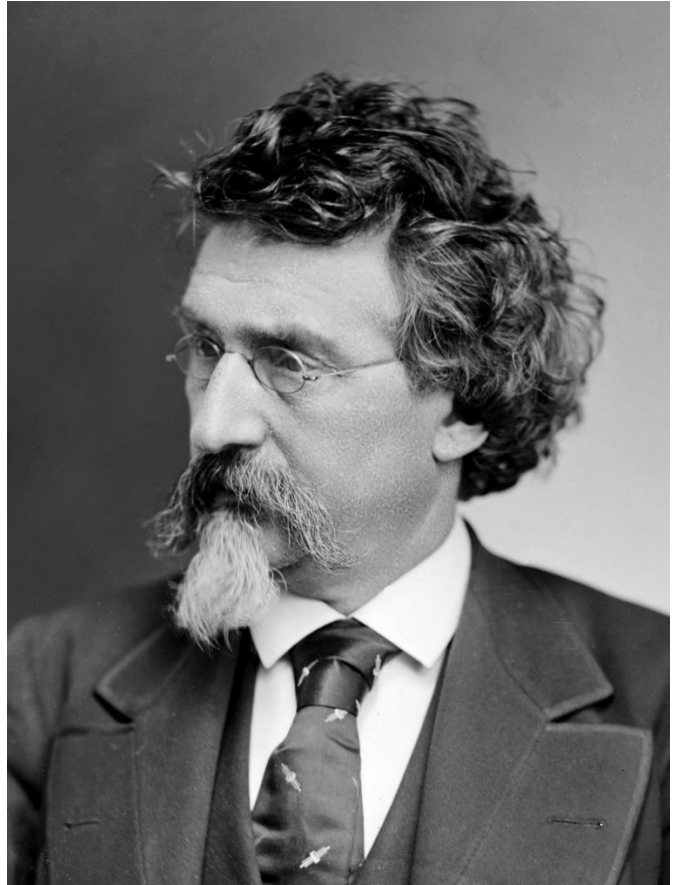


**#52 July 2020 Cameraderie
Matthew Brady (1822-1896)**



Mathew B. Brady was one of the earliest photographers in American history, best known for his scenes of the Civil War. He studied under inventor Samuel F. B. Morse, who pioneered the daguerreotype technique in America.

A biography of Mathew Brady by Robert Wilson was published in 2013: *Mathew Brady: Portraits of a Nation*.

Please have a look at his Wikipedia article here: https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Mathew_Brady

You can see many of Brady's images at the National Archive website, here.

<https://search.archives.gov/search/images?affiliate=national-archives&query=matthew+brady>

Several of the image have annotations attached identifying the individuals in the portraits—just mouse over the faces to see the identifications.

I found the Wikipedia article filled with interesting facts, so here are the ones that fascinated me:

In 1850, Brady produced [an album] *The Gallery of Illustrious Americans*, a portrait collection of prominent contemporary figures.

In 1856, Brady placed an ad in the New York Herald offering to produce "photographs, ambrotypes and daguerreotypes." This inventive ad pioneered, in the US, the use of typeface and fonts that were distinct from the text of the publication and from that of other advertisements.

His efforts to document the American Civil War on a grand scale; by bringing his photographic studio onto the battlefields earned Brady his place in history. Despite the dangers, financial risk, and discouragement by his friends, Brady was later quoted as saying "I had to go. A spirit in my feet said 'Go,' and I went." His first popular photographs of the conflict were at the First Battle of Bull Run, in which he got so close to the action that he barely avoided capture. While most of the time the battle had ceased before pictures were taken, Brady came under direct fire at the First Battle of Bull Run, Petersburg, and Fredericksburg.

He also employed ... [23 assistants], each of whom was given a traveling darkroom, to go out and photograph scenes from the Civil War. Brady generally stayed in Washington, D.C., organizing his assistants and rarely visited battlefields personally. ... Because so much of Brady's photography is missing information, it is difficult to know not only who took the picture, but also exactly when or where it was taken.

In October 1862 Brady opened an exhibition of photographs from the Battle of Antietam in his New York gallery, titled "The Dead of Antietam." Many images in this presentation were graphic photographs of corpses, a presentation new to America. This was the first time that many Americans saw the realities of war in photographs, as distinct from previous "artists' impressions".

At the end of the Civil War, the U.S. Government did not purchase Brady's archive of negatives, and many were lost over the years. The remaining images passed through many owners, and finally came into the hands of responsible collectors who assured Brady's place in photographic history. But the man himself went bankrupt and died in debt at a charity hospital.

Here are some of Brady's best-known images of the Civil War and the personalities of the time.

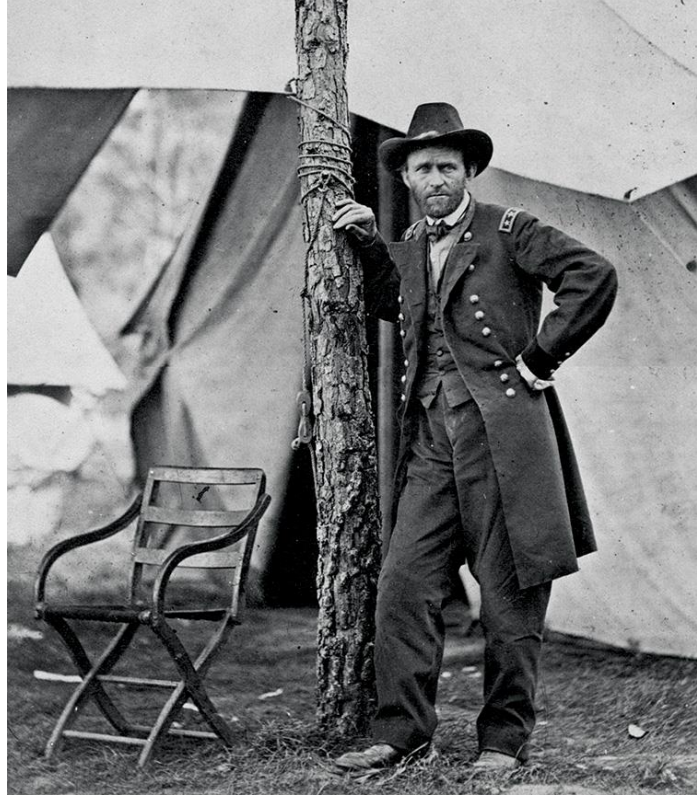
Typical field shots



Abraham Lincoln on the day of his Cooper Union speech



Ulysses S. Grant



Here is the original image of Grant, from the National Archives website, showing the typical condition of many of Brady's preserved images.

