 cover occurred several weeks after the *cartes de visite* were already in circulation in cities in the Northeast and Midwest, having been previously

¹⁵² These photographs entered public collections in diverse ways, some through historic archives, some through museum purchase, and others through the gifts of corporate and private collectors.

¹⁵³ The reasons for this absence are unclear. Notably, the paroled prisoners who were sent to West's Building Hospital in Baltimore in the spring of 1864 were in better shape than those sent to Annapolis; it is possible that photographs of these prisoners were seen as less compelling to public audiences and were therefore not circulated widely. For evidence of the circulation of one of the Baltimore photographs in 1864, see the letter sent by Dr. Artemus Chapel, Surgeon-in-Charge of West's Building Hospital, to the Joint Committee on the Conduct of the War. Reprinted in John D. Defrees, *Remarks made by John D. Defrees Before the Indiana Union Club of Washington, D.C., Monday evening, August 1, 1864* (Washington: L. Towers, 1864), 11.

disseminated by several members of the hospital's staff, federal legislators, and associates of the United States Sanitary Commission.¹⁵⁴ For example, the *Burlington Free Press* reported that Captain Gardner Spring Blodgett (1819–1909), Assistant Quartermaster at Annapolis, sent copies of the photographs to friends back home in Vermont as early as June 3, 1864, along with a “certificate of their correctness” signed by Dr. Bernard Vanderkieft (d. 1866), the surgeon in charge.¹⁵⁵ Additional copies of the Annapolis prisoner photographs were also placed on display in Cleveland after being received by the Reverend Thomas Alfred Starkey (1819–1903), then-rector of Cleveland's Trinity Church.¹⁵⁶ At the same time, contemporary news reports evince the robust public discourse that formed around the images in the daily press, as localized audiences debated the photographs' political meaning.

¹⁵⁴ On the photographs' circulation prior to their appearance in *Harper's Weekly*, see “Man's Inhumanity to Man,” *Rochester Daily Democrat*, May 14, 1864; “Death from Starvation”; “Photographs: Starved Union Prisoners,” *The Press* (Philadelphia), May 23, 1864; “A ‘Richmond Prisoner’.”, *The Press* (Philadelphia), May 27, 1864; “Starved Union Prisoners [Advertisement],” *The Press* (Philadelphia), May 28, 1864; “Treatment of Union Prisoners; Rebel Brutality!,” *Cincinnati Daily Gazette*, June 3, 1864; “Rebel Barbarities; Outrages on Union Prisoners; A Letter from the Rev. Dr. Starkey,” *Cleveland Daily Leader*, June 7, 1864; “Treatment of Union Prisoners,” *Chattanooga Daily Gazette*, June 12, 1864, NCN.

¹⁵⁵ A native of Holland, Dr. Bernard A. Vanderkieft (d. 1866) served as the head of the U.S. General Hospital at Annapolis from 1863 until November 1865. On Vanderkieft's military career and service at the Annapolis hospital, see Jane Wilson McWilliams, *Annapolis: City on the Severn; A History* (Baltimore: The Johns Hopkins University Press, 2011): 181. For evidence of the photographs' circulation in Vermont, see “The Wrongs of Our Prisoners,” *Burlington Weekly Free Press* (Burlington, VT), June 3, 1864; “The Wrongs of Our Prisoners,” *The Caledonian* (St. Johnsbury, VT), June 10, 1864, NWE.

¹⁵⁶ “Rebel Barbarities; Outrages on Union Prisoners; A Letter from the Rev. Dr. Starkey.”

This new and enhanced understanding of the photographs' circulation and reception demonstrates that *Harper's* publication of the wood engraved illustrations of the paroled prisoners from Annapolis occurred after the photographs, and in particular the image of Private John Q. Rose (fig. 29), had already come to serve as visual shorthand for accusations of Southern barbarity and signified specific political debates in the run-up to the 1864 presidential election. These debates positioned the figure of the white prisoner of war within questions of whether the war should continue, and, if so, on what ideological grounds. By framing the Annapolis prisoner photographs as evidence of Confederate inhumanity, *Harper's* engaged this preexisting political discourse, using the images to bolster their arguments for the re-election of President Lincoln and against a political compromise with the South. While other scholars have discussed the Annapolis prisoner photographs within the context of the 1864 election, this dissertation proposes a significant intervention by arguing that they appeared in *Harper's Weekly* because—by the time of their publication in *Harper's*—the photographs already constituted a particular visual strategy that served the periodical's political goals.¹⁵⁷ However, rather than suggesting that *Harper's* relied on a preexisting public consensus surrounding the images' meaning, this chapter will argue

¹⁵⁷ On connections being made between the Annapolis prisoner photographs and the 1864 presidential election, see McPherson, *Battle Cry of Freedom*, 797–803; Emily McKibbin, ““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” (master's thesis, Ryerson University, 2010), <https://doi.org/10.32920/ryerson.14647593.v1>. Erin Corrales-Diaz has also made broader connections between the 1864 presidential campaign and the image of the disabled veteran, in which the figure of the white prisoner of war is included. See Corrales-Diaz, *Remembering the Veteran*, 121–128.

that *Harper's*, a newspaper with a national circulation, instead leveraged audiences' familiarity with the debates surrounding the images as part of their reporting.¹⁵⁸

The harrowing qualities of the Annapolis prisoner photographs, and the empathy that is evoked by the soldiers' skeletal forms, suggests an informational urgency which demands that audiences bear witness to the unique suffering of these white, male bodies. For *Harper's* Northern readers, the illustrations would likely have recalled previously circulated images of the bodies of abused enslaved persons and accounts of violence in slave narratives and in anti-slavery speaking tours, a trans-racial correlation that was often made throughout the discourse surrounding the condition of prisoners of war.¹⁵⁹ However, the fact that the Annapolis prisoner photographs depicted injured white men would have brought new meaning to the photographs' substantiation of Southern cruelty and the "tidal wave of rage" that followed their publication in *Harper's Weekly*, a periodical with a predominantly white, Northern, and male readership.¹⁶⁰ The sense of a racial hierarchy of suffering is

¹⁵⁸ On the lack of consensus among the broader text public, and the illustration of this lack of consensus through the writings of localized, regional newspapers, I am indebted to the scholarship of Trish Loughran. Loughran, *The Republic in Print*.

¹⁵⁹ For the relationship between Civil War prison narratives and slave narratives, see Ann Fabian, *The Unvarnished Truth: Personal Narratives in Nineteenth-Century America* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2000), 117–157.

¹⁶⁰ McPherson, *Battle Cry of Freedom*, 797. I ground my argument on *Harper's* readership in the weekly journal's marketing of itself as a political organ, which was a predominantly male sphere at this time, as well as the newspaper's loss of Southern subscribers during the Civil War and broader demographic and literacy statistics. On *Harper's* organization as a political vehicle, see Mott, *A History of American Magazines, 1850–1865*, 472. On *Harper's* loss of Southern readers during the American Civil War, see William Fletcher Thompson, Jr., *The Image of War: The Pictorial Reporting of the American Civil War* (New York: Thomas Yoseloff, 1959), 25. For a statistical analysis of the history of American literacy, see Lee Soltow and

evidenced by the contrast in reactions to the suffering of Black and white bodies at this time, as well as the treatments of these subjects by historical memory, as governed by the hegemonic classes. For example, while the names, regiments, and military ranks of the paroled prisoners photographed at Annapolis and Baltimore were well-documented, the identity of the formerly enslaved African American man who is the subject of *The Scourged Back* remains uncertain to this day.¹⁶¹ In attending to the circulation and mediation of the Annapolis prisoner photographs, my analysis will thus consider how the referentially unstable signs of the white prisoners' injured bodies were transformed into ideological symbols that offered alleged "proof" of

Edward Stevens, *The Rise of Literacy and the Common School in the United States: A Socioeconomic Analysis to 1870* (Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 1981). For qualitative studies of American literacy, including the impact that new technologies and media forms had on literacy rates, see William J. Gilmore, *Reading Becomes a Necessity of Life: Material and Cultural Life in Rural New England, 1780–1835* (Knoxville: University of Tennessee, 1992); Isabelle Lehuu, *Carnival on the Page: Popular Print Media in Antebellum America* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2000); Paul Starr, *The Creation of the Media: Political Origins of Modern Communications* (New York: Basic Books, 2006); Ronald J. Zboray, *A Fictive People: Antebellum Economic Development and the American Reading Public* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1993). Regarding the gendered and racial dynamics of American literacy during the Civil War era, see Michael C. Nelson, "Writing During Wartime: Gender and Literacy in the American Civil War," *Journal of American Studies* 31, no. 1 (April 1997): 43–68; Beth Barton Schweiger, "The Literate South: Reading Before Emancipation," *Journal of the Civil War Era* 3, no. 3 (September 2013): 331–359.

¹⁶¹ In some cases, however, the identities of the white prisoners of war were confused. For example, in a pamphlet published by Republican printer and politician John Defrees, images of Private Lewis Klein, Company A, 14th New York Calvary, and Private Charles R. Woodworth, Company G, 8th Michigan Calvary, are incorrectly captioned as those of Private Francis W. Beedle, Company M, 8th Michigan Calvary, and Private John Breinig, Company G, 4th Kentucky Calvary. Defrees, *Remarks made by John D. Defrees Before the Indiana Union Club*.

Confederate inhumanity and a justification for the re-election of President Abraham Lincoln, while also diverting attention from the concerns of Black Americans at a critical moment in the war.

The Suffering of United States Officers and Soldiers as Prisoners of War

For many Northerners, including both Union prisoners and those that later beheld their images, the suffering of white men as prisoners of war was imbricated with the Confederacy's treatment of Black soldiers. In 1863, as many formerly enslaved men took up arms in support of the Union, the Confederate Congress responded by authorizing a policy to re-enslave or execute captured Black soldiers and their officers, rather than exchanging them as prisoners of war, thereby formalizing a threat previously announced by Confederate President Jefferson Davis.¹⁶² As a result, the U.S. War Department under Secretary of War Edwin Stanton (1814–1869) chose to suspend the prisoner exchange cartel that was put in place in 1862.¹⁶³ Informal exchanges would continue to occur in the years to come, but attempts to renew the formal policy foundered on the Southern refusal to recognize and treat soldiers from Black regiments as prisoners of war, and not as fugitives from enslavement.¹⁶⁴

¹⁶² McPherson, *Battle Cry of Freedom*, 792.

¹⁶³ In this system, known as the Dix-Hill cartel, the federal government allowed for regularized exchanges of prisoners of war while continuing to treat the Confederacy as a belligerent army, rather than a foreign nation. This arrangement lasted for approximately one year, from July 1862 to July 1863. McPherson, *Battle Cry of Freedom*, 791.

¹⁶⁴ Importantly, the South's actual treatment of Black prisoners is hard to ascertain, and the number of Black Union soldiers taken captive remains unknown. As James McPherson points out, not only did the Confederates, in refusing to acknowledge Black soldiers as legitimate prisoners, keep few records of Black captives, but also

Following the breakdown of the prison exchange system, along with the great battles of the summer and fall of 1863, the number of Union and Confederate prisoners rose significantly, and the makeshift facilities that were used as prisons—including obsolete forts, warehouses, and county jails—soon proved inadequate to shelter the men.¹⁶⁵

In November 1863, Union General Benjamin Butler (1818–1893) was granted special permission from Secretary Stanton to resume the negotiation of prison exchanges, and it was in this context that Union soldiers were released from prisons in Richmond and transferred to hospitals in Baltimore and Annapolis in the early months of 1864.¹⁶⁶ Despite previous accounts, including those published by *Harper's*, that prisoners were well fed and not mistreated, Union officials were shocked to see the condition in which their soldiers returned from the Libby and Belle Isle prisons.¹⁶⁷

many Black soldiers who were captured were murdered, rather than imprisoned. Concerns over the Confederate treatment of Black prisoners of war reached a crescendo in the spring of 1864, following the massacre of nearly 300 Black soldiers and their officers at Fort Pillow on April 12, 1864. McPherson, *Battle Cry of Freedom*, 793–794.

¹⁶⁵ For a summary of the prisoner of war issue leading up to the 1864 presidential election, see Hesseltine, *Civil War Prisons*, 69–113; McPherson, *Battle Cry of Freedom*, 792–801.

¹⁶⁶ Hesseltine, *Civil War Prisons*, 69–113; McPherson, *Battle Cry of Freedom*, 792–801.

¹⁶⁷ In one notable example, *Harper's* published extracts from the diary of Richard Colburn, a *New York World* correspondent who was taken prisoner at Vicksburg and later released. In his account of his imprisonment at Richmond's Libby Prison, Colburn described their food rations in positive terms, stating that they were "large enough, larger than that furnished to the Confederates of the same rank," though he balked at the indignity of the prisoners having to cook their own food. Importantly, conditions at Belle Isle prison, which was populated with soldiers of a lower rank than

The men were extremely emaciated, covered in dirt and vermin, and many were ill with smallpox, dysentery, and other diseases. The nurse and activist Dorothea Dix (1802–1887), who was on hand to see paroled prisoners disembark from the flag-of-truce ship in Baltimore, said she “never saw any of our boys so filthy,” noting that a majority had already lost their feet to frostbite and had to have their legs amputated after their arrival.¹⁶⁸ To a reporter, Dix would later describe the men as “a regiment of skeletons,” while the U.S. Congress similarly reported that the paroled prisoners were “living skeletons,” with “scarcely life enough remaining to appreciate that they were now in the hands of their friends.”¹⁶⁹ Such allusions to inhuman, skeletal figures underscored the non-normative forms of the emaciated prisoners; this terminology also recalled the earlier use of the moniker “the Living Skeleton” by circus performers both in the United States and abroad.¹⁷⁰ Once able-bodied white men fighting for the

those at Libby Prison, would have suffered worse than the indignity that Colburn described. “Union Prisoners at the South,” *Harper’s Weekly*, June 13, 1863, HarpWeek.

¹⁶⁸ “Letter From Washington. Miss Dix’s Story of Southern Barbarism—Our Prisoners Starved and Frozen,” *Rochester Daily Democrat*, May 11, 1864.

¹⁶⁹ “Letter from Washington”; U.S. Congress, *Report of the Joint Select Committee on the Conduct of the War* (Washington, D.C.: House of Representatives 1864), 5.

¹⁷⁰ A man named Claude-Ambroise Seurat was exhibited to audiences in London in the early nineteenth-century and described as a “living skeleton.” For a history of Seurat’s life, as well as a discussion of artistic representations of Seurat, see Richard H.R. Park and Maureen P. Park, “Goya’s Living Skeleton,” *BMJ: British Medical Journal* 303, no. 6817 (Dec. 21–28, 1991): 1594–1596. For the history of Isaac Sprague, another “living skeleton” who toured with P.T. Barnum, see Marc Hartzman, *American Sideshow: An Encyclopedia of History’s Most Wondrous and Curiously Strange Performers* (New York: Jeremy P. Tarcher/Penguin, 2005), 88–89. For other contemporary news reports that emphasized the prisoners’ non-normative forms, see “The Treatment of Union Prisoners. Rebel Brutality!” *Cincinnati Daily Gazette*; “The

Union, the men's visually different bodies now provoked anxiety and disquiet, and compelled explanation by visually ordinary persons.¹⁷¹ In May 1864, shortly after the men were released, investigations were launched by both the Joint Congressional Committee on the Conduct of the War and the United States Sanitary Commission (USSC) to determine the causes of the men's dramatic attenuation; the Annapolis prisoner photographs were produced in conjunction with and parallel to these investigations.

Today most Civil War historians conclude that inefficient administrative policy coupled with the successful Northern blockade, and not deliberate cruelty, caused the poor conditions—including overcrowding and a lack of clean water, adequate food, and shelter—that contributed to the high mortality rate of prisoners in the North and South.¹⁷² However, public outcry over the treatment of white Union soldiers in

Wrongs of Our Prisoners," *Burlington Weekly Free Press*; "Cruel Treatment of Prisoners," *New York Evening Post*, June 6, 1864; "Horrible.," *Bangor Daily Whig and Courier*, June 7, 1864, NCN; "Treatment of Union Prisoners," *Louisville Daily Journal*, June 9, 1864; "The Wrongs of Our Prisoners," *St. Johnsbury Caledonian*; "Treatment of Union Prisoners," *Chattanooga Daily Gazette*; "Cruel Treatment of Prisoners," *Buffalo Christian Advocate*, June 23, 1864.

¹⁷¹ Rosemarie Garland Thomson has noted that "Although extraordinary bodily forms have always been acknowledged as atypical, the cultural resonances accorded them arise from the historical and intellectual moments in which these bodies are embedded. Because such bodies are rare, unique, material, and confounding of cultural categories, they function as magnets to which culture secures its anxieties, questions, and needs at any given moment." Rosemarie Garland Thomson, "Introduction: From Wonder to Error—A Genealogy of Freak Discourse in Modernity," in *Freakery: Cultural Spectacles of the Extraordinary Body*, ed. Rosemarie Garland Thomson (New York: New York University Press, 1996), 2.

¹⁷² Reluctant to characterize the Confederacy as uniquely malicious, many scholars of Civil War prisons have noted that an immense loss of life was experienced on both sides, as disease ran rampant at Northern prison camps in Elmira, New York and Rock

Confederate prisons was swift and pronounced, with Congress declaring that the “evidence proves beyond all manner of doubt, a determination on the part of the rebel authorities, deliberately and persistently practiced for a long time” to torture and starve Union prisoners, and to return them in a condition “both physically and mentally, which no language we can use can adequately describe.”¹⁷³ The sense of outrage in the North grew in response to the dissemination of both first-person prison narratives and photographs and engraved images of the prisoners, including those compiled by Congress and the USSC. This public discourse was aided in its formation by the superior publishing industries in the North; as Kathleen Collins has noted, the South could have produced equally damning photographic evidence if it had the same technological resources as the North.¹⁷⁴

Island, Illinois, and at Confederate facilities in Salisbury, North Carolina and Andersonville, Georgia. Though the loss or destruction of many Confederate records make the actual number of deceased prisoners unknown, McPherson has estimated that 30,218 of the 194,743 Union soldiers who were imprisoned in Southern camps died there (signifying a mortality rate of approximately 15.5 percent), compared with 25,976 of the 214,865 Southerners who died in Northern prisons (12 percent). On the idea that the mortality rate in the North was equally bad, see especially Hesseltine, *Civil War Prisons*; Kathleen Collins, “Living Skeletons: *Carte-de-visite* propaganda in the American Civil War,” *History of Photography* 12, no. 2 (1988), 103–120. For statistics, see McPherson, *Battle Cry of Freedom*, 802.

¹⁷³ U.S. Congress, *Report of the Joint Select Committee on the Conduct of the War*, 5.

¹⁷⁴ Comparatively, there are no known surviving photographs which show paroled Confederate prisoners in similar conditions of emaciation and injury. Collins, “Living Skeletons.”

The Production of the Annapolis Prisoner Photographs

In an article written to accompany the publication of the wood engravings on its June 18, 1864 cover, *Harper's Weekly* identifies its source of the Annapolis prisoner photographs as Dr. Ellerslie Wallace (1819–1885), a Philadelphia-based physician and member of the United States Sanitary Commission (USSC), who participated in an inquiry into the condition of returned prisoners.¹⁷⁵ A private relief agency modeled on civilian activity during the Crimean War, the USSC helped soldiers collect back pay and with other logistical needs; surveyed the conditions of army hospitals and prison camps; and organized large fairs, at which they sold goods, including photographs, to raise funds in support of sick and wounded soldiers in the Union army.¹⁷⁶ Wallace's submission of the photographs to *Harper's Weekly* is

¹⁷⁵ Wallace was also the president of the Soldier's Home in Philadelphia, an organization that provided charity to convalescing soldiers. Ferdinand L. Sarmiento, ed., *Historical Sketch of the Soldier's Home in the City of Philadelphia, Incorporated, April 9, 1864, Succeeding the Cooper Shop Volunteer Refreshment Committee, Organized May, 1861* (Philadelphia: The Soldier's Home, 1886), HathiTrust.

¹⁷⁶ For a history of the U.S. Sanitary Commission, see Charles J. Stillé, *History of the United States Sanitary Commission, Being the General Report of Its Work During the War of the Rebellion* (Philadelphia: Lippincott, 1866), as well as Margaret Humphreys, *Marrow of Tragedy: The Health Crisis of the American Civil War* (Baltimore: The Johns Hopkins University Press, 2013). The fundraising efforts of the Sanitary Commission are also briefly mentioned in Rosenheim, *Photography and the American Civil War, 175–177*. On the role that the U.S. Sanitary Commission played in the changing nature of American medicine during the Civil War, see Kathryn Shively Meier, "U.S. Sanitary Commission Physicians and the Transformation of American Health Care," in *So Conceived and So Dedicated: Intellectual Life in the Civil War-Era North*, ed. Lorien Foote and Kanisorn Wongsrichanalai (New York: Fordham University Press, 2015), 19–40. For a representation of the Sanitary Commission in *Harper's Weekly*, see, among others, "The United States Sanitary Commission," *Harper's Weekly*, April 9, 1864, HarpWeek.

consistent with the broader humanitarian activities of the Sanitary Commission.¹⁷⁷ However, *Harper's* attribution of the photographs to Dr. Wallace is somewhat misleading, as Wallace and the USSC were not behind the production of many of the Annapolis prisoner photographs, nor were they solely responsible for their circulation.¹⁷⁸ Archival evidence reveals that at least one of the men depicted on *Harper's* June 18, 1864 cover, Private John Q. Rose (fig. 30), was already dead and

¹⁷⁷ The photographic activities of the U.S. Sanitary Commission remain ripe for further study, especially as connections may be made between the use of photographs by the Sanitary Commission and the broader history of humanitarian photography. For a study of humanitarian photography, see Heide Fehrenbach and Davide Rodogno, eds., *Humanitarian Photography: A History* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2015).

¹⁷⁸ Many assume that Ellerslie Wallace was the photographer of these pictures (see, for example, <https://www.metmuseum.org/art/collection/search/830994>). This assumption is most likely based on the attribution in *Harper's Weekly*, as well as Wallace's copywriting of two images of Private Jackson O. Broshears, a paroled prisoner at Annapolis, under the title "A Richmond Prisoner." (Note that neither of these images served as a source for *Harper's* engravings). It is unlikely, however, that Wallace himself was the photographer, as there is no evidence to suggest that Wallace practiced photography (though his son, Dr. Ellerslie Wallace, Jr., did), and U.S. copyright laws at the time allowed for images to be copyrighted by the owner of the negative, whether they were the photographer or not. The photographer A.J. Russell has also been erroneously linked to these photographs by writers such as John McElroy. See John McElroy, *This Was Andersonville*, ed. Roy Meredith (New York: The Fairfax Press, 1957; 1979; first published by McElroy in 1879), n.p. For the attribution of *Harper's* source images to Wallace, see "Further Proofs of Rebel Inhumanity," *Harper's Weekly*, June 18, 1864, HarpWeek. Documentation of Ellerslie Wallace's copyrighting of two images of "A Richmond Prisoner" can be found in the archives of the Library of Congress. Ellerslie Wallace, *A Richmond Prisoner*, Southeastern District of Pennsylvania, 1864. Copyright Ledger Collection, Rare Book & Special Collections Division of the Library of Congress, Washington, D.C. For an illuminating discussion of the impact that photographic patents and copyrights had on the evolution of paper photography, see Mazie Harris, *Paper Promises: Early American Photography* (Los Angeles: The J. Paul Getty Museum, 2018).

buried by the time of Wallace's arrival. Records indicate Private Rose was admitted to the hospital in Annapolis on May 2, 1864 and died just two days later; he was then buried on May 6.¹⁷⁹ Although contemporary news reports indicate that Private Rose's image was, in fact, a postmortem photograph, Rose's burial occurred more than a week before Dr. Wallace and the USSC's committee of inquiry visited the hospital.¹⁸⁰ The exact date of the USSC's arrival in Annapolis is unclear, but it would have occurred sometime between May 13, when the USSC records indicate that the investigatory committee was formed, and May 24, 1864, when Dr. Wallace copyrighted two photographs taken in the hospital; meanwhile, a photograph of Rose's emaciated form was already circulating in Rochester, New York by May 14, when a news report indicates that it was placed on public display.¹⁸¹ This evidence establishes that Dr. Wallace was not the creator of Rose's image but instead collected and circulated preexisting photographs as part of his efforts on behalf of Union soldiers.

¹⁷⁹ Compiled service record, John Q. Rose, Private, Co. C, 8th Kentucky Infantry Regiment; Carded Records Showing Military Service of Soldiers Who Fought in Volunteer Organizations During the American Civil War, compiled 1890–1912, documenting the period 1861–1866, Record Group (RG) 94; National Archives, Washington, D.C.

¹⁸⁰ On the image of Private Rose being a postmortem photograph, see "Death from Starvation." On the formation of the committee of inquiry, see New York Standing Committee Records, United States Sanitary Commission records. New York, N.Y. archives, Manuscripts and Archives Division, The New York Public Library. Astor, Lenox, and Tilden Foundations. For more information on Dr. Wallace's visit to the U.S. General Hospital in Annapolis, see also "A Richmond Prisoner," *The Press*.

¹⁸¹ An additional press report also places a print of Private Rose's photograph in Philadelphia by May 16, 1864. On the circulation of Rose's photograph in Rochester, NY, see "Man's Inhumanity to Man," *Rochester Daily Democrat*; on its circulation in Philadelphia, see "Death from Starvation."

The photographer was instead most likely A.H. Messinger (dates unknown), who operated a studio on the campus of U.S. General Hospital, Division No. 1, in Annapolis in 1864 and 1865, before relocating to Providence, Rhode Island.¹⁸² Imprints on the verso of other *cartes de visite* from this period evince Messinger's prolific portrait practice, as well as his association with the hospital's staff (figs. 32, 33, 34 and 35). Staging a makeshift studio in the hospital's ward, with blankets as backdrops, Messinger likely produced the Annapolis prisoner photographs in close collaboration with three different parties: the hospital's medical staff, members of the Joint Congressional Committee on the Conduct of the War, and members of the USSC.¹⁸³ Contemporary news reports, however, point toward the Congressional

¹⁸² In an earlier study of the Annapolis prisoner photographs, Kathleen Collins incorrectly identified Dr. Ellerslie Wallace as a member of the Annapolis hospital staff, which he was not. However, I agree with Collins in her attribution of the images to A.H. Messinger. See Collins, "Living Skeletons." Ross Kelbaugh also identifies Messinger as the photographer of the Annapolis prisoner photographs. For information on A.H. Messinger, see Bob Zeller, "Lost Photos of Antietam Hospital," *Civil War Times Illustrated* (May 1996): 36–43; Bob Zeller, "Rare Photos of the Naval Academy," *Civil War Times Illustrated* (May 1997): 36–39; Ross J. Kelbaugh, *Maryland's Civil War Photographs* (Baltimore: Maryland Historical Society, 2012), 198–208. Advertisements for Messinger's studio can be found in various issues of the hospital's newspaper, *The Crutch* (see, for example, Untitled, *The Crutch*, July 9, 1864). Evidence of Messinger opening a photographic studio in Providence, Rhode Island can be found in the directories for that city. See *The Providence Directory for the Year 1865: Containing a General Directory of the Citizens and Business Directory of the State of Rhode Island* (Providence, RI: Adams, Sampson, & Co., 1865), as well as those for the years 1866 and 1867.

¹⁸³ Notably, there are no known extant prints of the Annapolis prisoner photographs with Messinger's backmark; this may be because Messinger was taking the photographs on behalf of other parties. However, an example of Messinger's studio imprint has been preserved alongside one of the Annapolis prisoner photographs included in an album assembled by the Massachusetts commandery of the Military Order of the Loyal Legion of the United States (MOLLUS), located in the collection of the US Army Heritage and Education Center. See MOLLUS-Mass Civil War

Committee as having first “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.”¹⁸⁴ Later, both Congress and the USSC would use photographs and wood engravings after the Annapolis prisoner photographs to illustrate reports of their investigations.¹⁸⁵ For these historical actors, the photographs provided additional visual evidence to support oral testimony given by the prisoners and their physicians,

Photograph Collection Volume 77, The United States Army and Heritage Education Center, Carlisle, PA.

¹⁸⁴ Italics in original. Untitled, *The Crutch*, May 14, 1864. Note that the Congressional Committee arrived to examine the Annapolis prisoners on May 5 or 6, 1864, approximately two weeks before the arrival of the USSC’s own committee of inquiry. U.S. Congress, *Report of the Joint Select Committee on the Conduct of the War*, 1; “Death from Starvation.”

¹⁸⁵ Note that the Philadelphia publishers King & Baird published two versions of the USSC’s report in 1864. Both are entitled the *Narrative of Privations and Sufferings of United States Officers & Soldiers While Prisoners of War in the Hands of Rebel Authorities* and are approximately 283 pages. One version, which is bound in leather, features albumen paper prints of the Annapolis prisoner photographs, while another, which is bound in a paper cover, contains wood engraved reproductions after the same photographs. Emily McKibbon has referred to these as the “Clothbound” and “Paperbound” editions and speculates that the King & Baird “Clothbound” *Narrative* was not sold on the open market, but rather produced in a limited edition for USSC commissioners and government officials. Subsequent paperbound editions of the *Narrative* were produced by the publishers Littel’s Living Age in Boston in 1864, and feature wood engravings that were likely created using the same plates as the King & Baird edition. A letter in the archives of the USSC indicates that efforts were made to secure the plates from the Philadelphia edition to be reused by Littel’s. See United States Sanitary Commission records. Pennsylvania Archives, Manuscripts and Archives Division, The New York Public Library. Astor, Lenox, and Tilden Foundations. In 1865, the publishers Alfred William Bennett in London produced their own version of the *Narrative*, featuring photographic copies of the American wood engravings. For a thorough examination of the various editions of the USSC’s *Narrative*, see McKibbon, “To see some few proofs of enormous wickedness.”

which claimed that the Confederacy had transgressed the bounds of civilized warfare by deliberately starving Union prisoners.¹⁸⁶

Although the photographs that were taken of paroled prisoners at Annapolis and Baltimore in the spring of 1864 were produced, in large part, for political reasons, to document or prove the Confederacy's willful mistreatment of Union prisoners, they were also produced in a medical context. The figures' nudity and frontal postures, as well as the strong lighting and simplified backdrops of the images, which are evident in both the original photographs and *Harper's* engraved reproductions, are characteristic of period medical photography.¹⁸⁷ Several photographs also include members of the hospital's staff demonstrating their vocation as they surround the patient in bed or bear the weight of the patient's frame as they present them for the camera (figs. 36, 37 and 38).¹⁸⁸ In these images, the doctors seem to model a level of care and empathy for subsequent viewers of the photographs and their reprographic wood engravings, while also highlighting the stark physical differences between the

¹⁸⁶ The history of photographs as visual evidence, including the systemic racism which governs its admissibility in the United States, will be further explored in chapter four.

¹⁸⁷ For a history of Civil War medical photography, see William Gladstone, "Medical Photography in the Civil War," *Photographica* 8–9, no. 11 (Feb. 1979): 11–22; and Stanley Burns, "Early Medical Photography in America," *New York State Journal of Medicine* (August 1980): 1444–1469. The photographic endeavors of surgeon Dr. Reed Brockway Bontecou (1824–1907), of Harewood General Hospital in Washington, D.C., are also discussed at length in Rosenheim, *Photography and the American Civil War*, 178–193.

¹⁸⁸ In some of these photographs, the presence of the doctor may have been staged, as the prisoner was likely dead and therefore unable to wrap his own arm around the doctor. See, for example, the Annapolis prisoner photograph in the collection of the Nelson-Atkins Museum of Art in Kansas City, MO.

paroled prisoners and more normative white male bodies.¹⁸⁹ The difference in the form of the hospital photographs, in which some patients appear in a studio setting and others appear in bed, also suggests an adaptability in their production that was motivated by the desire to photograph the most pitiful and thereby illustrative cases.

During the Civil War, it was not uncommon for surgeons and physicians at army hospitals to employ the camera as part of their medical practice. A catalogue issued by the Army Medical Museum in January 1863 explicitly articulated the U.S. Army's interest in collecting photographic representations of extraordinary injuries and the results of operations or peculiar amputations.¹⁹⁰ These photographs were initially conceived as educational tools that would aid future diagnosis and treatment, and were part of a new epistemological era in American medicine, one based on the experience of dealing with patients and documenting their care.¹⁹¹ However, as scholars such as J.T.H. Connor and Michael G. Rhode have shown, these medical illustrations were often used and interpreted in ways far removed from their original

¹⁸⁹ This was a common practice in “freak” discourse in the nineteenth century, which saw the circulation of photographs which juxtaposed stark physical difference. Thomson, *Freakery*, 8.

¹⁹⁰ Burns, “Early Medical Photography,” 1453.

¹⁹¹ On the role that Civil War medical photography played in the development of American medicine, see Shauna Devine, “Civil War Surgical Card Collection (1860s); Army Medical Museum and the Surgeon General’s Office,” in *Hidden Treasure: The National Library of Medicine*, ed. Michael Sappol (Bethesda, MD: National Library of Medicine, 2012), 182. E-book.

purpose.¹⁹² In the case of the photographs of the paroled prisoners at Annapolis, Union supporters also quickly recognized the images' potential as political symbols.

The large number of photographs of paroled prisoners made at Annapolis in 1864 that survive today demonstrates the volume of their initial production and suggests that these photographs were produced with the intention of being distributed to a wide audience. This is also indicated by their composition, as the men's genitals are covered by their hands, clothing, or other objects.¹⁹³ Our attention is drawn to the implied modesty of Private Rose in particular, who was photographed with both his hands and a white cloth covering his private parts (figs. 30 and 39). Though it was common practice in the mid-nineteenth century for medical photographs to show both male and female genitalia and breasts, images of naked bodies would have been reserved for private, educational purposes and not intended for widespread public consumption. Notably, fig leaves were attached to Civil War medical photographs prior to their exhibition at the 1876 Centennial Exposition in Philadelphia.¹⁹⁴ In their essay "Shooting Soldiers: Civil War Medical Images, Memory, and Identity in

¹⁹² J.T.H. Connor and Michael G. Rhode, "Shooting Soldiers: Civil War Medical Images, Memory, and Identity in America," *InVisible Culture: An Electronic Journal for Visual Culture* 5 (January 2003). <http://ivc.lib.rochester.edu/shooting-soldiers-civil-war-medical-images-memory-and-identity-in-america/#fnref-3609-24>

¹⁹³ One of the paroled prisoners even appears with a large leaf covering his genitalia. A photograph of this unidentified soldier appears in the collections of the Library of Congress and the US Army Heritage and Education Center.

¹⁹⁴ According to Connor and Rhode, artificial leaves were attached to the negatives of photographs after their initial production and prior to their display; in one case, archival sources describe this retouching being done by a lithographer. Connor and Rhode, "Shooting Soldiers."

America,” Connor and Rhode argue that the use of such visual devices “had less if anything to do with guarding patient identity and modesty and more to do with not offending the potential audience.”¹⁹⁵ The distinct efforts that were undertaken to cover the prisoners’ private parts therefore suggests that the Annapolis prisoner photographs were produced to be seen by a broader audience beyond medical and military professionals.

As noted above, to date I have located forty-seven prints of the Annapolis prisoner photographs in public and private collections across the United States, with fifteen unique images and seven or eight individual soldiers identified within this broader group. An additional image, which has been variously identified as that of Private Phillip Hattel (or Hattle) and Private Oliver Fairbanks, was likely photographed at the U.S. General Hospital Division, No. 2 in Annapolis in 1865 (figs. 40 and 41).¹⁹⁶ Of the forty-seven known prints made in 1864, at least nine represent

¹⁹⁵ Connor and Rhode, “Shooting Soldiers.”

¹⁹⁶ Copies of this photograph can be found today in the collections of the Library of Congress and the U.S. Army Heritage and Education Center. The verso of the print in the Library of Congress identifies the subject as Private Phillip Hattle, Co. I, 31st Pennsylvania Volunteers, and states that the former prisoner died at the U.S. General Hospital, Division No. 2 in Annapolis on June 25, 1865. Military records at the National Archives confirm that there was a Private Phillip Hattel of Co. I, 31st Pennsylvania Volunteers that died in Annapolis on June 26, 1865. Compiled service record, Phillip Hattel, Private, Co. I, 31st Pennsylvania Infantry Regiment; Carded Records Showing Military Service of Soldiers Who Fought in Volunteer Organizations During the American Civil War, compiled 1890–1912, documenting the period 1861–1866, Record Group (RG) 94; National Archives, Washington, D.C. At the U.S. Army Heritage and Education Center, this figure is identified as “Oliver Fairbanks.” An additional print of this photograph is in a private collection in Pennsylvania and the subject has been identified as James R. Haun of the 103rd Pennsylvania Volunteers, although the collector admits his skepticism about this attribution. Correspondence between the author and Ken Turner, December 12, 2019.

Private Rose (fig. 30)—some the most photographs produced of any one man.¹⁹⁷ Most of the surviving images exist as *cartes de visite*, although in some cases the photographs have been floated off their mounts and pasted directly into albums and copies of the USSC’s report.¹⁹⁸ These different formats speak to their wide distribution and the public interest in viewing them. The idea that these images, which show men in states of extreme vulnerability and were presumably taken without the subjects’ full consent, would be copied and circulated for public consumption runs counter to our contemporary notions of privacy and medical ethics.¹⁹⁹ What is evident, however, is that there was a public interest in, and market for, such images of prisoners of war at this moment in American history.

In addition to their large number and the efforts undertaken to conceal the subjects’ nudity, the production of the Annapolis prisoner photographs as *cartes de visite* points to their intended distribution and use as informational tools. As described

In Appendix B, I identify this subject as “Phillip Hattel,” in reflection of the close correspondence between the object at the Library of Congress and the military records at the National Archives.

¹⁹⁷ As catalogued in Appendix B, it is in fact Private Isaiah Bowker who has the most surviving photographs.

¹⁹⁸ This is the case for the prints at the Getty Museum, the George Eastman Museum, the Metropolitan Museum of Art, Princeton University, and the U.S. Army Heritage and Education Center.

¹⁹⁹ It is also worth noting that the men who suffered the most in Confederate prisons were those of a lower military rank, and often of a lower-class background. For recent work that discusses the circulation of private, medical images by Civil War surgeons, see Jenna Marvin, “Reversing Dark for Light: Photographs, Negatives, and Methodologies of Absence,” Paper presented at *Speculative Forensics*, 55th Annual UCLA Art History Graduate Symposium, Los Angeles, CA (November 6, 2020).

in chapter 1, the invention of the *carte de visite* enabled multiple inexpensive copies of small images to be produced from a single exposure, creating objects that mimicked the portability and ubiquity of the calling card. The unique format of the card mount also provided space for text to be included on the object's recto or verso, and this space was often used to advertise the object's creator or to provide information about the subject; in some cases, this text also served as an expression of the subject's agency.²⁰⁰ In the case of the *cartes de visite* of paroled Union soldiers created in Annapolis in 1864, almost all the photographs offer information about the depicted soldier's military service, as well as the condition in which he arrived at the hospital.²⁰¹ This information appears in either handwritten notation or in more formal typewritten text, as in the example of the photographs of Private Jackson O. Broshears (figs. 42 and 43, and 44 and 45) located in the collections of the Library of Congress and the Metropolitan Museum of Art.²⁰² Although the photographs present different

²⁰⁰ See, for example, Sojourner Truth's use of *cartes de visite*, as explored in chapter 1.

²⁰¹ A short explanatory note was standard practice for medical images and specimens collected during the Civil War, as ordered by the Surgeon General. See Circular No. 2, May 21, 1862, referenced in Bradley P. Bengtson, M.D. and Julian E. Kuz, M.D., eds., *Photographic Atlas of Civil War Injuries: Photographs of Surgical Cases and Specimens, Otis Historical Archives, First Edition* (Kennesaw, GA: Medical Staff Press, LLC in association with Kennesaw Mountain Press, 1996), iv. In some instances, in which the Annapolis prisoner photographs have been floated off their card mounts, the typewritten descriptive text was preserved and placed adjacent to the albumen paper print in an album. This is the case for several of the photographs in the MOLLUS albums located in the collection of the U.S. Army Heritage and Education Center.

²⁰² This name is variously spelled "Broshers" and "Broshears." The correct spelling, according to military records, is "Broshears." Compiled service record, Jackson O. Broshears, Private, Co. D, 65th Indiana Infantry Regiment; Carded Records Showing

versions of Private Broshears, the typewritten text pasted on the verso of the mount is the same. It reads:

U.S. General Hospital, Div. No. 1
Annapolis, MD.,
Private Jackson O. Broshears, Co. D, 65th
Indiana Mounted Infantry. Age 20 years;
height 6 feet 1 inch; weight when captured,
185 lbs.; was in rebel hands three and one-
quarter months, 2 months of which were pas-
sed on Belle Isle. Under treatment in U.S.
Hospital 8 weeks—constantly improving—
now. May 19th, 1864, weighs 108 1/2 lbs.²⁰³

As the literary scholar Timothy Sweet has written, “no matter what political beliefs are held by an individual soldier, his death or injury is a referentially unstable sign that is appropriated by the discourse of war to legitimate the ideology of the victor state.”²⁰⁴ The unique materiality of the *carte de visite*, including its portability and the ability for a textual appeal to be added to the card’s mount, made it the ideal

Military Service of Soldiers Who Fought in Volunteer Organizations During the American Civil War, compiled 1890–1912, documenting the period 1861–1866, Record Group (RG) 94; National Archives, Washington, D.C.

²⁰³ Additional photographs of Private Broshears that have been sold at auction include handwritten notation from Ellerslie Wallace. For more information, see <https://www.worthpoint.com/worthopedia/dr-ellerslie-wallace-signature-civil-war-prisoner-1> and <https://www.worthpoint.com/worthopedia/dr-ellerslie-wallace-signature-civil-war-prisoner>.

²⁰⁴ Here Sweet is paraphrasing the work of Elaine Scarry in *The Body in Pain*. Timothy Sweet, *Traces of War: Poetry, Photography, and the Crisis of the Union* (Baltimore: The Johns Hopkins University Press, 1990), 105. For Scarry’s articulation of the political transformation of violence into ideological signs and its appropriation by the state as a mechanism of legitimation see Elaine Scarry, *The Body in Pain: The Making and Unmaking of the World* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1985), 117.

form for the communication of propagandistic ideas as supported by this ideological appropriation. This transformation of bodily violence into an ideological sign is reaffirmed by the text that is appended to many of the photographs, which points to the Confederacy as being responsible for the men's condition. For example, the text on the verso of the photograph of Private Isaiah G. Bowker located at the Massachusetts Historical Society (figs. 46 and 47) explicitly links the sight of Bowker's emaciated body to his time as a prisoner of war:

U.S. General Hospital, Div. No. 1
Annapolis, MD.,
Private Isaiah G. Bowker, Co. B, 9th Me. Vols.,
Admitted per Steamer New York from Richmond, Va., March 9, 1864. Died May 16, 1864, from effects of ill treatment while in the hands of the enemy.

However, by reducing the soldiers' injuries to their symbolic form as a representation of political ideology, the Annapolis prisoner photographs fail to articulate the lives of these men beyond their internment in Southern prison camps. This includes how Private Bowker survived for more than two months following his exchange, or how Private Broshears was released from the hospital in the fall of 1864 and returned home to Spencer County, Indiana—most likely to vote in the presidential election—only to die in the company of his mother on October 15, 1864.²⁰⁵ Another tragic story is that of Private Lewis Klein of Company A, 14th New York Cavalry, whose portrait endures

²⁰⁵ Compiled service record, Jackson O. Broshears. According to James McPherson, several thousand Union soldiers from Indiana were furloughed in the fall of 1864 with the intention that they would return home to vote for Lincoln in the largely Democratic state. At this time, the War Department also combed military hospitals for convalescent Indiana soldiers who were well enough to travel for the election. McPherson, *Battle Cry of Freedom*, 804.

as a wood engraving in the report of the Congressional committee (fig. 48). Captured at Donaldsonville, Louisiana in September 1863, Klein was held at Richmond's Libby Prison until April 18, 1864, when he was exchanged and sent to West's Building Hospital in Baltimore. Following the war, Klein was hospitalized at the New York City Asylum for the Insane, where he died in 1886; pension forms completed by his brother state that Klein's "constitution [was] shattered" because of his incarceration in a rebel prison.²⁰⁶ Rather than being superfluous, these biographical details highlight the history of these men's lives that is hidden by the limitations of the photographic medium and the use of their representations in a politically charged context, and instead offer a space for contemporary viewers to begin to encounter these images differently.

The Racial Politics of the Annapolis Prisoner Photographs

According to records located in the Library of Congress, the two photographs of Private Broshears were copyrighted in Philadelphia by Dr. Ellerslie Wallace on May 24, 1864, under the title "A Richmond Prisoner."²⁰⁷ The image of Broshears with

²⁰⁶ Lewis Klein, Private, Company A, 14th New York Calvary; Case Files of Approved Pension Applications of Veterans Who Served in the Army and Navy Mainly in the Civil War and the War with Spain ("Civil War and Later Survivors' Certificates"), 1861–1934; Civil War and Later Pension Files; Records of the Department of Veterans Affairs, Record Group (RG) 15; National Archives Building, Washington, D.C.

²⁰⁷ Later Wallace would state that he copyrighted the images "to make the evidence of the picture a little more sure to the minds of those to whom [Wallace] was known" in Philadelphia. For this quotation, see his letter to the Rev. Thomas Alfred Starkey, excerpted in "Rebel Barbarities; Outrages on Union Prisoners; A Letter from the Rev. Dr. Starkey."

his back facing the camera was also later reproduced as a wood engraving (fig. 49) in copies of the USSC's report on the condition of returned prisoners. This photograph was likely circulated and selected for reproduction because of its formal resonance with photographs of Peter Gordon, commonly known as *The Scourged Back* (fig. 6). Both images present men in a similar three quarter-pose, with their backs facing the camera and their faces shown in profile, as they contort their frames to present the best possible view of their injuries while simultaneously registering their identities. The scholar Ann Fabian has argued that these formal similarities were intentional, writing that "Those who made pictures of returned prisoners appropriated the visual vocabulary designed for images of slavery, [with] the ribs of the starving soldier replacing the lash marks on the slave's back."²⁰⁸ Northern audiences familiar with the earlier image of Peter Gordon would thus have been primed to read Broshears's photograph as further proof of Southern inhumanity, though this time as it was inflicted upon white men.²⁰⁹

In many ways, the injured bodies of the white prisoners of war were used by Northern actors as proxies for the conflict surrounding the treatment of Black prisoners of war, and, more broadly, the cruelty enacted upon Black Americans in the South. This connection was reinforced by newspaper accounts, including those published by *Harper's Weekly*, which framed the prisoners' sufferings in relation to the South's moral corruption through the practice of chattel slavery. The Annapolis

²⁰⁸ Fabian, *The Unvarnished Truth*, 130.

²⁰⁹ See chapter four for a related discussion of the formal similarities behind *The Scourged Back* and photographs of Martha Ann Banks, particularly as it relates to stereotypes in newspaper publishing.

prisoner photographs thus recall earlier examples in which white bodies were used to convey the horrors of enslavement, such as *The Branded Hand of Captain Jonathan Walker* (1845) (fig. 50), in which the white shipwright Jonathan Walker displays the letters “SS”—for “slave stealer”—that were branded on his person as punishment for attempting to help seven enslaved men escape by boat.²¹⁰ This trans-racial substitution was also inscribed by the many narratives written by white prisoners of war that used the language of enslavement to describe incarceration in prisoner of war camps.²¹¹ For example, in the report compiled by the USSC, one soldier likened the prisoners’ confinement in Libby Prison, in which many of the men were deprived of benches or stools and were obligated to rest on their haunches, to that of “so many slaves on the middle passage.”²¹² For white soldiers unaccustomed to starvation, filth, and loss of liberty, their sufferings felt equal to, if not greater than, that of the enslaved.²¹³

This analogizing of prisoners’ experiences to that of enslaved persons engaged the sympathetic feelings of Northern abolitionists, while also drawing attention away

²¹⁰ For a thorough description of *The Branded Hand*, see Mathew Fox-Amato, *Exposing Slavery*, 115–117; Fein, “White Skin, Silvered Plate.”

²¹¹ Similarly, colonial revolutionaries used the metaphor of enslavement to describe their oppression by Great Britain. Peter A. Dorsey, *Common Bondage: Slavery as Metaphor in Revolutionary America* (Knoxville: University of Tennessee Press, 2009).

²¹² United States Sanitary Commission, *Narrative of Privations and Sufferings of United States Officers and Soldiers While Prisoners of War in the Hands of Rebel Authorities; Being the Report of a Commission of Inquiry, Appointed by the United States Sanitary Commission; With an Appendix Containing the Testimony* (Philadelphia: King and Baird, 1864), 31.

²¹³ On the contest of suffering staged between white prisoners of war and enslaved Black Americans, see Fabian, *The Unvarnished Truth*, 117–157.

from the sufferings of actual enslaved Black Americans. This redirection of sympathy was further enabled by white viewers' encounters with the Annapolis prisoner photographs, which showed white bodies, not unlike viewers' own, marked by the brutality of the slave-holding Confederacy. The art historian Katherine Fein has recently argued, regarding the daguerreotype of Walker's *Branded Hand*, that the race and status of Walker's scarred body determined its reception among white audiences, and what it "could and could not do" for the abolitionist cause; by presenting white abolitionists with a body that was fragmented in its brutal scarring but also empowered by its whiteness, Fein argues that the cased photograph of Walker's hand materialized "the contradictions of the antislavery movement, simultaneously making tangible the brutality of slavery and holding it at a comfortable distance."²¹⁴ Similarly confronted with another body both "like and unlike their own," white Northern viewers of the Annapolis prisoner photographs would have been compelled to see themselves and their loved ones in the bodies of the emaciated prisoners, thereby igniting anger at the Confederacy for their inhumane treatment of these soldiers, while keeping both Black people and their experiences of enslavement out of reach.²¹⁵

Similar to the dynamics that Fein describes regarding *The Branded Hand*, in her publication *Raising Freedom's Child: Black Children and Visions of the Future After Slavery*, Mary Niall Mitchell describes how, during the Civil War, photographs and presentations of white-looking enslaved children (figs. 51 and 52) were used by Northern abolitionists to convey antislavery messages and boost support of the Union

²¹⁴ Fein, "White Skin, Silvered Plate," 370.

²¹⁵ *Ibid.*

campaign at a time when the war was becoming increasingly unpopular. In circulating these photographs and presenting white-looking slave children at public events, Northern activists reflected racial fears that surrounded the question of slavery and its demise; as Mitchell explains, even those in abolitionist circles harbored fears that if slavery, and the attendant sexual subjugation of enslaved women, was allowed to continue, racial difference would become increasingly hard to discern and as a consequence white people themselves could potentially be enslaved (whether by mistake or by malevolent design).²¹⁶ Images of white-looking slave children thus engaged sentimental Victorian notions of the purity and innocence of white childhood, while also preying upon preexisting fears that the Southern slave power was a threat to the liberties of white Americans and the purity of the “Anglo-Saxon” race.²¹⁷ Mitchell explains that photographs of white-skinned enslaved children and narratives of white people being mistakenly sold into slavery proved strategic for abolitionists and the Union military because they redirected Northern eyes away from the largely Black enslaved population for whom the war was fought.²¹⁸

Drawing upon the work of Fein and Mitchell, I assert that those who circulated the Annapolis prisoner photographs, including *Harper’s Weekly*, did so in part to divert viewers’ attention away from the interests of Black Americans when the war and emancipation were becoming increasingly divisive issues within the context of the 1864 presidential election. Notably, the Annapolis prisoner photographs circulated at a

²¹⁶ Mitchell, *Raising Freedom’s Child*, 51–91.

²¹⁷ *Ibid.*, 55.

²¹⁸ *Ibid.*, 60.

time of great concern regarding the Confederate treatment of Black prisoners of war, following the massacre of nearly 300 Black soldiers and their officers at Fort Pillow on April 12, 1864—yet none of the images depict or even mention Black soldiers.²¹⁹ By drawing viewers' attention to the injuries suffered by white prisoners of war, and, consequently, away from the violence that was enacted upon Black prisoners, and Black Americans more broadly, the Annapolis prisoner photographs conveyed to Northern audiences that it was white men's bodies and white men's freedom that needed to be defended against the slave powers, instead of the freedom of Black Americans.²²⁰ This redirection of sympathy was especially strategic in the context of the 1864 presidential election, as conservative Democrats preyed upon preexisting fears that emancipation and Black citizenship were a threat to white Northern society. Negatively framing the Lincoln administration as one in support of Black civil rights at the expense of white identity, Democratic rhetoric was filled with allusions to racial mixing and often borrowed the language of enslavement to describe the President's alleged oppression of white liberties.²²¹ As the brother-in-law of the late Colonel Robert Gould Shaw, the commander of the first all-Black regiment in the Northeast, and an advocate for the equitable treatment of Black soldiers, *Harper's* political editor

²¹⁹ There are likely no images of Black prisoners of war as many Black soldiers who were captured were murdered, rather than imprisoned, and yet the omission is still worth noting. On the massacre of Black soldiers at Fort Pillow, see McPherson, *Battle Cry of Freedom*, 748.

²²⁰ Mitchell, *Raising Freedom's Child*, 60.

²²¹ For an example of Democratic politicians borrowing the language of enslavement and allusions to racial mixing, see Weber, *Copperheads*, ix–x, 23. For an example of an anti-Lincoln political cartoon that engages such racist ideology, see, for example, Henry Thomas Atwell's "Political Caricature No. 4: The Miscegenation Ball."

George William Curtis would undoubtedly have had a vested interest in the complexities of this issue. Thus, while the Annapolis prisoner photographs were the product of class distinctions—as the men who suffered the most were often of a lower military rank—their circulation as Northern political symbols flattened class distinctions in favor of upholding a monolithic whiteness which with Northern viewers were asked to identify and thereby protect. Subsequently, the photographs’ emphasis on whiteness helped to further coalesce racial difference.

Reactions to the *Cartes de Visite*

In several publications, Kathleen Collins has highlighted how *cartes de visite* were used for charitable and propaganda purposes during the American Civil War and has discussed the Annapolis prisoner photographs within this latter context.²²² Indeed, contemporary newspaper accounts confirm that the Annapolis prisoner photographs were produced to circulate information about the condition of returned prisoners and

²²² In her 1985 PhD dissertation, and again in her 1987 article for *History of Photography*, Collins argues that the federal government used the Annapolis prisoner photographs to deflect attention away from the Union’s own culpability and “greater cruelty” in contributing to the mistreatment of prisoners of war through the effectuation of the naval blockade. Collins, “Living Skeletons,” 103. Though my work on the Annapolis prisoner photographs shares many affinities with that of Collins, my project employs previously undiscovered archival sources to trace the circulation of the Annapolis prisoner photographs before their appearance in *Harper’s Weekly* and the reports of the Congressional Committee and the USSC. My work also differs from that of Collins in its ultimate focus, as I am less interested in the ways in which, as she writes, “the camera can be made to lie,” and more interested how the wide circulation of the Annapolis prisoner photographs provided a platform for *Harper’s Weekly* to use the images to simultaneously reflect and reinscribe an ongoing discourse about the suffering of white men as prisoners of war. See also Kathleen Collins, “The Camera as an Instrument of Persuasion: Studies of 19th-Century Propaganda Photography,” (PhD diss., Penn State University, 1985).

the cruelty of the Confederacy, providing a counter-narrative to those who supported making concessions to the South in the quest for immediate peace. In the May 14, 1864 issue of the hospital's newspaper, *The Crutch*, an unnamed author described the persuasive potential of these images and emphasized that they should be circulated in large numbers, writing:

Let every one endeavor to secure one of the card-pictures exhibiting the condition of many of our paroled prisoners...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 sympathizer you may know. We are positive that all boasters of Southern chivalry will be compelled to hide their heads for shame.²²³

Accordingly, the experience of seeing the emaciated bodies of the white prisoners was thought to have the power to supersede any previously circulated accounts about the state of Southern prisons and the character of the Confederacy and to persuade even the most ardent Southern sympathizers. Within this interpretation, many news accounts emphasized the physical response that they provoked in viewers, a characteristic feature of sentimentalism. As Karen Sánchez Eppler has written, in the nineteenth-century reading sentimental fiction was a “bodily act, and the success of a story [was] gauged, in part, by its ability to translate words into pulse beats and sobs.”²²⁴ In the same cultural context, an affective response was thought to confirm

²²³ Untitled, *The Crutch* (Annapolis), May 14, 1864. For a summary of *The Crutch* and its publication, see Ira Spar, M.D., *Civil War Hospital Newspapers: Histories and Excerpts of Nine Union Publications* (Jefferson, NC: McFarland & Company, Inc., 2017): 135–156. Note, however, that this source contains many inaccuracies, including the misspelling of names of hospital staff.

²²⁴ Karen Sánchez-Eppler, “Bodily Bonds: The Intersecting Rhetorics of Feminism and Abolitionism,” *Representations* 24 (Fall 1988): 36.

the reader's own sensitivity.²²⁵ Thus an editorialist for the *Buffalo Christian Advocate* who advocated the positive impact that the Annapolis prisoner photographs would have on public opinion wrote that "We shudder and grow sick as we look, and do not wonder that one of the committee, a gentleman often amongst the wounded both in hospital and on the battle-fields of Virginia, on his return from this inspection fainted away, and had himself to be put under a physician's care."²²⁶ For those who saw the photographs as effective anti-Confederate and anti-Democratic rhetoric, the impact that the images had on viewers' feelings would lead to a belief in the facts which they claimed to present regarding the character of the Confederacy.

The images' reception, however, depended upon the context in which they were seen, and my research has shown that the photographs and their reproductions prompted a variety of reactions by different audiences across the country. For example, shortly after the photographs were taken, an image of Private John Q. Rose (fig. 30) was sent by the Annapolis surgeon Dr. William Smith Ely (1842–1922) to his father, Dr. William Watson Ely, in Rochester, New York.²²⁷ There, the photograph

²²⁵ Fabian, *The Unvarnished Truth*, 135.

²²⁶ "Cruel Treatment of Prisoners," *Buffalo Christian Advocate*. For other contemporary news reports that emphasize the bodily response of both viewers and those that reported on the prisoners' condition, see "Outrages on Federal Prisoners—Rebel Brutalities," *Cleveland Daily Leader*, June 6, 1864; "Starvation," *Daily True Delta* (New Orleans), June 11, 1864, NWE.

²²⁷ Dr. Ely was the Assistant Surgeon of the United States Volunteers and Executive Officer of Hospital Division No. 1 (the Naval Academy Hospital at Annapolis). He was among those interviewed by the USSC and the Joint Select Committee on the Conduct of the War, and his testimony is included in House Report No. 67 and the report of the USSC.

was placed on public display in Rochester's Reynolds Arcade and was received by a sympathetic crowd in the progressive Northern city. As one writer for the *Rochester Daily Democrat* observed, in Rochester, a city that was the center for several reform movements, the picture "excited the liveliest of expressions [with] even the most venomous Copperheads turning from its contemplation with blanched faces."²²⁸ Yet when copies of the Annapolis *cartes de visite* were displayed in Philadelphia, a city that was more greatly divided between pro-Union and Southern sympathizers, it was met with condemnation by at least one citizen. After seeing that the photographic firm of Wenderoth and Taylor was marketing their own copies of the Annapolis photographs under the ironic title "Illustrations of Chivalry," (figs. 53 and 54) the Philadelphian Joshua Francis Fisher criticized the studio for presenting propaganda that was intended only to "inspire hatred for our countrymen at the South."²²⁹

Across the country, viewers saw the Annapolis prisoner photographs in the context of their own political biases and were aware that others did the same. In the politically divided state of Ohio, the Democratic *Cincinnati Daily Enquirer* criticized

²²⁸ "Man's Inhumanity to Man."

²²⁹ [Joshua Francis Fisher], *The Cruelties of War* (Philadelphia: Published for the author 1864), 3; See also Nicolas B. Wainwright, ed., *A Philadelphia Perspective: The Diary of Sidney George Fisher Covering the Years 1834 – 1871* (Philadelphia: Historical Society of Pennsylvania, 1967). On the context of Philadelphia during the Civil War, see Winnifred K. MacKay, "Philadelphia During the Civil War, 1861–1865," *The Pennsylvania Magazine of History and Biography* 70, no. 1 (January 1946): 3–51. The British writer and Southern sympathizer George Augustus Sala (1828–1895) had a similar reaction upon seeing one of the Annapolis prisoner photographs placed on commercial display in New York. Sala wrote that the soldier's "cadaverous presentment is put into the Broadway bookseller's window to excite sentiments and hatred and vengeance against the wicked and cruel South." George Augustus Sala, *My Diary in America in the Midst of War*, Vol. 2 (London: Tinsley Brothers, 1865), 321.

its Republican colleagues at the *Cincinnati Daily Gazette* for publishing a small, 3 x 2 ¼-inch, wood engraved reproduction of the photograph of Private John Q. Rose (just slightly smaller than the original *carte de visite*) on its front page (fig. 55).²³⁰ Likening the image of the emaciated soldier to Hiram Powers's famous antislavery sculpture *The Greek Slave* (modeled 1841–1843; marbles completed 1844–1870s), the *Enquirer* accused their rivals of publishing the picture of Private Rose not out of sympathy for prisoners, but in order to advocate for the continuance of the war.²³¹ Beginning its account by remarking upon the rarity of a daily paper publishing news pictures, the *Enquirer* wrote:

The *Gazette* has gone into pictorial illustrations, and, in yesterday's issue, under the head of "Treatment of Union prisoners—Rebel Brutality," gives a cut of an emaciated individual, a sort of human mandrake, in full Greek slave costume and more than full Greek slave attitude, purporting to be from a photograph of a soldier who "died from the effects of ill treatment, while in the hands of the enemy."... These pictures of Southern cruelty may be true; but the purpose for which they are painted is false. The object to be attained is a party object: to excite hatred, and revive the flagging war spirit; to substitute a new indignation in the place of a stale and fading fallacy.²³²

²³⁰ According to historian Jennifer Weber, the *Enquirer* was a notorious Copperhead newspaper, and advocated for a compromise with the South. Weber, *Copperheads*, 142. "Northern Treatment of Prisoners—Sympathy," *Cincinnati Daily Enquirer*, June 6, 1864, PQHN. For the wood engraving of Private Rose, see "The Treatment of Union Prisoners; Rebel Brutality!"

²³¹ "Northern Treatment of Prisoners—Sympathy." This reference would have been particularly resonant for readers of the *Cincinnati Daily Enquirer* as Powers had previously lived in that city. On *The Greek Slave* as an emblem of freedom, see Vivien M. Green, "Hiram Powers's *Greek Slave*: Emblem of Freedom," *American Art Journal* 14, no. 4 (Autumn 1982): 31–39.

²³² "Northern Treatment of Prisoners—Sympathy."

Across the state, the *Cleveland Daily Leader* entered the fray by characterizing the *Enquirer's* response as displaying a “most disgusting inhumanity and barbarity” that was remarkable even for a newspaper such as the *Enquirer*, which the *Daily Leader* described as disloyal to the government and “devoted...to the slave aristocracy.”²³³ Importantly, critics of the photographs and subsequent reprographic engravings did not question their authenticity, but rather took issue with the rhetoric that was applied to the images with the appending of text.

The Publication of the Annapolis Prisoner Photographs in *Harper's Weekly*

The importance of visual and textual framing in structuring the images' reception and potential meanings is echoed in their later use in *Harper's Weekly*, which occurred nearly a month into the photographs' already wide circulation. The illustrations that appeared on the June 18, 1864 cover of *Harper's* were based on photographs of the aforementioned Private John Q. Rose (fig. 30) and that of a still-unknown soldier accompanied by a doctor (fig. 31). Of the approximately eight paroled Union soldiers whose photographs were taken at Annapolis in 1864, Private Rose's image has endured the most, and persists in a variety of forms. Photographs of Private Rose can be found today as a propagandistic *carte de visite* in the collection of the Library Company of Philadelphia (fig. 39), in the personal archives of surgeon William S. Ely at the University of Rochester (fig. 30), and in an album kept by Charles Appleton Longfellow, the poet's son (fig. 56).²³⁴ Albumen paper prints of

²³³ “The Enquirer on ‘Southern Treatment of Prisoners.’,” *The Cleveland Daily Leader*, June 8, 1864.

²³⁴ Backmarks located on surviving *cartes de visite* of Private Rose indicate that his image was also copied by a variety of photographic studios, including McAllister &

Private Rose's photograph have been pasted directly into limited editions of the USSC's report on the condition of returned prisoners (fig. 57) and albums created by veterans' organizations to memorialize the war (fig. 58).²³⁵ Wood engravings of Private Rose's image also appear in the reports commissioned by the House of Representatives and the USSC (fig. 59) and on the covers of the *Cincinnati Daily Gazette* (fig. 55), *Harper's Weekly*, and *Harper's* competitor, *Frank Leslie's Illustrated Newspaper* (fig. 60). Photographic copies of wood engravings of Private Rose, and others, are also featured in an extract of the Sanitary Commission's report that was published in England in 1865 (fig. 61).²³⁶ A wood engraving of Private Rose even appears in the pension file of his fellow paroled prisoner, Corporal William Smith, as a means to illustrate his own condition as a prisoner of war (fig. 62).²³⁷ The

Brother and Wenderoth & Taylor, both of Philadelphia. For information on the known extant prints of Private Rose, including their various backmarks, see Appendix B.

²³⁵ For a history of the albums assembled under the auspices of the Massachusetts commandery of the Military Order of the Loyal Legion of the United States (MOLLUS), see Zeller, *The Blue and Gray in Black and White*, 191–193.

²³⁶ Following the publication of the USSC's report in Philadelphia and Boston, another edition was printed in London using photographs of the earlier publications' wood engravings. United States Sanitary Commission, *Extracts from a Narrative of Privations and Sufferings of United States Officers & Soldiers While Prisoners of War in the Hands of Confederate Authorities* (London: Alfred William Bennett, 1865).

²³⁷ I am indebted to Mike Fitzpatrick for sharing this discovery with me. William M. Smith, Corporal, Co. D, 8th Kentucky Infantry; Case Files of Approved Pension Applications of Veterans Who Served in the Army and Navy Mainly in the Civil War and the War with Spain ("Civil War and Later Survivors' Certificates"), 1861–1934; Civil War and the War with Spain ("Civil War and Later Survivors' Certificates"), 1861–1934; Civil War and Later Pension Files; Records of the Department of Veterans Affairs, Record Group (RG) 15; National Archives Building, Washington, D.C.

afterlife of Private Rose’s image—variously collected as a *carte de visite*, removed from its backing and pasted into albums, translated into a wood engraving, and preserved in pension files—serves as evidence not only of the perceived testimonial power of his image, but also the way that photographs of atrocity were circulated through networks of information, as Northern audiences sought to understand, communicate, and reconcile the suffering of white men as prisoners of war. The various contexts of Private Rose’s image also provide evidence of the divergent roles and meanings that could be assigned to the same photographic object, from the medical, to the propagandistic, to the commemorative, to the administrative. In this way, the image of Private Rose exemplifies the renewability of the “event of photography,” as formulated by photographic theorist Ariella Azoulay, in which the political ontology of photography extends beyond the moment of the photograph’s production and is instead continuously actualized through the encounter between spectators and the image.²³⁸

By the time that *Harper’s* came to publish the wood engravings after the Annapolis prisoner photographs on their June 18, 1864 cover, audiences would have been familiar with stories of the prisoners’ frightening condition, and even the names of some of the paroled prisoners themselves, especially John Q. Rose. As with the prior case study of *The Scourged Back*, *Harper’s* acquisition and publication of the Annapolis prisoner photographs occurred after the images had entered public discourse. The earliest known references to the photographs’ production appeared in both the *New York Times* and *The Press* on May 7, 1864, less than a week after the

²³⁸ On “the event of photography,” see Azoulay, *Civil Imagination*, 11–27.

arrival of the paroled prisoners at Annapolis, and approximately a month before *Harper's* publication of the wood engraved images on its June 18, 1864 cover.²³⁹ A survey of historical newspapers reveals that discussions of the photographs' existence, and debates about their meaning, stretched across the country in the spring of 1864.²⁴⁰ Press coverage also demonstrates that prints of the Annapolis prisoner photographs were already in circulation as early as May 14, 1864, with accounts of the photographs' circulation documented in cities such as Rochester, Philadelphia, Cincinnati, Cleveland, Burlington, Vermont and Bangor, Maine.²⁴¹ The small wood engraving of Private Rose also appeared on the cover of the *Cincinnati Daily Gazette* on June 3, 1864, a week or so before *Harper's* own reproduction of Rose's image.²⁴²

As discussed in the previous chapter, the delay in *Harper's* publication can be attributed, in part, to the labor required to translate photographs into wood engravings, which necessarily involved a network of correspondents, editors, sketch artists,

²³⁹ According to *The Press*, "Photographs of some of the half-starved heroes," were taken to accompany the report of the Congressional Committee. "The Condition of Released Union Prisoners," *The Press* (Philadelphia), May 7, 1864; "Prisoners at Annapolis," *New York Times*, May 7, 1864.

²⁴⁰ "Horrible.," *Bangor Daily Whig and Courier*; "Starvation," *Daily True Delta*.

²⁴¹ On the photographs' circulation prior to their appearance in *Harper's Weekly*, see "Man's Inhumanity to Man"; "Death from Starvation"; "Photographs: Starved Union Prisoners"; "A 'Richmond Prisoner'." , *The Press* (Philadelphia), May 27, 1864; "Starved Union Prisoners [Advertisement]," *The Press* (Philadelphia), May 28, 1864: 3; "Treatment of Union Prisoners; Rebel Brutality!"; "Rebel Barbarities; Outrages on Union Prisoners; A Letter from the Rev. Dr. Starkey"; "Treatment of Union Prisoners," *Chattanooga Daily Gazette*.

²⁴² "Man's Inhumanity to Man"; "The Treatment of Union Prisoners; Rebel Brutality!"

engravers, and typesetters. However, the delay in publication was also a form of willful mediation on the part of *Harper's Weekly*, as *Harper's* editors engaged their audience's familiarity with contemporary events and noteworthy individuals in their presentation of related pictures. Indeed, *Harper's* assumed that their audience of active readers not only read the contents of daily newspapers and collected photographs, but also transposed their knowledge of recent events into their reading of the weekly journal.²⁴³ In this way, the temporality of *Harper's* reporting contrasts sharply with that of the modern news cycle, which values immediacy and "breaking" news.²⁴⁴ As a newspaper with a national circulation, *Harper's* would have benefitted from the robust public debate that surrounded the Annapolis prisoner photographs prior to their publication as wood engravings in the weekly journal, as audiences around the country argued as to the photographs' political implications and ultimate meaning.

Harper's presentation of the Annapolis prisoner photographs demonstrates that the journal's belated temporality inflected the character of its reporting, and that the editors assembled the newspaper with this lag in mind.²⁴⁵ On their part, *Harper's*

²⁴³ I am indebted to Geoffrey Belknap for his articulation of an active and informed periodical readership. See Belknap, *From a Photograph*.

²⁴⁴ On the temporality of modern news media, see Phillip Schlesinger, "Newsmen and Their Time-Machine," *The British Journal of Sociology* 28, no. 3 (September 1977): 336–350; and Barbie Zelizer, "Timing the Study of News Temporality," *Journalism* 19, no. 1 (2018): 111–121.

²⁴⁵ For a recent study of how *Life's* editors negotiated photographically the weekly magazine's inevitable belatedness as a news outlet compared to other media, such as daily newspapers and television, see Jason Hill, "On Deadline: *Life* as a Weekly Newsmagazine," *Life Magazine and the Power of Photography*, ed. Katherine A. Bussard and Kristen Gresh (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2020), 62–85.

acknowledged the temporal disjunction that arose from the delay between the creation of the photographs and publication, by noting that both men pictured on the June 18, 1864 cover were already dead at the time of their reporting. On a separate page, *Harper's* reprinted the text of a letter from Dr. Wallace that accompanied the photographs, in which Wallace wrote: "These two pictures are what may be called the good specimens of the *bad* cases which are brought to the hospital from the prisons and Belle Isle. They are from the worst of the cases, and these worst cases form a numerous body. Both are dead."²⁴⁶ Despite this temporal delay, the editors of *Harper's* clearly believed that the disturbing visual evidence of the men's dramatic attenuation was still relevant to contemporary discourse. Indeed, while an additional editorial notes that the pictures are "fearful to look upon" and "would make children shudder," the images were nonetheless placed on the issue's cover.²⁴⁷ The belated character of *Harper's* visual reporting is significant as it forces us to reconsider the revelatory function of illustrated journalism, at least as it was practiced in the nineteenth-century, as divorced from the new or the previously unknown. If, as Jason Hill and Vanessa Schwartz have written, "news pictures" are "images crafted with a commitment to transmit timely and reliable information held by journalists to be of consequence to a viewing public," the example of *Harper's Weekly* extends this

²⁴⁶ "Further Proofs of Rebel Inhumanity."

²⁴⁷ Significantly, the case studies outlined in chapters two and four, which represent injured African Americans, do not receive this privileged position in the newspaper; instead, they are relegated to the inside pages. "Rebel Cruelty."

timeliness beyond the framework of the immediate and into a longer discursive time frame.²⁴⁸

Harper's Page Layout

In presenting the images of paroled Union prisoners, *Harper's* editors assumed a certain amount of prior knowledge on the part of their readers, either of the inhumane treatment experienced by Union soldiers in Confederate prisons or of the experience of seeing the photographs themselves. This is underscored by the newspaper's layout, where visual experience prevails over context. Though the multiple uses of the Annapolis prisoner photographs, as outlined above, demonstrate that text was essential to the interpretation of these images, *Harper's* editors made text subordinate to the experience of viewing the images themselves.²⁴⁹ Notably, the images appear on the cover with only a brief caption that omits the subjects' names, and the full context for the illustrations is not given until the following page. In this system of structured viewership, the reader is immediately compelled to bear witness to these white men's suffering. The presence of the doctor in the image on the right thus functions also as a surrogate for the presence of the readers as privileged viewers of these wartime atrocities and helps to guarantee the images' indexical nature in

²⁴⁸ Hill and Schwartz, *Getting the Picture*, 4.

²⁴⁹ The importance of the caption when it comes to the interpretation of a photograph is the subject of eternal dispute among scholars. For opinions on this topic, see Roland Barthes, "The Photographic Message," reproduced in *Image-Music-Text*, trans. Stephen Heath (New York: Hill and Wang, 1978); W.J.T. Mitchell, "What Do Pictures 'Really' Want?," *October* 77 (Summer 1996): 71–82.

advance of the textual material that gives a fuller account of the causes of this atrocity.²⁵⁰

Formally, *Harper's* illustrations locate the prisoners in a loosely sketched, almost painterly, setting that further isolates the subjects in their suffering. The contrast in the printing of wood engravings, which significantly reduces the range of tonality visible in the photographic originals, produces a dramatic *chiaroscuro* effect that makes the men appear more emaciated, as a strong light source highlights the contours of their attenuated limbs and protruding bones. *Harper's* presentation of the Annapolis prisoner photographs also contrasts sharply with the more ornate framing of the images by *Harper's* competitor, *Frank Leslie's Illustrated Newspaper* (fig. 60). On June 18, 1864, the same date of *Harper's* publication, *Leslie's* reproduced on its own cover eight images of paroled Union prisoners made after photographs taken in hospitals in Annapolis and Baltimore in the spring of 1864.²⁵¹ On *Leslie's* cover the paroled prisoners appear within an elaborate, trellis-like frame, with what appears to be thorny branches or cracks appearing along the left and right edges, a somewhat obvious artistic interpretation that positions the prisoners of war at the center of a

²⁵⁰ As noted above, several of the Annapolis prisoner photographs include the presence of a doctor, or several doctors, who supports the soldier and assists them in the display of their injuries. The large volume of these prints that survive today suggests a public interest in collecting photographs that allowed viewers to project their own role as spectators on to the image.

²⁵¹ Captioned "Union Soldiers As They Appeared On Their Release From the Rebel Prisons – From Photographs Made by Order of Congress," *Leslie's* wood engraved reproductions may have been copied from the Congressional Report to which they are attributed, rather than from the photographs themselves. For *Leslie's* contextualization of the images, see "The Diabolical Barbarities of the Rebels; In the Treatment of Union Prisoners," *Frank Leslie's Illustrated Newspaper*, June 18, 1864, NCN.

crumbling nation-state. Situated in three rows, *Leslie's* engraved reproductions are much smaller than *Harper's* images, which had been enlarged from the original 4 x 2 ½-inch *carte de visite* to 6 ½ x 4 ½ inches. While *Harper's* presentation allowed for greater individual detail in the faces of the soldiers and the attending surgeon, in *Leslie's* the paroled prisoners are presented typologically and not as individualized portraits.²⁵² Perhaps to offset the anonymizing presentation of the subjects, *Leslie's* printed a number alongside each soldier that corresponded to a list of names and military ranks that appears along the bottom edge.²⁵³ In *Harper's*, however, the subjects are left unidentified, though readers may have recognized the widely circulated image of Private John Q. Rose. Stripped of any extraneous detail, including the figures' names and regimental information, yet enlarged to a degree that the reader can see the subjects' pained expressions, *Harper's* presentation of the Annapolis prisoner photographs on its June 18, 1864 cover declares the iconic character of these already pervasive images of suffering. At the same time, the comparison of the contemporaneous re-mediation of the Annapolis prisoner photographs by the two rival journals underscores the work that was done by artisans to interpret and translate photographs into wood engravings for the purposes of the illustrated newspaper.

²⁵² I am indebted to the scholar Emily McKibbin for her earlier articulation of the differences between the two covers. See McKibbin, "To see some few proofs of enormous wickedness," 33–34.

²⁵³ *Ibid.*, 34.

“Further Proofs of Rebel Inhumanity”

In *Harper's Weekly*, two articles were written to accompany the illustrations of paroled Union prisoners and to contextualize them within the political debates surrounding the 1864 presidential election; the dedication of two such articles in one number points to the importance that *Harper's* accorded this issue. Within the context of *Harper's* reporting, the images of the paroled prisoners at Annapolis serve not only as “indubitable proof” of the inhumane treatment experienced by Union soldiers in Confederate prisons, but also as evidence of the need to cast out “the spirit which inspires the rebellion.”²⁵⁴ This advocating for the continued pursuit of a total victory over the South, despite the fact that, by 1864, many citizens had grown weary of the war and were calling for peace, is aligned with the Republican politics of *Harper's Weekly*. The first of *Harper's* two articles, entitled “Further Proofs of Rebel Inhumanity,” (fig. 63) appears on the page immediately following the cover and identifies the photographs as having been sent to *Harper's* by Dr. Ellerslie Wallace. As noted above, Wallace was likely not the creator of either photograph, certainly not the photograph of Private John Q. Rose, who was buried before Wallace's arrival; instead, archival evidence suggests that Wallace collected and circulated preexisting photographs as part of his advocacy for Union soldiers. However misleading to subsequent generations of scholars, by detailing the provenance of its photographic sources, *Harper's* signaled the evidentiary quality of its illustrations, part of the “indubitable proof” of Confederate cruelty that the article claims to present.²⁵⁵

²⁵⁴ “Further Proofs of Rebel Inhumanity” and “Rebel Cruelty.”

²⁵⁵ “Further Proofs of Rebel Inhumanity,” *Harper's Weekly*. Katherine Fein has made a similar argument regarding reports which traced the genealogy of *The Branded Hand of Jonathan Walker* to Bowdoin. Fein, “White Skin, Silvered Plate,” 371.

“Further Proofs of Rebel Inhumanity” consists primarily of extracts from a letter supposedly written to *Harper’s* from Dr. Wallace, although the text repeats much of the same information that the physician conveyed in an earlier letter to the editor of *The Press* in Philadelphia, which was featured in the May 27, 1864 issue of that paper.²⁵⁶ Following its initial publication, Wallace’s letter to *The Press* was circulated through the system of exchange papers and excerpted in newspapers across the country, including in Cleveland, Cincinnati, Louisville, New Orleans, and Chattanooga.²⁵⁷ Although Wallace’s correspondence did not appear the same throughout its various reproductions, and was often paraphrased or reprinted with paragraphs in a different order, the attribution of the images and accompanying text to the eminent Philadelphia-based physician and member of the USSC added value and credibility to the photographs.²⁵⁸ As his friend the Rev. Starkey wrote to the *Cleveland Daily Leader* regarding Dr. Wallace’s sending of the photographs to

²⁵⁶ I do not question the authorship of the letter, but whether Wallace wrote such a letter to *Harper’s Weekly*. It is possible that *Harper’s Weekly* was merely reprinting the text of Wallace’s letter to *The Press* (Philadelphia), which was itself recirculated and excerpted in newspapers in Cincinnati, Cleveland, Louisville, Chattanooga, and Waukegan, Illinois. “A Richmond Prisoner.”

²⁵⁷ On exchange papers, see Richard Kielbowicz, *News in the Mail: The Press, Post Office, and Public Information, 1700–1860s* (New York: Greenwood Press, 1989), 141–161. For articles which reproduce extracts of Wallace’s letter, see “Treatment of Union Prisoners; Rebel Brutality!”; “Outrages on Federal Prisoners—Rebel Brutalities”; “Rebel Barbarities; Outrages on Union Prisoners; A Letter from the Rev. Dr. Starkey”; “Treatment of Union Prisoners,” *Louisville Daily Journal*; “Starvation”; “Treatment of Union Prisoners,” *Chattanooga Daily Gazette*.

²⁵⁸ Without a doubt, Wallace’s identity as a white man also contributed to the value ascribed to his testimony.

Cleveland, “As a Christian gentleman his character is unimpeachable, whilst his temperament [sic] – that of a cool, deliberate, yet eminently human man, – makes his testimony of especial worth.”²⁵⁹ It is likely that *Harper’s* editors did not feel the need to make explicit claims about Dr. Wallace’s character in their own paper as they presumed many of their national readers may have already been acquainted with Wallace’s endorsement and his circulation of the photographs through the reporting of local newspapers.

In sending copies of the Annapolis prisoner photographs to various friends and colleagues, Wallace had noted that, although “the immediate supposition...is that some fearful malady must have been at work on the physical frames of the unhappy originals,” the surgeon in charge of the hospital at Annapolis, Dr. Vanderkiefert, had assured him that the cause of the men’s condition was “neglect and cruel treatment while in the hands of the rebels.”²⁶⁰ As both the photographs and Wallace’s affidavit circulated across the country, they were folded into the discourse already underway regarding the character of the Confederacy, the possibility of retaliation against Confederate soldiers in Union prisons, and whether the war should continue. Though Wallace wrote to his friend the Rev. Starkey that he defied any man to look at the photographs of starved soldiers and then “entertain an idea of retaliation,” arguing that “It is too awful, too fearfully cruel and barbarous treatment for us to do the like,” local newspapers often referenced the photographs of the paroled prisoners in order to buttress their arguments for retaliation and the need to continue the war through to

²⁵⁹ “Rebel Barbarities; Outrages on Union Prisoners; A Letter from the Rev. Dr. Starkey.”

²⁶⁰ “A Richmond Prisoner” and “Further Proofs of Rebel Inhumanity.”

unconditional victory.²⁶¹ For example, alongside the small wood engraved facsimile of Private Rose's photograph, the *Cincinnati Daily Gazette* argued that the federal government should exhibit less kindness toward the Confederate officers confined at Johnston's Island prison, located on Lake Erie in Ohio, writing that

[I]t is humiliating to reflect that our Government has not had sufficient regard for our suffering prisoners, to make an effort to check the brutality of the rebels by a system of retaliation on the prisoners in our hands. We would not starve the latter, as the rebels starved our men, but we would, at least, confine them to the rations allowed by army regulations. This is not done. The rebel prisoners at Johnston's Island are supplied with the best that our market affords...kindness is thrown away upon rebels. You might as well cast pearls before swine.²⁶²

Similarly, the *Fort Wayne Daily Gazette* in Fort Wayne, Indiana argued, in response to the circulation of the Annapolis prisoner photographs, that "For every one of our men who suffer at their hands our government has the right to hold them to strict account...and to take the same measure to enforce this responsibility."²⁶³ Even though it does not make explicit claims in support of retaliation, "Further Proofs of Rebel Inhumanity," *Harper's* article, builds on these prior examples by reproducing the letter from Dr. Wallace and by introducing the photographic reproductions as "Evidences of the inhuman treatment of our prisoners by the Confederate authorities at Richmond." Declaring the Confederacy to be the cause of the prisoners' injuries, *Harper's* supports these claims of Confederate inhumanity with further evidence in the form of excerpts

²⁶¹ For Wallace's argument against retaliation, see "Rebel Barbarities; Outrages on Union Prisoners; A Letter from the Rev. Dr. Starkey."

²⁶² "The Treatment of Union Prisoners. Rebel Brutality!"

²⁶³ "Treatment of Union Prisoners," *Fort Wayne Daily Gazette*, June 7, 1864, NWE.

from the USSC's report, including testimonies from paroled prisoners, who share the record of their own terrible experience.²⁶⁴

Notably, *Harper's* diverges from the earlier circulation of Wallace's correspondence by electing not to suppress the identity of one prisoner whose name had been otherwise omitted from the local newspapers "lest [it] might meet his mother's eye."²⁶⁵ According to Wallace, "This poor fellow was so shrivelled [sic] that his face looked like that of an ape." Significantly, in writing of his encounter with this horribly afflicted man, Corporal William Smith, Wallace recollected the production of his photograph. Wallace wrote:

I had his picture taken; he asked me for one; I promised it to him, and inquired what he wanted it for. He trembled, choked with emotion, calmed himself, again quivered, and, as the tears gushed from his eyes, said, "To send it home to my mother." I rejoiced when I found the picture was a failure, for the sight of that face in a picture, I really believe, might have killed his mother, or turned her brain.²⁶⁶

This sentimental appeal to the hearts of mothers would have reminded readers of some of the most compelling arguments against the evils of enslavement, which invoked Northern women's status as mothers to elicit sympathy against the separation of

²⁶⁴ "Further Proofs of Rebel Inhumanity."

²⁶⁵ "Further Proofs of Rebel Inhumanity." The soldier's name is omitted from the accounts of several daily newspapers that also reprinted Wallace's letter. See, for example, "Treatment of Union Prisoners; Rebel Brutality!"; "Outrages on Federal Prisoners—Rebel Brutalities"; "Treatment of Union Prisoners," *Louisville Daily Journal*; "Starvation," *Daily True Delta*; "Treatment of Union Prisoners," *Chattanooga Daily Gazette*.

²⁶⁶ "A Richmond Prisoner" and reprinted in "Further Proofs of Rebel Inhumanity."

families within the slave trade.²⁶⁷ “Further Proofs of Rebel Inhumanity” reaffirms this drive for empathetic identification in its conclusion, by prompting *Harper’s* readers to contemplate their own position in relation to the prisoners’ heroic suffering and contextualizing the men’s injuries within the battle to preserve the Union. To close, the unnamed author writes:

The process of these men’s depletion is perfectly plain. Under the combined effects of bad and deficient food their ‘stomach gave out;’ then came indigestion, loss of appetite, nausea, weakness; then diarrhea, and often congestion of the lungs of atonic character...So they suffer, and hence they die, or are returned to the care of those for whom, and for whose country, for whose honor, as for themselves and their own, they have been thus sorely afflicted.²⁶⁸

At the same time, however, in including the heartbreaking anecdote of Corporal Smith’s photograph, *Harper’s* article also underscored the difference between how Smith was viewed by the external forces that surrounded him and how he viewed himself. Indeed, even though the discourse surrounding these images was often one of difference, with references made to the seeming inhuman, “skeletal,” or “ape”-like quality of the emaciated soldiers, the soldier’s desire to send his photograph to his mother demonstrates his belonging within a broader and more intimate photographic practice, one outside of his use as a political symbol.

²⁶⁷ On the representation of family separation in antislavery materials, see Maurie D. McInnis, *Slaves Waiting for Sale: Abolitionist Art and the American Slave Trade* (Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 2011), 40–49.

²⁶⁸ “Further Proofs of Rebel Inhumanity.”

“Rebel Cruelty”

A second article in *Harper's Weekly*, entitled “Rebel Cruelty,” (fig. 64) appears two pages after the cover and exhibits a different rhetorical stance than its predecessor, one that is not only meant to heighten the viewer's awareness of the meaningful act of witnessing the images of the emaciated soldiers, but also relies on the photographic origins of the wood engraved reproductions to express something otherwise ineffable about the trauma of the war. Asserting that “no evidence is like these pictures”—meaning the engraved reproductions of the Annapolis prisoner photographs—the author presages a still-emerging hierarchy between photographs and other forms of illustration, including the textual, by noting that “they are not fancy sketches from description; they are photographs from life, or rather from death in life, and a thousand-fold more impressively than any description they tell the terrible truth.”²⁶⁹ In the context of “Rebel Cruelty,” the photographic image, even in its remediated form, serves as a productive alternative to language, one that is able to express the horror of the men's suffering in a way that written accounts cannot. In advancing this argument about the privileged status of photographic sources, *Harper's* was reflecting and reinscribing larger cultural narratives about the role of photography that were emerging in the mid-nineteenth century. This discourse is echoed in other newspaper accounts of the Annapolis prisoner photographs, such as that of the *Burlington Weekly Free Press*, which remarked that

²⁶⁹ “Rebel Cruelty.” For the emergent hierarchy between photography and other forms of illustration, see Thierry Gervais, “De part et d'autre de la ‘garde-barrière’: Les errances techniques dans l'usage de la photographie au sein du journal *L'Illustration* (1880–1900),” *Études photographiques* 23 (2009): 31–50. Notably, the word “terrible” was also used to describe Mathew Brady's photographs of the dead at Antietam. See “Brady's Photographs; Pictures of the Dead at Antietam.”

Repeated, minute and reliable as have been the accounts [of the prisoners' condition] and as greatly as our sympathies have been stirred in their behalf, we have never realized the full horrors of their state as we did on Saturday evening, when we received from our friend G.S. Blodgett, A.Q.M. at Annapolis, *photographs* of two of the poor fellows, taken upon their arrival from Richmond a few days since.²⁷⁰

Similarly, the *Buffalo Christian Advocate* described the effect that viewing the photographs had upon civilians in terms of the inadequacy of written and oral language compared to the visual, noting that “As we look at the melancholy pictures we feel how tame are all descriptions of these sufferers, and how inadequate are the particulars which are drawn from them regarding their treatment.”²⁷¹ By engaging in this discourse about the power of photography, *Harper's Weekly* was setting its various media—including text, sketch illustration, photography, and cartoon—into critical dialogue with each other, in a way that articulated the specific communicative advantages and disadvantages of each. *Harper's* advancing of photography over and above oral or written testimony also served to reinforce the foundational premise of illustrated journalism: pictures do a kind of work that text cannot. At the same time, however, those who encountered the paroled prisoners observed the inability of *Harper's* illustrations to adequately convey the horror of the men's condition; as an unnamed author for the hospital's newspaper, *The Crutch*, remarked: “As wood cuts they are well executed, and to a certain extent truthful, but the degree of emaciation is hardly great enough.”²⁷²

²⁷⁰ The word “photographs” is italicized in the original. “The Wrongs of Our Prisoners,” *Burlington Weekly Free Press*.

²⁷¹ “Cruel Treatment of Prisoners.”

²⁷² Untitled, *The Crutch* (Annapolis), June 18, 1864.

The contemporary discourse of the trauma of the Civil War was often one of the un-representable and ineffable, yet the editors of *Harper's Weekly* clearly saw these remediated photographic images as able to more effectively communicate the unique atrocity of the men's suffering than textual or verbal descriptions ever could.²⁷³ Indeed, although the photographic illustrations were incapable of truly conveying the causes of the men's suffering, for *Harper's* the images demonstrated the cruelty of the Confederacy itself, at least as it was inflicted upon white men. In fact, according to *Harper's*, the South was capable of inflicting such atrocities upon white male bodies because of its historic brutalization of Black bodies, writing that "There is no civilized nation in the world with 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; and the reason is, that none of them are slaveholding nations, for nowhere are human life and human nature so cheap as among those who treat human beings like cattle."²⁷⁴ *Harper's* argument that the slaveholders turned prison keepers had become "imbruted" by the institution of human enslavement reflects long-standing beliefs in American society that slavery degrades the character of white enslavers.²⁷⁵ "Rebel Cruelty" then concludes by asking *Harper's* readers to consider the pictures of the

²⁷³ On the horror of the Civil War being unrepresentable or inexpressible, see Steven Conn, "Narrative Trauma and Civil War History Painting, or Why Are These Pictures So Terrible?" *History and Theory* 41, no. 4 (December 2002): 17-42; Harvey, *The Civil War and American Art*.

²⁷⁴ "Rebel Cruelty."

²⁷⁵ Many such beliefs have racist origins, as some believed that white slaveholders would fall under the influence of the "savage" African slaves they held. See Fabian, *The Unvarnished Truth*, 135.

emaciated, white soldiers in the context of the continued need to fight the war and to defeat the slave powers despite, and yet because of, these atrocities, imploring, “Can any thing which makes Americans citizens capable of torturing other American citizens in this fiendish manner be safely tolerated? Shall we lop off the branches, or shall we uproot the tree?”²⁷⁶

Harper’s Politics and the Framing of Images of Prisoners of War

As the American public struggled to grapple with the trauma of having previously able-bodied white men reduced to conditions “both physically and mentally, which no language...can adequately describe,” photographic images of all kinds—including wood engravings after photographs—presented a compelling format through which to negotiate the meaning behind this atrocity.²⁷⁷ By circulating the photographs of paroled Union prisoners as *cartes de visite* and as wood engravings, and often appended with text, the press and the public were able to use the images to argue for particular positions as to causes of the men’s deterioration. For *Harper’s Weekly’s* readers, the men’s suffering was a product of the cruelty of the Confederacy, whose humanity had become fundamentally altered by slavery and who thus needed to be defeated. *Harper’s* publication of the Annapolis prisoner photographs occurred at a crucial moment during the war, as many in the Union felt dispirited by the war’s long duration and its destructive impact on American society. In a letter to her husband, Union General Benjamin Butler, Sarah Butler exemplified the North’s weariness, as

²⁷⁶ “Rebel Cruelty.”

²⁷⁷ U.S. Congress, *Report of the Joint Select Committee on the Conduct of the War*, 5.

she wondered, “What is all this struggling and fighting for? This ruin and death to thousands of families? What is to come out of it? What advancement of mankind to compensate for the present horrible calamities?”²⁷⁸ The 1864 presidential election thus provided American voters with a unique opportunity to determine whether the nation was to continue the war or negotiate for peace with the Confederacy.

It was at this time that the conservative, antiwar wing of the Democratic Party, known as the Peace Democrats, reached the height of their political power. The Peace Democrats, also called “Copperheads” by their opponents—after the venomous snake—were committed to the restoration of the Union as it was, *ante bellum*, and presented a genuine threat to the Lincoln administration.²⁷⁹ The growing authority of the Copperhead faction was most evident when they took control of the Democratic National Convention in Chicago in August 1864 and adopted a platform of immediate peace with the Confederacy.²⁸⁰ For Republicans, the Copperhead policy of “peace at

²⁷⁸ Mrs. Sarah Butler to Benjamin Butler, June 19, 1864, in Jessie Ames Marshall, ed., *Private and Official Correspondence of Gen. Benjamin F. Butler During the Period of the Civil War*, Vol. IV (Norwood, MA: Plimpton Press, 1917), 418, quoted in McPherson, *Battle Cry of Freedom*, 742.

²⁷⁹ Although previous historians dismissed the influence of the Peace Democrats, the scholar Jennifer L. Weber has since revealed that the Copperhead movement was not a peripheral issue, and that the antiwar sentiment they embodied genuinely affected the Lincoln administration’s ability to effectively carry out the war. For the most thorough study of the antiwar movement of Peace Democrats during the American Civil War, see Weber, *Copperheads*. For an example of *Harper’s* contemporaneous reporting on the Peace Democrats, see “Copperheadism,” *Harper’s Weekly*, February 28, 1863, HarpWeek.

²⁸⁰ As Weber has noted, the Copperhead demand for the nation to go back to the way it was before the war neglected the Confederates’ newfound desire for complete independence.

any price,” even if it meant disunion or defeat, was traitorous and disloyal, not only to the government but to the thousands of men who lost their lives on the battlefield and in rebel prison camps. The figure of the wounded soldier and the prisoner of war became an important part of the iconography of this debate, particularly as Democrats and Republicans fought for votes from men in the military.²⁸¹

As the political crisis over the treatment of prisoners of war become folded into the discourse surrounding the 1864 presidential election, the body of the prisoner of war became inscribed as a vehicle for political meaning. On May 21, 1864, almost a month before *Harper's* publication of the Annapolis prisoner photographs, the newspaper published a two-page illustration by cartoonist Thomas Nast (1840–1902) that demonstrated the prior politicization of the sufferings of prisoners of war (fig. 65). Entitled “Rebel Atrocities,” the illustration was positioned as a visual response to the report of the Joint Committee on the Conduct of the War, excerpted in that same issue, which was said to prove “that the rebel authorities...[are] determined to subject our soldiers and officers who fall into their hands to physical and mental suffering impossible to describe.”²⁸² In this illustration, the sufferings of Black and white Union soldiers—including the shooting of a free Black man by Confederate General Nathan Bedford Forrest, the architect of the massacre at Fort Pillow, and emaciated prisoners at Belle Isle in Richmond—frame a center image of men with wings and horns and serpents coiling about their hooved feet, an obvious reference to Copperheads. Captioned “The Traitors in Council” and textually located in Richmond, this demonic

²⁸¹ On the importance of soldiers' votes during the 1864 election, see Weber, *Copperheads*, 196–198.

²⁸² “Rebel Atrocities,” *Harper's Weekly*, May 21, 1864, HarpWeek.

group is meant to represent the leaders of the Confederacy; the most prominent figure, in the center foreground, bears the unmistakable likeness of Confederate President Jefferson Davis. Above all this, Nast has included the text “Retribution will be surely given,” thus linking the alleged Confederate atrocities to the debate on retaliation.²⁸³

Significantly, *Harper’s* responded to potential criticism that it might receive in response to this dramatic image in an additional editorial entitled “Picture Preaching.”²⁸⁴ Presumably written by George William Curtis, the article imagines readers asking the editor: “How can I take the paper home? How can I show such things to my children? Is this a family paper, if you curdle us with such horrors?” To this, Curtis replies that the pain occasioned by such images is justified by the power of the lessons that they teach and the influence that they exert—lessons that were decidedly pro-Union, and anti-Confederate. Regarding the appropriateness of publishing pictures of atrocity, Curtis writes:

But may not the children well be taught the character of the enemy, with which their fathers and brothers are struggling, and the spirit of the barbarism which is seeking to overthrow the Government, and ruin the country? The earlier they learn it, the stronger the impression will be, and truer Americans they will become...And for every child who may be grieved by the spectacle of this suffering and crime, how many a

²⁸³ The quotation is excerpted from a speech that President Lincoln gave at the Baltimore Sanitary Fair on April 18, 1864, as he campaigned for the nomination of the Republican Party. Responding to the recent massacre of Black troops at Fort Pillow, Lincoln had assured the audience that the federal government would retaliate against the Confederacy when the facts of their barbarity were clearly proven. For the full text of Lincoln’s speech, see Gerhard Peters, John T. Wooley and The American Presidency Project, “Abraham Lincoln, Address at Sanitary Fair in Baltimore: A Lecture on Liberty.” <https://www.presidency.ucsb.edu/documents/address-sanitary-fair-baltimore-lecture-liberty> (Accessed April 2, 2023).

²⁸⁴ “Picture Preaching.”

manly heart will be strengthened with a wholesome detestation of the infamy of this rebellion and the means to which it naturally resorts!²⁸⁵

For *Harper's Weekly*, the publication of illustrations of atrocity, including Nast's drawing and, later, the Annapolis prisoner photographs, were intended not only to inspire hatred for the South, but also strengthen readers' identity as Americans and the resolve of the Union. *Harper's* use of illustrations of atrocity in the context of the 1864 presidential election was thus aligned with the newspaper's position, established several years earlier in "The Business of Illustrated Newspapers," that images of human suffering could be morally—and, by extension, politically—instructive.²⁸⁶

The Afterlife of Prisoner of War Images

Despite the objections raised over the appropriation of the prisoners' bodies as tools for political meaning, *Harper's*, and others, would continue to use the image of the prisoner of war as a visual strategy to serve Republican political goals in the run-up to the November 1864 presidential election—even after the newspaper's publication of the Annapolis prisoner photographs. In a speech delivered before the Indiana Union Club on August 1, 1864, the Republican printer and politician John D. Defrees (1810–1892) invoked the "cruelties inflicted on the soldiers of the Republic" at Libby and Belle Isle prisons in Richmond, as well as the massacre of Black troops at Fort Pillow, as he urged his audience to reject the Democratic party and vote for

²⁸⁵ "Picture Preaching."

²⁸⁶ Notably, the *Richmond Daily Dispatch* denounced both Nast's illustration and Curtis's editorial as anti-Southern propaganda, declaring that the "The Yankees are fruitful in expedients, and always have a lie ready to serve their purposes; and in the engraving before us we have a full illustration of the lies with which they have been gorging the public for months past." Untitled, *Richmond Daily Dispatch*, June 11, 1864.

Lincoln in the forthcoming election. This speech would later be printed in a pamphlet alongside wood engraved reproductions of photographs of paroled prisoners made in Baltimore in 1864, borrowed from the report of the Joint Committee on the Conduct of the War (fig. 66).²⁸⁷ For Republicans like Defrees and George William Curtis, the Democratic platform would lead to the destruction of the Union and the creation of a slave empire that would imperil the rights of both Black and white Americans.

In contrast to their Democratic rivals, Republicans called for the continued pursuit of the war until “unconditional victory” was achieved over the Confederacy. *Harper’s* support of this policy is reflected in the “The Blessings of Victory,” (fig. 67) a poster designed by Nast and published in the September 24, 1864 issue of *Harper’s Weekly*. In this image, we see the positive outcomes of victory on the battlefield, including the release of prisoners of war in a rondel in the upper left corner. Later, in “The Chicago Platform,” (fig. 68) Nast illustrated his contempt for the Democratic platform by juxtaposing the Democratic Party’s stated position on the treatment of prisoners of war with an illustration of Confederate soldiers thumbing their noses at an attempted exchange. Alongside Nast’s earlier illustration “Compromise with the South,” “Chicago Platform” was highly effective as a propaganda tool for Lincoln’s reelection campaign. Reprinted as posters, *Harper’s* distributed Nast’s illustrations across the country, including to army camps.²⁸⁸ These popular illustrations demonstrate how the figure of the prisoner of war continued to be positioned as a key

²⁸⁷ Defrees, *Remarks made by John D. Defrees Before the Indiana Union Club*.

²⁸⁸ For a soldier’s purported response to these images, see “Campaign Pictures,” *Harper’s Weekly*, October 1, 1864, HarpWeek.

visual element of the 1864 presidential election months after *Harper's* reproduction of the Annapolis prisoner photographs on June 18, 1864. In these illustrations, *Harper's* earlier interpretation of the sufferings of prisoners of war were thus further transposed into political arguments against the Democratic Party.

Ultimately, despite the images' unstable referential function, *Harper's* interpretation of the meaning behind the Annapolis prisoner photographs—Confederate barbarity and Democratic complicity—proved to be effective, both in 1864 and beyond.²⁸⁹ In November 1864, perhaps motivated in some part by the circulation of the Annapolis prisoner photographs, Americans chose to reelect President Abraham Lincoln, rejecting the Democratic candidate George McClellan.²⁹⁰ Meanwhile, the emaciated forms of Private John Q. Rose and the other paroled prisoners at Annapolis became increasingly fixed within the broader meaning and public memory of the conflict, particularly for white Northerners. The entrance of the Annapolis prisoner photographs into white Northern public memory is perhaps best demonstrated by the presence of three of the *cartes de visite* in an album assembled by Charles Appleton Longfellow, the son of poet Henry Wadsworth Longfellow (figs. 56 and 69). Turning the heavy pages, one finds the emaciated forms of Private Jackson Broshears, Private John Q. Rose, and Private L.H. Parham appearing alongside more innocuous specimens of nineteenth-century New England society, including the

²⁸⁹ For the role that Civil War prisons played in historical memory of the war, see Benjamin G. Cloyd, *Haunted by Atrocity: Civil War Prisons in American Memory* (Baton Rouge: LSU Press, 2016).

²⁹⁰ For the role that prisoner exchanges played in the 1864 election, see McPherson, *Battle Cry of Freedom*, 803–806.

portraits of friends, family members, and even a small dog. The inclusion of the photographs of the paroled prisoners in a domestic photo album testifies to the cultural work that they performed as they allowed white Northerners who collected the photographs to define themselves in relation to a national identity centered around white male sacrifice and the sanctity of the Union.

In her study of Civil War photo albums, the scholar Andrea Volpe has described how *cartes de visite* helped secure investment in the Union's claim to nationhood by combining emotional connection with national affiliation through the collapsing of distance between national leaders and ordinary Americans.²⁹¹ As Volpe writes, "[B]y picturing both famous and ordinary Americans in a common, accessible form, the carte portrait reduced the distance between the unshakable vision and bravery of idealized political and military men and ordinary citizens whose loyalties were tested by war."²⁹² Collected in an album, a format that fostered narratives of friendship and family, politicians and military heroes become close relatives, and the distance between public and private spheres collapsed.²⁹³ According to Volpe, *carte de visite* albums thus provided visual narratives that explained and justified the war, as a family's "willingness to endure the losses of war was built upon a direct visual appeal between family members."²⁹⁴ In the context of the Longfellow album, the

²⁹¹ Volpe, "Collecting the Nation."

²⁹² *Ibid.*, 96.

²⁹³ On the collapsing of the public and private spheres in *carte de visite* albums, see also see Elizabeth Siegel, *Galleries of Friendship and Fame: A History of Nineteenth-Century American Photographic Albums* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2010), 62.

²⁹⁴ Volpe, "Collecting the Nation," 96.

transformation of the prisoners of war into objects of intimate, familial connection is further enriched by the fact that Charles Longfellow's cousin Stephen Longfellow (1834–1905) was himself a prisoner of war in 1864. The photographs of the paroled prisoners from Annapolis thus serve as metonyms for the sacrifices endured not only by the Longfellow family, but also the nation, in the continued pursuit of a more perfect union. At the same time, the inclusion of the Annapolis prisoner photographs in the personal photo album of a white Northern family also reaffirms the foundational premise of the images' persuasive and metonymic power—that they represented the threat of the slaveholding Confederacy to white bodies and white identity, and the potential for the prisoners to recover their whiteness through the activation of sympathetic identification.

Coda: 1865

In March 1865, almost a year after the Annapolis prisoner photographs appeared in *Harper's Weekly*, a Confederate committee was convened to investigate the North's allegations of cruelty and ill treatment in Southern prisons and to defend the reputation of the Confederacy "to the public eye of the enlightened world."²⁹⁵ During these proceedings, the Confederate committee responded to the Annapolis prisoner photographs' publication as wood engravings by accusing the North of falsely charging the South by only photographing the worst of its cases.²⁹⁶ In their response,

²⁹⁵ Confederate Congress, *Report of the Joint Select Committee Appointed to Investigate the Condition and Treatment of Prisoners of War* (Richmond: House of Representatives 1865), 3.

²⁹⁶ Significantly, although several of the images appear to have been retouched, no retouching was done on the men's bodies. *Ibid.*, 2–4.

the Confederacy criticized the reports of both the Joint Committee on the Conduct of the War and the USSC; however, rather than challenging the evidentiary purchase of the photographic sources themselves, the Confederate commissioners focused on their employment by the Union as cultural tools. The Committee declared that “whether the statements they make be true or not, their spirit is not adapted to promote a better feeling between the hostile powers” and that, instead of ameliorating the condition of returned prisoners, the North’s allegations of cruelty, inhumanity and malice were merely “designed to inflame the evil passions of the North [and] to keep up the war spirit among their own people.”²⁹⁷

Regarding the photographs made of paroled prisoners at Annapolis and Baltimore in 1864, and their reprographic wood engravings, the Confederate Committee did not deny that the images showed Union soldiers who had been reduced by starvation and disease in rebel prisons, but rather maintained that the images were not representative of all cases, nor were the soldiers’ conditions the result of ill treatment or malicious neglect. According to the Confederate report, directions had been given to exchange only those prisoners who were healthy enough to survive the journey, but sympathetic surgeons had given in to the pleas of homesick men in the last stages of emaciation and sent them to be exchanged.²⁹⁸ The Committee argued that these cases of extraordinary suffering might be found in any hospital, North or South, or in private families, but “these are the cases which, in hideous violation of decency, the Northern committee have paraded in pictures and photographs.”²⁹⁹ In a

²⁹⁷ Confederate Congress, *Report of the Joint Select Committee*, 2–4.

²⁹⁸ *Ibid.*, 4.

²⁹⁹ *Ibid.*

seeming gesture of restoring agency to the soldiers that they had once incarcerated, the Confederates strongly condemned what they saw as the North's violation of these soldiers for political gain, writing:

They have taken their own sick and enfeebled soldiers; have stripped them naked; have exposed them before a daguerreian apparatus; have pictured every shrunken limb and muscle – and all for the purpose, not of relieving their sufferings, but of bringing a false and slanderous charge against the South.³⁰⁰

The historian Matthew Fox-Amato has noted that words such as “daguerreotype” and “daguerreian” were common at this time, as photography had infiltrated linguistic practice, and were “rooted in the apparent objectivity of the mechanism of the camera, rather than the subjective work of the paintbrush.”³⁰¹ The Committee's choice to describe the enfeebled soldiers as having been “exposed before a daguerreian apparatus” would have thus signified an unmediated vision of human suffering, even as they denounced the use of those images as political tools by pro-Union actors. Significantly, the Confederate Committee alleged that their own soldiers suffered equally in Northern prisons and that the photographs circulated in the North would be

³⁰⁰ Confederate Congress, *Report of the Joint Select Committee*, 4. In this the Southern representatives seemed to have forgotten their previous denials of the agency of enslaved subjects “exposed before a daguerreian apparatus,” such as those photographed by Joseph T. Zealy. on the daguerreotypes made by Zealy for the racial scientist Louis Agassiz, see, among others, Ilisa Barbash, Molly Rogers, and Deborah Willis, eds., *To Make Their Own Way in the World: The Enduring Legacy of the Zealy Daguerreotypes* (Cambridge, MA: Peabody Museum Press; New York: Aperture, 2020).

³⁰¹ Fox-Amato, *Exposing Slavery*, 114.

accurate representations of the condition in which paroled Confederate soldiers also appeared following their release from Northern prisons.³⁰²

Despite Confederate objections, however, photographs of emaciated prisoners continued to be deployed for anti-Confederate political purposes even after the end of the American Civil War. In the spring of 1865, photographs of paroled prisoners taken at Annapolis were used as visual evidence in the legal trial against Confederate Captain Henry Wirz (1823–1865), the commander of Andersonville prison, one of the deadliest prisoner of war camps.³⁰³ Shortly after the Confederate surrender at Appomattox courthouse in April of 1865, Wirz was arrested in conjunction with the high death rate at the prison and was charged with “maliciously, willfully, and traitorously” conspiring to injure the health and destroy the lives of Federal soldiers, in addition to the murder of thirteen specific prisoners.³⁰⁴ Prints of the Annapolis prisoner photographs were then deployed as legal evidence at Wirz’s trial, an event which scholar Jennifer Raab has identified as the earliest use of photographs in a

³⁰² Confederate Congress, *Report of the Joint Select Committee*, 5–6.

³⁰³ It is unclear which prisoner of war photographs were employed in the trial against Wirz. According to a memoir later written by the photographer David Bachrach, four photographs that he took at St. John’s College Hospital in Annapolis in late 1864 were used in the Wirz trial, against his own objections. David Bachrach, “Over Fifty Years of Photography, Part II,” *The Photographic Journal of America* 53 (January 1916): 20. For a summary of Bachrach’s photographic career, see Kelbaugh, *Maryland’s Civil War Photographs*, 213–216. For a summary of the life of Henry Wirz and Andersonville prison, see, among others, Cloyd, *Haunted by Atrocity*.

³⁰⁴ Ambrose Spencer, *A Narrative of Andersonville, Drawn from the Evidence Elicited on the Trial of Henry Wirz, The Jailer; With the Argument of Col. N.P. Chipman, Judge Advocate* (New York: Harper & Brothers, Publishers, 1866), 146.

criminal case in which the death sentence is at stake.³⁰⁵ Following a short trial, Wirz was convicted; he was then executed by hanging in Washington, D.C. on November 10, 1865, making him one of only two men to be tried, convicted, and executed for crimes committed during the Civil War. The effective use of the photographs of white prisoners of war in the trial against Captain Henry Wirz thus not only demonstrates the photographs' enduring political power, but also signifies the foreclosure of the photographs' otherwise unstable meaning during the American Civil War. The successful deployment of the prisoner of war photographs within the courtroom setting is also especially notable when compared with the later use of photographs of atrocity deployed by the Freedmen's Bureau court, as explored in chapter four.

³⁰⁵ Jennifer Raab, "Photography and the Crimes of War," Paper presented at *Photography Between Evidence and Disclosure*, Center for Cultural Analysis Virtual Conference, Rutgers University, New Brunswick, NJ (April 9, 2021).

Chapter 4

“IF THE EVIDENCE WERE ALL PUBLISHED IT WOULD PRESENT ONE OF THE MOST CRUEL AND HEARTLESS EPISODES OF HISTORY”: THE STORY OF MARTHA ANN BANKS AND HARPER’S MEDIATION OF ANTI-BLACK VIOLENCE DURING RECONSTRUCTION

“What the dailies told, *Harper’s Weekly* pictured.”

— J. Henry Harper, *The House of Harper*, 1912³⁰⁶

On July 28, 1866, more than a year after the Confederate surrender at Appomattox marked the end of the American Civil War, *Harper’s Weekly* illustrated newspaper published a gruesome image that was intended to once again demonstrate for its readers the inherent cruelty of the former slaveholding Confederacy and the horrific violence that Black men and women continued to face in the reconstructed nation (fig. 70).³⁰⁷ Appearing toward the end of the issue, just before the advertisements, the wood engraved illustration represents a young Black woman seated upon a chair, with her dress stripped to her waist. With her back toward the viewer, the woman rests her weight precariously on the right edge of the seat as her left arm extends outward, across the chair, for balance. Her right hand rests at her side, while in her left hand she grips a piece of light-colored cloth, most likely a bonnet or

³⁰⁶ Harper, *The House of Harper*, 243.

³⁰⁷ As noted in the previous chapters, *Harper’s Weekly* advance-dated its issues by one week. The issue dated July 28, 1866 therefore appeared on newsstands on July 21, 1866. On the advance-dating of illustrated newspapers, see Brown, *Beyond the Lines*, 255.

handkerchief—further material evidence of her recent disrobing.³⁰⁸ With her face carefully obscured, the woman appears in this state of partial undress in order to display a series of raised scars that cover her back, the back of her arms, and the back of her head. In these irregular marks *Harper's* wood engraver has employed his art to maximum effect, with each painful passage appearing as a complex network of curves, recessions, and broken lines that interrupt the otherwise standardized linework that defines her person.

Captioned “Marks of Punishment Inflicted Upon a Colored Servant in Richmond, Virginia,” *Harper's* textual framing suggests that the young woman serves a merely symbolic role by obscuring her identity and locating the subject of the image in the site of her injured body. Specifically, *Harper's* caption narrows the reader's focus to the scars located on the young woman's back, the “marks of punishment” which physically testify to her past abuse. Contemporary news reports, however, have allowed me to identify the illustration's subject as sixteen-year-old Martha Ann Banks (born in 1849/50) of Aylett, Virginia.³⁰⁹ In *Harper's Weekly* an accompanying article

³⁰⁸ The young woman's mother later testified that her daughter was wearing both a handkerchief and a white bonnet on her head when her injuries were discovered. It is possible that the object grasped in the young woman's hand is some form of head covering. On headwraps worn by enslaved women, see Matthew Fox-Amato, *Exposing Slavery*, 59–60. On the origins and styles of bandanas and headwraps as worn by enslaved African American women, see Shane White and Graham White, *Stylin': African American Expressive Culture, from Its Beginnings to the Zoot Suit* (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 1998), 58–59.

³⁰⁹ Newspaper articles variously spell the young woman's name as “Martha Ann,” “Martha Anne,” “Martha Anna,” and “Martha Annie,” and documents in the archives of the Freedmen's Bureau record her name as both “Martha Ann” and “Martha Anne.” Here I am choosing to employ the spelling “Martha Ann,” which appears most consistently. Following my own identification of Banks as the subject of *Harper's* image, I learned that other scholars, including Margaret Abruzzo, Khaliah Mangrum,

entitled “A Cruel Punishment,” (fig. 71) identifies Banks’s engraved image as made after a photograph (figs. 72 and 73) that was sent to *Harper’s* by a “gentleman” in Richmond, Virginia, along with a letter that provides further context.³¹⁰ According to the letter reprinted by *Harper’s*, the photograph shows the effects of “punishment by a hot iron on the back of a negro girl about 13 years of age, inflicted by a virago by the name of Mrs. A— living in King William County.”³¹¹ The letter—which renders both the victim and her female abuser nameless—reports that the girl had been “locked up in a private room, for some trivial offense, and kept in there over a week, during which time the burning was inflicted upon her.”³¹² The article goes on to report that the girl’s

Matthew Fox-Amato, and Catherine Jones had made similar connections between *Harper’s* illustration and the story of Martha Ann Banks, albeit to varying degrees. Abruzzo and Fox-Amato do not name Banks as the subject of *Harper’s* illustration, though they draw upon archival records which narrate her story and identify her by name. See Abruzzo, *Polemical Pain*, 229–230; Fox-Amato, *Exposing Slavery*, 219–222. Jones and Mangrum do identify “Martha Ann[e] Banks” as the subject of *Harper’s* illustration and connect *Harper’s* image with relevant records in the archives of the Freedmen’s Bureau, but they appear unaware of the existence of the photographic source, including the surviving print in the papers of Wendell Phillips. See Catherine A. Jones, *Intimate Reconstructions: Children in Postemancipation Virginia* (Charlottesville: University of Virginia Press, 2015), 71–73; Khaliah Mangrum, “Picturing Slavery: Photography and the U.S. Slave Narrative, 1831–1920” (PhD diss., University of Michigan, 2014), 100, http://deepblue.lib.umich.edu/bitstream/2027.42/108996/1/kmangrum_1.pdf.

³¹⁰ “A Cruel Punishment,” *Harper’s Weekly*, July 28, 1866, HarpWeek.

³¹¹ *Ibid.*

³¹² Notably the correspondent also de-ages Banks by several years. According to testimony given by her mother, Banks was either 16 or 17 years old at the time of the events. Testimony of Lucy Richardson, June 21, 1866. Compiled report of Judge Advocate Layton, Records of the Assistant Commissioner for the State of Virginia, Bureau of Refugees, Freedmen, and Abandoned Lands, 1865–1869 (National Archives Microfilm Publication M1048, Roll 16, Register of communications received

abuser had been arrested and that the case was now under investigation by the newly-formed Bureau of Refugees, Freedmen, and Abandoned Lands, also known as the Freedmen's Bureau. As the author points out, the local Richmond newspapers "all with one accord sang out against the Bureau for its interference" and regarded the accused as a "martyred and chivalrous Southern lady" and not "the fiend that she was."³¹³

Echoing the formal composition of *The Scourged Back* (fig. 6), the sight of the young woman's scarred body would have been similarly understood by *Harper's* readers as an index of racialized violence.³¹⁴ Like Peter Gordon, the male subject of *The Scourged Back*, Banks appears in a three-quarter pose as she contorts her frame to reveal a scarred back that testifies to the brutality of her enslaved past. This repetition of forms reflects not only the representational conventions of humanitarian imagery, in which social conditions are revealed through violations of the body, but also newspapers' reliance on recognizable frameworks for the understanding of new events.³¹⁵ For *Harper's*, the reduction of complex ideas to prefixed and legible

and referred registered letters and telegrams received, K-L, 1865–1866, frames 473–558); Records of the Bureau of Refugees, Freedmen, and Abandoned Lands, Record Group (RG) 105; National Archives Building (NAB), Washington, D.C. (hereafter "Testimony of Lucy Richardson" and "Compiled report of Judge Advocate Layton").

³¹³ "A Cruel Punishment."

³¹⁴ The sight of the woman's injured back would have also recalled the widely circulated image of Private Jackson O. Broshears, one of the paroled prisoners photographed at the U.S. General Hospital in Annapolis in 1864, as discussed in chapter three.

³¹⁵ Here I am referring to the definition of abolitionist "damage photography" advanced by Matthew Fox-Amato. See Fox-Amato, *Exposing Slavery*, 219.

icons—what Walter Lippmann famously described as “stereotypes”—allowed audiences to quickly grasp the information that was presented to them and helped to form consensus around the journal’s prior editorial claims.³¹⁶ As Jason Hill, drawing upon Lippmann, wrote: “With the stereotype, pictorial journalism’s stock-in-trade, the strange is reconfigured as the familiar, and conventional wisdom, however ill-suited to the present concern, proceeds unchallenged and unrevised.”³¹⁷

In publishing this illustration of Reconstruction-era violence, *Harper’s* editors drew upon the visual precedent of “A Typical Negro” to document how white-on-Black violence persisted in the South well past legal emancipation and to introduce consistency and stability of meaning to a period awash with political uncertainty.³¹⁸ Published in July 1866, Banks’s image appeared in *Harper’s* at a time of intense debate over Reconstruction policies and the upcoming congressional elections set to take place in the fall of 1866. Central to these debates were questions surrounding the continued military occupation of the South, the treatment of freedpeople and the

³¹⁶ As Jason Hill has noted, for Lippmann, “the stereotype was the fundamental problem for journalism, providing pictures of the world that comport with editors’ and their readers’ expectations rather than realities, compromising the whole merit of the enterprise.” For *Harper’s*, a journal suffused with editorial bias, this was less of a concern. Hill, *The Artist as Reporter*, 130. On the lack of objectivity in early American newspapers, see also Michael Schudson, *Discovering the News: A Social History of American Newspapers* (New York: Basic Books, Inc., 1967). For an exploration of the racial implications of stereotypes, see, among others, Jonathan Senchyne, “Bottles of Ink and Reams of Paper: *Clotel*, Racialization, and the Material Culture of Print,” in *Early African American Print Culture*, ed. Lara Langer Cohen and Jordan Alexander Stein (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2012), 140–142.

³¹⁷ Hill, *The Artist as Reporter*, 282.

³¹⁸ Walter Lippman, *Public Opinion* (New York: The Free Press, 1922), 54.

extension of the Freedmen’s Bureau, and both Black and female suffrage. For *Harper’s* Northern readers, the illustration of Banks’s scarred body and its allusions to *The Scourged Back* would have served as a reminder of the violence of enslavement, and as a powerful rebuke of the Southern population that now sought to reenter the Union. In this, *Harper’s* publication and framing of the wood engraving after Banks’s photograph was aligned with the newspaper’s support for Radical Reconstruction. However, this cultural technique, coupled with the form of the photographic image and the process of inter-medial translation, also served to flatten the illustration of the young woman from an individuated subject into an icon of anti-Black violence.³¹⁹ As this chapter will demonstrate, even though it was mobilized in the ostensible service of Black liberation, the representation of Banks’s injured body—as both a photograph and a wood engraving—was laden with the dispossessive violence of white supremacy.³²⁰

This chapter will engage the history of Martha Ann Banks’s image, providing new insight into Banks’s life and the production of her photograph. This chapter will also explore how the photograph of Banks’s injured body was circulated and framed through its use, particularly in the pages of *Harper’s Weekly*, where it was employed to activate the political agency of *Harper’s* white Northern readers. As with the prior case studies outlined in chapters two and three, I will examine the circulation of

³¹⁹ Fleetwood, *On Racial Icons*; English, “Emmett Till Ever After.”

³²⁰ Here I draw upon the recent work of Caitlin Meehye Beach, who makes a similar argument regarding the representation of enslaved subjects in abolitionist sculpture. Caitlin Meehye Beach, *Sculpture at the Ends of Slavery* (Oakland: University of California Press, 2022). On the slipperiness between empathy and subjugation, see Hartman, *Scenes of Subjection*, as well as Cutter, *The Illustrated Slave*.

Banks's photograph prior to its appearance in *Harper's Weekly* and will demonstrate how *Harper's* editors employed textual framing and the dynamics of page layout to mediate information already in circulation. As previously shown, *Harper's* news apparatus included the aggregation of stories and images from a larger intermedial culture of information, which were then selected and reframed to suit the Republican newspaper's political and editorial goals. However, unlike the prior examples of Peter Gordon and the paroled prisoners at Annapolis, there is no archival evidence to suggest that copies of Banks's photograph circulated across the country in large quantities. To date, I have located only one surviving print of Banks's photograph, in the papers of abolitionist Wendell Phillips at Harvard University.³²¹ The supporting evidence for this chapter will therefore be primarily textual, relying heavily on the original case report found in the archives of the Freedmen's Bureau, as well as articles from daily newspapers. These textual sources evince the public discourse which built around the case in the weeks prior to *Harper's* publication of Banks's photograph and which continued well after Banks herself faded from public view.

By examining the various forms of Banks's image, including textual references, as well first-person testimony transcribed by the officers of the Freedmen's Bureau, this discussion reveals the layers of mediation that have delimited the historic narration of Banks's abuse and self-emancipation. Here the term "mediation" signifies not only the material translation of Banks's image from one media to another, but also the ways in which her story has been transmitted and determined by historical

³²¹ I am indebted to Dr. Matthew Fox-Amato for helping me to locate this photograph.

actors.³²² The question of mediation takes on particular significance in the context of slavery and colonialism. As Huey Copeland and Krista Thompson describe in their essay “Perpetual Returns: New World Slavery and the Matter of the Visual,” history has cast enslaved (and, in Banks’s case, formerly enslaved) individuals into a “perpetual state of visual fugitivity” since the visual traces of enslavement continue to be obfuscated by the archives of the oppressive classes.³²³ The various iterations of Banks’s image—from the photograph, to the wood engraving, to textual references in un-illustrated newspaper articles—demonstrate this tension within the archive, between the extreme visibility of the enslaved body, and the absence, or erasure, of her subjecthood.

My ongoing efforts to identify Banks and to recover details of her life are part of a broader methodological intervention that positions the obfuscation of the lives of the enslaved as an entry point, rather than a barrier, to critical inquiry. Drawing upon the work of scholars such as Thompson and Copeland, as well as Saidiya Hartman and Jennifer L. Morgan, this project seeks to redress the violence of the archive by describing as fully as possible the conditions that determine Banks’s appearance and that dictate her silence.³²⁴ This includes the mediation of Banks’s personhood through

³²² For the various uses and definitions of media and mediation, see W. J. T. Mitchell and Mark B.N. Hansen, eds., *Critical Terms for Media Studies* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2010).

³²³ Huey Copeland and Krista Thompson, “Perpetual Returns: New World Slavery and the Matter of the Visual,” *Representations* 113, no. 1 (Winter 2011): 3.

³²⁴ This is a paraphrase of Hartman’s argument in her influential essay “Venus in Two Acts.” Saidiya V. Hartman, “Venus in Two Acts,” *Small Axe* 26, no. 2 (June 2008): 1. The scholar Jennifer L. Morgan has described the “violence” of enslaved women’s erasure from the archives of the transatlantic slave trade. See Jennifer L. Morgan, *Reckoning with Slavery: Gender, Kinship, and Capitalism in the Early Black Atlantic*

the recording of facts by the officers of the Freedmen’s Bureau and the subsequent circulation of both her story and image, as well as her appearance in *Harper’s Weekly*. It is through unpacking these multiple layers of mediated obfuscation that I have been able to locate traces of Banks’s own voice. In addition, this research illuminates the ways in which Banks’s continued presence within the archive, and narratives of racialized violence more broadly, remains governed by racial power structures.³²⁵

While other scholars have discussed the circulation of Banks’s image in the context of postwar humanitarianism, this project will draw upon *Harper’s* reporting of Banks’s story to demonstrate how representations of Black female bodies came to stand for questions regarding citizenship, national belonging, and uncertainty regarding the future of the nation during Reconstruction. My analysis will also consider how the infrastructures of print and the material process of publishing illustrated newspapers contributed to the role that *Harper’s* illustrations played in establishing and fostering racial identity during Reconstruction. This chapter will

(Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 2021), 52–53. On the generative tension that exists between “recovery as an imperative that is fundamental to historical writing and research...and the impossibility of recovery when engaged with archives whose very assembly and organization occludes certain historical subjects,” see Laura Helton, Justin Leroy, Max A. Mishler, Samantha Seeley, and Shauna Sweeney, “The Question of Recovery,” *Social Text* 125 33, no. 4 (December 2015): 1–18; Lauren Coats and Steffi Dippold, “Beyond Recovery: Introduction,” *Early American Literature* 55, no. 2 (2020): 297–319. On the potential problems inherent in linking historical work to the political work of redress, see also Walter Johnson, “On Agency,” *Journal of Social History* 37, no. 1 (Autumn 2003): 113–124.

³²⁵ The work of scholar Marisa Fuentes provides an additional touchstone for research that subverts “the violent systems and structures of white supremacy [which] pervade the archive and govern what can be known,” especially about enslaved women. Marisa J. Fuentes, *Dispossessed Lives: Enslaved Women, Violence, and the Archive* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2016), 5.

argue that *Harper's* publication of Banks's image and the narrative of her abuse served to direct attention away from the concerns of the nearly four million newly freed African Americans and reassured *Harper's* predominantly white readers that the prospect of Black freedom was not a threat to white Americans. In so doing, this discussion will reveal how *Harper's* own racial and gendered bias is evident in their reporting of Reconstruction era atrocities, even as the newspaper utilized Banks's photograph in support of arguments for Radical Reconstruction and civil rights for Black Americans more specifically.

Martha Ann Banks: An Intimate History

In her seminal essay "Venus in Two Acts," the scholar Saidiya Hartman describes the archives as a "death sentence" and "a tomb" for the enslaved, as enslaved persons' histories are rarely recorded outside the contexts of violence, criminality, and death.³²⁶ Indeed, although enslaved persons were the subject of perpetual surveillance by both their enslavers and the state, this scopic regime was often not such that would render their individual personhood visible in the archive.³²⁷ As Hartman notes, it often took acts of chance or disaster—such as accidents, injuries, murders, or criminality—to "produc[e] a divergence or an aberration from the expected and usual course of invisibility" and to catapult enslaved subjects "from the

³²⁶ Hartman, "Venus in Two Acts," 2.

³²⁷ In her publication *Picture Freedom: Remaking Black Visuality in the Early Nineteenth Century*, Jasmine Nichole Cobb describes Black visuality as a form of resistance to what she terms "the peculiarly *ocular* institution." Jasmine Nichole Cobb, *Picture Freedom: Remaking Black Visuality in the Early Nineteenth Century* (New York: New York University Press, 2015).

underground to the surface of discourse.”³²⁸ These are the conditions through which Banks enters the archive, as the story of her terrible physical abuse thrust her into the space of public knowability, although her life story also contains histories of kinship, intimacy, resilience, and resistance.

Born into enslavement in King William County, Virginia, a rural area approximately 30 miles northeast of Richmond, Banks and her family, including her mother and four siblings, labored as enslaved servants in the home of Henry and Ann Catherine Abrahams of Aylett.³²⁹ Banks and her twin sister, Mary Ellen, most likely worked in the home as domestic servants, while their mother, Lucy Richardson, was a cook.³³⁰ According to testimony gathered later by the Freedmen’s Bureau, Mrs.

³²⁸ Hartman, “Venus in Two Acts,” 2.

³²⁹ In newspaper accounts the family’s name is variously reported as “Abrahams,” “Abrams” and even “Adams,” though census records from this period typically include their name as “Abrahams.” Later, the family would change their name to “Abrams”; local historians have suggested that the family changed their name to avoid public scrutiny stemming from the incident involving Banks. Correspondence between the author and Bibb Edwards, March 19, 2023. For records pertaining to the Abrahams family’s residence in King William County, see Henry L. Abrahams and Ann[e] C. [Abrahams], King William, Virginia Census of Population; *Seventh Census of the United States*, 1850 (National Archives Microfilm Publication M432, Roll 955, page 242b); *Eighth Census of the United States*, 1860 (National Archives Microfilm Publication M653, Roll 1357, page 535); *Ninth Census of the United States*, 1870 (National Archives Microfilm Publication M593, Roll 1658, page 116A); *Tenth Census of the United States*, 1880 (National Archives Microfilm Publication T9, Roll 1375, page 10d); Records of the Bureau of the Census, Record Group (RG) 29; National Archives, Washington, D.C.; Ancestry.Com Library Edition. For testimony that records the Abrahams’ enslavement of Banks and her extended family, see Compiled Report of Judge Advocate Layton.

³³⁰ In her testimony to the Freedmen’s Bureau, Lucy Richardson stated that Mrs. Abrahams had her twin daughters, Martha Ann and Mary Ellen, “in the house ever since they was big enough to tote a plate and she has been treating them cruelly ever since she has had them in the house.” Testimony of Lucy Richardson.

Abrahams had a long history of abusing her enslaved servants, and is thought to have had a hand in the death of at least two women and one male child prior to the end of the Civil War.³³¹ Shortly after the end of the war, Banks's mother and siblings self-emancipated, leaving Martha Ann behind.³³² Then, in late May 1866, Banks's mother walked from Richmond to King William County to reclaim her daughter from the Abrahams household. As scholars such as Orlando Patterson have noted, the severing of kinship and familial bonds, particularly those between enslaved parents and their children, was critical to chattel slavery.³³³ Richardson's efforts to reunite with her child and reconstitute her family can thus be seen as part of a larger struggle by

³³¹ In their testimony to the Freedmen's Bureau, George Hill, Rebecca King, and Lucy Richardson allege that Mrs. Abraham was responsible for the death of her enslaved servants Sarah Dandridge and Eliza Hill, as well as one of Richardson's sons. See Compiled report of Judge Advocate Layton. On the abuse of enslaved servants by female slaveholders, see especially Thavolia Glymph, *Out of the House of Bondage: The Transformation of the Plantation Household* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2008), 18–31.

³³² It was not uncommon for enslaved mothers to have to leave their children behind as they severed ties with their enslavers in the wake of the Civil War, and many formerly enslaved mothers fought to reclaim their children after their own self-emancipation. Glymph, *Out of the House of Bondage*, 147–149.

³³³ Orlando Patterson, *Slavery and Social Death: A Comparative Study* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1982). On the grieving and longing that attended the separation of African American families during slavery see Heather Andrea Williams, *Help Me to Find My People: The African American Search for Family Lost in Slavery* (Chapel Hill: The University of North Carolina Press, 2012). On formerly enslaved Black Americans' expansive expressions of freedom following Emancipation, see Kidada E. Williams, *I Saw Death Coming: A History of Terror and Survival in the War Against Reconstruction* (New York: Bloomsbury Publishing, 2023), especially chapter one.

freedpeople to define and claim rights of citizenship in the wake of the Civil War, by pushing back against abuses that were once authorized by slavery.³³⁴

Upon their reunion, Richardson was shocked to see the extent of her daughter's injuries, including wounds on her face and burns on her head and back.³³⁵

Unfortunately, the burning of enslaved persons' bodies with coals or hot irons was not an unusual practice in the context of chattel slavery.³³⁶ Euro-American enslavers not only branded enslaved individuals as a means of social control, but also employed fire as a means of torture. Charmaine Nelson has observed that, "The frequency of whites using fire or heat to punish slaves located their desire not only to inflict excruciating pain but also to mark the body of the slave in order to remember the so-called offense and the punishment for it – another form of branding."³³⁷ With the encouragement of others, including members of Aylett's Black community and several white neighbors, Richardson then brought her daughter to the Freedmen's Bureau in Richmond.³³⁸

³³⁴ Jones, *Intimate Reconstructions*, 54; Stephanie E. Jones-Rogers also describes how former slave owners exploited the chaos that followed the end of the Civil War and took advantage of parents' absences to coerce children and adolescents into unfair labor agreements, and the efforts that their parents took to reclaim them. Stephanie E. Jones-Rogers, *They Were Her Property: White Women as Slave Owners in the American South* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2019), 187–190.

³³⁵ Testimony of Lucy Richardson.

³³⁶ Marcus Rediker has referred to branding in the history of the Middle Passage as "the hardware of bondage." Marcus Rediker, *The Slave Ship: A Human History* (New York: Viking, 2007), 72.

³³⁷ Charmaine A. Nelson, *The Color of Stone: Sculpting the Black Female Subject in Nineteenth-Century America* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 2007), 110.

³³⁸ Testimony of Lucy Richardson.

Organized by Congress in 1865, the Bureau of Refugees, Freedmen, and Abandoned Lands, more commonly known as the “Freedmen’s Bureau,” was designed to be a temporary entity that would assist with the reconstruction of the South by aiding white refugees and freedpeople following the defeat of the erstwhile Confederacy.³³⁹ Under the jurisdiction of the War Department, the Freedmen’s Bureau was responsible for providing “provisions, clothing, and fuel, as [the secretary of war] may deem needful for the immediate and temporary shelter and supply of destitute and suffering refugees and freedmen and their wives and children.”³⁴⁰ Perhaps the Bureau’s most important function, however, was to aid former slave owners and formerly enslaved people in their transition to a system predicated on free, rather than enslaved, labor.³⁴¹ It was in this capacity that the Bureau oversaw the drafting of labor contracts between freedpeople and white Southerners and helped freedpeople resolve matters related to employer mistreatment and physical abuse.³⁴²

³³⁹ For a history of the Freedmen’s Bureau, see George R. Bentley, *A History of the Freedmen’s Bureau*, (1955; repr., Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2017), Ebook; Paul A. Cimbala, *The Freedmen’s Bureau: Reconstructing the American South after the Civil War* (Malabar, FL: Krieger Publishing Company, 2005).

³⁴⁰ U.S. Congress, “An Act to Establish a Bureau for the Relief of Freedmen and Refugees,” in *The Statutes at Large, Treaties, and Proclamations of the United States of America. From December 1863, to December 1865, Arranged in Chronological Order and Carefully Collated with the Originals at Washington. With References to the Matter of Each Act and to the Subsequent Acts on the Same Subject*, Vol. 13, ed. George P. Sanger (Boston: Little, Brown, 1866), 507–509.

³⁴¹ Foner, *Forever Free*, 98.

³⁴² Notably, in her testimony to the Freedmen’s Bureau, Richardson denied that she had signed any labor contracts on behalf of her children. Testimony of Lucy Richardson.

In marshalling the powers of the Freedmen’s Bureau on behalf of her family, Richardson exercised her own self-possession outside the bonds of enslavement and communicated her self-identification as someone who fought for her and her family’s freedom. Richardson’s efforts are aligned with those of many freedpeople who testified to the traumatic injuries they endured at the hands of white Southerners. In *They Left Great Marks On Me: African American Testimonies of Racial Violence from Emancipation to World War I*, Kidada E. Williams describes how African Americans’ testimonies of violence to governmental bodies like the Freedmen’s Bureau represented a collective effort on the part of victims and witnesses to not only create public knowledge about post-Emancipation violence, but also to actively resist the ways in which violence created ruptures in African Americans’ path to full participation in American life.³⁴³ In demanding that the officers of the Freedmen’s Bureau bear witness to the sight of her daughter’s injured body, Richardson’s actions also expressed belief in the power of what Courtney Baker would later term “humane insight”—“an ethics-based look that imagines the body that is seen to merit the protections due to all human bodies.”³⁴⁴ Presaging the similarly heroic efforts of Mamie Till-Mobley (1921–2003) nearly one hundred years later, Richardson demonstrated a rhetoric of Black liberation that was premised upon the ethical

³⁴³ Kidada E. Williams, *They Left Great Marks On Me: African American Testimonies of Racial Violence from Emancipation to World War I* (New York: New York University Press, 2012), 20–21.

³⁴⁴ Courtney R. Baker, *Humane Insight: Looking at Images of African American Suffering and Death* (Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 2015), 5.

beholding of Black persons' embodied suffering.³⁴⁵ However, although Richardson's actions drew upon a belief in onlookers' investment in a shared humanity, the eventual circulation of her daughter's image beyond the bounds of the Freedmen's Bureau would demonstrate the instability of this ethical beholding as it unfolded within a political climate without a notion of universal humanity.

Following the demonstration of Banks's injuries to the officers at the Freedmen's Bureau, the young woman was brought by Lieutenant H.S. Merrell (d. 1871) to nearby Howard's Grove Hospital for treatment.³⁴⁶ It was around this time that Banks's photograph—the source for *Harper's* illustration—was taken, though the exact purpose for which the photograph was produced is unknown. As with the prior case studies of Peter Gordon and the paroled prisoners at Annapolis, it is possible that Banks's photograph was simultaneously intended both to serve as medical documentation and to be circulated as an object of political and moral suasion. Archival records do indicate that Banks's photograph was used as evidence in the investigation of Ann Catherine Abrahams for the abuse of her enslaved servants,

³⁴⁵ Significantly, Baker notes that “it has frequently been black women who have mobilized their keen understanding of the power of visual regard to improve substantially the circumstances for themselves and their racial kin.” Baker, *Humane Insight*, 6.

³⁴⁶ H.S. Merrell, Superintendent, 3rd District, to Orlando Brown, Assistant Commissioner for Virginia, June 2, 1866. Records of the Assistant Commissioner for the State of Virginia, Bureau of Refugees, Freedmen, and Abandoned Lands, 1865–1869 (National Archives Microfilm Publication M1048, Roll 17, frames 582–585); Records of the Bureau of Refugees, Freedmen, and Abandoned Lands, Record Group (RG) 105; National Archives Building (NAB), Washington, D.C. On Howard's Grove Hospital, see “Hospital Directory,” *Richmond Whig*, April 10, 1866, 3; “Medical College of Virginia,” *Richmond Dispatch*, March 6, 1866, 3.

which was undertaken by the officers of the Freedmen’s Bureau shortly after Banks’s arrival in Richmond.³⁴⁷ The principal source of our knowledge of these events is the report compiled by Brevet Major Caleb Rodney Layton (1826–1887), the Judge Advocate that presided over the investigation (fig. 74).³⁴⁸ This eighty-eight page document, which I located in the archives of the Freedmen’s Bureau, consists primarily of testimony from Abrahams’ former enslaved servants, including that of Banks and her mother, Lucy Richardson, as well as the surgeons that attended to Banks at Howard’s Grove Hospital; the report of Banks’s initial medical examination is included with Layton’s report as “Appendix A.” Notably, these witnesses were not

³⁴⁷ For archival records relating to the formation of the Freedmen’s Bureau investigation of Ann Catherine Abrahams for the abuse of her enslaved servants, see Captain Thomas W. Roche to Orlando Brown, Assistant Commissioner for Virginia, June 9, 1866. Records of the Assistant Commissioner for the State of Virginia, Bureau of Refugees, Freedmen, and Abandoned Lands, 1865–1869 (National Archives Microfilm Publication M1048, Roll 17, Register of communications received and referred registered letters and telegrams received, M, 1865–1866, frames 588–596); Records of the Bureau of Refugees, Freedmen, and Abandoned Lands, Record Group (RG) 105; National Archives Building (NAB), Washington, D.C.

³⁴⁸ Judge Advocates are appointed officers of the Judge Advocate General (JAG) Corps, the legal branch of the United States military. According to the Legal Information Institute at Cornell University Law School, “Judge advocates represent the Army in military legal matters and serve as legal advisors to uphold military law. Judge advocate also plays a key role in referring cases to courts martial, negotiating pre-trial agreements and taking actions on cases after court martial has concluded.” “judge advocate,” Legal Information Institute, Cornell Law School, updated June 2020, https://www.law.cornell.edu/wex/judge_advocate (Accessed February 20, 2023). As an extension of the War Department, the courts of the Freedmen’s Bureau were presided over by military officers. On the role of the military in Reconstruction era courts, see Zachary Newkirk, “A Brief Moment in the Sun: The Reconstruction-Era Courts of the Freedmen’s Bureau,” *Judicature* 101, no. 4 (2017) <https://judicature.duke.edu/articles/a-brief-moment-in-the-sun-the-reconstruction-era-courts-of-the-freedmans-bureau/> (Accessed March 29, 2023).

cross-examined, nor did Abrahams herself give testimony, as Abrahams' lawyers asserted that they did not recognize the military court's jurisdiction over the matter.³⁴⁹

The witness statements that do appear in the report were given under direct examination by Major Layton and transcribed by multiple officers of the Freedmen's Bureau, as evidenced by the multiple forms of handwriting that are present in the document. This includes Banks's own statement, in which she testified to being beaten, whipped, and burned by Abrahams before being rescued by her mother (whom she is recorded as affectionately calling "mammy"). Notably, however, Banks was not sworn in to testify as—according to the report—she did not "understand the obligations of an oath," though she "exhibited considerable intelligence in her answers."³⁵⁰ It is important to acknowledge here that the military officers that comprised the Freedmen's Bureau were invariably white men, and thus the testimonies given throughout the investigation were mediated through the racial bias of the transcribers.³⁵¹ Even though, as Kelli Moore argues, "Post-Emancipation legal

³⁴⁹ Statement of A.J. Crane and T.P. August, Counsel for Mrs. A.C. Abrahams. Compiled Report of Judge Advocate Layton. On the refusal of many to recognize the authority of the Freedmen's Bureau's courts, see also James Oakes "A Failure of Vision: The Collapse of the Freedmen's Bureau Courts," *Civil War History* 25, no. 1 (March 1979): 6–76.

³⁵⁰ Testimony of Martha Ann Banks, June 23, 1866. Compiled report of Judge Advocate Layton.

³⁵¹ Indeed, racial power structures governed both the recording and the archiving of the report. During my research in the archives of the Freedmen's Bureau at the National Archives and Records Administration in Washington, D.C., I first unsuccessfully searched for records of Banks's experience under "B" for "Banks," and "R" for "Richardson," her mother's name. However, it was not until I tried "L" for "Layton," the name of the Judge Advocate who presided over the case, that I found what I was looking for. It was there, filed under this white man's name, that I found the original report of the case, including Banks's own testimony.

testimonies, like those reported to the Freedmen’s Bureau, indicate a notion of the...Black observer of violence [who] is operating in the new context of rightful legal citizenship,” the records of many Black Americans’ testimonies of violence were still subsumed into a visual and linguistic field structured by whiteness.³⁵² Any understanding of Banks’s experience and analysis of this case study must therefore be done with an acknowledgement of these mediating forces.

According to the report, Banks’s photograph was presented during the testimony of Dr. D. R. Brower (1839–1909), then Acting Assistant Surgeon at Howard’s Grove Hospital.³⁵³ During his questioning by the Judge Advocate, Dr. Brower was asked to look at the photograph and to confirm whether it was an accurate representation of the nature and extent of Banks’s injuries at the time of her admittance to the hospital.³⁵⁴ Following the photograph’s deployment in the investigation, the object was appended to the Judge Advocate’s report as “Appendix

³⁵² Moore, *Legal Spectatorship*, 55. I am indebted to Judith Butler and Andrew Brooks’s respective explorations of the limits of witnessing, particularly when, as Brooks writes, “instances of mediated witnessing occur within a racially saturated visual field that upholds and reproduces a structural anti-Blackness...” Judith Butler, “Endangered/Endangering: Schematic Racism and White Paranoia,” in *Reading Rodney King, Reading Urban Uprising*, ed. Robert Gooding Williams (New York: Routledge, 1993): 15–22; Andrew Brooks, “The White Album: On Racialized Violence and the Witnessing of the Witness,” *Angelaki* 27, no. 2 (2022): 72–84.

³⁵³ On the history of early photographs being used as legal evidence, see Jennifer L. Mnookin, “The Image of Truth: Photographic Evidence and the Power of Analogy,” *Yale Journal of Law and the Humanities* 10, no. 1 (1998): 1–74.

³⁵⁴ Testimony of Dr. D. R. Brower, June 23, 1866. Compiled report of Judge Advocate Layton.

B.”³⁵⁵ In the context of the Freedmen’s Bureau investigation, the photograph served as additional visual evidence and a supplement to Banks’s own body, which was also employed as evidence of her past abuse. In the introduction to the report, Major Layton wrote that

The witnesses sustain each other and are, in their turn, sustained by the appearance of two of the persons upon whom the alleged barbarities were committed, Mary Ellen and Martha Ann Banks – the marks upon their persons, apparently the result of the lash, and of burns, establishing, beyond controversy, that they have been subjected to the most outrageous and inhuman treatment.³⁵⁶

The gathering of evidence and testimony was a standard activity of the Freedmen’s Bureau, and the prior example of Peter Gordon demonstrates that the body of the enslaved was often used as a rhetorical tool for arguments against enslavement. However, in the legal case against Abrahams, both forms of visual evidence—the bodies of Mary Ellen and Martha Ann Banks, and the photograph of Martha Ann’s injured back—were only admissible as they pertained to or illustrated the statements of white persons (specifically, the white doctor and the white Judge Advocate). The

³⁵⁵ It is unclear whether the print of Banks’s photograph that was once appended to the report of the Judge Advocate still exists. The archives of the Freedmen’s Bureau present certain challenges for scholars, as researchers no longer have access to the original documents and must instead work from microfilm. Unfortunately, the convenience of the digitized microfilms is undermined by a lack of clarity as some materials have become illegible in the translation from one medium to another, and the copying of multiple ledgers onto a single roll makes it difficult to understand cross-referencing. It is therefore possible that the print of Banks’s photograph that was included in the report is still present under a different location within the archives of the Freedmen’s Bureau, but that is difficult to determine.

³⁵⁶ Caleb Rodney Layton, Captain 11th U.S. Infantry and Acting Judge Advocate, Department of Virginia, to Major General Alfred J. Terry, Assistant Commissioner for the State of Virginia, June 27, 1866. Compiled report of Judge Advocate Layton.

use of Banks's photograph in the context of the Freedmen's Court thus reflects an epistemology of "legal seeing," or a way of seeing and interpreting visual evidence, that is, as LaCharles Ward has argued, "refracted by and through whiteness and foundationally anti-Black."³⁵⁷ The structural anti-Blackness of legal seeing in the United States derives from the integration of photographic evidence into a system predicated on the oral and written testimony of white citizens.³⁵⁸ In his recent essay "Somebody's – Or Nothing: Visual Evidence, Blackness and the Limits of Legal Seeing," Ward writes that

[A]round the same time that evidence was being codified, Black people, in effect, were rendered as nobodies within the court of law. Under the legal arguments about evidence, their testimony, oral or visual, illustrative or substantial, was not admissible and, in any case, unlikely to be respected. The evidence proffered by photographs of Black people, by extension, would only be understood as pertaining to or illustrating white testimony.³⁵⁹

Despite the inherently racist structures that governed its admittance into the legal archive, the use of Banks's photograph in this context was unique, and therefore noteworthy, as it also supported the testimony of freedpersons who spoke out against

³⁵⁷ LaCharles Ward, "Somebody's – Or Nothing: Visual Evidence, Blackness and the Limits of Legal Seeing," 45, no. 3–4 (2021): 363.

³⁵⁸ As legal historian Jennifer Mnookin has noted, in the mid- to late-nineteenth century, photographs were only admissible in legal cases as a supplement to oral testimony, to illustrate or support what had already been stated, as they were deemed unable to stand on their own as independent, substantive evidence. Mnookin, "The Image of Truth." See also Ward, "Somebody's – Or Nothing," 363–375.

³⁵⁹ Ward, "Somebody's – Or Nothing," 368.

their former enslaver.³⁶⁰ And even more striking would be the photograph's ultimate circulation and appearance in *Harper's Weekly*.

The Photograph of Martha Ann Banks

With the help of Dr. Matthew Fox-Amato, I was able to locate a print of the photographic source for *Harper's* illustration of Banks in the papers of abolitionist Wendell Phillips (1811–1884) at Harvard University. The *carte de visite* portrait had been sent to Phillips by his friend John Oliver (1821–1899), who was then working with the American Missionary Association to aid freedpeople in Richmond.³⁶¹ Oliver likely thought to send Phillips the photograph because of Phillips's long history of antislavery activism, as well as his role as then-editor for the *National Anti-Slavery*

³⁶⁰ The scholar Kelli Moore, drawing upon the work of Jennifer Mnookin, has noted that “Photographs of the living, wounded, or dead slave body seldom, if ever, appeared as evidence in court matters” particularly as it regarded the “adjudication of the rightful owner of a particular slave nor the adjudication of the excessive use of punishment by the master.” Moore, *Legal Spectatorship*, 31–32.

³⁶¹ A free Black carpenter from Petersburg, Virginia, Oliver arrived in Boston in 1853 and there became active in the antislavery movement alongside Wendell Phillips. Later, Oliver would become a prominent activist and political leader in Reconstruction-era Virginia; in 1867, he was one of six Black jurors on the federal grand jury that indicted Jefferson Davis for treason. For a summary of Oliver's life, see C. Peter Ripley et. al., eds., *The Black Abolitionist Papers*, Vol. 5, *The United States, 1859–1865* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1985), 136, n. 4. For a description of Oliver's relationship with Phillips, see James Brewer Stewart, “Comfortable in His Own Skin: Wendell Phillips and Racial Egalitarianism,” in *Wendell Phillips, Social Justice, and the Power of the Past*, eds. A.J. Aiséirithe and Donald Yacovone (Baton Rouge: Louisiana State Press, 2016), 111–132. On Oliver's sending of the photograph to Phillips in the context over Reconstruction era political debates, see James Brewer Stewart, *Wendell Phillips: Liberty's Hero* (Baton Rouge: Louisiana State University Press, 1986), 274.

Standard.³⁶² In his accompanying letter to Phillips, Oliver presents the photograph of Banks as evidence of the barbarism of slavery (fig. 75).³⁶³ Remarking on the ability of the *carte de visite* to accurately represent this atrocity despite the poor quality of the print, Oliver wrote:

I inclose to you a Photograph which is a very poor³⁶⁴
one but from it you will be able
to see quite well the barbarism of
Slavery as it now exist in King

³⁶² Oliver's letter to Phillips likely contributed to the publishing of Banks's story in *The National Anti-Slavery Standard*. However, this article was published over one month after Oliver's letter of July 6, 1866 and, instead of featuring Oliver's firsthand reporting of his encounter with Banks, reprints a special dispatch from the *New York Tribune*. "The Freedmen," *National Anti-Slavery Standard*, August 11, 1866, 1–2.

³⁶³ John Oliver to Wendell Phillips, July 6, 1866, Wendell Phillips papers, 1555–1882 (inclusive), 1833–81 (bulk), MS Am 1953 (942), Houghton Library, Harvard University. For discussions of this print, see Fox-Amato, *Exposing Slavery*, 219–222, and Abruzzo, *Polemical Pain*, 229–230.

³⁶⁴ The surviving print of Banks's photograph demonstrates little contrast in tone; it is possible that this is the "poor" quality that Oliver refers to. According to Mark Osterman, a specialist in nineteenth-century photographic printing processes, the print's lack of tonality is attributable, in part, to the fading of the albumen over time. However, the collodion negative's lack of sensitivity to non-white skin likely also resulted in a lack of tonal differentiation between the subject and background at the time of the image's production. As Osterman stated, "[Prior to fading, the photograph] actually had better tones than most pictures of people of color. It was a poor choice of background color. They should have used a darker background or lighted it less." Correspondence between the author and Mark Osterman, November 17, 2022. On the ways in which photographic technologies have privileged the representation of white skin since their invention, see Richard Dyer, *White* (New York: Routledge, 1997; 2017); Tanya Sheehan, "Color Matters: Rethinking Photography and Race," in *The Colors of Photography*, ed. Bettina Gockel (Boston: Walter de Gruyter, 2020), 55–71; Sarah Lewis, "Racial Bias and the Lens," in *Vision and Justice: A Civic Curriculum*, ed. Lewis (New York: Aperture Foundation, 2019), 52–55.

William Co, Virginia in 1866.
This girl with a twin sister and
their mother Lucy Richardson were
Slaves to a Mr. Henry Abrams
his wife, one of the most cruel
tyrant heard of in any age put out
the left eye of the mother, and
her constant habit has been to
take the children and burn their
backs in the manner which this
picture explains...³⁶⁵

In his letter Oliver also describes his personal encounter with Banks, noting that, when she was first brought to see him at the Freedmen's Court, she was too weak to get something to eat. He concludes by noting that the case had been brought before a Judge Advocate, but that at the time of his writing to Phillips, he had lost sight of the case. However limited, these personal details of Oliver's encounter with Banks are striking, as such intimate history is otherwise absent from the press coverage of her story and is not visible in her photograph.³⁶⁶

Though little is known about the production of Banks's photograph, an imprint on the verso of the extant *carte de visite* at Harvard indicates that it was produced by the Richmond-based photographic studio of Julian Vannerson (1826 – after 1873) and

³⁶⁵ I have chosen not to edit or use "sic" in my transcription of Oliver's letter, but rather maintain the spelling as it appears in the original. John Oliver to Wendell Phillips, July 6, 1866.

³⁶⁶ I borrow the concept of intimate history from Saidiya Hartman, who uses the term to signify intimate interpersonal relationships, including kinship, child-rearing, domestic arrangements, and sexual relationships. I however deviate from that usage in that I intend intimate history to emphasize more quotidian corporeal encounters. See Saidiya Hartman, *Wayward Lives, Beautiful Experiments: Intimate Histories of Riotous Black Girls, Troublesome Women, and Queer Radicals* (New York: W. W. Norton, 2019).

Charles E. Jones (dates unknown). A Virginia native, Vannerson first trained as a photographer alongside his brothers in Jesse Whitehurst's Richmond studio, before leaving to run Whitehurst's Washington gallery sometime in the 1850s.³⁶⁷ By 1860, Vannerson had returned to Richmond, eventually opening his own business in "Whitehurst's old Gallery" at 77 Main Street.³⁶⁸ During the war, Vannerson developed a lucrative business producing *carte de visite* portraits of Confederate military officers and briefly worked as a contract photographer for the Confederate government. In 1864, Vannerson was also hired to make portraits of Confederate General Robert E. Lee for the sculptor Edward Valentine (1838–1930) to work from in Europe; these photographs, which bypassed the Union naval blockade to arrive in London, later became known as the "blockade images," and are the most famous portraits of the Confederate commander (figs. 76 and 77).³⁶⁹ At the end of the war, Vannerson briefly entered into partnership with a "C.E. Jones."³⁷⁰ The imprint on the

³⁶⁷ Later Vannerson appears in D.C. archives as an assistant to the photographer James McClees, and is credited alongside McClees with photographs of U.S. Senators, as well as a delegation of Sioux leaders. For a summary of Julian Vannerson's photographic career, see Jeffrey Ruggles, *Photography in Virginia* (Richmond: Virginia Historical Society, 2008), 29, 50; see also Donald A. Hopkins, *Robert E. Lee in War and Peace: The Photographic History of a Confederate and American Icon* (El Dorado Hills, CA: Savas Beatie LLC, 2013), 47–50.

³⁶⁸ Ruggles, *Photography in Virginia*, 29; Hopkins, *Robert E. Lee in War and Peace*, 50.

³⁶⁹ Hopkins, *Robert E. Lee in War and Peace*, 48.

³⁷⁰ Even less is known about Vannerson's partner. Though the historian Jeffrey Ruggles has suggested that Jones was a Union army camp photographer prior to his association with Vannerson, there is little archival evidence to support this assertion. Jeffrey Ruggles, "Original Confederate Glass Negatives in the Cook Collection," (Unpublished manuscript, October 2011), typescript.

back of Banks's photograph indicates that the *carte de visite* was made at the studio of "Vannerson & Jones / Photographers, / No. 77 and 188 Main Street / Richmond, Va." and that negatives were retained for future copies. According to historian Donald Hopkins, photographs with backmarks showing studio addresses at both 77 and 188 Main Street were made between approximately November 1865 and May 1866.³⁷¹ This supports the notion that Banks's photograph was made shortly after her mother brought her to the Freedmen's Bureau, in early June 1866.³⁷²

As in the prior case studies outlined in chapters two and three, the survival of Banks's image as a *carte de visite* points to the photograph's intended distribution and use as an informational tool, whether for scientific, legal, or political purposes (or all three). However, the medium also took on a new significance in the context of Emancipation, as the portability, ubiquity, and democratic nature of the *carte de visite* stood for the expanded freedoms and mobility of African Americans in the mid-nineteenth century. Although, like the earlier forms of daguerreotypes, ambrotypes,

³⁷¹ Hopkins, *Robert E. Lee in War and Peace*, 50–51.

³⁷² It should be noted that a cancellation stamp appears on top of the photograph's two-cent revenue stamp bearing the date of May 7, 1866. Such markings were requisite on photographs from August 1, 1864 to August 1, 1866, as the United States government imposed a taxation system on many items, including photographs, to help pay for the war; the act of purchasing a photograph required that the seller affix a stamp to the object and then cancel the stamp by marking the stamp and dating it. The cancellation stamp that appears on the back of the *carte de visite* of Martha Ann Banks bears a date that would suggest that her photograph was made and purchased earlier than previously assumed. However, it is more likely that the photographer was inaccurate in dating his cancellation. As William C. Darrah has noted, photographers were not always precise in their cancellation of revenue stamps. See William C. Darrah, *Cartes de Visite in Nineteenth Century Photography* (Gettysburg, PA: William C. Darrah, 1981), 87.

and tintypes, the scale and haptic quality of the *carte de visite* implied a sort of possession of the subject, for many Black Americans the *carte de visite* served as an important tool of self-representation and self-actualization.³⁷³ By posing for the photographer's camera with clothing, jewelry, and props of their choosing, Black Americans could document their own self-possession beyond the bounds of their white oppressors.³⁷⁴ As Jasmine Nichole Cobb has written, early Black photographic practices "were not just creating distance between freedom and slavery's mediation of Blackness," as, for example, distributed in fugitive slave and auction advertisements, but were "reimagining and reconstructing Black visibility removed from the cultural logics of slavery."³⁷⁵

It is necessary to emphasize, as the scholar Emilie Boone has rightly noted, "that despite the possibilities offered by the *carte-de-visite* format, each image functioned within its own context."³⁷⁶ In the case of Martha Ann Banks, it is

³⁷³ In *Exposing Slavery*, Matthew Fox-Amato describes how the distinctive materiality of early photographs, and especially their small size, was at the root of slaveholders' use of photographs as part of a social practice of control. As Fox-Amato writes, "The size and durability of early photographs enabled southern whites to touch, hold, and wield miniature versions of their chattel." See Fox-Amato, *Exposing Slavery*, 52–54.

³⁷⁴ For the role of *carte de visite* photographs in the history of Black self-representation, see, among others, Maurice O. Wallace and Shawn Michelle Smith, eds., *Pictures and Progress: Early Photography and the Making of African American Identity* (Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 2012); Deborah Willis and Barbara Krauthamer, *Envisioning Emancipation: Black Americans and the End of Slavery* (Philadelphia: Temple University Press, 2013); Emilie Boone "The Likeness of Fugitivity: William Notman's *Carte-de-visite* Portrait of John Anderson," *History of Photography* 37, no. 2 (2013): 221–234; and Grigsby, *Enduring Truths*.

³⁷⁵ Here Cobb is referring to daguerreotypes, but the principle applies to *cartes de visite* as well. Cobb, *Picture Freedom*, 3.

³⁷⁶ Boone, "The Likeness of Fugitivity," 228.

important to consider the broader field of visual and material culture in which her photograph was produced, at the same time that we attend to the ways in which issues of race and the politics of Reconstruction delimited the production, circulation, and ultimate interpretation of her image. For many formerly enslaved and newly free Black Americans, like Banks, the *carte de visite* represented an opportunity to control their public and private identities, often for the first time; the scholar Theo Tyson has likened the visual practice of having a *carte de visite* portrait made of oneself to the semantic practice of choosing a new name upon emancipation.³⁷⁷ The liberatory possibilities of the *carte de visite* lay, in large part, in the medium's financial accessibility. Indeed, while some enslaved and free Black Americans had commissioned their own photographs in the decades prior to the American Civil War, like painted portraits, the high cost of early cased photographs prevented many from being able to afford this form of self-representation.³⁷⁸ By contrast, the invention of the *carte de visite*, which was easier to make and therefore less expensive, expanded the possibilities by which many Americans, including Black Americans, could represent themselves visually.³⁷⁹

³⁷⁷ Theo Tyson, "The Harriet Hayden Albums," Boston Athenæum Digital Collections, February 6, 2020, <https://cdm.bostonathenaeum.org/digital/collection/p16057coll52>.

³⁷⁸ On the commissioning of daguerreotypes by enslaved persons, see Fox-Amato, *Exposing Slavery*, 76–85. For daguerreotypes commissioned by free Black Americans in the North, see Jasmine Nichole Cobb's discussion of the Dickerson family portraits at the Library Company of Philadelphia. Cobb, *Picture Freedom*, 1–3.

³⁷⁹ On the accessibility of *cartes de visite* to persons of diverse economic classes, see Elizabeth Siegel, *Galleries of Friendship and Fame: A History of Nineteenth-Century American Photographic Albums* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2010), 15–67; Matthew Fox-Amato also presents a helpful explication of how photographs fit within

The production, sale, sharing, and collecting of *cartes de visite* by Black Americans in the nineteenth century extends from distinguished subjects such as Frederick Douglass and Sojourner Truth—the latter of whom sold her *carte de visite* to financially support her political causes—to the more vernacular collecting of middle-class Black communities.³⁸⁰ A notable example of such vernacular collecting are the two albums collectively known as the Harriet Hayden albums in the collection of the Boston Athenæum (figs. 78 and 79).³⁸¹ Compiled in the 1860s, these albums were gifted to Harriet Bell Hayden (1816–1893), a survivor of slavery whose Beacon Hill home served as a refuge on the Underground Railroad. In recognition of Hayden’s stature in Boston’s activist community, she was gifted this group of *carte de visite* portraits which document the social, political, and religious networks of Black abolitionists and their white allies. With photographs gathered from subjects in cities such as Raleigh, NC, Philadelphia, New York, Boston, and even Montpellier, France, we can see the geographic reach of the Haydens’ network as a surrogate for the increased freedoms enjoyed by other self-emancipated Black Americans at this time. In her study of photographs of Sojourner Truth, Darcy Grigsby explained that “The *carte-de-visite*, like the letters that often enclosed it, was a sign of mobility across

the broader economy of goods purchased by enslaved individuals. See Fox-Amato, *Exposing Slavery*, 82–83.

³⁸⁰ John Stauffer, Zoe Trodd, and Celeste Marie-Bernier, *Picturing Frederick Douglass: An Illustrated Biography of the Nineteenth Century’s Most Photographed American* (New York: Liveright Publishing Corporation, 2015); Grigsby, *Enduring Truths*.

³⁸¹ For an overview of the Harriet Hayden Albums and a summary of Hayden’s biography, see Tyson, “The Harriet Hayden Albums.”

distances; the fragile phantom substitute for the presence of persons exercising their freedom of movement.”³⁸² *Cartes de visite* could thus act as a proxy for the emerging freedoms and mobility of formerly enslaved and free Black Americans in the mid-to-late-nineteenth century, as their small size and affordability, coupled with the emerging efficiency of the United States postal system, allowed *cartes*, and subjects, to be sent across great distances and in great numbers.³⁸³

The reproducibility and circulatory nature inherent in the *carte de visite* format, however, also meant that subjects could not completely control the dissemination of their image. In the case of Sojourner Truth, the activist knowingly ceded this control for other forms of agential power, including payment and the exercise of her own authorship through copyright.³⁸⁴ For Banks, however, the reproduction and circulation of her paper photograph opened a space for her likeness to be used in political discourse in a way that was beyond her control and did not reflect her personal agency or her exercise of her own freedoms. It is impossible to know to what degree, if any, Banks consensually participated in the production and circulation of her image. What is clear, however, is that despite the capacity for self-empowerment located within the *carte de visite*, both John Oliver’s circulation of Banks’s photograph and its later translation as a wood engraving by *Harper’s Weekly*

³⁸² Darcy Grimaldo Grigsby, “Negative–Positive Truths,” *Representations* 113, no. 1 (Winter 2011): 20.

³⁸³ Grigsby, “Negative–Positive Truths,” 20; Boone, “Likeness of Fugitivity.” It should also be noted that cased photographs like daguerreotypes and ambrotypes were less easily mailed due to their weight and bulky quality, whereas *cartes de visite* could be easily slipped inside letters. Siegel, *Galleries of Friendship and Frame*, 18.

³⁸⁴ Darcy Grimaldo Grigsby, *Enduring Truths*.

only speak to the use of Banks's body as a political symbol, as evidence of the barbarism of enslavement. Both sources acknowledge the case that was brought against Mrs. Abrahams; however, they fail to fully articulate Banks's life without enslavement. This includes the resilience of Banks's mother, Lucy Richardson, who returned several times to rescue her daughter; Banks's own efforts at self-emancipation; or how, in the early days of Reconstruction, the family was able to finally seek justice against their abuser.³⁸⁵

A Close Reading of Banks's Pose

The photograph of Banks, the source for *Harper's* wood engraved illustration, stands out within the photographer Julian Vannerson's larger oeuvre, not only for its subject matter of a young Black woman, but also for her stylized pose.³⁸⁶ Indeed, Banks's nudity serves to make more plainly visible the subtle S-curve of her spine, which is accentuated by the uneven distribution of her weight upon the chair. In a pose that seems to emulate the dramatic *contrapposto* of neoclassical sculpture, Banks

³⁸⁵ I am indebted to Dr. Khaliah Mangrum for illuminating this tension for me, between *Harper's* use of Martha Ann's image as yet another example of slavery's cruelty, and Lucy Richardson and Martha Ann Banks's use of the image as part of their efforts to bring the law to bear on behalf of their family. Mangrum, "Picturing Slavery," 100.

³⁸⁶ Though Vannerson had previously photographed another formerly enslaved girl, the "redeemed" slave Mary Mildred Botts Williams, this prior subject was clothed and positioned in a manner more typical of Victorian portraiture. It is possible that Williams was photographed in this more modest way due to her young age, her "redeemed" status as a child rescued from enslavement, and/or the whiteness of her skin. On Williams's photograph and its circulation among abolitionists, see Mitchell, *Raising Freedom's Child*, 72–73. The photograph itself is now the collection of the Massachusetts Historical Society.

gazes off to her right, the profile of her face barely visible behind the curve of her neck, while the strong line of her left shoulder and arm draws the eye down to her left hand. To counterbalance her precarious position on the edge of the seat, Banks supports herself by placing considerable weight on her left hand; her bonnet appears to be crushed beneath the force of her fingers. Following the curve of her spine, the viewer's eye is then led back across the picture toward the gathering of her skirts, whose light color contrasts sharply against Banks's dark skin. As Banks's right hip hikes upward, her straight right arm leads the eye downward to rest within her heavy skirts in the lower-right corner of the frame.

Although the ostensible purpose of the photograph was to show Banks's injuries, the pose that the photographer has placed her in, but for the distinct centering of her head, does not seem to adhere to the conventions of medical or scientific representation. Banks's pose appears especially stylized when compared with photographs of other enslaved subjects, such as Delia and Drana, who were photographed by Joseph T. Zealy (1812–1893) two decades prior (figs. 80 and 81).³⁸⁷ In contrast to the straighter postures of Delia and Drana, the serpentine line that is formed by Banks's back presents her body as a site of aesthetic contemplation, one that recalls the stereotypical figure of the nude female bather, or the Turkish *odalisque* (fig. 82). Most famously represented by the work of French artist Jean-Auguste-Dominique Ingres (1780–1867), “odalisque” paintings typically portrayed nude

³⁸⁷ According to art historian Brian Wallis, the poses adopted by the subjects of the Zealy daguerreotypes reflect physiognomic and phrenological approaches to recording bodily and racial types. Brian Wallis, “Black Bodies, White Science: Louis Agassiz's Slave Daguerreotypes,” *American Art* 9, no. 2 (Summer 1995): 38–61.

women reclining in languorous poses amid settings and objects that referred to cultures outside of Europe. Created at a time when European powers expanded their empires to North and West Africa, and the Middle East, the *odalisque* drew upon the myth of exotic (non-white) women as sexually available.³⁸⁸

Perhaps a closer comparison—in both pose and subject matter—would be that of Hiram Powers’s famous antislavery sculpture *The Greek Slave* (fig. 83), the last version of which was modeled in 1866 (the same year of Banks’s photograph), or the artistic responses which followed its wide circulation. Like both *The Greek Slave* and its riposte, John Bell’s *The American Slave* (c. 1862), Banks exhibits a subtle sway to her hips.³⁸⁹ However, whereas Powers famously “clothed” his enslaved female subject in the rhetoric of sentiment by including sculptural references to her piety, modesty,

³⁸⁸ On the art of Jean-Auguste-Dominique Ingres and his interpretation of the *odalisque* theme, see Robert Rosenblum, *Jean-Auguste-Dominique Ingres* (New York: H.N. Abrams, 1990). For the sexualization of the serpentine line in Ingres’s paintings, see Carol Ockman, *Ingres’s Eroticized Bodies: Retracting the Serpentine Line* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1995). The scholar Kate Clarke Lemay has also drawn connections between *cartes de visite* of Peter Gordon, also known as *The Scourged Back*, and Ingres’s representations of female bathers. She writes, “Together, these images demonstrate how, from the mid-nineteenth century on, the naked back symbolized both the objectification and the appreciation of the human form.” Kate Clarke Lemay, “Reconstruction Reconsidered: The Gordon Collection of the National Portrait Gallery,” in *Beyond the Face: New Perspectives on Portraiture*, ed. Wendy Wick Reaves (Washington, D.C.: National Portrait Gallery, Smithsonian Institution, 2018), 98–115.

³⁸⁹ Notably Bell’s sculpture was executed as an electrotype, the same mechanical process used in the creation of forms for illustrated newspapers. Michael Hatt, “Sculpture, Chains, and the Armstrong Gun: John Bell’s *American Slave*,” *Nineteenth-Century Art Worldwide* 15, no. 2 (Summer 2016), <http://www.19thc-artworldwide.org/summer16/hatt-on-sculpture-chains-and-the-armstrong-gun-john-bell-american-slave> (Accessed November 11, 2022).

and familial bonds, and thus sublimated the work's implicit eroticism, Banks's studio portrait is absent these symbolic inclusions that would have bolstered her own claim for sexual innocence.³⁹⁰ The allusions to the conventions of the *odalisque* and/or *The Greek Slave* instead codify Banks's representation as a hypersexualized non-white body, underscoring the voyeuristic nature of the scene that would only have been amplified by the intimate handling of the photographic object.³⁹¹ This interpretation is reinforced by the inscrutability of Banks's face, as she tilts her head to the side while still concealing her profile; this aspect of her pose suggests to the viewer not only that Banks is conscious of her nudity, but also that there are other persons in the room that she turns away from. Allowing viewers to examine Banks without the threat that she might gaze back, Banks's pose thus places her in a position of objectification and

³⁹⁰ As scholars such as Charmaine Nelson have noted, Powers encoded the morality of his enslaved subject through the addition of certain sculptural details; this included a cross and a locket, which allude to her Christianity and family ties, and the placement of her hands over her genitalia. These details keep the young woman pure, and thus protect her from viewers' sexualized gaze. In doing so, Powers sculpted a safe narrative framework that allowed for a socially appropriate contemplation of the unclothed female figure in public places. Nelson, *The Color of Stone*, 75–112. On *The Greek Slave* and its significance for nineteenth-century American audiences, see also Samuel A. Robertson and William H. Gerdtz, "The Greek Slave," *The Museum* 17 (Winter–Spring 1965): 1–32; Vivien M. Green, "Hiram Powers's *Greek Slave*: Emblem of Freedom," *American Art Journal* 14, no. 4 (Autumn 1982): 31–39.

³⁹¹ Given the international circulation and incredible popularity of Powers's sculpture, which was widely disseminated via marble exhibition copies and illustrations, it is possible that Vannerson and Jones were aware of this visual precedent when posing Banks. Of course, they may have also been posing Banks to emulate the visual precedent of *The Scourged Back*.

contributes to viewers' reading of the image as representing Banks's probable sexual exploitation.³⁹²

There is an implicit tension present in the photograph between the sensuality of Banks's pose and our knowledge of her physical and likely emotional pain. Although, as previously stated, it is unclear to what degree Banks contributed to the production of her photograph, it is safe to assume that Banks herself did not select this pose, with her shoulder blades pulling in towards each other, as it may have caused considerable discomfort given her extensive injuries, several of which were still suppurating, or weeping, at the time of the photograph's production and her admission to the hospital.³⁹³ As one of the surgeons who examined Banks later stated in his testimony, upon her arrival at Howard's Grove Hospital, Banks had one suppurating wound, "noticeable on account on its size" on the back of her head, and large ulcers and suppurating wounds on both shoulder blades, the back of the neck, and one on the right elbow. Besides these large injuries, Banks had many small suppurating wounds,

³⁹² For sources that describe the sexual violence endured by enslaved women and girls, see, among others, Daina Ramey Berry, *"Swing the Sickle for the Harvest Is Ripe": Gender and Slavery in Antebellum Georgia* (Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 2007), especially 77–84; Daina Ramey Berry, *The Price for Their Pound of Flesh: The Value of the Enslaved from Womb to Grave in the Building of a Nation* (Boston: Beacon Press, 2017); Stephanie E. Jones-Rogers, "Rethinking Sexual Violence and the Marketplace of Slavery: White Women, the Slave Market, and Enslaved People's Sexualized Bodies in the Nineteenth-Century South," in *Sexuality and Slavery: Reclaiming Intimate Histories in the Americas*, ed. Daina Ramey Berry and Leslie M. Harris (Athens, GA: The University of Georgia Press, 2018), 109–123; Jennifer L. Morgan, *Laboring Women: Reproduction and Gender in New World Slavery* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2004).

³⁹³ It was typical for photographers to dictate subjects poses in the production of *cartes de visite*. See Siegel, *Galleries of Friendship and Fame*, 43.

“perhaps a dozen,” all over her body, particularly on the back.³⁹⁴ We might read this physical pain as being visible in Banks’s pose, which evidences considerable tension.³⁹⁵ Indeed, even though the photographers have posed Banks in the manner of a female bather or *odalisque*, her body does not appear languid or relaxed, as such figures are usually represented. Instead, Banks’s muscles appear tightly flexed as she grips on to the chair with her left hand and her clothes slip off her waist. Significantly, the dress and petticoat that Banks is wearing would likely have been bulky and uncomfortable pulled down to her waist, no doubt contributing to her tension and lack of ease.³⁹⁶

It is also possible that Banks appears tense because she was uncomfortable removing her clothing to expose her body in front of white men, especially ones who built their careers photographing Confederate soldiers and officers like Robert E. Lee. Notably, Banks, her mother, and sister had previously been forced to strip as part of

³⁹⁴ Testimony of Dr. D. R. Brower, June 23, 1866. Compiled report of Judge Advocate Layton.

³⁹⁵ Banks also described herself as being in pain in her testimony, noting, in response to the Judge Advocate’s inquiry, that the burns on her shoulders were still sore. Notably, Banks’s delivered her testimony to the Freedmen’s Bureau on June 23, 1866, nearly a month after her mother had recovered her from the Abrahams’ household; her burns were thus causing her pain weeks after their infliction. Testimony of Martha Ann Banks.

³⁹⁶ Given her status as a young, enslaved woman, it is most likely that Banks wears what was known as a “short dress.” I thank Nora Carleson for this observation. On enslaved dress, see Linda Baumgarten, “‘Clothes for the People’: Slave Clothing in Early Virginia,” *Journal of Early Southern Decorative Arts* XIV, no. 2 (November 1988): 27–70.

the physical abuse that they endured from their white enslaver.³⁹⁷ The archives of the Freedmen’s Bureau are filled with many accounts similar to those of Banks and her family members, in which Black women report having their clothes partially stripped off, thrown above their heads, or otherwise withheld, often as punishment for having asserted agency in the face of impending sexual violence.³⁹⁸ The memoir of Elizabeth Keckley (1818–1907), a formerly enslaved woman who served as the dressmaker to First Lady Mary Todd Lincoln, provides firsthand insight into the trauma that Black women experienced by being forced to disrobe in front of white men and their resistance to such forms of abuse. In *Behind the Scenes. Or, Thirty Years a Slave, and Four Years in the White House*, Keckley recounts her defiance to the base demands of a Mr. Bingham, who demanded that she “take down her dress” so that he might whip her. She writes:

Recollect, I was eighteen years of age, was a woman fully developed, and yet this man coolly bade me take down my dress. I drew myself up proudly, firmly, and said: “No, Mr. Bingham, I shall not take down my dress before you...Nobody has a right to whip me but my own master, and nobody shall do so if I can prevent it.”³⁹⁹

³⁹⁷ Testimony of Lucy Richardson; Testimony of Martha Ann Banks; Testimony of Mary Ellen Banks, June 23, 1866. Compiled Report of Judge Advocate Layton.

³⁹⁸ On this point I am indebted to Sarah Lewis. Sarah Elizabeth Lewis, “The Insistent Reveal: Louis Agassiz, Joseph T. Zealy, Carrie Mae Weems, and the Politics of Undress in the Photography of Racial Science,” in *To Make Their Own Way in the World: The Enduring Legacy of the Zealy Daguerreotypes*, ed. Ilisa Barbash, Molly Rogers, and Deborah Willis (Cambridge, MA: Peabody Museum Press; New York: Aperture, 2020), 297–325.

³⁹⁹ Elizabeth Keckley, *Behind the Scenes. Or, Thirty Years a Slave, and Four Years in the White House; With an introduction by James Olney* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1988), 33.

The inclusion of Banks's partially removed garments within the photographic frame may serve as a visual trace of her own forced disrobing. In their discussion of the daguerreotypes of Delia and Drana taken by Joseph Zealy, photographic historians Deborah Willis and Carla Williams argue that this visual device produces an image that is "more revealing and ultimately more exploitative of their bodies than their nudity would be."⁴⁰⁰ They write:

Signifying undress rather than nudity, the state of their clothing emphasizes the unnatural and humiliating aspect of their condition. Unlike African tribal women, whose daily wardrobes might reasonably consist of little clothing, these American slaves have had their clothing removed expressly for the photographs. The taking of the photograph reinforces the act of physically "stripping" them of their clothes.⁴⁰¹

Drawing upon the work of Willis and Williams, we might then read the inclusion of Banks's half-removed clothing in the photograph as a sign of her exploitation and violation by the photographers and/or the officers of the Freedmen's Bureau, whose scrutinizing gaze we inhabit through the framing of the *carte de visite*.

However, in her recent analysis of Carrie Mae Weems's intervention into the Zealy daguerreotypes, which excises the clothing that shows the figures in a state of half-dress, the scholar Sarah Lewis has revealed the mutability of this pictorial gesture. According to Lewis, over the course of the nineteenth-century the gesture of the "insistent reveal"—the indexical trace of forcibly undressing a subject through partial disrobing—shifted from a critical sign that alerted viewers to read bodies as objects for scrutiny within the project of racial science to one associated with the

⁴⁰⁰ Deborah Willis and Carla Williams, *The Black Female Body: A Photographic History* (Philadelphia: Temple University Press, 2002), 23.

⁴⁰¹ Willis and Williams, *The Black Female Body*, 23.

abolitionist movement and representations of emancipation.⁴⁰² Lewis points to *The Scourged Back* in particular as an example of how the previously dehumanizing gesture could be used in images that argued for the full extent of humanity.⁴⁰³

In addition to the example of Peter Gordon, Lewis draws upon Sojourner Truth's infamous performance of deliberate undressing to illustrate how partial disrobing could be used to rebuke the institution of slavery and the hierarchy of racial science. In 1858, while speaking in Indiana, the antislavery activist and suffragette was confronted by a group of pro-slavery sympathizers who claimed that Truth was an imposter, and that she was, in fact, a man—"an attack meant to invalidate her message," according to Lewis.⁴⁰⁴ This hostile group insisted that Truth show her breasts to the women in the audience, who would then confirm her sex.⁴⁰⁵ Rather than responding to this denigration by refusing to disrobe, however, Truth rebuked her accusers. It was later reported in *The Liberator* that:

Sojourner told them that her breasts had suckled many a white babe, to the exclusion of her own offspring; that some of those white babies had grown to man's estate; that, although they had suckled her colored breasts, they were, in her estimation, far more manly than they (her persecutors) appeared to be; and she quietly asked them, as she disrobed her bosom, if they, too, wished to suck! In vindication of her truthfulness, she told them that she would show her breast to the whole

⁴⁰² Lewis, "The Insistent Reveal," 300.

⁴⁰³ Ibid.

⁴⁰⁴ Ibid., 314.

⁴⁰⁵ For a more thorough recounting of this story, see Nell Irvin Painter, *Sojourner Truth: A Life, A Symbol* (New York: W.W. Norton & Company, 1996), 139.

congregation; that it was not to her shame that she uncovered her breast before them, but to their shame.⁴⁰⁶

According to Lewis, in this instance Truth read the “insistent call for her disrobement not as mere impertinence, but as opportunity to...potently reverse the commonly held associations with her half-dressed state,” and thus “used a posture meant to denigrate, performed at the hands of white men, as a reclamation of agency.”⁴⁰⁷

There is a critical distinction to be made, however, between the example of Truth and that of Martha Ann Banks, in that we are left with some sense (though no doubt heavily mediated) of how Truth herself responded to the demand that she remove her clothing. Comparatively, in the case of Banks, not only was her response omitted from the textual archive, but Banks’s interiority is also foreclosed by the nature of her pose—which excludes her eyes, nose, and mouth. We therefore cannot know how she felt at the time of her photograph’s production, or how she herself approached the display of sensitive parts of her body when forced to disrobe to support the claims of her abuse; it is also unclear whether the mutable gesture of her half-removed clothing should be read as a sign of her exploitation or humanity.⁴⁰⁸ What is known, however, is how the image of Banks’s naked back was used to support news of the atrocities committed against her. In fact, Banks’s photograph likely made an effective ideological symbol because it is not a portrait of an individuated subject, but a representation of a legible social type—in this case, the enslaved subject of

⁴⁰⁶ “Pro-slavery in Indiana,” *The Liberator* (Boston), October 15, 1858.

⁴⁰⁷ Lewis, “The Insistent Reveal,” 315.

⁴⁰⁸ Banks’s testimony to the Freedmen’s Bureau does not include any mention of the production of her photograph.

violence. With her back turned toward the viewer and her gaze hidden from view, Banks's pose simultaneously erased her identity and collapsed her representation into a template of prior abolitionist imagery that also relied on the trope of the nude back (figs. 6, 84, 85, and 86). Presented with this stereotype of anti-Black violence, viewers of Banks's image were thus able to quickly grasp its meaning and to experience the sense of spectatorial sympathy that it engendered, without being pushed to see Banks's body as connected with their own subjectivity.⁴⁰⁹

The Translation of Banks's Photograph into a Wood Engraving

Returning to *Harper's* publication of the wood engraved illustration made after Banks's photograph on July 28, 1866, we might consider how media and process contributed to the subjugation of Banks in the service of her ostensible liberation.⁴¹⁰ It is unclear how, following the production of Banks's photograph at the studio of

⁴⁰⁹ It is beyond the scope of this chapter, but it would be productive to compare the image of Banks, with her back facing the camera, to *Harper's* earlier publication of wood engravings after daguerreotypes which showed enslaved women from the captured ship *Wildfire* with bare breasts, especially in light of Kelli Moore's recent argument that the narrative of "A Typical Negro" "positions the history of the breast as vestibular to the scourged back's ideal representation of the brutality of slavery." Moore, *Legal Spectatorship*, 51. On *Harper's* illustration of enslaved women from the *Wildfire* ship, see "The Africans of the Slave Bark 'Wildfire'," *Harper's Weekly*, June 2, 1860, HarpWeek. For the daguerreotypes on which these illustrations were based, see Ellen Dugan, *Picturing the South: 1860 to the Present; Photographers and Writers* (Atlanta: High Museum of Art, 1996), 30. Recent efforts to locate these photographic sources have proven unsuccessful.

⁴¹⁰ Here the term "process" refers to both the material process of inter-medial translation, as the image of Banks's injured body was transformed from a photograph into a wood engraving for the purposes of publication, as well as the process of newsgathering in which this material translation was imbricated.

Vannerson and Jones, her image ended up in the hands of *Harper's Weekly's* engravers. A letter located in the papers of Major General Oliver Otis Howard (1830–1909), the head Commissioner of the Freedmen's Bureau in Washington, suggests that the photograph may have been sent directly to *Harper's* from the photographer.⁴¹¹ The letter (fig. 87), written by Orlando Brown, the Assistant Commissioner for the Freedmen's Bureau in Virginia, included a clipping from the *Washington Chronicle* which recounts Banks's story, and addresses the circulation of information beyond the offices of the Freedmen's Bureau. In referring to both a report compiled of murders and outrages committed against freedpeople in Virginia, which included information about Banks, as well as Banks's image, Brown writes:

No notice of "the Report" having
been sent has gone from this office.
I learn that Harper's Weekly has a
"Pictorial Illustration" of the girl Martha Banks.

⁴¹¹ Another possible link between *Harper's Weekly* and the photographic studio that produced Banks's image could be Peter Randolph (d. 1897). An African American preacher and member of Boston's abolitionist community, Randolph moved south after the Civil War to help the newly emancipated people in Virginia. In his memoir, *From Slave Cabin to the Pulpit*, Randolph recounts working with the Freedmen's Bureau in Richmond to defend formerly enslaved individuals that had been treated cruelly by their former enslavers, including Martha Ann Banks. Randolph wrote that "An eye-witness who was present photographed the back of this girl, and it can be had if my readers would like to see it." Peter Randolph, *From Slave Cabin to the Pulpit. The Autobiography of Rev. Peter Randolph: The Southern Question Illustrated and Sketches of Slave Life* (Boston: James H. Earle, 1893), 62. Notably, in 1866 Randolph would help to found Richmond's Sixth Mount Zion Church, the church that Banks's mother, Lucy Richardson, attended later in life. On Randolph's involvement in the founding of Sixth Mount Zion Church, see "Record of the Sixth Mount Zion Church – 35th Anniversary," *Richmond Planet*, August 31, 1901, 4. Regarding Lucy Richardson's attendance at Sixth Mount Zion, see her obituary. "Entered Into Rest," *Richmond Planet*, October 3, 1903, 1.

As near as I can learn, this loss was obtained from the Photographer...⁴¹²

Significantly, Brown's letter is dated July 21, 1866, the same date that the issue of *Harper's* featuring the wood engraved illustration of Banks's injured body would have hit newsstands. The timing of Brown's writing to Howard suggests the urgency of this communication; in addition, his characterization of the photograph's circulation as a "loss" suggests a divergence from the image's intended dissemination (or lack thereof).

In *Harper's* re-mediated illustration after Banks's photograph, the effects of Mrs. Abrahams's abuse have been painfully rendered by the wood engraving process. As previously explained in chapter one, wood engraving abetted mass illustration in part because, like letterpress, wood engraving was a relief print process, in which the image to be printed stands up from the block. To create a wood engraving, artists work in the negative, cutting away the areas of the wood not meant to receive ink, and leaving the intended image standing in relief. For Banks's scars to be registered as white highlights against her dark skin, the engravers would therefore have had to carve into the woodblock at the site of her injuries, effectively repeating the racialized violence to which she had been previously subjected. There is also a notable texture to Banks's injuries in the newspaper illustration that is not visible in the faded form of the surviving *carte de visite*. Upon close inspection, it is evident that the wood engravers took time to represent her wounds in detail, with each painful passage

⁴¹² Orlando Brown to Oliver Otis Howard, Washington, D.C., July 21, 1866. Oliver Otis Howard Papers, George J. Mitchell Department of Special Collections & Archives, Bowdoin College Library, Brunswick, Maine.

comprised of irregular lines and furrows of differing depth that demonstrate the plasticity of the print matrix.

In addition to the visually intricate passages on Banks's body, in converting the image from a photograph to a wood engraving, *Harper's* artists have removed the curved spindle that appears on the back of Banks's chair in the *carte de visite* and replaced this detail with a more typical straight spindle. The removal of the curved spindle serves to draw additional attention to Banks's curved back, which now stands out within the engraved composition, rather than in harmony with the form of the chair. Considerable effort has also been taken to define the background behind Banks, through a series of irregular florid lines, and varied tonality. These details show us how much work was done to interpret the photograph through re-mediation and to re-characterize the image as a wood engraving, rather than a photograph.

A close examination of *Harper's* illustration reveals "ghost lines" that further fragment Banks's injured body; the presence of these faint, white lines demonstrates that the wood engraved illustration after Banks's photograph was produced by multiple engravers working on several small component blocks (fig. 88).⁴¹³ In considering the position of *Harper's* multiple engravers, we might wonder as to how they were able to subject such photographic images of human suffering to this autographic procedure of material and fleshy destruction, especially when we consider that in this same period, photographs were understood to have a kind of direct link to their referents. What sort of psychological accommodation was required to reproduce an image of a real, injured body through the violent process of wood engraving? We

⁴¹³ Brown, *Beyond the Lines*, 29.

might also speculate as to whether the experience of an engraver working for *Harper's Weekly*, a publication owned and operated by white men, with predominately white, Northern readers, would have been different when approaching the respective suffering of Black and white bodies.⁴¹⁴

Harper's Page Layout

Located in the lower left register of *Harper's* page, Banks's partially naked and scarred body is triangulated in *Harper's Weekly* by seemingly edifying examples of nineteenth-century white American womanhood. These include a remediated illustration after Mathew Brady's portrait of the Union heroine Barbara Frietchie (fig. 89), and a sketch showing the latest trend in women's bathing costumes.⁴¹⁵ Arranged in a pyramidal structure punctuated by columns of type, the bust-like portrait of Frietchie looms overhead, in the center of the page, while Banks and the bathing woman are featured below, on the left and right side of the page, respectively. This layout roughly coincides with the order of information, as a reprinting of John Greenleaf Whittier's famous poem "Barbara Frietchie" appears first, followed by "A Cruel Punishment," the article which presents Banks's story, and then "A Bathing

⁴¹⁴ The breaking up of the image of Banks's body into component parts by *Harper's* engravers recalls the "disaggregation" of still frames from the video showing the beating of Rodney King in 1992. For more on the process of "disaggregation" and its impact on the racialized readings of visual evidence, see Kimberle Crenshaw and Gary Peller, "Reel Time/Real Justice," *Denver Law Review* 70, no. 2 (January 1993): 283–296.

⁴¹⁵ Barbara Frietchie became the subject of legend and popular culture when she allegedly displayed a U.S. flag as Confederate soldiers marched through Frederick, Maryland. David K. Graham, *Loyalty on the Line: Civil War Maryland in American Memory* (Athens, GA: The University of Georgia Press, 2018), 75.

Costume.” At the very bottom of the right-most column of text is the beginning of another article that describes an as-yet unseen illustration on the succeeding page, entitled “Street Scene in Atchison.” Given the commonality of their female subject matter, the juxtaposition of these illustrations and texts suggests some level of equivalence or relationship among the three women, though the contrast among the images is jarring. The image of Banks’s vulnerable nude body appears voyeuristic and sexualized, especially when compared to the other images on the page, which show white women in various states of dress and facing forward to meet the viewer’s gaze. Indeed, Banks’s lack of dress contrasts sharply with the images of clothed white women on the page, especially that of the female bather to her right; notably, while Banks adopts the hypersexualized pose of a bathing woman or *odalisque*, the white female bather is allowed to protect her modesty by wearing a stylish costume that “conceals the figure without impeding in the slightest degree the actions of its wearer.”⁴¹⁶ This obvious incongruity between images has the added effect of drawing our eye to Banks’s exposed body, and in particular the “marks of punishment” which visually testify to her past abuse.

The visual contrast between the images of Black and white women on *Harper’s* page is accentuated by the printing process itself, which necessarily darkened Banks’s skin. In archival documents, Banks is recorded as being of mixed race, or “mulatto,” though her mother is identified as “Black” with a “dark” complexion.⁴¹⁷ The wood engraving process, however, was limited in its application

⁴¹⁶ “A Bathing Costume,” *Harper’s Weekly*, July 28, 1866, HarpWeek.

⁴¹⁷ Compiled Report of Judge Advocate Layton. Banking records from the archives of the Freedmen’s Bureau also describes Lucy Richardson, Martha Ann Banks’s mother,

of black ink to a white ground, and thus illustrated newspapers like *Harper's Weekly* lacked the ability to represent the subtlety of skin tones of Black Americans. As the scholar Jonathan Senchyne has observed, the technologies of print are linked to the technologies of racialization, as the black/white dualism that structured print legibility also materialized and hierarchized racial difference, transforming whiteness into a central metaphor for the unmarked page, and blackness into difference.⁴¹⁸ This racial formulation was aided by the techniques of printing itself, in which black ink is read against white paper; in wood engraved illustrations white figures are thus represented through the absence of ink, while Black figures are represented through the presence of ink. A comparison between the two illustrations of Martha Ann Banks and Barbara Frietchie makes plain this duality, as large passages of unmarked paper signify Frietchie's white cheeks. As Senchyne notes, the black/white dualism of mid-nineteenth century printing technologies therefore naturalize "the social structure of whiteness as absence," or neutrality, "while making race appear 'present' on the bodies of others."⁴¹⁹ The illustration of mixed-race figures, like Banks, reveals the inherent limitations of both nineteenth-century printing processes and the cultural constructions of race in the United States.

as having a "dark" complexion. Registers of Signatures of Depositors in Branches of the Freedman's Savings and Trust Company, 1865–1874 (National Archives Microfilm Publication M816, Roll 27: Richmond, Virginia; June 21, 1870–June 29, 1874, frame 444). Records of the Office of the Comptroller of the Currency, Record Group (RG) 101; National Archives Building (NAB), Washington, D.C.

⁴¹⁸ Senchyne, "Bottles of Ink and Reams of Paper," 140–158.

⁴¹⁹ *Ibid.*, 151.

In the pages of *Harper's Weekly*, Banks's material and political visibility was predicated on this problematic black/white dualism, which has the effect of further racializing Banks's body, heightening the difference between Banks and that of the other women on the newspaper page. Ultimately, this juxtaposition of illustrations serves to re-inscribe Banks as racially othered and seems to underscore ideas about Black sexuality and misconceptions about Black female sexual behavior that formed the cornerstone of European and Euro-American attitudes toward slavery.⁴²⁰ The stripping of Banks's clothing in the newspaper—and the juxtaposition of her image with the intact and clothed bodies of white women—highlights the display of her body in a space of maximum public visibility in a way that echoes the spectacularization of abuse for public display by enslavers.⁴²¹ In his essay “Fortified Images for the Masses,” the scholar Michael Leja has described such examples of formal disunity as revealing the “jostling and mixing of media” that formed the new image ecology of the mid-nineteenth century.⁴²² However, *Harper's* discrepant juxtaposition of the different images on the page featuring Banks's illustration also seems to point to an editorial interest in tracing the different symbolisms associated with these different subjects and their representations.

⁴²⁰ Morgan, *Laboring Women*, 7.

⁴²¹ See Nelson, *Color of Stone*, 108.

⁴²² Michael Leja, “Fortified Images for the Masses,” *Art Journal* 70, no. 4 (Winter 2011): 60–83.

Harper's Politics and the Framing of Banks's Photograph in the Newspaper

In "A Cruel Punishment," the article written to accompany the wood engraved illustration after Banks's photograph, *Harper's Weekly* is seemingly frank about the newspaper's role as a mediating force. Declaring that "the time is now gone by when things of this nature are to be hidden from the public," *Harper's* article concludes by emphasizing that "If the evidence were all published it would present one of the most cruel and heartless episodes of history that have disgraced civilization."⁴²³ However, despite the importance that is given to the story of this woman's abuse, the evidence presented does not include Banks's own testimony. Instead, her ordeal is told entirely through another witness, a characteristic feature of sentimental literature of that time; in this case Banks's story is retold through the words of the aforementioned "gentleman" from Richmond, whose correspondence *Harper's* has reprinted. In sentimental narration, descriptions of Black female suffering were frequently deployed to awaken the feeling of white Northern actors—particularly white Northern women—and to mobilize them into political action.⁴²⁴ Yet, as Saidiya Hartman has shown, the creation of sympathetic representations of enslavement often displaced the personhood of the enslaved individual in the process of empathetic identification. As Hartman writes, "The other's pain is acknowledged to the degree that it can be imagined, yet by virtue of this substitution the object of identification threatens to disappear."⁴²⁵ In the context of *Harper's* reporting, Banks is treated as a cipher, her injured body employed

⁴²³ "A Cruel Punishment."

⁴²⁴ Franny Nudelman, "Harriet Jacobs and the Sentimental Politics of Female Suffering," *ELH* 59, no. 4 (Winter 1992): 939–964.

⁴²⁵ Hartman, *Scenes of Subjection*, 19.

as evidence of Southern cruelty and as a call to arms for *Harper's* readers during the battle over Reconstruction.

Banks's image appeared in *Harper's* at the height of debates over Reconstruction and the congressional elections that were set to take place in the fall of 1866. The Democratic Party, led by President Andrew Johnson (1808–1875), clashed with Radical Republicans over the terms by which the former Confederate states would be allowed to reenter the Union. Central to these debates were questions over what defined American citizenship and enabled political participation, particularly whether voting rights would be granted to Black men.⁴²⁶ Favoring a policy of quick restoration for the seceded states, Johnson objected to imposing Black suffrage as a condition of readmission.⁴²⁷ Meanwhile, as a Republican newspaper, *Harper's* endorsed Radical Reconstruction policies that would have punished former Confederates and granted citizenship and voting rights to African Americans.⁴²⁸ Under the leadership of political editor George William Curtis, *Harper's* backed Radical Reconstruction by publishing articles that argued for voting rights for Black men and the extension of the Freedmen's Bureau, denounced prejudice against Black Americans, and condemned anti-Black violence in both the North and the South. This included condemning the massacres that took place in Memphis and New Orleans in

⁴²⁶ "The President and the Suffrage," *Harper's Weekly*, May 5, 1866, HarpWeek; Foner, *Forever Free*, 107–127.

⁴²⁷ Foner, *Forever Free*, 90.

⁴²⁸ For scholarship on popular press images created during Reconstruction, see Brown, *Beyond the Lines*; David Tatham, *Winslow Homer and the Pictorial Press* (Syracuse, NY: Syracuse University Press, 2003); Foner, *Forever Free*.

the summer of 1866 (figs. 90 and 91), the same summer Banks's image was published, as well as publishing illustrations that depicted the benevolent paternalism of the Freedmen's Bureau (fig. 92).⁴²⁹

Though the publication had initially adopted a conciliatory tone regarding disagreements with President Johnson, by the end of the summer of 1866, *Harper's* had begun to position the president's policies as a threat to the nation. As Eric Foner has noted, the circulation of increasing reports of atrocities committed against freedpeople led many Northern republicans to doubt whether Southern whites were prepared to accept not only Black political participation, but the reality of legal emancipation.⁴³⁰ At the same time, President Johnson vetoed two bills that would have extended the life of the Freedmen's Bureau and granted citizenship and civil rights to Black Americans. Notably, Congress overrode Johnson's veto of the Freedmen's Bureau bill on July 16, 1866, a development on which *Harper's* reported in their July 28, 1866 issue, the same issue which featured the remediated illustration

⁴²⁹ See "The Memphis Riots," *Harper's Weekly*, May 26, 1866, HarpWeek; "The Late Riot at Memphis," *Harper's Weekly*, June 2, 1866, HarpWeek; "Office of the Freedmen's Bureau, Memphis, Tennessee," *Harper's Weekly*, June 2, 1866, HarpWeek; "Marriage of a Colored Soldier At Vicksburg by Chaplain Warren of the Freedmen's Bureau," *Harper's Weekly*, June 30, 1866, HarpWeek; "The Massacre in New Orleans," *Harper's Weekly*, August 18, 1866, HarpWeek; "The Apology for the Late Massacre," *Harper's Weekly*, August 25, 1866, HarpWeek; Thomas Nast, "Which is the More Illegal," *Harper's Weekly*, September 8, 1866, HarpWeek. For additional representations of the Freedmen's Bureau by *Harper's* rival, *Frank Leslie's Illustrated Newspaper*, including one depicting Lieutenant Merrill, see James E. Taylor, "The Misses Cooke's school-room, Freedmen's Bureau, Richmond, Va.," *Frank Leslie's Illustrated Newspaper*, November 17, 1866, NCN; "Peep at the Freedmen's Bureau office of Lieut. S. Merrill, superintendent 3rd district," *Frank Leslie's Illustrated Newspaper*, February 2, 1867, NCN.

⁴³⁰ Foner, *Forever Free*, 114.

after Banks's image photograph.⁴³¹ Taken in this context, it becomes clear that the image of Banks's injured body was presented less to illustrate the story of her abuse than to provide a counterargument to those who supported making concessions to the South in the lead-up to the 1866 elections.⁴³²

In the article written to accompany Banks's photograph, *Harper's* text positions the photographic source for its illustration as part of the evidence now before the Freedmen's Bureau, on whose "unquestionable authority" the case now stood.⁴³³ Within the context of *Harper's* reporting, the photograph of Banks's injured body is positioned as an evidentiary document which justifies the authority of the Freedmen's Bureau, and the federal government, over the former Confederate states. However, unlike the prior example of "Rebel Cruelty" (described in chapter three), which takes pains to position the illustrations of paroled prisoners at Annapolis as accurate representations of atrocity because they derive from photographs sources, "A Cruel Punishment" gives little attention to the fact of Banks's photograph beyond its employment by the Freedmen's Bureau. Instead, *Harper's* has exploited the image of Banks's injured body for the sake of its graphic impact, including its obvious visual reference to the prior example of "A Typical Negro." Lippmann's concept of the stereotype is particularly helpful here, as it returns our attention to the human-driven

⁴³¹ "Domestic Intelligence," *Harper's Weekly*, July 28, 1866, HarpWeek.

⁴³² This position is reflected in additional articles that I have found in other Republican newspapers that frame the story of Martha Ann Banks and Ann Catherine Abrahams within debates over Reconstruction. See especially "The Tactics of Our Adversaries," *The Press* (Philadelphia), July 25, 1866.

⁴³³ "A Cruel Punishment."

efforts to motivate subjects in the discursive space of public opinion. For *Harper's* editors, the virtue of Banks's illustration is rooted precisely in its recognizability, as the sight of Banks's scarred back would have served as powerful shorthand for the violence of enslavement and confirmed pre-fixed ideas about the brutality of the Confederate population that now sought to reenter the Union. *Harper's* deployment of this visual device would have also worked to conceal the newspaper's subjective mediation of Banks's narrative, as it folded the story of her horrible abuse into political arguments surrounding Reconstruction.

Looking at the page holistically, the logic of the newspaper's layout constructs a narrative hierarchy, in which the suffering of Black women serves as an anchor for the political agency and freedoms of white women in late nineteenth-century America.⁴³⁴ It is as if Banks, by force of association, is the passive beneficiary of Frietchie's self-sacrificing resistance to the Confederacy, and Banks's emancipation from enslavement is equivalent to the liberation of women from restrictive fashions. This presentation contrasts with *Harper's* earlier publication of the image of Peter Gordon, the male subject of "A Typical Negro," who achieves a degree of masculine agency through the covering of his scars by his military uniform, an illustration of his embodied transformation from fugitive slave to soldier.⁴³⁵ There is also a distinct temporal component to *Harper's* page layouts, as the triptych presented in "A Typical

⁴³⁴ Regarding the links between a discourse of Civil Rights and the histories of enslavement and racial subjection, see Hartman, *Scenes of Subjection*.

⁴³⁵ Alice Fahs, *The Imagined Civil War: Popular Literature of the North and South, 1861–1865* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1992), 169; Nudelman, *John Brown's Body*, 151–152; Nelson, *Ruin Nation*, 173–174.

Negro” evokes an increasingly empowered, if not completely liberatory, future for the Black male subject; in comparison, the juxtaposition of Banks’s unclothed body with clothed white female figures relegates Banks to an enslaved past that contrasts sharply with the futurity invoked by the sketch illustration of an imagined scene at bottom right.

In *Harper’s* page layout, a single premise unites the otherwise widely varied images of Banks, Frietchie, and the bathing woman: all three women were excluded from political discourse based on their bodies. As Karen Sánchez-Eppler has observed, the rhetorics of nineteenth-century feminism and abolitionism met “upon the recognition that for both women and blacks it is their physical difference from the cultural norms of white masculinity that obstructs their claim to personhood.”⁴³⁶ However, in *Harper’s* presentation, Banks’s body—and, by extension, her personhood—is defined and delimited in relation to its opposite. For *Harper’s* readers, decoding the meaning of this layout required no special effort, as the spectacularization of Banks’s suffering concretized a white supremacist racial hierarchy. By purposefully juxtaposing Banks’s half-dressed and injured Black body with the clothed and intact bodies of white women, the dynamics of *Harper’s* page layout works to reinscribe Banks’s subjugation, while presenting a future in which white women are able to enjoy increased freedom and mobility. In the end, the newspaper’s layout creates a reassuring vision of the future for *Harper’s* white readers, in which white Northerners can rest comfortably in their position even amidst increased civil rights for Black Americans. The publication also makes an implicit

⁴³⁶ Sánchez-Eppler, “Bodily Bonds.”

argument for the continued need of the white paternalism of the Freedmen's Bureau, to protect vulnerable Black women like Banks. In this way, the circulation of the photograph of Banks's injured body within a visual field structured by whiteness presages later examples of the circulation of spectacular anti-Black violence, such as the videos of the beating of Rodney King and the murder of George Floyd, which, as Andrew Brooks has written, mirror the spectacle of lynching, as "Black death becomes the process through which the white individual can enter a collective relation with the nation."⁴³⁷ Thus, while the publication of her image and the accompanying article in *Harper's Weekly* selectively recognize Banks's humanity by denouncing the violence inflicted upon her, the newspaper ultimately denies her full humanity by obscuring her identity, neglecting to include her own voice, and marginalizing her experience by employing her narrative as a political tool that ultimately favors the advancement of whiteness.

Reactions to Banks's Story

The influential print scholar William Ivins has argued that the development of the halftone reproduction process, which replaced wood engraving as the primary method for reproducing images in the late nineteenth-century, was an important discovery because it allowed viewers to see the hand of the artist, rather than the hand of the engraver. Although the halftone required the translation of images into a series of lines and dots, according to Ivins, this formal logic lay "below the threshold of unpracticed vision," whereas the various qualities of line and surface produced by

⁴³⁷ Brooks, "The White Album," 75.

wood engraving would have been visible to the lay viewer.⁴³⁸ For Ivins, the halftone was a process of “communication without syntax.”⁴³⁹ Following this line of thinking, we can therefore surmise that a reader of *Harper’s Weekly* would have been aware of the material and syntactical transformation that photographs underwent in order to be published as wood engravings in the illustrated newspaper.

There is evidence of this mid-nineteenth century public awareness of the artisanal quality of illustrated news pictures and its impact on public opinion, particularly in the published reactions of Democratic newspapers to *Harper’s* illustration of Banks. For example, on August 25, 1866, the *Sonoma Democrat* published an article that criticized *Harper’s Weekly* for publishing the “disgusting woodcut” of Martha Ann Banks one month prior, which, according to the unnamed author, was meant to engender “hatred and bitterness in the Northern mind against the people of the South.”⁴⁴⁰ In comparing the story of Banks to an instance of violence in the North that was not pictured, the author concluded by wondering, “How would this monstrous affair look done up with a big wooden daub in *Harper’s Weekly*?”⁴⁴¹ This stands in stark contrast to the conditions of early twentieth-century journalistic practice, in which, as Jason Hill notes, “the photographic news picture was

⁴³⁸ Ivins, *Prints and Visual Communication*, 128.

⁴³⁹ Ibid.

⁴⁴⁰ “Abolition Pictures,” *Sonoma Democrat* (Sonoma, CA), August 25, 1866, 4.

⁴⁴¹ Ibid.

constructed...as the disembodied, mechanical output of mindless machinery.”⁴⁴² The juxtaposition of different printed forms on the same page—including the use of both photographs and sketch illustration on the page featuring Banks’s image—also demonstrates *Harper’s* awareness of the viewer’s own situatedness in perceptual engagement with the various forms of the news picture.

The idea that this shared text public was cognizant of the violent transformation that wood engraving performed on images of real bodies takes on a particular significance when we consider that many readers were likely aware of Banks’s narrative, if not the circulation of her photograph itself, prior to *Harper’s* publication on July 28, 1866. Extensive press coverage demonstrates that the publication of Banks’s image by *Harper’s Weekly* occurred after her story was already in circulation in the daily press, with the earliest known articles describing the case appearing in the *Daily Morning Chronicle* and *The Press* on July 4, 1866, several weeks before the *Harper’s* story.⁴⁴³ A survey of historic newspapers further reveals that the story of Banks’s abuse and the trial of her former enslaver, Ann Catherine Abrahams, was widely reported in 1866. At least seventy (unillustrated) newspaper articles were published in reference to Banks’s case and/or the extraordinary cruelty of her abuser; these articles extend the audience for this story beyond its local context in

⁴⁴² Jason E. Hill, *The Artist as Reporter*, 42. See also Barbie Zelizer, “Journalism’s Last Stand: Wirephoto and the Discourse of Resistance,” *Journal of Communication* 45, no. 2 (Spring 1995): 78–92.

⁴⁴³ Importantly, both the *Daily Morning Chronicle* of Washington, D.C. and *The Press* of Philadelphia were published by John W. Forney. See “Shocking Barbarity,” *Daily Morning Chronicle*, July 4, 1866; and “The Army—Shocking Brutality,” *The Press*, July 4, 1866.

Virginia to national knowability, thus providing both a context and an established public sphere for *Harper's* publication of Banks's image.⁴⁴⁴ Significantly, the story of Banks and Abrahams appeared in newspapers all across the country—from the *Daily News and Herald* in Savannah, Georgia, to the *Winona Daily Republican* in Winona, Minnesota—and in Canada and Australia.⁴⁴⁵ These articles, which variously spell her name as “Martha Ann,” “Martha Anne,” “Martha Anna,” and “Martha Annie,” describe not only the shocking details of her abuse, but also the incredible efforts of Banks's mother, Lucy Richardson, to rescue her daughter after having fled the Abrahams household from similar abuse the year before. Several articles also reprint excerpts from the Freedmen's Bureau investigation, including surgical reports and eyewitness testimony, while others note the circulation of the photograph that served as the basis for *Harper's* illustration.⁴⁴⁶

Evidence suggests that Banks's story was circulated in large part due to the efforts of newspaper publisher and politician John Weiss Forney (1817–1881), who used the rapid technology of telegraphy to dispatch information about the case across

⁴⁴⁴ Here I am drawing on Jürgen Habermas's formulation of the public sphere. Jürgen Habermas, *The Structural Transformation of the Public Sphere: An Inquiry into a Category of Bourgeois Society*, trans. Thomas Burger (Cambridge: Massachusetts Institute of Technology, 1989).

⁴⁴⁵ “Monstrous,” *Daily News and Herald* (Savannah, GA), July 31, 1866, NCN; Untitled, *Winona Daily Republican*, July 26, 1866, NWE; Untitled, *Ottawa Daily Citizen*, July 27, 1866, NWE; and “Condition of the South—Atrocious Cruelties,” *The Age* (Melbourne, Australia), November 2, 1866, NWE.

⁴⁴⁶ “Horrible Outrage in Virginia,” *Cleveland Daily Leader*, July 25, 1866, NWE; “A Difference—Black and White,” *Spirit of Jefferson* (Charles Town, WV), July 31, 1866, NWE; “The Case of Mrs. Abrahams,” *Richmond Dispatch*, July 31, 1866, NWE.

the country. Multiple articles describe the case in a standardized language—suggesting the copying of a preexisting text—and attribute the bulletin to “J.W.F” or, more colorfully, to “that arch-knave Forney.”⁴⁴⁷ A staunch opponent of President Johnson, Forney would have been motivated to circulate any information that could be used as a critique of presidential reconstruction and spotlighted Johnson’s attempts to dismantle the Freedmen’s Bureau in 1866. Indeed, in many of these articles, the name of “Mrs. Abrahams” appears as shorthand for Confederate cruelty and the ills of the Democratic party. For example, in reporting (negatively) on the National Union Convention that was being organized to encourage political support for Presidential Reconstruction, the *Press* in Philadelphia wrote:

Whether Mrs. Annie C. Abrahams, the Virginia lady whose achievements in torturing their colored servants were chronicled in The Press on Monday, will have a front seat in the gallery, is not stated, but as the cause of cruelty and barbarism has among its many representatives few who have more to illustrate the great Johnsonian and Copperhead doctrine of a denial of civil rights to the freedmen, she is certainly worthy of a special invitation.⁴⁴⁸

By identifying Abrahams as a villain and a symbol of the ills of the former Confederacy, such accounts not only suggested that Southern women transgressed the idea of white female gentility through the enactment of violence, but also implicitly undercut white Southern masculinity authority by marking them as poor managers of

⁴⁴⁷ “Horrible Outrage in Virginia”; “Shocking Rebel Barbarity in Virginia,” *Lewistown Gazette* (Lewistown, PA), July 25, 1866, NWE; “Shocking Barbarity,” *Brownlow’s Knoxville Whig* (Knoxville, TN), August 8, 1866, NWE. For the description of Forney as an “arch-knave,” see “Forney and Underwood in Partnership,” *Richmond Whig and Public Advertiser*, July 24, 1866.

⁴⁴⁸ “The Tactics of Our Adversaries.”

the domestic sphere.⁴⁴⁹ By critiquing Abrahams, Republican newspapers like *The Press* implied that the Southern white home, which Southern whites were now seeking to reconstitute after the war, was not fit to be included in the Union.

The vast textual archive enabled by Forney that surrounds the circulation of Banks's image demonstrates that *Harper's* publication of the wood engraved illustration after Banks's photograph occurred after her story was already in wide circulation and had transitioned from local knowledge into the space of broader public knowability.⁴⁵⁰ As discussed in the previous chapters, the delay in *Harper's* publication can be attributed, in part, to the labor required to translate photographs into wood engravings. However, *Harper's* editors also knowingly exploited the fact that, as Jason Hill has written, "the news and its images necessarily traveled on different schedules," and engaged their audience's familiarity with contemporary events and noteworthy individuals in their presentation of related pictures.⁴⁵¹ Indeed, *Harper's* assumed that their audience of active readers not only read the contents of daily newspapers and collected photographs, but also transposed their knowledge of recent events into their reading of the weekly journal. As descendent J. Henry Harper (1852–1938) would later write regarding the interdependent relationship between weekly and

⁴⁴⁹ Glymph, *Out of the House of Bondage*, 36, 52, 124.

⁴⁵⁰ Archival evidence reveals that neighbors of the Abrahams family in King William County were already aware of Mrs. Abrahams's abuse of enslaved servants. Diary entries of Dr. William Gwathmey, June 13, 1866; June 15, 1866; June 18, 1866; September 1, 1866. Gwathmey Family Papers, 1790-1982 (Mss1 G9957 c FA2), Virginia Museum of History and Culture, Richmond, Virginia.

⁴⁵¹ Jason E. Hill, "Snap-Shot: After Bullet Hit Gaynor," in *Getting the Picture: The Visual Culture of the News*, ed. Jason E. Hill and Vanessa R. Schwartz (London: Bloomsbury Publishing, Inc., 2015), 190.

daily newspapers in the Civil War era, “What the dailies told *Harper’s Weekly* pictured.”⁴⁵² Harper’s statement not only reveals that the temporality of his family’s periodical contrasted with the immediacy of the daily news cycle, but also that the character of the journal’s reporting was shaped by its belated temporality and the prior formation of a shared text public vis-à-vis the daily news.⁴⁵³

As in the prior examples of *The Scourged Back* and the Annapolis prisoner photographs, *Harper’s* presentation of the illustration after Banks’s photograph demonstrates that the journal’s belated temporality inflected the character of its reporting. The textual framing of Banks’s image suggests that *Harper’s* relied on a certain amount of prior knowledge on the part of their readers either of the case against Banks’s abuser or the existence of the photograph itself.⁴⁵⁴ This is underscored by the image’s caption, which notes its origins in Richmond, Virginia but omits the subject’s name, as well as the article itself. Though the text of “A Cruel Punishment” renders both the victim and her female abuser nameless, the newspaper’s redaction of all but the first letter of Mrs. Abraham’s surname (see above, “a virago by the name of

⁴⁵² Harper, *The House of Harper*, 243. See also Belknap, *From a Photograph*.

⁴⁵³ On the temporality of modern news media, see Phillip Schlesinger, “Newsmen and Their Time-Machine,” *The British Journal of Sociology* 28, no. 3 (September 1977): 336–350; and Barbie Zelizer, “Timing the Study of News Temporality,” *Journalism* 19, no. 1 (2018): 111–121. On the temporality of nineteenth-century periodicals, see Mark W. Turner, “Periodical Time in the Nineteenth Century,” *Media History* 8, no. 2 (2002): 183–196.

⁴⁵⁴ The letter containing the photograph that was sent to *Harper’s Weekly* was dated July 3, 1866; as noted above, the issue containing Banks’s image would have appeared on newsstands on July 21, more than two weeks after the writing of the letter. For the date of the letter, see “A Cruel Punishment.”

Mrs. A —”), suggests that readers familiar with the story would understand to whom *Harper’s* was referring. In a way, the image of Banks itself seems to anticipate the belated character of the illustrated newspaper’s operational structure, or rather the “slowness” of its mediation. For as quick as the camera may have been in its registration of Banks’s photograph, Banks’s seated pose, and its allusions to prior visual forms including Ingres’s *odalisque*, Power’s *The Greek Slave*, and *The Scourged Back*, conveys a sense of timelessness rather than timeliness.

On their part, many Southern newspapers denounced the wide circulation of the story and *Harper’s* publication of the image as anti-Southern propaganda, arguing that it was unfair to charge the whole region with the alleged crimes of one bad person, and criticizing *Harper’s Weekly* for its obvious editorial bias.⁴⁵⁵ For example, the *Weekly Progress* of Raleigh, North Carolina wrote that it was not “humanity or Christianity” which motivated Northerners to publicize this case of wrongdoing, but rather “hatred of the south” and a “disposition to prolong the probation” of the former Confederacy before it was allowed to return to the Union and participate in legislation.⁴⁵⁶ Another local newspaper, the *Richmond Times*, ridiculed *Harper’s Weekly* and the Freedmen’s Bureau for the seeming unoriginality of Banks’s photograph, which recalled the earlier example of *The Scourged Back*, and referred to

⁴⁵⁵ On Southern opposition to the circulation of this story and the publication of the image of Banks’s injured body, see “Forney and Underwood in Partnership”; “The Case of Cruelty,” *Alexandria Gazette and Virginia Advertiser*, July 27, 1866; “Radical Tactics—Their Method,” *Weekly Progress* (Raleigh, NC), July 28, 1866, NWE; Untitled, *The Richmond Times*, July 30, 1866, NWE; Untitled, *The Richmond Times*, August 11, 1866, NWE. Also see “A Difference—Black and White”; “Monstrous”; and “The Case of Mrs. Abrahams.”

⁴⁵⁶ “Radical Tactics—Their Method.”

such images mockingly as “dorsal photography.”⁴⁵⁷ Couching their formal critique in deeply racist ideology, the unnamed author for the *Richmond Times* argued that this loss of “inventive power” was the result of *Harper’s* and the Bureau’s sympathy for Black Americans, writing that Black persons, “next to monkeys, are the most imitative of animals,” and such “negrophilist[s]” would likewise gravitate toward imitation and repetitiveness.⁴⁵⁸ Meanwhile, publications such as the *Alexandria Gazette* and the *Richmond Whig* criticized *Harper’s* seeming over-emphasis on Southern anti-Black violence by pointing to similar cases of cruelty in the North that went unnoticed by the New York-based newspaper. In an early instance of journalistic “whataboutism,” the Virginia publications reproduced a story of a young boy in Michigan who had been abused by his father, writing that, if the boy “had been black, and the scene in Virginia, the Harpers would have had another chance for a picture for the *Weekly*.”⁴⁵⁹ Similar criticisms of *Harper’s* and the Freedmen’s Bureau continued to appear in daily newspapers for almost a year after the events themselves, and thus signify the

⁴⁵⁷ Untitled, *The Richmond Times*, September 8, 1866, NWE.

⁴⁵⁸ Ibid.

⁴⁵⁹ “Barbarity,” *Alexandria Gazette and Virginia Advertiser*, August 8, 1866; “Another Instance of Barbarity at the North,” *Richmond Whig and Public Advertiser*, August 7, 1866. See also “Photographs Wanted.; [From the Richmond Times.],” *The Day Book* (Norfolk, VA), August 3, 1866, NWE; Untitled, *The Charleston Daily News*, August 7, 1866, NWE; “Wanted.,” *The Idaho World* (Idaho City, ID), September 29, 1866, NWE. On the rhetorical device of “whataboutism,” including its frequent deployment by former President Donald Trump, see Dan Zak, “Whataboutism: The Cold War tactic, thawed by Putin, is brandished by Donald Trump,” *The Washington Post*, August 18, 2017, https://www.washingtonpost.com/lifestyle/style/whataboutism-what-about-it/2017/08/17/4d05ed36-82b4-11e7-b359-15a3617c767b_story.html. (Accessed March 2, 2023).

endurance of the case in national consciousness.⁴⁶⁰ Importantly, while seeming to widen the sphere of moral sympathy, such arguments against *Harper's* circulation of the image in fact only served to divert blame from the South by drawing a false equivalence that ignored the legacies of chattel slavery and systemic racism that contributed to Banks's abuse. Regardless of their own bad intentions, however, in these rebuttals *Harper's* political rivals rightly noted the newspaper's moral hypocrisy in publishing photographic images of only those select atrocities which suited their editorial and political goals.

Conclusion

There is little evidence of what happened to Banks following the investigation of her former enslaver and the publication of her image in *Harper's Weekly*.⁴⁶¹ Though her image may have circulated widely, it is unclear if Banks herself ever got

⁴⁶⁰ "Fine Arts and the Freedman's Bureau," *The Richmond Times*, January 28, 1867, NWE; "Murder of the Innocents—Barbarism of the Higher Civilization.," *Nashville Union and American*, April 19, 1867, NWE.

⁴⁶¹ In the end, Ann Catherine Abrahams would suffer little consequences for her abuse of her enslaved servants, as the case fell apart over the military's lack of jurisdiction in Virginia. Similar efforts by the local church—to which both Abrahams and Lucy Richardson belonged—to censure Abrahams fell apart over a vote that was heavily weighted by members of Abrahams' own family. As William Blair has written, notwithstanding the chaos of Reconstruction, "The racially determined realities of the Southern legal culture diminished the possibility of Black victims achieving financial and punitive amends." William A. Blair, *The Record of Murders and Outrages: Racial Violence and the Fight Over Truth at the Dawn of Reconstruction* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2021), 25; On the efforts by Beulah Baptist Church to censure "Sister Abrahams," see Beulah Baptist Church, King William County, Minute Book, Vol. 3, 1852–1886. Virginia Baptist Historical Society, Richmond, VA.

to experience such freedom of mobility. Records indicate that Banks developed typhoid shortly after her arrival in Richmond; serious illnesses were a not-uncommon occurrence for many formerly enslaved persons, as tens of thousands of freedpeople became sick and died due to the inability of preexisting social systems to respond adequately to the public health crisis that arose from “the unexpected problems caused by the exigencies of war and the massive dislocation triggered by emancipation,” as the historian Jim Downs has noted.⁴⁶² Letters found in the archives of the Freedmen’s Bureau also indicate that, around the time of *Harper’s* publication, Banks came to the attention of the Republican Judge John Curtiss Underwood (1809–1873). Underwood is perhaps best known in Virginia history for his support of Radical Reconstruction policies and for his involvement in the trial of Confederate President Jefferson Davis.⁴⁶³ According to letters archived by the Freedmen’s Bureau, Judge Underwood essentially tried to “adopt” Banks and provide her a home in Washington, D.C. In a letter dated July 20, 1866, officials at the Freedmen’s Bureau were instructed to “have the girl neatly dressed and ready to proceed to Washington” and that, while Banks’s

⁴⁶² Dr. D. R. Brower to Captain John A. McDonald (sic), July 23, 1866. Records of the Assistant Commissioner for the State of Virginia, Bureau of Refugees, Freedmen, and Abandoned Lands, 1865–1869 (National Archives Microfilm Publication M1048, Roll 11, Register of communications received and referred registered letters and telegrams received, B, 1865–1866, frame 847); Records of the Bureau of Refugees, Freedmen, and Abandoned Lands, Record Group (RG) 105; National Archives Building (NAB), Washington, D.C. On the medical crisis that followed emancipation, see Jim Downs, *Sick from Freedom: African-American Illness and Suffering During the Civil War and Reconstruction* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2012), 7.

⁴⁶³ Brent Tarter and *Dictionary of Virginia Biography*, “John C. Underwood (1809–1873),” *Encyclopedia of Virginia*, December 22, 2021, https://www.encyclopediavirginia.org/Underwood_John_C_1809-1873#its5 (Accessed February 20, 2023).

mother should be consulted, “it may not be well to mention the matter to the girl as she might absent herself, as she has once already done.”⁴⁶⁴ The fact that Banks had once absented herself from the care of the Freedmen’s Bureau is noteworthy, as it indicates Banks’s efforts to articulate her own freedom and agency outside the paternalistic framework of those who positioned her as an icon of victimhood.

It is unclear if Judge Underwood did adopt Banks and accompany her to Washington, or if, as some later records suggest, she stayed in the care of her mother, Lucy Richardson. What is clear is that—however well-intentioned Underwood may have been—his interest in Banks, like that of *Harper’s Weekly* and John Oliver before him, reduced her body to an example of racialized violence and an object of instruction. In a letter to *New-York Tribune* editor Horace Greeley, Underwood proposed that Banks be brought to New York to be exhibited at Barnum’s American Museum as a “specimen of rebel reconstruction” and as an argument for Republican votes in the upcoming congressional election.⁴⁶⁵ Underwood wrote that “If the Republicans of New York will induce Barnum to send on to get the little girl Martha

⁴⁶⁴ Orlando Brown to John A. McDowell, July 20, 1866. Virginia, Freedmen’s Bureau Field Office Records, 1865–1872, Richmond (subassistant commissioner) (National Archives Microfilm Publication M1913, Roll 166, Registered letters received, Apr–Dec 1866, frame 621); Records of the Bureau of Refugees, Freedmen, and Abandoned Lands, Record Group (RG) 105; National Archives Building (NAB), Washington, D.C.

⁴⁶⁵ John Underwood to Horace Greeley, August 8, 1866, Horace Greeley Papers, 1831–1875 (MssCol 1231), Manuscripts and Archives Division, The New York Public Library. Richard Lowe, *Republicans and Reconstruction in Virginia, 1856–70* (Charlottesville: University of Virginia Press, 1991), 65. On Horace Greeley’s Reconstruction politics, see Eric Foner, *Reconstruction: America’s Unfinished Revolution, 1863–1877*, Updated ed. (New York: Harper Perennial, 2014), 501–510.

Ann Banks to show her burnt back to the people...I believe it would be worth ten thousand votes this fall.” He added: “I do not believe that the sight of the true cross would produce a more thrilling effect.”⁴⁶⁶ This suggestion to publicly display Banks’s body recalls the earlier example of Wilson Chinn, a formerly enslaved man whose scarred body was displayed in several Northern cities, and whose image was also reprinted in *Harper’s Weekly*.⁴⁶⁷

While we may recoil from the horrifying example of Underwood, Greeley and Barnum and their potential exploitation of Banks, this chapter has sought to demonstrate that *Harper’s Weekly* was just as misguided and biased in its promotion of Banks, even as it circulated her image in the ostensible service of Black liberation. Taken together, these examples illustrate not only the ways in which various historical actors mediated the narration of Banks’s abuse and emancipation, but also the ways in which the work of racial ideology detached Banks’s individual personhood from the use of her image—and her body—as an index of anti-Black violence and an icon of

⁴⁶⁶ John Underwood to Horace Greeley, August 8, 1866. P.T. Barnum’s exhibition of Black subjects early in his career—including, most notably, Joice Heth, “George Washington’s nursemaid”—demonstrated a disdain and even racist attitude, although the showman would later elide this part of his history as he took a more antislavery turn later in life. For a summary of Barnum’s exhibition of Joice Heth, see Benjamin Reiss, *The Showman and the Slave: Race, Death and Memory in Barnum’s America* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2001). For a summary of Barnum’s views on race during Reconstruction, see Bluford Adams, *E Pluribus Barnum: The Great Showman and the Marking of U.S. Popular Culture* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1997), 33–34.

⁴⁶⁷ See “Emancipated Slaves, White and Colored.—The Children Are From The Schools Established In New Orleans, By Order of Major-General Banks.—[See Page 71.]” and “White and Colored Slaves,” *Harper’s Weekly*, January 30, 1864, HarpWeek.

moral pedagogy. In the end *Harper's* publication of the wood engraved illustration after Banks's photograph hid as much as it made visible, including the role of Lucy Richardson, Banks's mother. In *Harper's* mediated retelling of Banks's story, Richardson's heroic efforts to reclaim her daughter are excluded from the narrative, thereby erasing not only the fact that was Banks a part of a family, but also the mother-child love bond that granted this task of humane insight its extreme urgency.⁴⁶⁸ Indeed, in her testimony to the Freedmen's Bureau Richardson described how deeply she was grieved by the sight of her daughter's injuries. As Richardson later recounted, "[Banks] had wounds on her face and all smashed and her face swelled up like a bladder and *when I first saw her I could not speak...I was just like a person shot with a gun* to meet her in that situation although it was not much more than what I expected [...]."⁴⁶⁹ Richardson's recounting of her own reaction to witnessing her daughter's injuries is especially significant, as it underscores the pain which a mother felt upon viewing her daughter as a victim of atrocity, rather than foregrounding the sentimental experience that viewing an image of such an atrocity would provoke for white readers of *Harper's Weekly*. Although this intimate history is not visible in the subsequent photograph or wood engraved illustration of Banks's body, its inclusion in this project helps to illuminate the failure of the two-dimensional image to represent or communicate the full lived experience of Banks and her mother, or the full lived experience of any subject of an image of atrocity.

⁴⁶⁸ This is a paraphrase of Courtney Baker's characterization of Mamie Till-Mobley's own heroic actions. Baker, *Humane Insight*, 74.

⁴⁶⁹ Emphasis mine. Testimony of Lucy Richardson.

Chapter 5

CONCLUSION

I first encountered the abominable portrait of Martha Ann Banks's injured body during a visit to the National Museum of African American History and Culture (NMAAHC) in Washington, D.C. At the NMAAHC an enlarged photographic reproduction of *Harper's* wood engraved image of Banks is featured in the galleries as part of a collage (fig. 93) that illustrates the lived experience of enslavement, wherein bondspeople built homes, developed crafts, and nurtured their families, and where, despite their varied experiences, the threat of violence was never far away. Although divorced from its original context, the image's origins in *Harper's* relief printing process are easily recognizable in the network of lines and crosshatching that define Banks's form. A wall label to the right of the image, however, presents the subject simply as "Marks of Punishment Inflicted by Burning, Richmond, Virginia, 1866," simultaneously omitting its source in *Harper's Weekly* and un-naming Banks in the same manner that *Harper's* did over 150 years ago.⁴⁷⁰ In the context of the museum's

⁴⁷⁰ On the process of disremembering, of which un-naming is a part, see Jennifer Germann's essay "'The Requisite Local Coloring': Painting *The Washington Family* in London." According to Germann, "Unlike forgetting, disremembering is an active process that omits the names, denies the subjectivity, and, ultimately, effaces the humanity of people of African descent and establishes Whiteness as the historical norm in both Britain and the United States. Jennifer Germann, "'The Requisite Local Coloring': Painting *The Washington Family* in London." *American Art* 35, no. 3 (Fall 2021): 26–37.

display, the image of Banks's scarred back is meant to serve not as a representation of Banks's unique experience, but as bodily evidence of the violence endured by enslaved persons. Banks's portrait helps to underscore that American slavery was a fundamentally human experience, in counterbalance to the museum's presentation of the legal and economic histories of enslavement on view in the preceding galleries.⁴⁷¹

Similar to the NMAAHC's use of Banks's portrait as an illustration of the cruelty of enslavement, versions of the Annapolis prisoner photographs appear on display at the American Civil War Museum (ACWM) in Richmond, Virginia (fig. 94). At the ACWM, enlarged reproductions of three of the Annapolis prisoner photographs are used to illustrate the "brutal physical toll" that long term imprisonment took on soldiers, many of whom were incarcerated on Belle Isle, which is just a short walk from the museum along the James River.⁴⁷² After turning a corner in the museum's pathway, viewers are confronted with the sight of these "living skeletons," whom the wall label describes as being "reduced nearly to bones" and "barely alive" upon their release. No longer utilized as political propaganda, today the Annapolis prisoner

⁴⁷¹ I would like to thank Mary Elliott, curator of American slavery at the Smithsonian's National Museum of African American History and Culture, for her insight into this display.

⁴⁷² A fourth image which appears in the ACWM's display is a reproduction of a photograph of Corporal Calvin Bates, Co. E, 20th Maine Volunteers, who was incarcerated at Andersonville prison from 1864 to 1865. A wood engraved reproduction of Bates's photograph appears in *Harper's Weekly* on June 18, 1865. Compiled service record, Calvin Bates, Corporal, Co. E, 20th Maine Infantry Regiment; Carded Records Showing Military Service of Soldiers Who Fought in Volunteer Organizations During the American Civil War, compiled 1890–1912, documenting the period 1861–1866, Record Group (RG) 94; National Archives, Washington, D.C. For *Harper's* publication of Bates's image, see "Rebel Cruelties," *Harper's Weekly*, June 17, 1865, HarpWeek.

photographs are part of the ACWM's liberal use of historic images to put a human face to the museum's otherwise didactic presentation of the origins and experience of the American Civil War. The names of Private Isaiah Bowker, Private Jackson Broshears, and Corporal William Smith, however, are absent from the museum's display.

In comparison to the image of Banks and the Annapolis prisoner photographs, the portraits of Peter Gordon have maintained the greatest cultural currency, and he is remembered by his surname. Today, Gordon's image persists in a variety of forms, and can be seen in Civil Rights murals (fig. 95), magazine illustrations (fig. 96), and contemporary artworks (figs. 97 and 98). A recent feature-length film was even produced that dramatized Gordon's self-emancipation, starring actor Will Smith.⁴⁷³ The photographer Dario Calmese (b. 1982) has also acknowledged using Gordon's image as the inspiration for his portrait of actress Viola Davis that appeared on the cover of the July/August 2020 issue of *Vanity Fair*, in which the actress appears with her exposed back facing the camera and her left wrist bent at her waist (fig. 99).⁴⁷⁴ In explaining the inspiration that he took from Gordon's photograph, Calmese acknowledged the enduring legibility of Gordon's pose, remarking that "*you know that line, with his profile going down the arm and coming back.*"⁴⁷⁵ Calmese has described

⁴⁷³ Lindsay Clouse, "'Emancipation': The True Story of Peter's Courageous Escape to Freedom," *Collider*, December 10, 2022, <https://collider.com/emancipation-true-story/>.

⁴⁷⁴ Jessica Testa, "The Black Photographer Making History at Vanity Fair," *New York Times*, July 14, 2020 <https://www.nytimes.com/2020/07/14/style/the-black-photographer-making-history-at-vanity-fair.html>.

⁴⁷⁵ Emphasis mine. Ibid.

drawing upon the imagery of *The Scourged Back* in an effort to transmute the white gaze on Black bodies “into something of elegance and beauty and power.”⁴⁷⁶ In this example, Gordon’s unique posture has been abstracted and employed as a motif to signify the legacies of both anti-Black violence and Black American resistance.

These diverse examples demonstrate the iconic nature of Gordon’s photograph. Iconic photographs, as the scholars Robert Hariman and John Louis Lucaites have argued, are those which are widely understood and remembered, and are strategically used to “orient the individual within a context of collective identity, obligation, and power.”⁴⁷⁷ Circulated across a range of media, appropriated by diverse actors, and folded into a rich intertext of public culture, icons are both highly specific objects of memory and abstract representations whose value is more symbolic than referential.⁴⁷⁸ By nature of their legibility, iconic photographs activate deep structures of knowledge and belief that guide social interaction and civic judgement, and allow for the formation of subjective identity while maintaining dominant social structures; according to Hariman and Lucaites, icons are thus able to serve as aesthetic resources for the performative mediation of historical conflicts, without definitive resolution.⁴⁷⁹

⁴⁷⁶ Testa.

⁴⁷⁷ Robert Hariman and John Louis Lucaites, *No Caption Needed: Iconic Photographs, Public Culture, and Liberal Democracy* (Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 2007), 1; see also Fleetwood, *On Racial Icons*.

⁴⁷⁸ Hariman and Lucaites, 6.

⁴⁷⁹ *Ibid.*, 10. Nicole Fleetwood has similarly remarked upon the duality of the icon, noting that racial icons can serve as both a “marking of a democratic notion of racial trajectory” and “a plea for recognition and justice for black Americans in light of historical and ongoing forms of racism.” Fleetwood, *On Racial Icons*, 3.

The abstracted form of Gordon's scarred back, whether instrumentalized by artists, the press, or museums, thereby signifies both the progress achieved by African Americans and the enduring nature of anti-Black racism in the United States, as well as the role of photography in this simultaneous triumph and failure.

It follows, then, that Gordon's image is also frequently reproduced within contemporary discussions about the ethics and political efficacy of reproducing images of violence. For example, in a recent *New York Times* article that questioned whether the release of photos of the victims of school shootings could lead to better gun control policies in the United States, one of McPherson and Oliver's photographs of Gordon was employed as a historical example of images of violence that were able to enact or incite change; often Gordon's image is used as evidence in support of arguments in favor of reproducing and circulating images of violence.⁴⁸⁰ To a large extent, recent debates regarding the ethics of circulating and looking at images of violence echo the discourse which surrounded *Harper's Weekly* in the mid-nineteenth century. However, the dialogue which unfolded in articles such as "The Business of Illustrated Newspapers" and "Picture Preaching," as presented in the introduction and chapter three of this dissertation, did not consider the experience of the subject of images of atrocity and their relationship to their own image, but rather the impact that such illustrations would have on the sensibilities of Victorian readers. In the current discourse surrounding the circulation of such images, of which the aforementioned *New York Times* article is a part, the news value of an image is weighed against the

⁴⁸⁰ Elizabeth Williamson, "From Sandy Hook to Uvalde: The Violent Images Never Seen," *New York Times*, May 30, 2022
<https://www.nytimes.com/2022/05/30/us/politics/photos-ualde.html>.

potential for it to be traumatic or exploitative of its subjects and their families. Today many editors and cultural critics—perhaps influenced by the work of scholars such as Elizabeth Alexander, Saidiya Hartman, Ariella Azoulay, and Christina Sharpe, who have asked questions about what it means to look, and the different kinds of ethical obligations that looking may entail—are compelled to ask who benefits from the publication of photographs of violence.⁴⁸¹ This includes questions about who benefits economically from the commercial reproduction and circulation of photographs, the impact that the wide circulation of images may have on the subjects themselves, and how scholarship and museum practice may participate in the work of reparations and restorative justice.⁴⁸²

The above examples demonstrate the diverse ways in which images of Civil War atrocity continue to be circulated, collected, copied, displayed, and studied as part of pedagogical efforts to convey the violence of the American Civil War, the horrors of enslavement, and the ways in which photographs can serve as tools to influence public opinion and political policy. However, these examples also demonstrate the

⁴⁸¹ Alexander, ““Can You Be BLACK and Look at This?””; Hartman, *Scenes of Subjection*; Azoulay, *Civil Imagination*; Christina Sharpe, *In the Wake: On Blackness and Being* (Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 2016).

⁴⁸² Joy Garnett and Susan Meiselas, “On the Rights of Molotov Man,” *Harper’s Magazine* (February 2007): 53–58; Anemona Hartocollis, “Who Should Own Photos of Slaves? The Descendants, not Harvard, a Lawsuit Says,” *New York Times*, March 20, 2019, <https://www.nytimes.com/2019/03/20/us/slave-photographs-harvard.html>; Ariella Azoulay, “Free Renty! Reparations, Photography, and the Imperial Promise of Scholarship,” *Hyperallergic*, March 2, 2020, <https://hyperallergic.com/545667/free-renty/>; Patricia McCormick, “The Girl in the Kent State Photo,” *The Washington Post*, April 19, 2021, <https://www.washingtonpost.com/magazine/2021/04/19/girl-kent-state-photo-lifelong-burden-being-national-symbol/>.

ways in which questions surrounding the appropriateness or usefulness of circulating images of atrocity, and the didactic function that they may serve, remain unfixed and unresolved to this day. In chapter four of this dissertation, I argued that the various iterations of Martha Ann Banks's image—from the photograph, to the wood engraving, to textual references in un-illustrated newspaper articles—demonstrate a tension within the archive, between the extreme visibility of the enslaved body, and the absence, or erasure, of her subjecthood. This tension may be seen to exist for all of the subjects of the images of atrocity that continue to be circulated and reproduced today. Each form of mediation, however well-intentioned, brings these human subjects both in and out of view, as the images of their scarred and emaciated bodies are used as evidence of civil transgression, and as a site for the activation of empathetic identification, political activism, and historic narration, at the same time that they remain un-named, disremembered, abstracted, and decontextualized.⁴⁸³ In this vein, it is worth considering that the first image described in this chapter, that of Martha Ann Banks at the NMAAHC, is itself an extreme form of mediation: an enlarged photographic reproduction of a wood engraving based on a photographic source, with both the subject and its source material unacknowledged.

In this dissertation, I have proposed new considerations for looking at Civil War news pictures, and images of atrocity more broadly, and have emphasized the ways in which the mediation of narratives of violence can elevate certain aspects of a subject's experience, while obfuscating others. Integrating the methodologies of periodical studies and material culture studies into the study of American visual

⁴⁸³ Copeland and Thompson, "Perpetual Returns," 8.

culture, I have sought to open up a space between the production of photographs of atrocity and their publication as wood engravings in *Harper's Weekly* in order to demonstrate the ways in which *Harper's* editors willfully mediated images already in circulation in service of their own political agenda. By articulating this temporal, material, and ideological gap as a necessary and important space for art historical research and analysis, this dissertation has provided a framework for future inquiry by scholars of photographic intermediality, mass communication, and reproductive technologies writ large, one that simultaneously emphasizes an ontological distinction between photographs and other media, while also approaching the meaning of photographic objects as intertwined with their mediation. In expanding our understanding of the production, circulation, and reception of photographic images of atrocity during the Civil War period, this project has also broken new ground by demonstrating the volatility and instability of the meaning and purposes of images in mid-nineteenth century Northern visual culture.

In the three body chapters which compromise this dissertation, I have traced the production and circulation of images of atrocity—including images of abused enslaved persons and emaciated soldiers—prior to their appearance in *Harper's Weekly*. In doing so, this dissertation has made a significant contribution to historical scholarship by demonstrating how *Harper's Weekly* relied upon an existing public archive—of text and images, and particularly *cartes de visite* photographs—to report the news and to further its rhetorical position. This research prompts a reexamination of the news value of these pictures, which were essentially “old news” by the time of their appearance as wood engravings in *Harper's Weekly* illustrated newspaper. By closely examining the relationship between *Harper's* wood engraved illustrations,

their photographic sources, and text, I have sought to reveal the friction inherent in *Harper's* mediation of these images of atrocity, and to illuminate the disparity which exists between the history that is presented to us, and the reality of the subject's lived experience. The wide circulation of the three case studies that form the foundation of this dissertation during the Civil War period provides the preconditions for their mediation both then and now, enabling their abstraction and appropriation by the didactic functions of, the press, political advocates, and museums. It is this persistent ubiquity and the abstraction of these images as icons that also provides an opportunity for better understanding of their historic contexts.

In this dissertation, I have sought to re-contextualize historic images of atrocity and contend that *Harper's Weekly* strategically employed photographs of atrocity at critical moments during the Civil War and Reconstruction to persuade readers of Confederate inhumanity and thereby define the bounds of civil discourse and democratic participation. Drawing upon photography's evolving documentary status as well as the aesthetics of sentimentalism, *Harper's* presented these images at critical inflection points in the direction of the nation and used them to orient readers to the newspaper's increasingly Republican and pro-Union point of view. In chapter two, I examined *Harper's* publication of the iconic Gordon triptych which purported to show Peter Gordon's transformation from an escaped bondsperson to a soldier. This reassuring visual narrative of Black male military service appeared in *Harper's* in 1863, at a time when the issuance of the Emancipation Proclamation and subsequent enlistment of Black soldiers in the Union army caused a crisis in definitions of masculinity and American citizenship. Chapter three then analyzed *Harper's* publication of images of emaciated Union soldiers shortly after the release from

Confederate prisons. These illustrations, which elevated the suffering of white men within the national consciousness, helped to defer attention from the interests of Black Americans at a time when the war and Emancipation were becoming increasingly divisive issues in the run-up to the 1864 presidential election. In the fourth chapter, I examined *Harper's* 1866 publication of the wood engraved portrait of Martha Ann Banks, at a time when the policies of Reconstruction fomented anxieties about reconciliation and democratic participation after the Civil War. Proceeding in a chronological fashion, these case studies demonstrate the ways in which *Harper's Weekly* used images to sway public opinion and influence political policy over the course of the American Civil War. While the three case studies examined in this dissertation all engaged with bodily violence, there are key differences among them, including *Harper's* engagement with issues of race and gender. In providing crucial contrasts through *Harper's* approach to the suffering of Black and white, and male and female bodies, I have pointed to the ways in which *Harper's* editorial apparatus was refracted by and through white masculinity and thus upheld white male privilege and white male supremacy, even when it ostensibly worked in support of Black liberation. In this vein, this dissertation invites critical reading not only of historical journalism, but also of the seeming objectivity of contemporary news apparatuses as well.

This dissertation is by no means a comprehensive study of the publication of images of atrocity during the American Civil War and Reconstruction. Instead, each chapter offers a case study which attempts to illuminate the circumstances surrounding *Harper's Weekly's* publication of specific photographic images of atrocity, including the circulation of these images prior to their appearance in the illustrated journal. It is my hope that these case studies can later be expanded into a broader study of mid-

nineteenth century illustrated journalism and its role in American society during the Civil War and Reconstruction, aided by future research. For example, although in chapter three I compare *Harper's Weekly's* and *Frank Leslie's* simultaneous publication of wood engravings after the Annapolis prisoner photographs, I have not yet established whether *Harper's* journalistic practice was in line with the practices of other illustrated newspapers at this time. In my future analysis, I will consider: Was *Harper's Weekly* publishing the same number of photographs as other publications at this time? Was *Harper's* publishing the same number of photographs of anti-Black violence as other publications at this time? Where do the editorial and visual practices of *Harper's Weekly* and *Frank Leslie's* deviate? And how were their editorial practices influenced by the demographics and political opinions of their respective subscribers? Additional study of both *Harper's Weekly* and *Frank Leslie's Illustrated Newspaper* would only strengthen my understanding of *Harper's* editorial enterprise, and the impact that it may have had on public opinion. Moving forward, I also hope to flesh out the larger material and visual worlds in which *Harper's* images of atrocity circulated, from the space of the Sanitary Fair exhibition to the middle-class home of *Harper's* readers. By attending to the stereographs, lithographs, sculptures, sheet music, and paintings with which *Harper's* audience engaged, I may better understand how *Harper's* practices fit, or did not fit, within this broader cultural context.

Additional work can also be undertaken to further explore the ways in which *Harper's* publication of photographic images of atrocity was influenced by the particular politics of the Harper brothers, as well as that of *Harper's* political editor, George William Curtis. Such opportunities exist, in part, because much of this project was undertaken during a global pandemic which placed considerable restrictions on

travel and in-person research. For example, I regret that I was unable to return to the archives of the Harper Brothers publishing house at Columbia University in New York, following an initial examination of the surviving ledgers and papers in 2019. Restricted access to institutions and archives also hindered my ability to examine firsthand the scrapbooks and papers of George William Curtis, which are located at the Staten Island Museum in Staten Island, New York. Although archivists were kind enough to send me scans of Curtis's scrapbooks, which features hundreds of newspaper clippings, there is no substitute for one's own eyes, especially when consulting the fine print of nineteenth-century newspapers. Travel to view Curtis's scrapbooks at the Staten Island Museum may illuminate future connections between the editor's personal politics and *Harper's* publication of photographic images of atrocity at crucial moments in the war. Similarly, a more detailed study of Curtis's social circle, including his correspondence with activists William Lloyd Garrison, Wendell Phillips, Henry Ward Beecher, and the abolitionist Shaw Family, may provide additional insight into the context in which these images of atrocity were circulated and reproduced.

Perhaps most pressing, further work needs to be done to distinguish the different viewing factions of *Harper's Weekly*. At present, I have relied on broad demographic and literacy statistics to argue that *Harper's* readers were predominantly white, male, and Northern. However, it has been suggested to me by other scholars that, given that *Harper's Weekly* billed itself as a "family newspaper" suitable for the drawing rooms of polite society, the audience may have in fact been overwhelming female.⁴⁸⁴ However, during the Civil War *Harper's* was read by a broad scope of the

⁴⁸⁴ Correspondence between the author and Joshua Brown, May 1, 2023.

American public, including, as one critic later described, “in city parlors, in the log-hut of the pioneer, by every camp-fire of our armies, in the wards of our hospitals, in the trenches before Petersburg, and in the ruins of Charleston.”⁴⁸⁵ A survey of both primary and secondary sources, including any letters, diaries, or daily newspapers that mention *Harper’s Weekly*, is merited to parse out these diverse cultural spaces and to determine the precise makeup of *Harper’s* readership. Additional research into the history of African American newspapers and print culture, as well as the ways in which the historic Black press approached the publication of images of anti-Black violence, is also needed to better understand how diverse audiences may have apprehended or understood the rhetoric of *Harper’s Weekly*.⁴⁸⁶

This project would also greatly benefit from a more thorough consideration of the positions or viewpoints not visible in the archive, including those of Black Americans. In chapter four, I gestured toward the viewpoints of Martha Ann Banks and her mother, Lucy Richardson, whose feelings about the production and circulation of Banks’s photograph are absent from the historical record. However, more can be done to give space to the multiplicity of reactions which these photographic images of

⁴⁸⁵ Excerpt from the *North American Review*, April 1865, quoted in Harper, *The House of Harper*, 231.

⁴⁸⁶ Among others, see Juan González and Joseph Torres, *News for All the People: The Epic Story of Race and the American Media* (London: Verso, 2011); Eric Gardner, *Black Print Unbound: the Christian Recorder, African American Literature, and Periodical Culture* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2015); Andrea N. Williams, “Cultivating Black Visuality: The Controversy over Cartoons in the Indianapolis ‘Freeman’,” *American Periodicals* 25, no. 2 (2015): 124–138; Amanda K. Frisken, “‘A Song without Words’: Anti-Lynching Imagery in the 1890s Black Press,” in *Graphic News: How Sensational Images Transformed Nineteenth Century Journalism* (Champaign, IL: University of Illinois Press, 2020), 123–159.

atrocities may have elicited across diverse racial groups in the nineteenth century. The emerging strategies of archivally-informed speculative history—what Martha Hodes terms “leaps of grounded imagination,” or which Hartman has creatively theorized as “critical fabulation”—offers an especially productive pathway for future inquiry, one that is less tightly bound to the traditional empirical frameworks of historical scholarship, and which attends to the absences within the archive.⁴⁸⁷ For example, more thorough research into how nineteenth-century Black Americans thought about scars or bodily injury has the potential to inform my speculation as to how Gordon or Banks may have felt about the production of their photographs and their later appearance as wood engravings in *Harper’s Weekly* illustrated newspaper. Additional consideration of the collecting practices of Black Americans, including the ways in which photographic albums could serve as visual and material affirmations of kinship and familial ties outside the bonds of enslavement, would also provide a critical contrast to the appropriation of Gordon and Banks’s images by the white media apparatus of *Harper’s Weekly*.⁴⁸⁸ In this way, well-researched speculative history

⁴⁸⁷ Martha Hodes, “Lincoln’s Black Mourners: Submerged Voices, Everyday Life, and the Question of Storytelling,” *Social Text* 125 33, no. 4 (December 2015): 68–76. In a recent panel discussion published in the journal *October*, Saidiya Hartman describes “critical fabulation” as a way of working that “might elude the impasse produced [by] colonial structures...colonial ways of knowing and thinking and writing.” Huey Copeland, Leah Dickerman, Pamela M. Lee, “Between Visual *Scenes* and Beautiful *Lives*: A Conversation with Saidiya Hartman,” *October* 180 (Spring 2022): 81–104.

⁴⁸⁸ On the collecting practices of formerly enslaved Black Americans, see Mary Shelley Trent, “Visualizing Freedom: The Family Photograph Album of the Formerly Enslaved Ellen Craft,” *American Art* 37, no. 1 (Spring 2023): 58–81.

provides a method through which I may recover some aspect of the lives of these subjects, and further illuminate the dynamics of their representation.

A crucial component of this project is the acknowledgement that no narrative history will ever be able to represent or communicate the full lived experience of any subject of an image of atrocity or redress the violence which was enacted upon them. However, I still believe that an attempt at recovery is an important historical effort. In the introduction to the special issue of *Social Text* entitled “The Question of Recovery: Slavery, Freedom, and the Archive,” the coeditors argue that there remains a “present, political purpose” to the project of historical recovery when it comes to the lives of the enslaved. Acknowledging that “accounting for slavery may not unsettle the deep power imbalances that continue to permeate our world,” they conclude that even an incomplete history of the lives of the enslaved (or, in the case of Gordon and Banks, formerly enslaved) remains a worthy—and even, urgent—pursuit, particularly given the continued onslaught against Black life.⁴⁸⁹ It is with these imperatives in mind, coupled with a personal sense of political urgency in the wake of the Black Lives Matter movement and the ongoing and unresolved debates surrounding the ethics and efficacy of circulating images of violence, that I have continued researching the lives of these victims of atrocity, despite and because of the impossibility of historical recovery and redress. By unpacking the layers of historical obfuscation that have resulted in absences within the archive and limning both the possibilities and the limitations which such absences place on historical inquiry, I aim to widen the gap between narratives of violence and the totality of the subject’s lived experience, in

⁴⁸⁹ Helton et. al, “Question of Recovery,” 7–11.

order to better understand how the historic white media used photography and reproductive media to promote and navigate the human and ethical stakes of the Civil War and Emancipation. In so doing, I hope to not only provide new pathways for critical thinking which counter historical and contemporary practices of disremembering, but also enable readers and future scholars to see how an emphasis on photographic realism and the power of iconic images creates a void in our understanding of violence, and the ways in which this disremembering, un-naming, decontextualization, and abstraction is perpetuated by seemingly objective institutions of public culture, including museums and the press.⁴⁹⁰

⁴⁹⁰ Germann, “‘The Requisite Local Coloring’,” 37.

FIGURES

ALL IMAGES REMOVED DUE TO COPYRIGHT

REFERENCES

Note: All links accurate and active as of May 2023.

Abbreviations of Frequently Cited Databases

- AHN America's Historical Newspapers
DS Documenting the American South
NCN Nineteenth-Century U.S. Newspapers
NWE Newspapers.com World Edition
PQHN ProQuest Historical Newspapers

Archives and Special Collections

- Bowdoin College Library, Brunswick, ME
Oliver Otis Howard Papers
- Historic Northampton, Northampton, MA
Henry S. Gere Collection of Civil War Photographs
- Houghton Library, Harvard University, Cambridge, MA
Wendell Phillips papers, 1555–1882
- Library of Congress, Washington, D.C.
Copyright Ledger Collection
- National Archives and Records Administration, Washington, D.C.
Compiled Military Service Records
Records of the Bureau of Refugees, Freedmen, and Abandoned Lands
Records of the Department of Veterans Affairs
- New York Public Library, New York, NY
Horace Greeley Papers, 1831–1875
United States Sanitary Commission Records
- State Library of Massachusetts, State House, Boston, MA

Marshall Spring Stearns and Stearns Family Papers

Virginia Baptist Historical Society, Richmond, VA
Beulah Baptist Church Minute Books

Virginia Museum of History and Culture, Richmond, VA
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Appendix A

PHOTOGRAPHS OF PETER GORDON, ALSO KNOWN AS *THE SCOURGED BACK*

This appendix comprises the photographic prints of Peter Gordon that I have located in public and private collections in the United States and abroad. It does not include prints that have appeared at auction, or which are otherwise in the “shadow archive” of private collections.⁴⁹¹ All of the photographs catalogued below are *cartes de visite*, except for one object in the collection of the Massachusetts Historical Society, which has been removed from its original backing and pasted directly into a scrapbook.

The photographic prints in this appendix are organized by Silkenat’s versions A, B, and C and then by the repository in which the print is located (alphabetical by name of institution).⁴⁹² As outlined in chapter two, versions A and B both depict Gordon with short hair; however, in version A, the back of Gordon’s chair is visible on the right side of the photographic frame. Version C closely resembles the first two in pose and dress, however in version C Gordon has much longer hair, suggesting that the photograph was likely taken at a later date. In version C Gordon’s left hand is also twisted upward in a more stylized position that accentuates the muscles in his left arm.

As noted in chapter two, it is likely that William D. McPherson (1833–1867) and A.J. Oliver (dates unknown) made all three photographic negatives in 1863; these images were then copied and distributed by other photographic studios.

Photographer and Publisher (If known)	Repository	Description of mount, including inscriptions
Version A – Short hair, with chair visible		
McPherson & Oliver (Active in New Orleans and Baton Rouge, LA, c. 1862–	International Center of Photography, New York, NY, Accession no. 183.2003	Border: recto, printed: Black or brown double band. No visible markings.

⁴⁹¹ Sekula, “The Body and the Archive.”

⁴⁹² Silkenat, “A Typical Negro.”

1865)		
McPherson & Oliver (Active in New Orleans and Baton Rouge, LA, c. 1862–1865)	National Archives and Records Administration, Records of the War Department General and Special Staffs, Record Group (RG) 165, Photographs from the Joseph H. Taylor Album, ca. 1861–ca. 1865, College Park, MD	Inscription: verso, at top, printed on separate paper adhered to cardstock: BATON ROUGE, La., April 2, 1863. / Ten days from to-day I left the plantation. Over-/seer ARTAYOU CARRIER whipped me. My master was / not present. I don't remember the whipping. I was / two months in bed sore from the whipping and my / senses began to come—I was sort of crazy. I tried to / shoot everybody. They said so, I did not know. I did / not know that I had attempted to shoot every one ; / they told me so. I burned up all my clothes ; but I / don't remember that. I never was this way (crazy) / before. I don't know what make me come that way / (crazy). My master come after I was whipped ; saw / me in bed ; he discharged the overseer. They told me / I attempted to shoot my wife the first one ; I did not / shoot any one; I did not harm any one. My master's / Capt. JOHN LYON, cotton planter, on Atchafalya [sic], near / Washington, La. Whipped two months before Christ-/mas. / The very words of poor PETER, taken as he sat for / his picture.
McPherson & Oliver (Active in New Orleans and Baton Rouge, LA, c. 1862–1865)	Private Collection, England	Border: recto, printed: Undulating blue rickrack. Stamp: verso, center: Photographed by / McPherson & Oliver, / Baton Rouge, La.
McPherson & Oliver (Active in New Orleans and Baton Rouge, LA, c. 1862–1865); A.I. Blauvelt (Active in Port	San Francisco Museum of Modern Art, Photography Department, San Francisco, CA, Accession no. 2016.511	Border: recto, printed: Blue double band. Inscription: verso, at top, printed on separate paper adhered to cardstock: BATON ROUGE, La., April 2, 1863. / Ten days from to-day I left the plantation. Over-/seer ARTAYOU CARRIER whipped me. My master was / not present. I don't remember

<p>Hudson and New Orleans, LA, c. 1864–1865)</p>		<p>the whipping. I was / two months in bed sore from the whipping and my / senses began to come—I was sort of crazy. I tried to / shoot everybody. They said so, I did not know. I did / not know that I had attempted to shoot every one ; / they told me so. I burned up all my clothes ; but I / don't remember that. I never was this way (crazy) / before. I don't know what make me come that way / (crazy). My master come after I was whipped ; saw / me in bed ; he discharged the overseer. They told me / I attempted to shoot my wife the first one ; I did not / shoot any one; I did not harm any one. My master's / Capt. JOHN LYON, cotton planter, on Atchafalya [sic], near / Washington, La. Whipped two months before Christ-/mas. / The very words of poor PETER, taken as he sat for / his picture.</p> <p>Stamp: verso, center: A.I. BLAUVELT, / Photographer, / Port Hudson, La.</p>
Version B – Short hair, no chair		
<p>McPherson & Oliver (Active in New Orleans and Baton Rouge, LA, c. 1862–1865)</p>	<p>Library of Congress, Prints and Photographs Division, Washington, D.C., Call no. LOT 14043-2, no. 606 [P&P]</p>	<p>Inscription: verso, at top, printed: FROM LIFE, Taken at Baton Rouge, La. April 2^d 1863; below, printed reproduction of handwriting: Camp Parapet, La. / August 4th 1863. / Colonel. / I have found a large number / of the four hundred contrabands examined / by me to be as badly lacerated as the specimen / represented in the enclosed photograph. / Very respectfully / yours / J.W. Mercer / Asst. Surgeon 47th M.V.; bottom left, printed: FacSimile / of Original Official Report / to Col. L.B. Marsh.</p>
<p>McPherson & Oliver (Active in New Orleans and Baton Rouge, LA, c. 1862–1865)</p>	<p>McFarland Collection, Los Angeles, CA</p>	<p>Unknown</p>

<p>McPherson & Oliver (Active in New Orleans and Baton Rouge, LA, c. 1862–1865)</p>	<p>Metropolitan Museum of Art, Department of Photographs, New York, NY, Accession no. 2019.522</p>	<p>Inscription: verso, at top, printed: FROM LIFE, Taken at Baton Rouge, La. April 2^d 1863; below, printed reproduction of handwriting: Camp Parapet, La. / August 4th 1863. / Colonel. / I have found a large number / of the four hundred contrabands examined / by me to be as badly lacerated as the specimen / represented in the enclosed photograph. / Very respectfully / yours / J.W. Mercer / Asst. Surgeon 47th M.V.; bottom left, printed: FacSimile / of Original Official Report / to Col. L.B. Marsh.</p>
<p>McPherson & Oliver (Active in New Orleans and Baton Rouge, LA, c. 1862–1865)</p>	<p>National Library of Scotland, Collection of journals and sketchbooks of John Francis Campbell, kept during his travels throughout the world, 1841–1880 (Adv.MSS.50.3.14-50.5.6), Edinburgh, Scotland</p>	<p>Inscription: verso, at top, printed: FROM LIFE, Taken at Baton Rouge, La. April 2^d 1863; below, printed reproduction of handwriting: Camp Parapet, La. / August 4th 1863. / Colonel. / I have found a large number / of the four hundred contrabands examined / by me to be as badly lacerated as the specimen / represented in the enclosed photograph. / Very respectfully / yours / J.W. Mercer / Asst. Surgeon 47th M.V.; bottom left, printed: FacSimile / of Original Official Report / to Col. L.B. Marsh.</p> <p>Handwritten note attached to the record: “Bought at Boston / Election time / 1864.”</p>
<p>McPherson & Oliver (Active in New Orleans and Baton Rouge, LA, c. 1862–1865)</p>	<p>National Museum of African American History and Culture, Smithsonian Institution, Washington, D.C., Object no. 2011.155.54</p>	<p>Inscription: verso, at top, printed: FROM LIFE, Taken at Baton Rouge, La. April 2^d 1863; below, printed reproduction of handwriting: Camp Parapet, La. / August 4th 1863. / Colonel. / I have found a large number / of the four hundred contrabands examined / by me to be as badly lacerated as the specimen / represented in the enclosed photograph. / Very respectfully / yours / J.W. Mercer / Asst. Surgeon 47th M.V.; bottom left, printed: FacSimile / of Original Official Report / to Col. L.B. Marsh.</p>
<p>Version C – Long hair, bent wrist</p>		

<p>McPherson & Oliver (Active in New Orleans and Baton Rouge, LA, c. 1862–1865); Chandler Seaver, Jr. (Active in Boston, MA 1856–1867)</p>	<p>Harvard Art Museums, European and American Art Division, Cambridge, MA, Object no. 2010.81</p>	<p>Inscription: verso, center, printed: “THE PECULIAR INSTITUTION” / ILLUSTRATED. / [Manicule] Copy of a photograph taken from life / at Baton Rouge, La. Ap. 2, '63 ; the lacerated / body— months after the brutal flogging had / been inflicted—having healed in the man-/ner represented. The alleged offence was a / trifling one. / How noble and benignant the / countenance of the victim!</p> <p>Stamp: verso, bottom: C. SEAVER, Jun., PHOTOGRAPHER, / 27, Tremont Row, Boston.</p>
<p>McPherson & Oliver (Active in New Orleans and Baton Rouge, LA, c. 1862–1865); McAllister & Brother, Philadelphia, PA (Active in Philadelphia, 1853–1865)</p>	<p>Haverford College, Quaker & Special Collections, Allinson Family Papers, 1710-1939 (HC.MC.968), Haverford, PA</p>	<p>Inscription: verso, bottom, upside down, in pencil: The Scourged Back / Whipped at Baton Rouge / October 1862 / Photographed from life / April 2d 1863</p> <p>Stamp: verso, center: <i>Established 1796.</i> / McALLISTER & BROTHER, / Opticians, / 728 Chestnut Street, Philadelphia. / Card Photographs, Photograph Albums, Field / Glasses, for Army and Navy use, Stereoscopes / and Stereoscopic Views, Thermometers, / Microscopes, &c.</p>
<p>McPherson & Oliver (Active in New Orleans and Baton Rouge, LA, c. 1862–1865)</p>	<p>High Museum of Art, Photography Department, Atlanta, GA, Accession no. 2021.248</p>	<p>No visible markings.</p>
<p>McPherson & Oliver (Active in New Orleans and Baton Rouge, LA, c. 1862–1865); McAllister & Brother,</p>	<p>Library Company of Philadelphia, Print Department, Philadelphia, PA, Accession no. 5786.F.157c</p>	<p>No visible markings.</p>

Philadelphia, PA (Active in Philadelphia, 1853–1865)		
McPherson & Oliver (Active in New Orleans and Baton Rouge, LA, c. 1862–1865); Chandler Seaver, Jr. (Active in Boston, MA 1856–1867)	Library Company of Philadelphia, Print Department, Philadelphia, PA, Accession no. P.8925.4	Inscription: verso, bottom, in pencil (likely not period): “Gordon” / by C. Seaver, Jr. / 1863
McPherson & Oliver (Active in New Orleans and Baton Rouge, LA, c. 1862–1865); Frederick, Jones, London, England	Library of Congress, Manuscripts Division, Henry Ward Beecher Papers, 1836–1886, Washington, D.C.	Inscription: recto, bottom, printed: Fred ^c . Jones. Photo: Copyright. Inscription: verso, centered, printed: THE “PECULIAR INSTITUTION” ILLUSTRATED. / “We have seen a Photographic likeness of a / Louisiana slave’s back taken five or six months / after a terrible scourging, and exhibiting from the / shoulders to the waist great welts and furrows / raised or gouged by the lash, running crosswise / and lengthwise. The victim himself presenting a / noble countenance and fine physique.” — <i>New York / Anti-Slavery Standard.</i> / “This Card Photograph should be multiplied by / the 100,000, and scattered over the States. It tells the story in a way that even Mrs. Stowe / cannot approach, because it tells the story to the eye.” — / <i>New York Independent.</i> “A remarkable Photograph. We think a good / distribution of it in our own country could do / no harm.” — <i>British and Foreign Anti-Slavery / Reporter.</i> “This remarkable Photograph has been pub- / lished in England by Mr. Fredc. Jones, Photo- / grapher, 146, Oxford Street.” — <i>Morning Star.</i>

<p>McPherson & Oliver (Active in New Orleans and Baton Rouge, LA, c. 1862–1865); Chandler Seaver, Jr. (Active in Boston, MA 1856–1867)</p>	<p>Massachusetts Historical Society, Dall-Healey Family Photographs, Boston, MA, Photo. 69.202</p>	<p>Inscription: recto of album page, below photograph, handwritten in blue ink: Result of a flogging</p> <p>Inscription: verso, center, printed: “THE PECULIAR INSTITUTION” / ILLUSTRATED. / [Manicule] Copy of a photograph taken from life / at Baton Rouge, La. Ap. 2, '63; the lacerated / body—months after the brutal flogging had / been inflicted—having healed in the man-ner represented. The alleged offence was a / trifling one. / How noble and benignant the / countenance of the victim!</p> <p>Stamp: verso, bottom: C. SEAVER, Jun., PHOTOGRAPHER, / 27, Tremont Row, Boston.</p>
<p>McPherson & Oliver (Active in New Orleans and Baton Rouge, LA, c. 1862–1865); Chandler Seaver, Jr. (Active in Boston, MA 1856–1867)</p>	<p>Massachusetts Historical Society, Nathaniel Bowditch Memorial Collection, 1851–1886 (Ms. N-1900), Boston, MA</p>	<p>Albumen paper print has been removed from card stock and pasted directly to scrapbook album page.</p> <p>Inscription: recto, bottom, handwritten in black ink: The “Stripes” - / Thank God such backs / can never hereafter exist / under American Law. - / And how infamous appears the / American Constitution <u>as it was</u> / for under it such backs were / possible.</p>
<p>McPherson & Oliver (Active in New Orleans and Baton Rouge, LA, c. 1862–1865)</p>	<p>Museum of Fine Arts, Photography Department, Houston, TX, Object no. 2021.66</p>	<p>Border: recto, printed: Black double band.</p> <p>Inscription: recto, bottom, printed: Copy of a Photograph taken from life at Baton / Rouge, La., April 2nd, 1863.</p>
<p>McPherson & Oliver (Active in New Orleans and Baton Rouge, LA, c. 1862–</p>	<p>National Gallery of Art, Department of Photographs, Washington, D.C., Accession no.</p>	<p>Border: recto, printed: Red double band.</p> <p>Inscription: verso, center, printed: “THE PECULIAR INSTITUTION” / ILLUSTRATED. / [Manicule] Copy of a</p>

<p>1865); Chandler Seaver, Jr. (Active in Boston, MA 1856–1867)</p>	<p>2018.95.2</p>	<p>photograph taken from life / at Baton Rouge, La. Ap. 2. '63 ; the lacerated / body—months after the brutal flogging had / been inflicted—having healed in the man-/ner represented. The alleged offence was a / trifling one. How noble and benignant the / countenance of the victim!</p> <p>Stamp: verso, bottom: C. SEAVER, Jun., PHOTOGRAPHER, / 27, Tremont Row, Boston.</p>
<p>McPherson & Oliver (Active in New Orleans and Baton Rouge, LA, c. 1862–1865); Mathew Brady (Active in New York and Washington, D.C., 1844–1894)</p>	<p>National Portrait Gallery, Smithsonian Institution, Washington, D.C., Object no. NPG.2002.89</p>	<p>Border: recto, printed: Brown or red double band.</p> <p>Stamp: recto, bottom left: Brady; bottom right: Washington</p> <p>Stamp: verso, printed: Brady's/ National Photographic Portrait Galleries; / Broadway & Tenth Street, / New York, / & / No. 352 Pennsylvania Av. Washington D.C.</p>
<p>McPherson & Oliver (Active in New Orleans and Baton Rouge, LA, c. 1862–1865); McAllister & Brother, Philadelphia, PA (Active in Philadelphia, 1853–1865)</p>	<p>Ross J. Kelbaugh Collection, Woodstock, MD</p>	<p>Inscription: verso, center, printed: “THE SCOURGED BACK.” / <i>Extract from a letter from S.K. Towle, Surgeon 30th / Regiment Massachusetts Volunteers, addressed to W.J. / Dale, Surgeon-General of the State of Massachusetts, / dated Baton Rouge, Louisiana, April 16, 1863.</i> / “I enclose a picture taken by an artist here, from / life, of a Negro’s back, exhibiting the scars from an old / whipping. Few sensation writers ever depicted worse / punishments than this man must have received, though / nothing in his appearance indicates any unusual vi-/ciousness—but on the country, he seems INTELLIGENT / AND WELL-BEHAVED.”</p> <p>Stamp: below: McALLISTER & BROTHERS, Opticians, / 728 Chestnut</p>

		Street, Philada.
McPherson & Oliver (Active in New Orleans and Baton Rouge, LA, c. 1862–1865); Chandler Seaver, Jr. (Active in Boston, MA 1856–1867)	Schomburg Center for Research in Black Culture, Photographs and Prints Division, The New York Public Library, New York, NY	Inscription: verso, center, printed: [Manicule] Extract from a letter enclosing the / original of this picture, dated Baton Rouge, / La., April 16, 1863 :—“ I enclose a photo-/graphic picture of a slave’s back, exhibiting / the scars of an old whipping. It was taken / from life by an artist here. Nothing in the negro’s appearance indicates unusual vi-/ciousness ; on the contrary, he seems intel-/ligent and well-behaved.” Stamp: verso, bottom: C. SEAVER, Jun., PHOTOGRAPHER, / 27, Tremont Row, Boston.
McPherson & Oliver (Active in New Orleans and Baton Rouge, LA, c. 1862–1865); Chandler Seaver, Jr. (Active in Boston, MA 1856–1867)	University of Maryland Baltimore County, Special Collections, Rooks, Collection, Baltimore, MD, Accession no. 76-13-002	Border: recto, printed: Red double band. Inscription: verso, center, printed: “THE PECULIAR INSTITUTION” / ILLUSTRATED. / [Manicule] Copy of a photograph taken from life / at Baton Rouge, La. Ap. 2. ’63 ; the lacerated / body—months after the brutal flogging had / been inflicted—having healed in the man-/ner represented. The alleged offence was a / trifling one. How noble and benignant the / countenance of the victim! Stamp: verso, bottom: C. SEAVER, Jun., PHOTOGRAPHER, / 27, Tremont Row, Boston.

Appendix B

PHOTOGRAPHS OF PRISONERS OF WAR TAKEN IN U.S. GENERAL HOSPITALS IN ANNAPOLIS, MARYLAND DURING THE AMERICAN CIVIL WAR

This appendix comprises the photographic prints of the Annapolis prisoner photographs that I have located in public and private collections within the United States. This does not include prints that have appeared at auction, or which are otherwise in the “shadow archive” of private collections.⁴⁹³

The photographic prints in this appendix are organized first by the subject of the photograph (alphabetical by surname) and then by the repository in which the print is located (alphabetical by name of institution). In the cases in which an institution has multiple photographs of the same subject, please see the description field for further identifying information.

As noted in chapter three, the photographer of the Annapolis prisoner photographs was most likely A.H. Messinger (dates unknown), who operated a studio on the campus of U.S. General Hospital, Division No. 1 in Annapolis in 1864 and 1865. Although there are no known surviving prints of the Annapolis prisoner photographs that include Messinger’s backstamp on the verso, I have chosen to list Messinger as the photographer of these images.

Photographer and Publisher (If known)	Date	Repository	Description of image and markings and inscriptions on mount
Beedle, Francis M., Private, Co. M, 8th Michigan Calvary (1845/1846–1864)			
A.H. Messinger (Active in Annapolis 1864–1865)	1864	Edward G. Miner Library, William Smith Ely Collection, Rochester, NY	Image: Postmortem photograph of an emaciated prisoner of war placed atop a cloth-covered pedestal with his left hand positioned to cover his genitals. This image is out of focus. Border: recto, printed: brown double band. Inscription: verso, middle, printed: U.S.

⁴⁹³ Sekula, “The Body and the Archive.”

			General Hospital, Div. No. 1, / ANNAPOLIS, MD. / Private Francis W. Beedle, Co. M, 8 th Mich. Cav. / <i>Admitted per Steamer New York from Richmond, Va., May 2, 1864. Died May / 3, 1864, from effects of ill treatment / while in the hands of the enemy.</i>
Bowker, Isaiah G., Private, Co. B., 9th Maine Volunteers (d. 1864)			
A.H. Messinger (Active in Annapolis 1864–1865)	1864	Edward G. Miner Library, William Smith Ely Collection, Rochester, NY	Image: Photograph of the back of an emaciated prisoner of war, surrounded by three men. Two men (likely doctors) lift the subject partially out of a bed, exposing his back. The man to the left holds the subject by his waist, while the man to the right holds his head and right shoulder. The face of a third man is visible in the right background of the photograph observing the scene. Border: recto, printed: brown double band. Inscription: verso, center, printed: U.S. General Hospital, Div. No. 1 / ANNAPOLIS, MD. / Private Isaiah G. Bowker, Co. B, 9 th Me. Vols., / <i>Admitted per Steamer New York from Richmond, Va., March 9, 1864. Died May / 16, 1864, from effects of ill treatment / while in the hands of the enemy.</i>
A.H. Messinger (Active in Annapolis 1864–1865)	1864	Edward G. Miner Library, William Smith Ely Collection, Rochester, NY	Image: Photograph of emaciated prisoner of war lying in bed, facing forward. Two men (likely doctors) sit on the left and right sides of the bed, while a third man stands at the head of the bed in the left background of the photograph. The two seated men appear to support the bed or a pillow in order to tilt the subject's upper body forward. All three men look at the subject. Border: recto, printed: brown double band. Inscription: verso, center, printed: U.S.

			General Hospital, Div. No. 1, / ANNAPOLIS, MD. / Private Isaiah G. Bowker, Co. B, 9 th Me. Vols., / <i>Admitted per Steamer New York from Richmond, Va., March 9, 1864. Died May / 16, 1864, from effects of ill treatment / while in the hands of the enemy.</i>
A.H. Messinger (Active in Annapolis 1864–1865)	1864	George Eastman Museum Library, Rochester, NY ⁴⁹⁴	Image: Photograph of emaciated prisoner of war lying in bed, facing forward. Two men (likely doctors) are positioned to the left and right sides of the bed, while a third man stands at the head of the bed in the left background of the image. The two men on either side of the bed appear to support the bed or a pillow in order to tilt the subject's upper body forward. The man on the left is seated, while the man on the right stands and leans over the subject. The third man at the head of the bed extends his arm out toward the bed. All three men look at the subject. A chair is visible in the far lefthand passage of the image behind the man on the left. No visible markings.
A.H. Messinger (Active in Annapolis 1864–1865)	1864	The J. Paul Getty Museum, Department of Photographs, Los Angeles, CA, Object no.	Image: Photograph of emaciated prisoner of war lying in bed, facing forward. Two men (likely doctors) are positioned to the left and right sides of the bed, while a third man stands at the head of the bed in the left background of the image. The two men on

⁴⁹⁴ This print appears pasted inside a copy of the United States Sanitary Commission, *Narrative of Privations and Sufferings of United States Officers and Soldiers While Prisoners of War in the Hands of Rebel Authorities; Being the Report of a Commission of Inquiry, Appointed by the United States Sanitary Commission; With an Appendix Containing the Testimony* (Philadelphia: King & Baird, 1864).

		84.XB.937.10 495	<p>either side of the bed appear to support the bed or a pillow in order to tilt the subject's upper body forward. The man on the left is seated, while the man on the right stands and leans over the subject. The third man at the head of the bed extends his arm out toward the bed. All three men look at the subject. A chair is visible in the far lefthand passage of the image behind the man on the left.</p> <p>No visible markings.</p>
A.H. Messinger (Active in Annapolis 1864–1865)	1864	Library Company of Philadelphia, Print Department, Philadelphia, PA, Object no. 5786.F.157a	<p>Image: Photograph of the back of an emaciated prisoner of war, surrounded by three men. Two men (likely doctors) lift the subject partially out of a bed, exposing his back. The man to the left holds the subject by his waist, while the man to the right holds his head and right shoulder. The face of a third man is visible in the right background of the photograph observing the scene.</p> <p>Stamp: recto, bottom, printed: ILLUSTRATIONS OF CHIVALRY. / UNION PRISONER, / Photographed four days after Parole.</p>
A.H. Messinger (Active in Annapolis 1864–1865)	1864	Library of Congress, Prints & Photographs Division, Washington, D.C., Call no. LOT 4181, no. 2 [P&P]	<p>Image: Photograph of the back of an emaciated prisoner of war, surrounded by three men. Two men (likely doctors) lift the subject partially out of a bed, exposing his back. The man to the left holds the subject by his waist, while the man to the right holds his head and right shoulder. The face of a third man is visible in the right background of the photograph observing the scene.</p> <p>No visible markings.</p>

⁴⁹⁵ United States Sanitary Commission, *Narrative of Privations and Sufferings of United States Officers and Soldiers*.

<p>A.H. Messinger (Active in Annapolis 1864–1865)</p>	<p>1864</p>	<p>Massachusetts Historical Society, Boston, MA, Call no. Photo. 3.361</p>	<p>Image: Photograph of the back of an emaciated prisoner of war, surrounded by three men. Two men (likely doctors) lift the subject partially out of a bed, exposing his back. The man to the left holds the subject by his waist, while the man to the right holds his head and right shoulder. The face of a third man is visible in the right background of the photograph observing the scene.</p> <p>Border: recto, printed: brown double band.</p> <p>Inscription: verso, center, printed: U.S. General Hospital, Div. No. 1, / ANNAPOLIS, MD. / Private Isaiah G. Bowker, Co. B, 9th Me. Vols. / Admitted per Steamer New York from Rich- / mond, Va., March 9, 1864. Died May / 16, 1864, from effects of ill treatment / while in the hands of the enemy.</p>
<p>A.H. Messinger (Active in Annapolis 1864–1865)</p>	<p>1864</p>	<p>Massachusetts Historical Society, Boston, MA, Call no. Photo. 3.362</p>	<p>Image: Sideview photograph of an emaciated prisoner of war lying on an examination table, with the subject's head on the left side of the image and his feet on the right side. The prisoner's head is elevated on a bolster, and his genitals are covered with a white cloth upon which his hands are positioned. A doctor stands behind the examination table facing forward and holds the prisoner's chin between his fingers. The doctor looks directly at the camera.</p> <p>Border: recto, printed: brown double band.</p> <p>Inscription: verso, center, printed: U.S. General Hospital, Div. No. 1, / ANNAPOLIS, MD. / Private Isaiah G. Bowker, Co. B, 9th Me. Vols. / Admitted per Steamer New York from Rich- / mond, Va., March 9, 1864. Died May / 16, 1864, from effects of ill treatment / while in the hands of</p>

			<i>the enemy.</i>
A.H. Messinger (Active in Annapolis 1864–1865)	1864	Massachusetts Historical Society, Boston, MA, Call no. Photo. 3.363	Image: Photograph of emaciated prisoner of war lying in bed, facing forward. Two men (likely doctors) are positioned to the left and right sides of the bed, while a third man stands at the head of the bed in the left background of the image. The two men on either side of the bed appear to support the bed or a pillow in order to tilt the subject's upper body forward. The man on the left is seated, while the man on the right stands and leans over the subject. The third man at the head of the bed extends his arm out toward the bed. All three men look at the subject. Border: recto, printed: brown double band. Inscription: verso, top, handwritten in pencil: U.S. Rebellion / Prisoners; below, handwritten in pencil: Mrs. H. Lamb / 2, 8, 1933
A.H. Messinger (Active in Annapolis 1864–1865)	1864	Metropolitan Museum of Art, Department of Photographs, New York, NY, Call no. N.A.2014.5 ⁴⁹⁶	Image: Photograph of emaciated prisoner of war lying in bed, facing forward. Two men (likely doctors) are positioned to the left and right sides of the bed, while a third man stands at the head of the bed in the left background of the image. The two men on either side of the bed appear to support the bed or a pillow in order to tilt the subject's upper body forward. The man on the left is seated, while the man on the right stands and leans over the subject. The third man at the head of the bed extends his arm out toward the bed. All three men look at the subject. A chair is visible in the far lefthand passage of the image behind the man on the left.

⁴⁹⁶ United States Sanitary Commission, *Narrative of Privations and Sufferings of United States Officers and Soldiers.*

			No visible markings.
A.H. Messinger (Active in Annapolis 1864–1865)	1864	Princeton University Library, Special Collections, Princeton, NJ ⁴⁹⁷	<p>Image: Photograph of emaciated prisoner of war lying in bed, facing forward. Two men (likely doctors) are positioned to the left and right sides of the bed, while a third man stands at the head of the bed in the left background of the image. The two men on either side of the bed appear to support the bed or a pillow in order to tilt the subject's upper body forward. The man on the left is seated, while the man on the right stands and leans over the subject. The third man at the head of the bed extends his arm out toward the bed. All three men look at the subject. A chair is visible in the far lefthand passage of the image behind the man on the left.</p> <p>No visible markings.</p>
A.H. Messinger (Active in Annapolis 1864–1865)	1864	The United States Army and Heritage Education Center, MOLLUS-Mass Civil War Photograph Collection Volume 77, Carlisle, PA	<p>Image: Photograph of the back of an emaciated prisoner of war, surrounded by three men. Two men (likely doctors) lift the subject partially out of a bed, exposing his back. The man to the left holds the subject by his waist, while the man to the right holds his head and right shoulder. The face of a third man is visible in the right background of the photograph observing the scene.</p> <p>Label: adjacent to photograph on album page, printed: U.S. General Hospital, Div. No. 1 / Annapolis, Md. / Private Isaiah G. Bowker, Co. B, 9th Maine / Vols., admitted per steamer "New York" from Richmond, Va., March 9, 1864. / Died May 16, 1864, from effects of</p>

⁴⁹⁷ United States Sanitary Commission, *Narrative of Privations and Sufferings of United States Officers and Soldiers*.

			ill treatment / while in the hands of the enemy.
A.H. Messinger (Active in Annapolis 1864–1865)	1864	The United States Army and Heritage Education Center, MOLLUS-Mass Civil War Photograph Collection Volume 77, Carlisle, PA	Image: Sideview photograph of an emaciated prisoner of war lying on an examination table, with the subject's head on the left side of the image and his feet on the right side. The prisoner's head is elevated on a bolster, and his genitals are covered with a white cloth upon which his hands are positioned. A doctor stands behind the examination table facing forward and holds the prisoner's chin between his fingers. The doctor looks directly at the camera. No visible markings.
Broshears, Jackson O., Private, Co. D, 65th Indiana Mounted Cavalry (1844–1864)			
(A.H. Messinger (Active in Annapolis 1864–1865)	1864	American Antiquarian Society, Graphic Arts Collection, Worcester, MA, Call no. Photos CDV 00368	Image: Frontal view photograph of emaciated prisoner of war seated atop some sort of pedestal, with no shirt. His right hand rests in his lap, while his left hand rests on the back of a chair. Leaning slightly backwards and to his left, he gazes over his shoulder and downward over the chair on the right side of the image. Inscription: recto, center, bottom, in pencil: Jackson O. Broshears; verso, centered, printed: Private Jackson O. Broshears, Co. D, 65 th / Indiana Mounted Infantry. / <i>Prisoner 3 months, 2 of which were passed on / Belle Island. Weighed in health, 185 lbs. / Weighs now, 108 ½. Has been in U.S. / Gen'l Hospital, Div. 1, Annapolis, / Md., since March 24, 1864, and / is now improving very fast.</i> Inscription: verso, bottom, in pencil: Presented by / Alonzo Kindy 2d Vermont Inf. / June 25. 1866. / In hospital at Annapolis Md. at time / photo was taken [illegible].
A.H.	1864	George	Image: Photograph of an emaciated prisoner

Messinger (Active in Annapolis 1864–1865)		Eastman Museum Library, Rochester, NY ⁴⁹⁸	of war seated backwards upon a chair, with no shirt. With his chair turned sideways within the picture plane, the prisoner twists his body so that both his back and his profile are visible to the camera; meanwhile, he turns both his shoulders so that his hands rest on a pedestal behind him. The subject faces the left side of the image. No visible markings.
A.H. Messinger (Active in Annapolis 1864–1865)	1864	The J. Paul Getty Museum, Department of Photographs, Los Angeles, CA, Object no. 84.XB.937.10 ⁴⁹⁹	Image: Photograph of an emaciated prisoner of war seated backwards upon a chair, with no shirt. With his chair turned sideways within the picture plane, the prisoner twists his body so that both his back and his profile are visible to the camera; meanwhile, he turns both his shoulders so that his hands rest on a pedestal behind him. The subject faces the left side of the image. No visible markings.
A.H. Messinger (Active in Annapolis 1864–1865)	1864	Library of Congress, Prints & Photographs Division, Washington, D.C., Call no. LOT 14043-2, no. 18 [P&P]	Image: Photograph of an emaciated prisoner of war seated backwards upon a chair, with no shirt. With his chair turned sideways within the picture plane, the prisoner twists his body so that both his back and his profile are visible to the camera; meanwhile, he turns both his shoulders so that his hands rest on a pedestal behind him. The subject faces the left side of the image. Stamp: recto, bottom, printed: A RICHMOND PRISONER. / <i>Entered according to Act of Congress, in the year</i>

⁴⁹⁸ United States Sanitary Commission, *Narrative of Privations and Sufferings of United States Officers and Soldiers.*

⁴⁹⁹ Ibid.

			<p>1864, by / E. Wallace, in the Clerk's Office of the District Court of / the Eastern District of Pennsylvania.</p> <p>Inscription: verso, center, printed on paper adhered to card stock: U.S. General Hospital, Div. No. 1, / ANNAPOLIS, MD., / Private Jackson O. Broshears, Co. D, 65th / Indiana Mounted Infantry. Age 20 years ; / height 6 feet 1 inch ; weight when captured, / 185 lbs.; was in rebel hands three and one- / quarter months, 2 months of which were pas- / sed on Belle Isle. Under treatment in U.S. / Hospital 8 weeks— constantly improving— / now. May 19th, 1864, weights 108½ lbs.</p> <p>The <i>carte de visite</i> has small thread loops attached to the verso, perhaps for display in an album.</p>
A.H. Messinger (Active in Annapolis 1864–1865)	1864	Longfellow House— Washington's Headquarters National Historic Site, Charles Appleton Longfellow (1844–1893) Papers, 1842–1996, (LONG 27888), Carte-de-visite album of Civil War (LONG 27910) Cambridge, MA	<p>Image: Photograph of an emaciated prisoner of war seated backwards upon a chair, with no shirt. With his chair turned sideways within the picture plane, the prisoner twists his body so that both his back and his profile are visible to the camera; meanwhile, he turns both his shoulders so that his hands rest on a pedestal behind him. The subject faces the left side of the image.</p> <p>No visible markings.</p>
A.H. Messinger (Active in Annapolis	1864	Massachusetts Historical Society, Boston, MA,	Image: Frontal view photograph of emaciated prisoner of war seated atop some sort of pedestal, with no shirt. His right hand rests in his lap, while his left hand rests on the back of

1864–1865)		Call no. Photo. 3.360	<p>a chair. Leaning slightly backwards and to his left, he gazes over his shoulder and downward over the chair on the right side of the image.</p> <p>Stamp: recto, bottom, printed: A RICHMOND PRISONER. / <i>Entered according to Act of Congress, in the year 1864, by / E. Wallace, in the Clerk's Office of the District Court of / the Eastern District of Pennsylvania.</i></p> <p>Inscription: verso, center, printed on paper adhered to card stock: U.S. General Hospital, Div. No. 1, / ANNAPOLIS, MD., / Private Jackson O. Broshears, Co. D, 65th / Indiana Mounted Infantry. Age 20 years ; / height 6 feet 1 inch ; weight when captured, / 185 lbs.; was in rebel hands three and one- / quarter months, 2 months of which were pas- / sed on Belle Isle. Under treatment in U.S. / Hospital 8 weeks— constantly improving— / now. May 19th, 1864, weights 108½ lbs.</p>
A.H. Messinger (Active in Annapolis 1864–1865)	1864	Metropolitan Museum of Art, Department of Photographs, New York, NY, Accession no. 2019.529	<p>Image: Frontal view photograph of emaciated prisoner of war seated upon some sort of pedestal, with no shirt. His right hand rests in his lap, while his left hand rests on the back of a chair. Leaning slightly backwards and to his left, he gazes over his shoulder and downward over the chair on the right side of the image.</p> <p>Stamp: recto, bottom, printed: A RICHMOND PRISONER. / <i>Entered according to Act of Congress, in the year 1864, by / E. Wallace, in the Clerk's Office of the District Court of / the Eastern District of Pennsylvania.</i></p> <p>Inscription: verso, center, printed on paper adhered to card stock: U.S. General Hospital, Div. No. 1, / ANNAPOLIS, MD., / Private Jackson O. Broshears, Co. D, 65th / Indiana Mounted Infantry. Age 20 years ; / height 6</p>

			feet 1 inch ; weight when captured, / 185 lbs.; was in rebel hands three and one- / quarter months, 2 months of which were pas- / sed on Belle Isle. Under treatment in U.S. / Hospital 8 weeks— constantly improving— / now. May 19 th , 1864, weights 108½ lbs.
A.H. Messinger (Active in Annapolis 1864–1865)	1864	Metropolitan Museum of Art, Department of Photographs, New York, NY, Call no. N.A.2014.5 ⁵⁰⁰	Image: Photograph of an emaciated prisoner of war seated backwards upon a chair, with no shirt. With his chair turned sideways within the picture plane, the prisoner twists his body so that both his back and his profile are visible to the camera; meanwhile, he turns both his shoulders so that his hands rest on a pedestal behind him. The subject faces the left side of the image. No visible markings.
A.H. Messinger (Active in Annapolis 1864–1865)	1864	Princeton University Library, Special Collections, Princeton, NJ ⁵⁰¹	Image: Photograph of an emaciated prisoner of war seated backwards upon a chair, with no shirt. With his chair turned sideways within the picture plane, the prisoner twists his body so that both his back and his profile are visible to the camera; meanwhile, he turns both his shoulders so that his hands rest on a pedestal behind him. The subject faces the left side of the image. No visible markings.
A.H. Messinger (Active in Annapolis 1864–1865)	1864	The United States Army and Heritage Education Center,	Image: Frontal view photograph of emaciated prisoner of war seated upon some sort of pedestal, with no shirt. His right hand rests in his lap, while his left hand rests on the back of a chair. Leaning slightly backwards and to his

⁵⁰⁰ United States Sanitary Commission, *Narrative of Privations and Sufferings of United States Officers and Soldiers*.

⁵⁰¹ Ibid.

		MOLLUS-Mass Civil War Photograph Collection Volume 77, Carlisle, PA	left, he gazes over his shoulder and downward over the chair on the right side of the image. No visible markings.
Probably Hattel, Phillip, Private Co. I, 31st Pennsylvania Volunteers (d. 1865) ⁵⁰²			
Unknown photographer, possibly David Bachrach (Active in Annapolis, c. 1864)	c. 1865	Ken Turner Collection	Image: Photograph of an extremely emaciated prisoner of war positioned on a wooden chair, with a cloth covering his genitals. His right hand is placed on his leg and his left hand rests on the edge of the chair. The subject has a mustache. According to Ken Turner, inscription on verso in pen, “but not a period pen, but an early writing cursive”: “James R. Haun U.S. Genl. Hosp. Div. 3, Ann Md...Then much lower, almost at bottom, in same pen ‘married to Powell girl.’ Against that, sideways vertically, but in period brown pen, ‘Andersonville did this’.” ⁵⁰³
Unknown photographer, possibly David Bachrach (Active in	c. 1865	Library of Congress, Prints & Photographs Division,	Image: Photograph of an extremely emaciated prisoner of war positioned on a wooden chair, with a cloth covering his genitals. His right hand is placed on his leg and his left hand rests on the edge of the chair. The subject has

⁵⁰² As noted in the text of chapter three, the subject of this image is uncertain. According to an inscription located on the verso of the *carte de visite* in the collection of the Library of Congress, the photograph represents “Private Phillip Hattel” of Co. I, 31st Pennsylvania Volunteers, who died at St. John’s College Hospital in Annapolis on June 25, 1865. Military records at the National Archives confirm that there was a Private Phillip Hattel of Co. I, 31st Pennsylvania Volunteers that died in Annapolis on June 26, 1865. However, at the U.S. Army Heritage and Education Center, this figure is identified as “Oliver Fairbanks,” and an additional print of this subject has been identified as James R. Haun of the 103rd Pennsylvania Volunteers.

⁵⁰³ Correspondence between the author and Ken Turner, December 12, 2019.

Annapolis, c. 1864)		Washington, D.C., Call no. LOT 14043-2, no. 26 [P&P]	<p>a mustache.</p> <p>Inscription: verso, center, printed on separate paper adhered to card stock: ST. JOHN'S COLLEGE. / U.S. GENERAL HOSPITAL DIV. NO. 2. / ANNAPOLIS, MD. / [Decoration] Private PHILLIP HATTLE, Co. I, 31st Pa. / Vol's admitted from Flag of Truce Steamer / June 6th 1865, died June 25, 1865, caused / by ill treatment while a Prisoner of War in / the hands of the Rebels.</p> <p>The <i>carte de visite</i> has small thread loops attached to the verso, perhaps for display in an album.</p>
Unknown photographer, possibly David Bachrach (Active in Annapolis, c. 1864)	c. 1865	The United States Army and Heritage Education Center, MOLLUS-Mass Civil War Photograph Collection Volume 77, Carlisle, PA	<p>Image: Photograph of an extremely emaciated prisoner of war positioned on a wooden chair, with a cloth covering his genitals. His right hand is placed on his leg and his left hand rests on the edge of the chair. The subject has a mustache.</p> <p>No visible markings.</p>
Parham, L.H., Private, Co. B, 3rd West Tennessee Cavalry (d. 1864)			
A.H. Messinger (Active in Annapolis 1864–1865)	1864	Edward G. Miner Library, William Smith Ely Collection, Rochester, NY	<p>Image: Photograph of an emaciated prisoner of war lying back on a blanket-covered bed with an unknown black object covering his genitals. The photograph is taken at an odd angle, perhaps tilted over the bed. The prisoner's face is noticeably out of focus, as the photographer appears to have focused his lens on the center object.</p> <p>Inscription: verso, center, printed: U.S. General Hospital, Div. No. 1, / ANNAPOLIS, MD. / Private [indecipherable, loss in text] H. Parham, Co. B, 3d W. Tenn. Cav. / <i>Admitted per Steamer New York from</i></p>

			<i>Rich- / mond, Va., May 2, 1864. Died May / 11, 1864, from effects of ill treatment / while in the hands of the enemy.</i>
A.H. Messinger (Active in Annapolis 1864–1865)	1864	George Eastman Museum Library, Rochester, NY ⁵⁰⁴	Image: Photograph of an emaciated prisoner of war lying back on a blanket-covered bed with an unknown black object covering his genitals. The photograph is taken at an odd angle, perhaps tilted over the bed. The prisoner's face is noticeably out of focus, as the photographer appears to have focused his lens on the center object. No visible markings.
A.H. Messinger (Active in Annapolis 1864–1865)	1864	The J. Paul Getty Museum, Department of Photographs, Los Angeles, CA, Object no. 84.XB.937.10 ⁵⁰⁵	Image: Photograph of an emaciated prisoner of war lying back on a blanket-covered bed with an unknown black object covering his genitals. The photograph is taken at an odd angle, perhaps tilted over the bed. The prisoner's face is noticeably out of focus, as the photographer appears to have focused his lens on the center object. No visible markings.
A.H. Messinger (Active in Annapolis 1864–1865); Published by Wenderoth and Taylor (Active in Philadelphia,	1864	Library Company of Philadelphia, Print Department, Philadelphia, PA, Object no. 5786.F.157b	Image: Photograph of an emaciated prisoner of war lying back on a blanket-covered bed with a white cloth covering his genitals. The photograph is taken at an odd angle, perhaps tilted over the bed. Unlike other representations of the subject, his face is in focus. Inscription: Photograph has been floated off its mount and pasted on to a large piece of

⁵⁰⁴ United States Sanitary Commission, *Narrative of Privations and Sufferings of United States Officers and Soldiers*.

⁵⁰⁵ Ibid.

1860s)		<p>card stock alongside a photograph of another prisoner of war. Between the two photographs appears the verso of a <i>carte de visite</i>, now removed, with an inscription: centered, printed: THIS PHOTOGRAPH / Was taken at Annapolis, of one of those Patriots / thus described by Miss Dix. / “I had just got to the wharf, when our Flag-of- / Truce boat, the City of New York, came in, and soon the / poor fellows began to land, four hundred and fifty of them / from Belle Isle. Such a sight! It was a regiment of skele- / tons! Most of them had to be carried off on stretchers. / Several died on the boat as the were lifted up. Nine died / on the wharf lispng their gratitude to God, that after all / their privations, they were permitted to die under the old / flag! A majority were so weak that they could scarcely / speak, and in a hundred the brain seemed to be implicated. / First, as near as we could learn from the few who could tell / the story, they had been starved—systematically they / thought—only a meagre scrap of musty bacon being / brought to them, with water, so that they gradually lost / their strength, and became mere skin and bone.” / “Then they were left exposed in cold weather to freeze. / They were in such a condition of hunger at any time that / a man would give his blanket or his shoes for a bit of food, / so that they became almost deprived of clothing. / A major- / ity of them had their feet frozen more or less. Many had lost their feet, and several had to have their legs ampu- / tated after their arrival in Baltimore.” / “A majority of the poor fellows are maimed or invalided / for life; many of them are hopelessly insane, also. It / seems to have been the deliberate policy of the rebels to / return all our prisoners in such a condition that they can / never more be of service to us.” ROCHESTER DEMOCRAT. / Copied by / WENDEROTH & TAYLOR, / Nos. 912, 914 & 916 Chestnut Street,</p>
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			<p>Philadelphia.</p> <p>Above and below the photographs appears the title, printed: ILLUSTRATIONS OF CHIVALRY / PAROLED UNION PRISONERS</p>
A.H. Messinger (Active in Annapolis 1864–1865)	1864	<p>Longfellow House—Washington's Headquarters National Historic Site, Charles Appleton Longfellow (1844–1893) Papers, 1842–1996, (LONG 27888), Carte-de-visite album of Civil War (LONG 27910) Cambridge, MA</p>	<p>Image: Photograph of an emaciated prisoner of war lying back on a blanket-covered bed with an unknown black object covering his genitals. The photograph is taken at an odd angle, perhaps tilted over the bed. The prisoner's face is noticeably out of focus, as the photographer appears to have focused his lens on the center object.</p> <p>No visible markings.</p>
A.H. Messinger (Active in Annapolis 1864–1865)	1864	<p>Metropolitan Museum of Art, Department of Photographs, New York, NY, Call no. N.A.2014.5⁵⁰⁶</p>	<p>Image: Photograph of an emaciated prisoner of war lying back on a blanket-covered bed with an unknown black object covering his genitals. The photograph is taken at an odd angle, perhaps tilted over the bed. The prisoner's face is noticeably out of focus, as the photographer appears to have focused his lens on the center object.</p> <p>No visible markings.</p>

⁵⁰⁶ United States Sanitary Commission, *Narrative of Privations and Sufferings of United States Officers and Soldiers*.

A.H. Messinger (Active in Annapolis 1864–1865)	1864	Princeton University Library, Special Collections, Princeton, NJ ⁵⁰⁷	Image: Photograph of an emaciated prisoner of war lying back on a blanket-covered bed with an unknown black object covering his genitals. The photograph is taken at an odd angle, perhaps tilted over the bed. The prisoner's face is noticeably out of focus, as the photographer appears to have focused his lens on the center object. No visible markings.
A.H. Messinger (Active in Annapolis 1864–1865); Published by Wenderoth and Taylor (Active in Philadelphia, 1860s)	1864	University of North Carolina, Southern Historical Collection, Penn School Papers (1862–2005), Chapel Hill, NC	Image: Photograph of an emaciated prisoner of war lying back on a blanket-covered bed with a white cloth covering his genitals. The photograph is taken at an odd angle, perhaps tilted over the bed. Unlike other representations of the subject, his face is in focus. Inscription: on separate card stock, adjacent to photograph [see above version of "Illustrations of Chivalry" from the Library Company of Philadelphia for full inscription]. Stamp: recto, top, printed: ILLUSTRATIONS OF CHIVALRY. / UNION PRISONER, / Photographed four days after Parole.
Rose, John Q., Private, Co. C, 8th Kentucky Volunteers (1845–1864)			
A.H. Messinger (Active in Annapolis 1864–1865)	1864	Edward G. Miner Library, William Smith Ely Collection, Rochester, NY	Image: Postmortem photograph of an emaciated prisoner of war positioned upon a cloth-covered pedestal. He is nude and his hands are covering genitals. One hand crosses over the other. His head is slightly titled downward to the right side of the image. Inscription: verso, handwritten in black ink: Private John Q Rose / Co. C 8 th Kentucky

⁵⁰⁷ United States Sanitary Commission, *Narrative of Privations and Sufferings of United States Officers and Soldiers*.

			<p>Vols / Admitted per Steamer / New York from Richmond / Va., May 2d 1864, / Died May 4th 1864 / from effects of treatment / while in the hands of the enemy.</p> <p>Stamp: verso, bottom: U.S. GENL HOSPITAL / DIV. No 1 / ANNAPOILS MD</p>
A.H. Messinger (Active in Annapolis 1864–1865)	1864	George Eastman Museum Library, Rochester, NY ⁵⁰⁸	<p>Image: Postmortem photograph of an emaciated prisoner of war positioned upon a cloth-covered pedestal. He is nude and his hands are covering genitals. One hand crosses over the other. His head is slightly titled downward to the right side of the image.</p> <p>No visible markings.</p>
A.H. Messinger (Active in Annapolis 1864–1865)	1864	The J. Paul Getty Museum, Department of Photographs, Los Angeles, CA, Object no. 84.XB.937.10 ⁵⁰⁹	<p>Image: Postmortem photograph of an emaciated prisoner of war positioned upon a cloth-covered pedestal. He is nude and his hands are covering genitals. One hand crosses over the other. His head is slightly titled downward to the right side of the image.</p> <p>No visible markings.</p>
A.H. Messinger (Active in Annapolis 1864–1865); Published by Wenderoth and Taylor (Active in	1864	Library Company of Philadelphia, Print Department, Philadelphia, PA, Object no. 5786.F.157b	<p>Image: Postmortem photograph of an emaciated prisoner of war positioned upon a cloth-covered pedestal. He is nude and a white cloth covers his genitals; his hands rest atop the white cloth. One hand crosses over the other. His head is slightly titled downward to the right side of the image.</p> <p>Inscription: on separate card stock, adjacent to</p>

⁵⁰⁸ United States Sanitary Commission, *Narrative of Privations and Sufferings of United States Officers and Soldiers*.

⁵⁰⁹ United States Sanitary Commission, *Narrative of Privations and Sufferings of United States Officers and Soldiers*.

Philadelphia, 1860s)			photograph [see above version of “Illustrations of Chivalry” from the Library Company of Philadelphia for full inscription].
A.H. Messinger (Active in Annapolis 1864–1865)	1864	Longfellow House—Washington's Headquarters National Historic Site, Charles Appleton Longfellow (1844–1893) Papers, 1842–1996, (LONG 27888), Carte-de-visite album of Civil War (LONG 27910) Cambridge, MA	Image: Postmortem photograph of an emaciated prisoner of war positioned upon a cloth-covered pedestal. He is nude and his hands are covering genitals. One hand crosses over the other. His head is slightly tilted downward to the right side of the photograph. No visible markings.
A.H. Messinger (Active in Annapolis 1864–1865)	1864	Metropolitan Museum of Art, Department of Photographs, New York, NY, Call no. N.A.2014.5 ⁵¹⁰	Image: Postmortem photograph of an emaciated prisoner of war positioned upon a cloth-covered pedestal. He is nude and his hands are covering genitals. One hand crosses over the other. His head is slightly tilted downward to the right side of the photograph. No visible markings.
A.H. Messinger (Active in Annapolis)	1864	Princeton University Library, Special Collections,	Image: Postmortem photograph of an emaciated prisoner of war positioned upon a cloth-covered pedestal. He is nude and his hands are covering genitals. One hand crosses

⁵¹⁰ United States Sanitary Commission, *Narrative of Privations and Sufferings of United States Officers and Soldiers*.

1864–1865)		Princeton, NJ ⁵¹¹	over the other. His head is slightly titled downward to the right side of the photograph. No visible markings.
A.H. Messinger (Active in Annapolis 1864–1865); Published by McAllister & Brother, Philadelphia, PA (Active in Philadelphia, 1853–1865)	1864	Ross J. Kelbaugh Collection, Woodstock, MD	Image: Postmortem photograph of an emaciated prisoner of war positioned upon a cloth-covered pedestal. He is nude and his hands are covering genitals. One hand crosses over the other. His head is slightly titled downward to the right side of the photograph. Stamp: verso, center, printed inside circular shape: Established 1796. / McALLISTER & BROTHER , / Opticians , / No. 728 Chestnut Street, Philadelphia. / Card Photographs, Photograph Albums, Field / Glasses, for Army and Navy use, Stereoscopes / and Stereoscopic Views, Thermometers, / Microscopes, &c.
A.H. Messinger (Active in Annapolis 1864–1865)	1864	The United States Army and Heritage Education Center, MOLLUS-Mass Civil War Photograph Collection Volume 77, Carlisle, PA	Image: Postmortem photograph of an emaciated prisoner of war positioned upon a cloth-covered pedestal. He is nude and a white cloth covers his genitals; his hands rest atop the white cloth. One hand crosses over the other. His head is slightly titled downward to the right side of the image. No visible markings.
Smith, William, Corporal, Co. D, 8th Kentucky Volunteers (dates unknown)			
A.H. Messinger (Active in Annapolis	1864	Library of Congress, Prints & Photographs	Image: Photograph of emaciated prisoner of war seated atop a pedestal that is covered with a dark cloth, in front of a dark background. In his right hand the prisoner appears to hold a

⁵¹¹ United States Sanitary Commission, *Narrative of Privations and Sufferings of United States Officers and Soldiers*.

1864–1865)		Division, Washington, D.C., Call no. LOT 4181, no. 2 [P&P]	white cloth, which he uses to cover his genitals; his left hand rests on the pedestal beside him. The prisoner tilts his head slightly backward and to the left. No visible markings.
A.H. Messinger (Active in Annapolis 1864–1865)	1864	The United States Army and Heritage Education Center, MOLLUS-Mass Civil War Photograph Collection Volume 77, Carlisle, PA	Image: Photograph of emaciated prisoner of war seated atop a pedestal that is covered with a dark cloth, in front of a dark background. In his right hand the prisoner appears to hold a white cloth, which he uses to cover his genitals; his left hand rests on the pedestal beside him. The prisoner tilts his head slightly backward and to the left. Label: adjacent to photograph on album page, printed: U.S. General Hospital, Div. No. 1 / Annapolis, Md., June 1, 1864 / Private William M. Smith, Co. D, 8 th / Ky. Vols., admitted May 2, 1864 from Richmond, Va., per steamer “New York.” / Still alive and prospect of recovery favorable.
Unidentified emaciated prisoner of war			
Unknown photographer	c. 1864	Library of Congress, Prints & Photographs Division, Washington, D.C., Call no. LOT 4181, no. 2 [P&P]	Image: Photograph of an emaciated prisoner of war seated atop a pedestal, with a white cloth covering his lap. A doctor stands beside the soldier, bearing the weight of the man’s chin with his hand. The subject’s left arm is wrapped behind the doctor’s head and shoulders. No visible markings.
Unidentified emaciated prisoner of war			
Unknown photographer	c. 1864	Library of Congress, Prints & Photographs Division, Washington, D.C., Call no.	Image: Photograph of an emaciated prisoner of war seated atop a pedestal, with a large leaf covering his genitals. No visible markings.

		LOT 4181, no. 2 [P&P]	
Unknown photographer	c. 1864	The United States Army and Heritage Education Center, MOLLUS-Mass Civil War Photograph Collection Volume 77, Carlisle, PA	<p>Image: Photograph of an emaciated prisoner of war seated atop a pedestal, with a large leaf covering his genitals.</p> <p>Stamp: pasted to album paper, below photograph: Photograph Gallery. / A.H. Messinger, / U.S. Gen. Hospital, Div. 1, / Annapolis, Md.</p>
Unidentified emaciated prisoner of war			
Unknown photographer	c. 1864	Nelson-Atkins Museum of Art, Kansas City, MO, Object no. 2005.27.3816	<p>Image: Photograph of an emaciated prisoner of war seated atop a pedestal, with a large white cloth draped across his lap and hanging down between his legs. Two men (likely doctors) stand on either side of the subject; the man to the left holds the subject's right shoulder and knee, while the man to the right touches the back of the subject's head and chin, presumably to place him in a photographer's head brace. The subject's left arm is wrapped behind the head and shoulders of the doctor on the right side of the image. The subject's feet rest on a wooden chair which faces to the right.</p> <p>Border: recto, printed: black double band.</p> <p>No visible markings.</p>