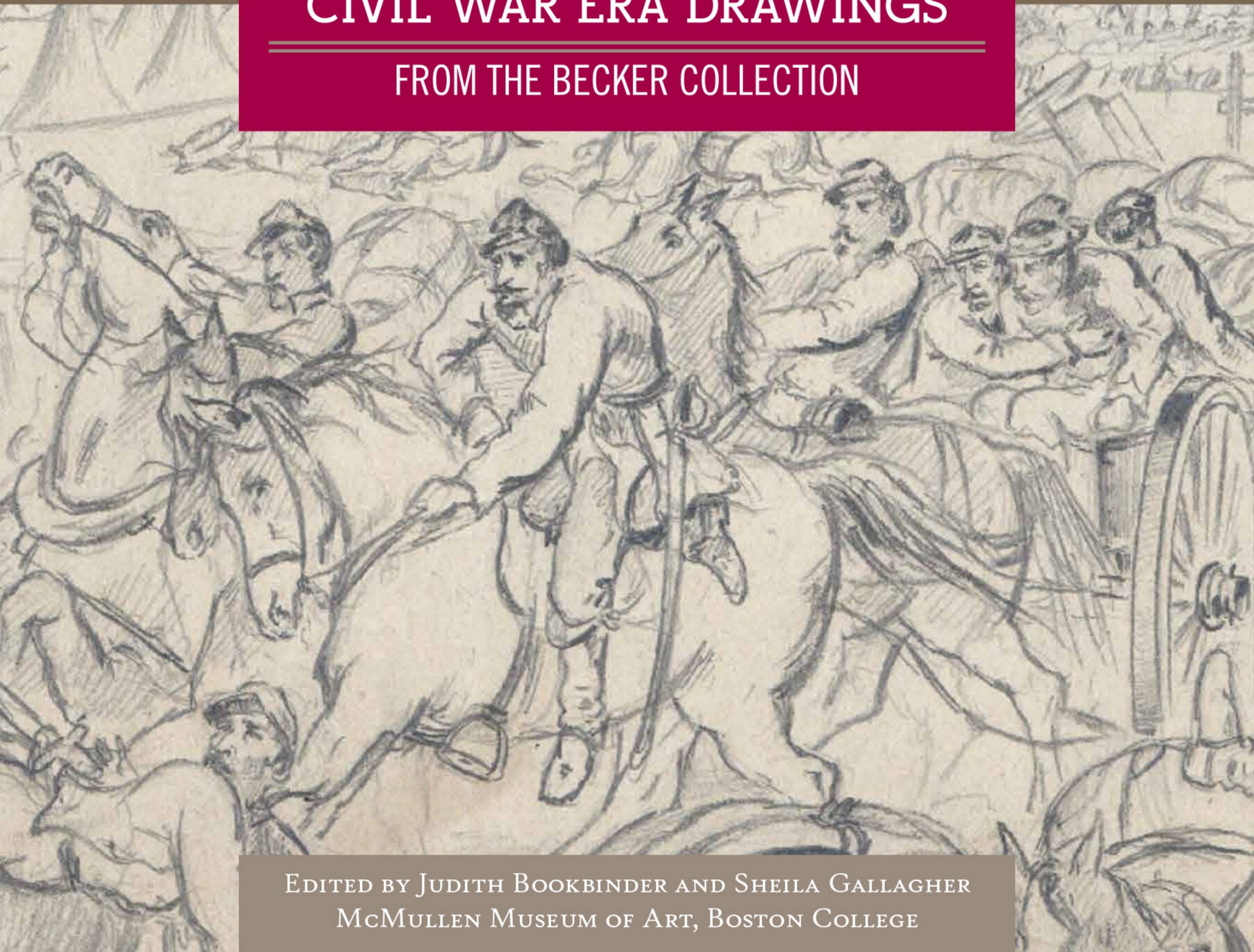
# First Hand
## Civil War Era Drawings
### From the Becker Collection



Edited by Judith Bookbinder and Sheila Gallagher
McMullen Museum of Art, Boston College

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This catalogue is published in conjunction with the exhibition *First Hand: Civil War Era Drawings from the Becker Collection*
organized by the McMullen Museum of Art, Boston College.

September 5–December 13, 2009

Selections from the exhibition will travel to
Saint-Gaudens National Historic Site, Cornish, N.H., 2010
Virginia Museum of Fine Arts, Richmond, Va., 2011

Curators: Judith Bookbinder and Sheila Gallagher

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# PREFACE

Nancy Netzer

**Since 2005, the McMullen Museum has been working to shape an exhibition with two members of Boston College's Fine Arts faculty, Judith Bookbinder and Sheila Gallagher, as they researched, catalogued, photographed, and designed an online archive for one of the most significant untapped resources on the American Civil War to have come to light in the last few decades—the Becker Collection.** Never displayed or published, the nearly seven hundred drawings in this collection constitute an archive of firsthand observations by fourteen artist-reporters, called Special Artists, embedded with the Union troops. The artists sent their drawings to *Frank Leslie's Illustrated Newspaper*, where Joseph Becker, himself a Special Artist, eventually became art director.

The planning of an exhibition and catalogue encouraged other scholars from various fields to study groups of drawings and write about them. The result of their efforts is this publication with contributions from artist Sheila Gallagher; art historians Judith Bookbinder, Harry Katz, and Natasha Seaman; historians Vincent Cannato, Robert Emlen, and James O'Toole; and literary scholars Lucia Knoles, Nirmal Trivedi, and James Wallace. As they steered this project from beginning to end, Bookbinder and Gallagher have been models of creativity, intelligence, and dedication. We thank them especially for overseeing selection of drawings for display and themes to be explored, facilitating communication among authors and peer-review of essays, and editing of this volume. We are grateful as well to Natalie Gallagher (great-granddaughter of Joseph Becker) for agreeing to loan the drawings to the exhibition. We also thank Timothy Wider, Robert Emlen, Jeremiah McGrann, the Boston Athenaeum, and the Burns Library at Boston College for loans of related artifacts, books, and photographs. Diana Larsen designed the exhibition and selected artifacts from various collections to enhance understanding of objects depicted in the drawings. Margaret Neeley (and before her Kirsten Ataoguz) oversaw the publication and copyedited the catalogue and exhibition texts. Undergraduate interns Lauren Gomez, Avia Navickas, and Elisabeth Lobkowicz served as able assistants. John McCoy designed this book as well as the exhibition materials and signage to pay tribute to the design of *Frank Leslie's Illustrated Newspaper*. Vincent Marasa selected works lent by the Boston Athenaeum. The drawings were artfully scanned for publication by Timothy McCool and Kristina Wilson. Bapst librarian, Adeane Bregman, aided with research. The O'Neill Library created the digital archive of the drawings, and the offices of instructional design and academic technology helped incorporate technology into the museum experience. Michael Swanson and Kerry Burke of Media Technology Services reproduced and mounted images from *Frank Leslie's Illustrated Newspaper* for display. We would be remiss not to acknowledge the contribution of Associate Dean William Petri in providing undergraduate research fellows Michael Bell, Jamie DiAngelo, Patton Hindle, Jan Ingalvson, Hillary Mazanec, Timothy McCool, Erin McCutcheon, Miriam Michalczyk,

Ariana von Rennan, Katherine Williamson, and Kristina Wilson the opportunity to serve as valued assistants on this project. We also thank Rosanne Pellegrini for publicity, Anastos Chiavaras, Rose Breen, and Jane Hall of our risk management office for assistance with insurance, and the members of our advancement office, especially Catherine Concannon, Mary Lou Crane, Ginger Saariaho, and Simon Welsby, for aiding our funding efforts.

The Museum's ability to realize an interdisciplinary research project of this magnitude owes much to the resources of the University and the generosity of the McMullen Family, especially Jacqueline McMullen. We extend thanks to the administration of Boston College, especially President William P. Leahy, S.J., Provost Cutberto Garza, Vice-provosts Kevin Bedell and Patricia DeLeeuw, and Dean of the College and Graduate School of Arts and Sciences David Quigley. Major funding for the exhibition and this catalogue came from Boston College and the Patrons of the McMullen Museum, chaired by C. Michael Daley. Additional support was provided by the Military Historical Society of Massachusetts and Tracy Shupp. Without the enthusiasm and dedication of everyone involved, this important archive and the firsthand story it tells might have remained hidden from the public for many more years.

Nancy Netzer
Director and Professor of Art History

# INTRODUCTION

Sheila Gallagher and Judith Bookbinder

**In 1900, Joseph Becker retired from his career, which had spanned four decades—first as an errand boy, then artist-reporter, and later art department director—at *Frank Leslie's Illustrated Newspaper* (*Leslie's*) and its related publications.** When he left the publisher's offices in New York City, he took with him nearly seven hundred original drawings, which he and other artist-reporters, often called Special Artists, had produced since the 1860s as source material for the illustrations that accompanied news stories *Leslie's* published. Some of the drawings that Becker chose to save had been used to create wood engravings, which were cast into metal plates then printed in the newspaper. Others were never published. The drawings he took—an archive of visual evidence of some of the most tumultuous events in American history—passed from the public to the private sphere and for a century laid all but forgotten among the possessions of Becker's heirs. Thanks to the generosity of Natalie Gallagher, the great-granddaughter of Joseph Becker and heir to his legacy, the public is now able to see these drawings for the first time.

In light of the war's sesquicentennial, the Civil War drawings in the Becker Collection give a new perspective on the dramatic events that divided and defined a nation. As is expected, the drawings record significant battles and leaders, but they also offer a new window into the social customs, cultural landscape, and built environment that existed in and around the war. Given the atrocities that were committed on both sides and the terrible human cost of a conflict that left more than six hundred twenty thousand Americans dead, it is easy to overlook the activities that defined the living. Many of the works of art in this exhibition tell the hidden histories of life during the war: the pacifist stance of the all but forgotten Dunkards, the wartime service of contrabands, the horseracing in the snow at an army camp, and the celebration of Thanksgiving. Images of the chaos and bloodshed at Shiloh and burying of the dead at Petersburg are shown next to works illustrating African Americans at a worship service and Fourth of July ceremonies. The Becker Collection not only documents how the war was waged but also reminds us why it was fought.

The purpose of this exhibition and catalogue is to introduce the Becker Collection through a representative sample of its holdings and present the first scholarly commentaries on the drawings. The collection itself is a work in progress: numerous drawings still await identification and cataloguing, and the research and writing have just begun. The scholarship it has inspired already is the result of the writers' first encounters with the drawings in the collection. Their scholarly concerns and aesthetic interests determined the selection of works for exhibition, and their essays reflect the spirit of inquiry of many disciplines. Our goal is to provide opportunities for dialogue and discovery for all those interested in using drawings in the collec-

tion as sources for historical insight and aesthetic inspiration. The drawings offer many possibilities for future investigation.

They are—before all else—the result of the mark-making process (the physical and intellectual effort to translate visual experience into a series of lines and tones that will be meaningful to future viewers). The exhibition begins by inviting the visitor to notice how some of the artists whose works are part of the Becker Collection used the strokes of their pens and pencils to capture settings, objects, and action. This skill was key to the work of the Special Artists during the years of the Civil War, when the camera was not yet able to capture action, and the cumbersome nature of photographic equipment restricted the movement of the photographer on the battlefield and in other precarious situations. The Special Artists could move quickly and nimbly if necessary and record action with directness and immediacy. Their firsthand drawings are the truest transcription of the circumstances that they observed. The artists often developed their drawings into aesthetically satisfying and expressive artworks. After making the initial study, the Special Artists modeled forms, added texture and detail, and constructed powerful compositions. In this process, they frequently revealed their own understanding of the events they witnessed. Taken together, these drawings, produced over time, became records of the evolution of the artists' state of mind as well as descriptions of what they saw.

The most dramatic drawings in the Becker Collection, certainly, were made during the battles of the Civil War. Just as soldiers are most severely tested in battle, so too were the Special Artists embedded with the Union troops as they worked to capture on paper the chaos of the fighting. During the course of the war, approximately twenty Special Artists working for the three Northern illustrated newspapers (*Leslie's*, *Harper's Weekly*, and the *New York Illustrated News*) traveled with the Union armies, moving from one army to another as the dynamics of the war shifted from place to place. The exhibition attempts to present a history neither of the war nor of the Special Artists; instead, it introduces each of the Special Artists whose drawings are represented in the Becker Collection in the context of a battle that he witnessed and depicted. Presented in rough chronological order, these battle drawings construct an overall timeline of the war and place at the heart of the action the fourteen Special Artists who worked for *Leslie's*.

Besides introducing the Special Artists through their drawings, the exhibition presents the Becker Collection as an archive of original source material for the student of American history. In his essay, James O'Toole (History, Boston College) places the Becker Collection within the context of archives, which have preserved the stuff of prior times and can provide a palpable experience of the past. The organization of this archive is the product of the efforts of Natasha Seaman (Art History, Rhode Island College) who, beginning in 1998, oversaw the initial conservation of the drawings, single-handedly documented nearly half of them, and established the collection's reference system. Every aspect of this project is indebted to her initial efforts.

The scholars who have contributed their preliminary research to this catalogue approach this material from the perspectives of their particular disciplines. James Wallace (English, Boston College) looks at several of these drawings to discern how views on violence and punishment were constructed during and soon after the Civil War. Lucia Knoles (English, Assumption College) studies the ways in which attitudes of race are revealed in depictions of African Americans. Because these drawings were intended for publication in the popular press, they also often reveal the interests and values of the newspaper-reading public. Harry Katz (former curator in the Prints and Photographs Division, Library of Congress) discusses the uses of drawings and photographs in the dissemination of information and considers the relationship of accuracy and truth in newspaper illustrations. Nirmal Trivedi (Ph.D. in English, Boston College) and Natasha Seaman explore the differences between the artists' original drawings and the published engravings derived from these drawings to discover how social and political meanings were inscribed in images and conveyed to the reading public. Robert Emlen (University Curator, Brown University) compares drawings and published engravings of Shakers to note how suspicion and stereotyping affected the ways in which this minority group was represented in the press. Vincent Cannato (History, University of Massachusetts Boston) investigates what cartoons reveal about attitudes towards minority groups in the later nineteenth century. All of these scholars are leading the way for further exploration of the collection, and we are grateful for their insights.

The process of engaging with these largely undiscovered works of art also has been undertaken at the undergraduate level. Involving undergraduates in collection research and management and exhibition preparation has been at the core of the project and has already resulted in dramatic discoveries. Kristina Wilson (B.A., 2009), an undergraduate research fellow at Boston College, explored a group of undocumented drawings and identified seven works by Edward Hall, a Special Artist who worked for *Leslie's* but did not

appear to be represented in the collection. Thanks to the support of the Fine Arts Department of Boston College, we were able to teach a unique, interdisciplinary course entitled Civil War Era Drawings in which students studied the primary source material of the Becker Collection. Alba Campo (University Exchange), a student in the course, delved into the undocumented drawings in the collection and identified at least one drawing by Alfred Waud, a well-known artist who occasionally worked for *Leslie's* as well as its competitor, *Harper's Weekly*. With the guidance of Adeane Bregman (Art Librarian, Bapst Library, Boston College) and Tim Lindgren (Instructional Design and eTeaching Services, Boston College) and using their manual drawing and visual analytical skills, primary sources, and electronic research tools, all the students in the class—Michael Bell, Alex Boeschenstein, Marie Conger, Alessandra Corriveau, Ron Ervin, Caitlin Fitzgibbons, Clare Garvey, Meg Lister, Maggie Mansfield, Sara Martin, Mary Kate McAdams, Ellen Regan, Carrie Sauls, and Katherine Williamson—made important discoveries about the undocumented drawings they chose to research. The works they studied and their discoveries, which provide models for continuing research, are included in the final section of the exhibition.

All of the researchers have begun their analyses of works in the collection by visiting the Becker Collection's Web site. This invaluable tool makes available to the public this entire collection of fragile drawings, which otherwise requires restricted access. The Web site is the result of a collaborative effort of cataloguers, programmers, Web site designers, and student researchers supported by Boston College. Beginning with the raw material—the original drawings; photographs of the drawings provided by the Military History Institute in Carlisle, Pennsylvania; and Natasha Seaman's reference system—three independent, but interrelated, teams processed the drawings and photographs, systematized the data, and created the Web site. Student researchers Erin McCutcheon, Patton Hindle, Jamie DiAngelo, Ariana von Rennan, Jan Ingalvson, and Kristina Wilson transcribed the text written on the drawings, scanned photographs, created digitized files, researched references, and in countless ways contributed to the compilation of the archive's data.

We are particularly grateful to Betsy McKelvey, Brian Meuse, and their "Digitool Team" of cataloguers at the O'Neill Library at Boston College for creating a permanent digital archive of the collection to be housed in perpetuity at Boston College. Using the Library of Congress cataloguing system and the Digitool platform, they configured our complex data into a standardized research database available to all researchers through Boston College's library system. Under the leadership of Beth Clark and Jeannie Po, Tim Lindgren and Jamie Walker of Instructional Design and eTeaching Services designed the Web site, which makes this database directly accessible to scholars and enthusiasts in Boston College's community and the public community. We are indebted to them for their continuing support of our project. Thanks also should be expressed to the Office of the Provost and Dean of Faculties at Boston College for assistance in the form of an Academic Technology Innovation Grant, which provided for new interpretive methods to accompany the exhibition.

Of course, directly encountering the original drawings in an exhibition at a museum and studying them at one's own pace in a catalogue in conjunction with thoughtful essays offer opportunities for the enhanced experience of the drawings only hinted at on a Web site. For these opportunities we are indebted to Nancy Netzer, Director of the McMullen Museum; Diana Larsen, Exhibitions and Collections Manager/Designer; John McCoy, Media Designer/Information Specialist; and Margaret Neeley, Publications and Exhibitions Administrator. This exhibition and catalogue would not have been possible without their guidance and expertise or the generous contributions made by the Patrons of the McMullen Museum, the Military Historical Society of Massachusetts, Tracy Shupp, the Norma Jean Calderwood Endowed Chair in Islamic and Asian Art, and the Fine Arts Department of Boston College.

The display of contemporary objects, from a songbook and photographs to a drum and military uniform, augment the drawings and enhance the visitor's appreciation of the contexts in which the artists worked. We are grateful to the Boston Athenaeum for lending numerous important artifacts and Vincent Marasa for selecting these artifacts and facilitating the loan. We are also grateful to Timothy Wider for allowing us unlimited access to his remarkable collection of Civil War artifacts and his generosity in facilitating the loans and the Burns Library at Boston College for lending several postwar illustrated volumes.

We are grateful for the generosity and guidance we received from the Deans of the College of Arts and Sciences of Boston College. In particular, we would like to acknowledge Joe Quinn (Economics, Boston College), an early and enthusiastic supporter of the Becker Collection, Patrick Maney (History, Boston College), and David Quigley (History, Dean of the College and Graduate School of Arts and Sciences, Boston College) for recognizing

the significance of the collection and supporting our work as curators. We extend gratitude to William Petri (Associate Dean of the College of Arts and Sciences, Boston College) for creating opportunities for students interested in primary historical research and understanding the important role undergraduate research fellows play in a project of this scope. The talent and hard work of several of Boston College's students were critical to the successful preparation of this exhibition and catalogue. Michael Bell, Hillary Mazanec, Timothy McCool, Miriam Michalczyk, and Katherine Williamson have ably handled numerous assignments with great care and attention. We extend special thanks to Kristina Wilson for her assistance in preparing images for the catalogue.

The Becker Collection has inspired and intrigued all those who have already encountered it, and it holds great promise for future research and enjoyment. It breathes life into the study of some of the most critical decades of the nation's past, and it sheds light on several of the obscure places in that history.

The exhibition *First Hand: Civil War Era Drawings from the Becker Collection* recognizes and illuminates the contributions of artists who created a lasting visual record of the forces that shaped America. We are pleased that segments of the exhibition will travel to the Saint-Gaudens National Historic Site in Cornish, New Hampshire, in fall 2010 and the Virginia Museum of Fine Arts in winter 2011 so that visitors from other parts of the country will have the opportunity to experience and engage with compelling drawings from the Becker Collection.

# AN ARTIST'S INTERESTING RECOLLECTIONS OF *LESLIE'S WEEKLY*

*LESLIE'S WEEKLY*, DECEMBER 14, 1905

Joseph Becker

**In the year 1859, at the age of seventeen, I entered the service of FRANK LESLIE'S ILLUSTRATED NEWSPAPER as an errand boy.** My duties included waiting upon members of the art staff, with some of whom I afterward worked on equal terms. Among the artists well known in their day employed on the paper at that time were Samuel Wallin, Albert Berghaus, Granville Perkins, Harry Stephens (afterward proprietor of *Vanity Fair*), and W. Jewett. During the course of the Civil War, which broke out in 1861, the following experts were added to the force: George White, Paul Dixon, W. Momberger, Arthur Lumley, Thomas Hogan, W. Hennessey, Frank Schell, W. Crane, Henry [*sic*] Lovie, Stanley Fox, Frank Bellew, and Edwin Forbes. Of all these men only Lumley and Schell are still alive. Coming in contact, as I did daily, with enthusiastic artists, I soon aspired to be a picture-maker myself. Gradually I picked up the rudiments of art, and at length began to practice in earnest. I was encouraged in my ambitions by my superiors, and even by Mr. Leslie himself. I not only learned to use the crayon, but also the engraver's tool.

Mr. Leslie, who was himself a first-class engraver, was severe in his judgment of my work. I have to thank him, however, for the exacting standard he set up for me. It made me toil harder and more carefully. The paper at the date of my first connection with it was published in a building on Spruce Street, New York. It afterward moved from one place to another until it got to 110 Fifth Avenue, with its name modified to LESLIE'S WEEKLY, and in 1903 it betook itself to its present quarters in the Parker Building, No. 225 Fourth Avenue. I was employed on it in one capacity or another from 1859 to 1900 forty-one years and for the last twenty-five years of that period I was the manager of its art department.

The great war between the North and the South began in 1861, and I was extremely anxious to go to the field, but my fitness for service in the war belt was not recognized until 1863. Mr. Leslie had sent out artist after artist to the leading points of military operations in the East, but had had considerable ill-luck with them. This eventually caused Mr. Leslie to order me to the front with my sketching outfit. I suppose that I was the youngest artist sent to the field during the war. In parting with me Mr. Leslie said, solemnly: "Joseph, I don't expect to ever see you alive again." I was a slender, delicate fellow, and nobody believed that I could stand the wear and tear of the life I was to lead. But active existence, largely in the open air, caused a distinct improvement in my health, and I grew to be hearty and robust. On the whole, I found that part of my career spent with the army exceedingly interesting. I had many a sad and wearisome time, but a great deal of the enjoyable also fell to my lot. And what a wealth of varied experience I had such as few men can possibly have.

I witnessed all the important battles in the East from Gettysburg to Appomattox. I accompanied the armies of the Potomac and the James in their

marches and engagements, and viewed the operations around Fort Fisher. I got acquainted with all the leading generals from Grant down and hundreds of stirring incidents came to my notice. I was in at Lee's surrender, and I was in Richmond, the ex-capital of the Confederacy, when he arrived there from Appomattox. Never shall I forget the remarkable ovation given to the fallen chieftain by the inhabitants of the city. Wherever I went, from 1863 to 1865, I gathered materials for pictures, and as I was a hard worker I managed to keep the paper well supplied with war features. Many of my drawings were reproduced in the pages of LESLIE'S and I accumulated a vast number of unused sketches and studies. One of my drawings made during the war period, and never before published, appears in this number of LESLIE'S WEEKLY. It is entitled, "Last Christmas in the Field of the Army of the Potomac." (Plate 47)

After the close of the great conflict I was dispatched to London to depict scenes connected with the laying of the Atlantic cable. The cable was to be taken out on the steamer *Great Eastern*, and I hoped to be a passenger on the vessel when she sailed for Newfoundland, paying out the cable on the way. But the managers of the company refused passage to all artists and correspondents, and I made my way otherwise to Heart's Content, Newfoundland, where the American end of the submarine telegraph was to be landed. It was an out-of-the-way locality. Some thirty other artists and writers also assembled there. The *Great Eastern* was looked for at any hour, but she failed to appear. For thirty-eight days we were marooned in that forsaken place, with only rude accommodations and meagre fare. We grew utterly disgusted, wearied, and *ennuied* long before a sailing-vessel stole into the bay and notified us that the laying of the cable had been deferred. We lost no time after that in departing for civilization. My fellow-artists had refrained from making sketches at Heart's Content. But I had made drawings of the bay, the coast and hamlet, and so when, a year later, the *Great Eastern* actually dropped the cable on Heart's Content beach, FRANK LESLIE'S was the only paper which published illustrations of the locality.

I next did general work until 1872, when Mr. Leslie commissioned me to go to California to portray the Chinese who had come over in large numbers to build the Union Pacific Railway. These people were then a novel addition to our population, and Mr. Leslie planned a "scoop" on our competitors. My destination was kept a secret. I reached California in due time, spent six weeks among the Celestials, making many drawings, and then went back to Salt Lake City, where I also tarried a while, taking in pictorial features

Unknown, *Man Reading a Newspaper [Joseph Becker]*, n.d. Graphite on wove paper, 7.5 x 12.8 in. (19.1 x 32.5 cm). PCW–UK–ND.

of Mormondom. In both these missions I scored "beats." The trip was also noteworthy for a reason more personal than the above. On the way West I was taken from Omaha to the Pacific coast on a special train chartered by Albert Pullman, brother of George Pullman, of Pullman palace-car fame. There was quite a party on board, and when a particularly fine bit of scenery showed itself several of the passengers would rush to the rear platform in order to get a better view. This suggested to me the idea of building what I named an "observation car." I furnished designs for this to Mr. Pullman, which afterward were utilized. I may therefore fairly claim to have been the inventor of what is now a feature on all great railways.

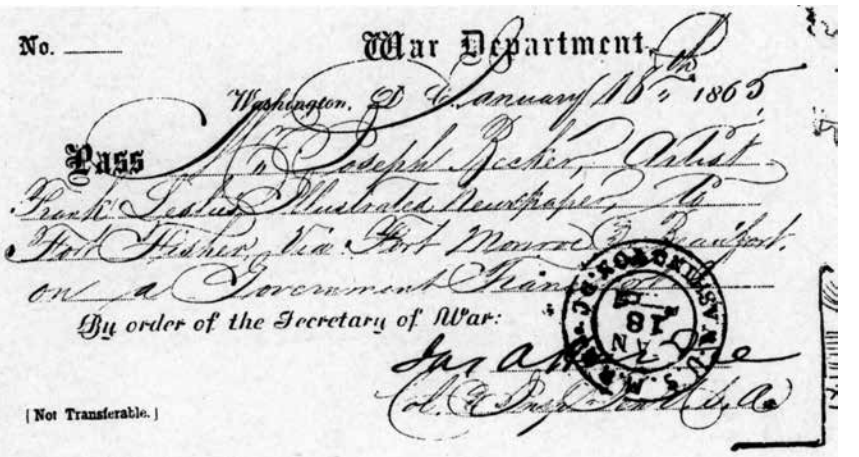
As I have already stated, I became manager of the art department of FRANK LESLIE'S in 1875. Among the leading artists then, or later, on the staff were the following: Matt Morgan, John Hyde, Joseph Keppler, Ben Day. T. de Thulstrup, Charles Kendrick, A. Berghaus, James E. Taylor, Sam Frizzell, William Frizzell, F. Miranda, J.H. Wales, F. Opper, W. Yeager, L. Schimpf, H. Ogden, T. Beach, D. Fisher, John Harley, Georgie Davis, Paul Frenzem, E. Jump, W. Goater, C. Upham, and C. Bunnell. Notwithstanding I was the chief of the department, I often had to respond to "emergency calls" myself, and at last it came to pass that when any important event requiring illustration took place Becker had to go. I always in those days kept a satchel, already packed, in the office, and was prepared to leave at a moment's notice. Partly because I had become the regular pictorial reporter, and partly because I was born in and was familiar with the region, I went, in 1877, to northeastern Pennsylvania to depict scenes in the sensational "Mollie Maguire" troubles.

The "Mollie Maguires" comprised numerous lawless men whose criminal organization had had its origin in ordinary labor difficulties. Coal miners had gone on strike, and some of them had resorted to acts of violence. Eventually members of the band perpetrated all manner of crimes, including murder. I fell in with a detective, and together, unsuspected, but taking great risk, we traveled about, coming in contact with many "Mollies," and even getting on familiar terms with their leaders. In this way we acquired inside information which was of avail to the prosecuting officers. On June 21st, 1877, seven chiefs of the "Mollie Maguires" were hanged at Pottsville, Penn. Before their condemnation I had visited them in jail, had had a friendly talk with them, and they had laughed at the idea of being convicted. I could not bear to see these men swing, and so I absented myself from their execution. Afterward I received from the executioner (the detective aforesaid) a two and a half inch section of each rope used in the hanging. I have these grim souvenirs still. The "Mollie Maguire" pictures formed a feature of LESLIE'S that attracted much attention.

There was a multitude of other big assignments which I have neither time nor space to mention. I made expeditions to many places in the Union. I met hosts of prominent men. My last important duty was to attend the funeral, at New Orleans, of Jefferson Davis, the ex-President of the Southern Confederacy.

A most gratifying feature of my long connection with FRANK LESLIE'S was the intimacy which grew up between Mr. Leslie and myself. Mr. Leslie was like a father to me. He was a great publisher and an able editor. His business maxim was, "Never shoot over the heads of the people." Accordingly he studied the taste of the public, and every occurrence of interest was pictured in his publication. His successes were many, but the principal things which gave his paper a great "boost" were his anti-swill-milk crusade in 1858, the pictures of the Sayers-Heenan prize-fight in 1860, which ran the sale of the paper up to nearly 350,000, and his enterprise in depicting the events of the Civil War. The war pictures gave the paper an immense circulation. After a big battle, and when the public mind was greatly excited, it was not unusual for Mr. Leslie to issue an extra almost daily.

For his service to the people in the matter of impure milk Mr. Leslie was presented with a costly gold watch, which on the inside of the back cover contains the inscription: "Presented to Frank Leslie in behalf of the mothers


No. ____ War Department.

Washington, D. C. January 18th, 1865

Pass Mr. Joseph Becker, Artist Frank Leslie's Illustrated Newspaper, to Fort Fisher, via Fort Monroe & Beaufort, on a Government Train.

By order of the Secretary of War:

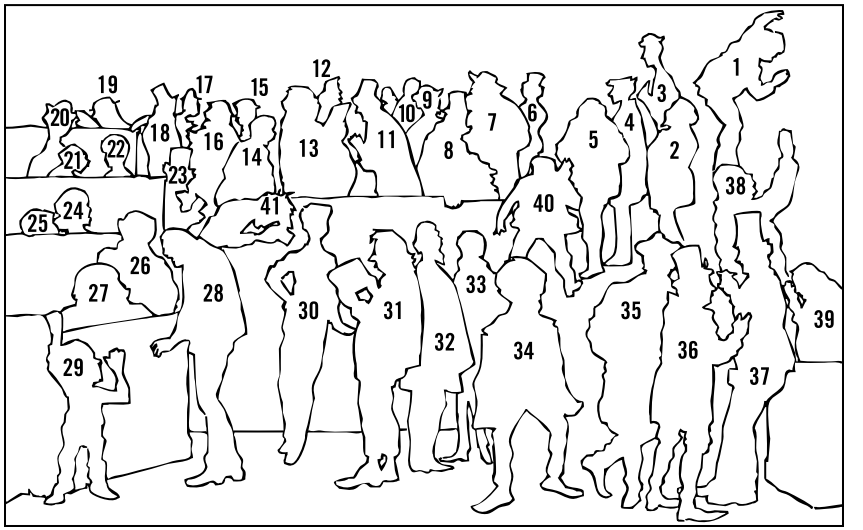
[Not Transferable.]

Joseph Becker's press pass from the War Department.

and children of New York as a grateful testimonial of his manly and fearless exposure of the swill-milk traffic. Dec. 25, 1858."

On the inner cover of the timepiece appears the following: "To Joseph Becker, in memory of Frank Leslie's regard and appreciation." This much-treasured relic was given to me at Mr. Leslie's own request, made before his death in 1880. Because of its associations I prize it far above any other single thing that I own.

**Opposite:** Reproduced in *Leslie's Weekly*, December 16, 1915, 661, the published version of this print depicting the staff includes a new figure (photographer James Wright) and a list of identifications that Frank Weitenkampf (1866–1962), the first curator of prints (then called keeper of prints) for the New York Public Library, determined to be inaccurate. Weitenkampf substituted his own handwritten key (transcribed below), placing it with the lithograph in the library's print collection.




1. Edward Jump, caricaturist, suicide
2. Frank (Harry) Leslie, Jr., died 1894
3. ——— Foreman of Press Room
4. ——— Asst. Advertising Agent
5. ——— Mr. Leslie's Private Secretary, died
6. Alfred Leslie
7. Charles Gaylor, author, died, playwright
8. Horace Baker, supt. of Engraving Dept
9. Dr. ——— author
10. ———
11. Newman, caricaturist, died
12. Dissosuray [?], Ins. Agent, died
13. Mr. Powell, ed. of "Budget of Fun" died
14. ——— compositor [McCabe?]
15. Charles Dawson Shanley, author, died
16. Charles Rosenburg
17. "Ike" Reed, Ed. "Day's Doings"
18. Fiske, caricaturist
19. Dr. Brandis, Ed. German Ed'n "Illus News"
20. Photographer, outside work
21. Arthur Kittell, artist
22. "Joe" Becker
23. Malcolm Campbell, Mr.
24. Schimpf, artist
25. Joseph Beale
26. "Steve" Burlett, engraver
27. ——— Holcomb, supt. Art Dept
28. ("Jim") James H. [*sic*] Taylor, artist
29. ——— Hagar, sub editor
30. John Hyde, artist, died 1896;
31. ——— Pillét, Editor [Joseph Keppler in LW caption]
32. Edward [*sic*] Forbes, artist died 1894
33. C. E. H. Bonwill, artist
34. "Ben" Day
35. ——— Small, story writer
36. ——— White, Advertising Agent, nickname "Foogle"
37. Frank Bellew, caricaturist (29 in LW version)
38. Albert Berghaus, artist
39. Mr. Wallin
40. ——— Miller, cashier
41. John Gilmary Shea, Literary Editor

THE NEW WORLD
PET
PRIVATE

# CIVIL WAR DRAWINGS AS ART

Judith Bookbinder

**Between 1861 and 1865, *Frank Leslie's Illustrated Newspaper* (*Leslie's*), *Harper's Weekly*, and the *New York Illustrated News* sent artist-correspondents to travel with the Union armies to make drawings of what they saw.** Embedding Special Artists, as they were called, within the armies was a new practice, and newspaper readers eagerly studied the engravings that accompanied war stories. During the war years, these American illustrated weekly newspapers published 2,096 engravings of the Civil War based on firsthand drawings by their thirteen most prolific Special Artists.[1] This number accounts for only a fraction of the drawings that these artists actually made and sent to their employers, since many of these drawings never found their way into print. These newspapers employed additional Special Artists on a more occasional basis and sometimes utilized the drawings of amateur artists (generally military personnel). In total, upward of three thousand illustrations of the Civil War appeared in print, but many more drawings were produced on the battlefields and in the camps, fortresses, towns, cities, and surrounding countryside through which the armies moved.

From our vantage point, the original firsthand drawings that survived the vagaries of battle, transport, and editorial whim are the most concrete and telling artifacts of the Civil War. Much thought has gone and will continue to go into considering the messages that these drawings and engravings convey, the visual facts they reveal or distort, and the degree to which editors manipulated them to advance their political agendas. Yet, as many observers mine each newly discovered drawing to unearth material that will either add to the body of information about the war or undermine earlier assumptions, it is easy to forget that these drawings are works of art. The individuals who created them used their manual and visual skills and their artistic sensibilities and insights to record what they experienced in a strong, clear, and aesthetic manner. This essay aims to initiate a discussion about the drawings made by the Special Artists as artworks.

The Special Artists whose works are included in the Becker Collection transcended circumstances that would have thwarted less determined artists in order to create often riveting, insightful, and beautiful drawings. Many of them brought prior art experience to their work as Special Artists, which made their draftsmanship subtle and elegant and their compositions expressive. Their sensitivity, honed in the war, resulted in drawings that speak less of victory or defeat and more of the complexity and cost of the conflict. In this latter analysis, these drawings, perceived as artworks, constitute the most enduring legacy of the Special Artists.

Unlike contemporary photographers—whose cumbersome, costly, and complicated equipment required stillness and safety—Special Artists could record action in the midst of battle and did so under life-threatening conditions. Francis (Frank) Schell, a Special Artist working for *Leslie's*, demonstrated such composure under fire that a major in the 9th New York Regiment noted the following in a letter to Frank Leslie, owner and editor of *Leslie's*:

> I noticed, and so did the whole of the Ninth Regiment, Mr. [Frank] Schell, your artist, sitting on a log sketching under the hottest fire from Fort Defiance. His nonchalance and coolness did as much toward inspiring our troops as the enthusiasm and bravery of any of the officers.[2]

Edwin Forbes, another Special Artist working for *Leslie's*, reported his experiences at the Second Battle of Bull Run:

> I was in the hottest of the fire for quite awhile. When I attempted to get away I found myself cornered. I started with a party of skirmishers through a dense wood, leading my horse, and after passing under a severe fire of shell, got a safe position.[3]

Confederate troops captured John Hillen, also a Special Artist working for *Leslie's*, at the Battle of Chickamauga during the summer of 1863, and the following year he was severely wounded during General William Tecumseh Sherman's campaign to capture Atlanta.[4]

Special Artist Henri Lovie of *Leslie's* first ironically, then poignantly, described his harrowing experiences on and off the battlefield. In 1861, his hometown newspaper, the *Cincinnati Daily Gazette*, reported, "Henri Lovie was a running target for Union sentries who mistook him for an enemy scout," adding, "fortunately their aim was not too good."[5] The article quotes Lovie, commenting that he had "no objections to running reasonable risks from the enemy, but to be killed by mistake would be damnably unpleasant." By the following year, Lovie's gallows humor had evolved into distress when the hardships of daily life weighed ever more heavily on him, as he communicated to Leslie in a letter:

> I shall not annoy you with a detail of my *petites miseres*, but, believe me, I have never encountered so many and great difficulties since I joined McClellan's army in Western Virginia, now nearly a year ago. Riding from 10 to 15 miles daily, through mud and underbrush, and then working until midnight by the dim light of an attenuated tallow dip, are among the least of my desagremens and sorrows. To use an indigenous but expressive phrase, I am nearly 'played out.' ... I am deranged about the stomach, ragged, unkempt and unshorn, and need the conjoined skill and services of the apothecary, the tailor and the barber, and above all the attentions of home and the cheerful prattle of children.[6]

In a series of drawings called *Adventures of a Special Artist*,[7] Lovie encapsulated the debilitating effects of these hardships.

*Adventures of a Special Artist, Part I: The Landing* (plate 79) and *Adventures of a Special Artist, Part V: Deliverance* (plate 80) depict Lovie's experiences in Kentucky during the winter of 1863, and they were meant to represent the Special Artist's ongoing struggles against the elements;[8] from arrival to departure, the artist is mired in snow. Lovie noted on each drawing, "28 inch snow." When he sets out, the artist plows intrepidly through the blank whiteness, his worried assistant struggling behind like Sancho Panza. Only a few gray tones and light lines indicate the depth of the snow into which the assistant appears to be sinking. In *Deliverance*, however, Lovie becomes the frail survivor who needs assistance to descend an icy gangplank for his return voyage. The open planes and horizontal lines in *The Landing* suggest freedom of action and possibility, while the intersecting diagonals and zigzag patterns in *Deliverance* suggest confinement and tension.

Both drawings reveal Lovie's ability to compose forms in space and capture salient gestures and detail that express meaning. These strengths are evident in his book illustrations of the prewar period, which were published in Cincinnati, where he settled after immigrating to the United States from Berlin, Prussia, where he likely studied classical draftsmanship.[9] When Lovie took time to develop a Civil War drawing beyond the initial sketch, his work achieved linear fluidity combined with careful study of visual detail that recalls Jean Ingres's classical portrait drawings.

In *General Asboth and Staff on Horseback* (plate 67), for example, Lovie used graceful, modulated lines to suggest broad forms in contrast to areas

of minute detail.[10] Small delicate lines gathered in strong light/dark patterns endow the figure of the general with assurance, while the delicately outlined body of his horse arises from legs so lightly defined that they seem to be caught in motion. Lovie depicts the members of Asboth's staff with lighter lines, which situate their forms in space and convey likeness and character in the momentary turn of a head or in the posture of a rider. In contrast to this reductive approach to the secondary figures, the detailed and darker rendering of York, Asboth's dog, and the wildflowers in the lower right surprises and draws the viewer's attention to the foreground, where the animal's upward glance sends the viewer's eye back to Asboth. In spite of the hardships and uncertainties of the war during the winter of 1862, Lovie still took the time to observe and depict details of his natural surroundings and incorporate them in a spare visual language in order to speak of loyalty and resolve.

By the time Lovie's drawing appeared as a printed engraving (fig. 1) in the "War Supplement" to *Leslie's*, dated April 5, 1862, it had undergone a subtle, but significant, transformation, which typified the editing and printing process at *Leslie's*. In the illustration published in *Leslie's*, Asboth and his staff ride stiffly through a generalized wood with their features set in rigid and stylized form. Uniform lines and even light replace the variety of lines and tonal gradations that distinguish the primary from the secondary figures and suggest an ambiguous space in the original drawing. These changes were, in part, the result of the complex process of turning the original drawing into an engraving using the hands of many artists and technicians. Ostensibly intended to relay visual information, the final print conveys, instead, editorial messages. Lovie's subtlety and curiosity give way to certainty and uniformity.

Lovie drew Asboth's equestrian portrait during the Missouri campaign in the fall of 1861 and winter of 1862 while embedded with what came to be called the Army of the Tennessee. In spite of often intense fighting as the army moved through Missouri, Arkansas, and Tennessee, Lovie occasionally found time to observe and record the beauty of the landscape. Climbing to the top of Pilot Knob in Missouri in October 1861, he surveyed the surrounding countryside and army encampment below and drew from a distance the conical form of the local promontory.[11] The resulting work, *Pilot Knob, Missouri* (plate 69), contains short pencil strokes that define wildflowers and foliage in the foreground and blend into an undulating texture of soft gray tones as Pilot Knob rises to its summit. Typical of nineteenth-century landscape artists, Lovie depicted the iron works and railroad bridge at the base of the hill in harmony with their natural surroundings. The five figures in the foreground converse peacefully. Lovie obscures the realities of war and the inroads of modern technology as he privileges an ordered and idealized landscape.

In contrast to Lovie's elegiac landscape of the early war years, James Taylor's drawings from 1865 of the Dutch Gap Canal, which was cut through the banks of the James River, depict a blasted landscape bearing the scars of war. Taylor attended the University of Notre Dame and painted a panorama of the Revolutionary War before he enlisted in the Union army in 1861. He soon began sending battlefield drawings to *Leslie's* in response to the newspaper's efforts to expand its stock of images by encouraging army personnel to submit drawings for potential publication. At the completion of Taylor's enlistment in 1863, Leslie hired him as a Special Artist. By 1865, Taylor had experienced the war as a combatant and artist-correspondent, and he understood its enormous costs.

Fig. 1. *General Asboth and Staff on Horseback.* Engraving, *Frank Leslie's Illustrated Newspaper,* April 5, 1862, after a drawing by Henri Lovie.

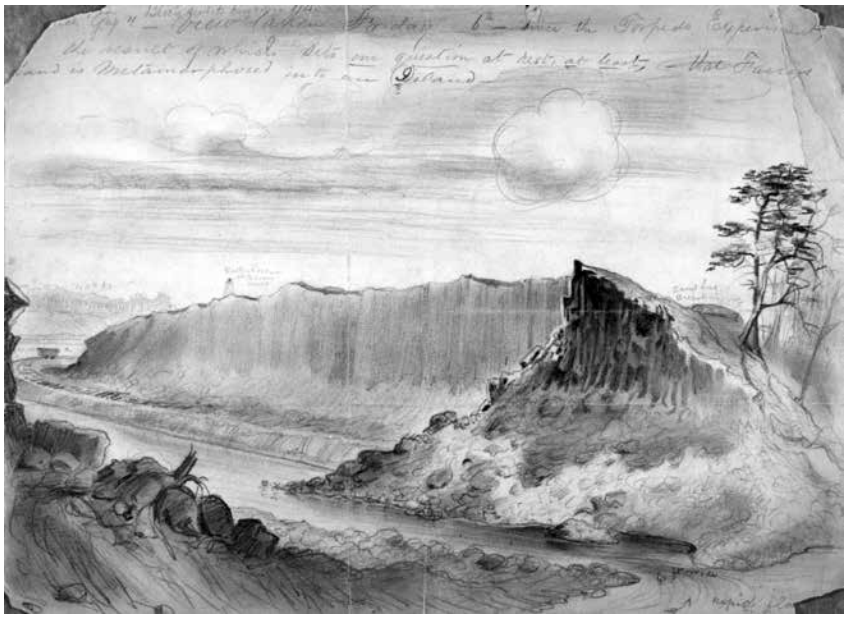


Fig. 2. James E. Taylor, *View of Dutch Gap since the "Torpedo Experiment,"* January 6, 1865. Graphite on wove paper, 9.8 x 13.3 in. (24.9 x 33.8 cm). CW–JT–VA–1–6–65a

In *View of Aikin's and Jones's Landing from Dutch Gap* (plate 111), Taylor used a light line to evoke the desolation along the banks of the James River near the scar of the canal. Blasted trees cling precariously to the edge of the riverbank, and two dredges rest near the water's edge with a few random wooden planks in the foreground to testify to the struggle now over. Even more moody and expressive is *View of Dutch Gap since the "Torpedo Experiment"* (fig. 2), in which a crag of land in the right foreground juts upward, pointing darkly toward a night sky dotted with puffs of smoke. Boulders tumble down the scraped edge into the canal, while a few emaciated trees cling to the eroding earth and seem to be about to fall out of the drawing. This instability compounds the desolation and leads the viewer to experience a tense, unresolved stillness.

Whereas Taylor recorded the aftermath of battle in an elegy about what had been lost, Andrew McCallum, another Special Artist working for *Leslie's*, caught the moment of battle at the Siege of Petersburg, Virginia, in July 1864. The Union army had been attacking Petersburg for three months with heavy losses and no success. On July 7, an explosion under the Confederate fortifications appeared to break the stalemate, but, as Union troops rushed into the smoking abyss, they found themselves trapped and surrounded by Confederate soldiers. In *Siege of Petersburg: Charge into the Crater* (plate 86), McCallum captures the ambiguity of hope and despair along with the strategy and chaos of an undertaking gone wrong. Generalized figures of soldiers merge into a dark wave that surges forward; they seem invincible, until the viewer notices that several figures extend their arms upward as though beseeching an unseen source for help at the moment when they are shot. Their forms reverse the pose and undermine the exultation of the soldier who holds an American flag at the crest of the crater.

The Siege of Petersburg continued into the early months of 1865, when McCallum and the Union armies could see that the end was in sight. His drawing *Siege of Petersburg: A Night Attack* (plate 88) seems to be more a victory celebration than a representation of death and destruction. The lines of light from each salvo of artillery intertwine and arc across the dark sky, creating a canopy over the gap between the opposing sides. The undulating lines of trenches and fortifications on the ground echo the arcing lines in the sky. Together, the curving lines of the explosions and the earthworks form a pinwheel of light and dark rotating in space. This dramatic and unusual composition expresses the triumph of the moment.

Fig. 3. Charles E.H. Bonwill, *Raid into North Carolina: The Return across the Cowan River*, July 30, 1863. Graphite on heavy gauge wove paper, 9.5 x 13.3 in. (24.1 x 33.8 cm). CW–CB–NC–7–30–63b

Prior to the conclusion of the Civil War, strategic advantage oscillated with victories, defeats, and standoffs on both sides, and many drawings capture this shifting condition. In *Raid into North Carolina: The Return across the Chowan River* (fig. 3), for example, Charles Bonwill depicts in minute detail and fine line the massing of Union steamships and ironclad gunboats to protect the return of Colonel Spear's cavalry and contrabands across the Chowan River to Virginia. The withdrawal followed a raid into rebel territory. The repeated forms of gunboats arranged horizontally along the far river bank and the charged movement of the diagonal lines of ferryboats about to cross the water create a powerful structure that frames the central action and protects the water passage that will lead to safety. The busy, yet disciplined, activity in the foreground—where soldiers, civilians, horses, and wagons are boarding the steamboats—conveys a sense of purposefulness, even in the moment of retreat.

In *Wreck of the Confederate Gunboat Cotton at Bayou Teche, Louisiana* (plate 52), Bonwill embeds defiance in this poetic evocation of loss and desolation. The gunboat's form dissolves before the viewer's eye, and the delicate lines that define its sections merge with the reflections on the water and the grasses on the riverbanks. Bonwill included an ambiguous note on the back of this image of apparent defeat, writing "the Ruins of the 'Cotton' lie across the Bayou Teche ... the 'rebs' finding they could not escape with the 'Cotton' ran ashore and set her on fire. She now makes a formidable obstruction to the passage of the bayou." By linking these words to the drawing, Bonwill suggests that even in defeat, resistance endures.

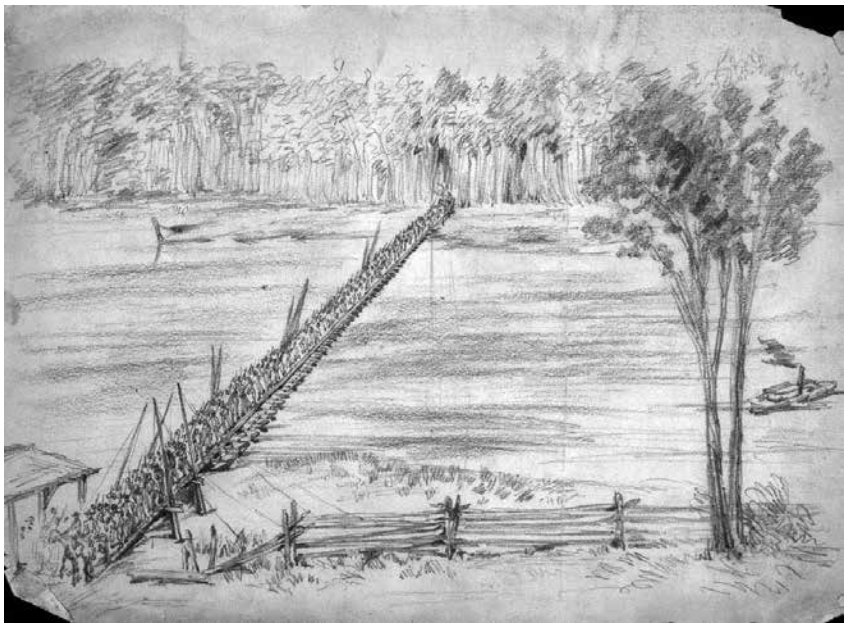


Fig. 4. Edward F. Mullen, *Siege of Petersburg: The Army Crossing the Appomattox River*, June 1864. Graphite on heavy gauge wove paper, 9.5 x 13.3 in. (24.1 x 33.8 cm). CW–EM–VA–6–64

Composition can expand the viewer's understanding of the visual facts the artist has drawn. Edward Mullen, for example, organized his drawing *Siege of Petersburg: The Army Crossing the Appomattox River* (fig. 4) as a powerful, spare balance of horizontal and vertical lines connected by a dramatic diagonal. The diagonal line of the footbridge cuts across the flat plane of the water, joining the near and distant riverbanks contained by the horizontal fence and vertical lines of the slender tree trunks at the right. It zooms through space and becomes a metaphor for the advance of the soldiers who cross the river and march toward the viewer. Through the composition, the viewer experiences the action.

Mullen was a well-known comic illustrator before he became a Special Artist for *Leslie's* in 1864, but none of his early illustrations foretell the dramatic power of his drawing of the Appomattox crossing or the expressive design of *Crows Nest Signal Station on the James River* (plate 93). In this drawing, delicate lines define the narrow trunk of a fragile tree whose branches have been cut away to accommodate ladders propped up against it at various angles for support. The lines darken toward the top of the tree tower in the foliage canopy of the crow's nest. The framework of slanting ladders, platforms, and supports encases the narrow tree trunk. The slight curve resolves itself into an elegant vertical form that arises from the varied, soft gray lines of the surrounding woodland. The small human figure monumentalizes the structure and testifies to the fragile balance that exists between nature and human action in war.

The Special Artists walked a fine line between their mandate to record the realities of what they saw and the impulse to find some solace, even in the grimmest circumstances, for themselves and those viewers who would see their images in *Leslie's*. Like Mullen, Frederic (Fred) Schell negotiated a line between a realistic rendering and an aesthetic construct. He recorded battles with minute detail and, at times, used a broad brush to depict landscapes in which the realities of war dissolve in washes that sweep across the paper.

In 1863, Schell drew the fierce fighting and innervating siege during General Ulysses S. Grant's long struggle to take the Confederate stronghold at Vicksburg, Mississippi. Many of his drawings record the cost of that cam-

paign. By the time he drew *General McPherson's Expedition into Mississippi* (plate 104), for example, in October 1863, most of the damage was done.[12] Small figures on foot and horseback cross a bridge and enter a landscape of carefully rendered blasted trees, scorched fields, and ruined structures. Puffs of smoke and dots of exploding bombs indicate that sporadic fighting continues; yet, even in depicting the devastation, Schell brought his training at the Pennsylvania Academy of the Fine Arts to bear on his composition.[13] The triangles and rectangles of the damaged barns in the middle distance repeat the shapes of the bridge in the foreground. The tree trunks that remain along the curving road and hillside echo the vertical lines of the structures, which are still upright, despite the battle. While the structures retain some viability, however, the trees have been scorched to frail stumps. Schell wrote on the back of his drawing that the Union army is "driving the enemy from their positions," but the pathos of the details in his drawing mutes the triumphal tone of his words and the harmony of his composition.

Schell's drawing, *Chattanooga Valley Sketched from Lookout Mountain after Sherman's Victory* (plate 105), from the following month, November 1863, suggests that he stepped back and used his ink washes and brushes to transcend the immediate combat in order to create a timeless vision of peace and harmony. While his commentary on the back of the drawing details where various regiments were located during the battle, the soft gray tones of the ink washes, flowing seamlessly over the surface, obscure the markers of military emplacements and reveal no trace of the devastation that scarred the land. Schell's mountaintop perspective facilitates accurate topographical notations but also elevates the viewer above the realities of the war.

Frank Schell, who may have been related to Fred Schell, relished the fight and often drew, especially early in the war, heroic figures locked in mortal combat. *Skirmish with the Texas Rangers on Tuesday the Eighteenth* (plate 96) inserts the viewer directly into the struggle between the Rangers and the 32nd Indiana Regiment in Woodsonville, Kentucky. Unlike many of the Special Artists who tried to record, at the least, an overview of a section of a battle, Schell focused on a relatively small group of combatants in this work in order to capture the immediacy of the struggle.[14] The curved lines of the rump of the horse at the lower right draw the viewer into the scene, particularly to the two figures furiously fighting atop a fallen horse in the center foreground. They also direct the viewer to the Texas Ranger whose arms are raised as the soldier in the left foreground shoots him. In an arcing composition, Schell leads the viewer through the chaos to the salient features in the scene. In this moment of intense action, Schell, who had been an artist, illustrator, and lithographer in Philadelphia before the war,[15] used firm lines, subtle tones, and significant details to render the anatomical features of horses and riders twisting, turning, and falling to the ground.

That same mastery of line, tone, and expressive detail is evident in Schell's drawing *Scene on the Levee at Baton Rouge, Louisiana: Contrabands Discharge the Ammunition from the U.S. Transport North Star* (plate 99). In this drawing, crisp lines and subtle tones focus the viewer's attention on the foreground group preparing the cannon. The steam engines and smokestacks of the two boats in the background—one a large frigate and one a riverboat—carry the viewer's eye upward. In this drawing, Frank Schell reveals that he understood that the war was more than battles—that it required hard, coordinated work by many players, including escaped slaves who had joined the struggle as laborers.[16]

Forbes also recorded the effort of African-American soldiers and contrabands to build bridges and roads and drive the wagon trains that supported and supplied the army. Years of study with Arthur Tait, who made a career of drawing and painting scouts and Indians on the western plains, likely inspired Forbes's interest in rendering dynamic action. His drawing *Burnside's Troops Crossing into Virginia* (plate 59) does not depict columns of soldiers marching across the landscape, as the drawing's title might suggest; instead, it shows a covered wagon at the upper left with an African-American teamster working to rein in his team of horses, which is pulling backward against the force of gravity dragging them and their heavy load down toward the river. The strong diagonal line of the receding bridge counters the diagonal direction of the struggling wagon team. These opposing elements pull away from the center and echo the tension of the wagon team as it works against gravity. Only the activity of a team of pontoon bridge builders at the lower right will make it possible for General Ambrose Burnside, his soldiers, and the wagon team to cross the river.

The tensions in this drawing yield to Forbes's more pacific panoramic landscapes, including *View of Little Washington* (plate 61). He was most at ease away from the immediacy of battle. As with several of the Special Artists, landscape drawing—particularly the distanced scope of panoramas—offered Forbes a way to submerge the details of war in the sweep of space. In this graphite and wash drawing, the precise rendering of structures and trees in the foreground gives way to airy strokes that define the distance then

dissolve in the atmosphere. As an exercise and a finished work, landscape drawing provided a brief escape for Forbes.

Although lacking formal training, Joseph Becker flourished as a Special Artist, because he was sensitive to the human dimension of the war. His drawing *Scene on Jerusalem Plank Road during the Siege of Petersburg* (plate 5) conveys the processes and costs of war. Ambulances, including one lurching frantically to the left, carry the wounded away from a battle near Petersburg, while fresh troops march doggedly toward the front lines during the siege of that strategic railway junction. A campfire in the foreground dramatically lights this night scene from the center. It models the forms of the ambulances against the dark forest and sky along with the soldiers who pass between the vehicles and the campfire without turning to see their injured comrades. The play of light draws attention to the struggle to save lives, even as the struggle that will take more lives continues.

Light also serves as the key to *Evening Prayer Meeting at City Point during the Siege of Petersburg* (plate 6), a drawing that Becker made the week after recording the scene on the Jerusalem Plank Road. Here, however, the light becomes poignant and spiritual as it spreads from two candles mounted in bottles on an improvised altar at the center to touch the figures of contraband men, women, and children, who stand or sit quietly in prayer. The symmetrical composition pauses the action and suspends time. The lighted canopy frames the central and most illuminated figure, the prayer leader. The tall man at the right and the child at the left stand as sentries on either side of the altar in the gathering shadows, while light in the foreground illuminates the large seated male figures, who anchor the base of this strong triangular group. Through composition and the play of light on form, Becker constructed a scene of spiritual unity that remains fresh and moving to this day.

Regardless of how their lives evolved and their original intentions, the Special Artists managed to produce artworks under difficult conditions that speak to the twenty-first-century viewer not only of the specific visual data of the war but also of the transcendent experiences of life and the aesthetic qualities of art. While fulfilling their mandate to record the visual realities of war, the Special Artists searched for ways to transform their work into a source of comfort for themselves and the readers of *Leslie's*. In the midst of suffering and destruction, they found harmony and beauty. They understood that there were few clear victories or defeats but much ambiguity. These aspects of their discourse were spoken in a universal language that resonates today and will continue to do so in the future.

## ENDNOTES

1 William P. Campbell, *Civil War: A Centennial Exhibition of Eyewitness Drawings* (Washington, D.C.: National Gallery of Art, 1961), 14.

2 *Frank Leslie's Illustrated Newspaper*, Letter to the editor, March 15, 1862, 258, quoted in Campbell, 39–40.

3 Edwin Forbes, *Frank Leslie's Illustrated Newspaper*, September 13, 1862, 387, quoted in Campbell, 34.

4 Joshua Brown, *Beyond the Lines: Pictorial Reporting, Everyday Life, and the Crisis of Gilded-Age America* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2002), 53.

5 *Cincinnati Daily Gazette*, June 29, 1861, quoted in J. Cutler Andrews, *The North Reports the Civil War* (Pittsburgh, Pa.: University of Pittsburgh Press, 1955), 103–104.

6 Henri Lovie, Letter to the editor, *Frank Leslie's Illustrated Newspaper*, May 17, 1862, 66, quoted in Campbell, 33–34.

7 Published in *Frank Leslie's Illustrated Newspaper*, February 17, 1863, 332.

8 The published series includes a third engraving of the artist riding his horse in the snow.

9 See Charles Nordhoff, *The Merchant Vessel: A Sailor Boy's Voyage to See the World* (Cincinnati, Ohio: Moore, Wilstach, Keys, 1856); and Mrs. Elizabeth D. Livermore, *Zoë; or, The Quadroon's Triumph: A Tale for the Times* (Cincinnati, Ohio: Truman and Spofford, 1855).

10 Although Lovie drew *General Asboth and His Staff* in Missouri in December 1861, *Leslie's* used the drawing in connection with a Union victory in Arkansas in March 1862; Lovie's drawing was published in *Frank Leslie's Illustrated Newspaper*, "War Supplement," April 5, 1862, 337 with the following caption: "The War in Arkansas- Brigadier General Asboth and Staff at the Battle of Pea Ridge, Ark., March 6th–8th, 1862." The news story begins: "The gallantry displayed by General A.S. Asboth in the victory of Pea Ridge gives great interest to the spirited sketch of himself and staff which we present to our readers. Among the officers in the sketch were Acting Brigadier General Albert, Brigade Quartermaster McKay, the young commander of the Fremont Hussars, Major George F. Waring, Jr., from New York City, formerly major of the Garibaldi Guards, and the general's aides-de-camp, Gillen and Kroll, etc. Among General Asboth's most constant attendants was his favorite dog, York, a splendid specimen of the St. Bernard species."

11 William Fletcher Thompson, *The Image of War: The Pictorial Reporting of the American Civil War* (New York, N.Y.: Yoseloff, 1960), 159.

12 Vicksburg's defenses collapsed on July 4, 1863, after a forty-six-day siege.

13 Timothy J. Reese, *Written in Stone: Brief Biographies of the Journalists, Photographers, and Artists Whose Names Appear on the War Correspondents Memorial Arch Gathland State Park Crampton's Gap, South Mountain, Maryland* (South Mountain, Md.: Friends of Gathland State Park, 2000), 34.

14 Thompson, 39.

15 Reese, 34.

16 Thompson, 38.

# DRAWING AS INFORMATION

Sheila Gallagher

Few impulses are more basic to human existence than drawing. From earliest recorded history to the present day, there has always been some form of drawing to communicate ideas, express fears and desires, demonstrate awareness of the physical world to others, and embellish the physical environment. No mode of human communication has served longer or been more effective in forming our understanding of human history and culture, and this is no less true of the history and culture of our own country, with its rich visual record of drawing for and by the American people.
—Albert A. Anderson, *Teaching America to Draw*[1]

**On July 6, 1861, the headline of *Frank Leslie's Illustrated Newspaper* (*Leslie's*) read:**

**OUR WAR ILLUSTRATIONS.**
**SUCCESSFUL ENTERPRISE!**
**FRANK LESLIE'S**
**The Oldest, Most Brilliant and Most Enterprising**
**Illustrated Newspaper in America**

The ensuing paragraphs claimed precedence over all other illustrated journals "in promptitude, enterprise and accuracy" and asserted the genius omniscience of its artists whose "brilliant and accurate sketches taken on the spot and transferred to our pages within a day or two of occurrence" reflected "every action, incident and movement of war."[2] The breaking news story *was* the illustration of the war.

However exaggerated the claims, from 1861 to 1865 *Leslie's* had more salaried pictorial reporters, called Special Artists, than any other periodical in the history of American journalism. It employed more Special Artists to cover the war than its competitors, *Harper's Weekly* and the *New York Illustrated News*, combined.[3] The drawings the artists produced in the field are examples of the first step in a complex editorial and technological process by which *Leslie's* converted images into engravings for the newspaper and conveyed the news to the public. Before they became news and were used to shape public opinion, the drawings in the Becker Collection were, first and foremost, immediate responses to perceived visual phenomena. They are the physical manifestations of the synchronized collaboration of mind and hand, between observing and recording the experience of seeing. Understood as such, the images in the Becker Collection are—like all observational drawings—the visible forms that reveal each artist's attempt to reconcile the outside world with his subjective experience.

Drawing is an act of communication. This essay will explore the following question: what kind of information is communicated through the original drawings that make up the Becker Collection? More specifically, what

knowledge may be gleaned from examining the different formal choices the Special Artists made in terms of line, tonality, composition, material, and mark-making? Examining a selection of representative drawings, I will consider the function of these firsthand drawings not only as eyewitness descriptions of what artists saw but also as evidence and expressions of individual experiences before or apart from the role the images played in the illustrated press. The drawings in the Becker Collection, including many that were never reproduced, are the work of many different artists who drew with intentions and styles that varied with circumstances. Analyzing the drawings, we may learn much about the subjects they depict as well as the experience of their makers and discover that, in the end, each drawing has an independent significance.

In America of the 1860s, drawing was regarded as a form of literacy—a skill that was as important for a young child's development as it was for the young country's economic progress.[4] By 1870, Massachusetts had passed the Drawing Act, which legislated that "drawing be included in the branches of learning which are ... required to be taught in the public schools."[5] Other states, notably Pennsylvania (where Joseph Becker attended school), incorporated drawing pedagogy into the curriculum to train teachers. Popular drawing manuals, such as the *American Drawing-Book* by John Gadsby Chapman, instructed students to sketch frequently to train their "quickness of perception" and form visual "conclusions with rapidity and decision."[6] Drawing was a way to communicate life and travel experiences. The quick drawing or sketch, according to Chapman, was an important graphic notational method that allowed the viewer to retain a fleeting impression.

It is in this context that we begin to understand the purpose of some of the quietest works in the collection—three small, early drawings sketched by Becker at Gettysburg during the fall of 1863: *Graves of Union Soldiers at Gettysburg* (plate 1), *Graves of Union Men at Gettysburg* (plate 2), and *Cemetery Hill at Gettysburg* (plate 3). Visiting Gettysburg two or three months after the battle, Becker depicted the graves of Union men and skeletons of dead horses using simple, direct outlines. The compositions are straightforward and the size of postcards, inviting their comparison to a contemporary personal snapshot of a trip to a tourist destination. In the first two drawings, one may note what looks like an artist's satchel—presumably Becker's—casually strewn in the foreground or placed on a fencepost. In these drawings, Becker's earliest-known attempts to record his experience, the artist appears to be locating himself in the site of the drawing and representing himself as an artist. In this personal graphic memento, Becker asserts and inserts his life near the grave markers, which mark death.

The most obvious purpose of the Special Artist's drawing, however, was to provide visual testimony for others. The artists of *Leslie's* considered themselves to be reporters who used images rather than words; they understood their job was to record events compellingly and as completely as circumstances allowed. Their work was central to the collective enterprise of the illustrated news. In most cases, the layout and textual content of the newspaper was determined by what images were available.[7] The drawings chosen to be turned into engravings for publication and contextualized by text were those that made for good storytelling. As Kevin Barnhurst and John Nerone write, "both text and picture were held to the standards based on the facility with which they advanced a narrative."[8]

In some instances, good storytelling relied on embellishment or reverted to romantic illusions about a heroic war, but the exaggerations largely occurred in the newsroom when a drawing was engraved or captioned. The war provided its own compelling narrative, and the Special Artists of *Leslie's* worked hard to convey the facts. Drawings, such as two by William T. Crane, *Opening of the Ball: First Gun Fired by a Rebel Tug at Five O'clock* (plate 55) and *Siege of Charleston: General View of the Bombardment of Battery Gregg and Fort Wagner* (plate 57), far from being glorified renditions of warfare, are an eyewitness's attempts to diagram complicated naval engagements with a complex indexing system.[9] While the Becker Collection has its examples of original drawings of gallant Federal officers and their acts of bravery in battle [see, for instance, *General Asboth and Staff on Horseback* (plate 67) by Henri Lovie and *Bayonet Charge on a Rebel Fort at James Island, South Carolina* (plate 56) by Crane],[10] these tended to have been penned earlier in the war and stand in contrast to drawings, such as *Drumming out a Coward Officer* (plate 94) by Edward Mullen. Even when depicting celebrated officers in drawings, such as *Brigadier General Rosecrans and Staff in Clarksburg, West Virginia* (plate 64) by Lovie and *Grand Review of the Nineteenth Corps by Sheridan* (plate 107) by James E. Taylor, there is ample visual evidence of intense observation and a determination to portray truthful likeness.

In the image of Brigadier General Rosecrans and his staff, Lovie emphasized the individuality and position of each man through elegant line and careful attention to appearances. Slight variations in pressure and line movement distinguish hair types, and delicate and precise lines created with a repeatedly sharpened graphite pencil lead to the edges of forms and define

facial features. Quartermaster Charles Leib and Rosecrans are clearly the most important people in a room whose contents and features—a map of Virginia, askew window shade, wood grain, and notes or invoices—Lovie inventoried visually. Throughout the war, Clarksburg was a major military supply station and deployment center for the Union.[11] The compositional prominence of Leib, the quartermaster at Clarksburg who was responsible for providing supplies to thousands of troops, is entirely in keeping with the position he occupied at the busy depot headquarters. Standing in the center, Leib is the most massive and finished figure, but all eyes are on Rosecrans, who is seated on the right at the table. Lovie articulated their significance by rendering them more volumetrically, relying on darker values and hatching to clarify structure. The other figures, particularly the comfortable looking personal secretary and the stiff young *aide de camp* who bookend the meeting, are, in contrast, less developed and drawn with lighter and fewer marks. Their bodies may withdraw back to the simplest outlines; yet, because of Lovie's attention to their faces, posture, and the distinguishing features of their uniforms, each is depicted as a distinct personality playing a specific role. As Lovie wrote on the back of the drawing, "the sketch is a very good likeness of all."[12] Lovie's desire—at least in this instance—to provide *Leslie's* with a faithful record of his observations is underscored by the fact that he writes of his intention to send biographical sketches and to obtain a daguerreotype of Rosecrans, presumably as a point of comparison and for future use as a visual resource for the staff at *Leslie's*.

The same evidence of careful observation is apparent in Taylor's drawing *Grand Review of the Nineteenth Corps by Sheridan*. With delicate, repetitive marks, Taylor created a rhythmic phrasing of bayonets and troops lined up for a military review on a rainy day. With the exception of the flag-waving Zouave in the right middle ground, the spectators and the troops are faceless, and, given the occlusion of text and odd scale disparities, they appear to have been drawn quickly and before Philip Sheridan arrived on the scene. Taylor saved the details to describe the decorative: flags, instruments, officers' dress, and the horses' tackle. Taylor's particular admiration for beautiful horses is revealed by the sculptural attention he bestowed upon the surface of their forms. [Also see *Hearing the News of the Fall of Richmond in Goldsboro, North Carolina* (plate 112) by Taylor.] The horses are highly energized and modeled with elegance—the stars of the parade. (Traces of an underdrawing reveal that Taylor originally drew the central horse even larger than it appears in the final drawing.) Taylor remarks that Sheridan's black horse, in particular, "is a beauty" and, for Taylor, clearly more deserving of being the central focus of the composition than General A.T.A. Torbert, commander of the cavalry corps of the Army of the Shenandoah (the static figure to the far left with his hand on his hip), of whom Taylor writes on the front of the drawing: "Torbert the vainest man in the army very large shoulders strap wide sash-jacket-silver mounted saddle."

Under different circumstances and when time allowed, Taylor lavished as much attention on people as he did on horses and was known to use his pencil to admire, to praise, or to curry favor when necessary. Dependent upon the army for access to news, mail, food, and shelter, artists at times composed drawings specifically to cultivate relationships with commanders or express appreciation for favors bestowed.[13] In his highly polished drawing *Loyal Dunkards at General Crook's Headquarters* (plate 109), Taylor devoted much time to creating likenesses in a striking group portrait executed both to tell a story and to repay a favor. In this work, Taylor organized multiple figures in space, capturing the specific gestures, dress, and interactions between Union officers and a little-known group of pacifist refugees, the Dunkards (so named after their baptismal practices), as if they were actors on a stage, dramatically communicating and receiving information. The careful discernment of light and shadow adds to the effect of drama and defines the figures, giving them a sense of solidity. On the back of the drawing (fig. 1),

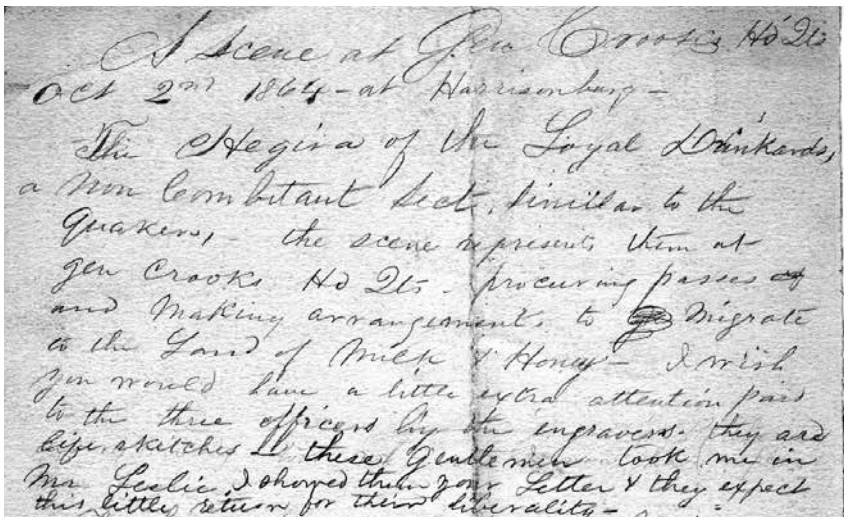

A Scene at Gen Crooks HQ Dts
Oct 2nd 1864 – at Harrisonburg –
The Regime of the Loyal Dunkards,
a non combatant sect, similar to the
Quakers, – the scene represents them at
Gen Crooks HQ Dts. procuring passes
and making arrangements to migrate
to the Land of Milk & Honey – I wish
Gen would have a little extra attention paid
to the three officers by the engravers. they are
life sketches – these Gentlemen took me in
Mr Leslie I showed them your Letter & they expect
this little return for their liberality –

Fig. 1. James E. Taylor, detail of verso of *Loyal Dunkards at General Crook's Headquarters*, October 2, 1864 (transcription below). Graphite on heavy gauge wove paper, 6.5 x 10.0 in. (16.5 x 25.4 cm). CW–JT–VA–10–2–64v

Taylor identified the subjects of his composition and explained his motivations for creating so detailed a drawing:

> I'm as a wanderer & they took me in// A scene At Gen. Crooks Hd'Qts ... // This Hegira of the Loyal Dunkards, a non-combatant Sect similar to The Quakers,—the scene represents them at Gen Crooks HdQts—procuring passes and making arrangements to migrate to the Land of Milk and Honey—I wish you would have a little extra attention paid to the three officers by the engraver—they are life sketches—these gentlemen took me in Mr. Leslie. I showed them your Letter & they expect this little return for their liberality—[14]

While the Special Artists clearly composed some drawings with an eye to remaining on good terms with the military hierarchy, the Special Artists of *Leslie's* working in the field did not consider themselves to be propagandists.[15] It is also significant to note that while *Leslie's* was illustrating the Civil War with a distinctly Northern point of view by mid 1861, Special Artists rarely caricatured the Confederates. In fact, in many of the Becker Collection's drawings of military engagements it is difficult to distinguish the Union from the Confederate combatants without the aid of the artists' notes, and the dead and wounded of both sides are represented. The majority of images in the Becker Collection reveal a desire for realism insofar as they privilege the immediate and the everyday over the ideal.

*Siege of Vicksburg: Life in the Trenches* (plate 102) by Frederic Schell is an example of an unromantic effort to record the material realities and daily lives of soldiers involved in trench warfare during Ulysses S. Grant's forty-two-day siege. By mid May 1863, Grant had launched several successful campaigns against Pemberton's field army when Frank Leslie sent Schell to cover Grant's assault on the city of Vicksburg. Schell arrived by May 22 in time to see Grant's army repulsed for the second time. Unable to break through the city's formidable defenses (nine forts connected by trenches and rifle pits), the Union lost three thousand men. Grant's army committed to "outcamp" Vicksburg by digging a system of Union trenches to surround the city. Schell's drawing captures in attentive detail a section of the eleven miles of zigzagging, multi-tiered pits, and tunnels of the fortification, which in places was only a few yards from the Confederate works. Here, Leggett's Brigade, a contingent of James McPherson's 17th Corps, is camped in and around an eighty-foot-deep ravine.

Using a variety of pencil textures, Schell took great care to describe visually the crude huts, odd burrows, and infrastructure of the fortification. Special attention was paid to depicting materials and architectural details with a depth of field no camera of the day could have captured. Refined horizontal lines define the clapboard of what Schell describes as the "White House, well riddled with Confederate shell." Small jagged lines show the lean-tos made from tree boughs and cane. Other huts are shown to be constructed from various types of salvaged or scavenged pieces of wood—some perhaps torn from the finely rendered structure in the upper right hand of the composition. (It is almost as if Schell counted every missing shingle.) The lower levels as depicted by Schell were where the men lived and slept. Tiny figures are observed socializing, drying their laundry, keeping out of the sun, and preparing food. One figure appears to have caught a fish. Another figure is plainly drawn defecating into the ravine—one of the many visual facts omitted from the published representation. In the left foreground, Shell recorded the upper level where the artillery was kept. Here, he depicts a box of ammunition and what looks like a cannonball beside the riflemen, who, when not resting, were on the lookout for Confederate sharpshooters. Drawn "in the sap,"[16] Schell captured in striking detail the quotidian side of a military strategy that was a turning point in the war.

The experience of being embedded with the troops influenced most Special Artists to record their experiences in image and text with a new realism, which at times ran counter to the more patriotic or picturesque aims of the home office.[17] Noting the title that Becker gave to his drawing *Something to Coax the Appetite: Exhuming the Bodies of Union Soldiers during the Siege of Petersburg* (plate 15), for instance, one can imagine the employees at the New York City office of *Leslie's* editing some of the artist's immediate perceptions. Judging from the underdrawing, developed tonal structure, and repeated directional mark-making, one can ascertain that despite his dark sarcasm about his olfactory experience, Becker cared about this image and approached it with compositional intentionality, probably over multiple sittings. It has a level of finish that was often not possible in his battlefield sketches. In addition to the creases it has from being folded and sent in an envelope, the drawing has scored outlines as well as areas that shine from layers of graphite—evidence that the drawing was reworked by Becker and possibly by artists at *Leslie's* in New York City.

Fig. 2. Andrea Mantegna, *The Dead Christ* (detail), ca. 1490. Tempera on canvas, 26.0 x 31.9 in. (66 x 81 cm). Pinacoteca di Brera, Milan.

The shadowy drawing represents an intimate view of graves being dug up near Weldon Road, the site of a battle Becker had witnessed a few months before. Embalmers (or agents) are pulling a dead body out of a grave surrounded by several apprehensive onlookers. The body—presumably that of John Owen (the name on the nearby marker)—was "to be conveyed to the soldier's friend in the north."[18] The practice of using independent agents to embalm and send bodies back to the North was a popular, but contested, practice, and, as Drew Gilpen Faust notes, in 1864 "the Virginia battlefields provided a booming business for undertakers."[19] Becker expressed the instability and liminality of the body: dead but being raised, its foreshortening and head position reminiscent of Andrea Mantegna's painting *The Dead Christ* (fig. 2) in the figure's threshold placement in relation to the ground plane. Value transitions intimate a passage as the threatening dark shape around the grave gives way to midtones around the corpse's feet and ends in light around its head. Becker established his eyewitness status and a sense of closeness to the action by manipulating the size of the notational objects in relation to the format frame. In the foreground, the coffin and grave marker are cut off, placing Becker—and by association the viewer—at a distance so close that nearby elements are cropped as if we are looking through a window a few feet from the scene. The drawing speaks of the effort and the intention to overcome distance, with Northern families relying on embalmers to pull their dead sons out of the earth, and an artist composing the event with an eye to conveying proximity.

Surveying the Becker Collection, one concludes that the artists illustrated the dead and the living as circumstances allowed and as they observed them—often under conditions that were far from ideal and in terms that were far from idealized. The first few battles that Becker witnessed were some of the most savage in the war; between May 5 and May 18, 1864, over ten thousand Union soldiers were killed and another forty thousand wounded in the battles of the Wilderness and Spotsylvania. Recalling his first three weeks of being embedded with the army, Becker describes in graphic detail the atmosphere of suffering and its effect on Hancock's troops in the Battle of Spotsylvania:

> Their route led by a field hospital in active operation. The dull "swish" of the surgeon's saw was ceaselessly sounding, and amputated arms and legs were thrown out in such a direction that the troops stumbled over them as they marched in toward the beginning of the horrors. The faces of the men were as faces of the dead. They moved like automatons, but the look upon them was as if they had given up life. [20]

Drawing on the spot, often in the midst of chaotic military engagements, required the artist to develop a kind of shorthand that captured the essence of complex topographies and bodies in motion. In many drawings in the Becker Collection, the mark-making is as fast and hurried as the scene depicted. This method of shorthand is particularly evident in a series of drawings that Becker created during the Petersburg to Richmond campaign while traveling with General Gouverneur K. Warren's 5th corps from August to October 1864.[21] In *Battle near Poplar Springs Church: Peeble's Farm* (plate 11), the fighting is underway and the scene is in a state of flux. Quickly rendered figures—some bodies connected by a rapid cursive—depict the "5th Corps marching on the double quick 2 lines." The troops—like the artist—pay little attention to the fallen, who are little more than stick figures. In many places, Becker's

hand seems to have been moving so quickly that he did not lift it from the page. Throughout the entire image, which was "sketched on the field while the battle was progressing,"[22] and probably took less than five minutes to execute, there is a rhythmic staccato quality: certain passages, such as the rows of soldiers, seem to resemble bars of musical notation. Most marks are short and the edges of many forms are left open, allowing them to convey movement. Like the recently invented telegraph with its dots and dashes, drawings with abbreviated graphic expressions, such as those in this drawing, were an effective way for Special Artists to convey timely information with an economy of means.

As in *Battle near Poplar Springs Church: Peeble's Farm*, it is clear from the abstracted forms and lack of fine details in *Battle in the Woods at Vaughn Road near Hatcher Creek* (plate 13) that Becker did not have a leisurely opportunity to sketch the landscape before the shells were flying. Once again, the marks are drawn rapidly, and the scene is greatly simplified to distill the most important information. A horizontal row of heavy, small, black parallel marks in the background indicates the rebel line. In the middle ground, a hastily drawn row of dark dots and oversimplified masses extends from left to right, depicting the 5th and 9th Corps of the Army of the Potomac. Circular shapes—rounded and flowerlike—serve as Becker's shell explosions. Simple lines of varying weight and diminishing size that run perpendicular to the horizon not only represent trees but also show depth. Larger trees with strong value indicate Becker's desire to give spatial clarity to a confusing scene.

Quick visual notations were supplemented often by notes on the front and back of a drawing in order to describe further the event or clarify marks and identify shapes. On the surface of *Battle in the Woods at Vaughn Road near Hatcher Creek,* Becker wrote "all small pines" directly over a group of open, wavy lines, which overlaps small figures that appear to be moving away from the action. The trees in the left foreground, while highly simplified through their irregularity and the large amounts of white negative space that surround them, effectively describe a landscape not easily known—a place where knowledge is incomplete and particulars are not easily discerned. The space becomes a place of projection for the viewer, who—like the artist-correspondent—tries to make sense of what he or she is seeing. The landscape around Vaughn Road was so thick with trees that General Warren, commander of the 5th Army Corps, requested that Union skirmishers fire their arms because the woods "are so dense we need the sound to guide us in moving up."[23] In these woods, a short diagonal slash may be read as a line, branch, or musket. Black dots peppered amid the abstracted pines seem to represent figures—perhaps escaped Confederate prisoners, stragglers, or wounded—joining those Becker reported were crowding the road in the foreground.[24]

It is interesting to note the elements Becker emphasized in this drawing. It is not the musket fire that warranted the heaviest or most aggressive mark-making but rather the zigzagging pines in the lower right foreground. The trees' dark, sharp contours, resembling teeth, almost menace the figures on the road, and, in fact, the terrain depicted, which commanding officers described as "worse than the Wilderness,"[25] proved to be a deadly factor in the Union's defeat at Hatcher Creek. Becker's drawing clearly is not intended to be a slavish illustration of the geography or events of October 27, 1864, but instead an immediate visual response to external stimuli. True, Becker made efforts to convey the position of troops and to create a cursory illusion of depth, but the authenticity of the representation lies in the responsive character of his marks. Here, lines speak what Philip Rawson would call their own "conceptual language." It is a vocabulary that does "not cover the same ground as words," or, I would add, photographs, but whose meaning "can be clarified both by its context of other lines ... and by its context as an index to a notational reality."[26]

Some historians have asserted that the majority of the Special Artists' drawings were created after the event and that most were compositions constructed from other eyewitness testimonies and visual descriptions.[27] While gathering information from various sources was a significant part of both pictorial and print reporting, most of the drawings in the Becker Collection, the majority of which were never worked up into engravings, appear to have been created—at least in part—from direct observation. Artists frequently made many studies from various points of view, then chose the strongest composition to turn into a more finished drawing, often working late into the night on the same day while their perceptions were still fresh. Some drawings were composed from several sketch sources and sometimes from more than one artist. Composite compositions were fairly uncommon, nevertheless, owing in part to the fact that it is a more difficult skill than drawing or detailing from observation and can result in internal discrepancies in perspective, scale, and light source. Visual information suggests that most artists in the Becker Collection (with the exception of, perhaps, Lovie) preferred to work from life or observational sketches.

Fig. 3. *W.S. Rosecrans and Staff* (detail). Engraving, *Frank Leslie's Illustrated Newspaper*, after a drawing by Henri Lovie.

Evidence of direct observation is apparent not only in observable underdrawings, in the specificity of details, devised short-hands, and the quick mark-making of specific battle drawings, but also in the artists' notes, which may be found on many drawings. Images are accompanied often by large amounts of handwritten text describing not only the circumstances surrounding the event but also the specifics of where and when a drawing was created: "Sketched from the observatory on Craigs Hill,"[28] Crane wrote on one, "sketched on the field while the battle was progressing this Friday afternoon Sept 30 ... I also send you a sample of cotton bulb from the field in the foreground,"[29] wrote Becker on another, "this was sketched hurriedly, wrote an artist known only by the initials A.M.

Fig. 4. Henri Lovie, *Camp Lily, Fremont's Headquarters, Jefferson City, Missouri* (detail).

To remain newsworthy, drawings were sent from the field to the newspaper's offices as soon as and as often as possible, and the home office was expected to supply the finishing touches. Many drawings in the Becker Collection are covered with physical descriptions and explicit directions for the engravers. Lovie's drawings, in particular, are full of elaborate and colorful instructions: "Make scene as wild as possible, I am entirely disabled by diptheria [*sic*] Quincy or heaven knows what. Contrast the black smoke well with the powder smoke. Finish gunboats from former sketches, no changes except pilot houses who have this shape."[30] They also included the occasional tart reprimand: "Try and make the steamboats in good shape, you represent them generally as most unnatural boxes. Mortar boats."[31]

Of all the Special Artists, Lovie was probably most conscious of the historicity of his work, and owing to his prodigious gifts as a draftsman in combination with his almost prescient ability to discern the newsworthy, many of his drawings were turned into popular published engravings that became lasting representations of the war and were ingrained on the public imagination (fig. 3).[32] He had a facility for spotting the iconic, and due to his prior artistic training and career as a lithographer, he understood the work of the artists at *Leslie's* in New York City and how to compose for their medium, often executing drawings in graphite with a kind of clarity of linear patterning intrinsic to the art of engraving.

In the drawing *Camp Lily: Fremont's Headquarters at Jefferson City, Missouri* (plate 65), Lovie demonstrated his ability to create marks that would transfer gracefully into print. Precise crosshatching shows structure, and uniforms and tents are rendered with thin, discrete pencil marks not unlike those made by a burin. One may observe the almost prescriptive nature of Lovie's line

on the horse on the left and figures on the right (e.g., fig. 4). Crisp, diagonal directional movements and tonality are clearly articulated with marks that mimic an engraver's incisions as if Lovie were visually instructing the artists at the New York City office of *Leslie's* as to how the drawing should be translated to and excised from the wood.

The degree of finish allotted to the portraits, trees, topography, and sky, as well as slight scale discrepancies in figures, suggest that the artist had ample time to do a multi-sitting image. He also apparently had an audience: "You will see that this sketch is a little finer than most," Lovie wrote. "Reason, Mrs. Frémont and Lily took special interest in it, and, I hope that you will make a careful and pretty engraving of it."[33] There was much pageantry and little action at General John Frémont's headquarters, and Lovie was bored and unimpressed with the commander.[34] Lovie's portrayal of a stiff officer, with a feather in his hat, standing around and staring at nothing, aptly illustrates the pomp of Camp Lily, which another member of the Bohemian Brigade, Franc Wilkie of the *New York Times*, described as "a gigantic picnic, whose main qualities were display, vanity, ostentation..."[35] In certain drawings by Lovie,

Fig. 5. Henri Lovie, *Charge of Fremont's Body Guard at Springfield, Missouri* (detail).

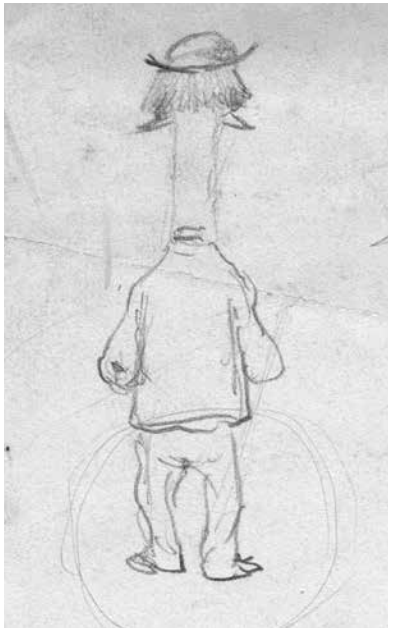


Fig. 6. Henri Lovie, *Outposts in Missouri: Camp Fremont at Norfolk* (detail from back of drawing), n.d. Graphite on wove paper, 6.8 x 9.5 in. (17.3 x 24.1 cm). CW–HL–MO–NDfv

however, not all visual information is easily understood nor was it intended to aid the engravers or to be translated into print. The *Charge of Fremont's Body Guard at Springfield, Missouri* (plate 66) is a curious mix of a thorough description of facts and responsible visual journalism combined with humorous elements whose meanings were, perhaps, comprehended only by Lovie. In the drawing, Lovie took great care to sketch the hillside and landscape near Springfield, Missouri, where a small contingent of General Frémont's cavalry charged and successfully routed a Confederate force. By utilizing standard spatial strategies—overlapping forms, receding road, soft smudges of background trees, and sharper outlines of foreground elements—Lovie created a convincing impression of the distance covered by Frémont's Body Guard. The attention paid to spatial interrelationships suggests that Lovie may have drawn the site before the charge occurred. The small sketch of a cavalry officer and notes about his dress imply that Lovie may have intended to create a more finished drawing at a later time. Lovie's motivation for drawing a strange, bearded, cartoonish figure squatting in the lower right corner is less obvious (fig. 5). Is it an impish self-portrait of the artist observing the scene? A formal, if lighthearted, device to establish scale? An amusement for the artist while he waited for the battle to commence? There are other drawings by Lovie in the Becker Collection with odd characters sketched on the backs of drawings, but the figure in *The Charge of Fremont's Body Guard* is unusual in its compositional significance (fig. 6). The ink in which he was rendered appears to be layered over the graphite—possibly added by a member of the staff at *Leslie's* in New York City or by Lovie himself after what turned out to be a minor Union victory.[36] The mysterious character is a reminder that drawing, even for a master producer of publicly consumed images like Lovie, is a private act—the method by which a sensitive observer makes his experience known to himself through graphic expressions. In Michael Ayrton's words, "it is a soliloquy before it becomes communication."[37]

Lovie's drawing—what can and cannot be known about it—is, like all images in the Becker Collection, an invitation to appreciate the information conveyed through graphic expression. Manipulating the formal properties of line, texture, tone, composition, and materials, each artist creates a document of his observed reality, which becomes a unique artifact of the private meeting the public. Every drawing is a repository of knowledge and an impression about the physical and psychological conditions under which images were produced and the event recorded, as well as a testament to the lasting role the individual artist plays in bearing witness to history.

## ENDNOTES

1 Albert A. Anderson, William Leonard Joyce, and Sandra K. Stelts, *Teaching America to Draw: Instructional Manuals and Ephemera, 1794–1925* (University Park: Pennsylvania State University Libraries, 2006), vii.

2 *Frank Leslie's Illustrated Newspaper*, "Our War Illustrations," July 6, 1861, 113.

3 William P. Campbell, *Civil War: A Centennial Exhibition of Eyewitness Drawings* (Washington D.C.: National Gallery, 1961), 107–108.

4 Anderson, Joyce, and Stelts, vii–xi.

5 Massachusetts Drawing Act of 1870, quoted in Richard Cary, *Critical Art Pedagogy: Foundations for Postmodern Art Education* (New York, N.Y.: Garland, 1998), 91.

6 J.G. Chapman, *The American Drawing-Book: A Manual for the Amateur, and Basis for Study for the Professional Artist*, rev. ed. (1877; repr., New York, N.Y.: Barnes, 1878), 170.

7 Kevin G. Barnhurst and John Nerone, "Civic Picturing vs. Realist Photojournalism: Photojournalism and the Regime of the Illustrated News, 1850–1901," *Design Issues* 16, no. 1 (2000): 63.

8 Ibid.

9 In preparation for the Battle for Port Royal, the North assembled a fleet of more than seventy-five vessels and twelve thousand soldiers. Before reaching Port Royal, many of the vessels were blown off course and damaged. Others never arrived. Newspapers, which had few correspondents aboard naval ships, ran conflicting and erroneous accounts of the operation. Crane, who was an eyewitness, later wrote to *Leslie's* to correct the record.

10 On the front of his drawing, Crane writes, "U.S. troops all charging Bayonets in double file ... Rebel field piece in woods ... NB There wer [*sic*] no wonded [*sic*] officers in this charge. On the back, he writes, "while exposed to a murderous cross-fire of grape canister, & musketry ... Gallant and most daring bayonet charge of U.S. troops under Brig Gen Stevens upon a rebel fort at James Island, S.C. on the 16th of June." William T. Crane, *Bayonet Charge on a Rebel Fort at James Island, South Carolina* (transcribed text from front of drawing), June 16, 1862. Graphite and ink wash on wove paper, 5.3 x 15.0 in. (13.5 x 38.1 cm). CW–WC–SC–6–16–62

11 Henry Haymond, *History of Harrison County, West Virginia: from the Early Days of Northwestern Virginia to the Present* (Morgantown, W.Va: Acme, 1910), 327–329.

12 On the back of the drawing, Lovie writes "a letter will reach you from Headquarters containing biographical notes. I am on my to Cairo. Sketch of Clarksburg etc tomorrow. I will stop at Yellow Springs at Mrs. Rosecranz [*sic*] and get you a daguerrotype [*sic*] or photograph of the general. The sketch is very good likeness of all." Henri Lovie, *Brigadier General Rosecrans and Staff in Clarksburg, West Virginia* (transcribed text from back of drawing), July 1861. Graphite on wove paper, 14.0 x 9.0 in. (35.6 x 22.9 cm). CW–HL–WV–7–61d

13 William Fletcher Thompson, *The Image of War: Pictorial Reporting of the American Civil War* (New York, N.Y.: Yoseloff, 1960) 76.

14 James E. Taylor, *Loyal Dunkards at General Crook's Headquarters*, (transcribed text from back of drawing), October 2, 1864. Graphite on heavy gauge wove paper, 6.5 x 10.0 in. (16.5 x 25.4 cm). CW–JT–VA–10–2–64.

15 Thompson, 88–90, 118.

16 The expression "in the sap" refers to a ditch or trench across open ground that was exposed to enemy fire. A description of the image, some of which Schell wrote on the original drawing and the rest of which appeared when the newspaper image was published, reads: "Siege of Vicksburg The opening in the bank to the left of the house is the entrance to the covered way by which the rebel works are approached. The operation of mining the enemy's works is here shown. This was conducted by Captain Hickenloper, Chief Engineer of General McPherson's Staff. The sketch was made in the sap, within fifteen feet of the Confederate Fort Hill, behind which lay the Confederate sharpshooters, held at bay by Coonskin and other riflemen eagerly

on the lookout for a Confederate head." Frank Leslie, *Famous Leaders and Battle Scenes of the Civil War* (New York, N.Y.: Mrs. Frank Leslie, 1896), 33. ("Coonskin" was a famous marksman named Henry C. Foster, who fought with the 22nd Indiana Infantry and often wore a raccoon fur cap.)

17 Thompson, 86.

18 Joseph Becker, *Something to Coax the Appetite: Exhuming the Bodies of Union Soldiers during the Siege of Petersburg* (transcribed text from back of drawing), November 2, 1864. Graphite on wove paper, 13.3 x 9.8 in. (33.8 x 24.9 cm). CW–JB–VA–11–2–64.

19 Drew Gilpen Faust, *This Republic of Suffering: Death and the American Civil War* (New York, N.Y: Knopf, 2008), 87. For a more extensive description and a lucid analysis of circumstances surrounding internment during the Civil War and the development of the funeral industry, see, in particular, 61–101.

20 Joseph Becker, "On the Spot," *Frank Leslie's Popular Monthly*, January–June 1894, 621.

21 Joseph Becker, "Petersburg," *Frank Leslie's Popular Monthly*, January–June 1894, 740–750. For part of the Petersburg campaign, Joseph Becker was in residence with General Warren at the Blick Tavern (headquarters of the 5th Army Corps) in Petersburg, Virginia.

22 Joseph Becker, *Battle near Poplar Springs Church: Peeble's Farm* (transcribed text from back of drawing), September 30, 1864. Graphite on wove paper, each panel 10.0 x 6.5 in. (25.4 x 16.5 cm). CW–JB–9–30–64d+e.

23 Major General Warren in a letter to General Griffin, October 27, 1864, in *The War of the Rebellion: A Compilation of the Official Records of the Union and Confederate Armies* (published under the direction of the Hon. Daniel S. Lamont, Secretary of War, Washington, D.C.: Government Printing Office, 1893; series 1, vol. 42, pt. 3, p. 386, eHistory@The Ohio State University, http://ehistory.osu.edu/osu/sources/recordView.cfm?page=386&dir=089 (accessed July 20, 2009) (hereafter referred to as *O.R.*). The Union command's knowledge of the geography around Vaughn Road and Hatcher Creek was insubstantial and in some cases erroneous. This led to much confusion among the Northern troops and caused commanding officers to commit tactical errors. For additional references to the role the landscape played in the Union loss at Hatcher Creek, see *O.R.* 389–403.

24 Joseph Becker, *Battle in the Woods at Vaughn Road near Hatcher Creek* (transcribed text from back of drawing), October 27, 1864. Graphite on lined paper with embossed insignia "CONGRESS", 16.0 x 10.0 in. (40.6 x 25.4 cm). CW–JB–VA–10–27–64a. "The fight on Thur 27th ... The Battle in the Woods ... Our line of battle composed of the 5th and 9th Corps pressing the rebels on the afternoon of the 27th [Signed] Joseph Becker ... The road in the foreground crowded with stragglers and wounded men ... I send this on government paper my paper and baggage are in the wagon which was sent to the rear with the train on the commencement of the battle." What Becker calls the "Battle in the Woods at Vaughn Road" is also known as the "Battle of Boydton Plank Road" or "Hatcher's Creek." Official reports initially put the total number of Union enlisted men captured or missing at five hundred fifty-six, wounded at nine hundred sixty-two, killed at one hundred fifty-two. *O.R.*, series 1, vol. 42, pt. 1, p. 160. Today, the total number of Union casualties and losses—largely due to the great number of wounded men left in the woods—is estimated to be more than one thousand seven hundred.

25 *O.R.*, series 1, vol.42, pt. 3, p. 403.

26 Philip S. Rawson, *Drawing the Appreciation of the Arts/3* (London, Eng.: Oxford University Press, 1969), 92.

27 Joshua Brown, *Beyond the Lines: Pictorial Reporting, Everyday Life, and the Crisis of Gilded-Age America* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2002), 69–70.

28 William T. Crane, *Siege of Charleston: General View of the Bombardment of Battery Gregg and Fort Wagner* (transcribed text from front of drawing), September 5, 1863. Graphite and ink wash on wove paper, 6.8 x 19.5 in. (17.3 x 49.5 cm). CW–WC–SC–9–5–63.

29 Joseph Becker, *Battle near Poplar Springs Church: Peeble's Farm* (transcribed text on back of drawing).

30 Henri Lovie, *Battle for Fort Henry, Tennessee* (transcribed text from front of drawing), February 6, 1862. Graphite on wove paper, each panel 13.8 x 10.0 in. (35.1 x 25.4 cm). CW–HL–TN–2–6–62

31 Henri Lovie, *Attack on Rebel Fort on the Tennessee Shore* (transcribed text from front of drawing), March 17, 1862. Graphite and black chalk on wove paper, 9.0 x 14.0 in. (22.9 x 35.6 cm). CW–HL–TN–3–17–62

32 See, for instance, Henri Lovie, *Bravest of the Brave: General Rosecrans Reconnoitering*, January 1863. Graphite on wove paper, 17.0 x 13.8 in. (43.2 x 35.1 cm). CW–HL–TN–1–63a (plate 76), which was not only published in *Leslie's* but also sold as a popular print during and after the war. It was also featured on sheet music; for an example of the image, see Mark E. Neely and Harold Holzer, "Rosecrans Victory March" in *The Union Image: Popular Prints of the Civil War North* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1999), 46. In the text on the original drawing, Lovie wrote, "I think you can make a splendid historical picture of this, do your best. Put R more in the center of the picture the ground is rising and in a slumpy field, be sure and make a tip-top portrait."

33 Henri Lovie, *Camp Lily: Fremont's Headquarters at Jefferson City, Missouri* (transcribed text from front of drawing), October 5, 1861. Graphite on wove paper, 7.5 x 9.5 in. (19.1 x 24.1 cm). CW–HL–MO–10–5–61.

34 Thompson, 64.

35 Franc Wilkie, quoted in Thompson, 64.

36 Another possible interpretation of the drawing is that Lovie recognized the battle for what it was: "A relatively minor affair [that] was blown up by Frémont partisans into a full-scale battle." E.B. Long, Barbara Long, and Bruce Catton, *The Civil War Day by Day: An Almanac 1861–1865* (New York, N.Y.: Da Capo, 1971), 131. His humorous addition to his own record of the event may be a critical commentary on the insignificance of the military engagement.

37 Michael Ayrton, *Golden Sections*. (London, Eng.: Methuen, 1957), 64, cited by Edward Hill, *The Language of Drawing* (Englewood Cliffs, N.J.: Prentice-Hall, 1966), 43.

# SEEING THE ARCHIVES
## HOW WE KNOW THROUGH DOCUMENTS

James M. O'Toole

**In the age of twenty-four-hour cable-television news, wireless access to the World Wide Web, video clips on YouTube and Facebook, cameras in every cell phone, and new technologies that may be invented before you finish reading this paragraph, events are widely seen and known the moment they happen.** A political candidate makes a speech on the other side of the country, and there it is—literally in the palm of your hand. Scenes of vast public crowds or the most private soliloquies make their way through the ether, where they can be retrieved and experienced by those absent from the event and unknown to the people involved. The classics of literature can be downloaded into a virtual library, though extended reading in this form has yet to catch on. Few have propped a portable screen on their stomachs to read *War and Peace* while lying in bed, but this may happen someday. Such apparent miracles are so commonplace that we take little notice of them. Indeed, they set new standards of expectation for what we can do and know. "What!" we exclaim to ourselves or someone else, "you *don't* have a [insert the name of the latest technological gadget]?"

It was not always so. Until relatively recently in historical time, information moved around in society much more slowly than it does today. News of the Battles of Lexington and Concord, for example, which began the American Revolution, spread with a speed that seemed remarkable in its day but would be at a snail's pace in ours. It took roughly a week for accounts of the "shot heard round the world" to reach New York City; ten more days to get to Charleston, South Carolina; and another two weeks to reach Savannah, Georgia. Even a generation later, news still traveled slowly. The voters in backcountry Kentucky who cast their ballots for Thomas Jefferson in the fall of 1800 waited three weeks before knowing the outcome of the election. Other technologies, including the railroad and the telegraph, progressively reduced these times throughout the nineteenth century. Virtually the entire nation, even newspaper readers in far-off San Francisco, knew of Abraham Lincoln's assassination in Washington, D.C., the morning after it happened in April 1865. During the twentieth century, broadcast radio and television sped the process once again. During the 1930s, citizens everywhere sat snugly by their own firesides while President Franklin Roosevelt had a "chat" with them. Thereafter, the rate of change gathered ever more speed until we arrived at our current ability to know immediately of far-flung events and experience them as they happen.[1]

These developments surely represented progress, but how do we now recover knowledge of events from the more remote past? If it took days and weeks for news to spread even at the time, how much more difficult it is for those who live decades and centuries later to know about important events.

Since no one is left today who experienced the American Revolution or the Civil War firsthand, we must find other means to recover those memories, both individual and collective. This is where the collections of documentary evidence commonly called archives are essential: they allow us to study past experiences and to contemplate their meaning. Archives tell their stories in a variety of forms and formats. They may be handwritten letters and diaries, printed official reports, or heavy accounting ledgers. They may be sketches and drawings, such as those of the Becker Collection, which, thanks to the improved reproductive technology of their own day, brought the immediacy of battle to readers in the North and South. For the more recent past, they include still and moving photographs, sound recordings, and computer disks and files. Knowing how these archives are assembled and used helps us learn more from the information they contain.

The word archives—until recently always spelled with a final *s*, even when it was a singular noun—had a very specific original meaning. In ancient Athens, the *archeion* was the center of government and by extension the building that housed the records and documents of that government. These included such official records as the results of judicial proceedings, but they might also include private contracts, kept as ongoing evidence of their validity. Such records came in many shapes and sizes. They could be written with brushes and ink on papyrus scrolls—the invention of alphabetic writing by the Greeks around the eighth century B.C.E. had provided an efficient system for reducing the complex sounds of the oral world to a set of easily remembered symbols—or they might be inscribed on monuments set up in the public square. In the intervening millennia, the word archives came to designate a host of materials, each of them useful for recording information for current and future use. As literacy spread, ordinary people too became the makers and keepers of archives.[2]

These documentary records are usually created for a number of reasons, none exclusive of the others.[3] Sometimes, records are made for purely personal reasons. The handwritten names in the family Bible, the videotape of a wedding, the album or memory chip full of snapshots from last summer's family vacation—these are the records in our personal archives. Diaries, autobiographies, and now blogs fall into this same category. Such items embody the very meaning of our word record, which derived from the Latin *recordare*. Combining the word for the heart (*cor*) with the verb to give (*dare*), to record (*re-cor-dare*) is to create a means for giving back to the heart some event or emotion, powerfully meaningful to us, that we wish to preserve so we may experience it again.

Other kinds of records are more clearly social in character, reflecting the interplay between individuals and the larger collective groups of which they are a part. Minutes of meetings, records of participation in religious rituals and sacraments, and the college yearbook or the cookbook of club members' favorite recipes are all records that document the interaction of individuals with the larger social groups of which they are a part. Such records are potent agents for creating and sustaining communities, both real and imagined, and over time they give their own gifts back to the heart. They allow members of these groups to share common experiences, just as the Becker drawings allowed far-flung readers to know the realities of war, labor, and immigration.

Legal and economic motivations provide a third reason for creating records. The ownership and management of property, the tracking of monetary transactions, and the protection of the rights of citizens or (in totalitarian states) the systematic violation of those rights—these activities produce records that can be consulted and made useful again in the future. Long overlooked treaties have helped reassert land rights of Native Americans, while the eerily meticulous records of prison camps have assisted in identifying and prosecuting war criminals. Still other kinds of records are purely instrumental: they are tools that allow us to do something else. Blueprints help us build a building that has a certain aesthetic appearance and does not fall down. Maps help us get from here to there, whether those maps are in hard copy, downloaded from a Web site, or visible on a screen in the dashboard of the car. Even that handwritten note in our wallet or desk drawer reminding us of the several different PINs we have for various accounts is an example of an instrumental record: it helps us log on when we are confused or forgetful.

Finally, some records are of a largely symbolic nature. Elaborately decorated compilations of Holy Scriptures are carried in processions and venerated in many religious traditions, but the best example of the symbolic power of records may be found closer to home: the college diploma. There are few practical uses for this archival document—almost no one ever asks to see it—and yet how highly we value it. Family members take a photograph of the very moment when it is placed into our hands. We frame the diploma, hang it on the wall, and gaze at it happily in later years, even if it is written in a language (usually Latin) we cannot understand. Its value comes from its power to give back to our hearts significant experiences and to symbolize our accomplishments. From all these motives for creating records, each of us

leaves a documentary footprint. Whether we realize it or not, we are all the makers and keepers of archives.

Sometimes, these personal archival collections assume a more formal status, and they come to be preserved in institutions established expressly for that purpose. There are countless Old World antecedents, but in the United States two general types of archives have been common—those in the public records tradition and those in the private manuscripts tradition.

The public records tradition began with European settlement in North America; governments were in the business of archives from the first. As early as 1626, the colonists at Jamestown in Virginia had established a system for recording land sales. All the colonies maintained so-called vital records (those of births, marriages, and deaths) in, as one early Massachusetts statute put it, "a book to be kept for that purpose." As time went on, citizens simply expected that their governments would be the keepers of reliable records, which could be called on when needed. The town hall, a latter-day *archeion*, set aside space for records, and town clerks were charged with the responsibility to keep them accurately. During his travels through the country during the 1830s, Alexis de Tocqueville noted the importance of these collections of public archives. They conveyed, he thought, a more "complete idea of the duties of society toward its members" than was the case in Europe, where citizens were more likely to be reminded of their duties to the state. Jurisdictions everywhere established archives to maintain such records: in 1901, the territory of Hawaii built the first building expressly designed as an archives, and in 1934, the Federal government (somewhat tardily) organized the National Archives and built a home for it.[4]

A second impulse for the care of archives came in what is called the private manuscripts tradition. Shortly after the American Revolution, some of those who had participated in that great upheaval took steps to preserve the memory of what they had done. "The present times exhibit so critical and important a scene," said the Reverend Jeremy Belknap, that "information impartially collected should descend" to posterity. The information that was in "books, pamphlets, manuscripts and records," if carefully preserved, would "rescue the true history of this country from the ravages of time and the effects of ignorance and neglect." To further these lofty goals, Belknap and his friends organized the Massachusetts Historical Society in 1791, the first private historical society in the United States. Their example has been followed ever since. These private collections have broadened Belknap's confessedly elitist approach so that documentation from people of all sorts and conditions is now available. Town historical societies preserve the papers of local individuals and institutions; ethnic and religious organizations gather the papers of prominent—and not so prominent—members of their communities; colleges and universities establish archives to preserve their own records and collect literary, artistic, and other manuscripts; archives devoted to particular groups (women, African Americans, sports enthusiasts) flourish. Whereas public archives preserve the official records of government, these private manuscripts preserve the richer stories of real people and their deeds, both significant and ordinary.[5]

Regardless of their origin or institutional setting, all these archives undertake similar tasks. The first of these is the responsibility to identify and to save those records that will have enduring value. At its most basic level, this entails their literal preservation, rescuing them from a moldy basement, unheated attic, or obsolete hardware and software, and then transferring them to a repository where their physical survival is better ensured. More importantly, archives select the documents they wish to add to their collection—a task that has become more complicated in the aftermath of the paperwork explosion of the twentieth century. We live in a world of records-abundance rather than records-scarcity: the weekly report is replaced by the monthly report, which is replaced by the quarterly report, which is replaced by the semi-annual report, which is replaced by the annual report. No archives can or should preserve all of these, just as individuals need not keep their canceled checks from twenty years ago. Setting standards is essential for making these appraising judgments: Where are the fullest, most informative records? Are the experiences of all ranks of society represented in the archives? Valuable information must be preserved, but, just as important, insignificant information must be weeded out so that forests of meaning can emerge from all the particular historical trees.

After this, archives organize their holdings, first understanding what these documents are, where they came from, and how they were originally made and kept. Then, the records can be described in catalogues so that others may understand them too. Finally comes the most important task for the archives: sharing knowledge of what they hold with those who want to learn from the information they contain. Such users of archives are often thought of as professional historians, but most archivists will point out that the vast majority of their clients are not scholars. Far more common among the archives' users are the genealogist tracing the family's generations, the lawyer seeking to follow the chain of ownership of a piece of property, the

auditor reconstructing financial transactions, the contractor studying the blueprints of the century-old building before repairing the roof, the writer or filmmaker seeking images of real people from the past.[6]

It is in this last stage, making the archival records available to anyone interested, that the work of the archivist connects to the public. What is it that those who study archives may know from them? What sorts of information about the past and its people can be extracted from collections of archives? The possibilities are almost endless and often surprising. Manuscript letters, whether written by a Founding Father or an immigrant describing the hardships and hopes of life in a new land, yield many insights, both those that are explicit and those that lie between the lines. Photographs of street scenes, taken perhaps to highlight a particular building or business, can also answer unanticipated questions: What are the people on the sidewalk wearing? Are there horses or automobiles in the street? What does that sign on the building next door say?[7]

Before the invention and spread of photography, it was manuscript drawings such as those in the Becker Collection that conveyed this kind of information. Its value as an archives—with the drawings' ability to convey the real experiences of ordinary people across time and space—is multi-layered. Joseph Becker and his colleagues followed the troops so as to be able to convey to the readers of *Frank Leslie's Illustrated Newspaper* and *Harper's Magazine* how the war was proceeding. They followed the railroad workers, the Chinese immigrants, and the freed slaves so as to convey a sense of the sweeping social changes underway during their lifetimes. In the process, they captured many other dimensions of mid-nineteenth-century American life. Looked at from one perspective, these drawing seem to tell merely differing dimensions of the same story. In fact, they tell many stories, and they connect modern viewers with those who inhabited that foreign country that is the past. We view them with our eyes, but if we listen we can also hear them speak.

## ENDNOTES

1 Richard D. Brown, *Knowledge is Power: The Diffusion of Information in Early America, 1700–1865* (New York, N.Y.: Oxford University Press, 1989), especially chapter 10; see also the maps in Glyndon Garlock Van Deusen, *The Jacksonian Era, 1828–1848* (New York, N.Y.: Harper and Row, 1959), 4–5.

2 In recent years, there has been a flowering of scholarship on ancient literacy and the role of archives. For the outlines of the discussion, see Ernst Posner's classic *Archives in the Ancient World* (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1972; reis. Chicago, Ill.: Society of American Archivists, 2003); and James P. Sickinger, *Public Records and Archives in Classical Athens* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1999). For scholarship on even earlier archives, see Maria Brosius, ed., *Ancient Archives and Archival Traditions: Concepts of Record-Keeping in the Ancient World* (New York, N.Y.: Oxford University Press, 2003).

3 For an elaboration of some of what follows, see James M. O'Toole and Richard J. Cox, *Understanding Archives and Manuscripts* (Chicago, Ill.: Society of American Archivists, 2006), 10–21.

4 A good overview of colonial record-keeping practices is George Leo Haskins, "The Beginning of the Recording System in Massachusetts," *Boston University Law Review* 21 (1941): 281–304; despite its restrictive title, this article discusses practices in all the English colonies. For Tocqueville's comments on the importance of local record-keeping, see Alexis de Tocqueville, *Democracy in America*, trans. Harvey Claflin Mansfield and Delba Winthrop (Chicago, Ill.: University of Chicago Press, 2000), 41, 60, and elsewhere.

5 On Belknap and his motives, see Louis Leonard Tucker, *The Massachusetts Historical Society: A Bicentennial History, 1791–1991* (Boston, Mass.: The Society, 1995), especially chapter 1; quotations at 7 and 16. Some sense of the growth of private archives may be had by comparing three twentieth-century efforts to list and describe them. Philip M. Hamer's *Guide to Archives and Manuscripts in the United States* (New Haven, Conn.: Yale University Press, 1961) presents information about thirteen hundred repositories across the country. Fifteen years later, the *Directory of Archives and Manuscript Repositories in the United States* (Washington, D.C.: National Historical Publica-

tions and Records Commission, 1978) identified nearly twice as many, and a decade after that a second edition, *Directory of Archives and Manuscript Repositories in the United States* (Phoenix, Ariz.: Oryx Press, 1988), found that the number had almost doubled again to nearly four thousand two hundred. This growth represented both the establishment of new repositories and better reporting of those that already existed.

6 For an overview of the work that archives do, see O'Toole and Cox, *Understanding Archives*, "The Archivist's Task: Responsibilities and Duties," in *Understanding Archives and Manuscripts*, 113–132. There are many interesting studies of the nature and dilemmas of modern record-keeping: see, for example, JoAnn Yates, *Control Through Communication: The Rise of System in American Management* (Baltimore, Md.: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1989); and Deidre Simmons, *Keepers of the Record: The History of the Hudson's Bay Company Archives* (Montreal, QC: McGill-Queen's University Press, 2007).

7 Elisabeth Kaplan and Jeffrey Mifflin, "Mind and Sight: Visual Literacy and the Archivist," *American Archivist* 21 (1996): 107–127.

# SPECIAL ARTISTS OF THE CIVIL WAR

## AMERICA'S FIRST "PHOTOJOURNALISTS"

Harry L. Katz

**During the Civil War, Special Artists were in their glory: At that time, they were the only graphic journalists capable of depicting the action and drama of newsworthy events as they happened.** They were also among the first generation of correspondents embedded with U.S. troops; they followed the soldiers from the opening salvos at Fort Sumter in Charleston Harbor to the climactic surrender of the Confederate army at Appomattox Court House. Special Artists rendered the war with intensity and immediacy for a public eagerly reviewing the war's weekly progress in the new—and increasingly popular—pictorial periodicals.

One of the country's most important, yet least known, archives of extant Civil War drawings is the Becker Collection—the finest collection of Civil War drawings in private hands. Composed entirely of drawings by artists employed by *Frank Leslie's Illustrated Newspaper* (*Leslie's*), it contains several hundred drawings, including landmark works that historians have long thought lost or destroyed. Beginning his career as a lowly gofer working for *Leslie's*, the self-taught artist Joseph Becker worked his way into a staff position and by 1863 gained a field assignment. During his long tenure with the journal, he came to know the other artists and gathered representative examples of their work, assembling an astonishing array of original drawings made by many of his most celebrated colleagues. Among them, Henri Lovie, who produced drawings from the Battle of Shiloh (the Battle of Pittsburg Landing), and Frederic (Fred) Schell, whose remarkable views of the Siege of Vicksburg are of immense value to historians, as no other artists recorded similar images. Becker's own scenes of daily life in camp, particularly that of African Americans, also offer a fresh perspective on the war. While many of these images exist as published wood engravings based on the drawings, the presence of the antecedents dramatically deepens our appreciation of the draftsmen's skills and contributions to American journalism and American art as well as the human cost of warfare. Like veterans themselves, these drawings survived the war. Unlike the long-dead warriors, they remain with us to this day, telling the story of the Civil War as it has never been told (fig. 1).

The tradition of combat art in America reaches back to the colonial era and the British topographical draftsmen and soldier-artists, such as Thomas Davies, who drew the battles that brought England defeat and the United States its destiny to be a nation. American draftsmen began documenting combat during the War of 1812 and the Mexican-American War (1846–1848)—even as the country's first wartime photographers made their way south onto battlefields across the border. Although photography had advanced by the 1860s, it could not yet capture action shots; thus, newspaper publishers and editors had to rely upon salaried or freelance amateur or professional draftsmen in the field to draw images of the Civil War for the pictorial press.

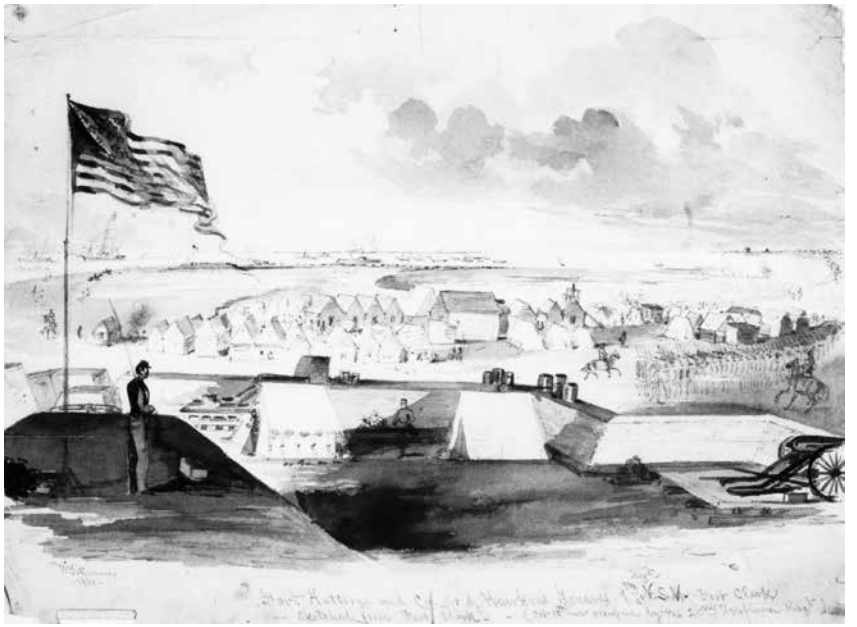


Fig. 1. William T. Crane, *Fort Hatteras and Camp of Hawkins Zouaves*, October 13, 1861. Graphite and ink wash on wove paper, 9.8 x 13.3 in. (24.9 x 33.8 cm). CW–WC–NC–10–13–61

A generation later, during the run-up to the Spanish-American War (1898), newspaper publisher William Randolph Hearst apocryphally cabled illustrator Frederic Remington: "You furnish the pictures and I'll furnish the war." They both produced: Hearst got his war and Remington his commission for images that sensationalized the American war effort. Other illustrators, such as newspaper draftsman and future member of the Ashcan School William Glackens, who produced grim and realistic frontline drawings of the so-called splendid little war for *McClure's Magazine*, came closer to the truth.[1]

American combat artists continued to provide compelling drawings of combat and military life through two world wars and conflicts in Korea and Vietnam. The work of such courageous photographers of World War II as Robert Capa, for example, found its counterpart in the drawings made by Howard Brodie and others. Most recently, in Iraq, artist Steven Mumford has given us graphic glimpses of the war that no photographer could capture. In an interview, Mumford said "if photojournalism captures a decisive moment, drawing is more about lingering with a place and editing the scene in a wholly subjective way"[2] (fig. 2).

During the Civil War, Special Artists often provided the most accurate reporting of what had transpired in the field. At a time when verbal or written reports often were confused, the drawings revealed what really had happened and who actually was involved. In April 1862, from the front lines in Northern Virginia, Edwin Forbes reported the following:

> I send you a batch of sketches which I am sure will interest your readers. They have been taken at considerable risk for the country is overrun with small gangs of sneaking Secessionists, who are as blood-thirsty as [the infamous Confederate general] Albert Pike. For one day I got an escort of ten men and made some sketches in comparative safety, which I herewith forward. All who have seen them say they are very accurate. I need hardly assure you that I do my best to make them so, as fidelity to fact is, in my opinion, the first thing to be aimed at.[3]

Photographers simply could not keep up; exposure times in cameras still were too slow to capture movement. And, even if cameras had been up to the

Fig. 2. Henri Lovie, *"Tigers" of the Bloody Ninth*, July 1861. Graphite on wove paper, 7.8 x 10.5 in. (19.8 x 26.7 cm). CW–HL–WV–7–61c

job, the technology required to reproduce photographs directly in newspapers without the intervening work of a draftsman to copy the photograph by hand onto a wood engraving block had not been invented yet. (Photographs reproduced as wood engravings accounted for just fifteen percent of published newspaper illustrations.) Only a very small number of nineteenth-century Americans viewed the static, posed images of war being produced by such pioneering field photographers as Mathew Brady and Alexander (Alex) Gardner. Their work—and the prints produced by their professional rivals—could only be seen by visiting one of the photographic studios scattered sparsely throughout the nation or by attending an exhibition at fairs hosted by regional organizations of the Sanitation Commission or the Soldiers' Relief Association.

Within the popular pictorial press, draftsmen filled a critical niche. By creating accurate combat drawings made from close, on-the-spot observation, the Special Artists were uniquely able to convey to the public the boredom, chaos, bravery, and terror of the Civil War. Their collective genius as visual reporters lay in their ability to identify quickly the focal point of a scene, blocking out telling details in the composition within minutes and fleshing out their drawings later while memories were still fresh in their minds. These eyewitness drawings, made in the field during or just after the frenzy of battle, were sent to New York City (virtually all of their offices were located in lower Manhattan), where they were converted into woodcuts by engravers for reproduction in the illustrated weeklies.

Despite the fact that many of these drawings represent compelling and accurate records of the war, some people still doubt that they are reliable historical documents. Skeptical historians cite prominent New Yorker William Hoppin, who wrote the following in 1864:

> it is true that the illustrated newspapers are full of drawings, purporting to be pictures of important scenes; but the testimony of parties engaged shows that these representatives are, when not taken from photographs, not always reliable. The desire of producing striking effects sometimes overcomes all other considerations, and the truth is now and then sacrificed to the demand for dramatic action or pleasing play of light and shadow. Many of these designs are of little value ... Some of them are positively lying and fabulous.[4]

Photographic historian Michael Carlebach elaborates, "the utterly graphic and realistic portrayal of war was something entirely new, and contrasted significantly to the more imaginative and romantic work produced by sketch artists like Winslow Homer and Alfred R. [Alf] Waud."[5] Most critics have mistaken artistry for artifice in their judgment of the historical accuracy and value of Civil War drawings. They feel the truest depiction of the war is found in the thousands of photographs made by Brady, Gardner, and their fellow cameramen—even though these photographs could not capture battlefield action. This opinion is to be expected, since through more than one hundred fifty years of photographic history we have accepted the belief that the camera does not lie. It records whatever falls within its field of view. Although we now know from historian William A. Frassanito's research into such iconic Civil War images as the view of a dead rebel sharpshooter at the Devil's Den on the battlefield at Gettysburg by Timothy O'Sullivan and Gardner, enterprising photographers were not above staging scenes by moving corpses. The truth is, photographers could fudge the truth and draftsmen could get it right; the fussy Frassanito praised Waud (of *Harper's Weekly*) for his "obsessive concern for detail and accuracy" in his views of Gettysburg.[6]

While Civil War photographers could offer true images of landscapes and battlegrounds, only Special Artists could create minutely detailed depictions of actual combat, based on the shorthand studies they made from close firsthand observation. Like today's photojournalists, Special Artists put themselves in harm's way—in the heart and heat of the action—in order to capture accurate, informed, and realistic images of battle to satisfy the demands of a nation clamoring for battlefield news. Waud's younger brother, artist William Waud of *Leslie's*, remained in Charleston, South Carolina, through early 1861, furnishing illustrations for several months prior to the bombardment of Fort Sumter. The Northern journal's generally Democratic outlook made its Special Artists welcome in the city.[7]

Special Artists' accounts recall numerous chance encounters and narrow escapes at the front and in scouting parties. On the brink of destruction they found moments of beauty, as Lovie recorded on the evening prior to General Ambrose Burnside's advance across the Rappahannock River from Fredericksburg, Virginia, on December 12, 1862: "Although a slight mist shrouded the lower part of the scene, floating a few feet above the river, the moonlight was resplendent. The shore was crowded with troops, while the glimmer of the bayonets and the camp-fires made a picture never to be forgotten."[8] If not for the draftsmen's work, countless otherwise undocumented incidents and

Fig. 3. Edwin Forbes, *Gordon's and Crawford's Brigades: Battle of Cedar Mountain*, August 9, 1862. Graphite and wash on wove paper, 15.0 x 5.3 in. (38.1 x 13.5 cm). CW–EF–VA–8–9–62

events from the Civil War era would have been lost to history. Their drawings differ in size, color, finish, quality, and purpose, and each one presents a unique tale of creation—from inspiration and conception through production and publication. As works of art as well as visual reportage, they often convey emotional expression, drama, and picturesque beauty well beyond their documentary purpose (fig. 3).

Few of the draftsmen's works bear the signs of polished artistry—they were not, of course, created for exhibition or critical connoisseurship: they were to be reproduced in newspapers. In 1860, two rival illustrated weekly newspapers, both published in New York City, dominated the national scene—*Leslie's* and *Harper's Weekly*. *Leslie's*, created in 1855, led the way. *Harper's Weekly*, created in 1857, followed closely. *Leslie's*, the brainchild of veteran English pressman Henry Carter (Frank Leslie, 1821–1880), routinely boasted print runs in excess of one hundred thousand copies even before the war began; special editions could top three times that number. From the battlefield, Special Artists dispatched their drawings to the newspaper's headquarters in Manhattan, where teams of engravers transcribed them onto wood blocks to be printed in the illustrated news. After a wood engraving was cut, the block was electrotyped and copied onto metal plates in preparation for printing on the journal's huge rotary presses. It usually took three to four weeks for the drawn image to appear in print. Draftsmen received from about five to twenty-five dollars per drawing *Leslie's* published.

Alf Waud is known to have carried a sidearm and fired his pistol at rebel troops on several occasions. He was an exception, however. In general, Special Artists traveled lightly and unarmed, as William Fletcher Thompson notes in his book *The Image of War*:

> To acquire mobility, the sketch artists burdened themselves with a minimum of baggage. Their clothing was entirely utilitarian: tough shoes or jack boots for protection, coats and trousers of a strong fabric that they could wear for weeks and even months without a change, and a wide-brimmed hat to shade their eyes and sketchpads from the sun. Alf Waud wore a holstered pistol, but most of the artists did not carry weapons. A large portfolio suspended from a strap over the shoulder contained paper, pencils, crayons, charcoal, ink, pens, brushes, and a few water colors. For battle sketching they ordinarily made pencil drawings, but for camp scenes they often preferred crayon and charcoal. They used ink and water colors for the more detailed illustrations they submitted to their publishers. A pair of powerful field glasses, a sure-footed horse, a rolled blanket, saddlebags with a change of clothing, a few rations, and extra drawings supplies completed their essential equipment.[9]

Understandably, there was a lot of turnover among the Special Artists, for they lived the life of soldiers and suffered the same privations (plate 79). Alf Waud, Theodore Davis, and perhaps William Crane, were the only Civil War draftsmen who had the will, courage, and constitution to follow the armies from Fort Sumter through the end of the war (and, in Waud's case, into Reconstruction). Like most Special Artists, Alf Waud's younger brother, William, appeared intermittently at the front; sometimes, like Crane and others, he covered a specific region. Special Artists were often attached to particular army corps or theaters of operation, and they were expected to illustrate engagements involving those troops. They lived among the troops, ate with the officers, and spent time with the soldiers, becoming familiar with them, sharing their hardships and perils, and suffering the same sorts of injuries and diseases as they did. Arthur Lumley and the Waud brothers, for example, were all severely debilitated by exhaustion and disease during the Seven Days' Battle (Peninsular Campaign) in spring 1862. James R. O'Neill, a part-time artist, was killed, while C.E.F. Hillen and Davis were wounded.

According to Davis, Alf Waud's colleague on the staff of *Harper's Weekly*, these were the qualities demanded of a professional draftsman:

Fig. 4. Edwin Forbes, *Front Royal on the Manassas Gap Railroad*, July 5, 1862. Graphite and wash on paper, 14.0 x 8.8 in. (35.6 x 22.4 cm). CW–EF–VA–7–5–62

> Total disregard for personal safety and comfort; an owl-like propensity to sit up all night and a hawky style of vigilance during the day; capacity for going on short food; willingness to ride any number of miles on horseback for just one sketch, which might have to be finished at night by no better light than that of a fire—this may give an inkling of some of it, and will, I trust, be sufficient to convince my readers that the frequently supposed mythical special was occasionally "on the spot."[10]

The Becker Collection portrays life only from the Union perspective. There is no surprise in this. The South's sole pictorial journal, the *Southern Illustrated News*, contained hardly any drawings of documentary merit and barely lasted two years (September 1862—November 1864) due to a lack of the essentials: artists, paper, pencils, pens, printing presses, subscribers, and transportation. While the South could boast of some soldier-artists, the only significant professional draftsman to follow the Southern war effort was veteran British combat illustrator Frank Vizetelly, whose drawings appeared irregularly in the *London Illustrated News*.

Each Special Artist brought his own style and character to bear on his work. Where such Special Artists as Lovie, Schell, Vizetelly, and Alf Waud often got down and dirty in the trenches, drawing dramatic vignettes of individual courage and terrible chaos, Forbes remained above the fray, positioning himself on nearby hillsides using binoculars so that he could draw entire battle scenes (fig. 4). Although he never reconciled himself to the sounds of combat or the sight of blood on the battlefield, Forbes made powerful representations of events on battlefields with his distant views of Burnside's Bridge, other features of the battlefield at Antietam, and other great Civil War sites. They leave indelible marks on our memory. Lovie, by comparison, never shied away from the realities of war. He rendered some of the earliest, most graphic depictions of war dead and wounded, which his publisher, Leslie, eagerly published. Lovie's views of the Battle of Shiloh, long thought lost or destroyed, offer panoramic, epic, and detailed eyewitness records of the momentous events that took place over the course of two days in April 1862 in southwestern Tennessee. At the Battle of Shiloh, the first large-scale bloody struggle of the war, Lovie was the only experienced Special Artist on hand, and he made the most of his presence. His ability to compose drawings depicting masses of men while capturing their exertions and expressions of fear, anger, maddened fury, and violence culminated in his Shiloh drawings. Among the best Civil War drawings by this excellent Special Artist—and one of the greatest portfolios created during the war—Lovie's work at Shiloh brought all of his artistic and journalistic instincts and experience to bear and revealed the bravery, chaos, and carnage of those terrible days (plate 71). Alexander Simplot, a young native of Iowa and self-taught illustrator, brought a more romantic and naïve outlook to the war during his two years with *Harper's Weekly*, while such seasoned draftsmen as the Schells combined technical facility with journalistic insight. Francis (Frank) Schell's Antietam

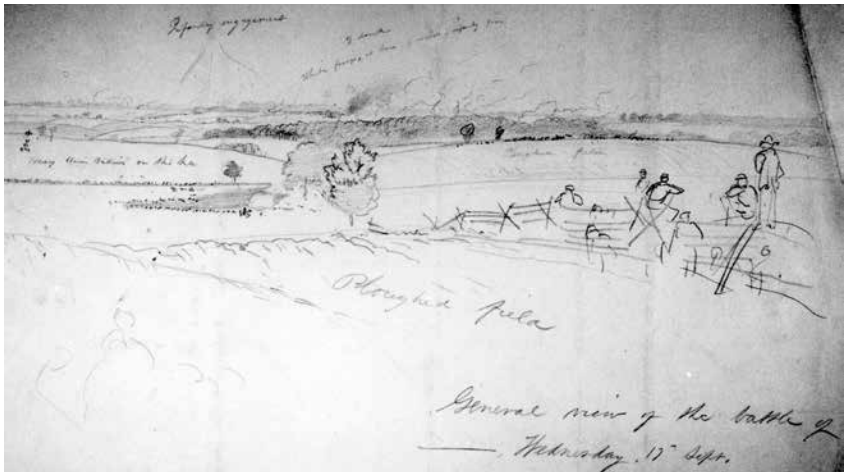


Fig. 5. Francis H. Schell, *Antietam: General View of the Battle*, September 17, 1862. Graphite on wove paper, 8.5 x 13.3 in. (21.6 x 33.8 cm). CW–FHS–MD–9–17–62b

drawings, for example, seem hurried and impressionistic; yet, they faithfully convey the chaotic pace of the fierce fighting as well as the gently swelling farmland and forests stitched by roads and fences (fig. 5). Fred Schell brought a documentarian's clear eye to his work on the Siege of Vicksburg. His drawings of the city's plight during the late spring of 1863 as the Army of the Tennessee, commanded by Union major general Ulysses S. Grant, tightened the noose around the besieged fortress city are remarkable for their authority and realism (plate 102). Other Special Artists made their mark as well: Andrew McCallum, Edward Mullen, and John Hillen were among those who created memorable, moving images of war preserved in the Becker Collection. Even under the stress and duress of combat conditions and constant fatigue, their compositions remain balanced: figures are well proportioned and modeled, faces are differentiated and expressive, and landscapes are recognizable and realistic. Realism and accuracy were the hallmarks of the draftsmen—harbingers of photojournalists, who looked through a lens and would one day make the draftsmen obsolete. The Special Artists' drawings—unique, timeless, and topical—recall their skills, dedication, and courage in becoming the first generation of American pictorial journalists to go to war.

## ENDNOTES

1 Illustrations by William Glackens are in Stephen Bonsal, "The Fight for Santiago" *McClure's Magazine*, October 1898, 517.

2 Kenneth Baker, "Picturing War: Artist Steve Mumford Went to Iraq Armed with Pen and Paint," *San Francisco Chronicle*, September 18, 2005.

3 Edwin Forbes, *Frank Leslie's Illustrated Newspaper*, April 12, 1862, 366.

4 *United States Army and Navy Journal and Gazette of the Regular and Volunteer Forces* (1864 and 1865).

5 Michael L. Carlebach, *The Origins of Photojournalism in America* (Washington, D.C.: Smithsonian Institution Press, 1992), 82

6 William A. Frassanito, *Early Photography at Gettysburg* (Gettysburg, Pa.: Thomas, 1995); on the position of the dead rebel soldier in Alexander Gardner's view of Devil's Den, see pages 268–273; on Frassanito's "profound respect" for Waud's Gettysburg sketches, see page 103.

7 *Frank Leslie's Illustrated Newspaper*, "The Only Reliable War Illustrations," April 27, 1861, cover.

8 *Frank Leslie's Illustrated Newspaper*, "Crossing the Rappahannock," December 27, 1862, 214.

9 William Fletcher Thompson, *The Image of War: The Pictorial Reporting of the American Civil War* (New York, N.Y.: Yoseloff, 1959), 81.

10 Theodore Davis, quoted in M. Paul Holsinger, ed., *War and American Popular Culture: A Historical Encyclopedia* (Westport, Conn.: Greenwood Press, 1999), 96.

# IN THE MIDST OF BATTLE

Judith Bookbinder

**The Special Artists whose drawings are in the Becker Collection recorded the processes of war and conveyed their personal perspectives in their battle images.** Taken together, these drawings are a testament to the talent and fortitude of the Special Artists, who made them under, perhaps, the worst conditions artists have ever encountered on an ongoing basis.[1] Often with bullets whizzing past their heads, smoke and noise filling the air, bodies falling left and right, and chaos on every side, they worked to draw the overall action or salient detail. After a battle, they returned to the scene to speak to those who had participated and record what they could not see during the fighting. They then developed their drawings, often working in cold, dank cabins or tents, if they were fortunate, or outside on the ground, if they were not.

For the purpose of this essay, selected battle drawings will introduce the Special Artists of *Frank Leslie's Illustrated Newspaper* (*Leslie's*) represented in the Becker Collection, place them at the sites of significant battles, and set out a general timeline of the war. For periods of time, each Special Artist was attached to, or embedded in, a particular division of the Union armies. The names and areas of operation of these armies were organized geographically, generally along major rivers. Special Artists often moved from regiment to regiment and army to army as circumstances changed; thus, a relatively small group of artists saw action throughout the numerous theaters of war—from the coastal campaigns of the Armies of the Potomac and the James to the more westerly campaigns of the Armies of the Tennessee, Ohio, and Cumberland. The artists of *Leslie's* are presented in the chronological order of the military actions depicted in their battle drawings in the Becker Collection.

## Edward S. Hall (active 1860–1862)

Edward Hall drew several of the earliest combat related scenes in the Becker Collection.[2] Hall was born in England around 1840, but by 1860 he was established as a book illustrator in New York City. He provided the illustrations for James Brady's novel *A Christmas Dream*.[3] Within a few weeks of the outbreak of war in April 1861, Frank Leslie sent Hall and Francis H. (Frank) Schell, another Special Artist, to cover the occupation of Baltimore by several Union regiments after a mob attacked the 6th Massachusetts Regiment. On April 19, believing that they were on friendly territory because Maryland remained part of the Union, the soldiers of the 6th Massachusetts disembarked from a train that had brought them from Boston and began to march through the city on their way to Washington, D.C., to join the Army of the Potomac. The presence of the Federal troops, who were unaware that many of the city's residents supported the Confederate cause, enflamed local sentiment, resulting in the riot and subsequent occupation of the city;[4] thus, the

soldiers Hall observed were in Baltimore to maintain order and reinforce Maryland's commitment to the Union.

Hall's drawings *Occupation of Baltimore* [2] (plate 62) and *People of Baltimore Witnessing the Erection of Fortifications by Warren Zouaves* (fig. 1) depict the tensions of the occupation. In the *Occupation of Baltimore*, he meticulously describes military uniforms and site features against an impressionistic background of smoke and cannon fire. At first glance, *People of Baltimore Witnessing the Erection of Fortifications by Warren Zouaves*, appears to present local residents in carefully rendered apparel enjoying a summer outing, until the viewer notices the outlines of soldiers in the distance methodically constructing their defensive fortification under a smoke-filled sky. Hall's drawings of the occupation of Baltimore capture the moment when the conflict began to intrude upon prewar normalcy.

The following year, after creating at least six drawings of the occupation of Baltimore during the spring and summer of 1861, Hall covered the war in Virginia. *Leslie's* published twenty-two of his drawings from this period. The Becker Collection contains drawings Hall made in Maryland during 1861.

Fig. 1. Edward S. Hall, *People of Baltimore Witnessing the Erection of the Fortifications by Warren Zouaves*, July or August 1861. Graphite on paper, 8.0 x 6.5 in. (20.3 x 16.5 cm). CW–ESH–MD–7–61

## Arthur Lumley (1837–1912)

The dramatic death of Colonel Elmer E. Ellsworth, commanding officer of the 11th New York Regiment (known as the New York Fire Zouaves) and the first Union officer killed in the war, became the subject of an unusual drawing that Arthur Lumley made in the aftermath of the incident. Lumley, who was born in Dublin, Ireland, came to the United States around 1840 and settled in Brooklyn. During the 1850s, he studied art at the National Academy of Design and supported himself by illustrating books, including *The Life and Adventures of Kit Carson*, *Wild Life; or, Adventures on the Frontier*, *Kit Kelvin's Kernels*, and *Sacred Poems*.[5]

In April 1861, Lumley encountered Ellsworth when he was assigned as a Special Artist to travel south from Washington, D.C., into Virginia with General Irwin McDowell's army, which would engage Confederate forces at Bull Run. Lumley made large panoramic drawings of Union troops in their initially successful attack and did closeup studies of the bayonet charge of the Fire Zouaves.[6] He was with the regiment when Ellsworth was killed in Alexandria, and he based his drawing on the description that Dr. Charles Grey, the regiment's doctor and first person on the scene after the shootings, gave him that night.[7]

The *Assassination of Colonel Ellsworth* (plate 83) captures the violence as the figure of Ellsworth lurches backward after being shot, and the attacker, in turn, falls backward as one of the Fire Zouaves kills him. The action seems all the more powerful for being contained in the tight space of an angular stairwell—an effect that was lost in the final engraving. That print appeared in *Leslie's* with the following caption:

> Murder of Colonel Ellsworth At The Marshall House,
> Alexandria, Va., May 24th, 1861

Colonel Ellsworth was passing the Marshall House in Alexandria, Va., when he saw a confederate flag waving above it. On the spur of the moment he entered the hotel, and ascending to the roof with two or three friends, cut the halyards and took possession of the flag. As he descended the stairs he was fired at by James W. Jackson, proprietor of the hotel. Colonel Ellsworth fell to the ground mortally wounded.[8]

The explosiveness of this drawing contrasts with the formal pace of Lumley's drawing *Army in Advance at Upton's Hill* (fig. 2). The 25th New York

Regiment stands in orderly review before its officers, while several contrabands (escaped slaves under the protection of the Union army) attend to chores nearby. An arc of tents encloses the figures, delineating the slope of the hill and echoing the topography of the distant landscape. The purposefulness of the scene contrasts markedly with the disorder of Lumley's assassination drawing. In 1862, Lumley went to work for the *New York Illustrated News*. In all, *Leslie's* and the *New York Illustrated News* published 298 of Lumley's wartime drawings. The Becker Collection contains drawings Lumley made in Virginia between 1861 and 1862.

After the war, Lumley illustrated *Kilpatrick and our Cavalry*, *The Culprit Fay*, *Harper's Bazaar*, *Our New West*, *Ten Years in Wall Street*, *Fanny Fern*, and *The Hand-Book of Wyoming and Guide to the Black Hills and Big Horn Regions*.[9] He also contributed drawings of social satire to the *Daily Graphic*, which was established in the early 1870s as the first illustrated daily newspaper in the United States.[10]

## William R. McComas (ca. 1840–1909)

Along with Lumley and Hall, William McComas was embedded with the Army of the Potomac during the early months of the war, and the *New York Illustrated News* published his drawings of the Northern Virginia campaign on June 29 and July 13, 1861. Soon thereafter, he joined up with Brigadier General Ulysses S. Grant and the Army of the Tennessee and drew the occupation of Paducah, Kentucky (a strategic location at the confluence of the Tennessee and Ohio Rivers).[11]

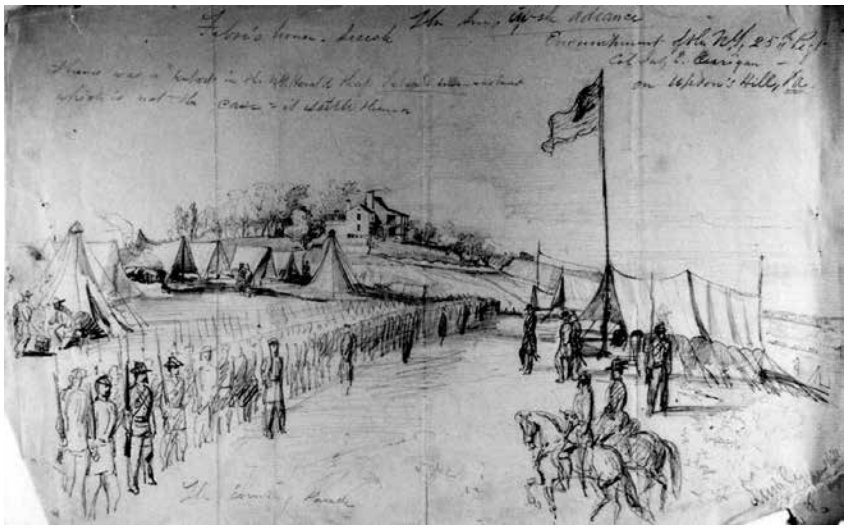


Fig. 2. Arthur Lumley, *Army in Advance at Upton's Hill*, September 16, 1862. Graphite on laid and sized paper, 14.3 x 8.8 in. (36.3 x 22.4 cm). CW–AL–VA–9–16–62

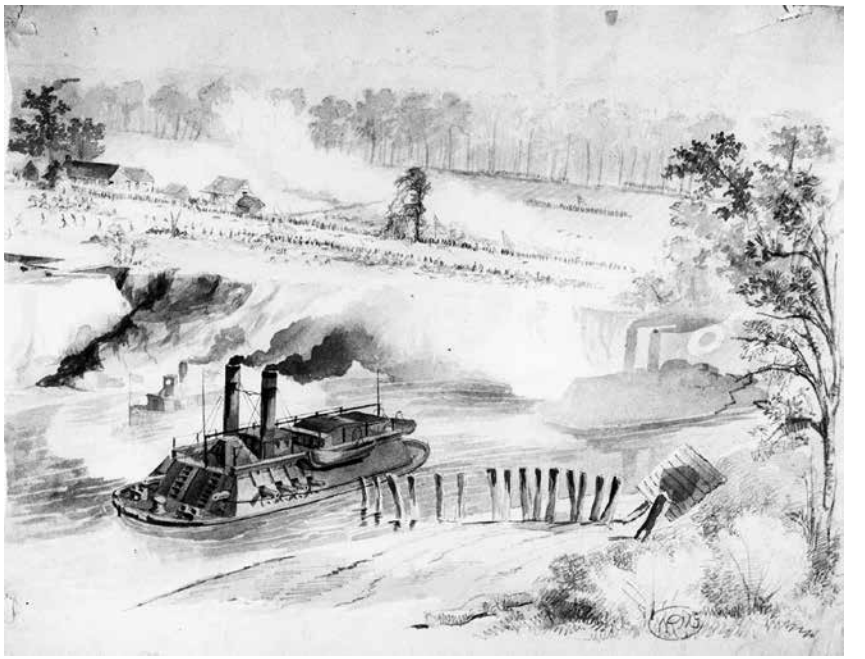


Fig. 3. William R. McComas, *Gunboats on a River*, n.d. Graphite and gray in wash on paper, 11.5 x 9.0 in. (29.2 x 22.9 cm). CW–WRMC–ND–1

*Entrenchments Surrounding the City* (plate 89) clearly presents the batteries that the Union forces built to defend Paducah. With careful attention to each detail, McComas depicts the fortification and its artillery as though he were rendering a still life. To insure that the staff at *Leslie's* in New York City would understand the context of the fortification, he wrote an inscription on the back of the drawing that attests to the powers of observation that would soon make him an army engineer:

> The City of Paducah is surrounded with entrenchments from part of which is sketched. They are built at intervals of 1/8 of a mile apart, in front of these again a cheveaux [*sic*] du frise is constructed to guard against the surprise of Infantry.

McComas employed the same attention to detail in his graphite and ink wash drawing *Gunboats on a River* (fig. 3), which provides visual information

about these vessels but no further documentation. *Entrenchments Surrounding the City* was the first of twenty-one drawings by McComas that *Leslie's* would publish. From Paducah, McComas continued to travel with Grant's army to Bowling Green, Kentucky, and Pittsburg Landing, Tennessee (the site of the Battle of Shiloh).

Despite enlisting as a 2nd Lieutenant in the 79th Ohio Infantry in 1862, McComas continued to send drawings to New York City throughout his military career. In 1863, McComas was assigned as a topographical engineer—first to Major General John McClernand's staff then to other generals for the duration of the war. In his report of the Battle of Champion Hill in Mississippi in May 1863, McClernand cited McComas for commendation, and in August, McComas was promoted to Captain. He continued to serve in campaigns in Texas until he was discharged in 1865. He then returned to Cincinnati (his birthplace).[12] The Becker Collection contains two drawings by McComas.

## Francis H. Schell (1834–1909)

Schell traveled to Baltimore with Hall to join the Army of the Potomac. He had been an artist, illustrator, and lithographer in Philadelphia before Leslie hired him as a Special Artist in 1861. Once Baltimore was stabilized, Schell and much of the Army of the Potomac settled at Fortress Monroe on the James River. On June 9, 1861, he joined the troops as they were ferried across Hampton Creek in long river rafts then moved inland to confront Confederate forces at Little and Great Bethel. He watched as two columns of Union soldiers accidentally fired on each other, while the Confederate army counterattacked and repulsed the Union effort.

Observing this confusion, Schell experienced the futility of trying to draw an entire battle. There was no vantage point from which to see all of the action. "If he moved away from the fighting," as William Fletcher Thompson explains, "the terrain interfered with his view, but when he followed in on the heels of the advancing troops, the dense smoke of the battle obscured everything in sight."[13] Schell resolved this problem when he moved on to join the Army of the Tennessee to record some of its early confrontations with Confederate forces in Kentucky.

The *Battle of Pikeville, Kentucky* (plate 95) and the *Skirmish with the Texas Rangers on Tuesday the Eighteenth* (plate 96) capture the drama of these struggles through diagonal lines and dynamic curves that lead the viewer across the surface and into space. These drawings also reveal changes in Schell's thinking as he moved from a more distanced view of the Pikeville battle to a closeup encounter between Union troops and the Texas Rangers that thrusts the viewer into the middle of the action. Schell's change in point of view anticipates a trend that would accelerate later in the war, when the Special Artists realized that they could not represent the overall scope of battles, which often involved more than one hundred thousand soldiers. Increasingly, they abandoned the distanced overview to focus on more limited incidents.[14]

After covering the early combat of the Army of the Tennessee, Schell returned east in early 1862 to follow again the Union campaign on the North Carolina coast. When the campaign became bogged down in a stalemate, Leslie reassigned him to General George McClellan's Army of the Potomac. In September 1862, he witnessed the Union confrontation with General Robert E. Lee's army at the Battle of Antietam Creek, one of the bloodiest battles of the war.

These experiences led Schell to focus on the realities of battle with less idealization or bravado. He increasingly drew small details and minor incidents of camp life that were meaningful to soldiers, and he captured the images of contrabands. In all, *Leslie's* published 211 of his wartime drawings. The Becker Collection contains drawings Schell made in Virginia, Kentucky, North Carolina, Maryland, Florida, Texas, and Louisiana between 1861 and 1863.

After the war, Schell became art director at *Leslie's* until 1875, when he formed a lithography partnership with Thomas Hogan, which continued for thirty years. He also contributed illustrations to the *Century Magazine* and drawings for the books *Beyond the Mississippi* and *Battles and Leaders of the Civil War*.[15] Producing *Beyond the Mississippi*, in particular, reunited many of the wartime Special Artists, including Schell, Joseph Becker, Edwin Forbes, Thomas Nast, Alfred Waud, and William Waud. They contributed drawings that they made from photographs and earlier published prints of scenes from the Mississippi River to the Pacific coast.[16]

## (John) Edwin Forbes (1839–1895)

In contrast to Frank Schell, Forbes preferred to remain at a safe distance from battles, where he could see an overview of the action through binoculars.[17] Close calls at such battles as the Second Battle of Bull Run, for example, had made him very cautious about direct encounters with the enemy.[18] His careful, distanced approach to depicting conflict also reflects his art training. Born in New York City, he began studying art there in 1857 with Arthur Tait,

an English lithographer, who had arrived in the city in 1850. Although he never traveled further than Chicago, Tait specialized in paintings and lithographs of scouts and Indians on the western plains, which he derived from the imagery of other artists and produced in his studio in New York City.[19] Forbes carried into his wartime drawings Tait's practice of constructing at a distance—if not second hand—landscapes with human and animal subjects.

In 1861, Forbes became a staff artist at *Leslie's* and was sent to cover the campaigns of the Army of the Potomac. He followed the Union army from the First Battle of Bull Run to the Battle of Cross Keys in the Shenandoah Valley, the Second Battle of Bull Run, and the Siege of Petersburg.[20] He made quick drawings overlooking the battlefields, which he refined later. His drawings *Gordon's and Crawford's Brigades during the Battle of Cedar Mountain* (fig. 4) and *St. Patrick's Day Skirmish at Kelly's Ford* (plate 60) typify his strategy.

Both drawings present sweeping views of the battlefields and contain much visual information. *St. Patrick's Day Skirmish at Kelly's Ford*, in particular, with its long text, seems to be both a visual and written inventory of the facts of the battle. Forbes often acquired this information by walking the battlefield and interviewing participants in the aftermath of the fighting. He had a strategic viewing spot to observe Pickett's charge at Gettysburg, and he was the first of the Special Artists to produce drawings of that battle to send back to *Leslie's* in New York City.[21] He also was interested in capturing scenes of camp life. *Leslie's* published 178 of his wartime drawings. The Becker Collection contains drawings that Forbes made in Virginia between 1862 and 1863.

In 1864, Forbes resigned his position at *Leslie's* but continued to produce images of war. Many of these drawings were made into copper-plate etchings and published as *Life Studies of the Great Army*... for which he was awarded a medal at the Philadelphia Centennial in 1876.[22] General William Tecumseh Sherman purchased the first proof and donated it to the United States government.[23] Forbes joined many of the other former Special Artists by contributing illustrations to *Beyond the Mississippi*.

Forbes also provided illustrations for numerous publications, including *Pebbles and Pearls for the Young Folks*, "Specimen Pages and Illustrations" from *Appletons' Journal*, *The Atlantic Almanac*, and *School Days at Mount Pleasant*.[24] In 1878, he opened a studio in Brooklyn, and the landscapes with animals he painted there recall his training with Tait. In 1890, he published a summary of his work in the book *Thirty Years After: An Artist's Story of the Great War*.[25]

## Henri Lovie (1829–1875)

Among the iconic images of the Civil War, the published engravings of the Battle of Shiloh became fixed in the public's mind as emblems of the

Fig. 4. Edwin Forbes, *Gordon's and Crawford's Brigades during the Battle of Cedar Mountain*, August 9, 1862. Graphite and wash on wove paper, 15.0 x 5.3 in. (38.1 x 13.5 cm). CW–EF–VA–8–9–62

terrible price the Union would pay in lives lost for victory—if victory could be purchased at all. Of the eighty thousand Union soldiers who fought at Shiloh between April 6 and 7, 1862, twenty thousand were wounded or killed within twenty-four hours. By the close of the second day of fighting, the Confederate army had retreated, but the Union troops were too exhausted to pursue them. Grant, who had led the Army of the Tennessee in combat against the larger numbers of General Albert Sidney Johnston's Confederate forces, realized that the war was going to be, in the words of an unnamed Union soldier, "a very bloody affair."[26]

Henri Lovie created the series of drawings that became known as the Shiloh engravings. *Leslie's* published them in May 1862. Two of these drawings, *Battle of Shiloh or Pittsburg Landing, Tennessee: Left Wing near the Peach Orchard* (plate 73) and *Battle of Shiloh or Pittsburg Landing, Tennessee: Centre; Sunday Morning* (plate 71), testify to Lovie's ability to orchestrate visual information and descriptive devices into a unified expression with great emotional impact. As accurately drawn and convincing as are the many figures in each scene, it is their placement among blasted trees in compositions with little central focus that convincingly conveys the chaos of battle and the enormous resulting loss.

Lovie had rushed with Grant's army to Pittsburg Landing after Johnston's forces initially had attacked the Union forces camped there. He had witnessed the chaotic situation as the unprepared Union recruits suffered many injuries and deaths. He watched stragglers, deserters, and the wounded flee toward the nearby river, blocking the path for the arriving reinforcements.[27] He discerned more casualties than heroes, and he drew the dead and dying—human and animal—lying across the foreground, while the living fought in confusion or fled in terror.

Lovie's preparation for his wartime work began in Berlin, Prussia, where he was born in 1829 and would have seen and studied academic art. He is first recorded in the United States as an established portrait and landscape painter, designer, and illustrator in Cincinnati during the 1850s. He drew the illustrations for numerous books, including *The Ohio Railroad Guide*, *Zoë; or the Quadroon's Triumph*, *Brother Mason, the Circuit Rider*, and *The Gallows, the Prison, and the Poor-House*.[28] From 1856 to 1859, he and Charles Bauerle maintained an engraving company. Together, they produced the illustrations for *Man-of-War Life*, *The Merchant Vessel*, and *The Book of the Great Railway Celebrations of 1857*.[29] He also taught drawing at Robert Conner's Cincinnati Academy of Design and Cincinnati Wesleyan Female College and participated in the Cincinnati Sketch Club with James Beard, T. Worthington Whittredge, Robert Scott Duncanson, and Henri Mosler.[30]

By 1860, Lovie was in New York City where he joined *Leslie's* as a Special Artist. In February 1861, Leslie assigned him to accompany Abraham Lincoln from Springfield, Illinois, to Washington, D.C., for his presidential inauguration. In the spring of 1861, Lovie joined McClellan's Army of the Potomac in Washington, D.C., and in June produced panoramic views of the Battle of Philippi and the West Virginia terrain. After the battle, he augmented his drawings by going onto the field to record battle debris and interview and sketch soldiers.[31]

Later that month, Lovie obtained permission to join the Federal Expeditionary Forces, which were going up the Missouri River under the command of Brigadier General Nathaniel Lyon to capture Jefferson City and Boonville, the headquarters of the Missouri State Militia. The campaign ended on August 10, 1861, with the Union retreat after the Battle of Wilson's Creek, where Lovie recorded the death of Lyon. Lovie escaped to Lebanon, Kentucky, then returned to Missouri, drawing scenes of battles at Munfordville in Kentucky and Stones River in Tennessee, where he recorded the death of Lieutenant Colonel Julius Peter Garesche.[32]

If the Battle of Shiloh demonstrated that the struggle could take tens of thousands of lives in a few days, the standoff at Vicksburg, Mississippi (the last Confederate stronghold along the Mississippi River), proved the prolonged obduracy of both sides. Lovie, embedded with Grant's army, witnessed and drew the Union army's repeated attempts to take Vicksburg, located on the bluffs above the river, during the spring of 1863. While the stalemate continued, he traveled up the Mississippi River to draw an army hospital at Lake Providence and took the opportunity to buy cotton to resell in the North. His investment paid off; he traveled home to Cincinnati, bought his parents a farm in Germany, and retired from the war.[33] *Leslie's* published 148 of Lovie's wartime drawings. The Becker Collection contains drawings Lovie made in West Virginia, Illinois, Missouri, Tennessee, Kentucky, Mississippi, Ohio, and Virginia between 1861 and 1863.

## Frederic B. Schell (d. 1905)

Needing a Special Artist on hand at the critical siege on the heights above the Mississippi River, Leslie sent Frederic (Fred) Schell to replace Lovie at Vicksburg. Schell was born in Philadelphia and studied at the Pennsylvania Academy of Fine Arts. He became a Special Artist at *Leslie's* in 1862 and was

first attached to McClellan's Army of the Potomac. He drew the struggle between McClellan's forces and Lee's Army of Northern Virginia on September 17, 1862, at Antietam Creek before Leslie reassigned him to Grant's army at Vicksburg.[34]

Schell drew the desperate hand-to-hand combat of the second futile assault by Union troops on May 18, 1863, then settled in to make numerous detailed studies of army life in the trenches as the standoff dragged on for months. *The Siege at Vicksburg: Soldiers at Work on the Fortifications* (plate 103) typifies many of Schell's meticulous renderings of the struggle. Cabins, watchtowers, farmhouses, churches, and, in some drawings, outhouses are carefully observed and drawn with fine delicate lines and subtle tonal variations. Small figures in a great variety of poses occupy the trenches in the middle distance and engage in numerous activities.

The order of the setting and the clarity of the forms belie the tension and suffering on both sides as disease breeding mud and stagnant water filled the Union trenches and deprivation sapped Confederate strength. When Confederate General John C. Pemberton and his exhausted and starving troops surrendered on July 4, Schell drew the stacking of Confederate weapons, while Union troops sat watching the enemy file by them. He depicted the somber meeting of the two generals and the silent march of the Union army through the shell-scarred streets of Vicksburg.[35] Leslie published these drawings with Forbes's drawings of Gettysburg in a special supplementary issue of *Leslie's* in late July 1863.

Schell's drawing *General McPherson's Expedition into Mississippi* (plate 104) captures the devastation across the area. Small figures, almost imperceptible in the large space, pass along a curved road into a bleak landscape of blasted trees and barren fields. Puffs of smoke and shell fragments dot the drawing's surface and confirm that the fighting is not over. Again, delicate lines and meticulous detail belie the violence of the war.

In all, *Leslie's* published forty-three of Schell's wartime drawings. The Becker Collection contains drawings that Schell made in Georgia, Mississippi, and Tennessee in 1863. His work was also published in the *Century Magazine* and the books *Battles and Leaders of the Civil War*, *Picturesque Canada*, and the *Picturesque Atlas of Australia*.[36] He served as art director for Harper and Brothers publishing house.[37]

## Charles E. H. Bonwill (active ca. 1861–1882)



Similar to Fred Schell, Charles Bonwill adopted a distanced view of such battles as the one he observed in November 1863 at Grand Coteau, Louisiana. *Battle of Grand Coteau, Louisiana: Furious Attack of the Rebels* (plate 53) presents an arc of small figures representing the Union forces under the command of General Stephen Burbridge confronting the onslaught of General Thomas Green's Confederate troops, who are surging out of the surrounding forest in a continuous band.

Although the figures are generalized and removed from the viewer, Bonwill understood the intensity of the fighting. "This sketch represents the attack in overwhelming numbers on the 60th Indiana Regiment," he wrote on his drawing. He called the battle "one of the most sanguinary conflicts of the war," stating that Green commanded approximately six thousand soldiers, whereas Burbridge had only one thousand two hundred men; yet, on the back of his drawing, Bonwill described the following:

> Gen. Burbridge was everywhere in the thickest of the fight. At one time [he] dismounted and personally fired one of the pieces of [the] 17th Ohio Battery with terrible effect. Thus [he moved] onto every part of the field personally rallying the men and leading them on.

As a final flourish, he added, "Lt. Richardson ... of Col. Owen's staff had his horse shot under him," and his rendering of the dead and wounded—human and animal—that fill the foreground testifies to the terrible carnage.

Bonwill's drawing *View of Centreville, Louisiana* (fig. 5) demonstrates his ability to embed a report of Union army occupation in a thoughtful study of village architecture. His keen eye caught the details of Classic Revival houses with columned porches, drawing them with a delicate touch. The mules and caissons of the 116th New York Regiment, arranged horizontally across the main street, seem to fit peacefully into this balanced and ordered setting. In this drawing, the tensions inherent in the military occupation of a civilian community disappear.

Between 1861 and 1865, *Leslie's* published eighty-seven of Bonwill's drawings. The Becker Collection contains drawings he made in Virginia, Maryland, North Carolina, and Louisiana between 1861 and 1863. After the war, he

Fig. 5. Charles E.H. Bonwill, *View of Centreville, Louisiana*, September 28, 1863. Graphite on wove paper, 6.5 x 10.0 in. (16.5 x 25.4 cm). CW–CB–LA–9–28–63

traveled to Canada, and his drawings of Quebec and Ottawa were published in *Picturesque Canada* in 1882.[38]

## William T. Crane (active 1861–1865)

While Bonwill approached his task with a precise and delicate touch, William Crane captured the energy of battle with an expressive display of rapid pencil lines and exploding inkblots. *Bayonet Charge on a Rebel Fort at James Island, South Carolina* (plate 56) evokes the speed of the advancing troops in quick, diagonal lines that race across the foreground toward the fortress, which is surrounded by gray and black washes and blots of smoke. On the back of his drawing, Crane described the battle as the "gallant and most daring bayonet charge of U.S. troops under Brigadier General Stevens." His enthusiastic message is tempered visually only by the several fallen figures he included.

Crane's inclinations toward expressive renderings and distant views converge in his battle panorama, *Siege of Charleston: General View of the Bombardment of Battery Gregg and Fort Wagner* (plate 57). He made the drawing from an observatory on Craig's Hill, and the artist and viewer seem to float above and look down upon the uproar. Inkblots overtake the delineated landscape and burst in the sky. Visual detail gives way to the experience of battle. The energy of the rendering of the attack obscures the fact that the standoff between Charleston and the Union army would continue until January 1865. To end the suffering and minimize his losses, Lee ordered the evacuation of Charleston, which was carried out largely without Federal knowledge. When Union troops marched in, they found the city in flames.[39]

Crane produced many drawings for *Leslie's*, which published 244 engravings based on his work. In addition, under orders from General Quincy A. Gilmore, Crane drew a series of sequential views of Fort Sumter in Charleston Harbor during the summer of 1863 that depict the stages of the fort's demolition during a prolonged Union bombardment. Gilmore included these detailed and shocking drawings in his final report on these operations to the War Department, which later reproduced them in the government's official records.[40] The Becker Collection contains drawings Crane made in North Carolina, South Carolina, Georgia, and Florida between 1861 and 1865.

## John F. E. Hillen (1819–1865)

Although all the Special Artists experienced the war firsthand, few saw combat as directly as did John Hillen, who served as a soldier before becoming a Special Artist. Born in Brussels, Belgium, in 1819, Hillen immigrated to the United States, where he worked as an illustrator and engraver in Brooklyn during the 1840s and Philadelphia during the early 1850s. By 1859, he had relocated to Cincinnati where he opened a school of drawing and painting. At the outbreak of the war, he enlisted in the 34th Ohio Volunteer Infantry and served in West Virginia where he made two drawings of his unit's activities, which *Harper's Weekly* published.[41]

Hillen was captured during the battle at Chickamauga Creek along the border of Tennessee, Georgia, and Alabama in 1863, and his drawing *Arrival of Rebel Prisoners to the Stockade Prison at Stevenson, Alabama* (fig. 6) depicts a part of the Chickamauga campaign that likely resonated with his own experience.[42] He then joined Sherman's army as it advanced toward Atlanta but was severely wounded during the campaign and discharged as disabled. After this, he worked as a Special Artist for *Leslie's* from late 1864 to 1865, sending back drawings of battles and camp life in Virginia, Georgia, Alabama, and Tennessee.[43]

*Battle Two Miles West of Atlanta* (plate 63) demonstrates Hillen's emotional involvement with the action he depicted. The viewer is thrust into the midst of the battle, which is framed by trees on its left and right. The figures are running, twisting, and falling as they are shot. They are composed of patches of light and dark wash, which draw the viewer's eye over the surface

and into space. They form horizontal bands that unify the frantic activity in the foreground but contrast with the summarily rendered tight formations of soldiers in the distance and the wispy trees on undulating hills beyond.

The hardships of life as a Special Artist compounded the debilitating effects of Hillen's war injury and contributed to his death in 1865. The Becker Collection contains drawings he made in Alabama and Georgia between 1863 and 1864.

## (Carl J.) Joseph Becker (1841–1910)

Becker was born in Pottsville, Pennsylvania, but by 1859, he had moved to New York City where he went to work for *Leslie's* as an errand boy. Although Becker had no formal training in art, Leslie and his staff encouraged Becker's natural talent, and in fall of 1863, Leslie promoted his protégé to Special Artist and sent him off to witness and draw the dedication of the new cemetery at Gettysburg.[44] Within a few months, Leslie dispatched Becker to join Forbes, who was traveling with the Army of the Potomac. In spite of his mentor's initial misgivings about his prospects of surviving the hardships of the war, Becker thrived and began to send back to New York City numerous closeup scenes and intimate figure groups of camp life. By the spring of 1864, he and

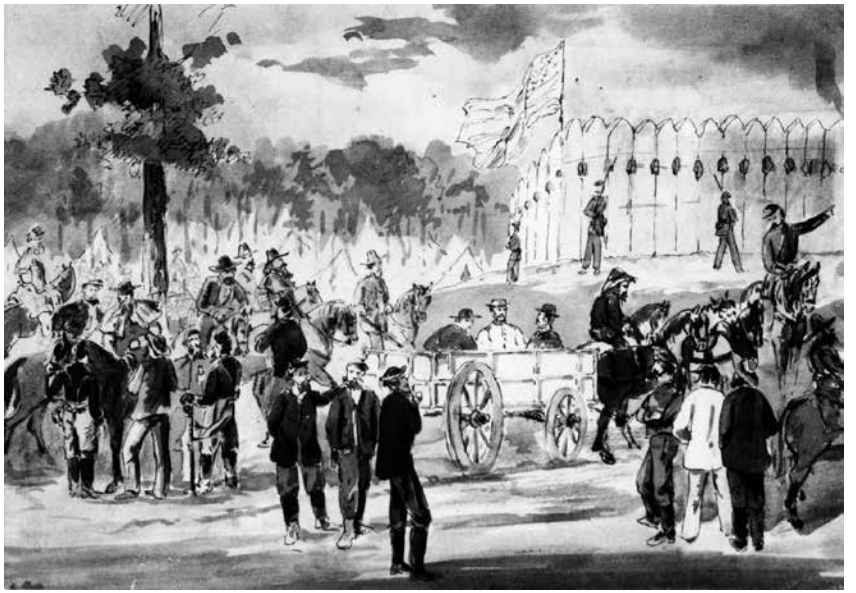


Fig. 6. John Hillen, *Arrival of Rebel Prisoners to the Stockade Prison at Stevenson, Alabama*, October 28, 1863. Graphite and black ink on wove paper, 10.3 x 7.5 in. (26.2 x 19.1 cm). CW–JH–AL–10–28–63

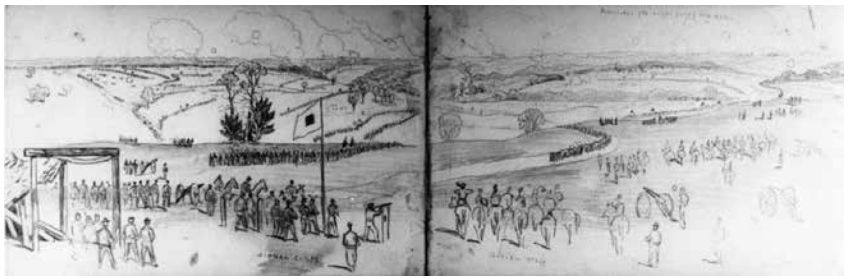


Fig. 7. Joseph Becker, *Battle of the Wilderness*, May 6, 1864. Graphite on wove paper, each panel 10.0 x 6.5 in. (25.4 x 16.5 cm). CW–JB–VA–5–6–64a+b

Forbes were with Grant's army in northern Virginia, where they witnessed the Battle of the Wilderness.[45]

During this battle, Becker stepped back and drew a panoramic view, *Battle of the Wilderness* (fig. 7). "Burnside's 9th Corps going into action," he wrote on the drawing. "Fire in the woods," he added then labeled the mounted figures, "Grant and staff." While small figures in the foreground stand watching the horizon, lines of soldiers move along curved paths toward the enveloping landscape as though all were participants in a formalized ritual. They would encounter the Confederate forces south of the Rappahannock River in an area of tangled vegetation fourteen miles long and ten miles wide that they called the Wilderness. The orderliness of Becker's drawing gives little hint of the intense battle amid dense thickets that took thirty thousand casualties in two days of fighting—many of the dead succumbing to the fires that scorched the low, thick brush.[46] The drawing testifies to Becker's understanding that "Grant intended," as William Fletcher Thompson states, "to use his superior resources to wear down [General] Lee's resistance."[47] Becker's drawing helped the effort by providing the details of Grant's strategy.

In contrast to the deliberate pace and distanced view of Becker's rendering of the entry of the 9th Corps into the Battle of the Wilderness, *Scene on Jerusalem Plank Road during the Siege of Petersburg* (plate 5) draws the viewer into a dramatic night scene. An ambulance careens almost out of control as ambulance drivers carry the injured away from the battle in wagons outlined against a dark background of blasted tree trunks. Fresh troops of the 9th Corps march toward the front lines at Ream's Station in Petersburg, the site of a rail junction critical to supplying the Confederate capital at Richmond and a key to Grant's strategy during the final year of the war.[48] The figures of the soldiers are briefly highlighted as they pass a campfire, the only source of light in the darkness. Here, Becker captured the process of warfare—the

determined soldiers who march into the fight and the casualties who are carried away from it.

In addition to major combat actions, including the Battle of the Wilderness and the Siege of Petersburg, Becker recorded scenes of daily life in army camps throughout the eastern theater of war as well as civilian events. In all, *Leslie's* published approximately eighty-eight of his wartime drawings between 1863 and 1865.

After the war, Becker returned to New York City and continued to work as a Special Artist for *Leslie's*, reporting many significant news events. He was dispatched to Ireland in 1865 to record the connection of the eastern end of the transatlantic cable. In 1869, he traveled westward by train as tracks were being laid, and he recorded the process. He drew Chinese immigrants and other laborers as they worked on the tracks, performed other tasks, and rested in makeshift quarters. In eighty-one hours, he journeyed from Omaha to San Francisco on the first cross-Rockies Pullman train, drawing the landscape of the Great Plains and the railroad winding through it. In San Francisco, he recorded scenes of Chinese immigrant life. Forty of the resulting drawings constituted the series "Across the Continent," which *Leslie's* published between December 1869 and mid 1870.[49]

Although Becker contributed illustrations to such publications as *Beyond the Mississippi*, he remained part of the staff at *Leslie's*. In October 1871, he and James E. Taylor, another artist continuing at *Leslie's*, traveled to Chicago in the aftermath of the Great Fire, and their drawings of the city's efforts to deal with the disaster raised the circulation of *Leslie's* to four hundred seventy thousand—the highest for a single issue of the newspaper. In 1875, Becker became manager of the art department at *Leslie's*—a post he held until his retirement in 1900. He died in Brooklyn.[50] The Becker Collection contains drawings he made in Pennsylvania and Virginia during the Civil War and in the postwar period in conjunction with numerous news stories.

## Edward F. Mullen (active 1859–1872)

The battle for Petersburg dragged on for months from June 1864 to April 1865, and the final withdrawal of Confederate forces from this strategic railroad junction would mark the beginning of the end for the Confederacy. In addition to Becker, other artists from *Leslie's*, including Edward Mullen, covered this compelling story. Mullen was a successful cartoonist when Leslie hired him in 1864. From 1859 to 1863, he had provided humorous illustrations for *Vanity Fair* magazine and for such humor books as *Drifting about; or, What Jeems Pipes, of Pipesville, Saw-and-Did* and *The Life and Adventures, Songs, Services, and Speeches of Private Miles O'Reilly*.[51] Although he would return to humor illustration after 1865, his wartime drawings employ the cartoonist's economy of line and detail to render the grim reality of battle.

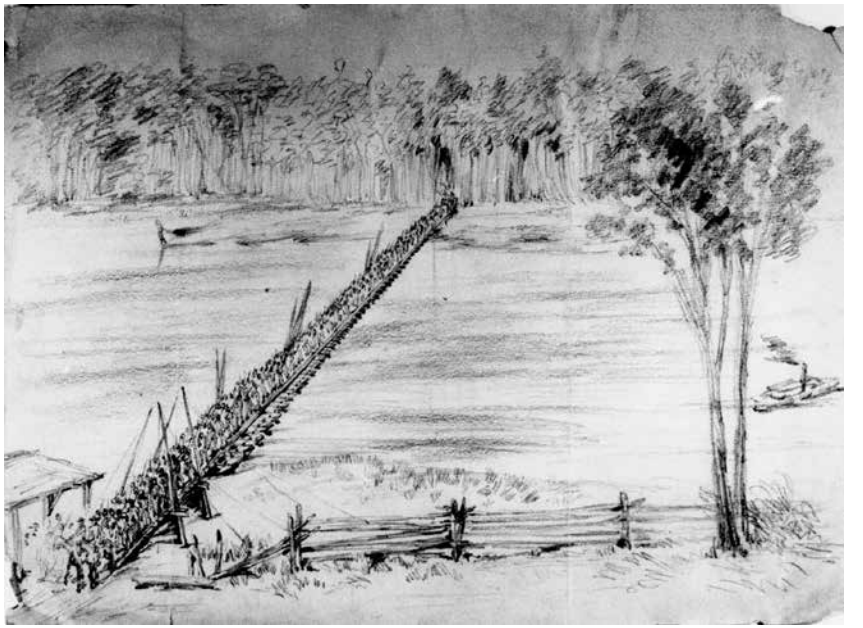


Fig. 8. Edward F. Mullen, *Siege of Petersburg: The Army Crossing the Appomattox*, June 1864. Graphite on heavy gauge wove paper, 9.5 x 13.3 in. (24.1 x 33.8 cm). CW–EM–VA–6–64

Mullen's drawing *Siege of Petersburg: The Army Crossing the Appomattox* (fig. 8) functions like the overture to a long opera. Its clear and simple composition announces the themes of a drama that would unfold in numerous acts. Here, there is only one movement: the march of soldiers, united as a single diagonal element, emerging from the woods on the far bank and crossing the river on a pontoon bridge. "The Army under General Baldy Smith," Mullen wrote on the back of his drawing, "crossing the Appomattox River to attack Petersburg." That direct statement echoes the composition, which requires few details to set the stage.

By the time Mullen drew *Regiment of the Eighteenth Corps Carrying a Portion of Beauregard's Line in Front of Petersburg* (plate 90), the battle was joined. The summary nature of the drawing is at once the product and expression of the skirmish. Two diagonal movements of Union troops with bayonets in place converge in the center and ascend the hill. There is no distant overview.

The bystander is located only slightly above and behind the last soldiers and their fallen comrades. The costs of the battle in lives and limbs are already included in its rendering.

By 1865, Mullen was back in New York City and contributing illustrations to the book *Artemis Ward: His Travels*, a humorous tribute to the editor of *Vanity Fair*.[52] Along with other veteran Special Artists, Mullen contributed drawings to *Beyond the Mississippi*. In the aftermath of the Great Chicago Fire, he did illustrations for *Mrs. Leary's Cow: A Legend of Chicago*.[53] The Becker Collection contains drawings Mullen made in Virginia and Washington, D.C., in 1864.

## Andrew McCallum (active 1864–1865)

Leslie hired Andrew McCallum along with Mullen during the summer of 1864 to augment the presence of artists from *Leslie's* at the Siege of Petersburg. The two new Special Artists arrived at Petersburg in time to witness the explosion of a mine placed in a tunnel under the Confederate lines. The Union forces suffered terrible losses when they surged forward into the resultant crater, because the rebel troops, most of whom had survived the explosion, rose up around the crater's edge to shoot down at the trapped Northerners.[54] McCallum's drawing *Siege of Petersburg: Charge into the Crater* (plate 86) records the exultant moment of the Union army's advance before the carnage that immediately would follow. From the lower left and right, the soldiers move upward and forward toward the center, forming a living pyramid with an apex of a triumphant figure standing on exploded boulders and waving the Stars and Stripes. Corpses and overturned wagons testify to the force of the explosion and foretell the greater losses to come.

In contrast to his drawing of the Union charge into the crater, McCallum's drawing *Siege of Petersburg: Shelling the Town from Captain Roemer's Battalion* (plate 87) has a slower, more deliberate pace as the artillery battalion is shown bombarding the town. McCallum even included a number key on the back of the drawing to point out the "distance to Petersburg (1 1/2 miles)," the location of the "Rebel lines and forts," "the Norfolk and Petersburg RR," "our skirmish line," and other details. As Becker's drawing of the Battle of the Wilderness in May 1864 testifies to Grant's dogged determination, McCallum's drawings at Petersburg in July reaffirm Grant's strategy. The Becker Collection contains drawings McCallum made in Virginia between 1864 and 1865.

## James E. Taylor (1839–1901)

As with Hillen, James Taylor brought his personal experience as a soldier to bear on his wartime drawings. He was born in Cincinnati and graduated from the University of Notre Dame at the age of sixteen. He enlisted in the 10th New York Infantry (National Guard Zouaves) in 1861. While a soldier, he sent his battlefield drawings to Leslie, who hired him as a Special Artist upon his discharge in 1863.[55] For the remainder of the war, he was embedded with the Army of the Potomac in Virginia, West Virginia, North Carolina, and South Carolina, particularly focusing on panoramas of battles and the settings of the war. *Leslie's* published sixty-one of his wartime drawings.

Taylor's drawings from January 1865 of Dutch Gap (a canal the Union army cut into the James River) view the topographical details of this engineering feat through the lens of the war-weary soldier. His drawing *View of Aikin's and Jones's Landing from Dutch Gap* (plate 111) sets the specific locations of the Aiken Mansion and Jones's Landing, as well as the names of particular vessels, against a foreground littered with the debris of battle. A few winter trees, the only living things in a desolate landscape, cling to a barren riverbank. Their precarious location seems to be a metaphor for the future of the Confederacy.

Prospects appear even bleaker in Taylor's drawing *View of Dutch Gap since the "Torpedo Experiment"* (fig. 9) in which the ruptured earth itself rises up to a pointed peak that pokes at a dull gray sky on the right. The "torpedo experiment", Taylor wrote across the sky, "the result of which sets one question at rest at least, —that Farras ... land is Metamorphosed into an (I)sland." That experiment also resulted in a devastated landscape. It sustains only a few ragged trees, which are in immediate danger of sliding down the embankment and out of the picture. Taylor's drawings rise above representation to express the spirit of the final moments of the war.

After the war, Taylor accompanied the Indian Peace Commission to the western territories, and *Leslie's* published his drawings of the Medicine Lodge Council of the Peace Commission in November 1867. His drawing *Branding Cattle on the Prairies in Texas*, which *Leslie's* published in June 1867, was the first illustration of the western cattle industry printed in the national press.[56] He also produced numerous drawings of the aftermath of the Great Chicago Fire in 1871. Several of them appeared as engravings in reports published by *Leslie's* on the relief and recovery process from late October to November 1871. In 1883, he left *Leslie's* to be a freelance illustrator. He died in New York

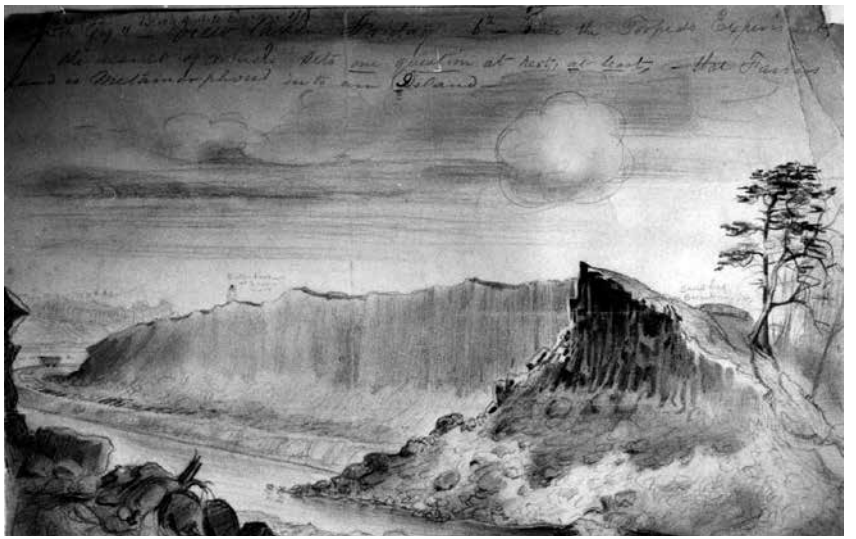


Fig. 9. James E. Taylor, *View of Dutch Gap since the "Torpedo Experiment,"* January 6, 1865. Graphite on wove paper, 9.8 x 13.3 in. (24.9 x 33.8 cm). CW–JT–VA–1–6–65a

City. The Becker Collection contains drawings Taylor made in Virginia, West Virginia, South Carolina, and North Carolina between 1864 and 1865 and in Chicago in 1871.

## ENDNOTES

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2 Kristina Wilson identified the work of Edward Hall and constructed his biography as part of an undergraduate summer research project funded by Boston College.

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5 DeWitt C. Peters, *The Life and Adventures of Kit Carson, the Nestor of the Rocky Mountains, from Facts Narrated by Himself* (New York, N.Y.: Clark, 1858); Captain Mayne Reid, *Wild Life; or, Adventures on the Frontier. A Tale of the Early Days of the Texan Republic* (New York, N.Y., DeWitt, 1859); Kit Kelvin, *Kit Kelvin's Kernels* (New York, N.Y.: Rollo, 1860); and Nathaniel Parker Willis, *Sacred Poems* (New York, N.Y.: Clark, Austin and Smith, 1860). See Sinclair Hamilton, *Early American Book Illustrators and Wood Engravers 1670–1870: A Catalogue of a Collection of American Books, Illustrated for the Most Part with Woodcuts and Wood Engravings, in the Princeton Library* (Princeton, N.J.: Princeton University Press, 1958 and 1968), 1:171.

6 Thompson, 42–44.

7 Lewin, Huff, and Murray, 5–6.

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9 James Moore, *Kilpatrick and Our Cavalry: Comprising a Sketch of the Life of General Kilpatrick* (New York, N.Y.: Widdleton, 1865); Joseph Rodman Drake, *The Culprit Fay, A Poem* (New York, N.Y.: Carleton, 1867); Samuel Bowles,

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10 See the *Daily Graphic*, 1867–1870; and Hamilton, 2:111.

11 Steven E. Woodworth, *Nothing But Victory: The Army of the Tennessee 1861–1865* (New York, N.Y.: Random House, 2005), 32–38.

12 Mary Sayre Haverstock, Jeannette Mahoney Vance, and Brian Meggitt, eds., *Artists in Ohio, 1787–1900: A Biographical Dictionary* (Kent, Ohio: Kent State University Press, 2000), 550–551.

13 Thompson, 39.

14 Ibid., 154–155.

15 Albert D. Richardson, *Beyond the Mississippi: From the Great River to the Great Ocean: Life and Adventure on the Prairies, Mountains, and Pacific Coast* (Hartford, Conn.: American, 1869); and Robert Underwood Johnson and Clarence Clough Buel, *Battles and Leaders of the Civil War: Being for the Most Part Contributions by Union and Confederate Officers: Based upon "The Century War Series,"* Grant-Lee ed. (New York, N.Y.: Century, 1884–1887).

16 Peggy Samuels and Harold Samuels, *Samuel's Encyclopedia of Artists of the American West* (Secaucus, N.J.: Castle Publications, 1985), 423.

17 Thompson, 121.

18 Forbes's description of his experience was published in *Frank Leslie's Illustrated Newspaper*, September 13, 1862, 387; also quoted in Bookbinder, "Civil War Drawings as Art," in this catalogue.

19 Elizabeth Johns, *American Genre Painting: The Politics of Everyday Life* (New Haven, Conn.: Yale University Press, 1991), 80–82.

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# FIGURES OF LIFE AND FIGURES OF DEATH

James D. Wallace

**History confronts us with the cold, hard facts—dates, names, places, wars, famines, and pestilences—that have shaped our world, but the human imagination always craves more.** We want to know what it was like, not just who the men and women were, but how they were like us and different from us: we want to know what they wore and what their clothes felt like, what they ate and drank and how it tasted, what it smelled like in their great halls and filthy streets, what the lilt and grating of their speech and music sounded like, and what the texture and heft of their lives were. And so we have works of the imagination: novels and historical romances, such as *Evangeline*;[1] living history museums, such as Plimouth Plantation; and historical reenactment groups, such as the Civil War Reenactors.

In his book *Confederates in the Attic: Dispatches from the Unfinished Civil War,* Tony Horwitz introduces a reenactor, Rob, to his readers. Rob is in constant search of what he calls the Civil Wargasm: "'This is my true calling—a Civil War bum,' [Rob] said, biting into the day's first plug of tobacco. 'The Gasm's a Bohemian thing, like a Ken Kesey bus tour, except that we're tripping the 1860s instead of the 1960s.'"[2] Some things about the experience of the Civil War, however, remain beyond the grasp of even the most dedicated reenactor, particularly the violence and overwhelming tide of death that swept the nation. Over six hundred thousand Americans—Northern and Southern—died as a result of the war, and the rate of death was a stunning 23 percent of combatants compared with 2.5 percent in World War II.[3] The wounds and suffering were often especially gruesome. Walt Whitman evoked something of the horror of it all in his poem *The Wound Dresser*:

> I dress the perforate shoulder, the foot with the bullet-wound,
> Cleanse the one with a gnawing and putrid gangrene, so
> sickening, so offensive,
> While the attendant stands behind aside me holding the tray
> and pail.
> I am faithful, I do not give out,
> The fractur'd thigh, the knee, the wound in the abdomen,
> These and more I dress with impassive hand, (yet deep in my
> breast a fire, a burning flame.)[4]

Death was no stranger to nineteenth-century Americans: infant mortality rates were very high, life expectancy was under fifty years, and most people died at home rather than in hospitals. None of that prepared them for the scale of carnage the war effected. As American historian Drew Gilpin Faust puts it, "the work of death was Civil War America's most fundamental and most demanding undertaking."[5]

Our knowledge of American life in the era of the Civil War has been enriched vastly by photography, which had been invented shortly before the

war began. Mathew Brady's studio—to name only the most famous of many photography studios that existed during the war—produced thousands of images that have radically shaped our sense of the war. In an oft cited editorial, "Brady's Photographs: Pictures of the Dead at Antietam," the *New York Times* wrote in 1862, "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."[6] Because of the long exposure times required, however, photography was limited in its ability to report on the war. It could only capture still images: men posing, landscapes, corpses on the ground, etc. To record action scenes, the news journals of the time turned to artists, like those represented in the Becker Collection. The immediacy and spontaneity of their drawings mark their special contribution to our knowledge of the era: battle scenes, activities in army camps, comedies and tragedies of daily life, and violent conflict that stirred and absorbed the nation.

## BATTLE SCENES

Illustrations of battle scenes were naturally of paramount importance and interest to the contemporary audience; they rendered not only the tactics and strategies of war-making but also conveyed to readers a sense of the diverse landscapes in the United States, educating northeastern readers about what the country looked like in the South and West. One good example is Charles Bonwill's drawing, *Battle of Grand Coteau, Louisiana: Furious Attack of the Rebels* (plate 53), depicting a moment during the Battle of Grand Coteau (November 3, 1863) near Opelousas, Louisiana. Bonwill paid special attention to faithfully conveying the geography of the battle site. An unidentified correspondent for the *Wisconsin State Journal* described the site of the battle: "The forests here are thin lines of trees, following the windings of the bayous [*sic*] through the prairies, and are rarely above eighty rods through, maintaining the line with singular regularity. The trees are mainly live-oak—an evergreen, draped in the everlasting Spanish moss—and it is rare that there is any undergrowth."[7] Bonwill accordingly filled the background (the upper two-thirds) of his drawing with trees draped heavily in Spanish moss.

The two armies face each other in regular skirmish lines. In the foreground, the corpses of several men lie already on the earth, attended by others, while smoke rises from the firing muskets. What is perhaps most striking about Bonwill's drawing is the sense of formal order—the geometric regularity of the scene as the troops form an oval on the lower half of the drawing. Bonwill conveys the fury of the attack in the deadly hail of bullets he depicts, not in the frantic movements of the troops. In reality, there was plenty of movement during the battle. As an ambulance driver who was present at the battle reported the following in the *Wisconsin State Journal*:

> it was the most exciting, not to say exhilarating, race I ever got caught in. Looking over into the field from the ambulance to see if there was a chance, we saw a battery gallop furiously up, and without waiting to unlimber even, twice poured a storm of shells into the advancing columns, and we had the satisfaction of seeing men and horses tumble in heaps.[8]

Contrasting this chaotic impression, Bonwill presents a classically balanced and proportioned scene.

Quite different in spirit is Francis Schell's drawing *Skirmish with the Texas Rangers on Tuesday the Eighteenth* (plate 96), dated December 18, 1861. The Union unit engaged in the skirmish was the 32nd Indiana (not the 32nd Illinois as Schell identifies it in his note on the front of the drawing). The unit had been organized by August Willich, a German exile, and most members of the 32nd Indiana were German American, garnering the troops the collective nickname, Willich's Dutchmen. They were famous for their well-drilled discipline.[9] In this drawing, Schell emphasizes not the ethnic character of the unit, but rather the chaotic swirl of desperate combat: falling horses, grappling men, and flashing weapons. What is most interesting about Schell's rendering is, perhaps, that he did not witness the battle; his drawing "is from narration by members of Willich's regiment," he states on the front of the drawing. Unlike Bonwill's, Schell's drawing accesses the long western art-historical tradition of depicting battle scenes. Remove the attendant angels and substitute pistols for bows and arrows, and Raphael's *Battle of the Pons Milvius* (fig. 1), dated 1520–1524, with its swirl of bodies, horses, and weapons is remarkably like *Skirmish with the Texas Rangers on Tuesday the Eighteenth*. Drawing upon his knowledge of the history of art, Schell has put the Civil War into a much larger Judeo-Christian historical and mythopoeic context: modern armies, for all their new technologies and West Point educated generals, look just like grappling Romans and Carthaginians.

## THE ASSASSINATION OF COLONEL ELLSWORTH

After the secession of Virginia from the Union on April 17, 1861, Federal forces quickly moved to secure the area immediately across the Potomac River from Washington, D.C.: Arlington, Rock Spring, and Alexandria, Virginia. On May 24, 1861, Colonel Elmer E. Ellsworth, commanding officer of the 11th New York Volunteer Infantry Regiment (known as the New York Fire Zouaves), led his regiment into Alexandria. They peacefully captured the city. After they secured the city, Ellsworth noticed a Confederate flag still flying from the roof of the Marshall House Tavern. He and a few of his troops entered the building, climbed the stairs, and tore down the flag. As Ellsworth walked down the stairs carrying the flag, James W. Jackson, proprietor of the tavern, shot and killed him with a double-barreled shotgun. One of Ellsworth's troops immediately shot and killed Jackson (plate 83).[10]

As one of the first notable clashes of the war and an episode most readily understood as personal combat, the killing of Ellsworth created a sensation in both the North and South. Both men were hailed as martyrs—Ellsworth in the North and Jackson in the South. In the South, the incident was memorialized and mythologized in an anonymous volume with the hyperactive title, *Life of James W. Jackson, the Alexandria Hero, the Slayer of Ellsworth, the First Martyr in the Cause of Southern Independence; Containing a Full Account of the Circumstances of His Heroic Death, and the Remarkable Incidents in His Eventful Life, Constituting a True History, More Like Romance Than Reality*.[11] Seventy-six years later, the Southern agrarian poet Alan Tate included the episode in his novel about the Civil War, *The Fathers*; one of Tate's characters calls Jackson "an excellent man" and a fervent Southern patriot.[12]

Fig. 1. Giulio Romano (after designs by Raphael), *Battle of the Pons Milvius (Battle of the Milvian Bridge)* or *Battle of Constantine against Maxentius*, 1520–1524. Fresco. Sala di Costantino, Vatican

Both *Life of James W. Jackson* and *The Fathers* seem, indeed, more romantic than reality. The real Jackson, according to historian Daniel Aaron, "was a hotheaded hunter of abolitionists and Black Republicans, a kind of Confederate Horst Wessel,"[13] and the Smithsonian's Web site CivilWar@Smithsonian remarks on his reputation as a firebrand secessionist, as he was called: "Querulous by nature, Jackson was a respected pugilist and seemed destined to become the town's first civilian casualty."[14]

In the North, Ellsworth's death made him, Anthony Lee notes, the first Union martyr of the war.[15] Ellsworth, who had worked in Abraham Lincoln's law office in Illinois before the war and raised the Chicago Zouave Cadets, was a popular and dashing figure even before his death; Mathew Brady had photographed him,[16] and *Harper's Weekly* profiled him in a prominent article just two weeks before his slaying.[17] Officers withheld news of his death from his men, lest they destroy the city in revenge. His death was later commemorated in songs, poems, paintings, and crockery.[18] The 11th New York Zouaves, a unit recruited by Ellsworth himself, became known as Ellsworth's Avengers (fig. 2), and in the autumn of 1861, Colonel Stephen W. Stryker from Herkimer County formed the 44th New York, which also adopted the nickname. The engraving of one of Brady's photographs by Currier and Ives, *Col. Elmer R. Ellsworth* (fig. 3), became an icon of the Northern cause. Their engraving *Death of Col. Ellsworth* (fig. 4) was also popular. After the war, Ellsworth's assassination kept its resonance. Alexander Gardner used a photograph of the Marshall House Tavern as the first image in his monumental book *Photographic Sketch Book*,[19] signifying the event as the origin and anchor of the war itself. The caption accompanying the photograph reveals what happened to the Marshall House after Ellsworth's death: "Relic hunters soon carried away from the hotel everything moveable, including the carpets, furniture, and window shutters, and cut away the whole of the staircase and floor where Ellsworth was shot."[20] *Harper's Weekly* devoted two pages to the story of Ells-

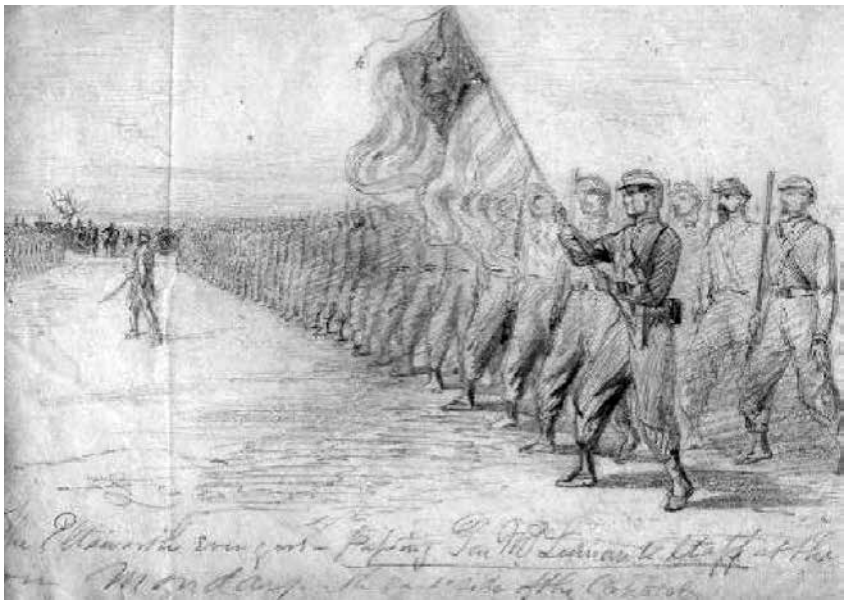

Fig. 2. Arthur Lumley, *The Ellsworth's Evengers* [sic], n.d. Graphite on laid and sized paper, 13.8 x 8.8 in. (35.1 x 22.4 cm). CW–AL–WDC–ND

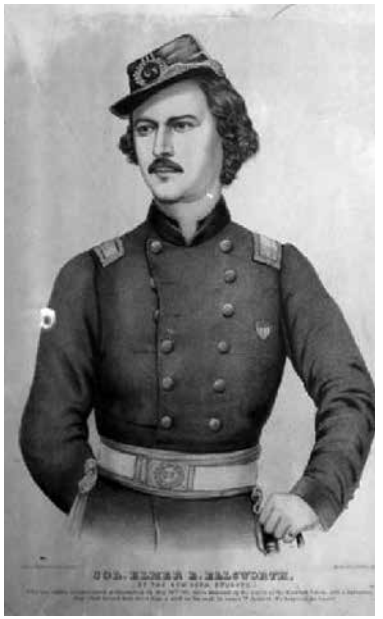

Fig.3. *Col. Elmer E. Ellsworth.* Lithograph, ca. 1861 (Currier and Ives).

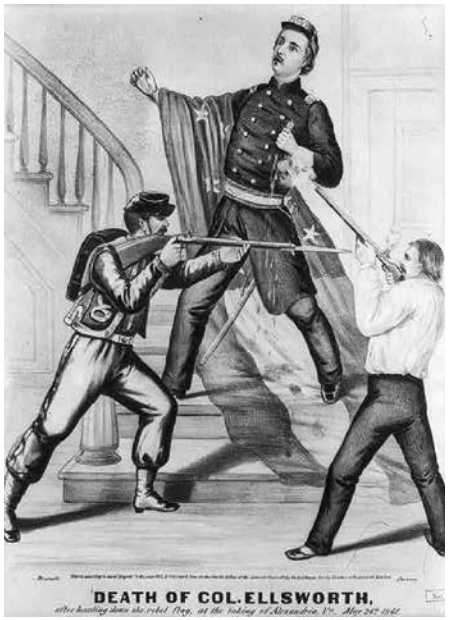


Fig. 4. *Death of Col. Ellsworth.* Lithograph, ca. 1861 (Currier and Ives).

worth's murder on June 8 and a one-page story on June 15, both with copious illustrations (fig. 5).[21]

One more set of facts made Ellsworth a compelling synecdoche for the tragic cost of the Civil War: His body was embalmed, a process that became widespread for the first time during the war.[22] Embalming not only preserved corpses so that they could be shipped over long distances as bodies were returned to their families but also palliated some of the horrors—the filth, disfigurement, and agonizing death—of war. Drew Gilpin Faust explains, "to contemplate one's husband, father, or son in a state of seemingly sleep-like repose was a means of resisting death's terror—and even to a degree, its reality; it offered a way of blurring the boundary between life and death."[23] Out of his personal grief for the death of his friend, Lincoln ordered that Ellsworth's body lie in state in the White House, and visitors marveled at Ellsworth's lifelike corpse.[24] In retrospect, the postmortem events and commemorations for Ellsworth uncannily foreshadowed the aftermath of Lincoln's assassination. Once the war was over, the deaths of Ellsworth and Lincoln stood as bookends for the entire terrible course of the war.

## EXECUTIONS IN THE ARMIES

Maintaining order proved to be challenging for an army composed of men from a population used to thinking of itself as free. Most citizens—both Northern and Southern—were proud of their independence and self-reliance and were not accustomed to obeying so-called superiors." Occasionally, the most extreme measures were taken to maintain order. Joseph Becker's drawings illustrate two different types of execution—the firing squad (for desertion) and hanging (for murder).

### Desertion

In February 1864, after the execution of fifteen deserters, Confederate chaplain John Paris delivered the following sermon to the assembled troops:

> I hold, gentlemen, that there are few crimes in the sight of either God or man, that are more wicked and detestable than desertion. The first step in it is perjury. Who would ever believe such a one in a court of justice again? The second, is treason. He has abandoned the flag of his country; thus much he has aided the common enemy. These are startling crimes,

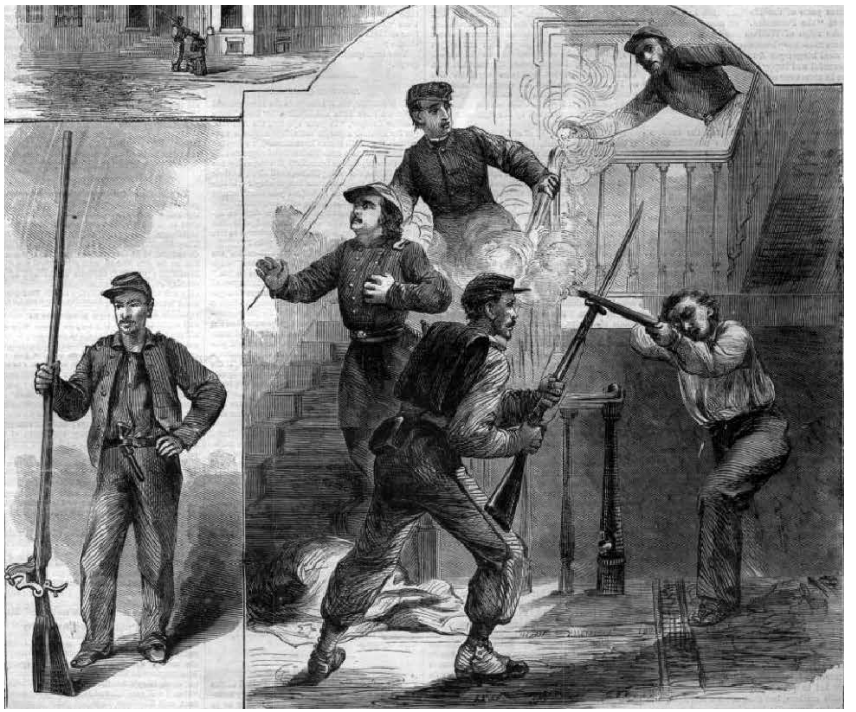

Fig. 5. *Death of Colonel Ellsworth.* Engraving, *Harper's Weekly*, June 15, 1861.

> indeed, but the third is equally so. He enstamps disgrace upon the name of his family and children.[25]

Desertion was a major problem for both armies during the Civil War. Early and enthusiastic enlistees saw their terms of service extended again and again. Both armies resorted to conscription to fill the ranks. Soldiers' homes often were close to where they were serving. And, the war was far more brutal and deadly than anyone had anticipated. The total number of desertions was very high. Over two hundred sixty thousand soldiers deserted the Union army over the course of the war, and another one hundred sixty thousand draftees never reported to duty. An estimated two hundred sixty thousand of the approximately two million men who served in the Confederate army deserted.[26] Execution was the prescribed penalty in both armies, though it rarely was imposed. When it was imposed, it was carried out with full military pomp in order to maximize any deterrent effect. In a letter to a school friend, Washington Gardner (a volunteer from Michigan who after the war became commander in chief of the Grand Army of the Republic) describes an execution carried out on November 14, 1863, in General Philip Sheridan's 11th Division of the Army of the Ohio. Except for the number of victims it identifies, it could serve as the text for Edward Mullen's drawing *Execution of Frank McIlhenney: Deserted to the Enemy* (plate 91). At around noon that day, a brigade formed three sides of the perimeter of a square, while thousands of soldier spectators gathered behind it. At one o'clock, two prisoners were marched into the square with their coffins and the chaplain knelt with them in prayer:

> Then they arose, apparently very calm, and sat erect each upon his coffin. A bandage was then bound over the eyes of each. A platoon of soldiers with loaded rifles stood a few paces in front. There was a strange silence for a moment and then the voice of command rang out. "Ready!" "Aim!" "Fire!" And each of the prisoners fell back over his coffin, dead.

"It was hard to see men thus killed by their own comrades," Gardner concluded, "but you have no idea how many have deserted, encouraged by friends at home to do the disgraceful act."[27] The somber ritual of death, he hoped, would serve as a prophylaxis against future desertions.

## Murder

On January 6, 1862, private Michael Lanahan, Company A, Second Regiment, U.S. Infantry, was hanged—found guilty of murdering a man by the name of Sergeant Brenner. During an altercation, Brenner had struck Lanahan, who then left the scene only to return a few minutes later with his musket; he shot and killed Brenner. The report on Lanahan's execution (fig. 6) in the *Baltimore American* focused not on the solemnity of the occasion but rather on the meaning of Lanahan's crime in terms of military discipline:

> It is very reprehensible for a commissioned or non-commissioned officer to strike a soldier, except when it is absolutely necessary to repress disorder. It is never allowable as a punishment for an offence. But for a soldier, because of being struck, to shoot his immediate superior, is at war with every principle of military subordination.[28]

Clearly Lanahan was wronged, and a civilian court might have acquitted him on the grounds that he was defending his honor. Such verdicts were not uncommon in nineteenth-century America. Disobeying the military's code of conduct, however, overrode any consideration of honor.

## The Arrest of Joe Coburn

Yet another aspect of nineteenth-century American culture may be glimpsed in Becker's drawing *Arrest of Coburn* (fig. 7), dated May 27, 1868, in Cold Springs, Indiana. The drawing depicts a sheriff pointing his pistol at a large man wearing a cap, while a crowd looks on in apparent astonishment and displeasure.

*Arrest of Coburn* depicts Joe Coburn, a well-known prizefighter of the era. This episode attracted much attention and even the *New York Times* covered it on May 26, 1868. The newspaper reported that "New-York rowdies" were gathering in Cincinnati, Ohio, in anticipation of the fight:

> The coming prize fight [*sic*] between MIKE MCCOOLE and JOE COBURN creates a great deal of excitement here. The city is thronged with sporting men from the East and West, and additions are made by every train. JOHN C. HEENAN and about 300 others arrived from New-York last evening, and another delegation of the fancy of New-York are expected to-day.[29]

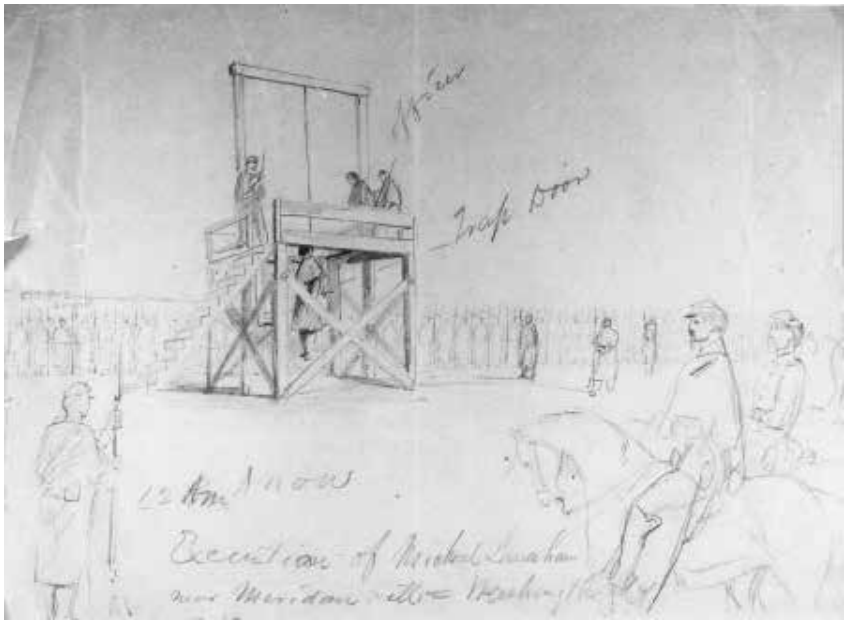

Fig. 6. Unknown, *Execution of Michael Lanahan*, n.d. Graphite on paper, 13.0 x 9.0 in. (33.0 x 22.9 cm). CW–UK–DC–ND–1

Fig. 7. Joseph Becker, *Arrest of Coburn*, May 27, 1868. Graphite and white gouache on toned paper, 10.5 x 7.0 in. (26.7 x 17.8 cm). SR–JB–IN–5–27–68

Betting was reported to have been heavy, with McCoole the favored fighter. This was in spite of "some persons thinking that he has too much flesh," since rumors were rampant that Coburn "drank very hard day before yesterday ... and his friends are very anxious about him." The fight was slated for a site in Indiana near the line of the Ohio and Mississippi Railroad.

The excitement and publicity surrounding the fight was its undoing: prizefighting was illegal in Indiana at that time, as it was in many other states. Mike McCoole, who had already arrived in Indiana, was arrested at three o'clock on the morning of the twenty-seventh. He immediately posted bond and headed for the ring, but Coburn's subsequent arrest put a stop altogether to the event. "Coburn was arrested later in the day," the *New York Times* reported on May 27th, "and the fight prevented. The deluded spectators left the field in disgust."[30] There was some suspicion that the legal intervention had been arranged somehow by Coburn's camp. On June 3, the

*New York Times* printed a report it received from St. Louis that people there who had been at Cold Springs had witnessed something peculiar in Coburn's arrest: At "about 2:30 that day COBURN came within half a mile of the ring; that "JOHNNY" FRANKLIN approached him, bringing with him the Sheriff; that "JOHNY" [*sic*] told the Sheriff to arrest COBURN, and that the Sheriff replied that he had no count, whereupon FRANKLIN produced a document from his pocket, and on that, whatever it was, the Sheriff took him away."[31] The public suspected that bribery may have been the reason. The *New York Times* added that a report that the Chief of Police of Cincinnati was prepared to testify that Coburn's friends had offered him one thousand dollars to arrest McCoole reinforced this suspicion. With this report, the documentary trail for this event disappears.

With all those open mouths and dropped jaws, Becker's drawing captures the dismay of the "deluded spectators" at Coburn's arrest. The episode is, of course, far more peaceful than any battle; yet, the potential for violence lurks in this depiction of the crowd, as Becker grouped the figures to echo the swirl of battle in *Skirmish with the Texas Rangers*.

In the Athenian *Dionysia*, the annual dramatic contest in ancient Athens, playwrights like Aeschylus submitted three tragedies followed by a satyr play, a farce designed to relieve the seriousness of the preceding plays. The arrest of Joe Coburn is a fitting farce to relieve the tragedy of the Civil War. It also constitutes an ironic comment on nineteenth-century American culture: in a nation that had just witnessed the deaths of over six hundred thousand men—many killed by the most fiendish and efficient technology that could be devised—two men were prevented from entering, by mutual consent, a ring to fight with their bare hands. Like all eras, including our own, the period of the Civil War was marked by a strange blend of violence and decorum. In peace and war, conflict and turmoil stirred the American scene. The artists whose drawings make up the Becker Collection were there to capture and convey it to a voracious public.



## ENDNOTES

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15 Anthony W. Lee, "Introduction," in *On Alexander Gardner's* Photographic Sketch Book *of the Civil War*, Anthony W. Lee and Elizabeth Young (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2007), 6.

16 Prints of several of Brady's photographs are in the National Portrait Gallery of the Smithsonian Institution, Washington, D.C. One example may be seen at National Portrait Gallery, "First Blood: Elmer E. Ellsworth," Smithsonian Institution, http://civilwar.si.edu/firstblood_ellsworth.html (accessed July 3, 2009).

17 *Harper's Weekly*, "Colonel Ellsworth, of the Fire Zouaves," May 11, 1861, 1.

18 The New York State Military Museum and Veterans Research Center has a collection of newspaper clippings regarding Ellsworth; see the postings on their Web site: "Unit History Project: 11th Infantry Regiment, New York, Civil War Newspaper Clippings," New York State Division of Military and Naval Affairs, http://dmna.state.ny.us/historic/reghist/civil/infantry/11thInf/11thInfCWN.htm (accessed July 3, 2009). The Smithsonian Web Site "CivilWar@Smithonian" has a chapter called "First Blood" that displays a collection of artifacts relating to Ellsworth's death, including the cover of a requiem composed by George Warren, a piece of a Confederate flag he seized, and commemorative envelopes; see National Portrait Gallery, "First Blood," Smithsonian Institution, http://www.civilwar.si.edu/firstblood_intro.html (accessed July 3, 2009). Other songs mourning Ellsworth include "Monody on the Death of Ellsworth" (words by Mrs. G. Remak, music by J.C. Beckel), "Ellsworth's Avengers" (words by A. Lora Hudson, music by S.L Coe), and, most notably, "Better Times Are Coming," by Stephen Collins Foster. Poems include Henry Howard Brownell's "Abraham Lincoln" and John Greenleaf Whittier's "The Watchers."

19 Alexander Gardner, *Gardner's Photographic Sketch Book of the Civil War* (1866; repr. New York, N.Y.: Dover Publications, 1959).

20 Ibid., 1.

21 *Harper's Weekly*, "The Death of Colonel Ellsworth," June 8, 1861, 3; and *Harper's Weekly*, "Murder of Colonel Ellsworth," June 15, 1861, 1.

22 Faust, 92.

23 Ibid., 93.

24 Ibid., 94.

25 Richard Barksdale Harwell, "The Consequence of Desertion," in Richard Barksdale Harwell, ed., *The Confederate War Reader: How the South Saw the War* (New York, N.Y.: Dover Publications, 1989), 269–270.

26 Henry Steele Commanger, editorial note in Washington Gardner, "General Sheridan Executes Two Deserters at Chattanooga," in *The Civil War Archive: The History of the Civil War in Documents*, ed. Henry Steele Commager, revised and expanded by Erik Brunn (New York, N.Y.: Black Dog and Leventhal, 2000), 346.

27 Gardner, 346–347.

28 Moore, 4:5–6.

29 *New York Times*, "The MacCoole-Coburn Prize Fight—New-York Rowdies in Cincinnati," May 26, 1868.

30 *New York Times*, "The MacCoole-Coburn Prize Fight—Arrest of the Principals," May 27, 1868.

31 *New York Times*, "The MacCoole-Coburn Corruption Case," June 3, 1868.

# THE BLACK IMAGE IN THE WHITE NORTHERN MIND

## REPRESENTATIONS OF AFRICAN AMERICANS BY THE SPECIAL ARTISTS OF *FRANK LESLIE'S ILLUSTRATED NEWSPAPER*

Lucia Zaucha Knoles

**As she began to learn the rudiments of reading and writing in a school for former slaves, young Emma Colt used her new skills to describe to Northern teachers the stories she had been told about Northerners by her former owner:**

> he says that Wel belong to him in hell and he says that he wishes that yankees Was at the Devel ... thank Lord that yankees came ... he sad that youall had for legs like a hors and had one eye before and one behind and a horn on each side.[1]

Emma was not the only one who had heard stories about monster men from the North. Slave owners circulated such tales to discourage African Americans from escaping to the Union lines or staying to welcome Northern troops when the Confederate soldiers retreated. But, even though they had been told to fear Northerners, most slaves seem to have not mistaken fiction for fact. Another young student in a freedmen's school explained, "they said that the yankees had horns and said that the yankees Was Goin to kill us and something told me not to Believe them and something told me not to Be afraid."[2]

African Americans had good reasons to doubt the word of their enslavers: if the stories proved false, perhaps the men in blue would offer them a chance for freedom. Most Northern whites, on the other hand, were not similarly motivated to challenge the popular stereotypes of African Americans disseminated in the antebellum period in plantation fiction, minstrel songs, so-called scientific treatises, and even sermons. The myth that blacks were lazy, carefree, and uncivilized enabled both the proponents of slavery and those who wanted to avoid fighting over the issue to agree that blacks were incapable of living in freedom.

Most abolitionists actually shared these negative views of African Americans but resorted to a narrative of nurture rather than nature to explain the supposedly distinctive characteristics of blacks. Even Thomas Jefferson, whose taxonomy of racial differences articulated in his book *Notes on the State of Virginia* seems to have provided a foundation for many later stereotypes, admitted that it was impossible to know whether racial differences were inherent or the result of time and circumstances.[3] In addition, antebellum abolitionists who described slavery as having a "degrading" effect on African Americans were echoing Jefferson's notion that "the whole commerce between master and slave is a perpetual exercise of the most boisterous passions, the most unremitting despotism on the one part, and degrading submissions on the other."[4]

The war came to be seen as a test of whether or not African Americans, once free from the degrading conditions of slavery, would develop the characteristics and behaviors most valued by white Americans. Sent by the president to assess the African Americans who had taken refuge at a camp for escaped slaves during the early months of the war, Edward Pierce (an ardent advocate of emancipation and civil rights) explained the issue this way: "You may think yourself wise, as you note the docility of a subject race;

but in vain will you attempt to study it until the burden is lifted. The slave is unknown to all, even to himself, while the bondage lasts."[5] And, here is how Pierce articulated the terms of the trial:

> Two questions are concerned in the social problem of our time. One is, 'Will the people of African descent work for a living? and the other is, Will they fight for their freedom? An affirmative answer to these must be put beyond any fair dispute before they will receive permanent security in law or opinion.[6]

During the war, Northerners were thus naturally curious to get their first look at the people who had long been the subject of public debate, and two of the first illustrated periodicals in America, *Frank Leslie's Illustrated Newspaper* (*Leslie's*) and *Harper's Weekly*, were uniquely situated to capitalize on the Northern interest in former slaves and other war topics. The two publications competed for readers during the war years by sending dozens of Special Artists into the field to draw dramatic pictures of events as they were taking place.

*Harper's Weekly* (a Republican-leaning publication) often used sympathetic depictions of slaves to appeal to its readers' emotions. In a time period when many publications were known primarily for their political positions, *Leslie's*, committed to developing a national readership, told stories that were consistent with popular opinion. It was this desire to build a broad audience that led Frank Leslie (owner of the newspaper) to advise his staff: "Never shoot over the heads of the people."[7] Rather than offend Southern subscribers by sharply criticizing the actions of the Confederacy during the early days of the war, *Leslie's* tried to take a middle position, until it became clear that such a course would alienate Northern readers.

As Joshua Brown so succinctly explains in *Beyond the Lines: Pictorial Reporting, Everyday Life, and the Crisis of Gilded-Age America*, a reader who opened the pages of *Leslie*'s encountered "scenes of brawny bare-knuckle boxing matches coupled with editorial complaints about the moral degradation engendered by such amusements"[8] This approach enabled *Leslie's* to gratify the tastes of both those seeking the sensational and those hungering for reform. It also cleverly allowed *Leslie's* to indulge the conflicted tastes of the individual: a reader could satisfy a taste for the vulgar under the guise of seeking out the virtuous. So, when we find that some of the depictions of African Americans that appear on the pages of *Leslie's* were intended to be comic and others heroic, we should remember the two prongs of that newspaper's marketing strategy.

At the same time, the seemingly contradictory images of African Americans produced by the Special Artists working for *Leslie's* may be seen as a reflection of white Northerners' confusion over whether or not to believe that African Americans were inherently inferior and whether or not to believe that the war would reveal their ability to function as free men and women.

This is why the drawings produced by the Special Artists of *Leslie's* are so valuable to those trying to understand what George Fredrickson calls "the black image in the white mind."[9] Given *Leslie's* marketing strategy of appealing to as broad an audience as possible, the pictures published there should provide a clear indication of Northern whites' visions of race. Guy McElroy reminds us:

> The ways that America's leading visual artists have portrayed the African American—as slave or freedman, servant or member of the middle class, minstrel performer or wartime hero, ridiculous stereotype or forceful leader—form an index that reveals how the majority of American society felt about its black neighbors."[10]

These attitudes had practical consequences. While the fate of slavery was being determined on the battlefields of the South, the success of emancipation would, to some extent, depend on the visions of race harbored by both Northerners and Southerners; thus, by helping us understand how Northern whites saw African Americans, these pictures provide powerful evidence of the forces African Americans had to fight against—even in the North—and just how hard they worked to win their own freedom.

## AFRICAN AMERICANS WORKING

As far as the eye can see in Francis Schell's drawing *One Thousand Contrabands Building a Levee on the Mississippi River* (plate 100), African-American men and women bend over shovels, over wheelbarrows, over pallets, digging, pushing, and loading. In this respect, Schell's composition is typical of most of the representations of African Americans found in the Becker

Collection; almost every black body in the drawings is paired with a pick, shovel, wheelbarrow, or heavy load. A man pulls baggage from a train in the background of Joseph Becker's drawing *Petersburg and City Point Railroad during the Siege of Petersburg* (fig. 1). A line of men weighed down by heavy sacks unloads furniture from a train in James E. Taylor's drawing *The Barracks: Furniture Delivery Department of the Shelter Committee on Washington Street* (fig. 2). Schell's drawing *Scene on the Levee at Baton Rouge, Louisiana: Contrabands Discharge the Ammunition from the U.S. Transport North Star* (plate 99), shows a line of men weighed down by boxes of ammunition. Other drawings depict African Americans digging, for example, earthen fortifications in Becker's drawing *A Street in Smithville during the Capture of Wilmington* (fig. 3) and graves in an unknown artist's drawing *Union Soldiers Cemetery at Jefferson Barracks, Missouri* (fig. 4).

These drawings record some of the many ways that formerly enslaved men and women contributed to the war effort. During the early months of the war, the Federal government—along with most Northerners—regarded the preservation of the Union as the war's only purpose. As a result, slaves who successfully escaped to Union camps were promptly returned to their masters. To do otherwise, many thought, would violate the Constitution. That practice ended in May 1861 at Fort Monroe, when General Benjamin Butler decided to claim fugitives as "contraband of war" in order to have

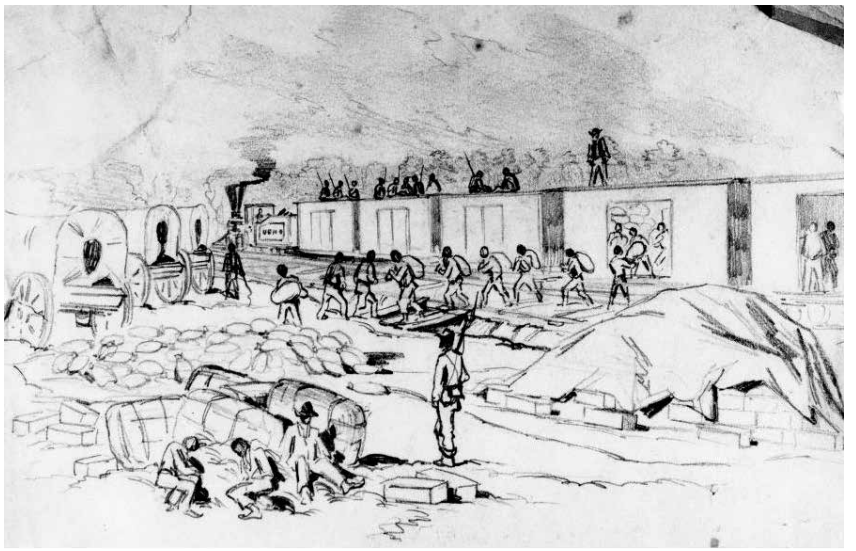


Fig. 1. Joseph Becker, *Petersburg and City Point Railroad during the Siege of Petersburg*, September 2, 1864. Graphite on wove paper, 9.8 x 6.3 in. (24.9 x 16.0 cm). CW–JB–VA–9–2–64c

Fig. 2. James E. Taylor, *The Barracks: Furniture Delivery Department of the Shelter Committee on Washington Street*, n.d. Graphite on wove paper, 7.0 x 9.3 in. (17.8 x 23.6 cm). PCW–JT–UK–ND

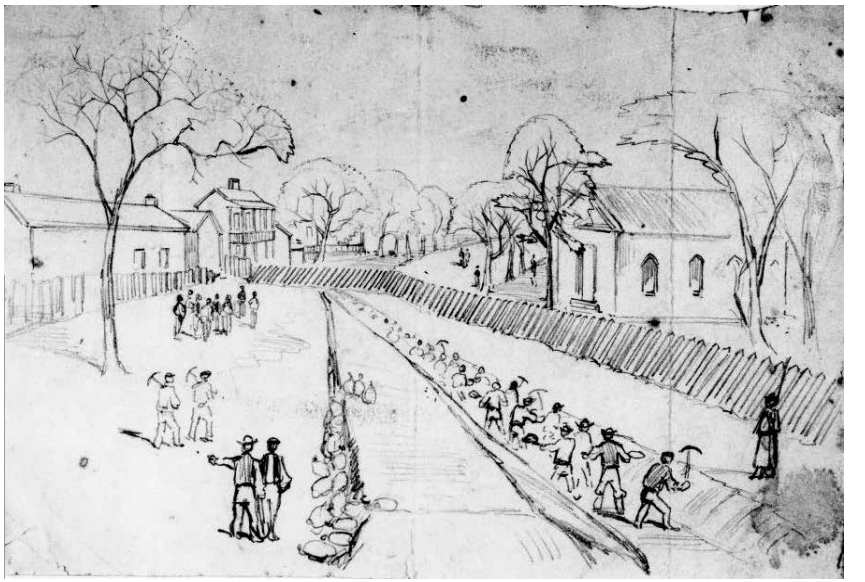


Fig. 3. Joseph Becker, *Capture of Wilmington: A Street in Smithville*, February 3, 1865. Graphite on wove paper, 9.8 x 6.5 in. (24.9 x 16.5 cm). CW–JB–NC–2–3–65a

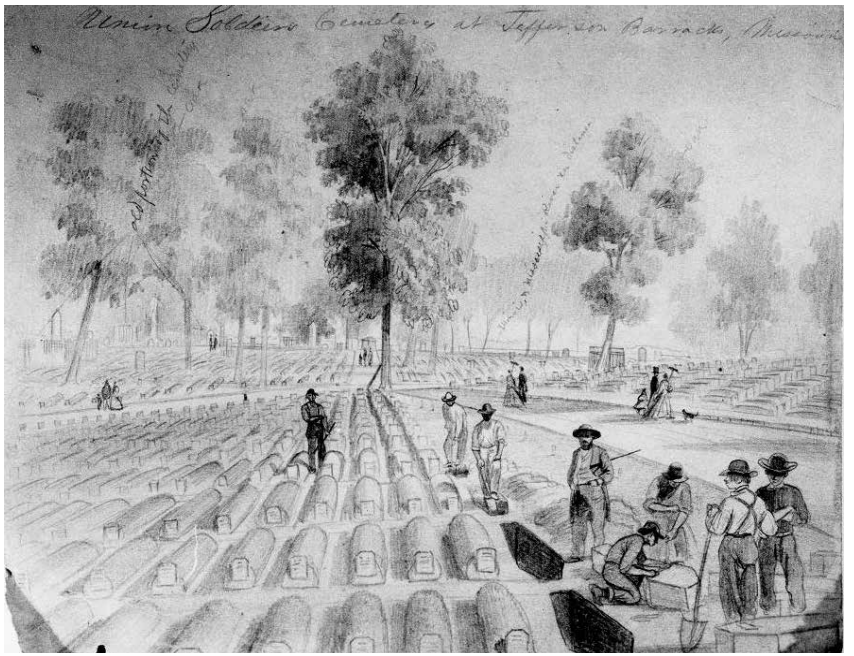



Fig. 4. *Union Soldiers Cemetery at Jefferson Barracks, Missouri*, n.d. Graphite on paper, 9.3 x 7.5 in. (23.6 x 19.0 cm). CW–UK–MO–ND

the benefit of the services African Americans could offer while simultaneously depriving the Confederates of slave labor.[11] By claiming that he was not freeing slaves but instead laying claim to contraband (goods subject to confiscation), Butler cleverly avoided the political firestorm that would have erupted had he proposed emancipation at that time. By identifying African Americans as contrabands, however, Butler essentially affirmed their status as property and simply transferred ownership from individual Confederate slave owners to the Union army. Southerners loyal to the Union cause were allowed to retain their slaves under this system.[12] In the First and Second Confiscation Acts (1861 and 1862, respectively), Congress made Butler's decree, which the public referred to as the Fort Monroe Doctrine, the basis for national policy.

Used at first to build fortifications and provide other kinds of basic services for the military, able-bodied male contrabands were eventually impressed or recruited into the army, where they were typically assigned menial jobs. Many other African Americans, including women, were compelled to continue laboring on the same cotton plantations where they had once worked as slaves so that the Union could bring the cotton harvest to market.[13]

In addition to documenting the very real contribution African Americans were making to the war effort, these drawings directly address the concerns Northern whites had about whether or not African Americans would work once they were free. Throughout the early nineteenth century, slavery had been defended as an institution made necessary by the very nature of African Americans. Noted proponent of slavery George Fitzhugh wrote, "the negro is improvident; will not lay up in summer for the wants of winter; will not accumulate in youth for the exigencies of age."[14] But, did the illustrations in *Leslie's* reassure readers of the productivity of black workers or reinforce the stereotype of the so-called lazy negro? Perhaps an answer may be found by taking a close look at Schell's drawing *A Thousand Contrabands Building a Levee on the Mississippi River* in conjunction with its version (fig. 5) by the same name published in *Leslie's* and the article that accompanied it.

There is something troubling about the tone of Schell's drawing and other images in *Leslie's* of African Americans at work. Despite the massive enterprise in which he depicts the African Americans engaged, Schell makes no demands on our feelings for the people portrayed; instead, the drawing

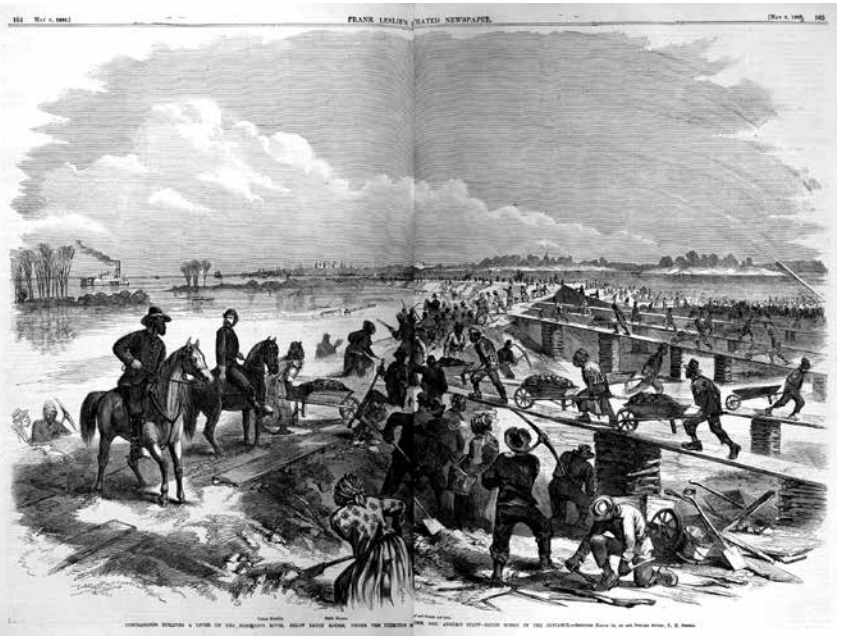


Fig. 5. *Contrabands Building a Levee on the Mississippi River, Below Baton Rouge, Under the Direction of General Augur's Staff—Baton Rouge in the Distance—Sketched March 13 By Our Special Artist, F.H. Schell.* Engraving, *Frank Leslie's Illustrated Newspaper*, May 9, 1863, after a drawing by Francis H. Schell.

appears designed to encourage the viewer's detachment from those viewed. While the supervisors face us, the workers do not. We see only their backs or their profiles. A few details endow the faces of the officers with a sense of humanity and individuality, whereas the faces of the laborers—even those in the foreground whose faces can be seen from the side—are represented essentially as dark ovals not only in the preliminary drawing but also in the published version.

Each row of workers is distinguishable from the others, because perspective demands that each be slightly smaller than the one before. Like the seemingly infinite series of images created by the reflections in a set of facing mirrors, we see rank after rank of wheelbarrow-pushing silhouettes disappearing into the distance. Even the scale of the landscape conspires against any attempt to see these laborers as individual human beings, as most of them are reduced to nothing more than small dots—even in the engraved version. Never do we seem to be invited to admire the nobility of their labor or sympathize with them on account of its difficulty.

The accompanying article admits that the blacks depicted in the picture work hard: "They labor cheerfully and efficiently, and their conduct proves that paid negro labor would be more productive than slave labor. About 1,000 are thus usefully occupied, in which number there are about 150 women."[15] This statement could be read as a refutation of the myth of the unwilling black worker. The article pointedly suggests, however, that there is no reason to feel either respect or pity for these people. Despite the grueling work depicted in the picture, the text describes the African Americans as moderately worked, and remarks, "it is almost needless to add that no white men could perform this continuous work, whereas moderate labor is beneficial for the colored race."[16]

Both the engraving and article seem to reflect the point of view put forth in antebellum proslavery writings, such as *The Black Gauntlet: A Tale of Plantation Life in South Carolina*, in which Mrs. Henry Rowe Schoolcraft writes, "all experience in the South proves that you cannot overwork a negro."[17] According to this vision, a role that would be tragic for whites is natural for blacks, whose bodies supposedly have been designed for hard labor. The fact that both the illustration and article that appeared in *Leslie's* seem to encourage readers to maintain a comfortable and comforting distance between themselves and those pictured is particularly thought provoking given that the poetry and fiction published in *Leslie's* regularly appealed to the nineteenth-century appetite for the sentimental by focusing on the heart-wrenching last words of dying soldiers, trials of orphans, or vicissitudes of life suffered by beautiful virgins.

Some of these works were little more than emotional snuff, stimulating readers' emotions in order to set off satisfying eruptions of tears. At its best, however, the sentimental was intended "to evoke a certain form of emotional response, usually empathy, in the reader or viewer" in order to bring about transformation.[18] In *Uncle Tom's Cabin*, for example, Senator Bird returns home after calmly voting in favor of the Fugitive Slave Law of 1850 only to discover in his own kitchen a woman and child fleeing from slavery. "Confronted with the real presence of distress—the imploring human eye, the frail, trembling human hand, the despairing appeal of helpless agony," Bird suddenly realizes that behind the stereotype of a fugitive slave ("the image of a little newspaper picture of a man with a stick and bundle with 'Ran away from the subscriber' under it") was a real human being like himself.[19] The fact that the slave child was wearing the "little well-known cap" of his own dead son, given to the fugitives at Bird's suggestion, intensified his sense of personal identification with the mother. Although he had lectured his wife earlier that afternoon on the constitutional importance of the Fugitive Slave Law and the political importance of maintaining good relations with the South, Bird personally delivers the fugitives into the hands of someone who can conduct them to freedom. Bird is, of course, a surrogate for the reader. While he, not the reader, is physically "confronted with the real presence of distress," the reader is expected to empathize with him as he is in the process of empathizing and changing.

This concept of the sentimental may provide a useful lens for viewing the drawings the Special Artists at *Leslie's* produced: do they invite empathy on the part of a white reader in a way that might reflect or create his or her sense of identification with a black subject? In the case of *A Thousand Contrabands Building a Levee on the Mississippi River* and its accompanying article, it seems as if *Leslie's* is encouraging the reader to feel a sense of distance that reaffirms feelings of difference.

Had the newspaper wished to challenge its readers to overcome their sense of African Americans as other, it could have used the sentimental to inspire an empathetic emotional response. Sentimental literature, for example, often focused on the plight of vulnerable women—the overworked seamstress or the unmarried maiden without a father to provide for her. The article on the levee project calmly reported that one hundred fifty women were laboring there.[20] Their grueling work surely could have been described in ways

that touched the emotions. Considering the carefully circumscribed roles assigned to white women in late nineteenth-century America, it would have been unthinkable for *Leslie's* to publish an image depicting white women engaged in a similar kind of manual labor. Rather than drawing the reader's attention to this violation of the supposed women's sphere, the illustration makes little distinction between male and female figures. We can tell the men from the women only because the former wear pants and hats, while the latter wear skirts and head-wraps styled as turbans (another signifier not only of gender but also race and, thus, otherness).[21] The writer's assumption that no white men could undertake such labors, even though one hundred and fifty black women engaged in this enterprise are supposedly being only "moderately worked," further reinforces this idea of otherness.

Of course, African Americans in this situation lacked the freedom to decide for themselves whether or not to observe the social conventions that structured the lives of most white Americans. Many black women were forced to work alongside men in the fields. In the same way, men could not decline to do work that was not regarded as manly. This was certainly true of both slaves and contrabands, whose lives were governed by their owners or Union officers.

Depictions of African Americans violating social norms provided the basis for many illustrations in *Leslie's* that were clearly designed to provoke laughter or at least a knowing smile. A case in point is Becker's portrait *An Army "Washerwomen" during the Siege of Petersburg* (plate 10). Made during a period in which male and female spheres were sharply separated, the image of a male doing a female's work clearly was intended to be humorous. As if afraid we might miss the joke, *Leslie's* published the illustration with a caption and article designed to wink at the white reader:

> An amusing sketch on page 189 represents the army "washerwoman" engaged in the useful business of washing clothes. The "laundress," in this case, is a stout negro, who pursues this avocation amid the most primitive surroundings. His assistants or gossips are near at hand, to chatter of the news.[22]

In the short space of two sentences, the article draws attention to the comic incongruity of a "stout" masculine figure serving as a "washerwoman" and casts his fellow laborers in similarly female roles by resorting to a traditional negative female stereotype in describing them as "gossips" who "chatter." (This also has the effect of suggesting that the men are not really laboring.) The ambiguity of the seated figure near the center of the picture, perhaps a female child or small man wrapped in a large apron, further contributes to the image's gender-bending humor. The engraver changed the composition in ways that contribute to the comedic effect. In Becker's drawing, one male washes clothes, while the other hangs them to dry. Each man focuses on his work. The published version, *"Washerwomen" in the Army of the Potomac—From a Scene by Our Special Artist, Joseph Becker* (fig. 6), includes a third man, and the men at the far right and far left of the composition seem to be looking at one another as if engaged in "chatter" in the manner the article suggests.

Fig. 6. *"Washerwomen" in the Army of the Potomac—From a Scene by Our Special Artist, Joseph Becker.* Engraving, *Frank Leslie's Illustrated Newspaper*, December 10, 1864, after a drawing by Joseph Becker.

If the sentimental attempts to provoke feelings of empathy in order to dissolve any sense of distinction between the self and the other, the comic sometimes attempts to do the opposite. By emphasizing distinctions between the self and the other, comedy can provide the viewer with a pleasant sense of superiority while reducing any sense of threat occasioned by the other. Rod Martin (a psychologist who specializes in investigating the ways that humor is used as a mechanism for dealing with psychosocial stress) explains: "A long-standing theoretical approach views humor [as] a form of aggres-

sion. Theories of this kind have been referred to as superiority, disparagement, aggression, or degradation theories."[23] Thinkers as far back as Plato and Aristotle have suggested that laughter is often based in malice. In the seventeenth century, Thomas Hobbes wrote that "the passion of laughter proceedeth from the sudden imagination of our own odds and eminency: for what is else the recommending of ourselves to our own good opinion, by comparison with another man's infirmity or absurdity?"[24]

While *Leslie's* published few depictions of African Americans during the Civil War that could be regarded as sentimental, the newspaper produced a significant number that were clearly intended to be comic. African Americans were regarded as funny when they contravened the conventions of white society, even when economic necessity or the commands of a Union officer forced them to violate those codes. As we will see, African Americans were also regarded as humorous when they adhered to social conventions against the expectations established by racial stereotypes. In those cases, the humor was intended to be generated by the sense of incongruity the viewer experienced seeing blacks imitate the behavior associated with white Americans. A reporter for the *New York Times* assigned to the Army of the Potomac explains, "whether drilling, digging, or enjoying themselves, they are always comical. Even when most seriously inclined the negro is amusing."[25]

Comedy is a supple tool. The ambiguity inherent in humorous expression makes it possible for the writer to avoid taking responsibility for the idea being expressed and the readers to avoid taking responsibility for their approval. After all, did they really mean what they said—if that is indeed what they meant to say—or were they only joking?[26] That made racial humor particularly valuable for a publication like *Leslie's* in a time period when emotions were high, opinions different, and events on the ground might cause a sudden shift in political attitudes. Unfortunately, the effect of such comedy likely would have been to accentuate the sense of difference and superiority white readers felt toward the figures depicted in *An Army "Washerwomen" during the Siege of Petersburg* and other comic illustrations and articles.

## AFRICAN AMERICANS DANCING

An image claiming to represent the antics of dancing African Americans usually could be counted on to provoke mirth in white viewers during the mid nineteenth century. Images of African Americans fiddling and dancing were a familiar part of antebellum popular culture, particularly after the emergence of blackface minstrelsy during the late 1820s. Among the number of drawings of dancing African Americans that appeared in Northern publications during the war are the stereotyped depictions of dancing and banjo-playing blacks produced by Winslow Homer, famous today for his landscapes and touching scenes from American life.[27] What are we to make, then, of the drawing of dancing African Americans that appears in the Becker Collection or the engravings of dancing that *Leslie's* published during the war? Do they reinforce the minstrel stereotype of the happy-go-lucky slave? Do they illustrate the story told in slave narratives of dancing as a performance intended to appease, appeal, and subvert white power?

Two illustrations, *Jumbo Jum* (fig. 7) and *Jim Crow Jubilee* (fig. 8), which appear on the covers of sheet music published in Boston during the 1840s, are examples of the traditional representations of the character Jim Crow (the minstrel show's comic vision of a plantation slave). At the center of each composition, a slave wearing garish and tattered clothes cavorts joyfully in dance. The sense of restraint or grace that would characterize cultivated modes of dance in nineteenth-century white society is missing here, replaced by a display of unbounded strutting. In the background, other slaves abandon themselves to merriment.

Fig. 7. *Jumbo Jum* (detail). Lithograph, 1840.

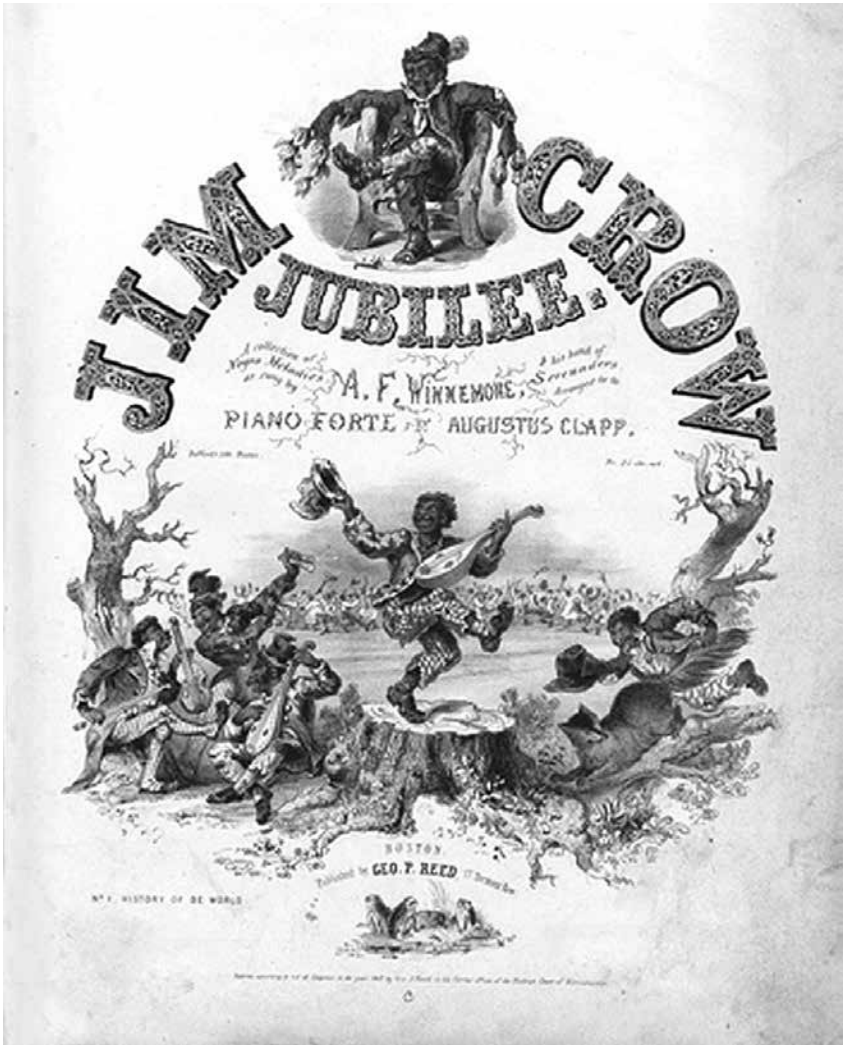



Fig. 8. *Jim Crow Jubilee*. Lithograph, 1847.

The message seems clear; if slaves can sing, play, and dance on the plantation, they must be happy or, at the very least, carefree. Such myths date back at least to the eighteenth century, when Jefferson wrote in *Notes on the State of Virginia*, "a black, after hard labour through the day, will be induced by the slightest amusements to sit up till midnight, or later, though knowing he must be out with the first dawn of the morning,"[28] and, "their griefs are transient. Those numberless afflictions, which render it doubtful whether heaven has given life to us in mercy or in wrath, are less felt, and sooner forgotten with them."[29]

Antebellum advocates of slavery echoed these claims in order to justify the conditions of slavery, insisting that what they regarded as the naturally cheerful disposition of blacks meant that slavery caused them no suffering. Thomas Carlyle, protesting England's decision to end slavery in Haiti wrote, "frightful things are continually told us of negro slavery, of the hardships, bodily and spiritual, suffered by slaves."[30] Carlyle countered these complaints by describing the typical black as "a merry-hearted, grinning, dancing, singing, affectionate kind of creature, with a great deal of melody and amenability in his composition."[31]

This conception of the happy-go-lucky black provided the basis for the plantation darky stereotype that served as the focus of so many minstrel songs and shows. Consider the lyrics of the song named *A Darkie's Life is Always Gay*:

> A darkies life am always gay, Always gay
> Tho he work from morn til de set ob sun
> Yet he merrily sings, when de work am done,
> Den merrily merrily sing and play,
> Yes darkies sing and play...
> Music an wine am de charm divine,
> Dat drown all thoughts of sorrow...
>
> When de daylight he come ober de hill, ober de hill,
> De nig he jump from him cot so quick,
> Do corn for to hoe or de cotton for to pick,
> Yes he merrily, merrily dance and sing
> Yah! darkies dance an sing ah! ah!
> Sing darkies sing &c.
>
> But when de Darkies work am done, work am done,
> Den he gaily dance wid his on chum chum,
> Nor tink ob de work dat to morrow may come,
> But merrily merrily sing an play,
> Yes! darkies sing an play . . .
>
> A darkies life is always gay.[32]

According to E.P. Christy (founder of the famous Christy Minstrels), minstrel songs and shows were more fact than fiction, as they represented an attempt "to reproduce the life of the plantation darky."[33] Certainly, it is factual to say that slaves sang and danced. In New Orleans between 1800 and 1862, for example, slaves were permitted to spend Sundays dancing in a public square while whites gathered to watch.[34] Frederick Douglass (famous as a fugitive slave and abolitionist) included an illustration of dancing slaves in the frontispiece of his autobiographical slave narrative *My Bondage and My Freedom* (fig. 9).[35] The first-person testimony of former slaves confirms that they sometimes sang and danced even when chained together in coffles as they were driven to the market and placed on the auction block itself. The question is not whether slaves danced but why.

Douglass warns of the dangers of misunderstanding such behavior:

> The remark is not unfrequently made, that slaves are the most contented and happy laborers in the world. They dance and sing, and make all manner of joyful noises—so they do; but it is a great mistake to suppose them happy because they sing. The songs of the slave represent the sorrows, rather than the joys, of his heart; and he is relieved by them, only as an aching heart is relieved by its tears.[36]

The dancing of slaves was also often intended for white consumption. In their autobiographies, former slaves testify that African Americans often danced not despite the oppression of their masters but because of it. An owner might require slaves to sing or dance because he wanted to be entertained or because he hoped to speed their work, demonstrate their vitality to potential buyers, or even encourage sexual relationships and reproduction. At the same time, a slave might choose to dance in order to rebel or allay the master's fears of a possible rebellion.

During the period in which he was owned by a slave speculator, William Wells Brown had the job of supervising the men, women, and children who had been herded into the auction yard. He recalls,

> some were set to dancing, some to jumping, some to singing, and some to playing cards. This was done to make them appear cheerful and happy. My business was to see that they were placed in those situations before the arrival of the

Fig. 9. Frontespiece, *My Bondage and My Freedom Life as a Freedman*. Engraving, in Frederick Douglass, *Frederick Douglass, My Bondage and My Freedom* (New York, N.Y.: Miller, Orton and Mulligan, 1855), 334, after a drawing by Nathanial Orr.

> purchasers, and I have often set them to dancing when their cheeks were wet with tears.[37]

In his autobiography, *Twelve Years a Slave: Narrative of Solomon Northup, a Citizen of New-York, Kidnapped in Washington City in 1841, and Rescued in 1853,* Solomon Northrup recalls being told by the owner of an auction house to play the violin in the yard where the men and women were being displayed so they could be made to dance to prove their fitness to prospective owners.[38] In another scene, Northrup recalls being required to play so that the dancing of his fellow slaves would divert their moody master:

> No matter how worn out and tired we were, there must be a general dance. When properly stationed on the floor, I would strike up a tune.
>
> "Dance, you d—d niggers, dance," Epps would shout.
>
> Usually his whip was in his hand, ready to fall about the ears of the presumptuous thrall, who dared to rest a moment, or even stop to catch his breath.[39]

In each of these cases, singing and dancing constitutes a form of performance—a performance of contentment, health, or pleasure—designed to reassure, appease, entertain, or even attract a new owner at the behest of the old one.

A different kind of performance is described by John J. Jacobs in his short slave narrative "True Tale of Slavery." Because a dancing slave looks like a contented slave, Jacobs learned to use dancing as a strategy to avoid violence at the hands of his master. He writes,

> a slave's wife or daughter may be insulted before his eyes with impunity. He himself may be called on to torture them, and dare not refuse. To raise his hand in their defence is death by the law. He must bear all things and resist nothing. If he leaves his master's premises at any time without a written permit, he is liable to be flogged. Yet, it is said by slaveholders and their apologists, that we are happy and contented. I will admit that slaves are sometimes cheerful; they sing and dance,

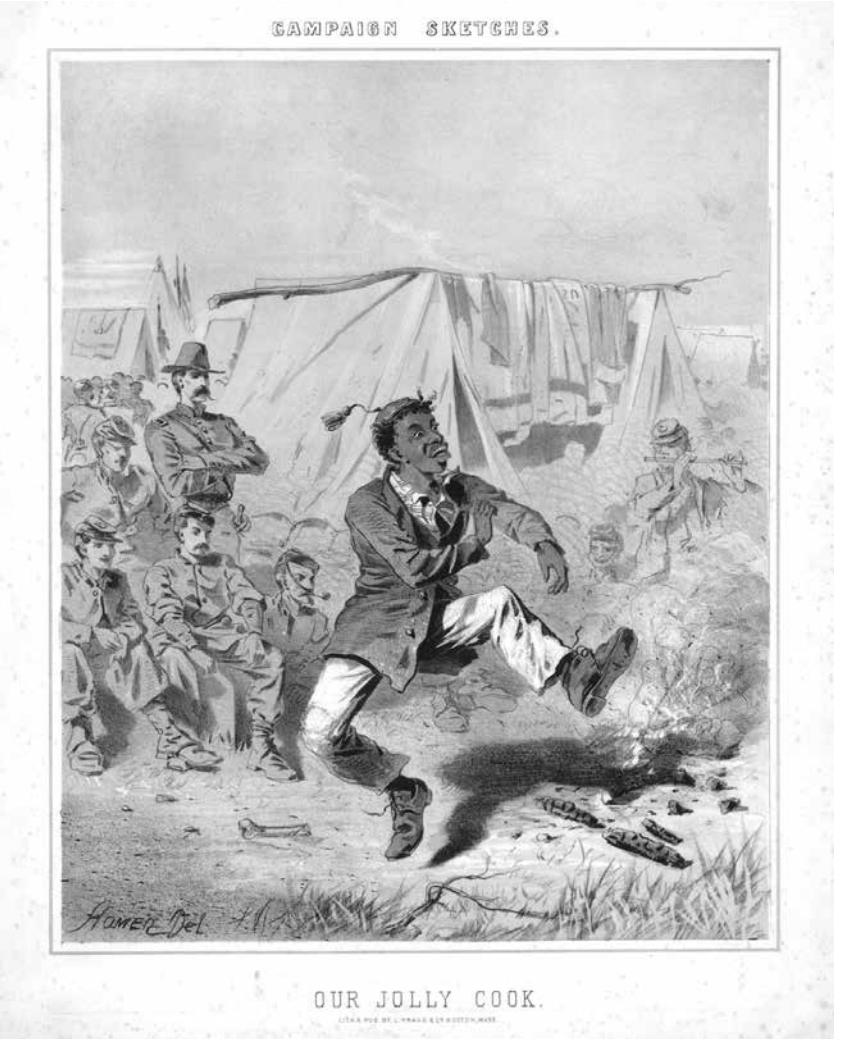



Fig. 10. *Our Jolly Cook*, from *Campaign Sketches*. Lithograph, 1863 (Louis Prang), after a drawing by Winslow Homer.

> as it is politic for them to do. I myself had changed owners three times before I could see the policy of this appearance of contentment.[40]

This means that seeing the dancing of slaves as a simple expression of lighthearted contentment is not merely reductive, it is wrong: dancing was most often a performance designed to serve or subvert the master's power.

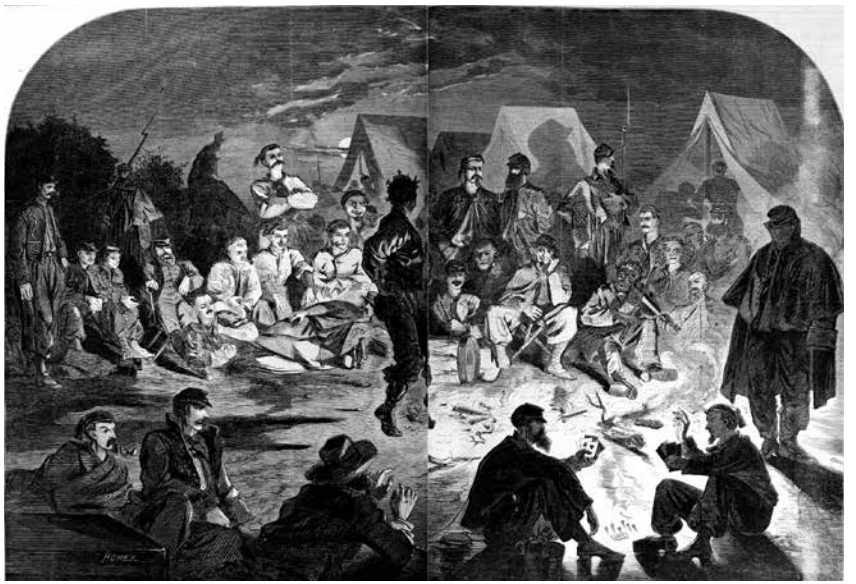


Fig. 11. *A Bivouac Fire on the Potomac.* Engraving, *Harper's Weekly,* December 21, 1861, after a drawing by Winslow Homer.

In *Scenes of Subjection: Terror, Slavery, and Self-Making in Nineteenth-Century America*, Saidiya Hartman argues that there is no one simple way of understanding the dancing of slaves. On the one hand, "the slave dancing a reel at the big house or stepping it up lively in the coffle ... transformed subjugation into a pleasing display for the master,"[41] and on the other, the master also could encourage singing or dancing in the work place in order to "harness pleasure as a productive force."[42] She also points out, however, that the practice of "stealing away" for secret dances was an assertion of independence and defiance.[43] The thoughtful complexity of Hartman's analysis serves as a cautionary tale: it is important not to read these images in a reductive fashion.

Becker's drawing *Evening Amusement of the Coloured Servants and Contrabands during Siege of Petersburg* (plate 9) published in *Leslie's* during the war challenges important elements of the minstrel stereotype by showing African Americans who seem to be dancing in celebration of their freedom rather than in disregard of the conditions of slavery. No element of performance enters into Becker's' drawing as there are no onlookers: the men dance, presumably, for their own pleasure. Their movements seem lively but natural rather than exaggerated. Neither the flamboyant finery nor the rips and patches common in the minstrel images make an appearance here. The men in the drawing wear matching work clothes that are simple and in good repair. In order to appreciate the dignity Becker granted his subjects, one need only contrast this image with Homer's lithograph *Our Jolly Cook, from Campaign Sketches* (fig. 10) or the illustration published in *Harper's* of *A Bivouac Fire on the Potomac* (fig. 11) that was based on a drawing by Homer.

Like Becker's drawing, an engraving based on a drawing by Schell entitled *Yanks Expedition—Extempore Musical and Terpsichorean Entertainment at the U.S. Arsenal, Baton Rouge. Under the Patronage of the 41st Mass., the 131st N.Y. and 25th Volunteers—Contraband Children* (fig. 12), is set within the secure confines of a Union camp. While both black and white adults look on, children dance, as if to suggest that the adults are too self-possessed to engage in such a performance. The residents of the contraband camp are outfitted very respectably; for example, the women wear hats or bonnets rather than turbans and are fully covered by modest dresses with long sleeves. It seems reasonable to speculate that viewers are being invited to think of this engraving as a testimonial to the transformative effects of freedom.

During the same period, *Leslie's* also featured depictions of African Americans that reinforce racial stereotypes. *Before Secession, After Secession: The South as Secession Found It, The South as Secession Leaves It* (fig. 13), published

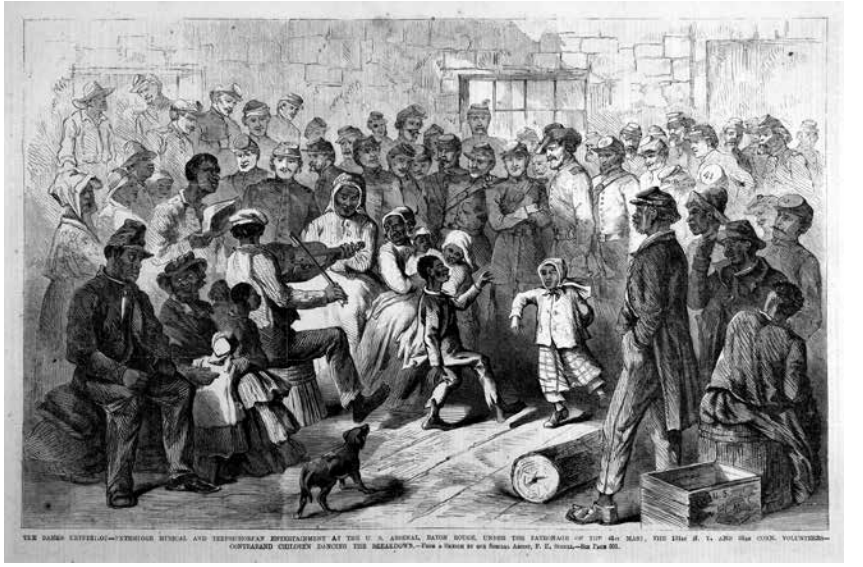


Fig. 12. *Yanks Expedition—Extempore Musical and Terpsichorean Entertainment at the U.S. Arsenal, Baton Rouge. Under the Patronage of the 41st Mass., the 131st N.Y. and 25th Volunteers—Contraband Children.* Engraving, January 31, 1863.

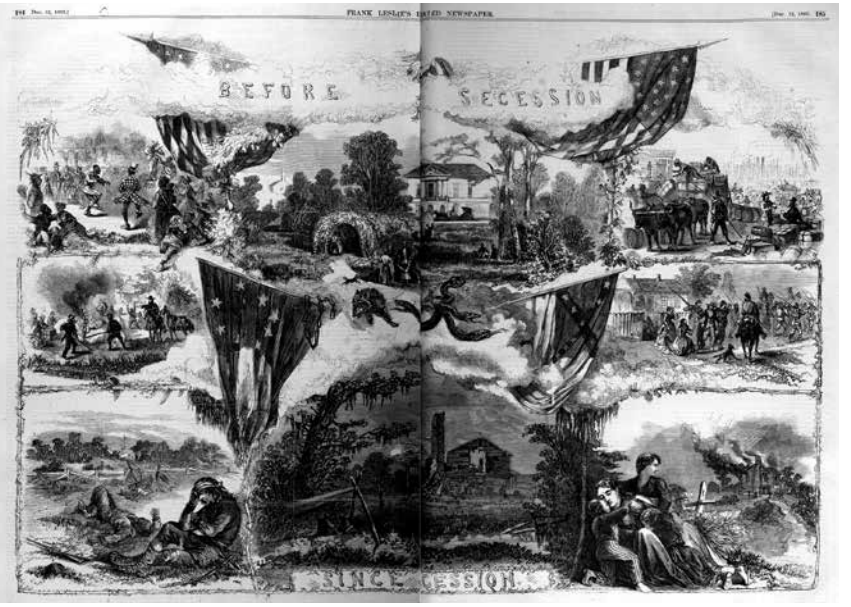



Fig. 13. *Before Secession, After Secession: The South as Secession Found It, The South as Secession Leaves It.* Engraving, *Frank Leslie's Illustrated Newspaper*, December 12, 1863.

in 1863, offers a series of vignettes contrasting antebellum plantation life with life in the wartime South. In one scene, the dead and wounded lie scattered across what once might have been the field of a prosperous planter. In another heart-tugging scene, a man looks back toward the burning remains of a house, while his wife fervently hugs two children. Southern life, these pictures seem to say, lies in ruins.

Nevertheless, in the same engraving, life before secession is depicted in a series of "happier" vignettes that could have been taken directly from the cover of sheet music for a minstrel show. In one, slaves load what appear to be bales of hay atop an oxcart, while in the background, others work in the fields in an orderly fashion. In another panel, slaves dance merrily. In the left foreground, a black couple appears to be drinking, and on the right foreground, an African-American woman represented as a stereotypical "mammy" gazes affectionately at a white child. In the background, a slave with his cap in hand walks up to a white man and woman who, along with the other whites accompanying them, form a genteel audience for the two black men dancing in the center middle ground of the image. The two men move in the angular way always used to depict minstrel-show characters. The dandified clothing of one of the dancers, who sports a checkered tailcoat as well as a top hat,

Fig. 14. *Zip Coon.* Lithograph, 1834 (Endicott and Swett).

makes him the very image of one of the foppish "urban coon" figures of the minstrel stage [for example, Zip Coon (fig. 14) or Jim Dandy] originally introduced around 1829 by white singer George Washington Dixon. Zip Coon was comic because his ambitious attempts to imitate the clothing and manners of whites were so clearly doomed to failure. Dressed in outlandish clothing and speaking in malapropisms, the performance of Zip Coon characters conveyed the message that the very idea that a black would aspire to any kind of social equality was inherently comic. In addition to conveying a message that African Americans are fundamentally merry and free of worries—even under slavery—the stereotyped image of the dancing black man (or sometimes woman) thus also served as a marker of unbridgeable otherness.

Perhaps the best way to understand this phenomenon is to compare two depictions of similar kinds of events published only a month apart in *Leslie's*: *Contraband Ball* (fig. 15), featuring black dancers, and *Soiree Dansante Given by General Gillmore at Hilton Head, S.C.* (fig. 16), featuring white dancers. The dancers in the *Contraband Ball* are clearly enjoying themselves: broad smiles stretch across the faces of the man and woman facing the viewer. Angles abound: the arms of the male dancers in the foreground, the leg of one of the dancers, and even the legs of the primary spectator are placed in the seemingly awkward angle conventionally used to characterize African-American dancing during that period. Meanwhile, the lively dancing of the two centrally placed women displaces their skirts, revealing their feet and the nearer woman's legs and petticoat. *Soiree Dansante Given by General Gillmore at Hilton Head, S.C.* offers a glimpse of a far more sedate scene: Rather than angles, we see curves. The sweeping curve of ball gowns and the curve of hands are extended in genteel greetings. Expressions are composed and restrained

Fig. 15. *Contraband Ball.* Engraving, *Frank Leslie's Illustrated Newspaper*, January 30, 1864.

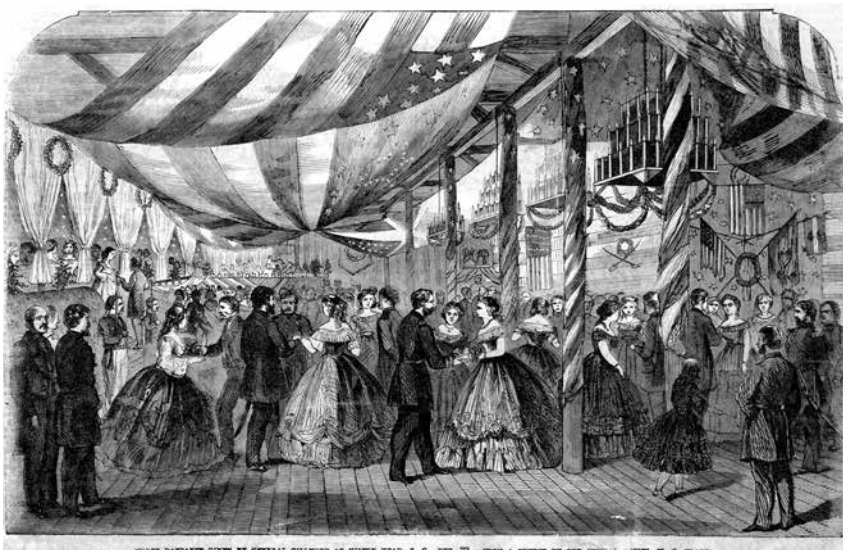


Fig. 16. *Soiree Dansante Given by General Gillmore at Hilton Head, S.C., Dec. 23—From a Picture by Our Special Artist, W.T. Crane.* Engraving, *Frank Leslie's Illustrated Newspaper*, January 23, 1864, after a drawing by William T. Crane.

rather than gleeful, and the only female legs exposed are those belonging to a young girl walking across the dance floor.

The article accompanying *Contraband Ball* is outwardly positive in tone but clearly distinguishes blacks from whites:

> The negroes preserve all their African fondness for music and dancing ... Coming as they all do from a degraded and oppressed class, they assume, nevertheless in their intercourse with each other, as far as they can, the manners and language of the best classes in society. There is often a grotesque exaggeration, indeed; but there is an appreciation of refinement and an endeavor to attain in which we seldom see in the same class of whites.[44]

Terms like "exaggeration" and "grotesque" draw our attention to the comic otherness perceived in African Americans, even when—perhaps, especially when—they were seen behaving in ways that are inconsistent with expectations based on racial stereotypes. Consider the similarity between this report and the description provided in an article describing a *Negro Fireman's Ball At "Sabbatry Hall," Charleston, S.C.* (fig. 17) published in the *New York Illustrated News* on December 6, 1862: "The excessive gallantry of the men, and the coy little airs of the colored belles were very amusing."[45] This can be funny only

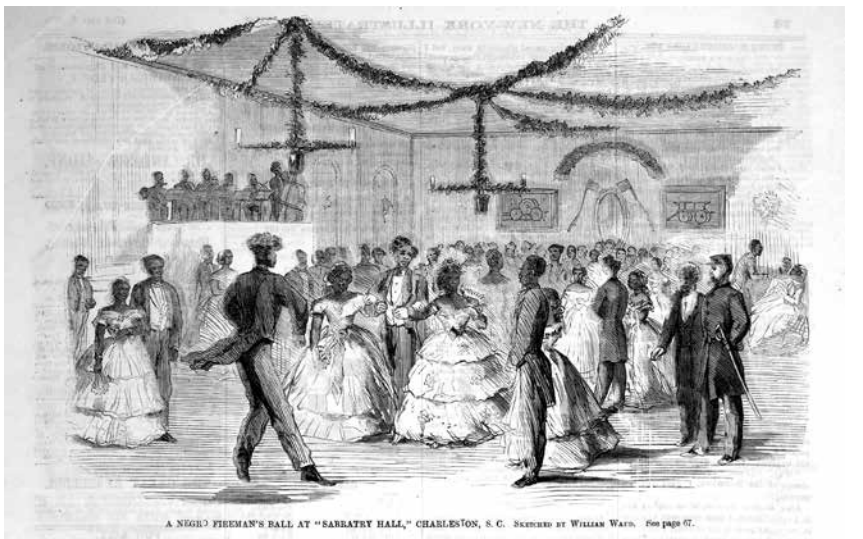



Fig. 17. *Negro Fireman's Ball At "Sabbatry Hall," Charleston, S.C.* Engraving, *New York Illustrated News*, December 6, 1862, after a drawing by William Waud.

in the same way a cat dressed in baby clothes is funny: Neither the cat nor the clothes is humorous in itself; the comedy derives from the unexpected incongruity of a cat appearing in baby clothes. Thus, once again, African Americans are seen as comic whether they behave in ways that seem consistent or inconsistent with racial stereotypes. In either case, humor reinforces the sense of otherness.

White Americans' renditions of African-American song and dance during the nineteenth century sometimes celebrated black culture, but they often denigrated African Americans at the same time. In an article about blackface minstrel shows, the virulently antislavery *New York Tribune* observed in 1855, "absurd as may seem negro minstrelsy to the refined musician, it nevertheless expresses the peculiar characteristics of the negro as surely as the great masters of Italy represent their more spiritual and profound nationality."[46] This positive commentary identifies that the refined see black musicality as absurd and expressive of the "peculiar characteristics of the negro" in the same way as opera demonstrates the "more spiritual and profound" identity of white Italians.

For all of these reasons, the drawings of blacks dancing created by the Special Artists of *Leslie's* need to be understood as part of a long and significant tradition in the representation of African Americans by white artists, reporters, and performers. In some of the drawings produced during the war, including Becker's drawing *Evening Amusement of the Coloured Servants and Contraband during the Siege of Petersburg* and Schell's drawing *Children Dancing the Breakdown*, we seem to see a dignity that was never allowed to shine forth from a picture of a Jim Crow or Zip Coon. The image of the happy-go-lucky slave, however, continued to doggedly persist in drawings like *Before Secession, After Secession*. It was a stereotype fated to live on long after the war ended, surviving to become part of the romantic myth of the vanished South in the nostalgic memoirs, plantation fiction, minstrel shows, and, eventually, movies of the postwar era.

## AFRICAN AMERICANS PRAYING

Becker's drawing *Evening Prayer Meeting at City Point during the Siege of Petersburg* (plate 6) provides a counterpoint to the pictures of dancing (and the suggestions they sometimes convey of an excess of primitive energies) by showing African Americans gathered together peacefully in a quiet moment of devotion. And yet, even the religious practices of African Americans were often used to identify them as other.

Before and during the war, African Americans were regarded as deeply devout. The abolition movement urged white Americans to see blacks as fellow Christians who deserved freedom because they were children of God. The narratives by escaped slaves published by abolitionist societies frequently included religious rhetoric and scenes of prayer. There was certainly an element of truth in the characterization of enslaved people as devout. Many Protestant denominations in the South had proven useful to slave owners by preaching the importance of obedience to masters. At the same time, many African Americans found hope in the gospel messages they heard during services. It must have been easier to bear the difficulties of life with a promise of a better life in the hereafter. Whether in formally established churches or in secret gatherings at what were called hush harbors, the black church was a place where African Americans could find a message of hope, develop their own leaders, and perpetuate African-based cultural traditions.[47] In addition, the preaching and gospel singing that flourished in the black church gave African Americans a means to celebrate and communicate messages of freedom that were as much about breaking the chains of slavery as they were about breaking the manacles of sin.[48]

Even antislavery whites made African Americans' piety the butt of their comedy and complaint; the singing, dancing, and shouting in their services (borrowed from African traditions) shocked Northern whites, who were accustomed to more austere religious services. Frederick Law Olmsted, who traveled through the South before the war, wrote that slaves "are subject to intense excitements, often really maniacal, which they consider to be religious."[49]

In his postwar memoir, *Army Life in a Black Regiment*, Thomas Wentworth Higginson (the white commander of the First South Carolina Volunteers) recalled visiting his men as they participated in one of those "strange festival[s] half pow-wow, half prayer-meeting, which they know only as a 'shout,' held in a "regular native African hut, in short, such as is pictured in books." He continues,

> this hut is now crammed with men, singing at the top of their voices, in one of their quaint, monotonous, endless, negro-Methodist chants, with obscure syllables recurring constantly, and slight variations interwoven, all accompanied with a

> regular drumming of the feet and clapping of the hands, like castanets. Then the excitement spreads: inside and outside the enclosure men begin to quiver and dance, others join, a circle forms, winding monotonously round some one in the centre; some "heel and toe" tumultuously, others merely tremble and stagger on, others stoop and rise, others whirl, others caper sideways, all keep steadily circling like dervishes; spectators applaud special strokes of skill; my approach only enlivens the scene; the circle enlarges, louder grows the singing, rousing shouts of encouragement come in, half bacchanalian, half devout, "Wake 'em, brudder!" "Stan' up to 'em, brudder!"—and still the ceaseless drumming and clapping, in perfect cadence, goes steadily on. Suddenly there comes a sort of snap, and the spell breaks, amid general sighing and laughter.[50]

African Americans' religious practices disturbed other supporters of African Americans, including Lucy Chase (Higginson's friend and a freedmen's teacher):

> They begin with a meeting and end with a party, don't they?" my sister said—And so it seems. The excitable people protract their evening meetings far into the night. It is customary with them to continue the exercises of prayer and singing after the benediction has been pronounced. Their spiritual gratifications are emotional, rather than rational, and they rock, and sing, and wail, and howl, till their own most lazy patience is exhausted ... In their prayer-meetings, one or many grow "Happy," jump, and spin, throw their arms into the air, embrace those near them, shake all the bands they can reach, screech words of religious rapture, and give an occasional staccato howl,—horrible and startling.[51]

White observers usually regarded African Americans' expressive behavior during religious meetings as childlike and alarming. A representative from the New England Freedmen's Aid Society prefaced his description of a religious meeting he attended by saying that he had "no wish to bring a shade of ridicule over them, but merely to convey to unfamiliar minds some idea of the simplicity and originality of the people."[52] After reporting what he witnessed, he concluded that he "could only hope a blessing might rest upon them in their strange, almost alarming, mode of worship, until He who formed their impulsive hearts shall see fit to bestow upon them further light and instruction."[53] Pierce commented similarly: "Missionaries will be needed to address the religious element of a race so emotional in their nature."[54]

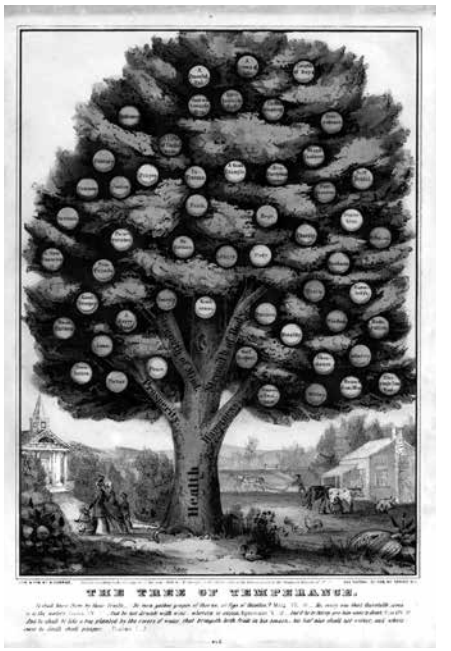


Fig. 18. *Tree of Temperance.* Lithograph, 1849 (Nathaniel Currier).

Becker's drawing *Evening Prayer Meeting at City Point during the Siege of Petersburg* reflects none of these concerns, instead showing African Americans silently and reverently bowing their heads as the man at the center of the composition preaches. To the right, we see what appears to be a family: a man, woman, and a small child on either side of them. This kind of image should have reassured Northern whites that African Americans were prepared to be good citizens. A respectable American was expected to be a member in good standing in a Christian congregation, and images of white church-going families were so often included in nineteenth-century lithographs that they are part of the iconography of American identity during that period. Nathaniel Currier's lithograph *Tree of Temperance* (fig. 18), for example, depicts a family approaching a church on the left side of a tree in the middle of the composition and a man working the land on a farm on its right. The composition communicates the belief that together religion and hard work form the basis for a good life—and the national identity.

Nevertheless, *The Contraband Camp at City Point—An Evening Prayer Service* (fig. 19), which is the published version of *Evening Prayer Meeting at City Point during the Siege of Petersburg*, differs in some important ways from Becker's drawing and as a result does not offer quite the same reassurances that African Americans and Northern whites share a common American identity. Sometimes engravers revised an image in order to make it fit the

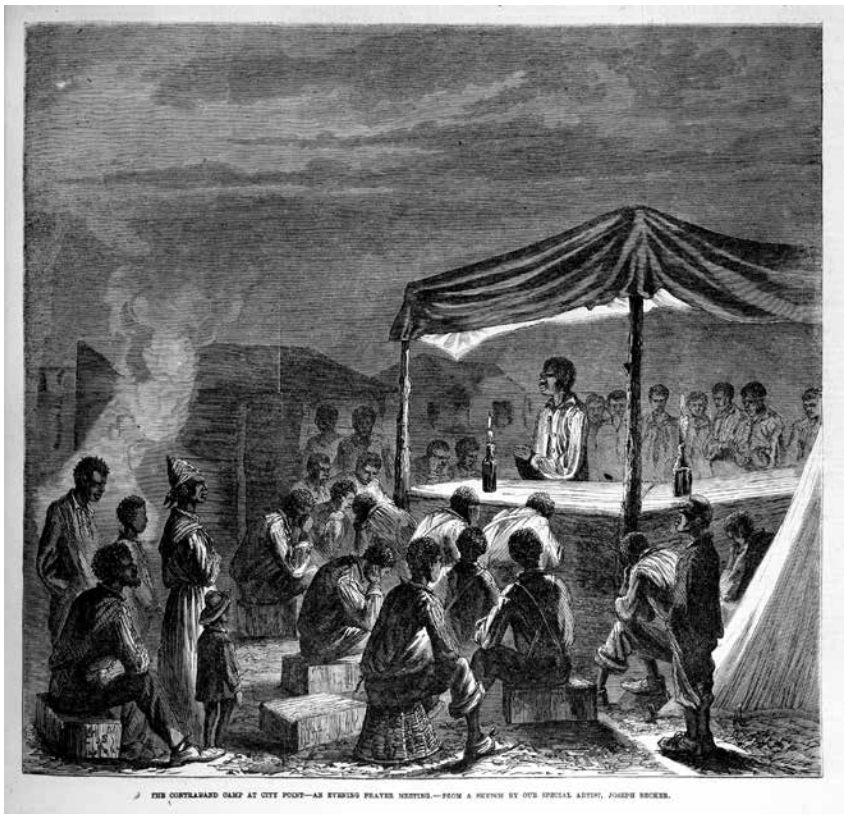



Fig. 19. *The Contraband Camp at City Point—An Evening Prayer Service.* Engraving, *Frank Leslie's Illustrated Newspaper*, October 1, 1864, after a drawing by Joseph Becker.

dimensions of the space available on the newspaper's page or to add details that the Special Artist omitted when drawing on the spot. When engravers transcribed the figure of the woman in the family grouping, however, they added details that accentuated markers of racial difference, giving her a fierce expression, exaggerated features, sharply peaked kerchief, and outfit crisscrossed with stripes. These changes distract from the peaceful reverence suggested by Becker's version.

Possibly engravers sometimes revised drawings to make them more consistent with readers' biases. Even so, *The Contraband Camp at City Point—An Evening Prayer Service*, like the drawing on which it was based, conveys the idea that African Americans are sincerely pious. The accompanying article notes,

> the negro is devotional. If he seldom rises intellectually to the higher level of the whites, he shows every basis for religious teaching. He is earnest, emotional, reverent ... Our Artist in Gen. Grant's camp was struck one evening at City Point by the singing of a colored meeting, and approaching, was so struck by the simple earnestness, real piety and untutored eloquence of Brother John, who led the services, that he could not forbear sketching he scene.[55]

The writer, however, cannot forbear remarking, "when this struggle is over we trust that good men will endeavor to elevate them. The field is a wide one."[56]

## AFRICAN AMERICANS FIGHTING

By far the most positive representations of African Americans published in *Leslie's* during the war are those depicting black soldiers in action. While at the beginning of the war white Northerners strongly resisted the idea of enlisting blacks, their attitude began to change as the need for recruits grew. On July 1, 1862, Lincoln put out a call for three hundred thousand more volunteers.[57] *Leslie's* later responded:

> We're coming, Father Abraäm, we're coming all along,
> But don't you think you're coming it yourself a little strong?
> Three hundred thousand might be called a pretty tidy figure,
> We've nearly sent you white enough, why don't you take the nigger?[58]

African Americans were finally accepted into the military after Lincoln issued the Emancipation Proclamation on January 1, 1863.[59] From that point forward, countless commentators argued that if African Americans wished to earn their freedom, they should prove their worthiness by fighting for it.

But not even depictions of African-American soldiers were free of negative stereotypes. Perched atop a sagging horizontal pole, seven soldiers unconcernedly wait out the time of their sentences in Becker's drawing *Scene in One of the Camps of the Negro Regiment: Mode of Punishing Negro Soldiers for Various Offences during the Siege of Petersburg* (fig. 20), published in *Leslie's* with the title *Army of the Potomac—Scene in Camp of Negro Regiments—Method*

*of Punishment of Negro Soldiers for Various Offences.—From a Sketch by Our Special Artist, Joseph Becker* (fig. 21). Some men slouch in sleep, hat brims pulled down over their eyes; some happily play cards. The jumble of their dangling limbs and various hunched poses conveys a sense of disorder that contrasts with the disciplined image of the black guard, who paces below them with an upright posture and a measured tread. In the course of supposedly complimenting these African Americans on their good-natured response to disciplinary action, the accompanying article explains,

> what is chastisement and mortification to one is mere pastime to another. Much depends upon the individual nature ... But punishment is usually received in good part, especially among the negro troops, whose sensibilities are as obtuse as their animal spirits are exuberant ... the negroes do not seem to cherish any vindictive feelings, such as might well be occasioned in the bosoms of white men when subject to indignity.[60]

What makes these men immune to such concerns about indignity, we might ask, and so ready to amuse themselves while being disciplined? Such images may reflect and reinforce the argument made by proponents of slavery that African Americans were lazy, childlike, and happy to play lowly roles, and therefore in need of strict working conditions and harsh punishments.

Some punishments meted out to African Americans involved far more than the indignity of straddling a pole. In *Execution by Firing Squad* (fig. 22), a line of men stand with rifles still pointed at a soldier as he crumples to the ground dead. This poignant event takes place in an enclosure formed by a line of men identified in the notes as colored troops. It is likely that this drawing records the death of Sergeant William Walker of the 3rd South Carolina Volunteers, who was convicted of mutiny after his men stacked their arms, and he reported to the commanding officer that none of them would continue to serve in the army for a pay of seven dollars per month. The army paid white troops thirteen dollars per month plus a clothing allowance of three dollars and fifty cents per month, while they paid African-American soldiers ten dollars per month from which three dollars was deducted for clothing.

At his court-martial, Walker testified that he had volunteered for service after being assured that he would receive the same the pay and conditions of service as did white soldiers. Complaining of the treatment he and other blacks received, he said,

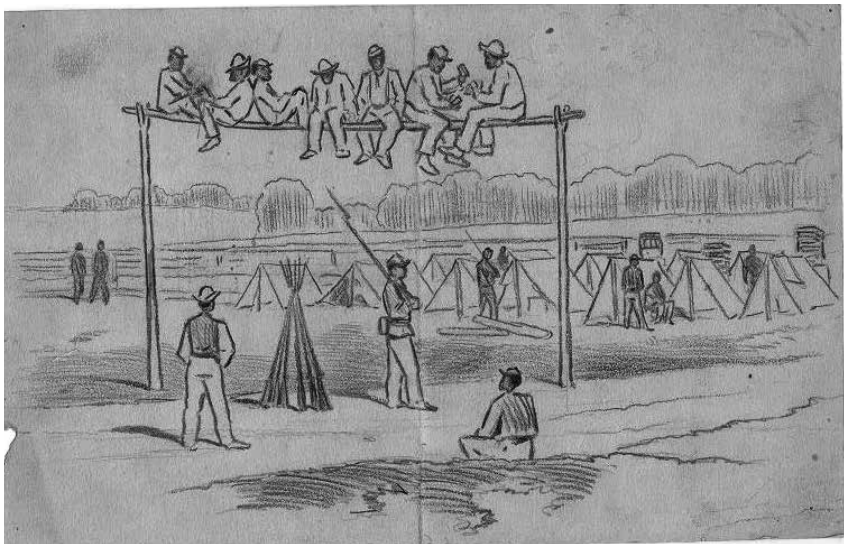


Fig. 20. Joseph Becker, *Scene in One of the Camps of the Negro Regiment: Mode of Punishing Negro Soldiers for Various Offences during the Siege of Petersburg*, October 31, 1864. Graphite and charcoal on wove paper, 10.0 x 6.5 in. (25.4 x 16.5 cm). CW–JB–VA–10–31–64

Fig. 21. *Army of the Potomac—Scene in Camp of Negro Regiments—Method of Punishment of Negro Soldiers for Various Offences* [sic].*—From a Sketch by Our Special Artist, Joseph Becker.* Engraving, *Frank Leslie's Illustrated Newspaper*, December 10, 1864, after a drawing by Joseph Becker.

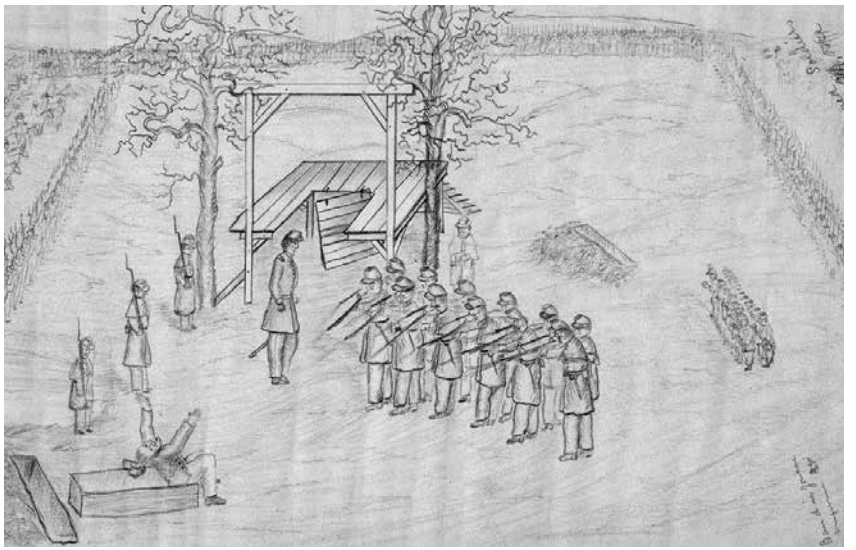


Fig. 22. Unknown, *Execution by Firing Squad*, n.d. Graphite on paper, 11.5 x 7.3 in. (29.2 x 18.5 cm). CW–UK–ND–14

> nine-tenths of those now in service there will be my witness that it has been tyrannical in the extreme, and totally beneath that standard of gentlemanly conduct which we were taught to believe as pertaining to officers wearing the uniform of a government that had declared a "freedom to all" as one of the cardinal points of its policy.[61]

The court-martial panel sentenced Walker to be executed by firing squad while his regiment watched, and this is the scene the sketch seems to record. Although the army seemed to hope that this harsh sentence would deter others from making demonstrations similar to those made by Walker, other African-American soldiers also found ways of protesting the discriminatory treatment they received: the 54th Massachusetts Infantry Regiment, for example, refused to accept pay for a year rather than accept less money than their white counterparts.[62] When in May 1864 the Senate passed a bill guaranteeing equal pay for African Americans and the U.S. House of Representatives prepared to take up the matter, *Harper's Weekly* observed:

> The sad case of Sergeant WALKER in Florida, who was shot because he would not submit to be cheated by the authority of the United States, is fresh in our memories, and will always be shameful for our name. And while we refuse to treat these brave men honorably the rebels massacre them like dogs."[63] (Emphasis original)

It is interesting that the picture of Walker's execution was never published.[64]

By late 1863, the involvement of black troops in memorable battles brought about a notable increase in the number of positive depictions of African Americans on the pages of *Leslie's*. And, articles alike seemed to announce the advent of a new African American—one whose manhood had been either forged or revealed (depending on the commentator) in the heat of battle.

On May 27, 1863, African-American soldiers had their first opportunity to play a major role in the fighting when they took part in the Battle of Fort Hudson. A two-page engraving depicting their valor, *Assault of the Second Louisiana (Colored) Regiment on the Rebel Works at Port Hudson, May 27—From a Sketch by Our Special Artist* (fig. 23), appeared in *Leslie's* on June 27, 1863. In a widely quoted report, General Nathaniel P. Banks acknowledges,

> their conduct was heroic. No troops could be more determined or more daring. Whatever doubt may have existed heretofore as to the efficiency of organizations of this character, the history of this day proves conclusively ... that the Government will find in this class of troops effective supporters and defenders."[65]

Fig. 23. *Assault of the Second Louisiana (Colored) Regiment on the Rebel Works at Port Hudson, May 27—From a Sketch by Our Special Artist.* Engraving, *Frank Leslie's Illustrated Newspaper*, June 27, 1863.

On June 7, 1863, less than two weeks after the Battle of Fort Hudson, a recently recruited and poorly equipped force of African Americans held its post at Milliken's Bend in Mississippi against a much larger number of Confederates. That fight was later celebrated at the center of a two-page illustration in *Leslie's* called *The Negro in the War—Sketches of the Various Employments of the Colored Troops in the United States Armies—From Sketches by Our Special Artist, C.E.F. Hillen* (fig. 24). The article states,

> the negro will ever figure as a prominent feature in the present civil war. They have been caricatured in some cases and more fairly treated in others; but the gallantry of the men who fought at Milliken's Bend, who rushed to the assault of Port Hudson and Fort Wagner, will stand as proudly in American history as the defence of the fort on the Delaware in the Revolution."[66]

Fig. 24. *The Negro in the War—Sketches of the Various Employments of the Colored Troops in the United States Armies—From Sketches by Our Special Artist, C.E.F. Hillen* [sic]. Engraving, *Frank Leslie's Illustrated Newspaper*, January 16, 1864, after a drawing by Edward F. Mullen.

Ironically, this coverage appeared the same week a military court handed down a death sentence to Sergeant Walker.

The gallant performance of African-American troops in battle sometimes won over white soldiers. Just three days after the Battle of Milliken's Bend, for example, Captain M. M. Miller wrote to his aunt: "I never more wish to hear the expression, 'The niggers wont fight.' Come with me 100 yards from where I sit and I can show you the wounds that cover the bodies of 16 as brave, loyal, and patriotic soldiers as ever drew bead on a rebel."[67]

Edward F. Mullen's drawing, *Advance on Petersburg: Colored Infantry Drawing; Captured Guns to the Rear After the Fight* (fig. 25) documents the impact that the accomplishments of African-American troops sometimes had on their white colleagues. As black soldiers triumphantly pull into camp with the Confederate gun they have captured in battle, white soldiers from the Hundred Day Ohio Regiment cheer. (Men in the Hundred Day regiments were members of state militias put under Federal command for a period of one hundred days in order to cover shortages in enlistments.) Mullen's drawing captures the men from Ohio amid the harrowing dangers of the Siege of Petersburg (June 9, 1864—March 25, 1865) long after their period of service should have elapsed. No wonder they were applauding the willingness of black troops to take risks at the front.[68]

The article that accompanies the published version of Mullen's drawing, *Hink's Division of Negro Infantry Bringing in the Gun Captured from Confederates at Baylor's Farm, Near Petersburg, VA, June 15th 1864* (fig. 26), praises the African-American soldiers but still resorts to racial stereotypes, portraying the soldiers as comically childlike: "When the negroes found themselves within the works of the enemy no words could paint their delight. Numbers of them kissed the gun they had captured with extravagant satisfaction."[69]

Even the comic tone of the text, however, cannot undercut completely the heroic mood of the published engraving. As the determined-looking set of black infantrymen puts its strength into pulling the cannon forward, white soldiers waving caps and swords cheer. The composition invites us to feel the jubilation of that moment by showing a single African American who has turned toward the white soldiers waving his hat to them in acknowledgment of their shouts of praise. Two dead black soldiers lie in the foreground next to their guns as a grim reminder of the costs of this accomplishment. The arms of one are raised in the air, stiff with rigor mortis. The published image reminds viewers of the purpose of the military action with its counterbalance of the corpses in the foreground and a flag being waved joyously

Fig. 25. Edward F. Mullen, *Advance on Petersburg: Colored Infantry Drawing; Captured Guns to the Rear after the Fight*, February 9, 1864. Graphite on heavy gauge wove paper, 9.8 x 13.3 in. (24.9 x 33.8 cm). CW–EM–VA–2–9–64

by a white soldier immediately behind the black infantrymen. The article concludes on a firmly positive note:

> A large crowd congregated, with looks of unutterable admiration, about Sergeant Richardson and Corporal Wobey, of the Twenty-second United States [African American] regiment, who had carried the colors of their regiment and been the first men in the works. Our artist gives a sketch of this gallant action.[70]

The presence of the flag in both the drawing and the published illustration is particularly noteworthy because of the appeal it would have had to those in the grip of the flag mania rampant in the North during the war. In their book *The Union Image: Popular Prints of the Civil War*, Mark Neely and Harold Holzer point to wartime flag mania to explain the profusion of prints that were produced in the North with the flag as a central figure.[71] They also point out that black faces did not appear in these types of images until

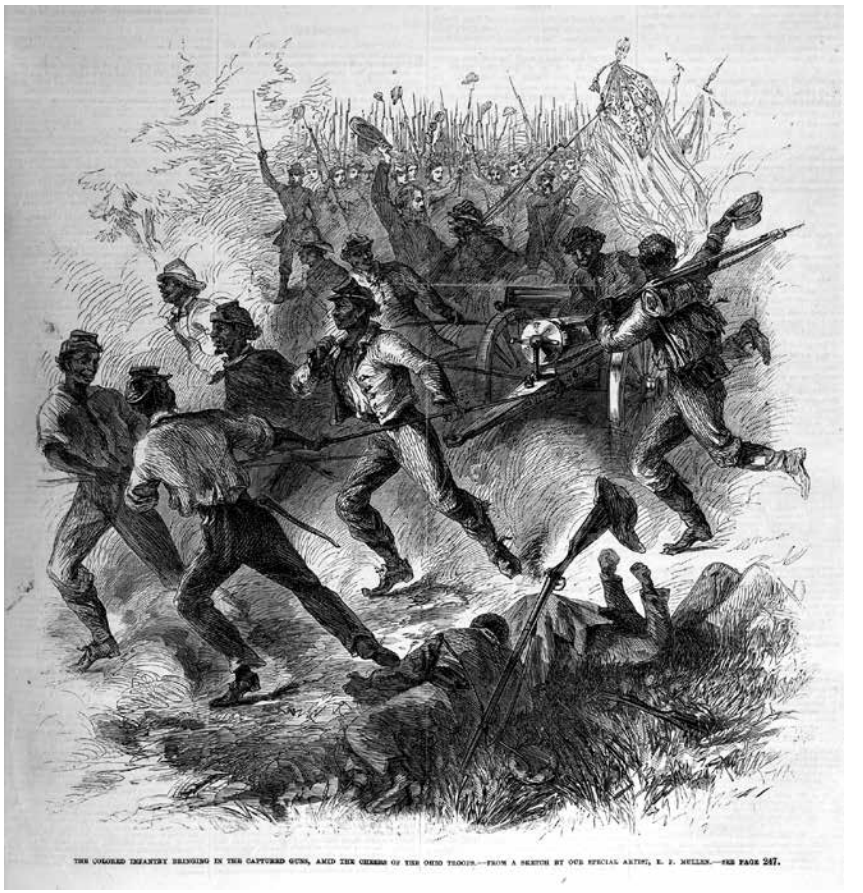


Fig. 26. *Hink's Division of Negro Infantry Bringing in the Gun Captured from Confederates at Baylor's Farm, Near Petersburg, VA, June 15th 1864.* Engraving, *Frank Leslie's Illustrated Newspaper*, July 9, 1864, after a drawing by Edward F. Mullen.

a recruiting handbill depicting the image of a white officer holding a flag while surrounded by African Americans produced in 1863 called on "able-bodied colored men [to] ... fight for the STARS AND STRIPES."[72] The vignettes on the right and left of the flag express the promise of transformation through military service. On the right, a Union soldier reaches down to rescue kneeling and scantily clad slaves. On the left, an African-American man reads a newspaper while a plow rests beside him, and children play at his feet. Beyond him, we see a crowd of black people entering a school with a church looming beyond. In that same year, the Supervisory Committee for Recruiting Colored Regiments published a poster emblazoned with the call-out, "Come and Join Us Brothers" (fig. 27).[73] At the center of this portrait of

a white officer and black troops, the flag billows in the wind as a black hand grips the pole. The presence of the white soldier saluting the achievement of black troops in *The Advance on Petersburg* with the American flag appears to be yet another important sign that white Americans were finally accepting African Americans as Americans.

The illustrations and articles in *Leslie's* show the war inspiring two kinds of conversions: while some pieces show work and military service converting African Americans into "men," other items in the paper show the bravery of black troops converting formerly distrustful whites to a belief in the manhood of African Americans. *The War in Virginia: The Twenty-Second [African American] Regiment, Duncan's Brigade, Carrying the First Line of Confederate Works Before Petersburg* (fig. 28) and the article that accompanied it echo that dual theme, describing a successful attack made by two African-American regiments against the Confederate breastworks protecting Petersburg and the reaction of the white Union soldiers. *Leslie's* notes, "the result of this charge was waited for with great anxiety. The majority of the whites expected that the [African-American] troops would run, but the sable forces astonished everybody by their achievements."[74]

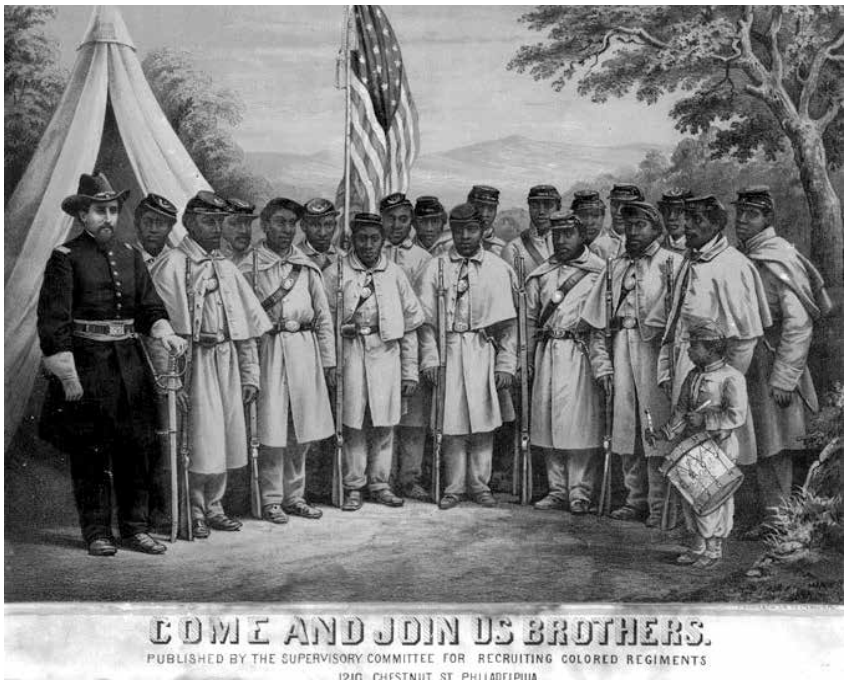



Fig. 27. *Come and Join Us Brothers.* Lithograph, ca. 1863 (P.S. Duval and Son).

Evidence from sources other than *Leslie's* suggest that the achievements of black soldiers did transform the attitudes of some of their white compatriots. In his article "Freedom at Port Royal" in the *Atlantic Monthly*, Pierce tells how he eavesdropped on a group of soldiers as they watched African-American troops approach:

> "What are those coming?"
>
> "Negro soldiers," (word pronounced as in the former case [nigger]) was the answer.
>
> "Damn 'em!" was the ejaculation.
>
> But as they approached nearer, "What have they got with 'em?" was inquired.
>
> "Why, some Secesh prisoners."

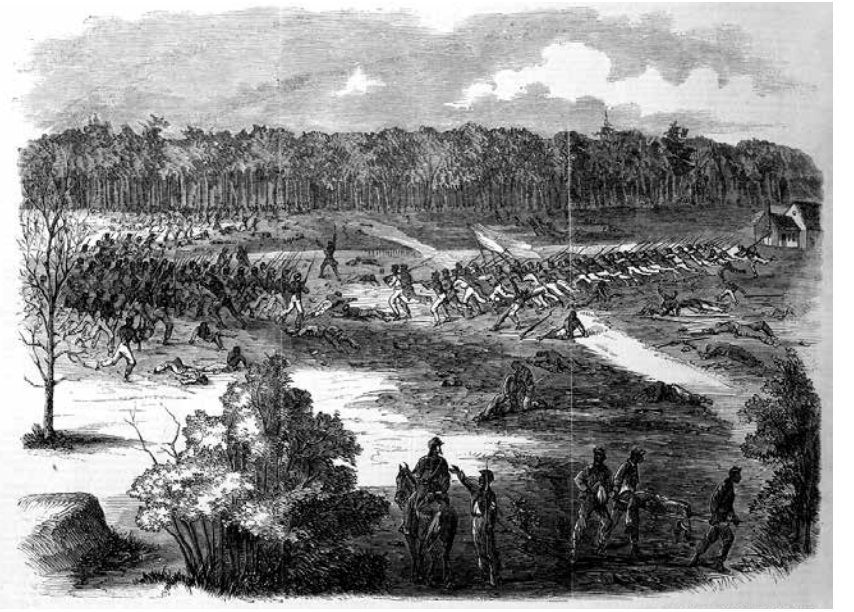


Fig. 28. *The War in Virginia: The Twenty-Second [African-American] Regiment, Duncan's Brigade, Carrying the First Line of Confederate Works Before Petersburg.* Engraving, *Frank Leslie's Illustrated Newspaper*, April 29, 1865.

> "Bully for the negroes!" (the same pronunciation as before [niggers]) was then the response from all.
>
> Pierce comments: "So quick was the transition, when it was found that the negroes had demonstrated their usefulness!"[75]

Incidents similar to those Pierce described in this article formed the basis for a story that appeared in *Leslie's* on June 4, 1864, accompanying the engraving *Incident in the Battle of the Wilderness—The Rebel Generals Bradley Johnson and E. Stuart Taken to the Rear by Negro Cavalry* (fig. 29). The human-interest appeal of that engraving arose from the idea of the deep embarrassment suffered by Confederates captured by African Americans. An account of the Battle of Milliken's Bend published in *Harper's Weekly*, for example, gleefully recounts, "one brave man took his former master prisoner, and brought him into camp with great gusto. A rebel prisoner made a particular request that his own negroes should not be placed over him as a guard. Dame Fortune is capricious! His request was not granted."[76] It would be hard to miss the note of glee in that statement. In this same issue, a similar event became the basis for a joke:

> The siege of Nashville was the occasion of some laughable incidents, as the following paragraph from a correspondence written in that city shows:
>
> During the skirmish in the little reconnaissance made by Gen. Steedman on our left, a couple of soldiers of the colored brigade came upon three rebels, whose guns were unloaded, and demanded their surrender. One of the Johnnies indignantly refused to surrender to a "d—d nigger."
>
> "Berry sorry, massa," said Sambo, bringing his piece to a "ready;" "but we's in a great hurrty, and hain't got no time to send for a white man!"
>
> The ominous click that accompanied this remark brought the scion of chivalry to time, and he was brought in, crying and swearing all the way that his father would kill him if he ever heard that he had surrendered to a nigger.[77]

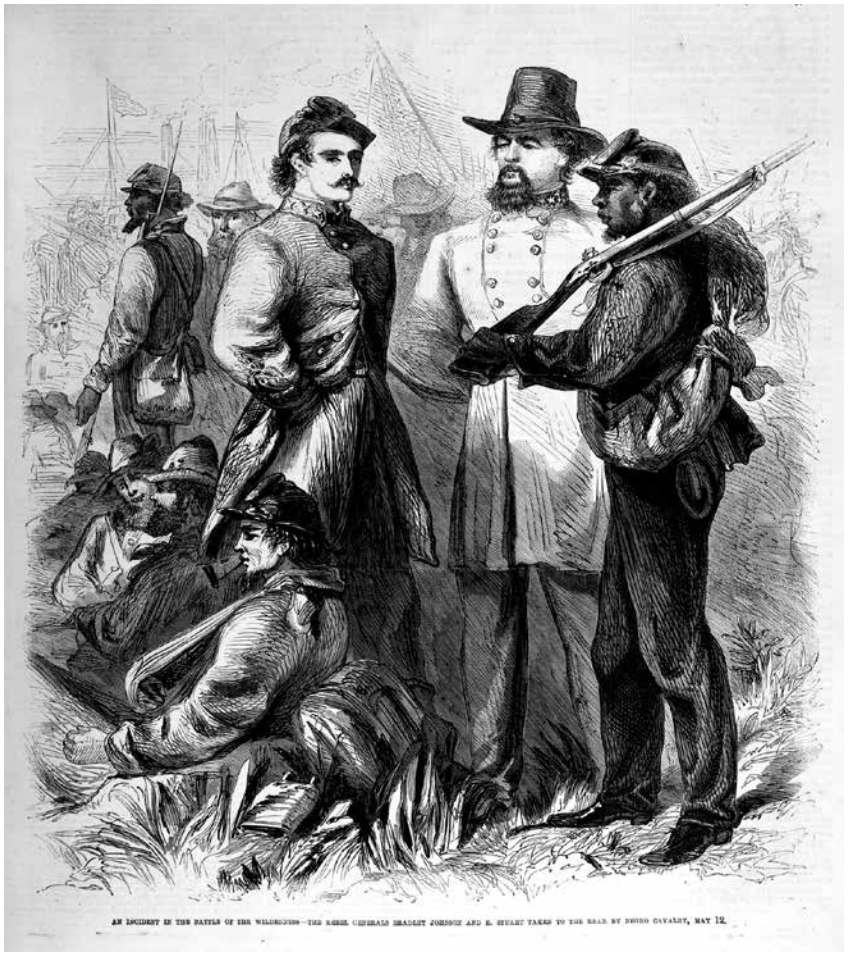


Fig. 29. *Incident in the Battle of the Wilderness—The Rebel Generals Bradley Johnson and E. Stuart Taken to the Rear by Negro Cavalry.* Engraving, *Frank Leslie's Illustrated Newspaper*, June 4, 1864.

Of course, the humor is double-edged; the Southern prisoner's degradation is made complete by being made to surrender to a Sambo who speaks in the dialect typically used in minstrel shows. Both the white Confederate and the black Union soldier are the butt of this joke.

Only a year earlier, *Leslie's* had published a picture very similar to the engraving *Incident in the Battle of the Wilderness. The War in Mississippi—The 1st Mississippi Negro Cavalry Bringing in To Vicksburg Rebel Prisoners Captured at Bakers' Bluff* (fig. 30), published on December 19, 1863, shows a group of Confederate soldiers in the custody of the African-American troops who had captured them. While the clothing and facial hair of the Confederates

gives them a downtrodden and unkempt look, the black soldiers are smartly attired in Union uniforms (one displays an officer's stripes on his arm). As they conduct their prisoners through a crowd of onlookers, the black soldiers look about alertly, clearly in control of the situation.

The accompanying article comments on the heroism of the soldiers, pointing out that the group repulsed a large force of rebel cavalry, despite the fact that they were not yet fully organized and were only mounted on mules. The article goes on to give a comic touch to the scene, drawing our attention to an element in the picture that might well go unobserved by viewers today. Having triumphed over the enemy, "they ... exchanged animals with their prisoners, whom they thus led into Vicksburg, most thoroughly crestfallen. Their entrance into the city is represented as having been ludicrous in the extreme."[78] Once again, what is "ludicrous" is the exchange of roles:

Fig. 30. *The War in Mississippi—The 1st Mississippi Negro Cavalry Bringing in To Vicksburg Rebel Prisoners Captured at Bakers' Bluff, respectively.* Engraving, *Frank Leslie's Illustrated Newspaper*, December 19, 1863.

the black men ride on horses as the "masters," while the Confederates under their command shamble along on muleback.

Along with the comic, heroic, and comic-heroic representations of black troops in *Leslie's* came tragic-heroic depictions probably inspired in part by the determination of the Confederacy to treat captured African-American soldiers as guilty of "insurrection" and liable to "retaliation." When in September 1862 Lincoln announced his intention to emancipate all slaves in Confederate states as of January 1, 1863, he also declared "such persons of suitable condition, will be received into the armed service of the United States to garrison forts, positions, stations, and other places, and to man vessels of all sorts in said service."[79] In response, Jefferson Davis issued a proclamation on December 24, 1862, directing Confederate troops to return all captured African Americans serving in the Union army to slavery and to execute their white officers.[80] This order was reaffirmed by the Confederate Congress on May 1, 1863.[81]

Even on the battlefield, blacks could not expect equal treatment, but they did at least win Northern sympathy as accounts of Confederate atrocities against African-American troops began to appear in the news. According to *Leslie's*, for example, three hundred African-American soldiers who had surrendered at Fort Pillow on April 12, 1864, were "butchered in cold blood" and five buried alive by Confederate troops serving under Major General Nathan Bedford Forrest.[82] Only fifty-six black soldiers survived.[83] The illustration, *The War in Tennessee—The Massacre of the Union Troops After the Surrender at Fort Pillow, April 12* (fig. 31), that accompanies the article, portrays African-American soldiers as dramatic hero-victims; against the backdrop of a battle scene, black soldiers raise their hands, pleading for mercy as Confederate soldiers stab them with bayonets and swords or club them with the butts of rifles and pistols. In the very center of the illustration, a black soldier gazes upward at the face of the man who is about to kill him. The beseeching look has no effect on the attacker: the white soldier's face remains a mask of grim determination in the moment before he lowers his rifle butt to strike the killing blow. The Confederate soldier swinging the rifle serves as the apex of a triangle of death and dying; facing him at the bottom of the triangle is the upside down corpse of a white man—a reminder that Confederates reportedly massacred white Union soldiers alongside blacks at Fort Pillow. The news of Fort Pillow led to such an outcry in the North for retaliation that Lincoln set up a committee to investigate the matter, explaining,

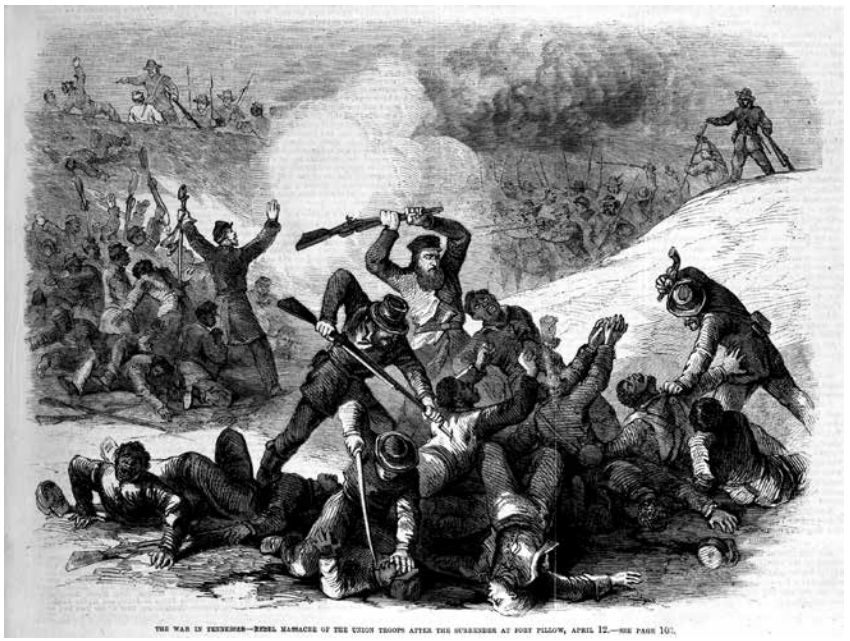


Fig. 31. *The War in Tennessee—The Massacre of the Union Troops After the Surrender at Fort Pillow, April 12.* Engraving, *Frank Leslie's Illustrated Newspaper*, May 7, 1864.

> we do not to-day know that a colored soldier, or white officer commanding colored soldiers, has been massacred by the rebels when made a prisoner. We fear it, believe it, I may say, but we do not know it. To take the life of one of their prisoners, on the assumption that they murder ours, when it is short of certainty that they do murder ours, might be too serious, too cruel a mistake.[84]

The Joint Commission on the Conduct of the War arrived at the conclusion that "the atrocities committed at Fort Pillow were not the result of passions excited by the heat of conflict but the result of a Confederate policy."[85] By publishing sixty thousand copies of this document for distribution in a pamphlet that also included a Congressional investigation of Confederate abuse of captive Union soldiers, which included pictures of emaciated survivors, the Commission exacerbated the bloodthirsty mood of Union supporters. According to Ronald White (author of *Lincoln's Greatest Speech*), it was the vengeful spirit generated by Fort Pillow and other massacres that inspired Lincoln in his now famous Second Inaugural Address on March

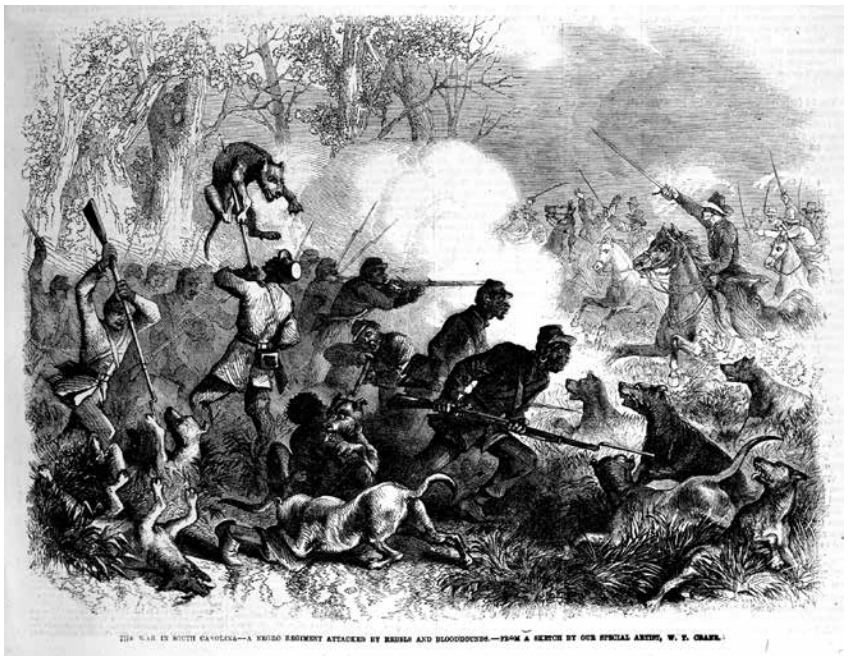


Fig. 32. *A Negro Regiment Attacked by Rebels and Bloodhounds.* Engraving, *Frank Leslie's Illustrated Newspaper*, March 5, 1864.

4, 1864, to call on citizens to move forward "with malice toward none, with charity for all."[86]

Near the end of the war, we begin to see African Americans portrayed in *Leslie's* in a way that invites an emotional response and, possibly, even empathy. As news of massacres and the horrors of Andersonville and other military prisons began to seize the Northern imagination, the Southerner became the other while the African-American soldier serving the Union became a more sympathetic figure.

On March 5, 1864, another engraving redolent of both pathos and heroism appeared on the cover of *Leslie's*. A standard element of abolitionist literature and art, the gruesome image of a man being tracked through swamps by bloodhounds was undoubtedly part of every Northerner's visual vocabulary. *A Negro Regiment Attacked by Rebels and Bloodhounds* (fig. 32) shows African-American troops using their bayonets to skewer the dogs sent by Confederate soldiers to attack them. The engraving forcefully reminds the reader of the changing status of African Americans, suggesting that the men who were once the prey of dogs are now soldiers and prepared to triumph over the same men who once owned them. The article reinforces the message:

> The negro fleeing for life, unarmed and unequipped, is a different being from the drilled soldier ... As the rebels attacked the 1st South Carolina volunteers, the bloodhounds rushed upon them, but were soon shot or speared on the bayonets of the men, who held aloft, with no little exultation, the beasts that had been so long a terror to their race.[87]

Once again, the theme is transformation. In this case, it is the transformation of the "negro fleeing for life" into "the drilled soldier."

One of the best examples of this motif is the illustration *Paying Off Negro Soldiers at Hilton Head* (fig. 33), which shows a neatly dressed group of African-American soldiers receiving their pay in an orderly fashion. They stand erect or sit with a soldierly bearing. No face is distorted by exaggerated features or comic grimaces: there are no oversized lips, no bulging eyes, no foolish grins. Each man, instead, seems dignified and thoughtful. The article notes that the scene "gives vivid reality to the changes effected by the war. What a gulf between the crouching plantation slave, that these men were so recently and what they are!"[88] The same note is struck in the article "Paying Off Negro Soldiers" published August 20, 1864. After reminding readers of the public outburst that had been occasioned when it was first announced that the army would enlist blacks, the writer exclaims, "how strange it is now to look back at the commencement of this war! What advance has been

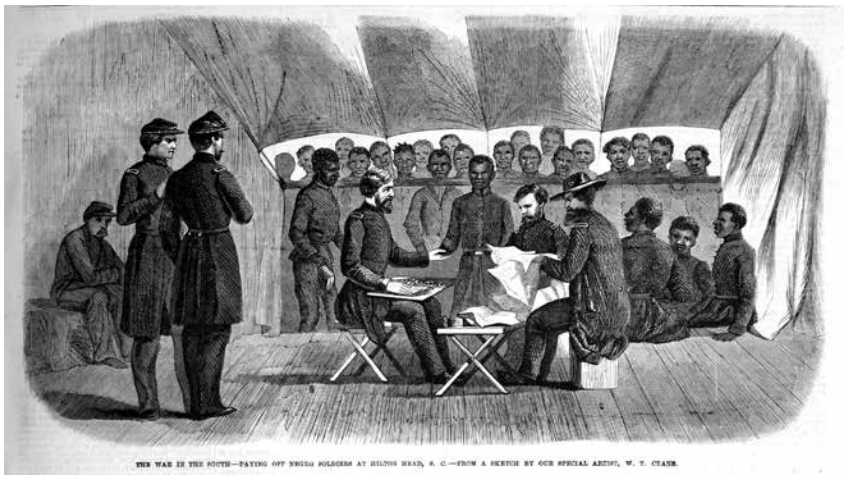


Fig. 33. *Paying Off Negro Soldiers at Hilton Head.* Engraving, *Frank Leslie's Illustrated Newspaper,* August 20, 1864.

Fig. 34. *The Union Army Entering Richmond, VA. April 3—Reception of Federal Troops in Main Street—From a Sketch by Our Special Artist.* Engraving, *Frank Leslie's Illustrated Newspaper,* April 29, 1865.

made in many ideas."[89] The illustration and both articles invite Northern whites to replace their mental image of the African American as a crouching or capering slave with a new image of a proudly erect soldier.

It is this upright, dignified soldier who is celebrated in a full-page engraving published April 25, 1865, marking the entry of the Union army into Richmond. *The Union Army Entering Richmond, VA. April 3—Reception of Federal Troops in Main Street—From a Sketch by Our Special Artist* (fig. 34) depicts battle-hardened black veterans marching with rifles over their shoulders into a city in ruins. Black men, women, and children, enjoying what are probably their first moments of freedom, cheer on the soldiers.

Early in the war, Pierce informed the officials who had sent him to evaluate the first group of African Americans to be granted refuge with the Union army that "not even Tocqueville or Olmsted, much less the master, can measure the capacities and possibilities of the slave, until the slave himself is transmuted to a man."[90] Although he was an abolitionist, Pierce conceded that African Americans would only be granted rights once they had demonstrated that they would work for their living and fight for their freedom. "Like all unprivileged classes before them," Pierce said, "they will have their full recognition as citizens and men when they have vindicated their title to

be an estate of the realm, and not before."[91] Encouraging African Americans to enlist, Frederick Douglass made much the same argument:

> The opportunity is given us to be men. With one courageous resolution, we may blot out the handwriting of ages against us. Once let the black man get upon his person the brass letters U. S., let him get an eagle on his button, and a musket on his shoulder, and bullets in his pocket; and there is no power on the earth, or under the earth, which can deny that he has earned the right of citizenship in the United States.[92]

In *The Union Army Entering Richmond, VA*, we seem to see African Americans responding to that challenge so that they could lay claim to their "right of citizenship."

Turning to the very next page of *Leslie's*, however, we encounter what seems to be a parody of that image of "courageous resolution." In *The Wilmington "Sanitary Commission"—Contraband Street-Sweepers Going to Work* (fig. 35), a corps of African Americans wearing rags instead of uniforms, shouldering tree branches rather than rifles, and preparing to sweep the streets of debris rather than rebels, marches behind a white officer. *Leslie's* moves from a heroic portrait of African Americans on one page to a traditional comic representation of African Americans on the next. To increase the impact of the comic punch, the title plays off of the term Sanitary Commission, contrasting the black workers' lowly labors with the more highly respected operations of the Northern whites who formed the Sanitary Commission to organize medical efforts for the war. Interestingly, even though the Emancipation Proclamation had long since declared slaves in the Confederate states free, *Leslie's* referred to the men in this picture as "contraband" street sweepers, as if to insist on reasserting the former status of these men as property.

The engraving of the Richmond street sweepers represents a step backward rather than forward in the depiction of African Americans as men and women who have earned not only rights but also respect during the course of the war: the image of the street sweepers is nearly identical to one of the very first depictions of contrabands *Leslie's* published—*Morning Gathering of Contrabands at Fortress Monroe on Their Way to Their Day's Work* (fig. 36). Both compositions show men wearing a motley assortment of costumes, shouldering work implements rather than rifles, marching off to work rather than war under the direction of a white officer. If two such similar images can be used to announce both the initial emergence of African Americans into the war in support of the Union and their efforts during the closing days of

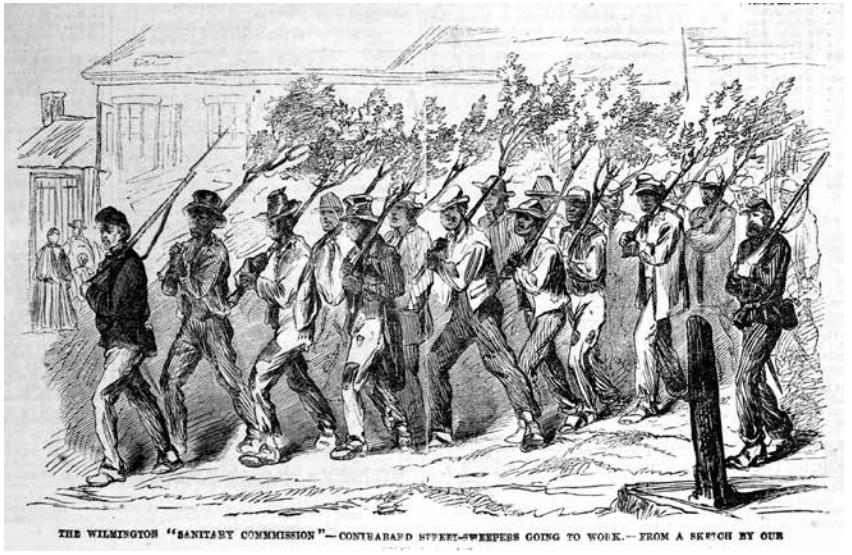



Fig. 35. *The Wilmington "Sanitary Commission"—Contraband Street-Sweepers Going to Work.* Engraving, *Frank Leslie's Illustrated Newspaper*, April 29, 1865.

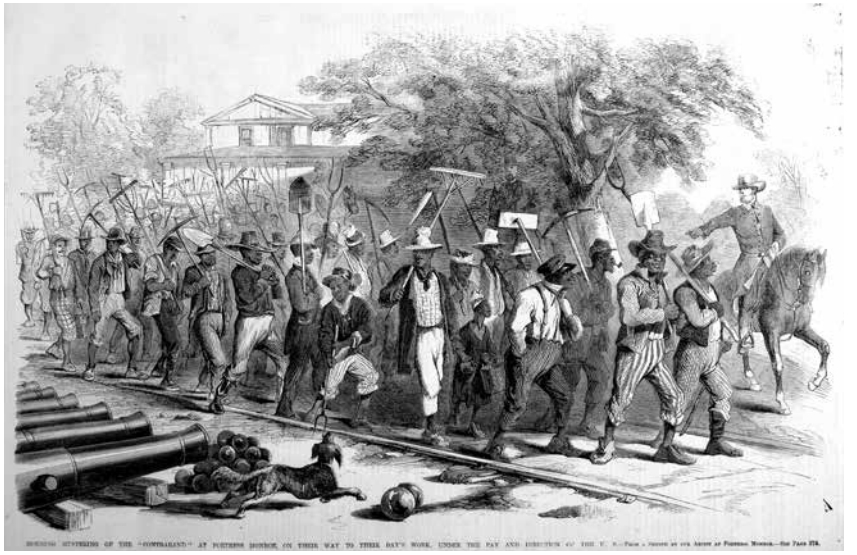


Fig. 36. *Morning Gathering of Contrabands at Fortress Monroe on Their Way to Their Day's Work.* Engraving, *Frank Leslie's Illustrated Newspaper*, November 2, 1861.

the conflict, we cannot claim there was a steady trajectory of progress in the representation of race in *Leslie's* during that period.

Published only a month after *The Union Army Entering Richmond, VA*, the engraved version of Schell's drawing *The Provost Guard in New Orleans Taking up Vagrant Negroes* entitled *The Provost Guard in New Orleans Arresting Vagrant Negroes* (fig. 37), offers another darkly tragic-comic counterpoint to the triumphant march of African-American soldiers celebrated in the earlier picture. In the engraving, white soldiers escort three black men accused of vagrancy to jail. The checkered pants on the first vagrant give him the appearance of Zip Coon, while the angles of his arms and legs recall the stereotypical dancing poses of minstrel characters. A tattered coat droops off his shoulders as he ambles forward in an exaggerated slouch. His bearing seems emblematic of laziness—and, perhaps, even insolence—as such a posture would prevent him from making quick or regimented movement, regardless of what his escort commanded. A faint smile plays across his lips, suggesting that he has no concern for the circumstances in which he finds himself or respect for those in authority over him.

Meanwhile, the white onlooker seen standing just behind the first vagrant stands perfectly erect and wears a top hat, tie, coat, and vest. Indeed, the soldiers who march before and behind the three vagrants and the well-dressed white spectators in the background form a frame within which we are invited

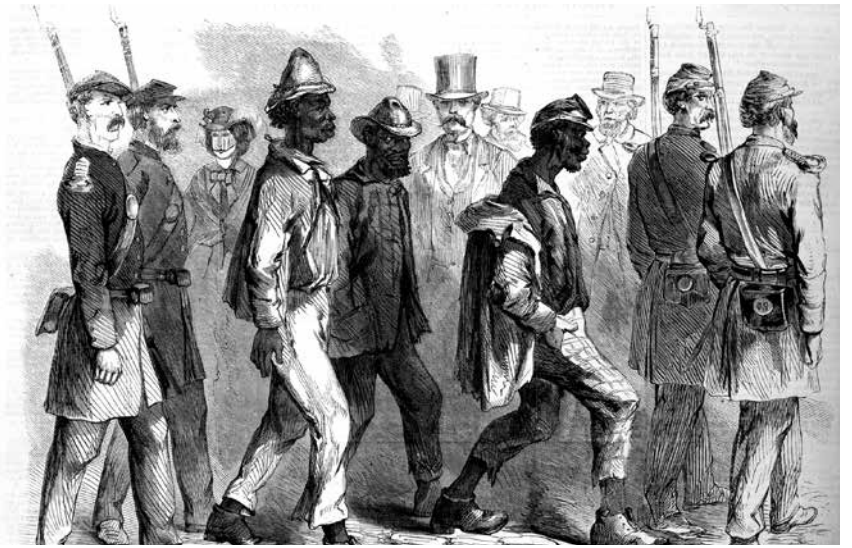


Fig. 37. *The Provost Guard in New Orleans Arresting Vagrant Negroes.* Engraving, *Frank Leslie's Illustrated Newspaper*, n.d.

to see—and measure—the African Americans in the foreground. The white figures seem to represent the standards of civilization that citizens are supposed to meet while the shabby black figures seem designed to suggest how far former slaves are from meeting those standards. The article explains,

> the Federal occupation of New Orleans produced, as in other parts, a decided effect on the slave population. The bonds of the patriarchal institution were sensibly weakened. The slaves with the idea of freedom had not imbibed the idea of labor and were in a state of perfect bewilderment. Many wandered around the streets, so many in fact as to become a growing evil.[93]

The illustration and article strike a comic, but foreboding, note, conveying a sense that African Americans are unequipped to function in freedom. Pierce and others had preached that the war would be a "test" of the ability and willingness of African Americans to work and fight for their freedom. If, once free, they were regarded as not having "imbibed the idea of labor," then African Americans would be seen as lazy by nature rather than by the peculiar "nurture" of slavery.

Other pictures and articles *Leslie's* published during the same period questioned the fitness of African Americans for freedom. The article "A Plantation on the Teche," published in *Leslie's* after Union troops took possession of that area, declares slavery an "abnormal system" but goes on to praise its contribution toward maintaining order and productivity on the part of African Americans:

> The finer plantations of the South, those owned by high-minded persons, full of a true Christian idea of the great responsibility imposed upon them by that abnormal system of slavery, deserve to be enshrined in history...The slaves were well kept, but are now thoroughly demoralized; about 300 still remain but all idea of labor has been lost.[94]

This statement is a powerful indictment of African Americans, especially since the word "demoralize" at that time meant not a loss of morale but a loss of morals. The implication of the article is clear: freedom was corrupting

for African Americans, because their inherent laziness and/or immorality required regulation.

Although African Americans had passed the test set for them by some Northern whites, in the end, the war also proved to be a test of the willingness of Northern whites to change their perceptions of blacks. Fortunately, the drawings produced by the Special Artists of *Leslie's* along with the engravings and articles published in that newspaper during the war document both that African Americans worked and fought during the war to earn their freedom and the reality that racial myths persisted throughout the course of the war. Even during the closing months of the conflict, *Leslie's* undercut their heroic depictions of contraband soldiers with comic depictions of black street sweepers and vagrants.[95]

## RECONSTRUCTION: THE FIGHTING CONTINUES

Once peace was declared, African Americans appeared in the illustrations in *Leslie's* with much less regularity; white Northerners were clearly eager to turn away from questions of race and return to their prewar occupations and preoccupations. Nevertheless, a drawing made by a Special Artist after the war and preserved in the Becker Collection documents the way African Americans continued to fight for their rights even after the ostensible end of the war.

Two years after the triumphal entry of African-American troops into Richmond, a very different type of spectacle appeared on the streets of that city. On May 10, 1867, a crowd was enjoying a competition between two fire trucks when a fire chief pushed a black man out of his way. In response, another African American hit the fire chief over the head, causing a fight to erupt. Police intervened, arresting the black man. It proved difficult to get him back to the jail, because a swelling crowd of African Americans followed the police the whole way hurling paving stones at them. The police eventually freed the prisoner; it took troops equipped with bayonets to disperse the crowd.

The African-American men depicted in the unattributed drawing *Negro Mob in Richmond* (fig. 38) look distinctly different from the African Americans in the drawings and articles published in *Leslie's* during the Civil War.[96] The men in the earlier depictions are characterized as high-spirited but good-natured, lazy but peculiarly suited for supervised labor, and undisciplined but quick to accept punishment. The men in *Negro Mob in Richmond*, on the other hand, look energetic and threatening. They point, raise their hands in the air, and wield sticks or knives. Unlike their counterparts in the Civil War drawings, they convey neither humor nor heroism; clearly, comedy could no longer keep anxieties about the other at bay.

The seemingly endless number of black laborers hunched over their wheelbarrows in orderly rows as far as the eye can see in Schell's wartime drawing *Contrabands Building a Levee on the Mississippi River* (fig. 5) promise an unending source of labor. In *Negro Mob in Richmond*, the confusing profusion of black rioters that fills the space from foreground to horizon in this drawing suggests an endless threat. Black figures overwhelm the page and swamp the few white figures. In the upper-left side of the crowd, a solitary uniformed figure stares out of a doorway at a small ring of policemen trying to move toward the jail. Their task seems hopeless.

In the right foreground of the composition, an intimate and intense racial encounter is unfolding. A hunched black figure clasping a weapon focuses intently on two white women and a small child. As the child clutches one woman's skirts and stares back at the man, the small dot signifying her mouth suggests a look of terror: meanwhile, the two women struggle to escape the scene. They push forward with their hands in a pose of desperation as their scarves stream behind them. Like the child, however, one woman seems compelled to look back over her shoulder at the man with the weapon. The pos-

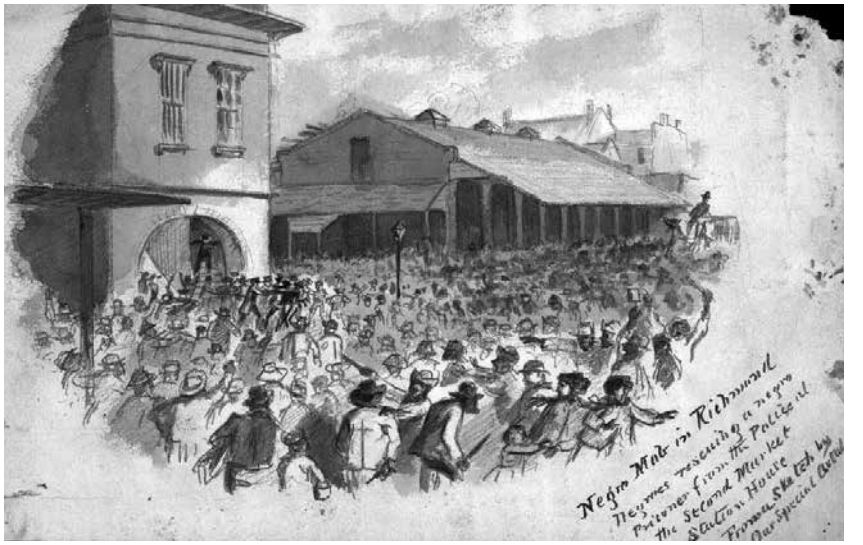



Fig. 38. Unknown, *Negro Mob in Richmond*, n.d. Graphite and ink wash on paper, 12.0 x 7.8 in. (30.5 x 19.8 cm). CW–UK–VA–ND–3

tures of the women and child seem the very embodiment of white fear. That racial fear is succinctly articulated in the caption "Negro Mob at Richmond."

If fear is the distinctive flavor of the drawing, it was also the flavor of life in the postwar South. Sent by President Johnson in 1865 to report on conditions under Reconstruction, former Union officer Carl Schurz concluded,

> nothing renders society more restless than a social revolution but half accomplished ... All classes of society are intensely dissatisfied with things as they are. General explosions may be prevented, but they are always imminent. There is probably at the present moment no country in the civilized world which contains such an accumulation of anarchical elements as the south.[97]

Looking back on Reconstruction, W.E.B. Du Bois wrote sympathetically of the whites: "Their economic condition was pitiable, their fear of negro freedom genuine."[98] Whites also worried about racial violence. In a commentary on this and related events in Richmond, the *National Intelligencer* of Washington complained on May 16, 1867:

> Hate by the negroes towards the [whites] seems to have been the absorbing passion that has developed itself in mob assemblages and mob violence ... The whites are unarmed. The negroes are armed.[99]

The complaint about weapons was at least partially true: large numbers of African Americans joined Republican political organizations, such as the Lincoln Brotherhood and the Union League during Reconstruction (1866–1877), and these groups quickly began to function as informal self-defense leagues. According to Eric Foner, "reports of blacks drilling with weapons sometimes under men with self-appointed 'military titles,' aroused considerable white apprehension."[100]

On the other hand, the assertion that whites had no weapons was simply false. Throughout the South, secret societies and paramilitary groups with names like the Knights of the White Camelia, White Brotherhood, White League, White Line, White Rose, and Pale Faces were gathering members.[101] Their goal was to use any means available to keep blacks from exercising their rights. Six former Confederate soldiers founded the best known of these groups, the Knights of the Ku Klux Klan.

So, despite the sympathetic description of white anxiety offered by *Negro Mob in Richmond*, it was actually African Americans who were in the greatest danger. Years later, Schurz remembered:

> Dead bodies of murdered negroes were found on and near the highways and by-paths. Gruesome reports came from the hospitals—reports of colored men and women whose ears had been cut off, whose skulls had been broken up, whose bodies had been slashed by knives or lacerated with scourges. A veritable reign of terror prevailed in many parts of the South.[102]

Yet, newspapers in both the North and South often labeled any violence involving blacks during Reconstruction as the fault of a "negro mob" or "negro riot" whether African Americans were the initiators, victims, or both.[103] Only a few weeks before the events depicted in *Negro Mob in Richmond*, four African Americans peacefully attempted to ride the streetcars in Richmond and were forcibly ejected by troops; that too was called a "negro riot" by the press. Nevertheless, it is probably more accurate to see these skirmishes as a continuation of the African-American fight for freedom that included the slave insurrections and escapes of the years before the Civil War and the wartime service of the contrabands and black regiments.

Even though the war had brought about the destruction of the slave system, slavery had only been one factor in a complex system of restrictions that had kept all African Americans in the South subordinated to whites. A section of the Richmond city ordinances passed in 1857 and entitled, "What place slaves not to Walk or be in," for example, specified,

> negroes shall not at any time stand on a sidewalk to the inconvenience of [white] persons passing by. A negro meeting or overtaking, or being overtaken by a white person...shall pass on the outside; and if it be necessary to enable such white person to pass, shall immediately get off the sidewalk.[104]

Although the Confederates had lost the war, many Southern whites hoped to win the peace by ensuring the continuation of this and other caste-like distinctions that had long separated them from blacks.[105]

This context helps explain why a riot resulted when a white fireman shoved a black citizen on a sidewalk; maintaining control of public spaces, like sidewalks, became a way Southern whites asserted their supremacy during Reconstruction. At the same time, it became equally important for African Americans to assert their equal right to use public spaces. Countless violent encounters resulted: In Mobile, Alabama, in 1865, white Union general Thomas Kilby Smith decided it was necessary to arm his black troops "because they were hustled from the sidewalk by infuriated citizens, who, sought to incite [a] mob."[106] In Hamburg, South Carolina, in 1876, an armed confrontation occurred when whites objected to the drills being staged on the Fourth of July parade by the African Americans who were part of National Guard of the State of South Carolina. The members of a white mob equipped themselves with guns, hatchets, and a cannon, and proceeded to fire on the armory where the militia had taken cover. Although they initially returned fire, the African Americans had a very limited amount of ammunition and twenty-five of them soon were taken prisoner. Two prisoners were shot to death by the mob and three more were told to run and were then were shot in their backs. By the end of the disruption, one white person and eight blacks were dead, and the fires set by the mob had consumed homes and businesses.[107]

The attempt of the Negro mob in Richmond to rescue a fellow African American from police custody was also a typical feature of racial violence during the years following the war. As late as 1883, the *Atlanta Constitution* complained: "This thing is becoming too common. Almost every day something of the kind occurs. The negroes, whenever an arrest is made in an 'out of the way' part of the city, try every way to obstruct the officers. They even follow the officers all the way to the station house, abusing them."[108]

African Americans had good reason to fear how police would treat them in the Reconstruction South. After a violent incident set off by an African-American parade that took place on the first Fourth of July after the war, Smith testified:

> The enormities committed by...policemen were fearful... Colored girls seized upon the streets had to take their choice between submitting to outrage on the part of the policemen or incarceration in the guardhouse. These men, having mostly been negro drivers and professional negro whippers, were fitting tools for the work in hand.[109]

In April 1866, four white members of the police forced a group of African Americans off a sidewalk in Memphis. When one of the black men fell, a policeman tripped over him, and "the police then drew their revolvers and attacked the Negroes, beating them with their pistols."[110] This occurrence led to the infamous Memphis Riot of 1866 that lasted for three days. The *Nation* observed: "Its most novel and most striking incident was, that the police headed the butchery, and roved round the town either in company with the white mob or singly, and occupied themselves in shooting down every colored person, of whatever sex, of whom they got a glimpse."[111] Whites killed forty-six African Americans, raped five African-American women, burned four African-American churches, and destroyed twelve schools and ninety-one homes.

Police also played a significant role in the bloodshed that followed the attempt of African Americans to gather in New Orleans on July 30, 1866, for a constitutional convention to raise the question of their voting rights. City authorities, many of them former Confederate army officers, planned the attack on the black delegates in advance.[112] *Harper's Weekly* claimed, "fire-companies prepared and armed themselves; the police were withdrawn from their posts, supplied with revolvers, and kept waiting at their station-houses until the signal for the butchery was given, and then rushed to the bloody work with a raging mob of rebel soldiers."[113] In his report to General Ulysses S. Grant, general of the Army, General Philip Henry Sheridan, military commander of New Orleans, states flatly: "It was no riot. It was an absolute massacre by the Police, which was not excelled in murderous cruelty by that of Fort Pillow."[114] Memories of Fort Pillow may have been prompted particularly by stories of a black minister who had approached the police with a flag of surrender, saying "we are non-combatants. If you want to arrest us, make any arrest you please." W.E.B. Du Bois recounts that an officer responded: "We don't want any prisoners; you have all got to die." The police shot the minister, who immediately fell dead.[115]

Not long after the "Negro mob in Richmond" had been dispersed, police detained another black man, Jedekiah K. Hayward. They arrested him "for using language at the negro meeting ... calculated to create a riot."[116] The *National Intelligencer* claimed that he invited his African Americans to "hold high carnival," and also complained that he raised "to the highest pitch of excitement a colored crowd by holding up to their view the charms of equal political and social rights, in respect not only to offices, but to admission to theatres, hotels, and like public places."[117] A member of the audience responded from his seat: "Mr. Speaker, you may tell the people of Massachusetts that

the colored people of Richmond are determined to enter any barroom, hotel, theatre or street car they may wish. ['Yes, they will!' Cheers.]"[118]

The drawing of the "mob" never made it onto the pages of *Leslie's*. "Negro riots," while covered extensively in Southern newspapers, received much less attention in Northern ones. This probably explains why on the cover of its issue of June 8, 1867, *Leslie's* featured a different incident that took place in Richmond on the same eventful weekend.

The day after the racial incidents, mounted soldiers patrolled the streets, and the *Sun* of Baltimore assured its readers: "Squads of police were placed at all the churches in view of the threats of negroes to force their way in among the white folks."[119] While the authorities guarded white institutions against the intrusion of black citizens, another parade was proceeding down Main Street. After being held for two years in prison by authorities, Jefferson Davis was returning to Richmond to the courts to ask for bail.

The illustration of that event, *The Arrival of Jefferson Davis in Richmond, On Saturday, May 11th—Passing Up Main Street Under Escort of Gen. Burton and U.S. Cavalry* (fig. 39), published in *Leslie's* on June 8, 1867, shows a thin and genteel looking Davis being driven by an African-American coachman. In one sense, it is a familiar image: a black man is driving the coach, and a white man is riding. The procession and surrounding crowds appear orderly. But, no matter how reassuring that vision might have been to the Southern whites who turned out to welcome Davis home or to the Northern readers of *Leslie's*, the image could not promise a return to the past. We see the men driving into an indeterminate future. A few blocks away, "negro riots" were taking place. A crowd was rescuing an African American from police custody. A few days away, Davis would walk into a courtroom and enter a plea for bail before a jury that included African Americans.

*Negro Mob in Richmond* reminds us that the African-American fight for real freedom neither ended with the Civil War nor began with the civil rights movement. It had begun long before the Civil War and would continue long after.

## CONCLUSION

Slaves who were told tales of murderous Yankees with horns did not always believe the racial myths they heard. As young former slave Charlotte Ann Jackson wrote while a student in a Freedmen's School, "something told me not to Believe them"; yet, even those who harbored doubts

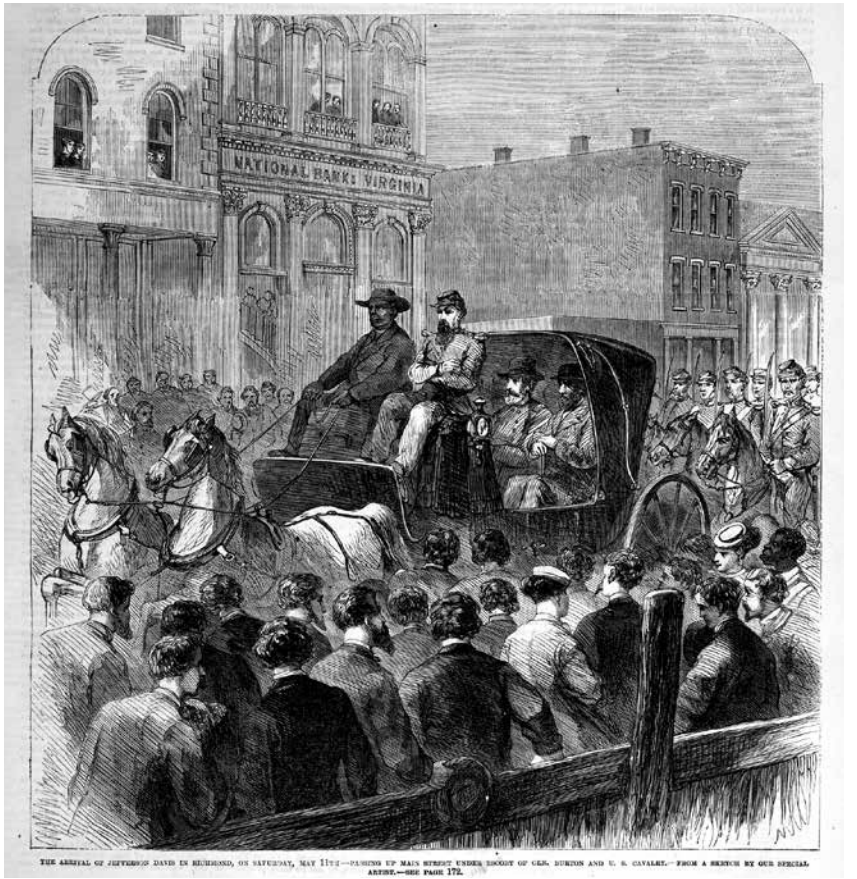



Fig. 39. *The Arrival of Jefferson Davis in Richmond, On Saturday, May 11th—Passing Up Main Street Under Escort of Gen. Burton and U.S. Cavalry.* Engraving, *Frank Leslie's Illustrated Newspaper*, June 8, 1867.

needed only glance at a Union soldier to know that the stories were lies. The myths whites had heard and repeated about African Americans were, on the other hand, more insidious and long lasting perhaps in part because so many Northern whites had little or no direct experience of African Americans and may have relied on articles and illustrations in publications like *Leslie's* to test the tales they had been told.

As a newspaper driven by the need to appeal to as many people as possible, *Leslie's* was not motivated to challenge stereotypes. So, if the real war for African-American freedom had to be won not only on the battlefields but also in the hearts and minds of Northern and Southern whites, then we may be able to monitor the progress of that inner war—or lack thereof—by look-

Fig. 40. *Am I Not a Man and a Brother?*. Engraving, from John Greenleaf Whittier, "Our Countrymen in Chains" (New York, N.Y.: Anti-Slavery Office, 1837).

ing closely at the drawings produced by the Special Artists of *Leslie's*. Those pictures document an important part of our national story—one that we must know about and understand if we are to move forward.

And while many of the illustrations published in *Leslie's* during the war continued to reinforce racial stereotypes, the best drawings that were printed offer far more positive depictions of African Americans than had been popularly circulated up to that point. Even the images used by abolitionists often show slaves in primitive costumes and/or settings, kneeling and raising their hands in supplication. The famous abolitionist image of a kneeling man (fig. 40) used in both England and America in as early as the eighteenth century explicitly appeals to the viewer to feel a direct connection with the slave by asking, "am I not a man and a brother?"[120] It seems unlikely that any white American man or woman living during the nineteenth century would identify with a half-naked and crouching black man. Such pictures may inspire sympathy, but they are unlikely to generate esteem.

Nevertheless, the engraving published in *Leslie's* marking the entry of African-American troops into Richmond commands the viewer's respect. In the illustration, we see black men, women, and children, who are probably enjoying their first moments of freedom, cheering battle-hardened black veterans. As we look into the eyes of the African-American soldiers as they march into the future, we seem to see what they suffered, what they fought for, and what they hope they have won. Unfortunately, their real fight for true freedom was not over.

As Barack Obama said on March 18, 2008, in his speech on race during the primary campaign in his run for the presidency,

> words on a parchment would not be enough to deliver slaves from bondage, or provide men and women of every color and creed their full rights and obligations as citizens of the United States. What would be needed were Americans in successive generations who were willing to do their part—through protests and struggle, on the streets and in the courts, through a civil war and civil disobedience and always at great risk—to narrow that gap between the promise of our ideals and the reality of their time.[121]

The drawings produced by the Special Artists working for *Leslie's*, including those that reflect racist stereotypes, document an important phase of that heroic struggle. In recording the reality and perceptions of their time, they testify that African Americans were never *freed*men (saved by others) but rather men and women who worked, fought, suffered, and died to *earn* their freedom and redeem the ideals of the American experiment for all of us.

# ENDNOTES

1 Emma Colt, Essay, 1864. Chase Family Papers, American Antiquarian Society, Worcester, Mass.

2 Charlotte Ann Jackson, Essay. 1865. Chase Family Papers, American Antiquarian Society, Worcester, Mass.

3 Thomas Jefferson, "Notes on the State of Virginia," in *Writings*, ed. Merrill D. Peterson (New York, N.Y.: Library of America, 1984), 270.

4 Even Thomas Jefferson was uncertain whether his assessment of blacks as naturally inferior was correct. In "Notes on the State of Virginia" he writes, "the whole commerce between master and slave is a perpetual exercise of the most boisterous passions, the most unremitting despotism on the one part, and degrading submissions on the other." Ibid., 288.

5 Edward L. Pierce, "The Freedmen at Port Royal," *Atlantic Monthly*, September 1863, 301.

6 Ibid., 291. As Secretary of the Treasury, Salmon P. Chase was responsible for confiscated goods and lands during the Civil War. When the Union established its first camp for contrabands at Port Royal, Virginia, Chase appointed fellow abolitionist Edward L. Pierce to oversee the work and education of the African Americans housed at Port Royal, Virginia. Chase hoped Pierce's efforts would prepare the contrabands for freedom and his reports would help Chase persuade Lincoln to emancipate the slaves. Pierce worked at Port Royal for only three months before mustering out, but during that time he sent a report to Chase [Edward Lillie Pierce, *The Negroes at Port Royal: Report of E. L. Pierce, Government Agent, to the Hon. Salmon P. Chase, Secretary of the Treasury, February 3, 1862* (Boston, Mass.: Wallcut, 1862)] that later became the basis for the article published in the *Atlantic Monthly* and mentioned above in note five.

7 George Everett, "Frank Leslie (Henry Carter)," *Dictionary of Literary Biography*, ed. Perry J. Ashley (Detroit, Mich.: Gale, 1985), 43:302.

8 Joshua Brown, *Beyond the Lines: Pictorial Reporting, Everyday Life, and the Crisis of Gilded Age America* (Berkley: University of California Press, 2002), 41.

9 George M. Fredrickson, *The Black Image in the White Mind: The Debate on Afro-American Character and Destiny, 1817–1914* (Hanover, Conn.: Wesleyan University Press, 1971).

10 Guy C. McElroy, *Facing History: The Black Image in American Art, 1710–1940* (San Francisco, Calif.: Bedford Arts, 1990), xi.

11 Benjamin Butler to Simon Cameron, July 30, 1861, in *The Rebellion Record: A Diary of American Events, with Documents, Narratives, Illustrative Incidents, Poetry, Etc.*, ed. Frank Moore (New York, N.Y.: Putnam, 1861–1868), 2:437–438.

12 An article published in *Leslie's* notes, "the promptness and sagacity of General Butler have increased the dilemma of the Secessionists to a remarkable degree, since it is at once equally hostile to both Abolitionism and Secession. By declaring slaves as contrabands of war, he recognizes them as property, and, consequently as liable to capture." *Frank Leslie's Illustrated Newspaper*, "Negroes Taking Refuge at Fort Monroe," June 8, 1861 (hereafter referred to as *Leslie's*).

13 Even when African Americans were finally allowed to enlist in the army, they usually found themselves assigned primarily to menial jobs involving manual labor. The white commander of African-American troops once complained in a letter: "The only thing they give colored troops here to do in the way of duty is fatigue duty, working on the forts, etc., while not a white man of all the thousands of enlisted soldiers here, until yesterday, has been required to lift a spade ... It is thought they are only fit to dig." Letter quoted in Charles A. Page, *Letters of a War Correspondent*, ed. James Roberts Gilmore (Boston, Mass.: Page, 1898), 170–171.

14 George Fitzhugh, *Sociology for the South, or the Failure of Free Society* (Richmond, Va.: Morris, 1854), 83.

15 *Leslie's*, "Building a Levee at Baton Rouge," May 9, 1863.

16 Ibid.

17 Mrs. Henry Rowe (Mary Howard) Schoolcraft, *The Black Gauntlet: A Tale of Plantation Life in South Carolina* (Philadelphia, Pa.: Lippincott, 1860), 49.

18 Shirley Samuels, "Introduction," in *The Culture of Sentiment: Race, Gender, and Sentimentality in 19th-Century America*, ed. Shirley Samuels (Oxford, Eng.: Oxford University Press, 1992), 4.

19 Harriet Beecher Stowe, *Uncle Tom's Cabin* (Boston, Mass.: Jewett, 1852), 134; and Harriet Beecher Stowe, *Uncle Tom's Cabin; or, Life among the Lowly* (London, Eng.: Thomas Bosworth, 1852), 96. The description of a picture of "a man with a stick and a bundle" refers to the image that was typically used as an illustration in advertisements for runaway slaves.

20 "Building a Levee at Baton Rouge."

21 While both African-American women and men tied cloth around their heads in an extension of the traditions in Africa, even in the colonial period, as early as 1786, the Governor of the Spanish colony of Louisiana decreed that all black women must wear "their hair bound in a kerchief." South Carolina's Negro Act of 1735 also dictated that African Americans (whether free or enslaved) wear distinctive clothing, and similar rules were in effect there and elsewhere in the South until emancipation. See Helen Bradley Foster, *New Raiments of Self: African American Clothing in the Antebellum South* (Oxford, Eng.: Berg, 1997), 273.

22 *Leslie's*, "'Washerwomen' in the Army," December 10, 1864.

23 Rod A. Martin, *The Psychology of Humor: An Integrative Approach* (Burlington, Mass.: Academic Press, 2007), 44–45.

24 Thomas Hobbes, *The Elements of Law, Natural and Politic*, ed. J. C. A. Gaskin (Oxford, Eng.: Oxford University Press, 1999), 54.

25 *New York Times*, "The Army of the Potomac. What It Has Done and What It Is Doing," October 30, 1864.

26 Martin, 43.

27 Marc Simpson, "The Bright Side: 'Humorously Conceived and Truthfully Executed,'" in *Winslow Homer: Paintings of the Civil War*, ed. Marc Simpson (San Francisco, Calif.: Fine Arts Museums of San Francisco, 1988), 54. Simpson's article also makes an extremely important contribution to our understanding of some of the ways in which even mid-nineteenth century representations of African Americans seen as serious today were regarded as comic during the Civil War period.

28 Jefferson, 265.

29 Ibid.

30 Thomas Carlyle, "Occasional Discourse on the Nigger Question," *The Old Guard*, May 1866, 308. This was part two of a three-part series published under the title of "Fifteen Years of Emancipation in the West Indies." Part one appeared in *The Old Guard*. April 1866, 239–235; the final installment appeared in June 1866, 372–377. The pamphlet as a whole was a reworking of Carlyle's "Occasional Discourse on the Negro Question," *Fraser's Magazine for Town and Country*, February 1849, 670–679.

31 Carlyle, "Occasional Discourse on the Nigger Question," *The Old Guard*, 308.

32 "A Darkie's Life is Always Gay," in *Music of the Original Christy Minstrels, the Oldest Established Band in the United States* (New York, N.Y.: Holt, 1848); from American Memory, "Music for the Nation: American Sheet Music; ca. 1820–1860," Library of Congress, http://memory.loc.gov/cgi-bin/query/r?ammem/mussm:@field(NUMBER+@band(sm1848+441830) (accessed June 8, 2009).

33 Edwin Pearce Christy, quoted in Eileen Southern, *The Music of Black Americans: A History* (New York, N.Y.: Norton, 1997), 92.

34 Gary A. Donaldson, "A Window on Slave Culture: Dances at Congo Square in New Orleans, 1800–1862," *Journal of Negro History* 69, no. 2 (1984): 63.

35 While it is not surprising that Nathaniel Orr, who also provided pictures for the covers for a number of minstrel songbooks, designed a picture that

included such a stereotype, it is difficult to know why such a seemingly negative image of African Americans was allowed to appear in Douglass's book. While the publication of *The Narrative of the Life of Frederick Douglass* was almost entirely controlled by William Garrison, Douglass himself had authority over the production of *My Bondage and My Freedom*. John Sekora sees the inclusion of illustrations in the latter work as a sign of the personal interest Douglass took in shaping the published work, saying "he certainly selected these scenes, he probably commissioned them as original illustrations, and he may have helped design them." John Sekora, "'Mr. Editor, If You Please': Frederick Douglass, *My Bondage and My Freedom*, and the End of the Abolitionist Imprint," *Callaloo* 172 (1994): 617.

36 Frederick Douglass, *My Bondage and My Freedom* (New York, N.Y.: Miller, Orton and Mulligan, 1855), 99.

37 William Wells Brown, *Narrative of William W. Brown* (Boston, Mass.: Anti-Slavery Office, 1847), 46.

38 Solomon Northrup, *Twelve Years a Slave: Narrative of Solomon Northup, a Citizen of New-York, Kidnapped in Washington City in 1841, and Rescued in 1853* (Auburn, N.Y.: Derby and Miller, 1853), 79.

39 Ibid., 181–182.

40 John Jacobs, "A True Tale of Slavery," *The Leisure Hour: A Family Journal of Instruction and Recreation* No. 476 (February 7, 1861): 85.

41 Saidiya V. Hartman, *Scenes of Subjection: Terror, Slavery, and Self-Making in Nineteenth-Century America* (New York, N.Y.: Oxford University Press, 1997), 42.

42 Ibid., 44.

43 Ibid., 68.

44 *Leslie's*, "Negro Festivities at Vicksburg," January 30, 1864, 292.

45 Ibid.

46 *New York Tribune*, "The Black Opera," June 30, 1855 (repr. in *Journal of Music*, July 3, 1858: 107).

47 Laurie F. Maffly-Kip, "An Introduction to the Church in the Southern Black Community," University Library: The University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill, http://docsouth.unc.edu/church/intro.html (accessed June 8, 2009).

48 See, for example, Charshee Charlotte Lawrence-McIntyre, "The Double Meanings of the Spirituals," *Journal of Black Studies* 17, no. 4 (June 1987): 379–401.

49 Frederick Law Olmsted, *A Journey in the Seaboard Slave States* (London, Eng.: Sampson Low, Son, 1856), 114.

50 Thomas Wentworth Higginson, "Camp Life," in *Army Life in a Black Regiment* (Boston, Mass.: Fields, Osgood, 1870), 18.

51 Lucy Chase, Letter, July 1, 1864. Chase Family Papers, American Antiquarian Society, Worcester, Mass.

52 "Anecdote and Incidents of a Visit to Freedmen," *The Freedmen's Record* 1, no. 10 (October 1865): 158.

53 Ibid., 159.

54 Pierce, *The Negroes at Port Royal*, 5.

55 *Leslie's*, "Negro Prayer-Meeting," October 1, 1864.

56 Ibid.

57 Abraham Lincoln, "Call for 300,000 Volunteers," in *The Collected Works of Abraham Lincoln*, eds. Roy P. Basler, Marion Dolores Pratt, and Lloyd A. Dunlap (New Brunswick, N.J.: Rutgers University Press, 1953), 5:296–297.

58 *Leslie's*, "To Abraham Lincoln, On His Demand for Three Hundred Thousand Men," September 20, 1862.

59 Abraham Lincoln, "Emancipation Proclamation. January 1, 1863. By the President of the United States of America: A Proclamation," in *The Collected Works of Abraham Lincoln*, 6:28–31.

60 *Leslie's*, "Army Discipline—Punishment of Negro Soldiers," December 10, 1864.

61 William Walker, "Court-Martial Statement by South Carolina Black Sergeant," in *The Black Military Experience*, ed. Ira Berlin, Joseph P. Reidy, and Leslie S. Rowland (1982; repr., Cambridge, Eng.: Cambridge University Press, 1983), 393.

62 The 54th Massachusetts was the Union's first all-black volunteer company and was celebrated in the movie, *Glory*. *Glory*, DVD, directed by Edward Zwick (1989; Culver City, Calif., Sony Pictures, 1998).

63 *Harper's Weekly*, "Reluctant Justice," May 7, 1864, 290.

64 Congress finally granted equal pay to African-American soldiers in June 1864. Even then, those who had been slaves at the beginning of the war were to receive back pay only to January 1, 1864. It would take until March 3, 1865, for Congress to equalize back pay for all African-American soldiers. Two months later, the War Department created yet another set of inequities when it granted bounties to all black recruits who enlisted after July 18, 1864, but not to those who had enlisted earlier as slaves. For more on this subject, see John David Smith, ed., *Black Soldiers in Blue: African American Troops in the Civil War Era* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2002), 41–52.

65 Nathaniel P. Banks, *Report of Major Gen. Nathaniel P. Banks, U. S. Army, Commanding Department of the Gulf, to Major-General Halleck, Commander-in-Chief, U. S. Army, May 30, 1863*. The report was quoted in a large number of newspapers and books, including *Leslie's*, June 27, 1863; *New York Times*, "The Siege of Port Hudson: An Official Report from General Banks," June 10, 1863; and W.E.B. Du Bois, *The Negro* (New York, N.Y.: Holt, 1915), 122. For a more extensive analysis of the response to the actions of the African-American troops at Fort Hudson, see Lawrence Lee Hewitt, "An Ironic Route to Glory: Louisiana's Native Guards at Port Hudson" in *Black Soldiers in Blue*, 78–106.

66 *Leslie's*, "The Negro in the War," January 16, 1864.

67 "The Great Gallantry Of The Negro Troops At Milliken's Bend," *Galena* [Ill.] *Advertiser* in *War of the Rebellion, Official Records of the Union and Confederate Armies*, 2d ser., vol. 3 (Washington, D.C.: Government Printing Office, 1880–1901), 452–453.

68 By 1865, the difficulty of enlisting enough men to meet the quotas set by the Federal government led Ohio Governor John Brough to put state militias under Federal control for a period of one hundred days. The "Hundred Days" men, as they were called, were used to do manual labor, guard prisoners, and serve in other support roles. While Brough's proposal was enthusiastically endorsed by Lincoln and circulated among other governors, Ohio used this system far more than any other state, sending approximately thirty-five thousand Hundred Days men, while only twenty-five thousand were sent by all the other states combined. For more on this subject, see Jim Leeke, ed., *A Hundred Days to Richmond: Ohio's "Hundred Days" Men in the Civil War* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1999).

69 *Leslie's*, "Siege of Petersburg," July 9, 1864, 247.

70 Ibid., 247.

71 Mark E. Neely Jr. and Harold Holzer, *The Union Image: Popular Prints of the Civil War North* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2000), 1–21.

72 Ibid., 234. (Emphasis in original.) The subject of this discussion is a colored lithograph entitled "Freedom to the Slave" (n. p., 1863?). The reverse features an appeal for African American recruits: "All Slaves were made Freemen. By Abraham Lincoln, President of the United States, January 1st, 1863. Come, then, able-bodied Colored Men, to the nearest United States Camp, and fight for the Stars and Stripes." A digital version of the Library Company of Philadelphia's copy of the lithograph can be found at "The Crisis of the Union," Schoenberg Center for Electronic Text and Image: http://dewey.library.upenn.edu/sceti/printedbooksNew/index.cfm?textID=P_9179_44 (accessed July 27, 2009).

73 For an interesting analysis of this image, see Jerome S. Handler and Michael L. Tuite, Jr., "Retouching History: The Modern Falsification of a Civil War Photograph," http://people.virginia.edu/~jh3v/retouchinghistory/ (accessed June 6, 2009).

74 *Leslie's*, "The War in Virginia. The Twenty-Second [African American] Regiment, Duncan's Brigade, Carrying the First Line of Confederate Works Before Petersburg," July 9, 1864, 240.

75 Pierce, "The Freedmen at Port Royal," 314.

76 *Harper's Weekly*, "The Fight at Milliken's Bend," July 4, 1863.

77 *Leslie's*, "Fun for the Family," February 25, 1865.

78 *Leslie's*, "Scenes at Vicksburg.—Fortifications in the Streets—Negroes bringing in Prisoners," December 19, 1863.

79 Abraham Lincoln, "Preliminary Emancipation Proclamation. September 22, 1862 By the President of the United States of America: A Proclamation," in *The Collected Works of Abraham Lincoln*, 5:433–436.

80 Jefferson Davis, "General Orders, No. 111, December 24, 1862," U.S. War Department, *The War of the Rebellion: A Compendium of the Official Records of the Union and Confederate Armies*, 2d ser., vol. 5 (Washington, D.C., Government Printing Office, 1880–1901), 795–797.

81 U.S. Congress, *Fort Pillow Massacre*, 29th Cong. 1st sess., 1864, H. Rept. 65.

82 Commentators continue to debate not only Forest's role in the events at Fort Pillow but also his role in events in the postwar South. A wealthy slave owner and slave trader before the war, Forest is described by some as having caused atrocities at the Battle of Fort Pillow and by others as having acted to protect survivors of the battle. In his memoir, Ulysses S. Grant praises the bravery of the Union troops on that occasion, and writes: "I will leave Forrest in his dispatches to tell what he did with them. 'The river was dyed," he says, "with the blood of the slaughtered for two hundred yards. The approximate loss was upward of five hundred killed, but few of the officers escaping. My loss was about twenty killed. It is hoped that these facts will demonstrate to the Northern people that negro soldiers cannot cope with Southerners.' Ulysses S. Grant, *Personal Memoirs of U.S. Grant in Two Volumes*, (New York, N.Y.: Webster, 1885–1886), 63–64. Others attempting to assess Forest's legacy point to the words he spoke at the conclusion of his farewell address from May 9, 1865, to the men who had served under him during the war: "Obey the laws, preserve your honor, and the Government to which you have surrendered can afford to be, and will be, magnanimous." John Allan Wyeth, *Life of Lieutenant-General Nathan Bedford Forrest* (New York, N.Y.: Harper Brothers, 1899), 614. Forest was one of the first members of the Ku Klux Klan and may have served as its first Grand Wizard. Brian Steel Wills, *The Confederacy's Greatest Cavalryman: Nathan Bedford Forrest* (Lawrence: University Press of Kansas, 1998), 335–336. He also enjoyed a special standing as a hero of the "lost cause" in the South in the postwar years, particularly because he was attacked in the congressional report *Fort Pillow Massacre*. In fact, the claim has been made that there are more monuments to Nathan Bedford Forrest in the U.S. than to any other single person. James Lowen, *Lies Across America: What Our Historic Sites Get Wrong* (New York, N.Y.: Touchstone, 1999), 25. See note 81 for the congressional report.

83 *Leslie's*, "The Massacre at Fort Pillow," May 7, 1864.

84 Abraham Lincoln, "Address at Sanitary Fair, Baltimore, Maryland," *The Collected Works of Abraham Lincoln*, 7:301–303.

85 U.S. Congress, *Fort Pillow Massacre*. The accuracy of the report has been a matter of intense debate ever since its publication, but most historians agree that a massacre did take place. For further discussion of the contradictory reports on Fort Pillow, see Albert Castel, "The Fort Pillow Massacre: A Fresh Examination of the Evidence" *Civil War History* 4 (1959): 37–50; John Cimprich and Robert C. Manifort Jr., "Fort Pillow Revisited, New Evidence About an Old Controversy," *Civil War History* 28 (1982): 293–306; Ronald C. White, Jr., *Lincoln's Greatest Speech* (New York, N.Y.: Simon and Schuster, 2002), 173–177; John Cimprich, *Fort Pillow, A Civil War Massacre*; and Andrew Ward, *River Run Red: The Fort Pillow Massacre in the American Civil* (New York, N.Y.: Viking, 2005).

86 Abraham Lincoln, Second Inaugural Address; endorsed by Lincoln, April 10, 1865, March 4, 1865; Series 3, General Correspondence, 1837–1897; The Abraham Lincoln Papers at the Library of Congress, Manuscript Division (Washington, D.C.: American Memory Project, http://memory.loc.gov/ammem/alhtml/alhome.html (accessed July 8, 2009).

87 *Leslie's*, "A Negro Regiment Repulsing an Attack of Rebels and Bloodhounds," March 5, 1864, 369.

88 *Leslie's*, "The Siege of Charleston. Filling the Sandbags for the Spar Death of Ironsides—Paying Off Negro Recruits," January 16, 1864.

89 *Leslie's* "Paying Off Negro Soldiers," August 20, 1864.

90 Pierce, "The Freedmen at Port Royal," 301.

91 Ibid.

92 Frederic May Holland, *Frederick Douglass: The Colored Orator* (Toronto, Ont.: Funk and Wagnalls, 1891), 301.

93 *Leslie's*, "Arrest of Vagrant Negroes in New Orleans," May 21, 1864

94 *Leslie's*, "A Plantation on the Teche," February 6, 1864.

95 On this point, I arrive at a somewhat different conclusion than Mark E. Neely and Harold Holzer, who argue that by 1866 "it was clear that in war and iconography alike, African Americans had ... raised themselves from shackled slaves to armed freedom fighters." Mark E. Neely, and Harold Holzer, *The Union Image: Popular Prints of the Civil War North* (University of North Carolina Press, 1999), 235. While it is true that images of transformation did appear in *Leslie's* as in other places, those were counterbalanced in *Leslie's* by pictures that reaffirmed long-standing racial stereotypes in a way that seemed to deny the possibility of real change.

96 While *Negro Mob in Richmond* is attributed only to a "Special Artist," it could be the work of James E. Taylor, who was producing drawings for *Leslie's* in and around Richmond during the years immediately following the war. For more information on Taylor and representations of African Americans in *Leslie's* during Reconstruction, see Joshua Brown. The *New York Times* described Taylor in his obituary as "a wary correspondent and artist of the rebellion, whose pictures of the Indian, negro, and soldier became famous throughout the United States." It also states that from the end of the war until 1883, Taylor worked in the South to "portray the negro and the Indian" for *Leslie's*. *New York Times*, "James E. Taylor Dead; He Was a Famous Artist and War Correspondent of the Rebellion," June 23, 1901.

97 Carl Shurz, "Report of Carl Shurz on the States of South Carolina, Georgia, Alabama, Mississippi, and Louisiana," *Message of the President of the United States*, U.S. Senate Documents, 39th Cong., 1st sess., exec. doc. no. 2 (Washington, D.C.: Government Printing Office, 1865), 37.

98 W. E. Burghardt Du Bois, "Reconstruction and its Benefits" *The American Historical Review* 15, no. 4 (July 1910): 78.

99 *National Intelligencer* (Washington, D.C.), "Richmond the Scene of Negro Riots," May 16, 1867.

100 Eric Foner, *Reconstruction: America's Unfinished Revolution, 1863–1877* (New York, N.Y.: HarperCollins, 2002), 283–284.

101 John Hope Franklin, *From Slavery to Freedom* (New York. N.Y.: Alfred A. Knopf, 1947), 323.

102 Carl Schurz, "Can the South Solve the Negro Problem?," *McClure's Magazine*, January 1904, 259–275; and reprinted in *Speeches, Correspondence and Political Papers of Carl Schurz*, ed. Frederic Bancroft (New York, N.Y.: Knickerbocker, 1913), 6:315.

103 See, for example, Stephen Kantrowitz, "One Man's Mob is Another Man's Militia: Violence, Manhood, and Authority in Reconstruction South Carolina," in *Jumpin' Jim Crow: Southern Politics from Civil War to Civil Rights*, ed. Jane Elizabeth Dailey, Glenda Elizabeth Gilmore, and Bryant Simon (Princeton, N.J.: Princeton University Press, 2000), 67–87.

104 Richmond, Ordinances, December 12, 1862 quoted in Richard Wade, *Slavery in Cities* (New York, N.Y.: Oxford University Press, 1967), 108.

105 For a discussion of the formal and informal race-based rules that shaped interactions in the antebellum South and their significance in postwar life, see Bertram W. Doyle's early study, "The Etiquette of Race Relations—Past, Present, and Future," *Journal of Negro Education* 5, no. 2 (1936): 191–208; and Jane Dailey's "Deference and Violence in the Postbellum Urban South: Manners and Massacres in Danville, Virginia," *Journal of Southern History* 63, no. 3 (1997): 553–590.

106 "Document No. 9: Statement of General Thomas Kilby Smith," in *Message of the President of the United States*, 59.

107 William Stone, Attorney General of South Carolina, to D. H. Chamberlain, Governor, "Official Report of the Battle of Hamburg," Columbia S.C., July 12, 1876, published in Walter Allen, *Governor Chamberlain's Administration in South Carolina* (New York, N.Y.: Putnam Knickerbocker Press, 1888), 313–318.

108 *Atlanta Constitution*, August 17 and 25, 1883, quoted in Howard N. Rabinowitz, "The Conflicts Between Blacks and Police in the Urban South: 1865–1900," in *Race, Ethnicity, and Urbanization: Selected Essays* (Columbia: University of Missouri Press, 1994), 177.

109 "Document No. 9: Statement of General Thomas Kilby Smith," 59.

110 Charles F. Johnson and T. W. Gilbeth, "Report of an Investigation of the Cause, Origin, and Results of the Late Riots in the City of Memphis," *Records of the Assistant Commissioner for the State of Tennessee*, Bureau of Refugees, Freedmen, and Abandoned Lands, 1865–1869 (National Archives Microfilm Publication M999, roll 34).

111 "The Moral of the Memphis Riots," *The Nation* (May 15, 1866).

112 For one account, see James G. Hollandsworth, *An Absolute Massacre: The New Orleans Race Riot of July 30, 1866* (Baton Rouge: Louisiana State University Press, 2004).

113 *Harper's Weekly*, "The New Orleans Massacre," March 30, 1867, 202.

114 General Philip Henry Sheridan quoted in *New York Times*, "The New Orleans Riot: Gen. Sheridan's Testimony," February 12, 1867; and House Select Committee on New Orleans Riot, Telegram: P.H. Sheridan to U.S. Grant in *Report of the Select Committee on the New Orleans Riot*, U.S. 39th Cong., 2d sess., August 2, 1866, House Report 16 (Washington, D.C.: Government Printing Office, 1867), 11.

115 W.E.B. Du Bois, *Black Reconstruction in America, 1860–1880*, ed. David Levering Lewis (New York, N.Y.: Free Press, 1998), 465. See also, James Oliver Horton, and Lois E. Horton, *Slavery and the Making of America* (Oxford, Eng.: Oxford University Press, 2005), 218.

116 *Vindicator* (Staunton, Va.), "Arrest of Massachusetts Lawyer on Charges of Inciting to Riot," May 24, 1867, http://valley.lib.virginia.edu/news/rv1867/va.au.rv.1867.05.17.xml02 (accessed June 6, 2009).

117 "Richmond the Scene of Negro Riots."

118 *National Intelligencer* (Washington, D.C.), "Arrest of Massachusetts Lawyer on Charges of Inciting to Riot," May 16, 1867.

119 *Sun* (Baltimore, Md.), "Another Riot in Richmond," May 13, 1867.

120 The image was first designed by members of the Society for Effecting the Abolition of the Slave Trade in 1787 and was soon adopted by other abolitionist groups. For more information, see WGBH, "Am I "Am I Not a Man and a Brother?"+, WGBH Educational Foundation, http://www.pbs.org/wgbh/aia/part2/2h67.html (accessed July 7, 2009).

121 *New York Times*, "Transcript: Barack Obama's Speech on Race," March 18, 2008.

# MICROHISTORIES: CIVIL WAR WITNESSING BEFORE MEMORIALIZATION

Nirmal Trivedi

**At the conclusion of the Civil War, Walt Whitman prophesized that "the real war won't get into the books.** Future years will never know the seething hell and black infernal background of countless minor scenes and interiors (not the official surface-courteousness of the Generals, not the few great battles)."[1] Before the century was over, the American public witnessed a wholesale revision of the Civil War into an event of generals and "great battles" that presented the Civil War as an episode in a larger narrative of national unification. Memoirs and illustrated histories using this narrative swamped the public with engraved prints of a war more about grand heroism and national reunification than divisiveness, inequality, and suffering.[2] During the war, through a publication process, firsthand testimony of artist-correspondents was filtered into palatable engraved prints. These filtered engraved prints effectively monumentalized the war during—and especially after—the war; many were reproduced at the turn of the century in illustrated histories to elevate the dead to martyrs of the Federal state, consigning them to a symbolic existence as models of good citizenship at a point in the 1890s when the United States was embarking on imperialist ventures abroad. This sanitized memory of the war—initiated during the war and crystallized at the turn of the century—so dominates understandings of the conflict and its aftermath that it prevents us from accessing the challenges the war posed, namely the responsibilities of the Federal state to protect its own citizens in a time of war.[3] Effected by discursive and professional forces during the war, the engravings represented the Federal government as supporting the idea of the North as a homogenous, political identity in which Northerners supported the war effort without reservation while seeing the Confederacy as the enemy.

In contrast, the drawings made by the Special Artists during and after the Civil War unravel aspects of the "real war" that Whitman longed to see in print: in addition to documenting relatively unknown incidents, they represent the subjective experiences of soldiers and the Special Artists. The Special Artists bore witness to the war's inglorious moments, documenting everyday occurrences and exceptional suffering. These documents help us interpret the series of complex histories and unresolved tensions of the post-Civil War period, particularly those that defined the rights of the citizens and the responsibilities of the Federal government. The drawings are what cultural historian Carlo Ginzburg terms microhistories (stories of large-scale events in a "narrow compass in time and space").[4] These microhistories of the war effectively present Whitman's "minor scenes and interiors": they tell of for-

gotten battles; unburied bodies; those less sacrificed than killed; contraband soldiers; and the lives of the Special Artists who worked throughout the war, often under extreme circumstances, to represent the unrepresentable.[5]

One of the major themes that later accounts of the Civil War elide is the extent to which the nation had divided into more factions than the Union and Confederacy. The illustrated histories regularly represented the nation as having an underlying unity in which two ideologically unified entities were pitted against each other. Both were presented as internally homogeneous, which is implied by the common way of characterizing them as the North and the South or the Union versus the Confederacy. Visual reminders of these supposed unions are ubiquitous in published engravings, from images of parades to those of heroic generals leading their troops into battle with flags billowing in the wind. These images of unified forces are ironic, since by its literal meaning, the term civil war denotes a multi-faceted crisis of a federal state. Witnessing from the front lines of this crisis, the Special Artists testify to the consequences of Federal state power, consequences that resulted from the neglect of the state. Such neglect is rendered invisible by the glorified memorializations of the engravings while represented more fully by the Special Artists precisely because they experienced the neglect firsthand. The drawings effectively expose the neglect of the Federal state through microhistories that depict the Federal government abandoning its citizens in need of protection, and, at other times, enacting its power to kill. While the drawings plant the seed for the engravings that depict a unified nation more pointedly at the turn of the century, they also depict soldiers and Special Artists operating in zones where the nation was unstable, showing how the state both selectively withdrew protection for its troops and artists and enacted its force upon those it deemed traitorous. The drawings depict soldiers abandoned on battlefields, drummed out of their armies for "cowardice," executed for desertion, and as victims of crude makeshift medical treatment. In these microhistories, the absence of the protective power of the Federal state over all its citizens is as conspicuous as is the violence enacted by the divided nation's military powers.

In this essay, I will discuss two central phenomena concerning the role of state power in the Special Artists' work: The first deals with how the Special Artists drew with what I call an aesthetic of physicality (a style of representation that emphasized the physical costs and challenges of being in the war zone, where the boundaries that delimited the Federal state were in a state of flux). The second deals with drawings made of the Indian wars during the 1870s, which demonstrate that the end of the Civil War did not mean the end of civil war in the United States. I will turn to three seemingly unrelated scenes to elaborate on these two phenomena. In the first scene, I consider two images by Henri Lovie that illustrate his aesthetic of physicality. His drawings and the comments he wrote on the front and back of his drawings show that the very bodies of soldiers and Special Artists contradict the histories of the war told in the memorialized accounts written during the turn of the century. I will then turn to Edward Mullen's drawings, which depict the Union turning against its own citizens through executions of dissenting and so-called cowardly soldiers. The final scene takes place after the Civil War when the U.S. Army continued to consolidate its western territories through the Indian wars. These images inform us that civil war did not end at Appomattox, where Robert E. Lee surrendered the Army of Northern Virginia to Ulysses S. Grant, but rather continued into the 1870s. Finally, I will discuss the drawings made by a formerly unknown soldier-artist, Adolphus H. von Luettwitz, which testify to both the predicament of treating the wounded in war and open up a discussion of how such events are to be treated aesthetically. These three scenes are microhistories of personal experience and individual hardship that were effaced or suppressed in the engraved versions that the public saw in *Frank Leslie's Illustrated Newspaper* (*Leslie's*). The continued existence of a selection of these drawings in the Becker Collection narrates a common story about the Special Artists and how they stood, physically and through their representations of the war, in the way of memorialization.

## HENRI LOVIE AND THE AESTHETIC OF PHYSICALITY

The drawings Lovie made during the Civil War present image making as a deeply physical experience for both the subjects of the works and those depicting them on paper. Lovie was among the most experienced staff artists at *Leslie's*. The most notable drawings he made during the war show that he felt a deep sensitivity to the physical pressures of wartime—its toil on the body of artists and soldiers alike. Although the published (engraved) images based on Lovie's drawings suggest the physical cost of war, Lovie's drawings are ever more stark renditions of violence.

Lovie's sensitivity is evident in his depiction of the Battle of Shiloh. In the words of historian George Frederickson, Lovie's images from the battle destroyed early notions of the war as a "heroic picnic."[6] The Battle of Shiloh

resulted in twenty-four thousand casualties alone—more than in any previous American battle and more than in the entire U.S.-Mexican War.[7] The battle was the first in a series of confrontations between Union and Confederate troops that resulted in unprecedented violence. Lovie himself underwent great hardship during his time as a Special Artist: Confederate forces questioned him numerous times, frequently accusing him of spying. In the words of one scholar, he became a target of more than one sentry.[8] While these tribulations certainly contributed to his decision to retire in 1863 from *Leslie's*, they defined the way he saw the war and represented it.[9]

The physical toll Shiloh took on the soldiers became Lovie's opportunity to highlight the impact of state power upon the wounded and killed. *Leslie's* presented Lovie's coverage of the conflict as both a major coup for the newspaper and a moment of awakening for the war's participants. Lovie expressed his longing for peace and a quick end to the war. In one of his drawings of the battle, *Battle of Shiloh or Pittsburg Landing, Tennessee: General McClernand's Second Defense* (plate 72), Lovie conveys the significant loss of life at the hands of Confederate troops. In the foreground, he depicts several wounded soldiers being tended to in what is, presumably, an open-air hospital. The wounded display not the quiet dignity of the wounded in turn of the century illustrated histories but rather their suffering at the lack of basic medical provisions to ease their pain. The image parallels the juxtaposition of institutional coldness and physical violence evident in Herman Melville's poem from 1866 "Shiloh: A Requiem":

> Over the field where April rain
> Solaced the parched one stretched in pain
> Through the pause of night
> That followed the Sunday fight
> Around the church of Shiloh—[10]

Two soldiers left of center in the foreground of the drawing hold back a soldier whose arm has been amputated and is bleeding. The latter looks with resignation at a comrade in the far left of the foreground whose arm appears to be in the process of being amputated. Lovie depicts a solider in the center of the foreground who is lying on the ground face down while a man—presumably a doctor—attends to him. Lovie depicts three soldiers in the far right of the foreground who express their pain and seem to surrender. In the background, a battle carries on among a handful of soldiers. Lovie identifies only these soldiers in the notes he wrote on the front of the drawing for his editor despite the fact that the injured and dying soldiers are the subjects of the drawing since they are in the foreground and drawn with more detail than any other elements. Lovie's own aesthetic vision is in tension with his obligations to *Leslie's* to make a newsworthy drawing. It seems to be an attempt to untangle the war and its narrative of unified state power from the painful recognition of the war's brutality. This drawing ultimately represents an underside of the war that the illustrated histories attempt to elide.

A powerful engraved version of this drawing appeared in *Leslie's* on May 24, 1862.[11] It attempts faithfully to reproduce the drawing, abiding by Lovie's approach of "indicating effects" to be completed by engravers. In the engraving, however, Lovie's narrative captured in the juxtaposition of the foreground and background is lost. All subjects are engraved with the same amount of definition, thus lending equal weight to their presence. The engraving transforms the narrative into one of suffering—another artifact of the pathos of the war. Lovie's narrative (the suffering in the battle) is dependent on the juxtaposition of unrepresented (outlined) elements to fully articulated elements. Another narrative appears in the same issue. It appears not as an illustration but as a letter from a surgeon in General Don Carlos Buell's army who was at the battle. The surgeon writes, "I am not lonely, not homesick, nor tired in well doing [*sic*]. But I confess I sometimes feel heartsick, and as if my sympathies would overcome me when witnessing such a vast amount of human suffering and misery as falls under my observation here"[12] Throughout his testimony, the surgeon evokes Lovie's aesthetic as he too struggles to represent the gravity of what he was witnessing.

His drawing *Pontoon Bridge on the March* (plate 77), made later that year, integrates his sensitivity to physical hardship into an aesthetic paradigm. The image itself depicts no particular hardship: it documents a common event during the war—a regiment transporting a pontoon bridge for a river crossing. Lovie's comment on the back of the drawing, however, tells a different story. Lovie writes, "[F]inish this as well as you can, I can only indicate effects. As you will see from the style my fingers are very cold and there is not a drop of 'the crathur' in all these piney woods."[13] Lovie, in effect, wrote onto the image his self-consciousness. Through his words we understand the importance of the physicality of image making. What appears here only as documentary evidence is seen as testimony of his physical endurance and that of the soldiers.

Lovie's comments inform us that the physical pressures of reporting had narrative consequences, since publishers and engravers were asked to fill in missing details of the story Lovie intended to tell. These works beckon us to imagine the process by which they became the version the public saw in *Leslie's*. Lovie's technique to "only indicate effects" was central to his artistic practice. In his drawing *Bravest of the Brave: General Rosecrans Reconnoitering* (plate 78), he adapts this aesthetic into a commentary on state power.[14]

*Bravest of the Brave* is a portrait of General William S. Rosecrans. It is remarkable in that its most distinctive element is missing—Rosecrans's face. Rosecrans was a Union general who led the Army of the Ohio on the western front. Lovie explains, "Harpers [*sic*] published the best photograph of Rosecrans, get that, make the beard and hair light all published ones are too dark." Lovie's aesthetic attitude of only providing effects makes evident all the meditation that went into creating a narrative about the heroic Rosecrans: the work of their engravers, publishers, and even competitors. Portraying this process undermines the seemingly realistic presentation of heroic, statist portraits of engravings and illustrated histories in general, both of which hide the elaborate process involved in creating the news. This drawing thus may be interpreted as a commentary on the image of the Federal state as made through a patchwork of images formed collaboratively (or collusively) by a news-making apparatus. With his name behind the published version, the Special Artist provides both testimony of the unrepresentable aspects of the war (the facelessness of Rosecrans) *and* a seed for more heroic interpretations of the event, bridging—literally and metaphorically—the war and its representation. It exemplifies the interconnected nature of physical and narrative pressures as Lovie turns a presumably heroic image of state power into a commentary on the manufacturing of heroism.

## EDWARD MULLEN: NARRATIVES OF DISSENT

Given the turmoil of the war evidenced in Lovie's drawings, particularly of Shiloh, it is not surprising that many soldiers on both sides deserted the army for either reasons of conflicting loyalties or sheer exhaustion. By the beginning of 1863, the Union experienced widespread desertion from its ranks. One count estimates that one-quarter of the soldiers were "absent without leave."[15] Stephen Crane investigated the psychological fear and allure of desertion in his famous Civil War novel *Red Badge of Courage*, published in 1895.[16] While Crane was interested in the psychic drama of possible dissent within the ranks, Mullen was interested in representing its physical aspects.

Mullen joined *Leslie's* late in 1864, covering the siege of Petersburg for the newspaper. He is unique among the Special Artists in the Becker Collection; more than other artists, he drew the darker side of the war, in particular, the grisly aftermath of battle. He found himself witnessing some of the most emotionally challenging moments of the war, including burial squads at Antietam and Petersburg. One of Mullen's unrestrained images appears on September 3, 1864, in the issue of *Leslie's* covering the events at Petersburg.[17] The engraving depicts a mass burial before a cemetery hill under which a flag of truce flies. In the foreground, African-American soldiers throw corpses into large, anonymous graves. Despite its gravity, the image, with its placement on the bottom of the newspaper page as a minor event in the context of the more important ongoing siege of Petersburg, belies the fact that engravings such as this could not compete with the national narratives required for front-page stories. If the engraving of Shiloh based on Lovie's sketch obscures Lovie's original narrative, the engraving of mass burial based on Mullen's sketch disappears among the competing narratives on the newspaper page. When appreciated as its own entity, Mullen's drawing more effectively conveys the gravity of the subject matter.

Mullen's drawing *Drumming out a Coward Officer* (plate 95), for example, exists independently of competing narratives, unveiling one of the most unexamined phenomena of the war—the divisions inside the army whereby soldiers maintained various views on the meaning of good citizenship. The drawing profiles a soldier identified on the back as Pat Bullus. His comrades are forcing him to march with a placard inscribed with the word "coward" on it tucked under his arm. The shaming of Bullus between the rather expressionless faces of his comrades suggests the large extent to which nonconformity was repressed within the ranks, where expressions of bravery and valor stamped out lingering doubts or fear. The scene does not conventionalize the narrative of two uniformly heroic, homogeneous armies fighting nobly for their principles; it makes known the instance of hesitation on behalf of a soldier. Just as Lovie's drawing *Battle of Shiloh or Pittsburg Landing, Tennessee: General McClernand's Second Defense* opens up a history of the relationship between the state and individual soldiers, *Drumming out a Coward Officer* exposes a history of internal strife within supposedly united armies.

Another harrowing image of war reflecting the internal divisions within the army is Mullen's drawing *Execution of Frank McIlhenney, Deserted to the*

*Enemy* (plate 92). It depicts a formal execution of a soldier. Mullen draws a panorama of the event, including what appear to be hundreds of soldiers watching as Frank McIlhenney kneels on wooden blocks and faces the firing squad. Mullen wrote on the back that McIlhenney had defected from the Union army, joined the Confederacy, then defected. Clearly illustrating the deep ambivalence of participants in the war, the drawing offers a testimonial of a central enduring challenge for each soldier, namely the Federal state's relationship to the individual: what it meant to fight for the nation, to be a good citizen, and be patriotic. The disturbing image unveils an entire history of the Federal state turning against its citizens, a troubling proposal not least because the physical borders that delineated one side from another were unstable.

## ADOLPHUS H. VON LUETTWITZ: DEMOCRATIZING REPRESENTATION

Some of the most radical images in the Becker Collection are from von Luettwitz, who worked during the Great Sioux War of 1876. His drawings further problematize the postwar narrative of the Civil War as a war about reunion. They expose the civil war that took place between the United States and the Native-American peoples during the post-Civil War period.[18] Von Luettwitz's drawings are radical not only because they document an unspoken story about the hardships soldiers experienced during the Indian wars, exposing the physical deprivations for soldiers in the period, but also because they render the aesthetic of physicality with an amateur's hand. Largely two-dimensional and caricatural, the images perform important cultural work for two reasons: First, they present a soldier's perspective of post-Civil War experience. Second, they reveal the little written about history of the ordinary person's experience, including that of Native Americans. Von Luettwitz almost certainly developed his ledger art style from encounters with the Lakota and Cheyenne.[19] His style caused editors to perceive his drawings to be so common and amateurish that *Leslie's* never published them: they were the anathema to the realist style of the newspaper's engravings. Von Luettwitz's drawings both tell a story of the soldier's experience that was never told and intervene in the memorialization process by revealing the variety of representational practices that persisted after the war.

Von Luettwitz was one of the many artists who submitted unsolicited drawings to *Leslie's* with the hope that *Leslie's* would publish them. A "tough Prussian," according to army records, von Luettwitz fought with the 54th New York Infantry Regiment during the Civil War, rising to the rank of Captain in November 1862.[20] When von Luettwitz drew the images, both Fletcher Harper and Frank Leslie were running campaigns to solicit drawings from ordinary people who witnessed any newsworthy events in the aftermath of the war: homecomings, reconstruction, and of course incidents of ongoing strife with the Indian wars. Leslie specifically requested drawings from soldiers, offering a yearlong free subscription to anyone who submitted an image.[21] This was a sign that the newspapers relied on ordinary citizens for depictions of the war.

Von Luettwitz had a particular interest in representing the physical impact of the Indian wars: a first lieutenant in the 3rd Cavalry, commanded by General George Crook, he participated in the Battle of Slim Buttes (September 9–10, 1876) during the Great Sioux War of 1876–1877. The raid by U.S. soldiers aimed to steal food from the Sioux.[22] The U.S. troops had been struck by extreme bouts of thirst and starvation. As fellow soldier Charles King recounted, the soldiers were limited to "scanty pools among the rocks in the stream-beds," ultimately resorting to eating their own horses and mules in order to survive.[23] Von Luettwitz does not portray how the battle was interpreted from the perspective of the Lakota and Cheyenne, whose testimony on the Battle of Slim Buttes recorded by an unnamed adjutant general described the battle as a massacre of unsuspecting Native-American families.[24] What he does portray is the degree to which the battle was costly for the artist-soldier: doctors had to amputate his leg after a stray bullet caught him in the knee.[25]

In addition to the physical turmoil of the campaign, the Battle of Slim Buttes was indicative of the problematic relationship between the state and its soldiers. Crook was ordered to secure the northern plains to make way for railways spreading across the nation. But, he was quickly losing the support of his troops, who resented that he looked after the well-being of certain "mule-packers and civilians" (civilians sanctioned by the U.S. government to settle the land) attached to the campaign rather than that of the soldiers.[26] In *General Crook's Campaign: Two of Our Doctors* (plate 120), which addresses both his own predicament and that of his fellow combatants, von Luettwitz takes the authorities to task for neglecting payment to the medical personnel who could aid the wounded in battle. The image portrays an obese doctor wearing an official U.S. Army uniform handing a syringe to a strikingly thin doctor, who carries a medical bag with the words Pain Killer written

on it. Von Luettwitz explains on the back: "This picture shows the bodily difference between a full surgeon, [and] a contract doctor. I hope that our lawmakers will provide, that our poor contract doctors don't get still skinnier. Look on the contrast, and your heart will melt." The image emphasizes a tragic-comic element in the treatment—or lack thereof—for the soldiers. The depiction is cartoonish, exaggerating the physiques of both doctors while at the same time revealing the paltry medical service available on the battlefield. The aesthetic mirrors this theme, effectively engaging the viewer with humor while asking the same viewer to pause and consider the implications of the neglect.

Like Lovie and Mullen, von Luettwitz narrates rather than documents the soldiers' physical experience, focusing particularly on the crude nature of medical treatment. Unlike Lovie or Mullen, von Luettwitz was also a subject of the experience he was depicting—the crude medical treatment. In *Crook's Campaign: Sled for Slightly Wounded Men* (plate 119), von Luettwitz depicts a wounded man being transported by a *travois* (a platform with poles attached to each side and harnessed to a horse or mule).[27] The device, normally used by the Northern Plains Indians to transport heavy loads, was adopted by the 3rd Calvary as an ambulance to transport the wounded. If we compare the drawing to a photograph of the same theme, the drawing appears clearly to narrate the soldier's vulnerability with his juxtaposition to a weary mule.[28] The drawing represents a subjective portrayal more than it documents the event. The fact that von Luettwitz himself endured a similar experience testifies to the extent to which the drawing was a reflection of his own criticisms towards the institutional structures that could provide treatment for bodies injured in war. Indeed, he sarcastically explains that it is more accurate to call the *travois* a bumper because it "bumps continually & therefore keeps the inmate comfortable and wide awake."

Instead of depicting the war in a glorified manner through national narratives of reunion, the drawings by these Special Artists expose how the soldiers and Special Artists sought to challenge institutional authority, whether that be the Federal state or its related organizations dealing with the medical care provided to soldiers in the war zone. In enduring the challenges of war reporting, the Special Artists ultimately represented scenes that turn of the century illustrated histories ignored. More importantly, the drawings provide seeds for a more complex narrative of the war and its aftermath, allowing scholars and students access to a living history.

## ENDNOTES

1 Walt Whitman, *Complete Poetry and Collected Prose* (New York, N.Y.: Literary Classics of the United States, 1982), 778.

2 Several illustrated histories were published during and after the war; representative titles include John S.C. Abbott, *The History of the Civil War in America* (New York, N.Y.: Bill, 1863–1866); Alfred H. Guernsey and Henry Mills Alden, *Harper's Pictorial History of the Civil War* (New York, N.Y.: Fairfax Press, 1977); Robert Underwood Johnson, Clarence Clough Buel, and Century Company, *Battles and Leaders of the Civil War* (New York, N.Y.: Century Co, 1887–1888); Benson John Lossing and William Barritt, *Pictorial History of the Civil War in the United States of America* (Philadelphia, Pa.: Childs, 1866–1868); E.G. Squier and Frank Leslie, *Frank Leslie's Pictorial History of the American Civil War* (New York, N.Y.: Leslie, 1861–1862); and Orville J. Victor, *The History, Civil, Political and Military, of the Southern Rebellion, from its Incipient Stages to its Close* (New York, N.Y.: Torrey, 1861).

3 David Blight writes that we have yet to contend with many problems left unresolved by the war among which are the role of the citizen in relation to the Federal state and the inclusion of African Americans in civil society. David W. Blight, *Beyond the Battlefield: Race, Memory and the American Civil War* (Amherst: University of Massachusetts Press, 2002), 124.

4 Carlo Ginzburg, "Microhistory: Two or Three Things that I Know about It," trans. John and Anne C. Tedeschi, *Critical Inquiry* 20, no. 1 (1993): 11.

5 Francis H. Schell captures one such microhistory (not discussed in this essay) about contraband (former slaves who had either escaped or were brought within Union lines) soldiers. These soldiers were theoretically free but still considered to be property of their Southern owners. Schell represents their contribution to the war effort in *One Thousand Contrabands Building a Levee on the Mississippi River* (plate 101).

6 George M. Fredrickson, *The Inner Civil War: Northern Intellectuals and the Crisis of the Union* (Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 1993), 79.

7 The Battle of Shiloh was neither a Union nor a Confederate victory, although both armies claimed that they were the victors. It is more accurate to discuss the battle as one in which the Confederacy lost substantial ground in mid and western Tennessee after having gained early successes in the battle. The Union, likewise, understated the early losses of the battle and claimed the acquired territory as a sign of inevitable victory. Both sides ultimately sustained heavy loss of life.

8 Mitchell P. Roth and James Stuart Olson, *Historical Dictionary of War Journalism* (Westport, Conn.: Greenwood Press, 1997), 186.

9 Ibid., 186.

10 Herman Melville, *Battle-Pieces and Aspects of the War* (New York, N.Y.: Da Capo, 1995), 63.

11 *Frank Leslie's Illustrated Newspaper*, May 24, 1862.

12 *Frank Leslie's Illustrated Newspaper*, "Surgeon's Letter, Written on April 18th," May 17, 1862.

13 *Crathur*, or *craythur*, is an Irish term for whiskey.

14 Lovie rarely submitted finished drawings to publishers; instead, he submitted what may be called templates from which engravers were to fill in details in their engraved versions of the drawings. As a consequence, Lovie's drawings regularly arrived at *Leslie's* several days before those by his fellow Special Artists and his competitors at *Harper's Magazine*.

15 Andrew Seth Coopersmith, *Fighting Words: An Illustrated History of Newspaper Accounts of the Civil War* (New York, N.Y.: New Press, 2004).

16 Stephen Crane and Henry Binder, *The Red Badge of Courage: An Episode of the American Civil War*, vol. 2, *University of Virginia Edition of the Works of Stephen Crane* (Charlottesville: University of Virginia Press, 1975).

17 *Frank Leslie's Illustrated Newspaper*, September 3, 1864.

18 Paul L. Hedren, *Fort Laramie and the Great Sioux War* (Norman: University of Oklahoma, 1998), 4. The Great Sioux War of 1876–1877 is an important, yet largely forgotten, episode in American history. It established terms by which Caucasians were to displace Native Americans in the northern plains of Montana, Wyoming, North Dakota, and South Dakota. The war was a culmination of entrenched warfare that was also carried out during the Civil War. The result of the war, the Fort Laramie Treaty, invoked again the vexed relationship between the United States and its citizens that had prevailed throughout the Civil War. It imposed limits on Native-American mobility to reservations, which were ironically established so that no one could pass through or occupy that land except for agents of the U.S. government.

19 I thank Judith Bookbinder for alerting me to the so-called ledger drawings of the Plains Indians to whom von Luettwitz owes a great debt.

20 Charles M. Robinson, *General Crook and the Western Frontier* (Norman: University of Oklahoma Press, 2001), 196. For more information about von Luettwitz's career in the army, see U.S. Adjutant-General's Office, *Army Register* (Washington D.C., 1882), 216. The presence of von Luettwitz in the army signifies the ethnic diversity of the volunteer forces. Prussian by birth, he was one of many immigrants who joined the American military and contributed to what one officer considered to be the army's racial diversity. The regiments, he wrote, were composed of African Americans as well as an "array of nationalities ... [that] balance one another ... [:]the phlegmatic Teuton and the fiery Celt, mercurial Gaul and stolid Anglo-Saxon." Charles King, *Campaigning With Crook, and Stories of Army Life* (Ann Arbor, Mich.: University Microfilms, 1966), 8.

21 William Fletcher Thompson, *The Image of War: The Pictorial Reporting of the American Civil War* (New York, N.Y.: Yoseloff, 1960), 30.

22 The Battle of Slim Buttes took place in the Dakota Territory in present day Reva, South Dakota. In an effort to secure food, a detachment from Crook's army led by Captain Anson Mills discovered, looted, and destroyed a Sioux village.

23 King, 11.

24 Jerome A. Greene, *Lakota and Cheyenne: Indian Views of the Great Sioux War, 1876–1877* (Norman: University of Oklahoma Press, 1994) 85–92.

25 King, 125.

26 Robinson, 195.

27 Hedren, 201, 276n20. According to Hedren's research of army medical records, the drawing probably dates to late September or early November 1876, when von Luettwitz was transported to a station near Slim Buttes for medical treatment.

28 Stanley J. Morrow, "Travois With Wounded Man, From Battle of Slim Buttes Photographed and Published by S. J. Morrow, Yankton D. T," in *Views of General Crook's Expedition and the Black Hills* (n.p.: one copy in the Western Americana Collection, Beinecke Rare Book and Manuscript Library, Yale University, 1876).

# AUTHENTICITY, THE MASTER AUTHOR, AND THE MISSING HAND

## DRAWINGS BY THE CIVIL WAR SPECIAL ARTISTS IN *FRANK LESLIE'S ILLUSTRATED NEWSPAPER*

Natasha Seaman

**On January 26, 1861, approximately fifteen days into the Civil War, the front page of *Frank Leslie's Illustrated Newspaper* (*Leslie's*) bore the following notice:**

> No other representative artist from the North is or has been in Charleston during this stirring time, so the public will bear in mind that FRANK LESLIE'S ILLUSTRATED NEWSPAPER will contain the only authentic illustrations of the Secession Movement and the important and thrilling events which arise out of it. *All pictures, therefore, in other papers, pretending to illustrate events transpiring in Charleston, are necessarily, and must be pronounced BOGUS.* We make this statement unwillingly, but we think it right to claim whatever merit or advantage may be derived as the fruits of our enterprise ...[1] (emphasis original)

This manifesto spells out the central claim of *Leslie's* about its journalistic coverage of the Civil War: the authenticity of its illustrations is guaranteed by their creation by eyewitnesses, called Special Artists, who, far from being sideline observers, worked at the very center of the conflict. How *Leslie's* and its artists effected this authenticity in the newspaper and in the objects that moved between them—the drawings that provided the data for the illustrations—is the subject of this essay.

As the passage above makes clear, these illustrations of battles and campaigns—appearing in *Leslie's* as full- and double-page illustrations with lengthy captions—purport to present eyewitness truth. To our photographic- and video-era sensibilities, the means of obtaining this truth seems indirect. In 1861, photography was incapable of capturing movement and could depict only the aftermath of an action, such as the dead lying on a battlefield.[2] Beyond this limitation, there was no means to reproduce photographs for publication except by the same method as the drawings—by being traced onto a woodblock for engraving. Drawings were, therefore, the only means available to record a battle visually while it was happening. The very nature of drawings and the way they record objective reality, of course, makes this impossible; drawings of movement—no matter how quickly and schematically they are made—must be rendered over a period of time vastly longer than that in which the action takes place. The irony of a drawn illustration is that the time spent rendering the scene may be metered by the degree of its finish: the greater the finish and the more complete—and, therefore, "real"—the image is, the further it is from the ocular moment that generated it. It was the necessary task of *Leslie's* to overcome this inherent contradiction.

Toward understanding the difference between the news culture then and now, it is important to note that *Leslie's* selected the term "authenticity" and not "accuracy" to describe the degree of correspondence between an actual event and the printed image(s) of it.[3] Accuracy, "exact conformity to truth," as an American dictionary put it in 1895, was laden with notions of precision; it was much more rigorous than authenticity, which the dictionary defined as "entitled to acceptance as authoritative, genuine, true, or correct."[4] As I

will show, this authenticity, unlike accuracy, is created, not captured. *Leslie's* accomplished this in two ways—through the elevation of eyewitness authorship in which the experience of the eye was privileged over the recording power of the hand and through the creation of a "master-author function" that belonged to the newspaper and the Special Artists.

## MAKING *LESLIE'S*

Frank Leslie, an Englishman with experience working for the *Illustrated London News* and pictorial papers in Boston, started *Leslie's* in New York City in 1855. *Leslie's* cast itself as the perfect combination of the two types of currently available media: newspapers, which published only maps and written articles, and pictorials, which published only pictures. An unsigned article entitled "How Illustrated Newspapers are Made," published in *Leslie's* in 1856, describes its special characteristics: "an illustrated newspaper not only furnishes its weekly gallery of art, but gives current news, thus bringing the genius of the pencil and the pen promptly to illustrate the recorded event."[5] The contents included not only images illustrative of articles but also ones that stood alone with a caption as a single unit of news. At first, *Leslie's* specialized in sensationalistic and gruesome pictures of crime scenes,[6] but it later gained a reputation for vigorous investigative reporting through its coverage of the sale of tainted milk in New York City in the late 1850s.[7]

Leslie's competitive edge came from his particular technique of rendering reporters' drawings into newspaper illustrations. "How Illustrated Newspapers are Made" details the process.[8] Like other illustrated newspapers, *Leslie's* converted drawings into printed images through wood engravings. To create wood engravings, artists carve an image into the crosscut of a piece of Turkish boxwood. (Turkish boxwood is very hard, enabling engravers to incise very fine lines in it, and the crosscut of the wood leaves no visible grain in the print, unlike in traditional woodcuts.) Turkish boxwood grows very slowly and typical blocks are only a few inches square. To make a large block, several smaller blocks are bolted together. Leslie's innovation was to turn this inconvenience into an advantage by taking apart the wood engraving block after the initial design was traced upon it and giving the separate pieces—sometimes as many as sixteen—to different engravers to carve. Once the carving was completed, it was refastened and cast in metal for printing. This process sped up the time it took for a drawing to be converted into an engraving from several weeks to as little as one, as the newspaper itself asserted, giving *Leslie's* a significant advantage over its competitors.[9]

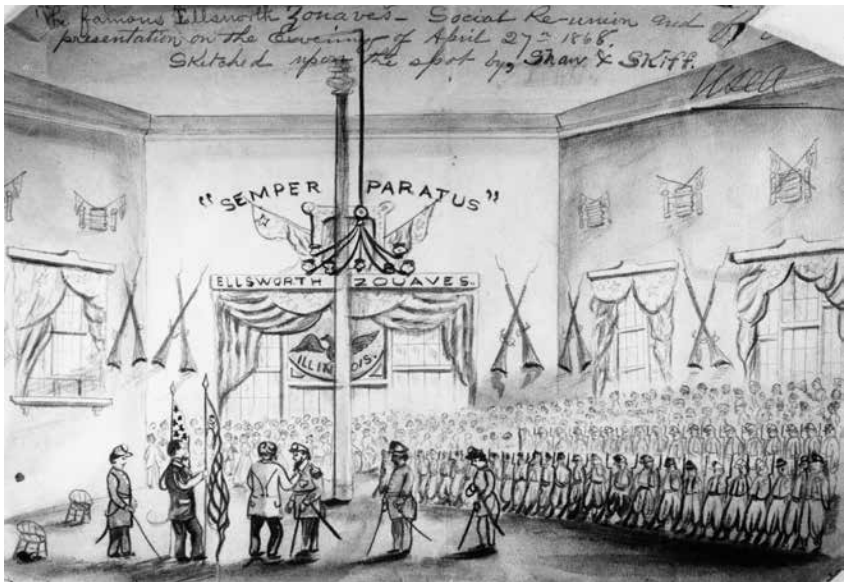



Fig. 1. William V. Shaw and Frank D. Skiff, *The Famous Ellsworth Zouaves*, April 27, 1868. Graphite on paper, 13.8 x 10.5 in. (35.1 x 26.7 cm). PCW–S&S–IL–4–27–68

The engravings *Leslie's* published were derived from photographs and drawings by staff artists. Amateur artists also sent in their drawings with the hope of publication, in which case they would receive a small sum.[10] Several examples of drawings by amateurs, such as *The Famous Ellsworth Zouaves* (fig. 1) by "Shaw and Skiff" (obviously untrained artists who do not appear again in the collection) may be found in the Becker Collection. The newspaper kept all submitted drawings—professional or amateur—in its archives for publication at a later date should the scene become newsworthy.[11] In some cases, these archived drawings were pressed into service to create composite images of events that could not be covered.[12] In these instances, the newspaper always noted in the image's caption that it was not taken from a eyewitness drawing, which augmented the veracity of those images that were.[13] Indeed, a quick glance over the pages of *Leslie's* reveals its general habit of noting the precise sources from which the engravings were made, be they photographs or drawings by Special Artists or amateurs.

## MAKING TRUTH IN *LESLIE'S*

This care around attribution reflects a key component of an image's authenticity—its authorship. At *Leslie's*, authorship was dependent upon the notion of eyewitness—a concept that became an important one during the newspaper's coverage of the tainted milk scandal. As Andrea Pearson notes, *Leslie's* promoted its coverage by establishing the primary artist of that story, Arthur Berghaus, as a personality and player within the drama of exposing those who would pass off tainted milk to the children of New York City.[14] Articles in *Leslie's* highlight his personal valor in exposing wrongdoers, and published engravings record his presence at the scene of the investigations.[15] No bystander, Berghaus literally made the news; his documented presence in engravings, such as *Scene at the Offal Dock* (fig. 2), certified the facts of his reportage.

What the earnest naturalism of these illustrations makes one forget is the impossibility of including oneself in a truly eyewitness image; furthermore, none of these images have what may be called "mirror awareness," that is, the artist's acknowledgment that he is depicting himself. He depicts himself as another actor in the scene: the illustration is effectively a third person self-portrait. In these images, the eyewitness function of the artist is separated from the artist's body. The effect, upon publication as an engraving, is that the newspaper interposes between the witnessing eye and the acting body: the artist in the image seems to be generated from beyond, elevating the newspaper to the status of the image's master author.

In addition, even though the emphasis is on the viewing eye and experiencing body of the artists as eyewitnesses, their *hand* is missing. Despite the many artists who supplied images for the newspaper, *Leslie's* made the engravings in a uniform style. In contrast to the illustrations provided in *Leslie's* main competitor, *Harper's Weekly*, where the artists' names sometimes appear as a signature in the image, *Leslie's* ascribed authorship not in the block but rather in the captions, and they maintain a rigid line quality emphasized by a minimum of contour lines and a maximum of minute parallel hatching. This painstaking style served on one level as a means of validating the images through the obvious amount of labor—and, therefore, capital—used to produce them;[16] never does one line suffice where more may be deployed. More than this, the process and style of *Leslie's* served to suppress the individual hand of the artist (including the Special Artist, the artist(s) who drew the image on the block, and the engravers) at every step of the image's production and reduce the image to only the essential visual data transferable to the woodblock. Frank Leslie's innovation of breaking the woodblock into numerous pieces further fractured the authorship, mechanizing the image by detaching the single author from the single work.

Fig. 2. *Scene at the Offal Dock.* Engraving, *Frank Leslie's Illustrated Newspaper*, May 22, 1858, after a drawing by Arthur Berghaus.

## THE ARTIST'S PART

As such, the Special Artist is best described as an agent of the newspaper's master-author function. That Leslie gave his artists pads of paper with a legend stamped in the lower left, saying "an actual sketch, made on the spot by one of the Special Artists of *Leslie's*. Mr. Leslie holds the copyright and reserves the exclusive rights of publication," further illustrates this.[17] This function extended to the Special Artists' rendering of events: just as the published engravings bore a uniform style, so too did the artists' drawings. Despite the rich assortment of drawings in the Becker Collection, it is relatively difficult to differentiate the staff artists from one another. Their individual hands are best identified by where they worked (one artist, for instance, spent the entire war in North Carolina, South Carolina, and Geor-

gia) and through their handwriting, which is more distinctive than their drawn mark.

One reason for this uniformity came from the shared difficulty of and common solutions for depicting battle scenes. Theodore Davis, who was a Special Artist for *Harper's Weekly,* notes the following in an article he wrote long after the war for the *St. Nicholas Magazine*:

> Most [people] seem to have an idea that all battlefields have some elevated spot upon which the general is located, and that from this spot the commander can see his troops, direct all their maneuvers and courteously furnish special artists an opportunity of sketching the scene. This would of course be convenient, but it very seldom happens to be the case.[18]

For Davis and battlefield artists, such as Joseph Becker [see, for instance, *Fight at Reams Station during the Siege of Petersburg* (plate 4)], quick, unadorned drawings augmented with written notes were the most effective way of capturing battle scenes. Artists assimilated the no-nonsense style of *Leslie's* for its functionality and, no doubt, comprehensibility to the artists who would interpret their compositions onto woodblocks. Using this style also likely enhanced the artists' own legitimacy as reporters and thus the likelihood of publication—a necessity when artists were paid by the piece published, not for their time.[19] Their drawings also competed with the twenty to forty other drawings *Leslie's* claimed to have received daily.[20]

Artists frequently accompanied their artworks with written accounts about the events depicted and the artists' privileged position in viewing them.[21] These may be read as a further push by the artists to have their drawing published. Henri Lovie, for instance, wrote in a letter, "[I have] so informed myself of [the army's] movements, so as to be in the *right* place at the *right* time....I have made but one sketch from a distance ... all the rest were made on the spot and are historically reliable."[22] *Leslie's* frequently published these letters with the images, as it did with this one, so their authenticating function was shared with the newspaper. Beyond being assertions of the artists' physical presence at a given scene, these written testimonies tended to highlight, above all, the Special Artists' way of life, particularly the discomforts they suffered and the similarity of these discomforts to those experienced by the soldiers. This theme is repeated regularly throughout the war. The practice of depicting the artist at the scene started during the tainted milk scandal continued in *Leslie's* throughout its coverage of the Civil War.[23] Henri Lovie's series on the life of the Special Artist, which includes *Adventures of a Special Artist, Part I: The Landing* (plate 79), contains third-person self-portraits. It thus seems that it was necessary that the eyewitness also bear *bodily* witness to the realities of the war as a way of both emphasizing the individual identity of the artist and authenticating his experience by comparing it to that of the soldiers.

The camp scene, another genre of war illustration published by *Leslie's*, served a similar purpose. Joseph Becker's drawing *An Army Meat Market* (plate 16), for instance, represents a different sort of visual document of war. More detailed and anecdotal, drawings of camp scenes allowed artists to exert more conventional pictorial skills. In this way, they resemble the genre paintings of American life popular before and after the war. The drawings of camp scenes, however, make a separate testament about the experience of the Special Artists as eyewitnesses. The more finished drawings, however, measure the time the Special Artists spent among the soldiers, recording not only the soldiers' valor but also the quasi-domestic moments they experienced between the battles. Like the artists' letters, these images serve to authenticate the artists' experience as members of the camp to both the newspaper and its readers.

Such scenes also must have been satisfying to the readers at the time: many of them were soldiers or their families. This points to the final participant in the creation of authenticity at *Leslie's*—its readers. In the passage cited above, Theodore Davis notes that many readers assumed that his images were taken from some ideal viewing point, when in fact these views were constructed by a team of artists and technicians who worked from his collage of memoranda taken during the action. By their nature, battle scenes are a generalization and compression of events. In other words, it is only the artist as eyewitness and the newspaper as master author that stand between the reader and the abyss of incomprehensible chaos of war. Authenticity is thus a mutual construction. In a testimonial published by *Leslie's*, a reader argues the following:

> Those who suppose the *Illustrated Newspaper* to be a mere pictorial should at once be undeceived. No paper in the country contains so complete an epitome of the news—so condensed as to give everything of importance, stripped of its

dross....It contains nothing but pure gold—all the superfluous and useless matter being sifted out.[24]

To us, the images in *Leslie's* seem essentially incomplete—and they certainly have failed to function in modern retellings of the Civil War[25]—yet the contemporary reader celebrated the very nature of the illustration as a composite and condensed image.

The authenticity in these images was constructed on a variety of levels at different points along the production line. In the newspaper, it was produced through the publication of readers' testimonials and the artists' letters and through the creation of a master-author newspaper style that subsumed all other authorial marks and transformed the artists into observers of their own scenes. The artists relied on their assertions of their presence at a scene, both verbally through letters and visually through the informational rendering of battles and detailed depictions of camp life. The Special Artist's drawing is both a product of this eyewitness experience and its affidavit. Vital on all of these levels is the awareness of the artists' eye and bodily witnessing of events even when their individual hand was suppressed. Through viewing these images in the context of the legitimating techniques of the newspaper and the technology of the era, we can reclaim some of their original force.



## ENDNOTES

1 *Frank Leslie's Illustrated Newspaper*, "Notice to Our Readers. Our Special Artist in Charleston," January 26, 1861, 145 (hereafter referred to as *Leslie's*).

2 An example is Timothy H. O'Sullivan, *Harvest of Death*, Gettysburg, Pennsylvania, July 4, 1863. Battlefield photographs were consumed, typically, as albums or in exhibitions. See Joshua Brown, *Beyond the Lines: Pictorial Reporting, Everyday Life, and the Crisis of Gilded-Age America* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2002), 49, 46n.

3 Ibid., 55.

4 *The Century Dictionary*, "The Century Dictionary: Find Entry," Global Languages Resource, Inc., http://global-language.com/CENTURY/ (accessed March 6, 2009).

5 The author was probably Leslie himself. *Leslie's*, "How Illustrated Newspapers are Made," August 2, 1856.

6 Frank Luther Mott, *A History of American Magazines: 1850–1865* (Cambridge, Mass.: Belknap Press of Harvard University Press, 1957), 458.

7 Andrea G. Pearson, "*Frank Leslie's Illustrated Newspaper* and *Harper's Weekly*: Innovation and Imitation in Nineteenth-Century American Pictorial Reporting," *Journal of Popular Culture* 23, no. 4 (spring 1990): 86.

8 "How Illustrated Newspapers are Made."

9 For more detail on the production process, see Brown, 34–40.

10 William P. Campbell, "The 'Special Artist' Reports the Civil War" in *The Civil War: A Centennial Exhibition of Eyewitness Drawings* (Washington, D.C.: National Gallery of Art, 1961), 93.

11 Ibid., 53.

12 Ibid., 72.

13 Ibid., 87.

14 Pearson, 86.

15 See for instance, *Leslie's*, "Scene at the Offal Dock," May 22, 1858.

16 "How Illustrated Newspapers are Made" makes much of the expense of the process of publishing illustrations. Beyond these attestations, the degree of detail and complete working of the engraved surface visually makes the same point. For more on equations of value and a worked surface in art, see Charles Rosen and Henri Zerner, "The Ideology of the Worked Surface," *Romanticism and Realism: The Mythology of Nineteenth-Century Art* (New York, N.Y.: Norton, 1984), 205–232.

17 Brown, 55.

18 Theodore R. Davis, "How a Battle is Sketched," *St. Nicholas Magazine*, July 1889, 661. Influenced by *Leslie's*, *Harper's Magazine* began to publish more journalistic images as the war went on. For more on the relationship between the two papers and how *Harper's Magazine* adopted some of *Leslie's* approach to news images, see Pearson.

19 Campbell, 53.

20 *Leslie's*, "Our Artists in the Field. Unrivalled Corps," June 1, 1861, 1.

21 See, for instance Lorenzo Crounse, "The Army Correspondent," *Harper's New Monthly Magazine*, October 1863, 627–633; *Leslie's*, December 7, 1861, 35; Joseph Becker, "An Artist's Interesting Recollections of *Leslie's Weekly*," *Leslie's*, December 14, 1905, 570; and *Harper's Weekly*, "Our Artists During the War," June 3, 1865, 339.

22 *Leslie's*, December 7, 1861, 35 (italics are original).

23 Pearson, 90, appendix A.

24 *Leslie's*, November 6, 1861, 403.

25 Images published in *Leslie's* were not used, for instance, in Ken Burns' popular series on the Civil War. Brown has also commented on this failure of these images to speak to our generation—see, Brown, 2.

# JOSEPH BECKER VISITS THE SHAKERS

Robert P. Emlen

**Some time during the early 1870s Joseph Becker visited the Shaker village at Mount Lebanon, New York, where he drew scenes of daily life in this communal religious society.** In 1873, *Frank Leslie's Illustrated Newspaper* (*Leslie's*) reproduced fourteen of his Shaker drawings as wood engravings to illustrate four articles it published about the Shakers that year.[1] Becker's keen eye for both the peculiarities of Shaker life and the distinctive details of the interiors of Shaker buildings made these illustrations a popular success: they were reprinted five times during the following twelve years—both domestically, in other periodicals published by Leslie, and internationally, in illustrated newspapers published in Madrid and Copenhagen.[2]

During the twentieth century, historians of Shaker culture discovered the Shaker prints published in *Leslie's*. Beginning in 1940 with Edward Deming Andrews's book *The Gift to be Simple*, the engraved versions of Becker's drawings were reproduced in a stream of publications on a variety of topics about the Shakers: architecture, autobiography, crafts, dress, furniture, spiritual life, and visitors' accounts. Because the engravings are the earliest published images to depict daily life in the Shakers' private living quarters, they have become a major historical resource for present-day students of Shaker culture. This essay examines the context in which Joseph Becker made his Shaker drawings and how they were reproduced in the nineteenth-century American illustrated press.

Joseph Becker was not the first artist to visit the Shaker community at Mount Lebanon. During the forty years preceding his visit, a procession of artists came to sketch, paint, and draw this society of pacifist, celibate communards. The American reading public first encountered visual images of Shaker life around 1830 through published illustrations, which depict the Shakers' practice of worshiping by dancing ecstatically in their meeting-house at Mount Lebanon.[3] These prints quickly became commercial successes, inspiring imitators to produce their own versions of the scene. The Shakers' distinctive dress and intense body movements made it easy for outsiders to ridicule them, especially given the way these first visual representations portrayed them as agitated and tormented souls.

The popularity of these decorative prints and magazine illustrations widened public interest in the Shakers. The pictorial press responded with a second generation of images, which depicted views of Shaker villages and additional vignettes of Shaker worship. While the landscape views paid tribute to the virtues of rural life, a number of the genre scenes exaggerated the public image of individual Shakers, portraying them as deluded fanatics or societal misfits. During the 1840s, lurid prints appeared showing wild-eyed believers engaged in frenzied religious exercises.[4]

As the nineteenth century progressed, however, the tone of these visual depictions became more positive. Images in the popular press increasingly tended to depict the Shakers as good neighbors and solid—albeit unconventional—citizens. This new interpretation reflected a more mature phase of

the Shaker experience during which they were several generations removed from the ecstatic visions and alarming behavior of their founders. It also reflected the Shakers' newfound awareness of the power of visual representation, which they learned to use to their advantage in presenting themselves in a favorable light to outsiders. Good publicity was crucial for the Shakers, who, because they were celibate, depended exclusively on converts to populate their religious communities.

Visits by outsiders to the cloistered world of Shaker communities were carefully regulated. Visitors presented themselves at the community trustees' office, which served as the portal through which the Shakers interacted with the outside world. Anyone who wished to tour the village was assigned a guide, who led the visitor through such public buildings as barns, the schoolhouse, or the meetinghouse. Rarely did the Shakers give an outsider access to workshops or the residential buildings they called "dwellings," the most private of Shaker spaces. Sometimes the Shakers did not invite visitors into any part of their community. In 1842, Charles Dickens wrote that he was turned away when he presented himself at the Trustees' Office at Mount Lebanon during a time of intense religious fervor.

By the 1850s, the Mount Lebanon Shakers actively encouraged visits from the public. They did not merely allow outsiders to experience public worship as had been the custom since the earliest years of the faith but also wanted to show them that Shaker communities offered a desirable domestic life as well. Mount Lebanon was the largest of all eighteen Shaker communities, and it served as home to the central ministry, which governed all eighteen societies the Shakers established from Maine to Kentucky. Its novitiate order, housed in a separate and self-contained cluster of buildings called the "North Family," actively proselytized for new converts. Its location a day's train ride from New York City made it a convenient destination for city folk interested in seeing Shaker life. Between 1856 and 1872, three artists whose drawings would appear in New York's pictorial magazines and newspapers over the next seventeen years visited the village: Benson John Lossing (1856), Arthur Boyd Houghton (1869), and Joseph Becker (1872).[5]

Of the numerous drawings Becker made for the fourteen engravings that were published in *Leslie's* in 1873, only four are extant. Each is marked prominently with the word "used." This suggests that the editors at *Leslie's* may have been distinguishing this group of drawings from some other group of Becker's Shaker drawings that were not being used. Even though only four are known to survive, they provide enough consistent information

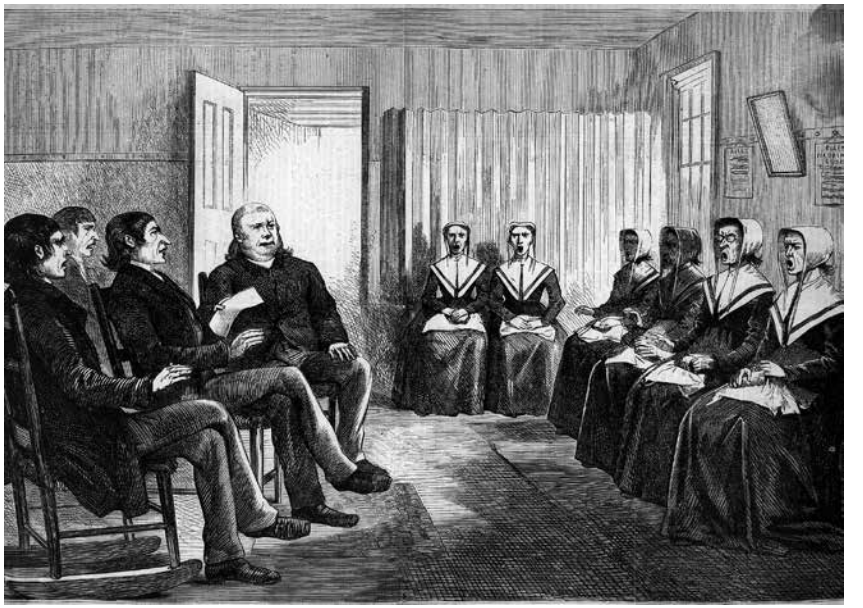


Fig. 1. *The Singing Meeting.* Engraving, *Frank Leslie's Illustrated Newspaper,* January 11, 1873, after a drawing by Joseph Becker.

to reveal Becker's awareness of his surroundings and his sensitivity to his subjects—a facet of his work not always evident in the engraved versions of his drawings.

*Leslie's* published the first of the engravings on January 11, 1873.[6] Among them was *The Singing Meeting* (fig.1), which became one of *Leslie's* best-known Shaker views. The scene depicts ten Shaker brothers and sisters singing songs during an evening social meeting—a time during which members of the Shaker family gathered to sing and converse after finishing the day's work. In the celibate world of a Shaker community, opportunities for contact with the opposite sex were controlled carefully. Shakers tried to balance their need to nurture the affinity of kindred spirits among the members of both sexes with the awareness that their physical proximity to each other could lead to undue familiarity. The Shakers tried to achieve this balance through these occasions, which they called "union meetings." There was a list of approved topics for conversation and an explicit understanding that brothers and sisters were to meet publicly in groups, not privately in pairs.

The engraved version of Becker's drawing demonstrates that he recognized that the arrangement of this meeting reflected the Shakers' custom of segregating the sexes: the brethren and sisters sit on opposite sides of the

room, and in the background, the door to the room is open for propriety's sake. The artist also took note of the Shakers' simple, old-fashioned ladder-back rocking chairs.[7] The walls are plain, except for a row of pegboard circling the room. The Shakers hung small household furnishings from these pegs; the practice reflects their quest for order and neatness. On the wall on the right side of the composition, Becker depicts a framed looking glass and next to it a framed copy of the broadside *Rules for Doing Good*, which the Shakers had adapted from John Wesley's writings.[8] Becker depicts the Shakers in the motion of keeping time by tapping their right hands on their thighs in unison. Particularly noticeable in this wood engraving are the faces of the Shaker sisters; their mouths are agape as they sing earnestly—the very picture of repressed rectitude so derisively portrayed in images of the dancing Shakers from the 1830s and 1840s.

Becker's version, *Singing Meeting* (plate 50), puts the representation of those humorless spinsters in a whole new light: Translating a sketchbook drawing into a finished pencil-and-chalk work inevitably reduces the spontaneity of first impressions. Transferring the finished drawing to a wood engraving block reduces the nuances of shading to the stiff lines characteristic of engravings. Subsequent artistic interpretation and editorial outlook further affects the image. Whether by the inspiration of the engravers at *Leslie's* or by the conscious intervention of its editors, several differences exist between the drawing and the engraving: The engraver omitted the head of a sister wearing a white bonnet, which Becker included in the background immediately in front of the open door. Perhaps an editor thought that this female figure interfered with Becker's desire to convey the physical separation of the sexes that existed in the Shaker community. The engraver also reduced the size of the woven rug beneath the boots of one of the brothers to an undifferentiated area of carpeting. Perhaps he thought the rug was too prominent.

Nothing about these elements changed the tone of the picture. What did change, however, in the final version are the expressions on the faces of the Shaker sisters. Becker portrayed them sympathetically in his drawing; they are actively engaged singers no more earnest in their efforts than the brethren sitting opposite them. The comparison between the two versions reveals that the engraver rendered the sisters as objects of derision. Becker depicts the Shakers the same way he did so many of the figures who inhabit his vignettes of American life. Judging from the hundreds of drawings by Becker in the Becker Collection, he drew with an intuitive eye for character and appearance and was not given to passing facile judgment on his subjects. The Shakers' unconventional behavior and beliefs made them easy targets for ridicule, and the nineteenth-century American popular press produced numerous caricatures of them as religious fanatics and borderline maniacs. If the engraved version tended toward that cheap humor, the existence of the drawing makes it clear that it was not Becker's doing.

On September 6, 1873, *Leslie's* published a second Shaker article accompanied by five more illustrations created from Becker's drawings.[9] The article "The Shakers" opened with a half-page engraving called *A Shaker Schoolroom* (fig. 2), based on Becker's drawing *Shaker Schoolroom* (plate 49). The two versions depict Shaker boys reciting their lessons in a schoolroom. The schoolhouse was always a popular stop during visits to Shaker villages, and the Shakers were particularly interested in showing visitors their schoolhouses; by 1872, the state boards of education had regulated elementary education in the United States, and the education of children living in Shaker communities had become a matter of public concern. For this reason, visitors to the schoolhouse were common.

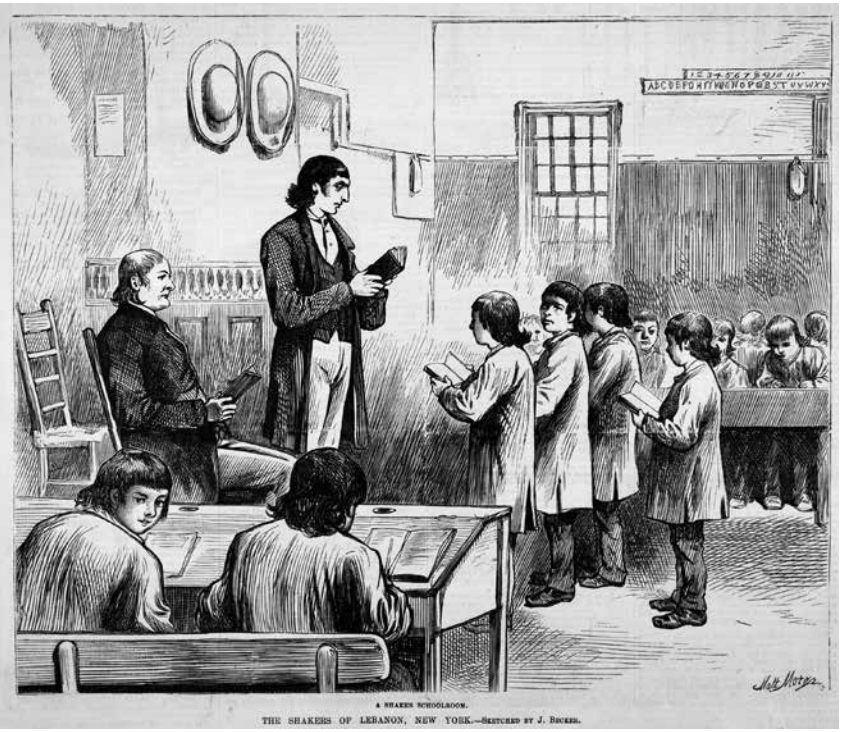



Fig. 2. *A Shaker Schoolroom*, Engraving, *Frank Leslie's Illustrated Newspaper*, September 6, 1873, after a drawing by Joseph Becker.

Since the 1780s, when they began to gather into communal living, Shakers always included children in their villages. Some of the children arrived with their parents when the latter joined the Shaker community. Others came from broken homes or were orphaned and sent by relatives or child welfare agencies to live with the Shakers. All were raised by caretakers and placed among the other children in a single-sex environment. Unlike adults, who were free to convert after trial periods as novitiates, children could legally commit to join the Shaker society only when they came of age at which point they were given the choice to sign a binding covenant or leave the community. Until that time, the Shakers educated the children in their communities and trained them in craft skills. Shakers and non-Shakers alike regarded an upbringing in a Shaker community as solid preparation for adult life.

It can be determined that Becker visited Mount Lebanon during the winter months, because his drawing of the schoolroom depicts male schoolmasters and students; although the Shakers educated both sexes, they taught boys and girls in separate sessions—boys in the winter, when they could be spared from farm chores, and girls in the summer. In this scene, four boys recite from books as they stand before the schoolmasters.[10] Their old-fashioned smock coats and distinctive haircuts mimic the styles worn by the adult Shaker brethren standing in front of them. Behind them, rows of younger boys attend to their lessons at long desks illuminated by the two windows behind them. Above the window on the right are an alphabet board and a number line—two standard tools of classroom instruction in postwar America. The fidelity with which Becker recorded these features is suggested by comparing them with the extant alphabet boards from the schoolroom in which Becker drew this image, which remained at Mount Lebanon until a private collector purchased them in 1990.[11] In the image's foreground, Becker drew three older students seated at a long desk—pencils in hand and copybooks open before them.[12] Distracted by the presence of the visiting artist, the boy in the middle glances over his shoulder at the viewer.

In the engraved version of this drawing, the engraver, Matt Morgan, changed the proportions of the image and, by reducing its width, eliminated the figure seated at the far left of the four-student desk. The most prominent change he made was to give the fidgeting student a more conspicuous role in the vignette: he hunched the student's shoulders as the latter leans toward his classmate with a conspiratorial expression on his face. With this change, Morgan adds the implicit message that even Shaker schoolboys can be mischievous.

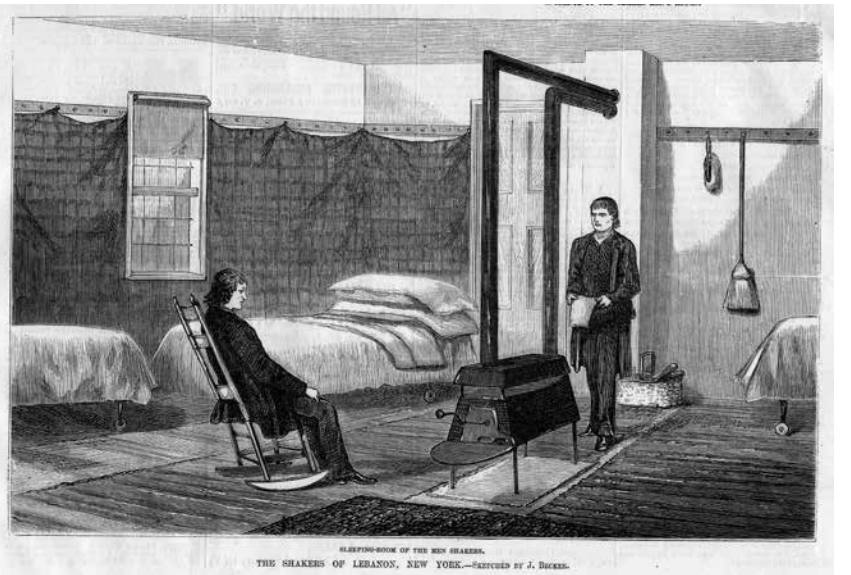



Fig. 3. *Sleeping Room of the Male Shakers.* Engraving, *Frank Leslie's Illustrated Newspaper*, September 6, 1873, after a drawing by Joseph Becker.

On the following page of this issue is the engraving *Sleeping Room of the Male Shakers* (fig. 3), based on Becker's drawing by the same name (plate 51). The Shakers invited Becker to see a bedroom in their communal dwelling house, where he drew a Shaker brother seated in a ladder-back rocking chair, warming himself in front of a wood-burning stove. Another brother stands facing him just behind the stove. A woven splint basket holding firewood is on the floor behind him. Although the Mount Lebanon Shakers had recently modernized their buildings, they had not added central heating to their dwelling houses. They had abundant supplies of firewood, and like most of their neighbors in the Taconic Mountains of eastern New York State, they heated individual rooms as needed with wood-burning stoves. As they did with so many of the objects that furnished their communities, the Shakers designed their own stoves. The specialization of labor within their large communal family allowed them to experiment with new designs, and their moral imperative to strive for perfection constantly compelled them to seek more efficient designs. By the 1870s, the Shakers had developed a parlor stove with a superheater mounted on top of the firebox. This device substantially increased the surface area available to radiate the heat from a small fire. Operating this stove successfully meant that the user had to coax a draft through two chambers, out the stovepipe, and into the chimney flue.

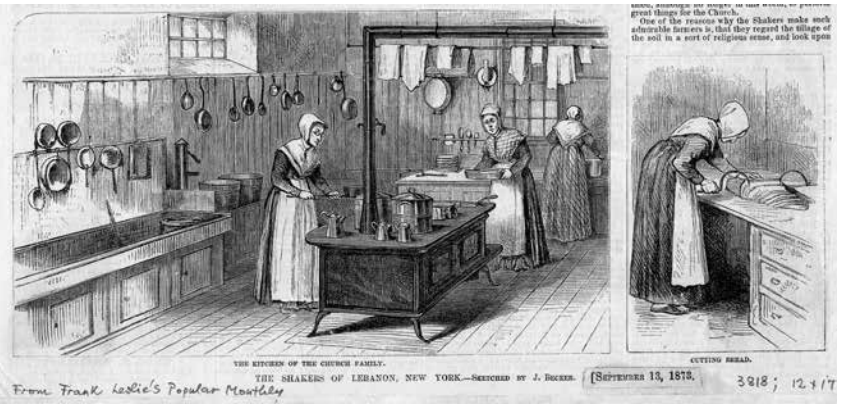
Controlling the draft through a single stovepipe was essential to making this design work. For unknown reasons, Becker drew the stove with two stovepipes—an illogical arrangement that would have diverted the concentrated flow of air needed for the carefully designed stove to draw properly. While many examples are known of Mount Lebanon Shaker superheater stoves with a single stovepipe, none are known in the form drawn by Becker.[13]

The observant artist included another detail that conveys the way the Shakers protected themselves from the winter cold; they hung quilted blankets, which they called "wall curtains," from the ubiquitous pegboards on the perimeter walls. The Shakers fitted the blankets individually around architectural features, such as windows, to help insulate a room during cold weather. Becker's drawing is the only nineteenth-century image to record wall curtains in use. The historical accuracy of this detail is confirmed by the existence of a similar wall curtain in the museum collection of the Hancock Shaker Village.[14] The engraving *Sleeping Room of the Male Shakers* is the earliest visual record of a Shaker bedroom and the only one published before commercial photographers began to photograph Shaker interiors in the 1880s.[15] Its unique value as documentary evidence of Shaker life in the 1870s is a result of the unprecedented access granted to Becker in visiting the private realms of the Mount Lebanon Shaker village.

The artist drew three beds around the perimeter of the room. One is piled with blankets and pillows. Becker's sharp eye once again caught a distinctive feature of Shaker furniture—large wooden wheels mounted at the bottom of the bedstead's legs. The casters on Shaker beds did not swivel, because the beds did not have to travel far. These wheels were designed to allow the Shakers to pull the beds straight out from the wall, so the floor beneath them could be swept and the bedding changed, then push them back into place. The three beds in this scene are a visual reminder of the communal nature of Shaker life: sleeping rooms in Shaker dwellings could accommodate as many as eight believers. By design and necessity, Shakers were rarely alone anywhere in the village; however, Becker's drawing of this scene includes only the solitary figure of the man in a rocking chair. The Shaker brother was not alone in the room; he was with Becker and, perhaps, was Becker's guide. Becker may have asked this brother to model for his drawing. With its one figure, however, the drawing gives the misleading impression that each Shaker lived solitarily. The engraver introduced another Shaker brother in his version, perhaps to correct that impression.

The discovery that the engraver added the second Shaker brother is only one of the revelations that the discovery of Becker's drawing has made possible. Because the engraver emphasized the wall curtains by making them darker in the printed version, he made the engraving's tone more somber—even the two Shaker brothers look gloomy. None of this atmosphere is apparent in the drawing.

*Leslie's* published the last of the four surviving drawings on September 13, 1873.[16] The engraving *The Kitchen of the Church Family* (fig. 4) and its antecedent drawing *Scene in the Kitchen of the Church Family* (fig. 5) are among




4. *The Kitchen of the Church Family.* Engraving, *Frank Leslie's Illustrated Newspaper*, September 13, 1873, after a drawing by Joseph Becker.

5. Joseph Becker, *Scene in the Kitchen of the Church Family,* n.d. Graphite and white gouache on toned paper, 9.5 x 6.3 in. (24.1 x 16.0 cm). SH–JB–ND–4

the least revealing of Becker's views of the Mount Lebanon Shakers;[17] other than the scale of the domestic operation, its neatness, and the distinctive clothing worn by the sisters, nothing distinguishes this image as a depiction of Shakers. In the print, a sister works over a wood-fired cookstove. In the scullery beyond her, another sister washes up in an alcove festooned with dish towels hung out to dry. A third sister carries a platter from the dish sink to the stove. Saucepans line the walls. Large wooden pails sit in the dry sink beneath the spout of the well-water pump. An oil lamp hangs next to the window to illuminate the dish sink at night. *Leslie's* reproduced this drawing as an engraving measuring a mere four inches by six and three-quarters inches—just 20 percent of the area occupied by the full-page engravings of Shakers worshiping or singing. Clearly, the images portraying more compelling facets of Shaker life were rewarded with larger-scale engravings.

The Shakers were no doubt proud of their spacious and well-appointed kitchen, which had to produce meals for fifty to sixty family members at any given sitting.[18] This scene of cleanliness and efficiency is one more example of how these images present the advantages of domestic life offered at Mount Lebanon. The depiction of a kitchen scene made an unremarkable impression compared to that garnered by some others that Becker drew, but the Shakers probably showed the room to the visiting artist in order to publicize their relatively high standard of living.

As it turned out, Joseph Becker's visit to Mount Lebanon marked the end of an era: his intimate drawings of the community were the last images of Shaker domestic life reproduced as wood engravings in popular illustrated periodicals.[19] Technology was changing the world of periodical illustration. By the time Becker visited Mount Lebanon, commercial photographers had already begun to produce stereopticon views of the exteriors of buildings in the village. Interior photography soon followed. Advances in printing technology accompanied the popularization of photography so that by the 1890s the reading public expected to see stories illustrated with actual photographs. The stream of illustrated articles about the Mount Lebanon Shakers continued, but these later accounts were illustrated with photographs.[20]

Becker's drawings document a sympathetic impression of the Shakers—interpreted in his sketchbook from his personal experiences among the Shaker community. The drawings he made throughout his career reveal him to be an artist with an objective interest in all manner of life across America, which he recorded without undue judgment or predisposition. His four surviving drawings of the Mount Lebanon Shakers suggest that the Shakers—all too familiar with the ridicule of the popular press—welcomed him with goodwill into their community and that he returned their goodwill by portraying them honestly. His sensitive, insightful drawings reflect the fairness, understanding, and openmindedness that typify his career of pictorial reporting.

# ENDNOTES

1 *Frank Leslie's Illustrated Newspaper*, "A Peep at Shakerdom," January 11, 1873, 286–287, 293; "The Shakers," September 6, 1873, 416–418; "The Shakers," September 13, 1873, 12–14; and "Dancing Religious Exercises of the Shakers, New Lebanon," November 1, 1873, 124, 127.

2 *Frank Leslie's Illustrirte Zeitung*, "Die Shaker-Gemeinde in New-Lebanon, New York," November 11, 1873, 7–8; *La Ilustracion Espanola y Americana*, "Los Shakers," December 1, 1873, 44; *Illustreret Tidende*, "En Søndag i en Shaker-Landsby," November 1873, 57–61; Annette Bassette, "A Day with the Lebanon Shakers," *Frank Leslie's Sunday Magazine*, February 1879, 137–149; and *Frank Leslie's Popular Monthly*, "The Shakers in Niskayuna," December 1885, 660–672.

3 Robert P. Emlen, "The Shaker Dance Prints," *Imprint: The Journal of the American Historical Print Collectors Society* 17, no. 2 (Autumn 1992): 14–26.

4 For an example of how the Shakers were pictured as extremists driven by their passions, see the wood engravings *The Whirling Gift* and *The Gift of the Father and Son* illustrated in David R. Lamson, *Two Years Experience Among the Shakers* (West Boylston, Mass: Published by author, 1848), 85, 104.

5 The date of Becker's visit to Mount Lebanon is unknown, but his drawings reveal it to have been, most likely, during winter weather. Because *Leslie's* published the first of his drawings on January 11, 1873, and it tended to publish drawings promptly after their creation, it is most likely that he visited the Shakers in November or December 1872.

6 "A Peep at Shakerdom."

7 Soon thereafter, the Mount Lebanon Shakers' ladder-back chairs attracted national attention, when they were displayed at the Centennial Exposition of 1876. For more about ladder-back chairs made by the Mount Lebanon Shaker, see Charles R. Muller and Timothy D. Rieman, *The Shaker Chair* (Canal Winchester, Ohio: Canal Press, 1984), 157–231.

8 John Wesley, *Letters of John Wesley*, ed. George Eayrs (London, Eng.: Hodder and Stoughton, 1915), 423, footnote 8.

9 "The Shakers," September 6, 1873.

10 At this time, Br. Calvin Reed and Br. William Calvert were the schoolmasters at Mount Lebanon.

11 The Mount Lebanon school alphabet boards are illustrated in Timothy D. Rieman and Susan L. Buck, *Shaker: The Art of Craftsmanship* (Alexandria, Va.: Art Services International, 1995), 128–131.

12 An identical desk from the Mount Lebanon schoolhouse, which is now located in the collection of the Hancock Shaker Village, is illustrated in John T. Kirk, *The Shaker World: Art, Life, Belief* (New York, N.Y.: Abrams, 1997), 47.

13 For an example of a Mount Lebanon Shaker stove, see Rieman and Buck, 144.

14 A Shaker wall curtain in the collection of Hancock Shaker Village is illustrated in Mario S. De Pillis and Christian Goodwillie, *Gather Up the Fragments: The Andrews Shaker Collection* (Pittsfield, Mass.: Hancock Shaker Village, 2008), 282.

15 Stereopticon photographs made by W. G. F. Kimball of a bedroom in the great stone dwelling at the Shaker village at Enfield, New Hampshire, are reproduced in Mary Lyn Ray, *True Gospel Simplicity* (Concord: New Hampshire Historical Society, 1974), 35–35. Prints of these two photographs in the collection of the New Hampshire Historical Society are marked with the ink notation "Elder Abraham's room, 1883."

16 "The Shakers," September 13, 1873.

17 Becker's visit to the Church Family, the largest family in the Shaker village, yielded at least six vignettes illustrating various aspects of Shaker life.

18 Unbeknownst to them, the Mount Lebanon Shakers would soon have an even more modern facility, because the kitchen in Becker's drawing was destroyed when the Church family's dwelling at Mount Lebanon burned to the ground in 1875. The Shakers replaced the entire dwelling the following year.

19 His Shaker engravings were reprinted in *Leslie's* periodicals in 1879 and again in 1885, see Bassette, 138–150; and "The Shakers in Niskayuna."

20 For magazine and newspaper accounts from the 1890s of visits to Mount Lebanon that are illustrated with photographs, see *Harper's Bazaar*, "Life in the Shaker Community at Mount Lebanon, New York," October 27, 1894; 859, 861; Bert Philips, "The Picturesque Shakers," *Frank Leslie's Illustrated Weekly*, June 25, 1896, 435; and Madeline S. Bridges (Mary Ainge De Vere), "A Wonderful Little World of People," *Ladies Home Journal* 15 (June 1898): 6–7.

# POLITICAL(?) CARTOONS IN THE BECKER COLLECTION

Vincent J. Cannato

**The term political cartoon brings to mind witty—even biting—political commentary and often is found today on the editorial pages of daily newspapers or weekly newsmagazines.** When we think of historical political cartoons, we think of either nineteenth-century cartoonist Thomas Nast, whose images of a bloated Boss Tweed and his Tammany Hall minions have molded our image of life in the nineteenth-century American city, or twentieth-century cartoonist Herblock, whose renderings of Richard Nixon with a perpetual five o'clock shadow have helped cement the ex-president's negative reputation. In other words, political cartoons have the potential to shape the way future generations view history.

Political cartoons impart an ideology, worldview, or some kind of partisan approach to the issues of the day. The best political cartoonists are able to take an issue, prominent politician, or celebrity, exaggerate features and bend reality to create a new understanding of important current issues. Cartoonists rely on imagery and symbolism that will appeal to their readers to impart visual clues that will be a tip-off to the subtle meanings held within the composition. These cues are embedded in the culture and ideology of the era in which a cartoon is drawn.

All of this brings us to a discussion of the drawings in the Becker Collection that are classified as political cartoons. Of all the drawings in the Collection, the political cartoons are the least accessible to the modern reader, at least in terms of our ability to divine their meanings.

Mid to late nineteenth-century New York City and Brooklyn would seem to have provided endless fodder for political cartoons from the machinations of Tammany Hall and the rapaciousness of Wall Street financiers, such as Jay Gould and J.P. Morgan, to the growing stream of immigrants entering the city's social fabric and the rapid urbanization and modernization seemingly occurring on a daily basis. Such an environment would seem ideal for political cartoonists seeking material; yet, the collection of political cartoons in the Becker Collection exhibits very little—if any—of this subject matter. The only well-known person to appear in any of these cartoons is the spectral image of Horace Greeley, editor of the *New York Tribune*, in a cartoon dealing with fundraising for Ireland entitled "Horace Greeley in England"; instead, many of these drawings, such as the talking mosquitoes found in the drawing *Evil Communications* (fig. 1), exhibit dry wit and whimsy. What is most striking about these drawings is how so many possess a cartoonish, almost surrealistic, nature that defies categorization and explanation.

My favorite drawing in the collection might be *The New Freak* (fig. 2). It contains the image of a carnival barker pointing to a grotesque and lumpy figure identified as the "Great Human Nugget, Imported from New Jersey"—a figure somewhat reminiscent of the Stay Puft Marshmallow Man from the movie *Ghostbusters*. It is a strange, alarming visual. The drawing is clearly about the freak shows of the late nineteenth century, but it is unclear exactly what point—if any—the artist is trying to get across. The image imparts

Fig. 1. Unknown, *Evil Communications*, n.d. Black ink on board, 11.3 x 7.5 in. (28.7 x 19.1 cm). PC–1

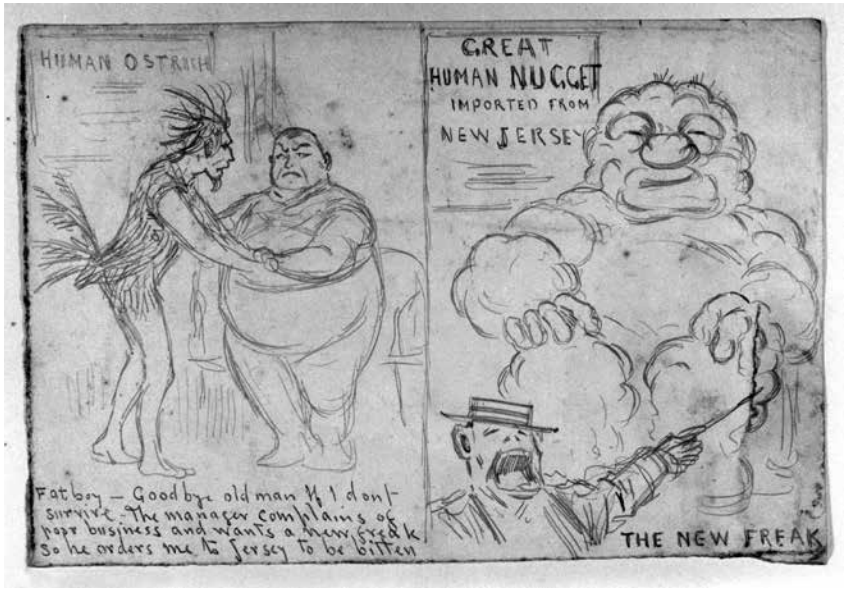



Fig. 2. Joseph Becker, *The New Freak*, n.d. Graphite on board, 8.3 x 12.0 in. (21.1 x 30.5 cm). PC–51

no larger message about this controversial form of popular entertainment; instead, it leaves us with an absurdist image devoid of any deeper political or ideological significance than drawing in the modern viewer while at the same time repelling him or her.

Many of the political cartoons in the Becker Collection have a similar, if somewhat less jarring, feel. A few, such as *A Cool Proposition* (fig. 3), have an eerie resemblance to the drawings by Robert Crumb (albeit without the sexual fantasies) from a century later. In this drawing, a fly is talking to a sweaty man sitting next to an ice bucket. It is asking the man if he and his insect friend may fly around the man's head in order to settle a bet while the man is umpiring. Absurdist drawings like this one, which speak of a private fantasy world that is the sole preserve of the artist, exhibit a sensibility more reminiscent of the 1970s than of the 1870s.

Some of the cartoons deal with the subject of women. They do not delve into any specific political issues regarding women's rights, such as suffrage, but rather speak to the artist's personal views toward women. One of them, *A Mean Motive* (fig. 4), features two neighbors talking to each other from across a fence that separates their properties. The caption has one of the men saying to the other, "wife has the lock-jaw, hey? Sure I'll bring mine around to see her; it may be catching."

Another drawing features a vain young woman holding a mirror and surrounded by bills for expensive items, such as clothes, perfume, and French language lessons. The title reads, "having acquired all the graces, accomplishments and artful dodges of the city girl at the expense of her husband." Both of these cartoons tell us little about the debates over the roles of women during this time period; instead, they are classic misogynist tropes, portraying women as little more than nuisances and financial drains on their husbands. While one drawing features women who talk too much and suggests that lockjaw might be a good solution to this problem, the other shows a spendthrift woman spending her husband's money on vanities.

Issues of race and ethnicity crop up among these drawings, but they do so in ways that only seek to add to the mysteriousness of their narratives and seemingly impenetrable nature. The cartoon entitled *How the Hebrew Would Get There* (plate 46) is a perfect example of the ambiguity and lack of ideology that exemplify so many of the cartoons in the Becker Collection. There are two figures in the composition, Uncle Sam and one clearly Jewish figure. Both are engaged in some kind of commerce or trade. At first glance, we might expect the cartoon to drink at the deep well of anti-Semitic stereo-

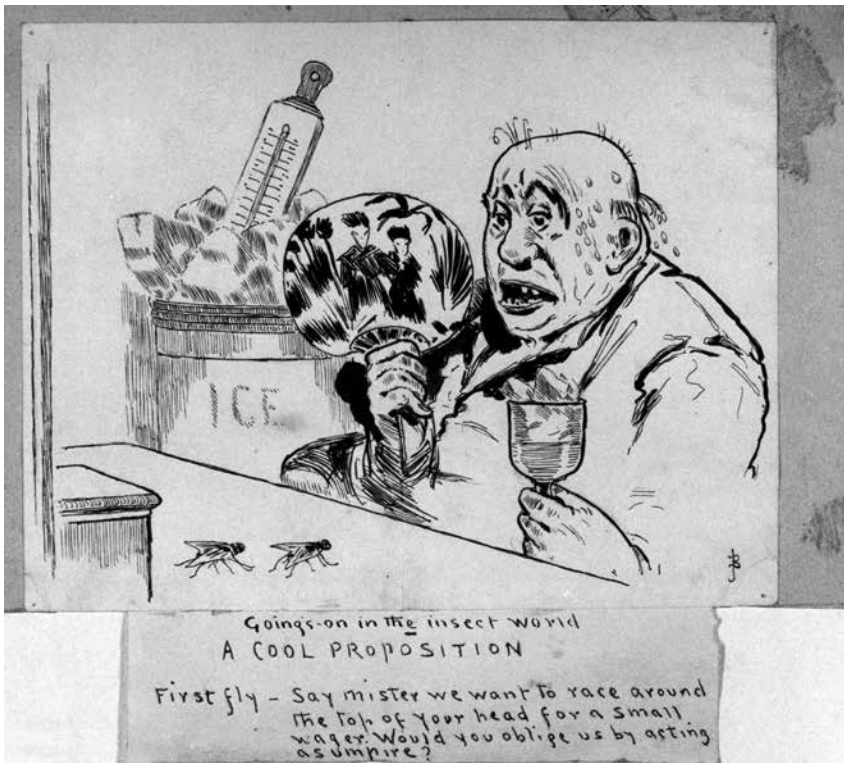



Fig. 3. Joseph Becker, *A Cool Proposition*, n.d. Black ink on paper mounted on board, 7.8 x 11.3 in. (19.8 x 28.7 cm). PC–62

types, especially those of Jewish peddlers or businessmen. But, while it is hardly a sympathetic portrayal of the Jewish man, it is by no means derogatory: Uncle Sam, representing the native-born Yankee, is also presented as a clever, shifty businessman with a bottle of snake oil cure-all hanging from his pocket, waiting to sell it to an unsuspecting customer. The caption under the figure of Uncle Sam makes this meaning explicit: "How the Yankee would land with both feet, says the Hebrew."

While the meaning of the title and the subsequent captions are inexplicit, through the inclusion of specific attributes associated with each figure, the cartoon implies through the bargain sale catalogue in the Jewish figure's hands that Jewish peddlers survive by selling goods at deep discount and that Yankees survive by selling staples, such as brown bread, pumpkin pie, and baked beans. Still, there is something a little off about this drawing. Both characters—Yankee and Jew—come across too slick, like the nineteenth-century equivalent of the twentieth-century used-car salesmen stereotype. Neither man is superior to the other. The image has no larger message: it does not push the viewer toward any particular view of business nor toward the inferiority or superiority of either the Jew or the Yankee. The ideological context and point of view, which readers always seek in political cartoons, appear to be absent here.

This lack of context is unusual when you consider many of the cartoons made during the late nineteenth century that deal with immigration. *Stranger at the Gate* features an immigrant seeking entrance into America. The man makes a pathetic impression: he is short, hunched over, sickly, and his toes stick out of his ragged shoes. The ethnicity of the immigrant is inexplicit, but he is clearly an amalgam of Jewish and other immigrants with eastern and southern European backgrounds. Literally and figuratively, he

Fig. 4. Unknown, *A Mean Motive*, n.d. Black ink on paper, 10.0 x 10.0 in. (25.4 x 25.4 cm). PC–29

carries a lot of baggage: In one hand is a bag labeled Poverty and in the other a bag labeled Disease. Around his neck hangs a bone with the inscription Superstition, signifying his so-called backward religion and culture. On his back are a beer keg with the words Sabbath Desecration on it and a crude bomb labeled Anarchy. The cartoon is unambiguous in its statement that this immigrant—and presumably many others—are undesirable and do not deserve entry into the United States. That kind of clear ideological content and making blatant, derogatory stereotypes of immigrants are missing from *How the Hebrew Would Get There*.

A similar phenomenon appears in other drawings in the Becker Collection. Chinese immigrants appear in a number of the drawings and one finds a similar ambiguity in their portrayal. Some two hundred fifty thousand Chinese immigrated to America after the Civil War, most settling on the West Coast. Racism and fears that Chinese labor was undercutting the wages of native-born workers led to an inhospitable environment for the Chinese. This culminated in 1882 with the Chinese Exclusion Act, which banned nearly all immigration of Chinese. In response to anti-Chinese sentiment on the West Coast, some Chinese immigrants moved east, settling in New York City.

Fig. 5. Unknown, *He Work for Me*, n.d. Black ink and graphite on cardstock and paper, 11.0 x 8.0 in. (27.9 x 20.3 cm). PC–UK–58–1

Fig. 6. Unknown, *Chinese Eating Rice*, 1858. Graphite and ink on cardstock, 10.0 x 8.0 in. (25.4 x 20.3 cm). PC–JB–UK–58–2

The drawing *He Work for Me* (fig. 5) features a Chinese man working with a hoe in a field. Standing over him is another Asian figure, who is clearly the man's boss (hence, the title of the drawing). Another drawing, *Chinese Eating Rice* (fig. 6), features a Chinese man eating a bowl of rice with chopsticks. Two other figures sit in the background. Each man is wearing traditional clothing and the *queue* (the traditional Chinese hairstyle consisting of a long braid). Neither of these cartoons suggests or implies any definite attitudes toward the Chinese; they are neither overtly sympathetic to the plight of Chinese immigrants nor traffic in stereotypes common during this period of the Yellow Peril. They make no statement one way or another about the benefits or harm caused by Chinese immigration. The artist never tips his hand about his views on whether Chinese immigration should be restricted or not. The drawings merely present these individuals as they might have seemed to nineteenth-century Americans—however different that might be

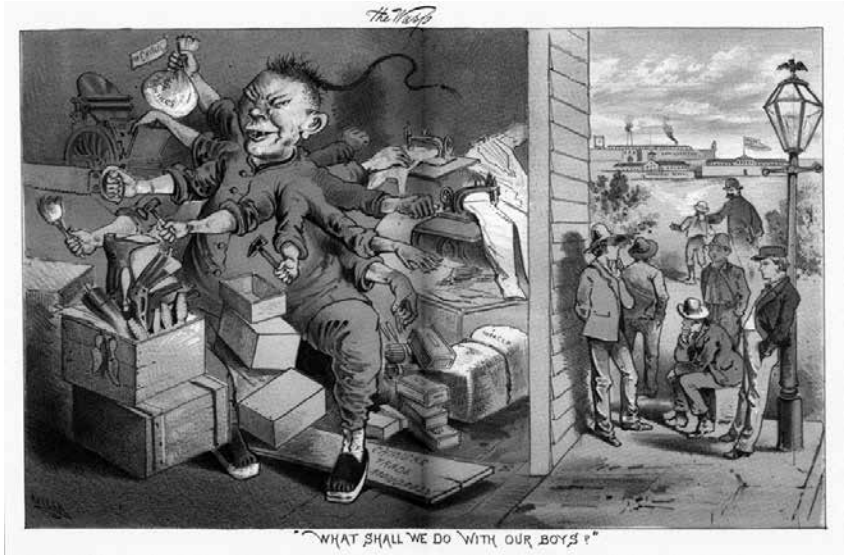



Fig. 7. *What Shall We do with Our Boys?* Engraving, *The Wasp*, March 3, 1882, after a drawing by George Frederick Keller.

from how modern Americans see them—with little commentary or attempt at political persuasion.

Compare this cartoon with one from 1883 in the *Wasp* (a late-nineteenth-century magazine) (fig. 7). It depicts a stereotypical Chinese immigrant—one wearing a *queue* and native Chinese clothing. With multiple arms, this individual is doing the work of many workers, while native-born American workers linger outside. Here, the Chinese immigrant is portrayed as a superhuman machine that threatens native-born American "boys" with unemployment. The political implication is clear: Chinese workers need to be kept out of the country. In harsher tones, a soap advertisement from the same period shows Uncle Sam literally kicking a Chinese immigrant out of the country (fig. 8). The caption reads, "the Chinese Must Go." The visual cues on both of these cartoons are stark and easy to read; they transmit to the viewer the dangerousness and/or undesirability of Chinese immigration and propose that exclusion is the proper solution. These cues are missing from the cartoons in the Becker Collection.

The drawing *For Sale* (plate 45), in which we get a glimpse of American stereotypes of the Irish seen in earlier cartoons by Thomas Nast, is in a similar vein (fig. 9). The figures labeled Pat and Dennis are working-class Irishmen. Speaking in an Irish brogue, the two figures are classic Paddy characters. Pat is drilling holes into a boat under the assumption that the government will buy anything that sinks under water. This strikes the viewer as a scheme—an implausible one at that— perpetrated by the workingman who dreams of getting some extra cash.

Nast, in his cartoon *The Ignorant Vote* from 1876, portrays his classic caricature of the brutish Irish immigrant with simian features, comparing him to the similarly unfavorable stereotype of the African American from the South. Although not quite drawn with the same features Nast used, *For Sale* presents the faces of Pat and Dennis as brutish, dull, and unrefined. As with the drawings of the Chinese, no moral judgment is being made about these men and their fitness for American citizenship. It merely shows viewers how the Irish looked during this time to many native-born Americans. Unlike Nast's drawing, this cartoon appears to intend to dehumanize or denigrate the Irish.

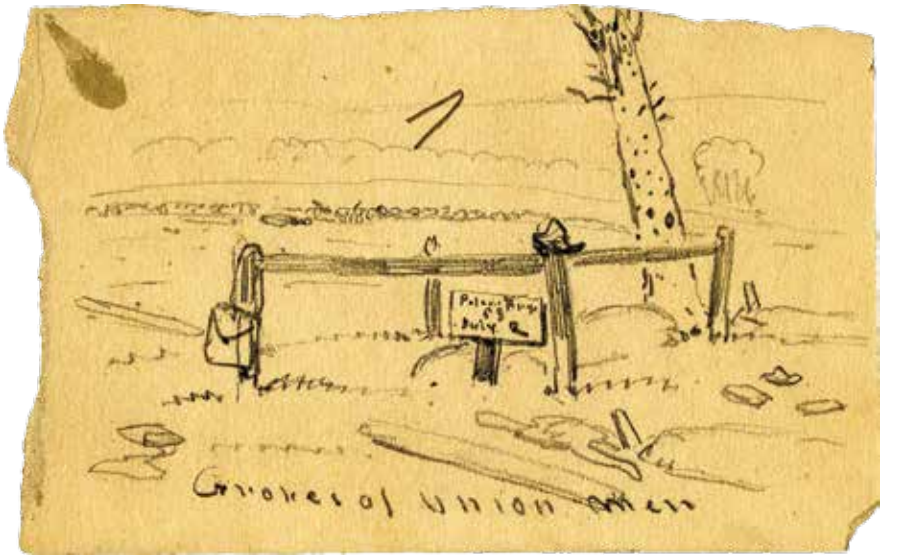
In the end, what may be said about the political cartoons in the Becker Collection? Are they completely devoid of political ideology or are we modern viewers simply missing the visual cues that would have been familiar to nineteenth-century viewers? After more than a century since their creation, these drawings have the capacity to both

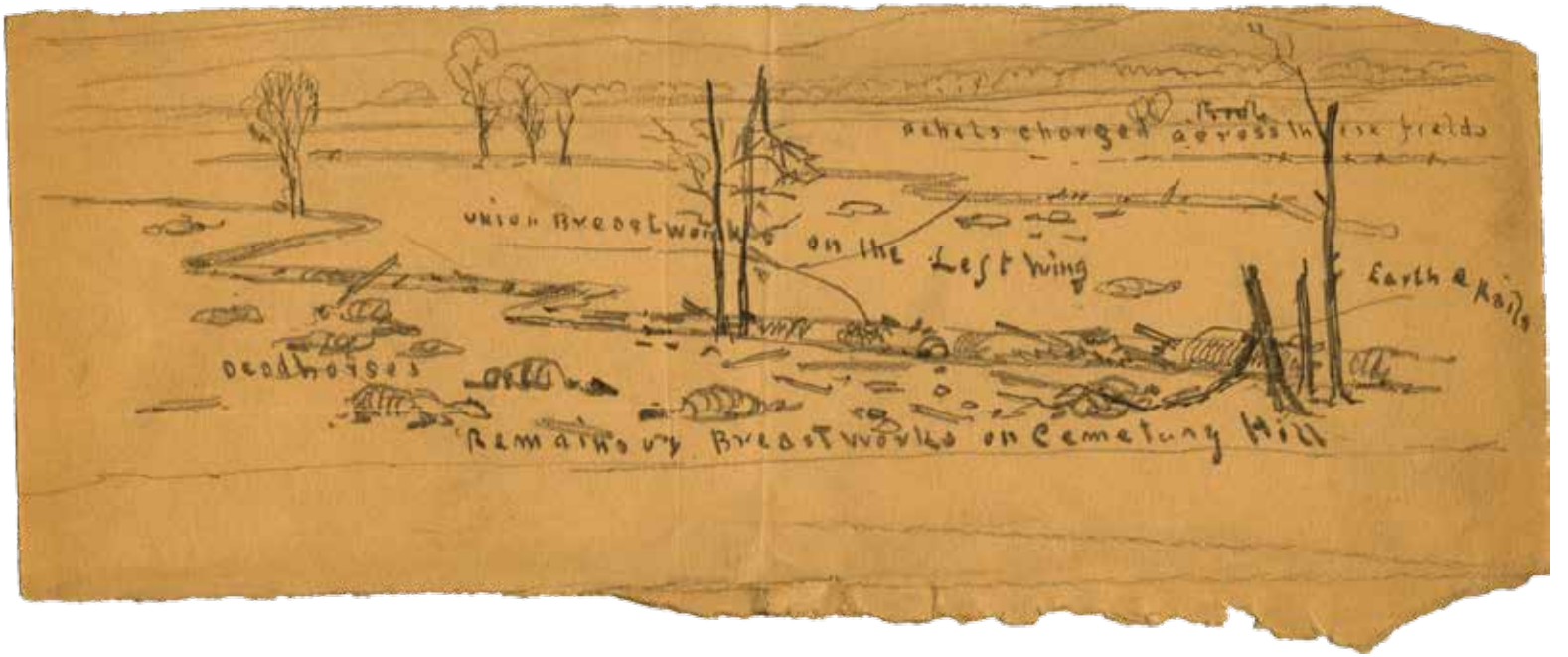
Fig. 8. *The Magic Washer*. Lithograph, ca. 1886 (Shober and Carqueville).

Fig.9. *The Ignorant Vote*. Engraving, *Harper's Weekly*, December 9, 1876, after a drawing by Thomas Nast.

amuse and confuse. Perhaps scholars in the future will be able to untangle the hidden meanings of these singular and sometimes off-the-wall drawings. For now, the value of these cartoons lies not in what they tell us about the political and social debates of late nineteenth-century urban America but in that they allow us to enjoy the unusual drawings produced by an exceptionally idiosyncratic mind.

# PLATES

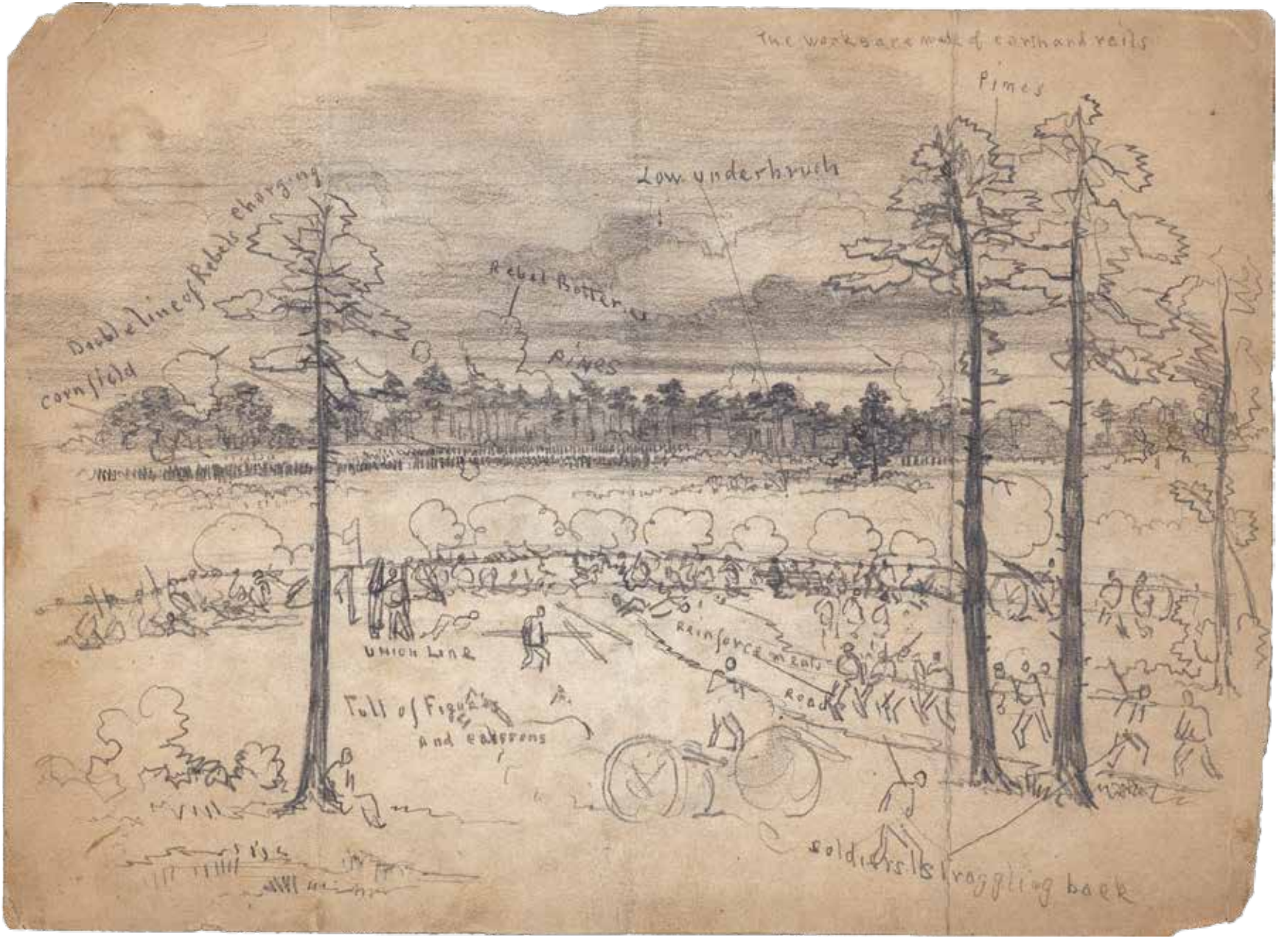


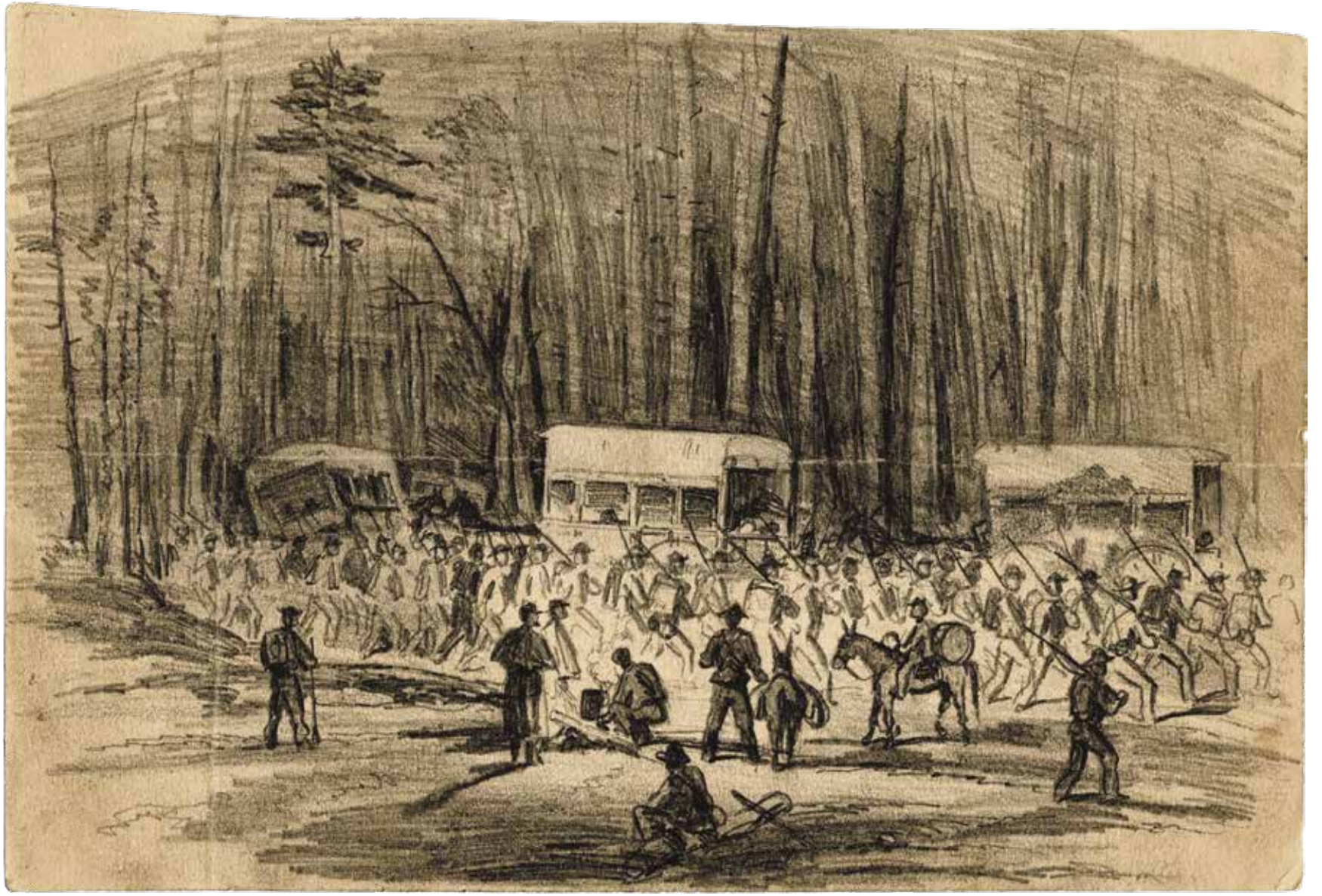

1. Top left: Joseph Becker, *Graves of Union Soldiers at Gettysburg*, September–October 1863.
Graphite on paper, 4.0 x 3.5 in. (10.2 x 8.9 cm). CW-JB-PA-9-63b

2. Top right: Joseph Becker, *Graves of Union Men at Gettysburg*, September 1863.
Graphite on wove paper, 5.8 x 3.5 in. (14.7 x 8.9 cm). CW-JB-PA-9-63c

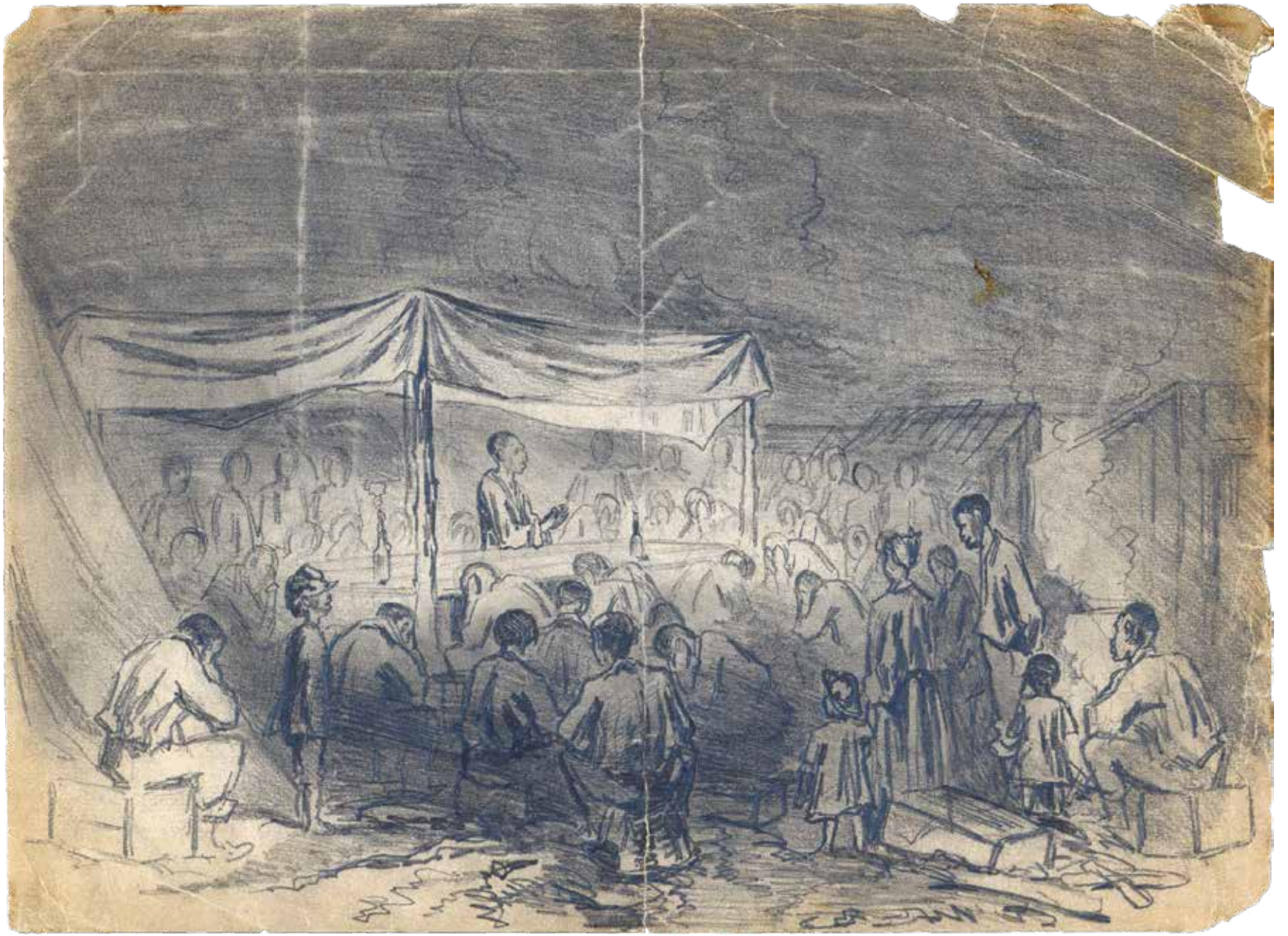
3. Bottom: Joseph Becker, *Cemetery Hill at Gettysburg*, September–October 1863.
Graphite on wove paper, 9.8 x 3.8 in. (24.9 x 9.7 cm). CW-JB-PA-9-63d




4. Joseph Becker, *Fight at Reams Station during the Siege of Petersburg*, August 25, 1864.
Graphite on wove paper, 13.0 x 9.5 in. (33.0 x 24.1 cm). CW-JB-VA-8-25-64b

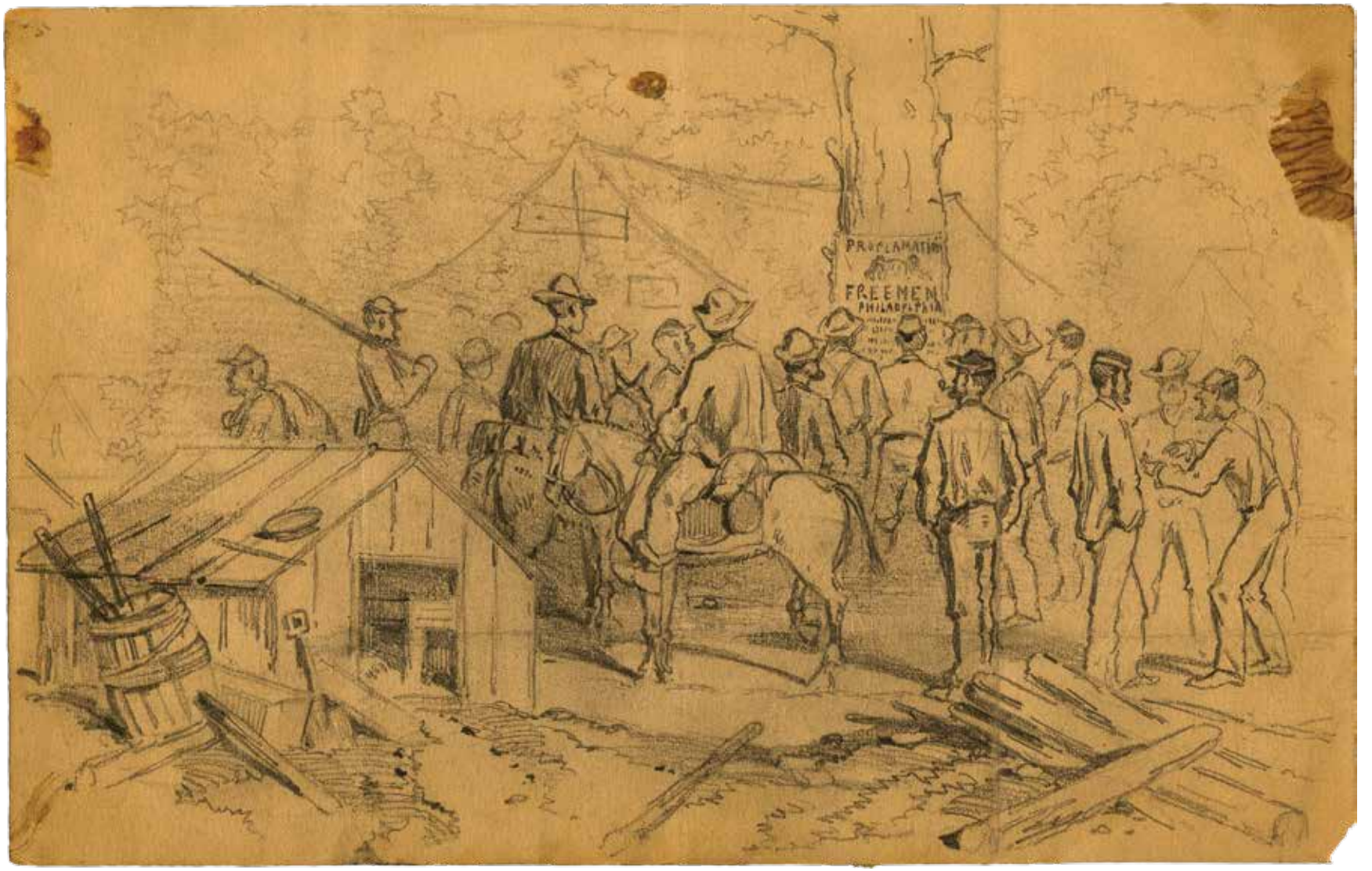


5. Joseph Becker, *Scene on Jerusalem Plank Road during the Siege of Petersburg*, August 25, 1864.
Graphite on wove paper, 9.75 x 6.3 in. (24.9 x 16.0 cm). CW-JB-VA-8-25-64a



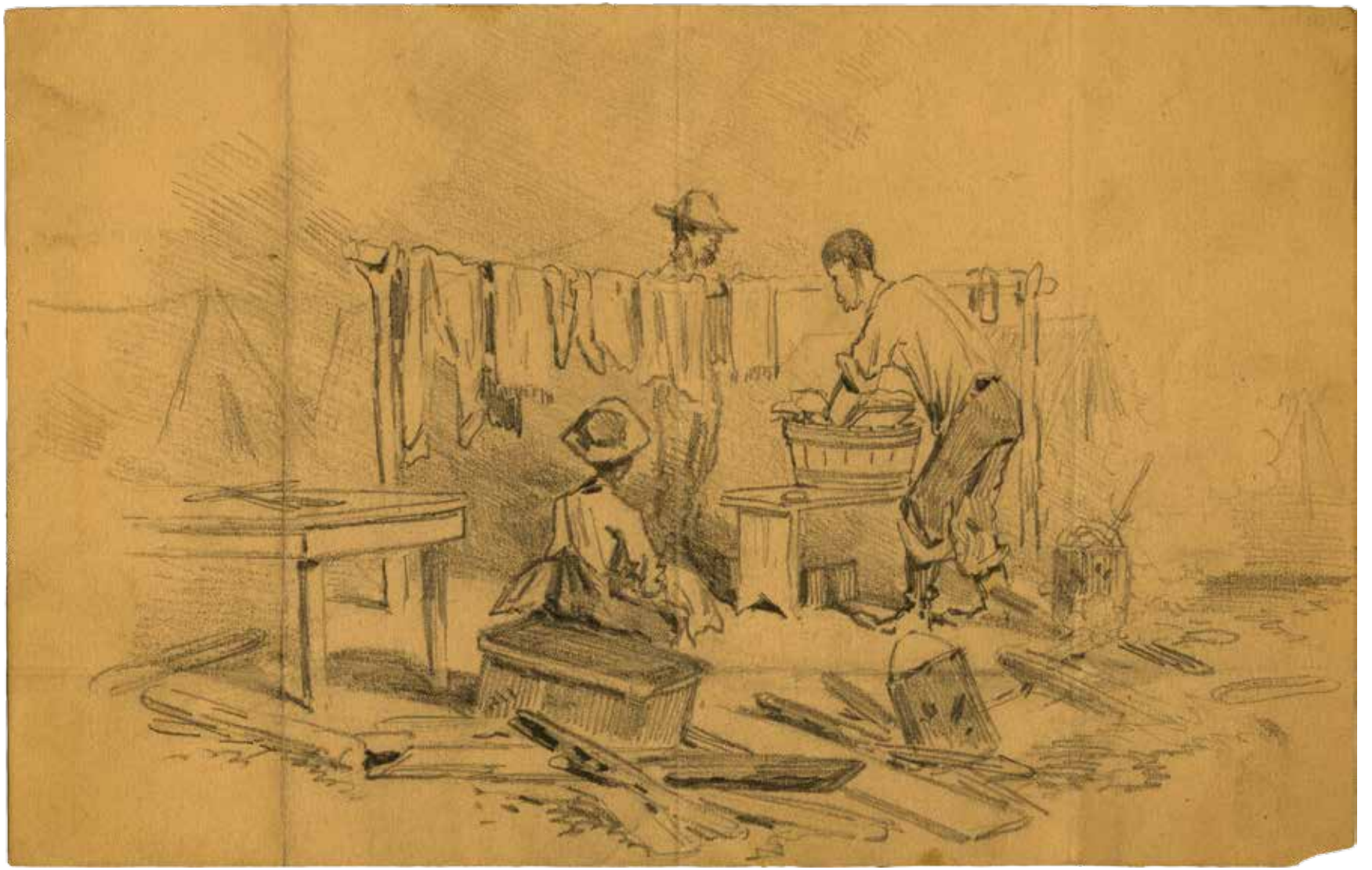
6. Joseph Becker, *Evening Prayer Meeting at City Point during the Siege of Petersburg*, September 2, 1864.
Graphite on wove paper, 13.5 x 9.8 in. (34.3 x 24.9 cm). CW-JB-VA-9-2-64b

7. Joseph Becker, *Camp Sketches: Interior of a Bombproof during the Siege of Petersburg*, September 23, 1864.
Graphite on wove paper, 6.5 x 4.5 in. (16.5 x 11.4 cm). CW-JB-VA-9-23-64

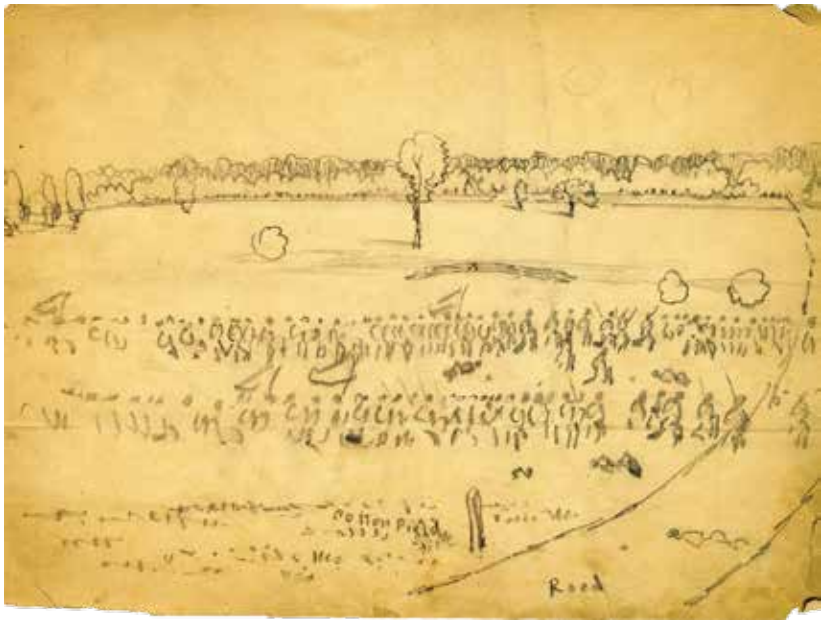


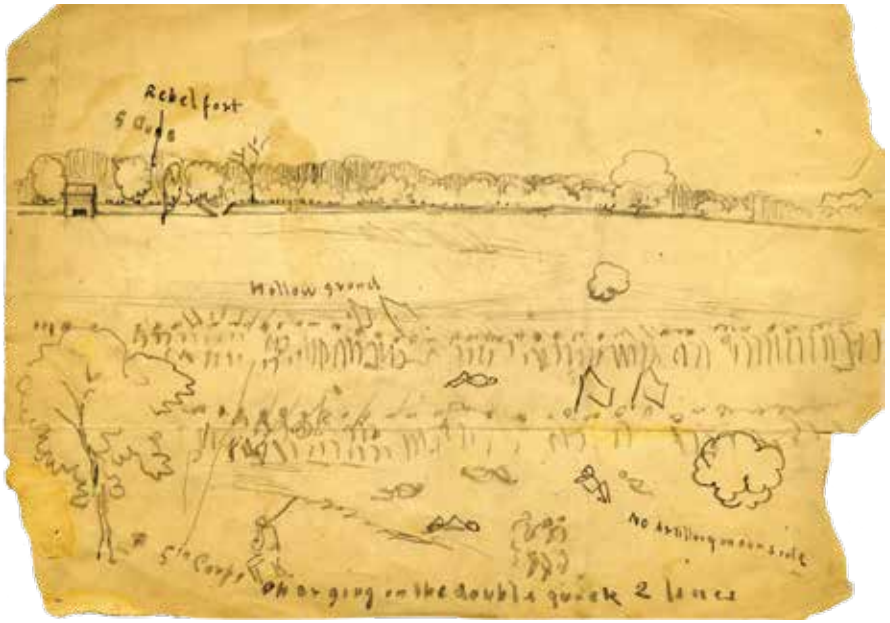

8. Joseph Becker, *Approaching Elections during the Siege of Petersburg*, September 25, 1864.
Graphite on wove paper, 10.0 x 6.5 in (25.4 x 16.5 cm). CW-JB-VA-9-25-64

9. Joseph Becker, *Evening Amusement of the Coloured Servants and Contrabands during the Siege of Petersburg*, September 27, 1864.
Graphite with charcoal on wove paper, 10.0 x 6.5 in. (25.4 x 16.5 cm). CW-JB-VA-9-27-64d

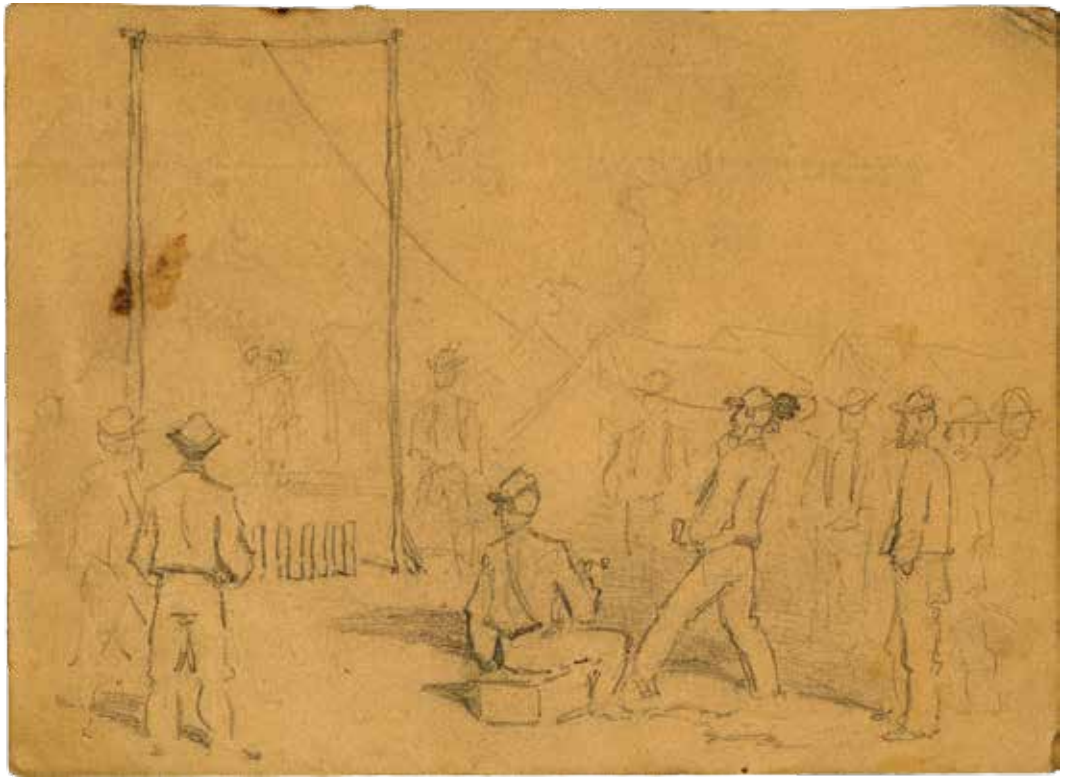


10. Joseph Becker, *An Army "Washerwoman" during the Siege of Petersburg*, September 28, 1864.
Graphite on wove paper, 10.0 x 6.5 in. (25.4 x 16.5 cm). CW-JB-VA-9-28-64

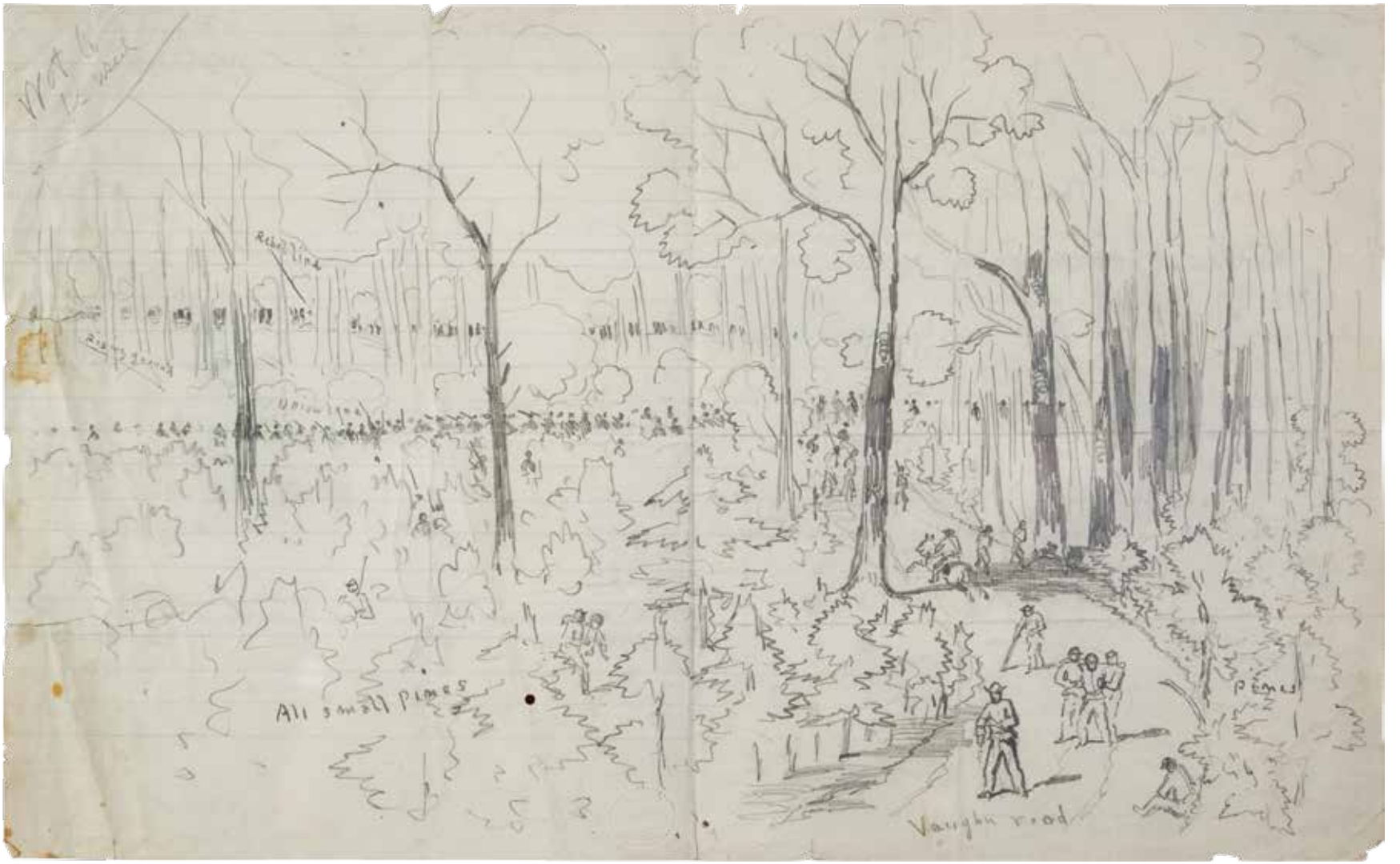


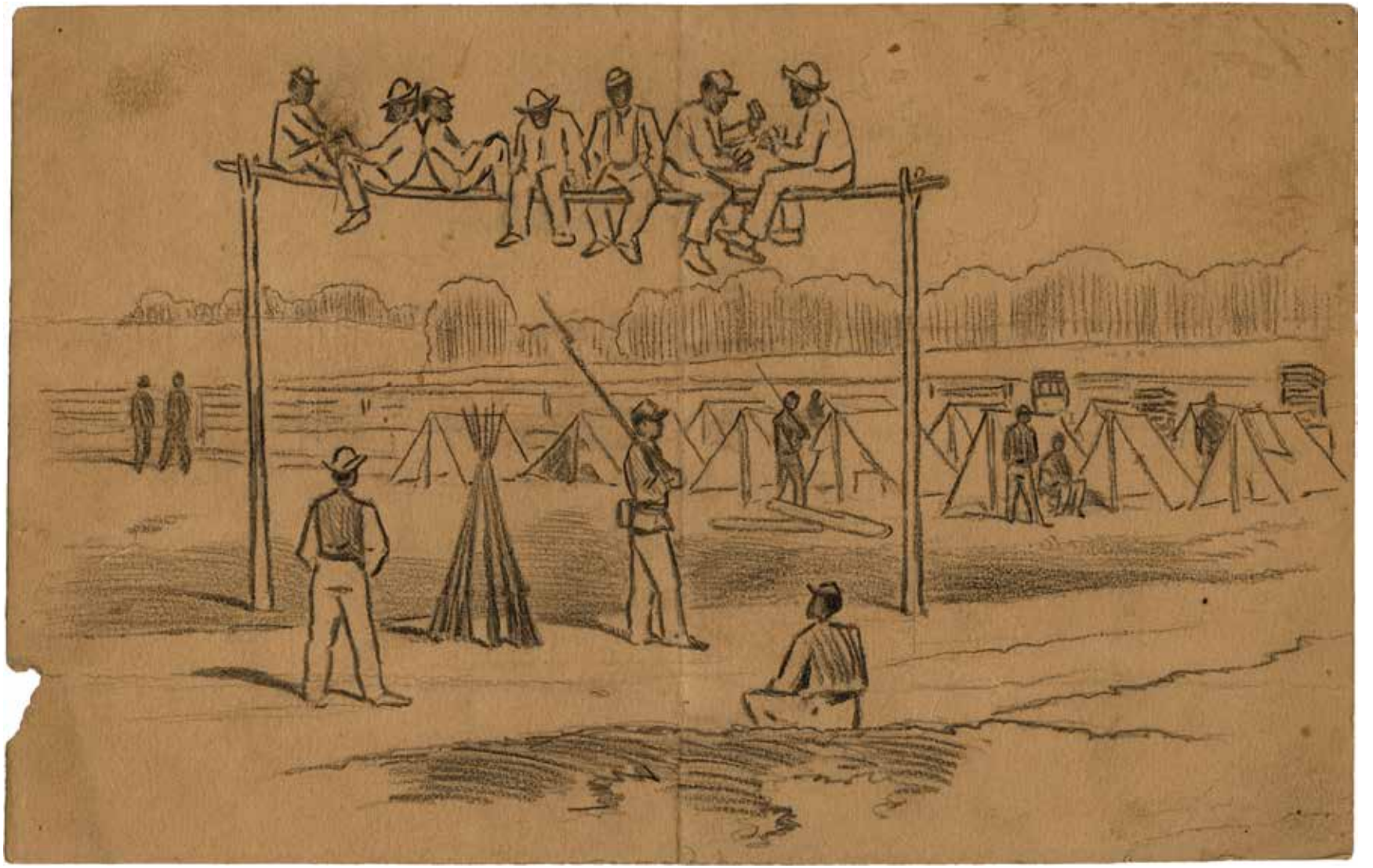

11. Joseph Becker, *Battle near Poplar Springs Church: Peeble's Farm*, September 30, 1864.
Graphite on wove paper, each panel 10.0 x 6.5 in. (25.4 x 16.5 cm). CW-JB-9-30-64d+e



12. Joseph Becker, *Camp Sketches: Soldiers Playing Ten Pins during the Siege of Petersburg*, September 1864.
Graphite on wove paper, 6.3 x 4.8 in. (16.0 x 12.2 cm). CW-JB-VA-9-64k

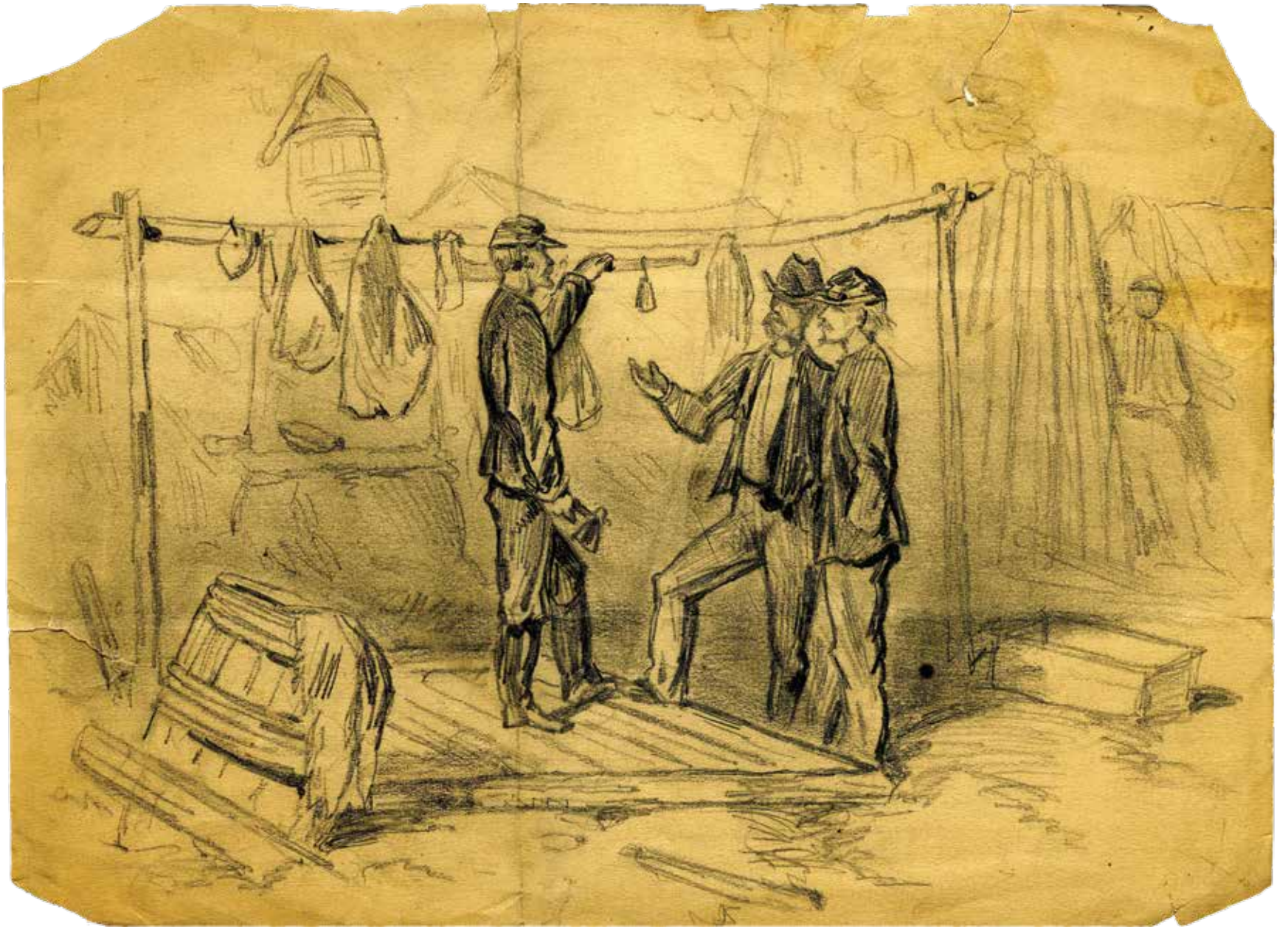



13. Joseph Becker, *Battle in the Woods at Vaughn Road near Hatcher Creek*, October 27, 1864.
Graphite on lined paper with embossed insignia "CONGRESS", 16.0 x 10.0 in. (40.6 x 25.4 cm). CW-JB-VA-10-27-64a

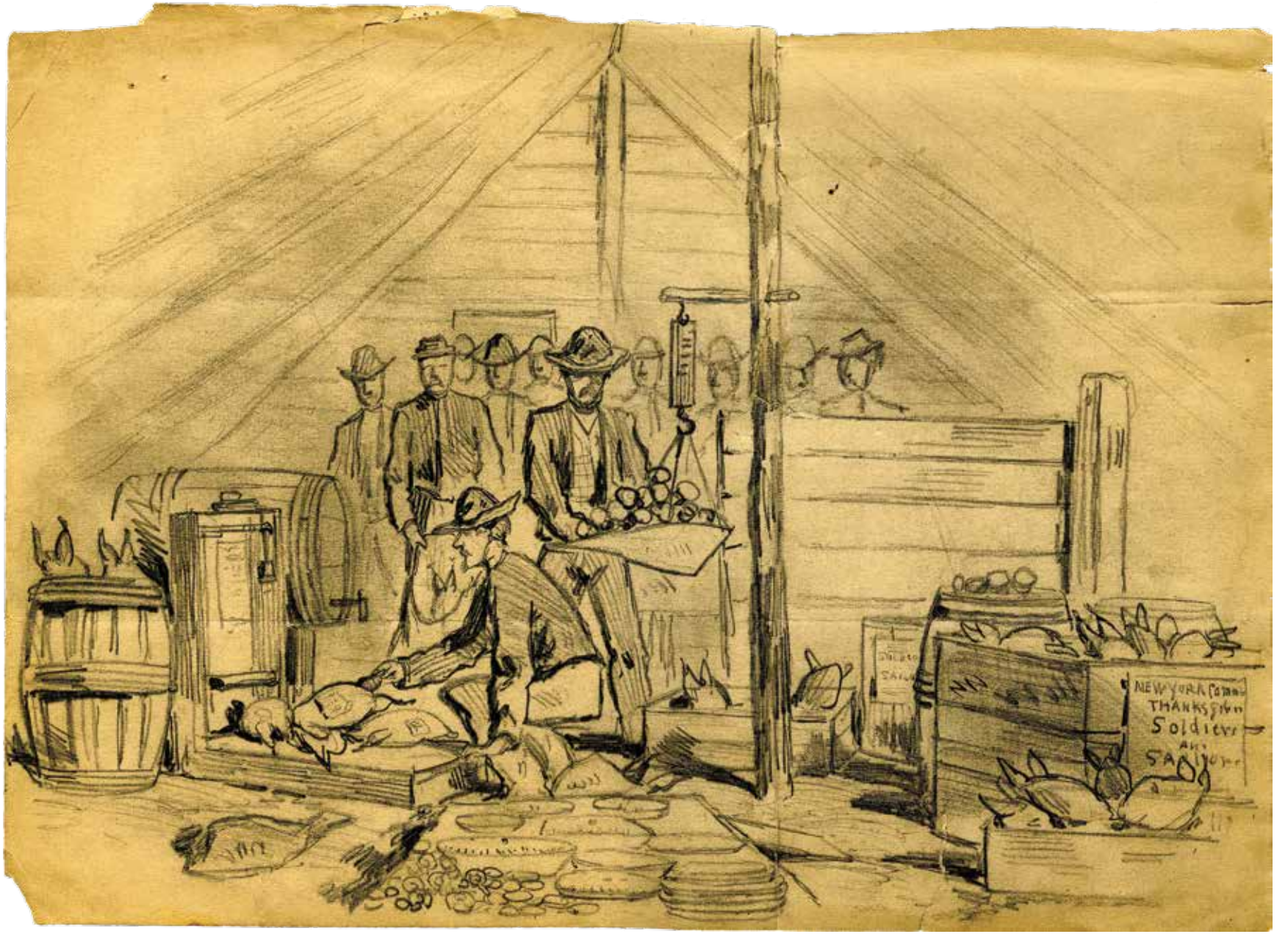


14. Joseph Becker, *Mode of Punishing Negro Soldiers*, October 31, 1864.
Graphite and charcoal on wove paper, 10.0 x 6.5 in. (25.4 x 16.5 cm). CW-JB-VA-10-31-64

15. Joseph Becker, *Something to Coax the Appetite: Exhuming the Bodies of Union Soldiers during the Siege of Petersburg*, November 2, 1864.
Graphite on wove paper, 13.3 x 9.8 in. (33.8 x 24.9 cm). CW–JB–VA–11–2–64

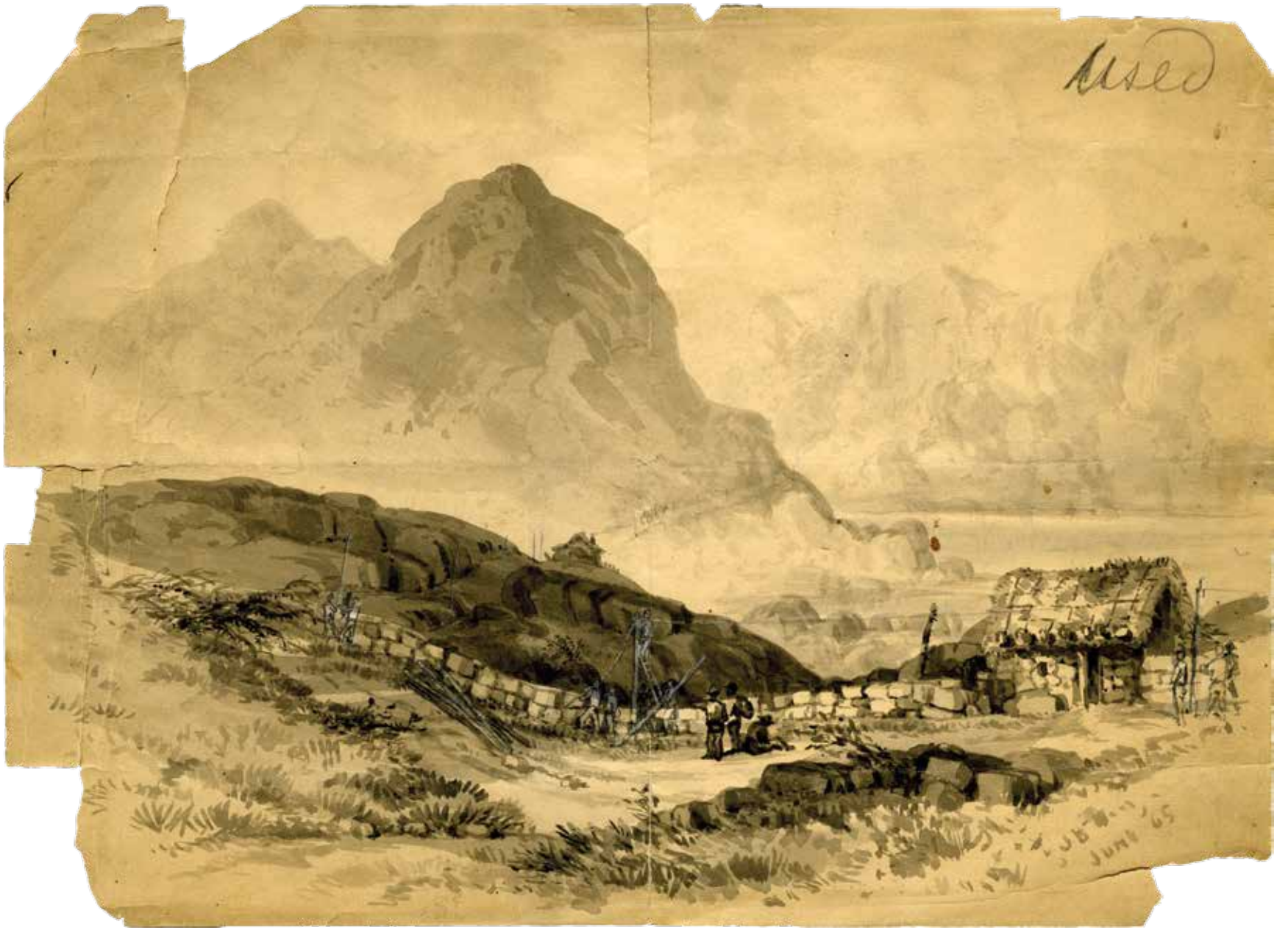


16. Joseph Becker, *An Army Meat Market*, November 23, 1864.
Graphite on wove paper, 13.3 x 9.8 in. (33.8 x 24.9 cm). CW-JB-VA-11-23-64




17. Joseph Becker, *Distributing Thanksgiving Favors to the Soldiers of the Army of the Potomac during the Siege of Petersburg*, November 24, 1864.
Graphite on wove paper, 13.3 x 9.8 in. (33.8 x 24.9 cm). CW–JB–VA–11–64a

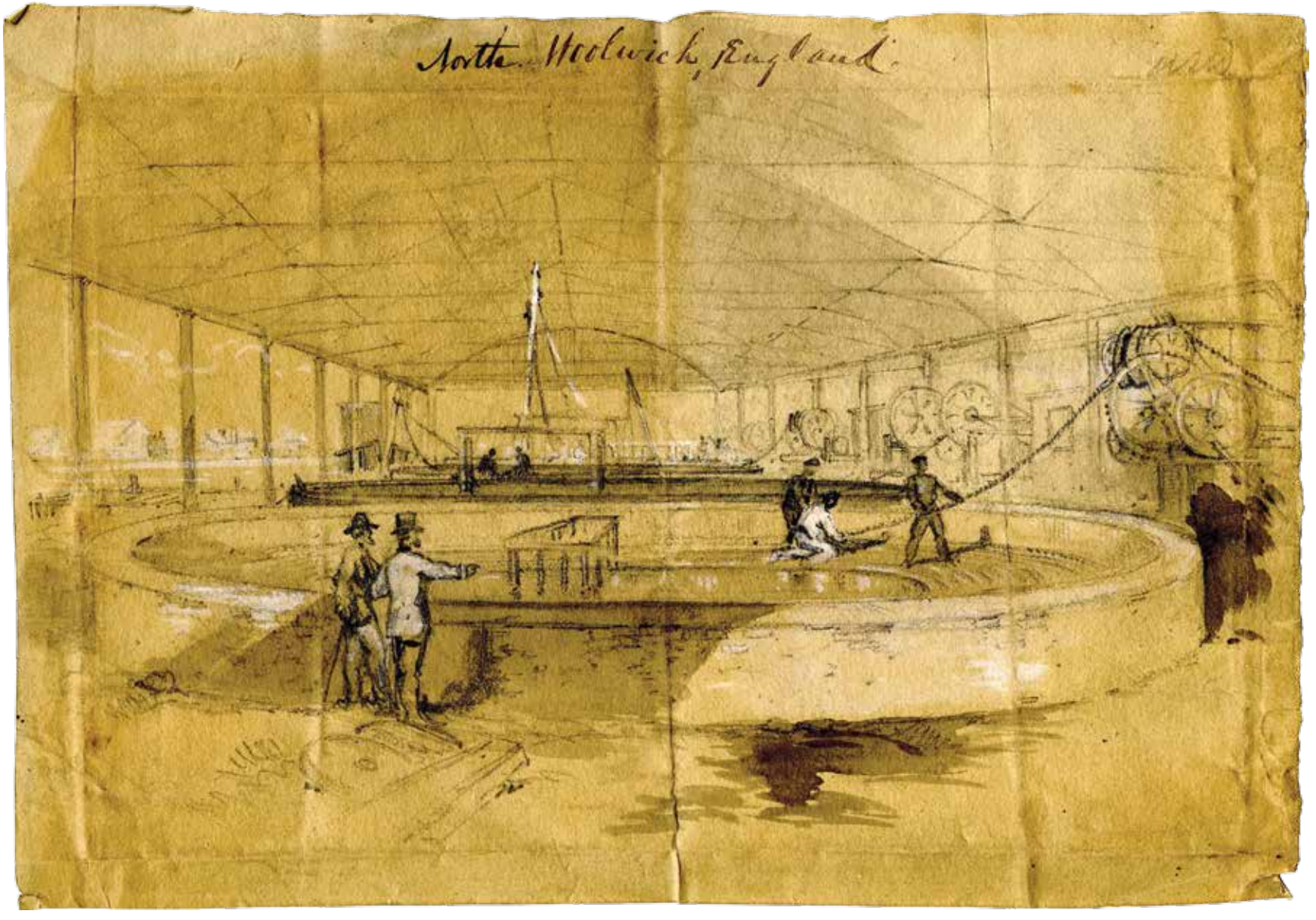
18. Joseph Becker, *Scenes at Wilmington, North Carolina, during the Capture of Wilmington*, March 3, 1865.
Graphite and ink wash heightened with white on wove paper, 10.0 x 6.5 in. (25.4 x 16.5 cm). CW-JB-NC-3-3-65




19. Joseph Becker, *View of the Royal Mail Road in Valentia, Ireland*, June 4, 1865.
Black and gray ink wash and graphite on paper, 13.5 x 9.5 in. (34.3 x 24.1 cm). TAC–JB–GB–6–4–65

20. Joseph Becker, *Cyrus Field and Party in Valentia, Ireland*, June 5, 1865.
Graphite on paper, 13.0 x 9.5 in. (34.3 x 24.1 cm). TAC–JB–GB–6–5–65–2

21. Joseph Becker, *Valentia, Ireland*, June 5, 1865.
Black ink wash and graphite on paper, 7.0 x 6.5 in. (17.8 x 16.5 cm). TAC–JB–GB–6–5–65

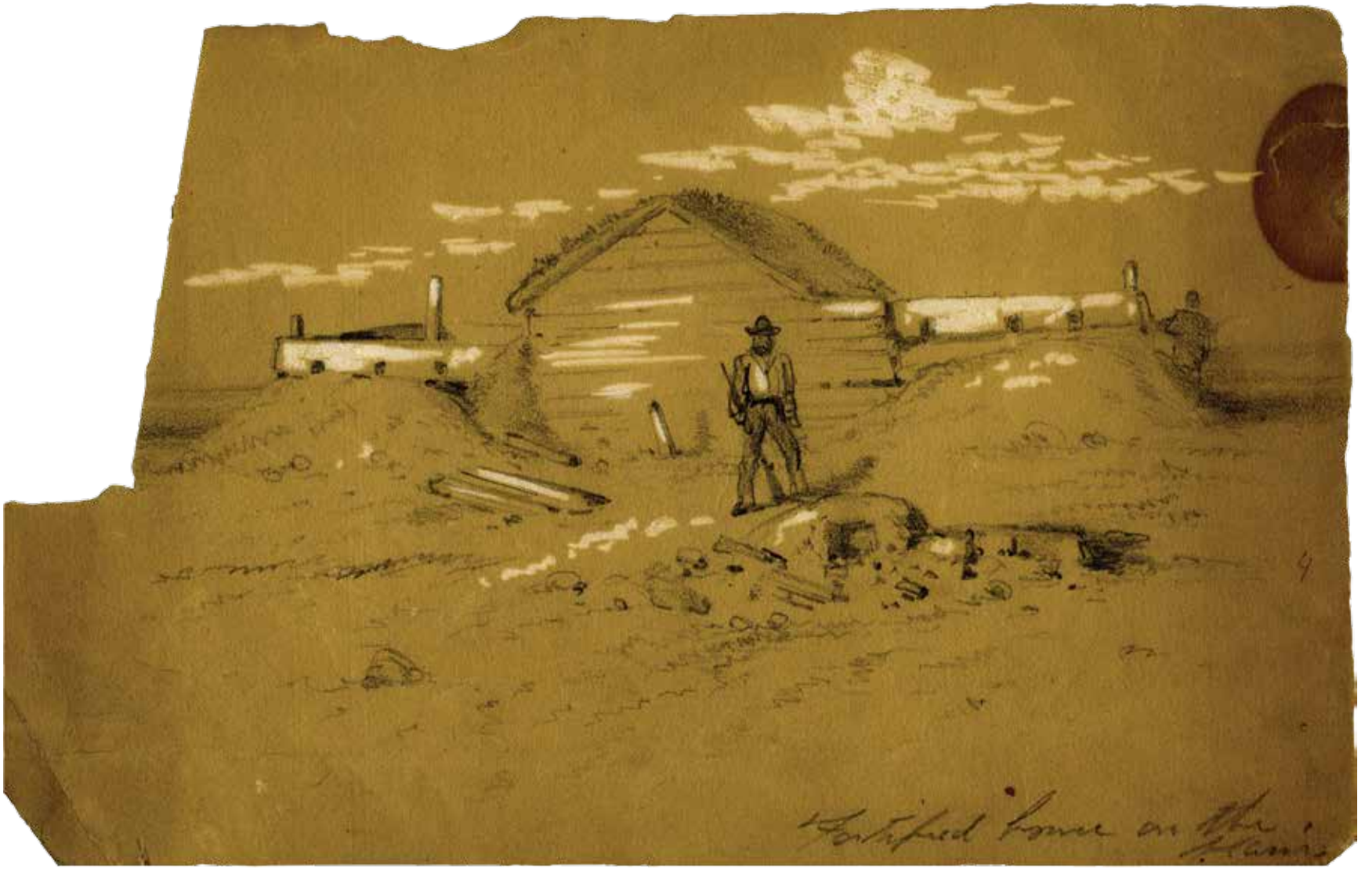



22. Joseph Becker, *North Woolwich, England*, 1865.
White gouache, graphite, and ink on toned paper, 11.0 x 7.5 in. (27.9 x 19.1 cm). TAC–JB–GB–65

23. Joseph Becker, *Chambermaid at the Hotel Laramie*, 1869–1870.
White gouache and graphite on toned paper, 5.5 x 5.5 in. (14.0 x 14.0 cm). RR-JB-WY-69-70-5

24. Joseph Becker, *Chinese in California*, 1869–1870.
White gouache and graphite on toned paper, 9.5 x 6.0 in. (24.1 x 15.2 cm). RR-JB-CA-69-70

25. Joseph Becker, *Chinese Porters for the Railroad*, 1869–1870.
White gouache and graphite on toned paper, 9.5 x 9.5 in. (24.1 x 24.1 cm). RR-JB-69-70-20

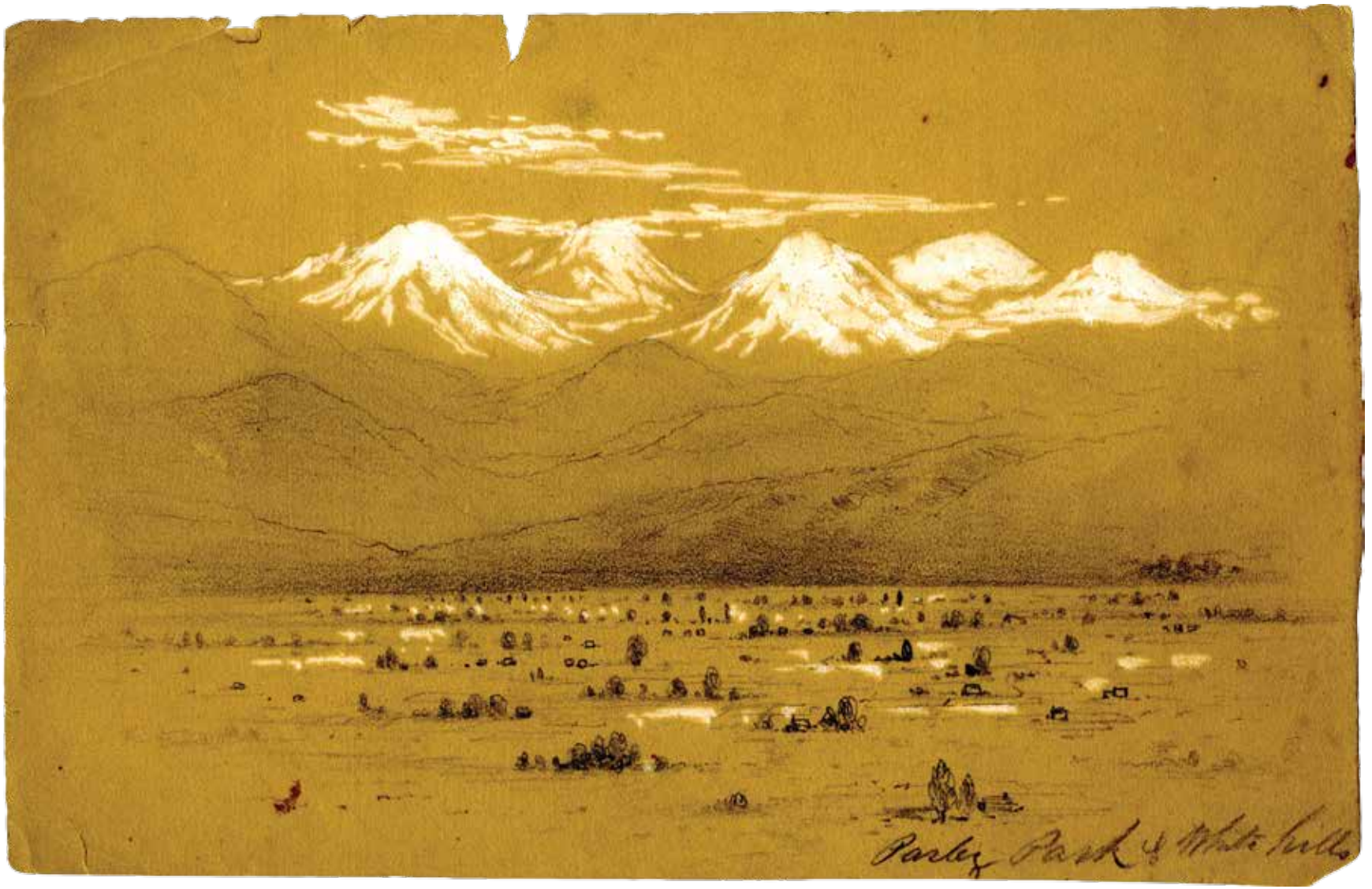



26. Joseph Becker, *Fortified Home on the Plains*, 1869–1870.
White gouache and graphite on toned paper, 9.0 x 6.0 in. (22.9 x 15.2 cm). RR–JB–69–70–6

27. Joseph Becker, *Chinese Railroad Workers' Sleeping Quarters*, 1869–1870.
White gouache and graphite on toned paper, 10.0 x 6.3 in. (25.4 x 16.0 cm). RR-JB-69-70-21

28. Joseph Becker, *Hotel Laramie*, 1869–1870.
White gouache and graphite on toned paper, 5.0 x 3.5 in. (12.7 x 8.9 cm). RR-JB-WY-69-70-3

29. Joseph Becker, *Hotel Laramie: The Wash Hour*, 1869–1870.
White gouache and graphite toned paper, 7.5 x 7.0 in. (19.1 x 17.8 cm). RR-JB-WY-69-70-1



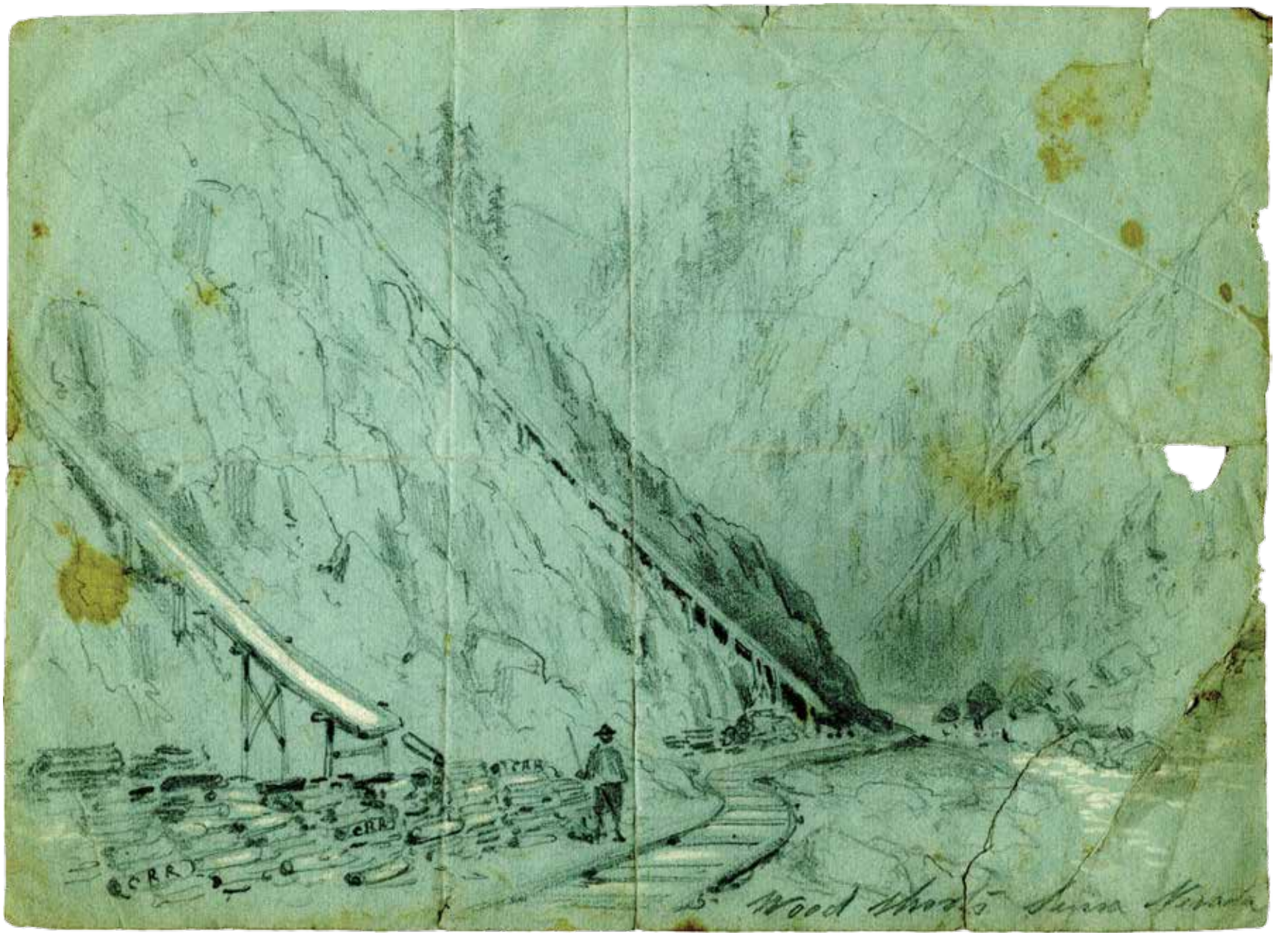

30. Joseph Becker, *Parley Park and White Hills*, 1869–1870.
White gouache and graphite on toned paper, 9.5 x 6.0 in. (24.1 x 15.2 cm). RR–JB–UT–69–70

31. Joseph Becker, *Railroad Pass with Chinese Workers*, 1869–1870.
White gouache and graphite on toned paper, 12.0 x 9.5 in. (30.5 x 24.1 cm). RR-JB-69-70-18

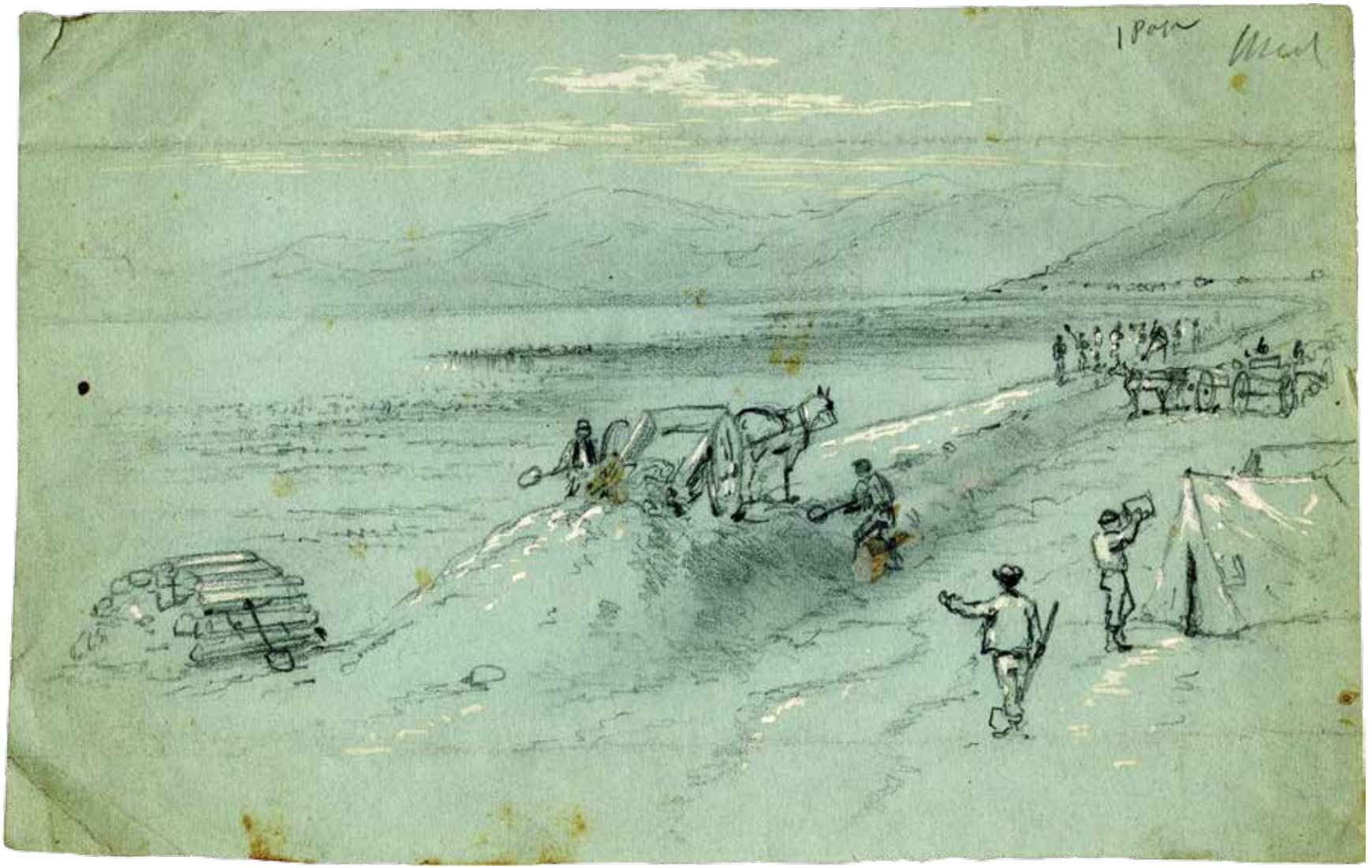
32. Joseph Becker, *Railroad Train and Town Seen at a Distance*, 1869–1870.
White gouache and graphite on toned paper, 9.5 x 6.5 in. (24.1 x 24.1 cm). RR-JB-WY-69-70-6

33. Joseph Becker, *Signing the Hotel Register*, 1869–1870.
White gouache and graphite on toned paper, 6 x 6 in. (15.2 x 15.2 cm). RR-JB-WY-69-70-2

34. Joseph Becker, *Sleeping Quarters at Camp*, 1869–1870.
White gouache and graphite on toned paper, 10.0 x 7.5 in. (25.4 x 19.1 cm). RR-JB-69-70-22

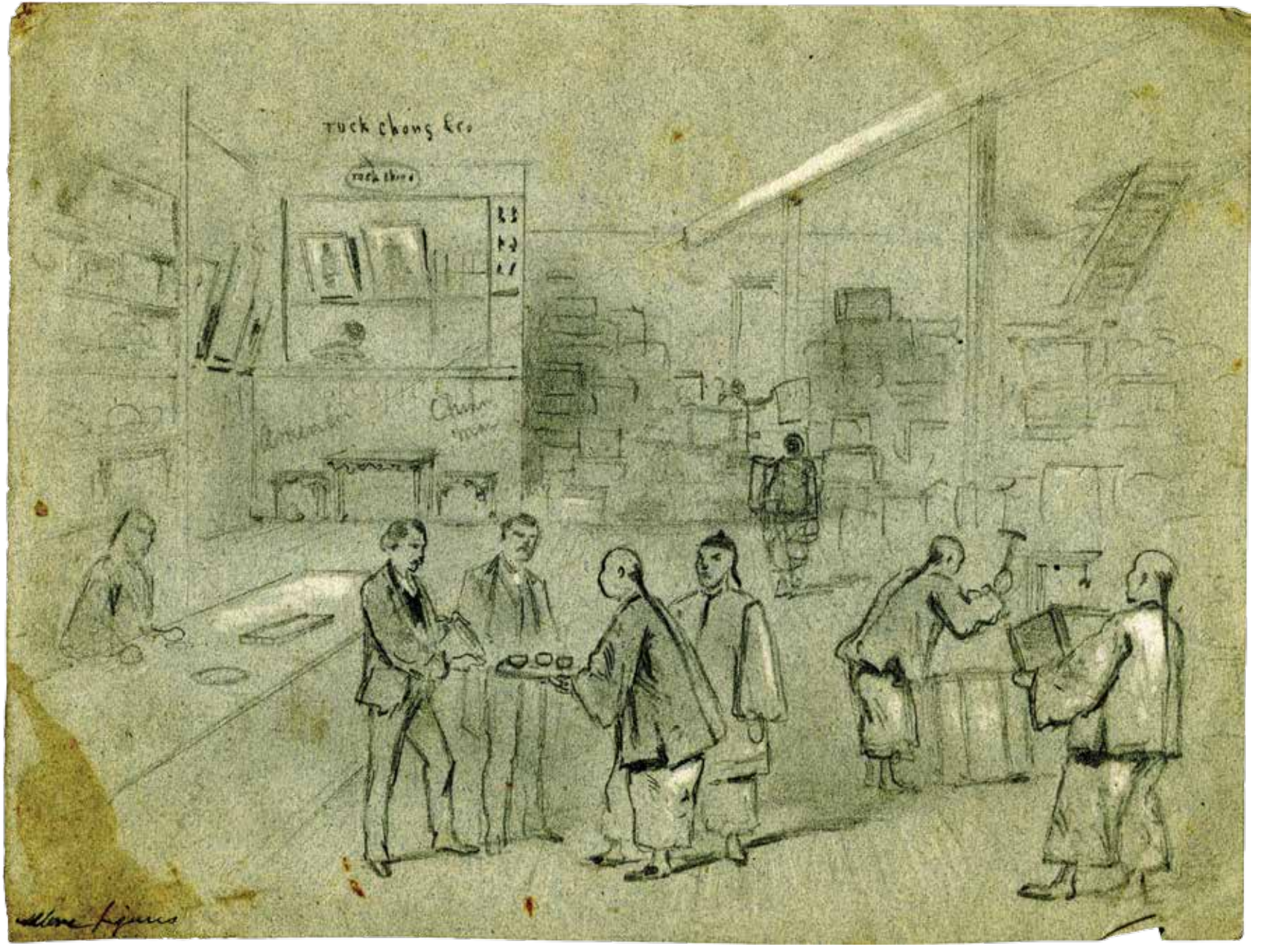



35. Joseph Becker, *Wood Shoots in the Sierra Nevadas*, 1869–1870.
White gouache and graphite on toned paper, 9.5 x 7.0 in. (24.1 x 17.8 cm). RR-JB-69-70-7



36. Joseph Becker, *Workmen Digging the Railroad Bed*, 1869–1870.
White gouache and graphite on toned paper, 10.0 x 6.5 in. (25.4 x 16.5 cm). RR-JB-69-70-11

37. Joseph Becker, *Alley in San Francisco*, 1869–1870.
White gouache and graphite on toned paper, 6.5 x 9.5 in. (16.5 x 24.1 cm). SF-JB-69-70-2




38. Joseph Becker, *At a Chinese Importer in San Francisco*, 1869–1870.
White gouache and graphite on toned paper, 9 x 7 in. (22.9 x 17.8 cm). SF-JB-69-70-5

39. Joseph Becker, *Chinese Herb Seller in San Francisco*, 1869–1870.
White gouache and graphite on toned paper, 8.5 x 5.0 in. (21.6 x 12.7 cm). SF-JB-69-70-4

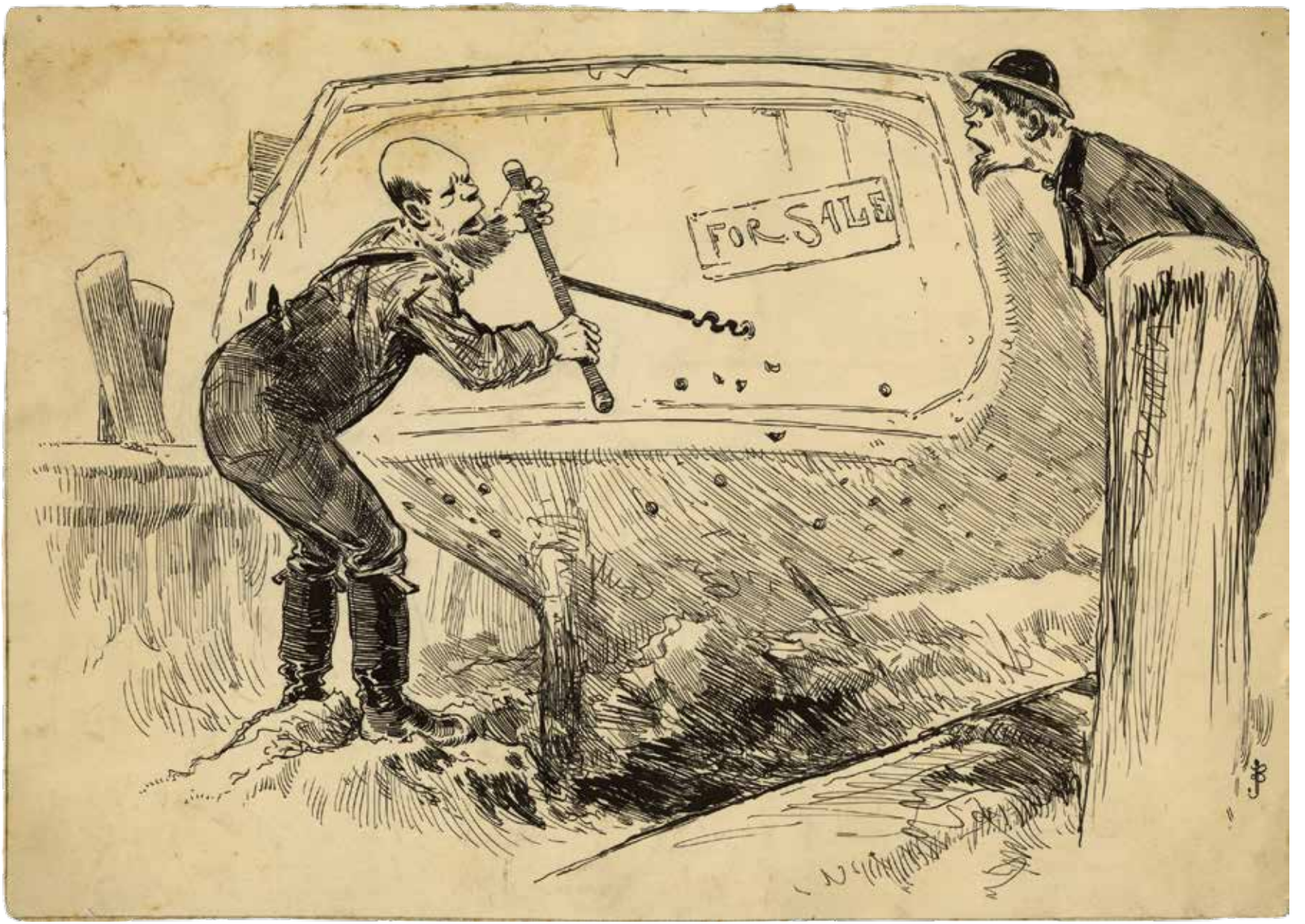
40. Joseph Becker, *Choosing Day Workers*, 1869–1870.
White gouache and graphite on toned paper, 9.0 x 7.0 in. (22.9 x 17.8 cm). SF-JB-CA-69-70-8

41. Joseph Becker, *Opium House*, 1869–1870.
White gouache and graphite on toned paper, 9.5 x 9.5 in. (24.1 x 24.1 cm). SF-JB-CA-69-70-9

42. Joseph Becker, *Outside a California Theatre*, 1869–1870.
White gouache and graphite on toned paper, 9.5 x 5.8 in. (24.1 x 14.7 cm). SF–JB–69–70–12

43. Joseph Becker, *Looking East toward the Lake from the Linns Block Corner of Market and Randolph,* October 1871.
Graphite and white gouache on wove paper, 9.8 x 14.0 in. (24.9 x 35.6 cm). CF-JB-IL-10-71-4

44. Joseph Becker, *Young Ladies of Chicago Making Sandwiches for the Poor Children*, October 1871.
Graphite and white gouache on wove paper, 9.8 x 10.5 in. (24.9 x 26.7 cm). CF-JB-IL-10-71-5




45. Joseph Becker, *For Sale*, n.d.
Black ink on board, 13.0 x 9.0 in. (33.0 x 22.9 cm). PC–24

46. Joseph Becker, *How the Hebrew Would Get There*, n.d.
Black ink and graphite on board, 14.3 x 9.0 in. (36.3 x 22.9 cm). PC–16

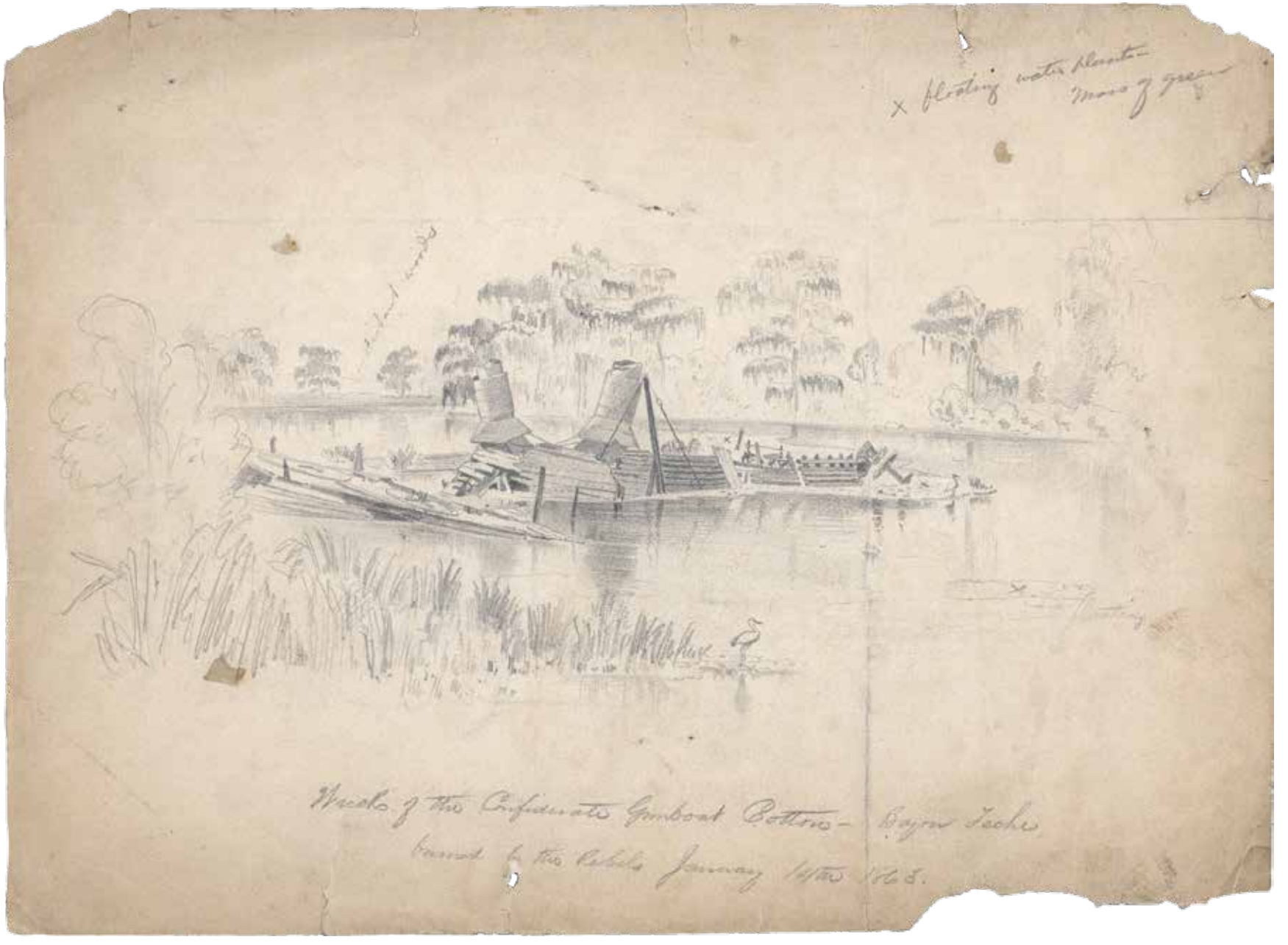
47. Joseph Becker, *Last Christmas in the Field Army of the Potomac*, n.d.
Graphite, charcoal, ink, and gouache on paper, 15.0 x 22.0 in. (38.1 x 55.9 cm).

48. Joseph Becker, *Negro Worship in the South: Taking Up the Collection*, n.d.
Graphite and white gouache on toned paper, 9.5 x 6.5 in. (24.1 x 16.5 cm). AA-JB-ND-1

49. Joseph Becker, *Shaker School Room*, n.d.
Graphite and white gouache on paper, 11.5 x 10.5 in. (29.2 x 26.7 cm). SH–JB–ND–3

50. Joseph Becker, *Singing Meeting*, n.d.
Black and gray ink, graphite, and white gouache on toned paper, 12.0 x 16.0 in. (30.5 x 40.6 cm). SH-JB-ND-1

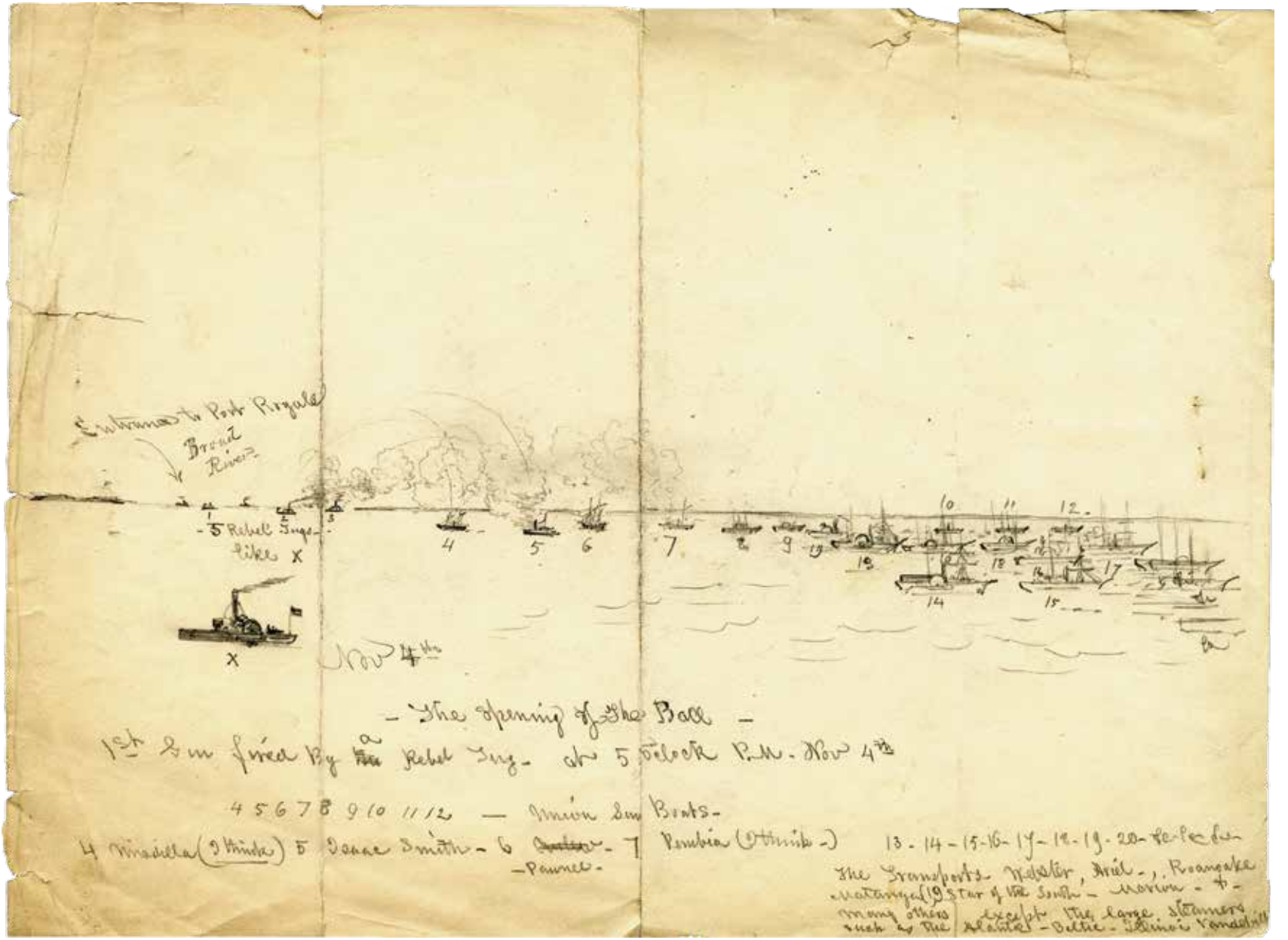
51. Joseph Becker, *Sleeping Room of the Male Shakers*, n.d.
Graphite and white gouache on toned paper, 10.0 x 6.5 in. (25.4 x 16.5 cm). SH–JB–ND–2




52. Charles E. H. Bonwill, *Wreck of the Confederate Gunboat Cotton at Bayou Teche, Louisiana*, September 26, 1863.
Graphite on wove paper, 9.5 x 12.3 in. (24.1 x 31.2 cm). CW-CB-LA-9-26-63

53. Charles E. H. Bonwill, *Battle of Grand Coteau, Louisiana: Furious Attack of the Rebels*, November 4, 1863.
Graphite on wove paper, 7.0 x 9.5 in. (17.8 x 24.1 cm). CW-CB-LA-11-4-63

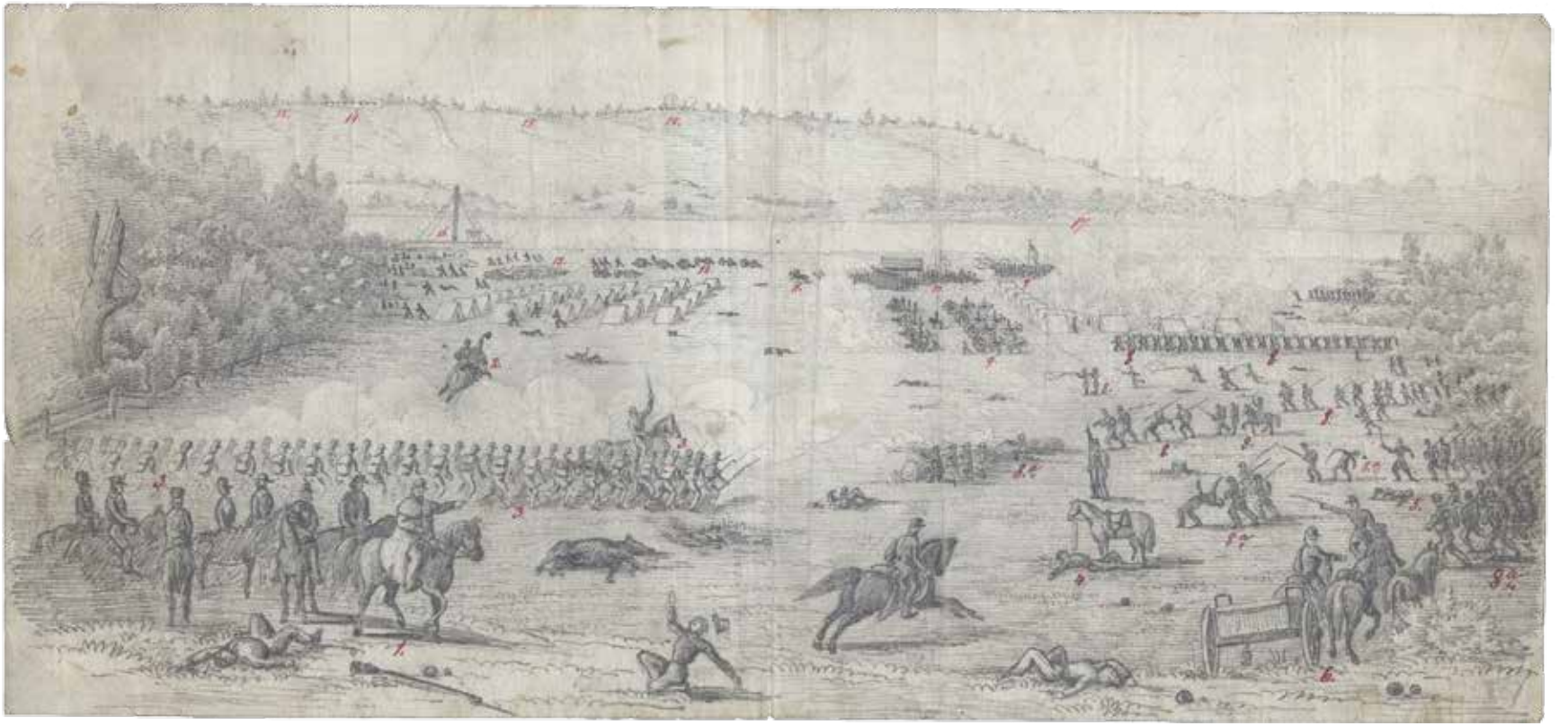
54. S.A. Coleman, *Miller's Regiment of New Jersey Militia Celebrating the Fourth of July on Runyon Avenue at Camp Princeton*, July 4, 1861.
Graphite on wove paper, 12.0 x 10.8 in. (30.5 x 27.4 cm). CW-SAC-VA-7-4-61




55. William T. Crane, *Opening of the Ball: First Gun Fired by a Rebel Tug at Five O'clock*, November 4, 1861.
Graphite on paper, 13.3 x 9.8 in. (33.8 x 24.9 cm). CW-WC-11-4-61

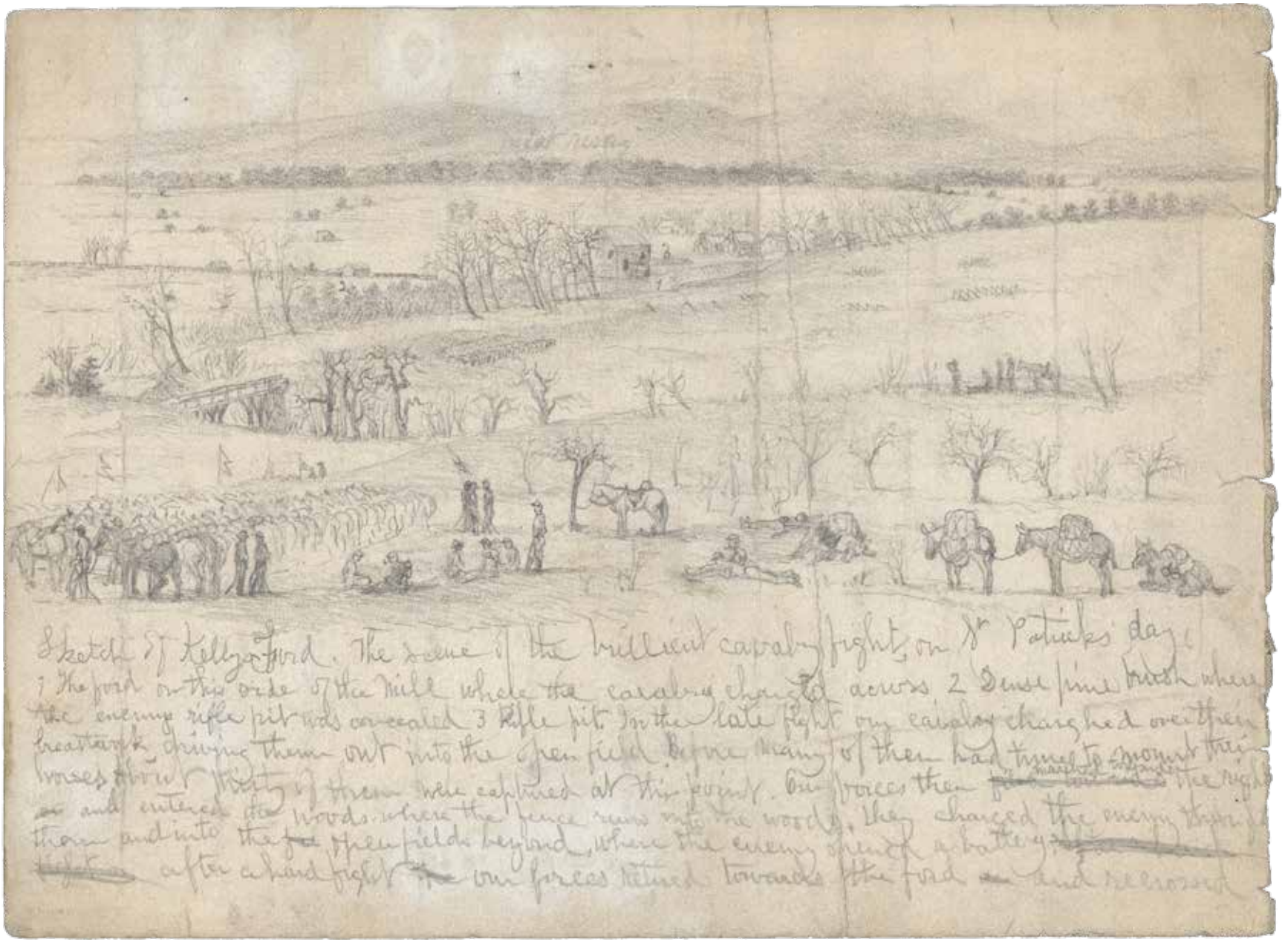
56. William T. Crane, *Bayonet Charge on a Rebel Fort at James Island, South Carolina*, June 16, 1862.
Graphite and ink wash on wove paper, 5.3 x 15.0 in. (13.5 x 38.1 cm). CW-WC-SC-6-16-62

57. William T. Crane, *Siege of Charleston: General View of the Bombardment of Battery Gregg and Fort Wagner*, September 5, 1863.
Graphite and ink wash on wove paper, 6.8 x 19.5 in. (17.3 x 49.5 cm). CW-WC-SC-9-5-63

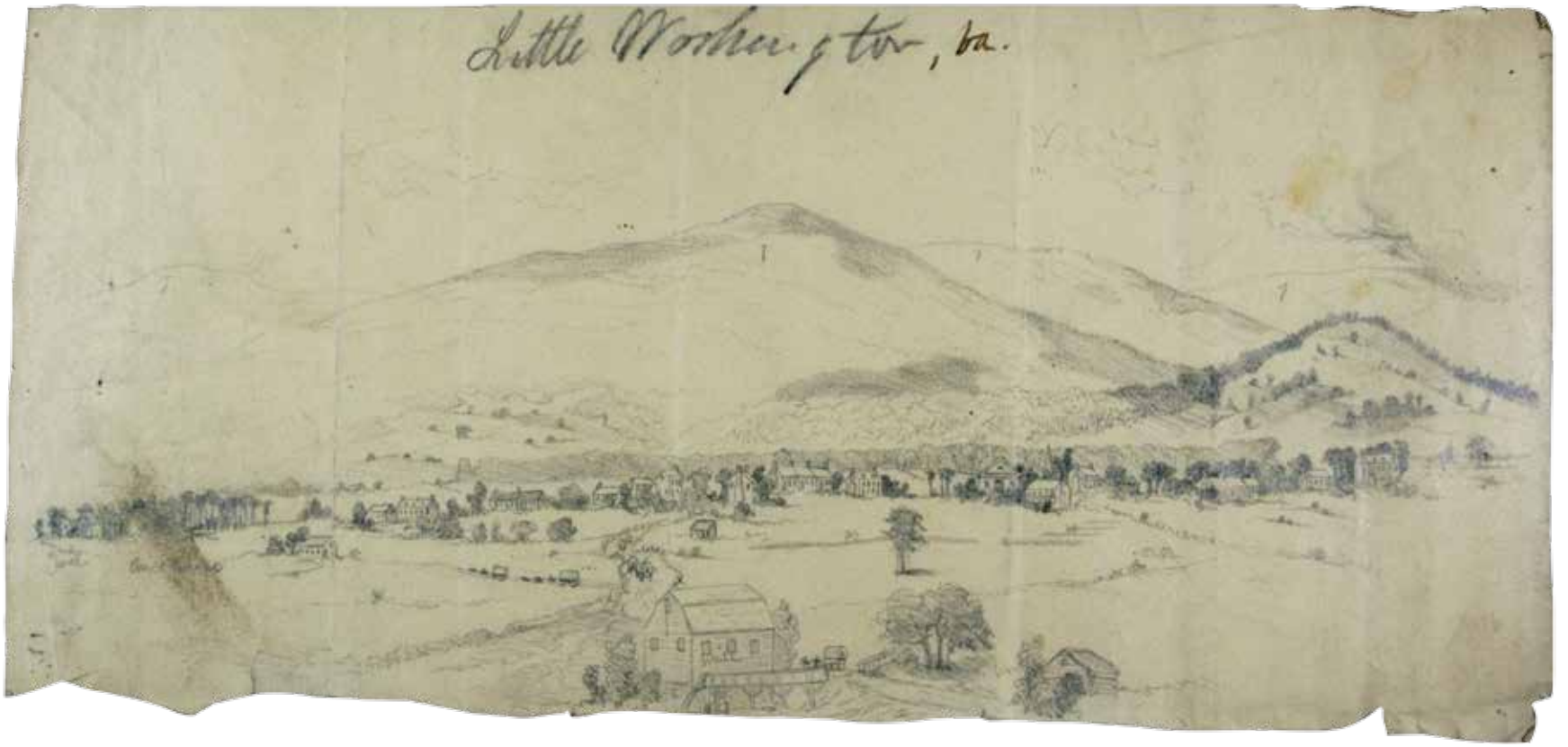


58. Edwin Forbes, *Skirmish near Belmont, Missouri*, November 7, 1861.
Graphite on wove paper, 13.8 x 6.3 in. (35.1 x 16.0 cm). CW-EF-MO-11-7-61

59. Edwin Forbes, *Burnside's Troops Crossing into Virginia*, October 27, 1862.
Graphite on wove paper, 11.5 x 8.5 in. (29.2 x 21.6 cm). CW-EF-VA-10-27-62




60. Edwin Forbes, *St. Patrick's Day Skirmish at Kelly's Ford*, March 17, 1863.
Graphite on wove paper, 11.5 x 8.5 in. (29.2 x 21.6 cm). CW-EF-VA-3-17-63



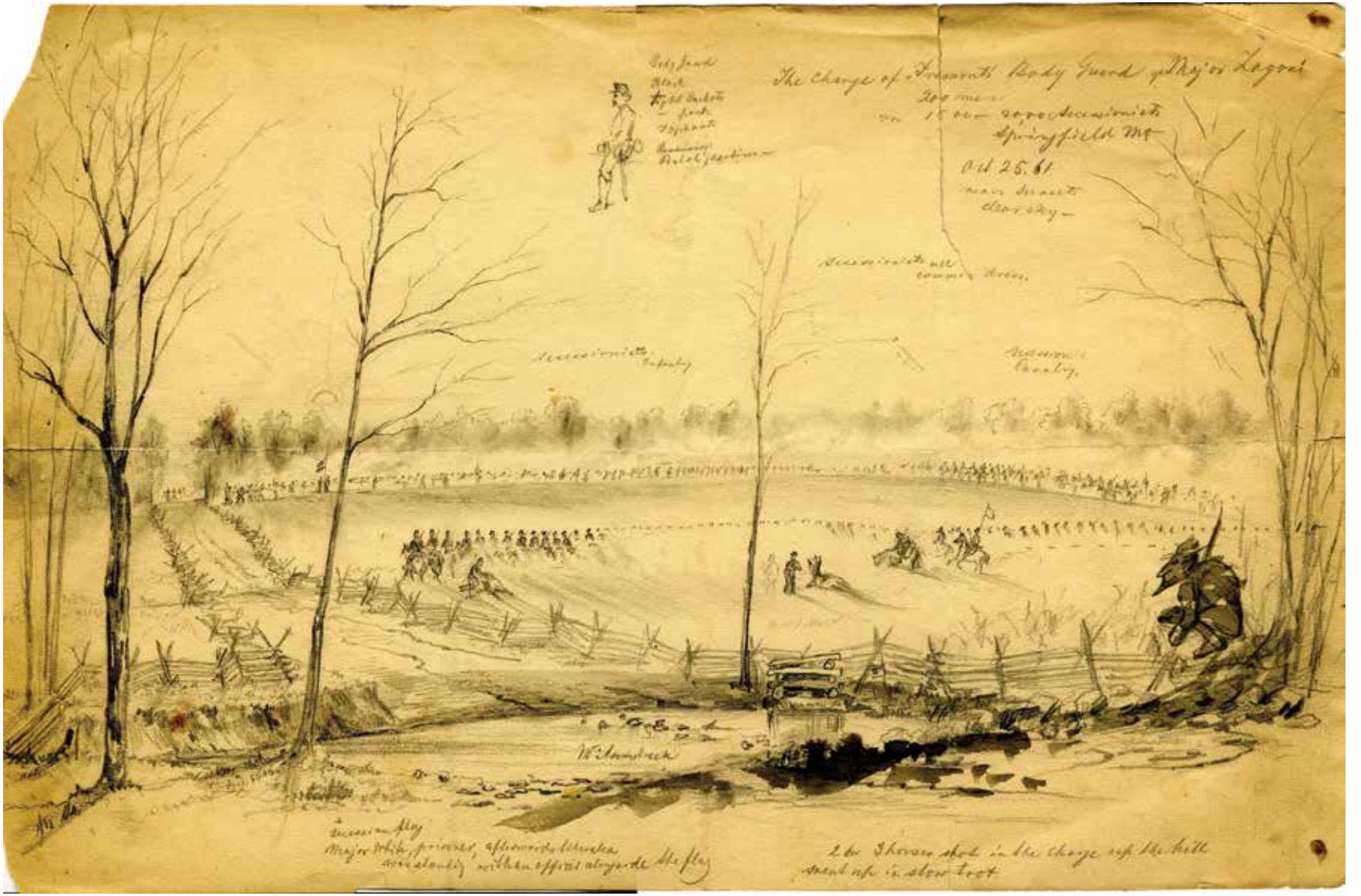

61. Edwin Forbes, *View of Little Washington*, August 2, 1863.
Graphite on wove paper, 13.8 x 6.3 in. (35.1 x 16.0 cm). CW–EF–VA–8–2–63

62. Edward S. Hall, *Occupation of Baltimore* [2], May 8, 1861.
Graphite on paper, 9.5 x 6.5 in. (24.1 x 16.5 cm). CW-ESH-MD-5-8-61

63. John F. E. Hillen, *Battle Two Miles West of Atlanta*, July 30, 1864.
Graphite, brown ink, and brown wash on wove paper, 19.3 x 10.0 in. (49.0 x 25.4 cm). CW-JH-GA-7-30-64

64. Henri Lovie, *Brigadier General Rosecrans and Staff in Clarksburg, West Virginia*, July 1861.
Graphite on wove paper, 14.0 x 9.0 in. (35.6 x 22.9 cm). CW-HL-WV-7-61d

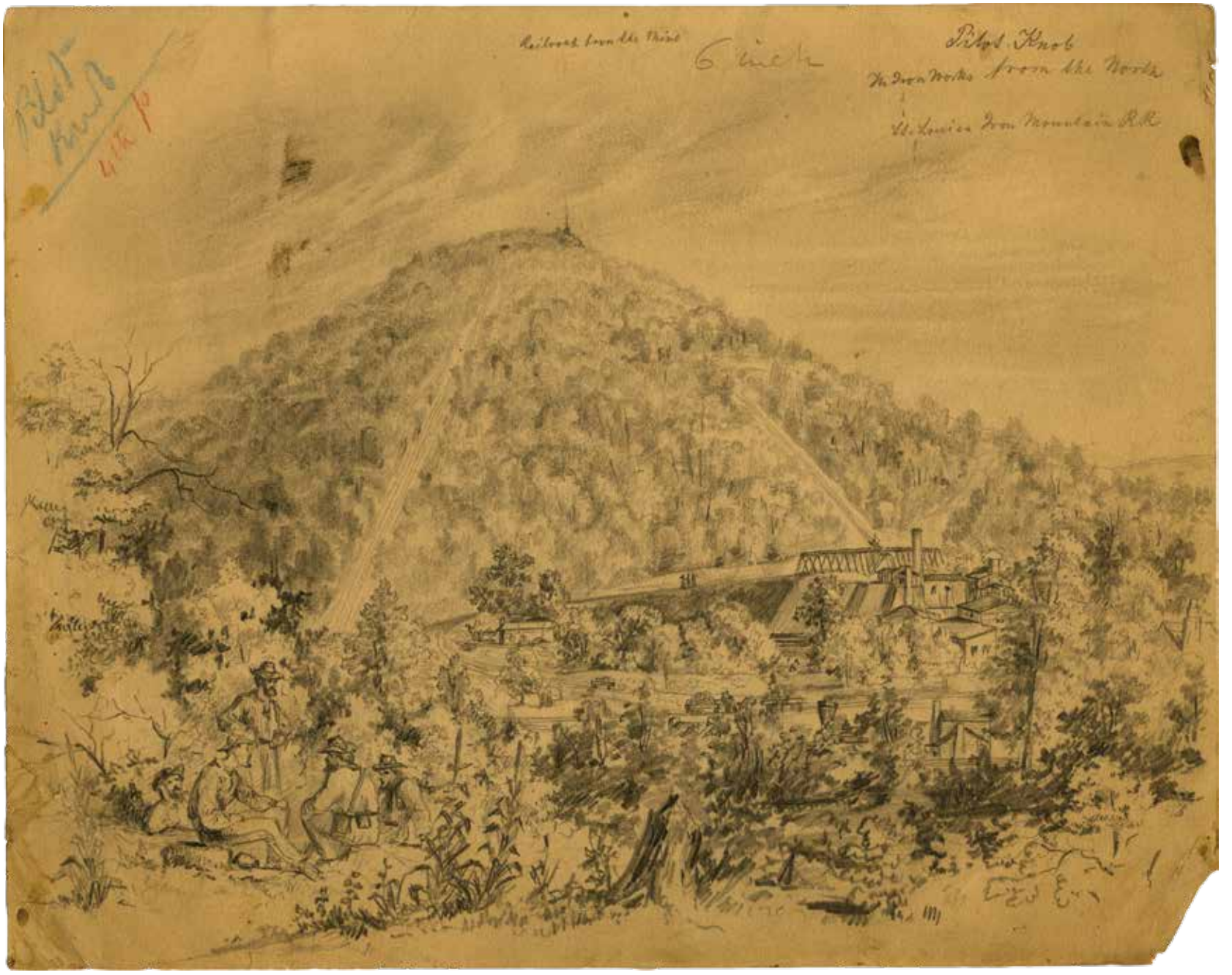
65. Henri Lovie, *Camp Lily: Fremont's Headquarters at Jefferson City, Missouri*, October 5, 1861.
Graphite on wove paper, 7.5 x 9.5 in. (19.1 x 24.1 cm). CW-HL-MO-10-5-61



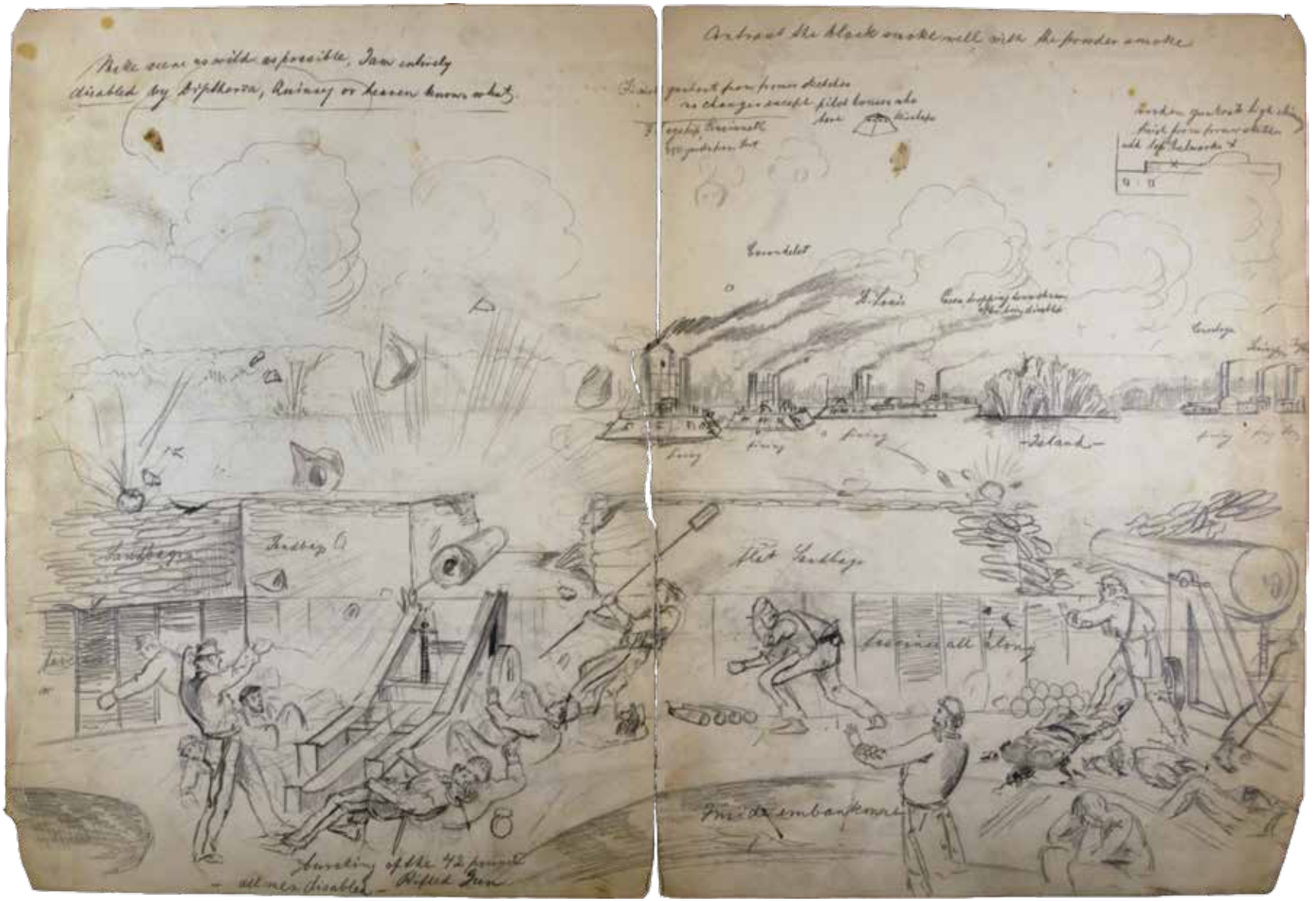

66. Henri Lovie, *Charge of Fremont's Body Guard at Springfield, Missouri*, October 25, 1861.
Graphite and ink on wove paper, 9.0 x 14.0 in. (22.9 x 35.6 cm). CW-HL-MO-10-25-61

67. Henri Lovie, *General Asboth and Staff on Horseback*, December 10, 1861.
Brown chalk on wove paper, 11.3 x 7.8 in. (28.7 x 19.8 cm). CW-HL-MO-12-10-61a

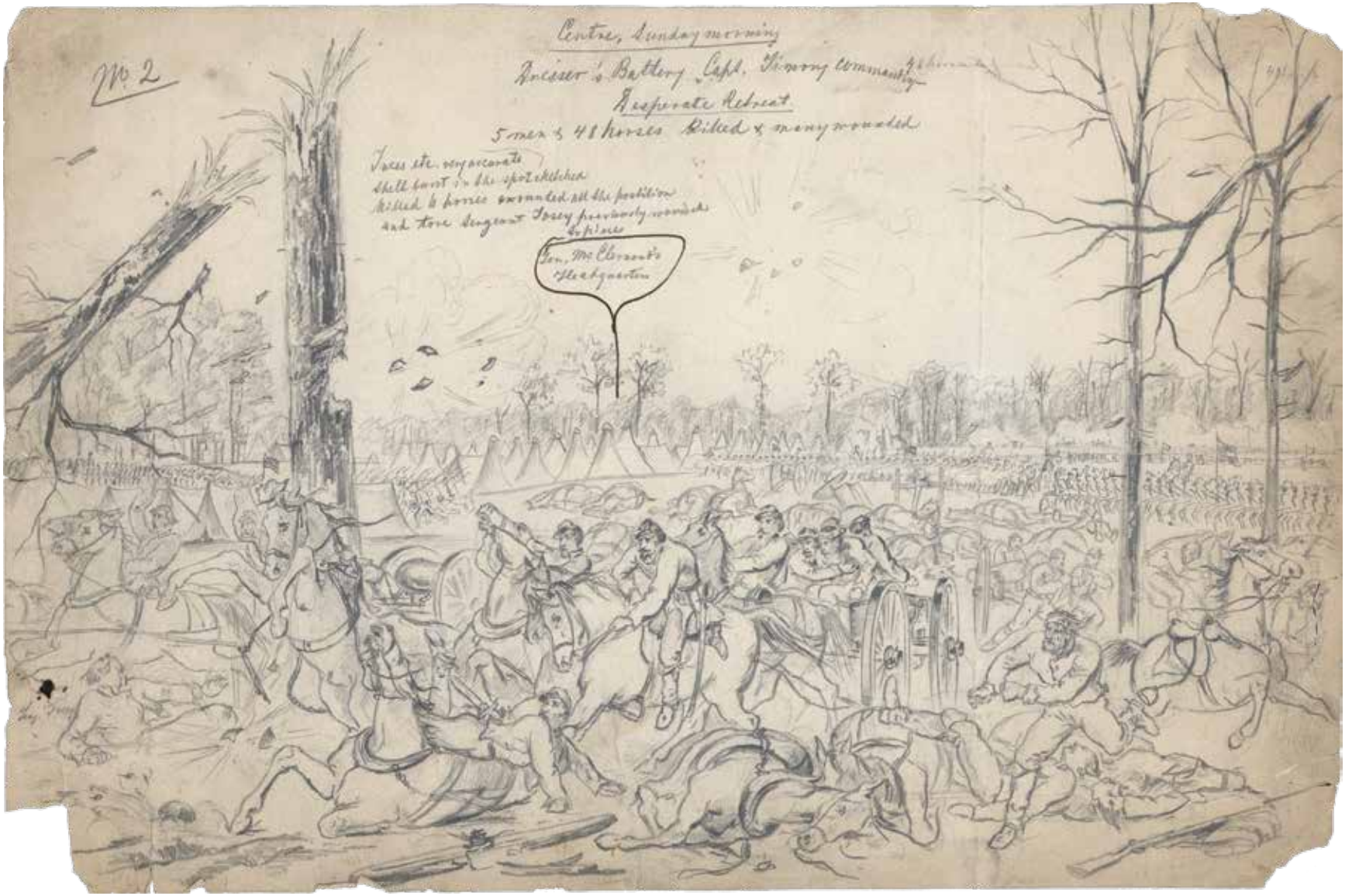
68. Henri Lovie, *Winter Scene at Camp Lafayette near Rolla, Missouri*, December 1861.
Graphite on wove paper, 7.3 x 9.5 in. (18.5 x 24.1 cm). CW-HL-MO-12-61




69. Henri Lovie, *Pilot Knob, Missouri*, 1861.
Graphite on wove paper, 7.5 x 9.5 in. (19.1 x 24.1 cm). CW-HL-MO-61



70. Henri Lovie, *Battle for Fort Henry, Tennessee*, February 6, 1862.
Graphite on wove paper, each panel 13.8 x 10.0 in. (35.1 x 25.4 cm). CW–HL–TN–2–6–62

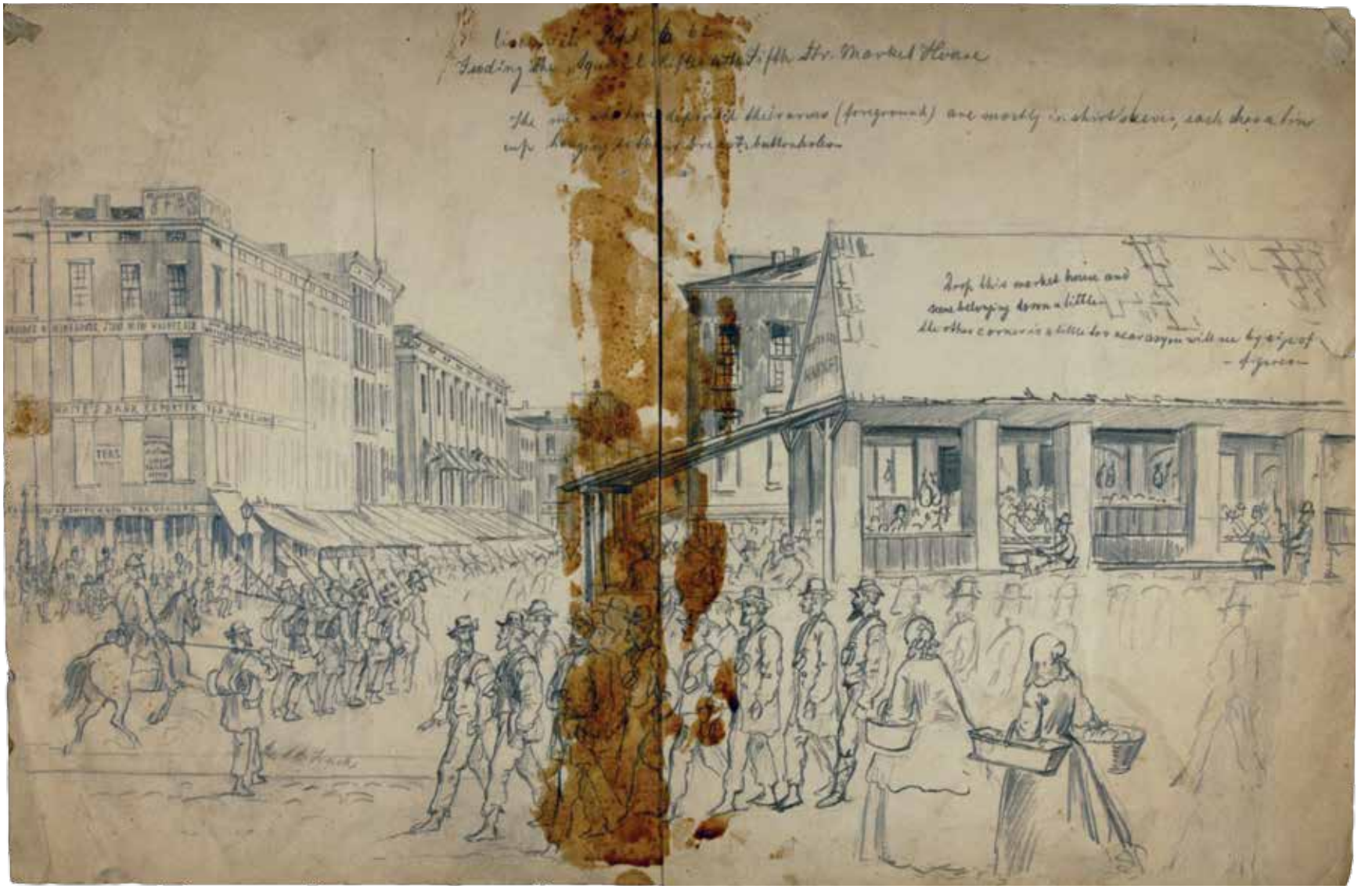



71. Henri Lovie, *Battle of Shiloh or Pittsburg Landing, Tennessee: Centre; Sunday Morning*, April 6, 1862.
Graphite on wove paper, 9.0 x 14.0 in. (22.9 x 35.6 cm). CW-HL-TN-4-6-62c

72. Henri Lovie, *Battle of Shiloh or Pittsburg Landing, Tennessee: General McClernand's Second Defense*, April 6, 1862.
Graphite on wove paper, 9.0 x 13.8 in. (22.9 x 35.1 cm). CW–HL–TN–4–6–62d

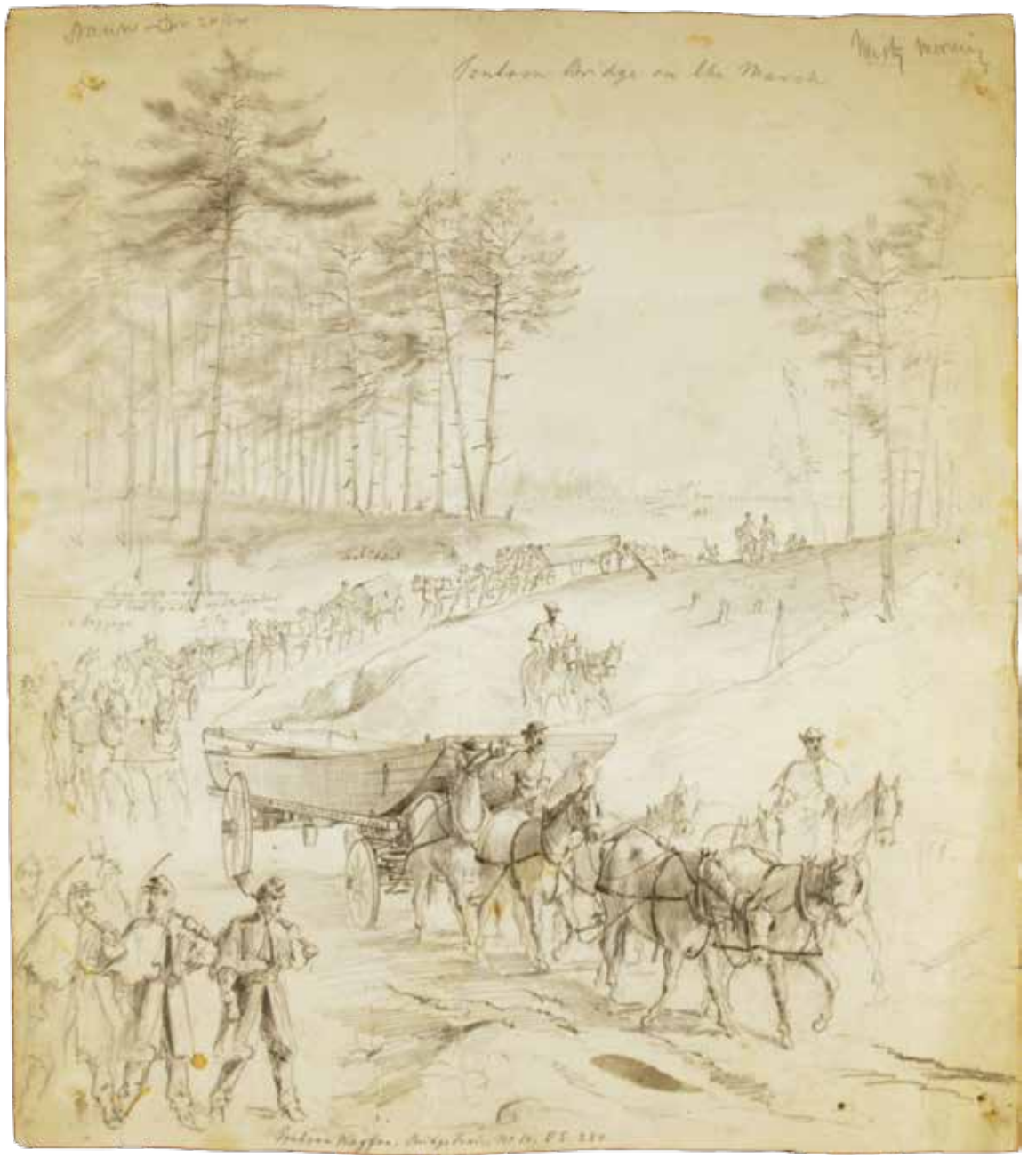
73. Henri Lovie, *Battle of Shiloh or Pittsburg Landing, Tennessee: Left Wing near the Peach Orchard*, April 6, 1862.
Graphite and gray wash on wove paper, 7.5 x 9.5 in. (19.1 x 24.1 cm). CW-HL-TN-4-6-62a

74. Henri Lovie, *Squirrel Rifles: Sketch at the Depot in Xenia, Ohio*, September 5, 1862.
Graphite on wove paper, 9.0 x 14.0 in. (22.9 x 35.6 cm). CW-HL-OH-9-5-62



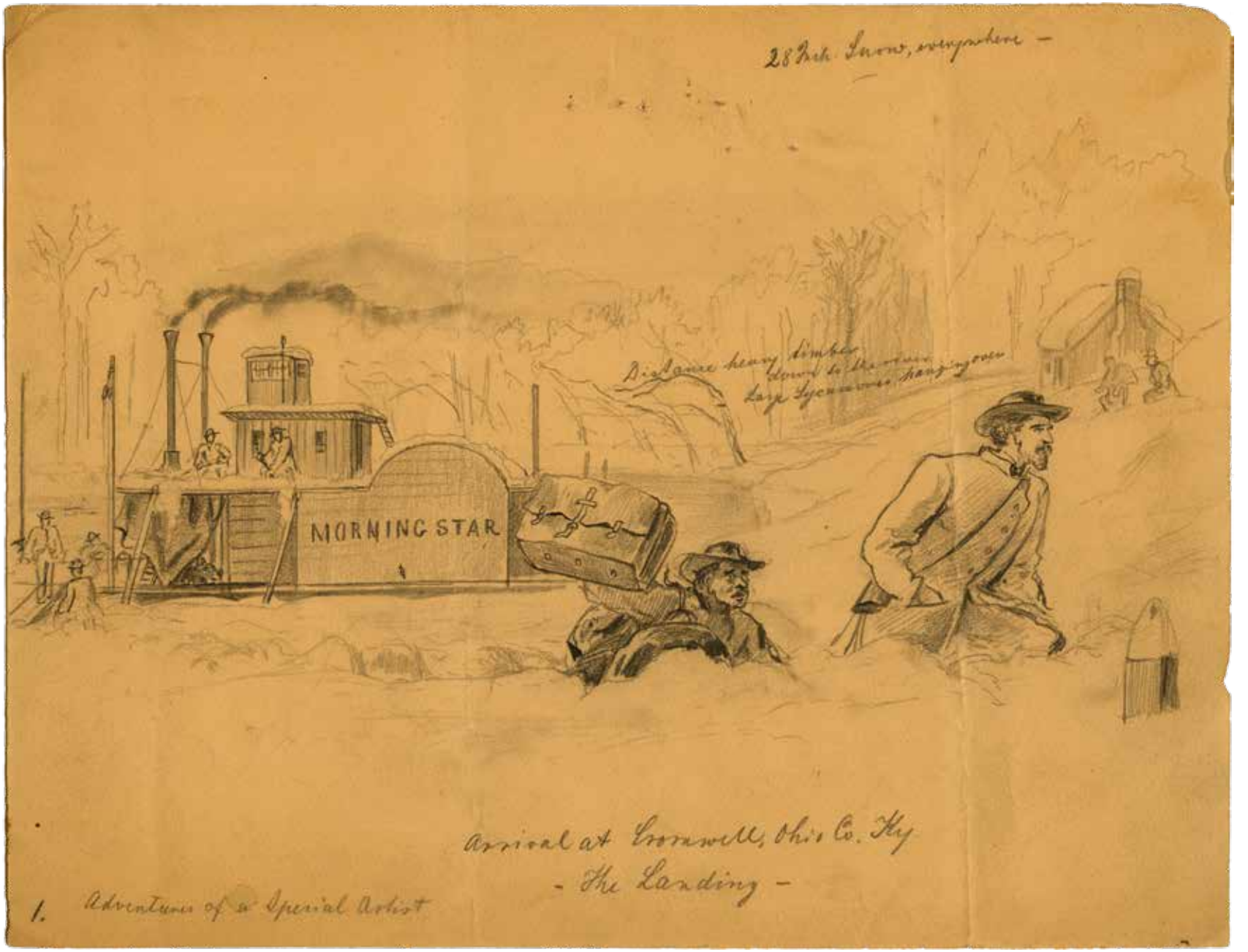
75. Henri Lovie, *Feeding the Squirrel Rifles in Cincinnati, Ohio*, September 6, 1862.
Graphite on wove paper, 9.0 x 14.0 in. (22.9 x 35.6 cm). CW-HL-OH-9-6-62

76. Henri Lovie, *Cincinnatians in Camp*, September 12, 1862.
Graphite on wove paper, 9.0 x 14.0 in. (22.9 x 35.6 cm). CW-HL-KY-9-12-62

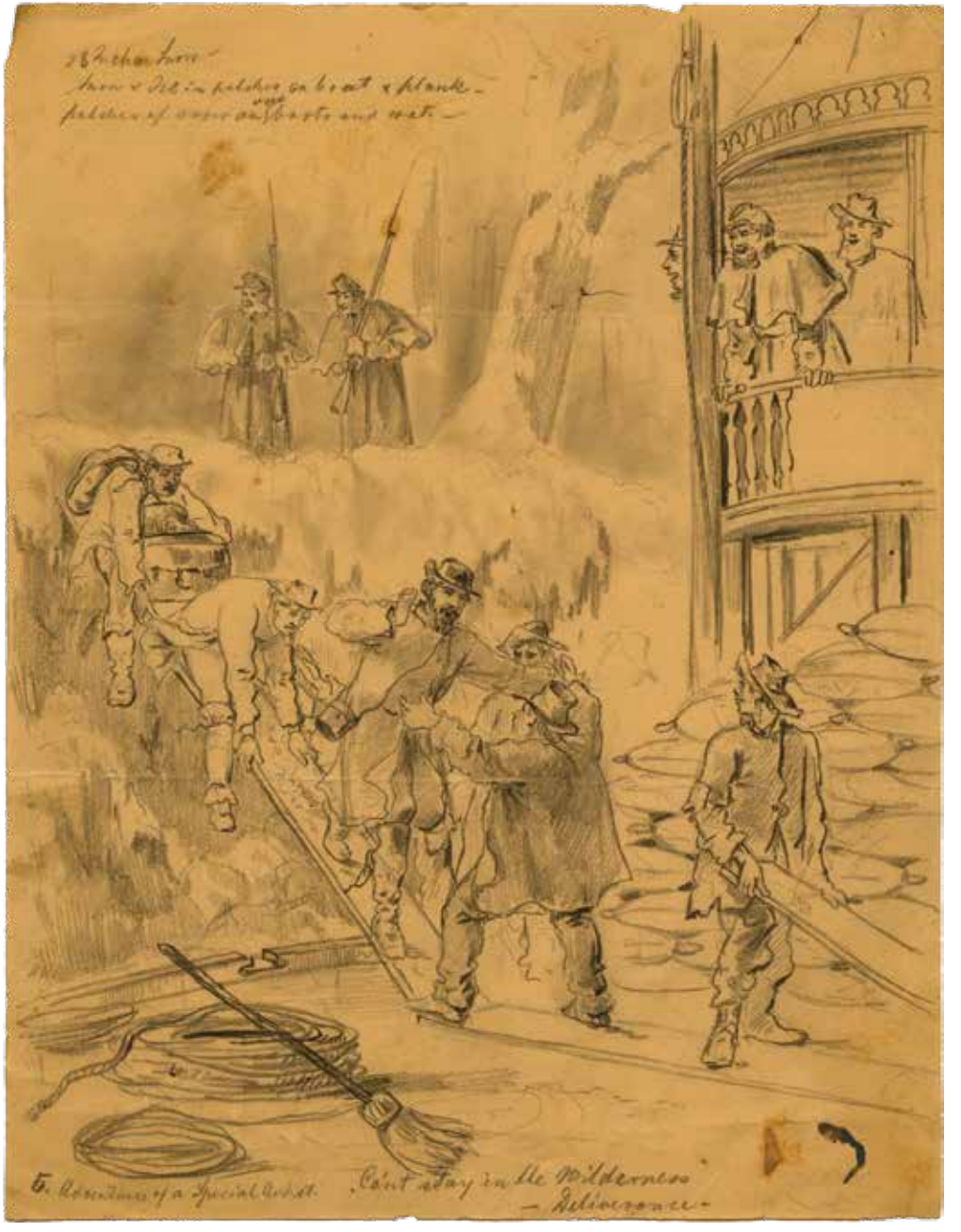



77. Henri Lovie, *Pontoon Bridge on the March*, December 20, 1862.
Graphite on wove paper, 10.8 x 9.5 in. (27.4 x 24.1 cm). CW-HL-VA-12-20-62

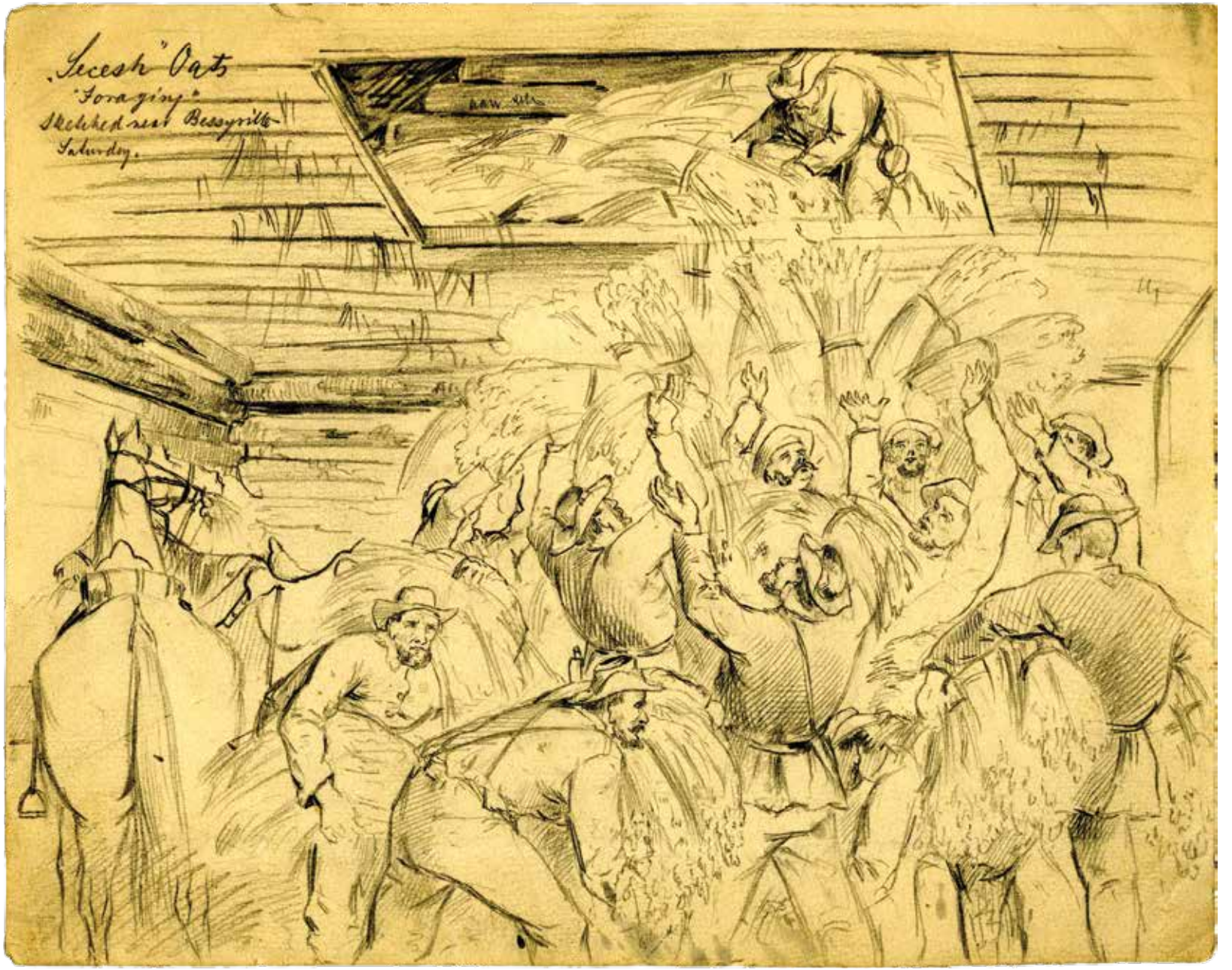
78. Henri Lovie, *Bravest of the Brave: General Rosecrans Reconnoitering*, January 1863.
Graphite on wove paper, 17.0 x 13.8 in. (43.2 x 35.1 cm). CW-HL-TN-63a




79. Henri Lovie, *Adventures of a Special Artist, Part I: The Landing*, February 17, 1863.
Graphite on wove paper, 7.5 x 9.5 in. (19.1 x 24.1 cm). CW-HL-KY-2-17-63a



80. Henri Lovie, *Adventures of a Special Artist, Part V: Deliverance*, February 17, 1863.
Graphite on wove paper, 9.5 x 7.5 in. (24.1 x 19.1 cm). CW-HL-KY-2-17-63b



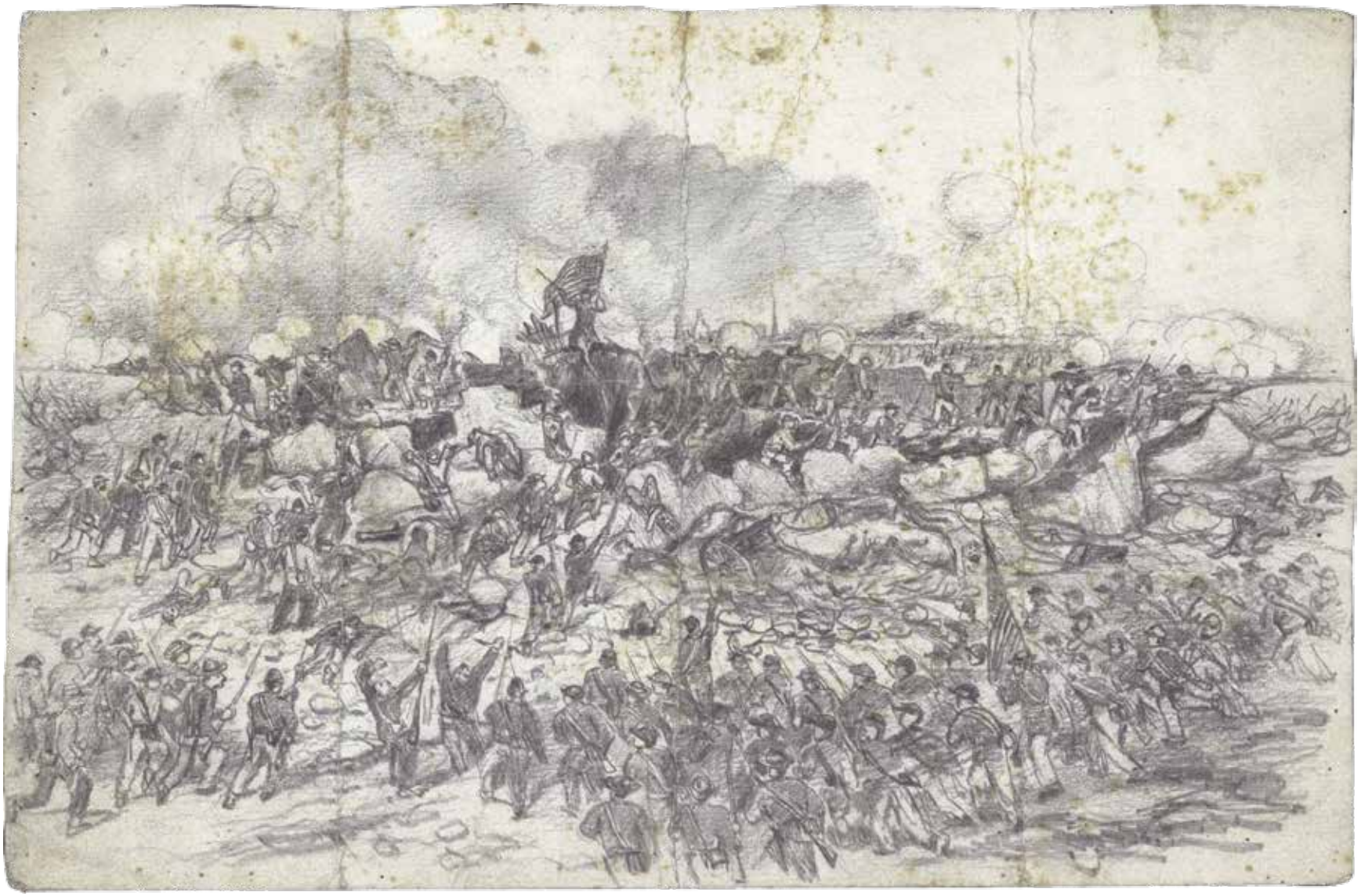

81. Henri Lovie, *Foraging Secesh Oats*, n.d.
Graphite on wove paper, 7.5 x 9.5 in. (19.1 x 24.1 cm). CW-HL-MO-NDa

82. Henri Lovie, *Foraging: Slaughter of the Innocents*, n.d.
Graphite on wove paper, 7.5 x 9.5 in. (19.1 x 24.1 cm). CW-HL-MO-NDb

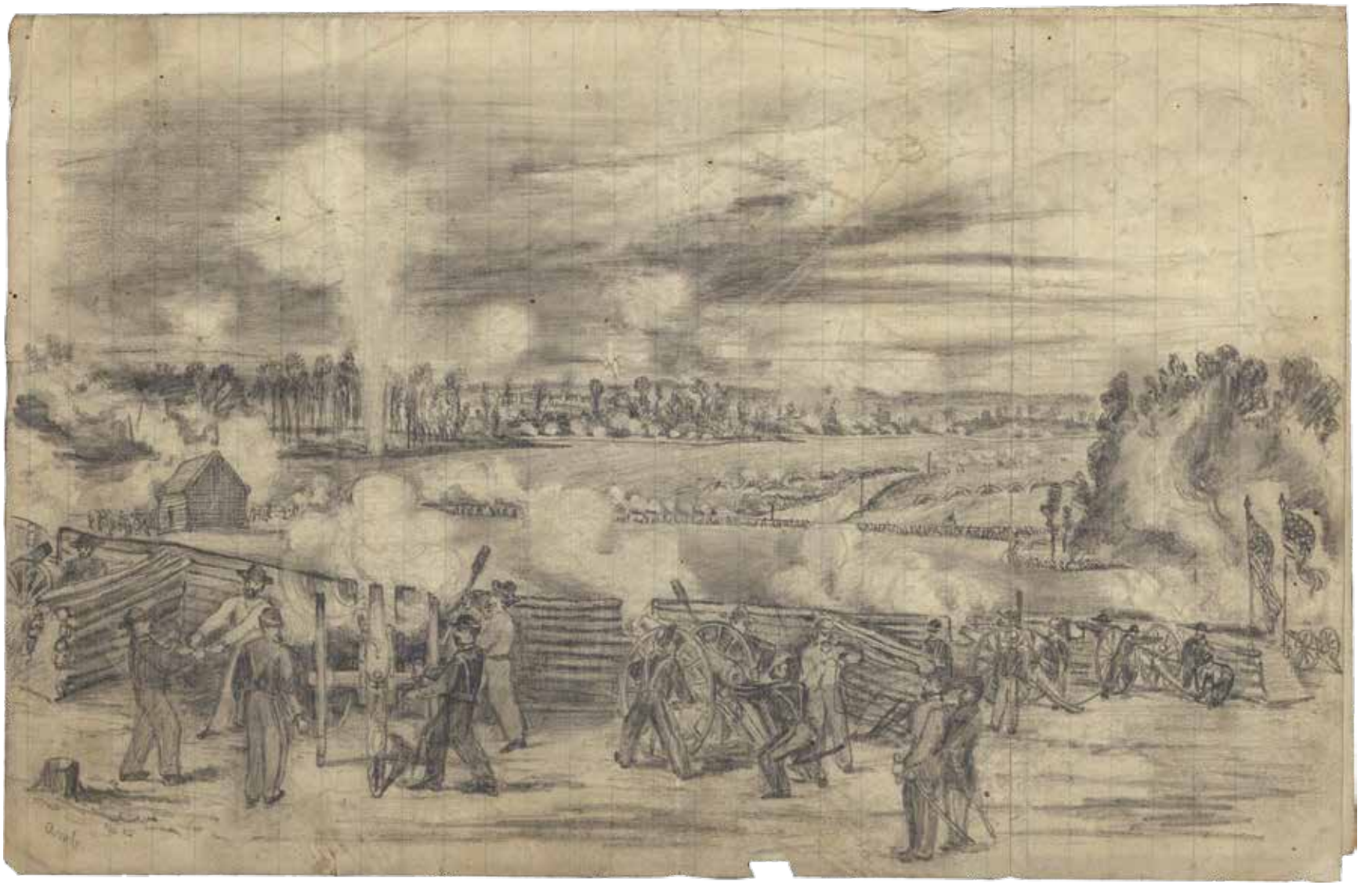
83. Arthur Lumley, *Assassination of Colonel Ellsworth*, May 24, 1861.
Graphite on wove paper, 9.8 x 13.3 in. (24.9 x 33.8 cm). CW-AL-VA-5-24-61

84. Arthur Lumley, *Dinner Time: Twenty-Second Regiment*, January 1, 1862.
Graphite and white gouache on wove paper, 7.3 x 9.3 in. (18.5 x 23.6 cm). CW-AL-VA-1-1-62

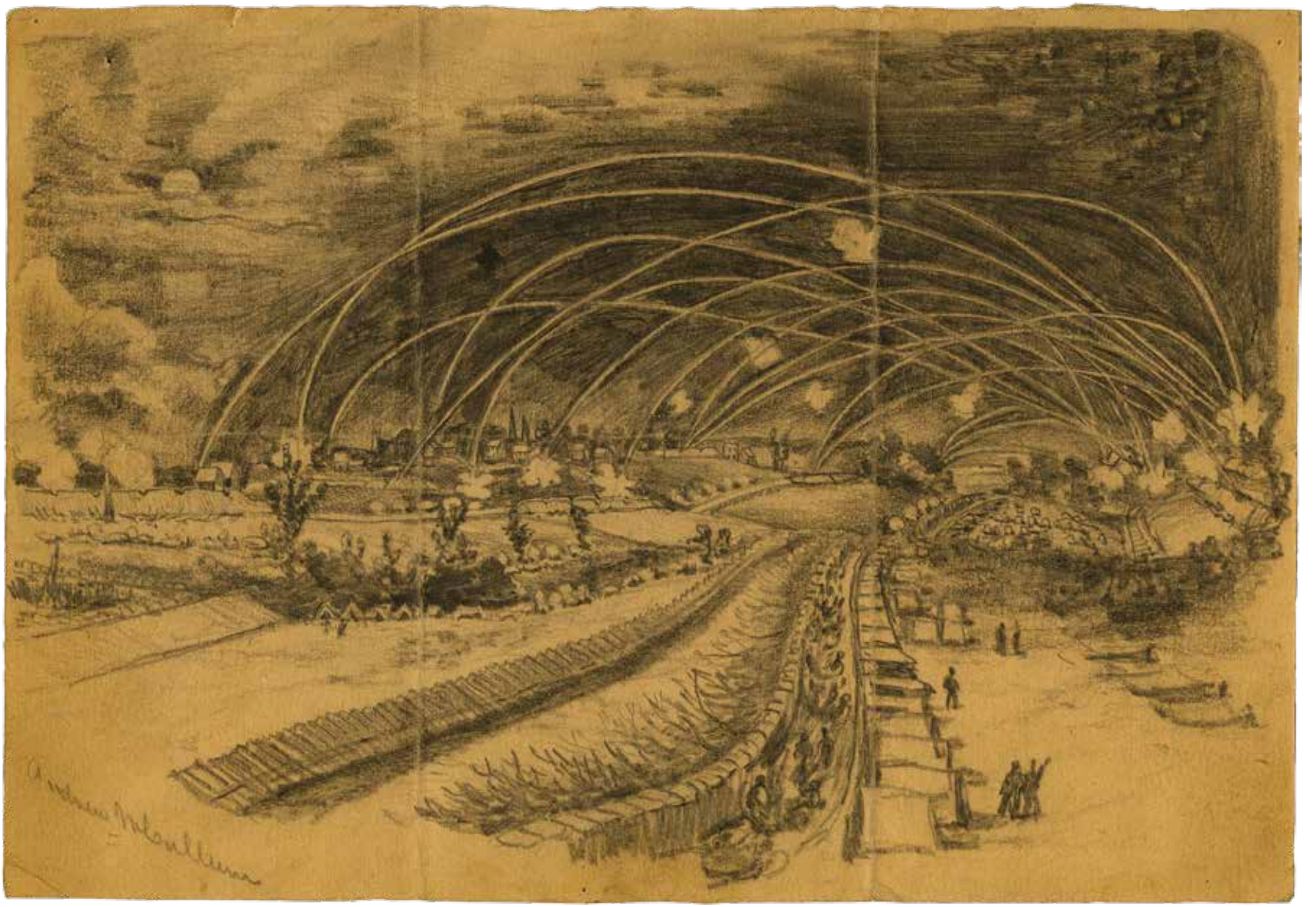
85. A. M., *Indians and Guides in Camp*, n.d.
Graphite on wove paper, 9.8 x 7.5 in. (24.9 x 19.1 cm). IW-AM-ND



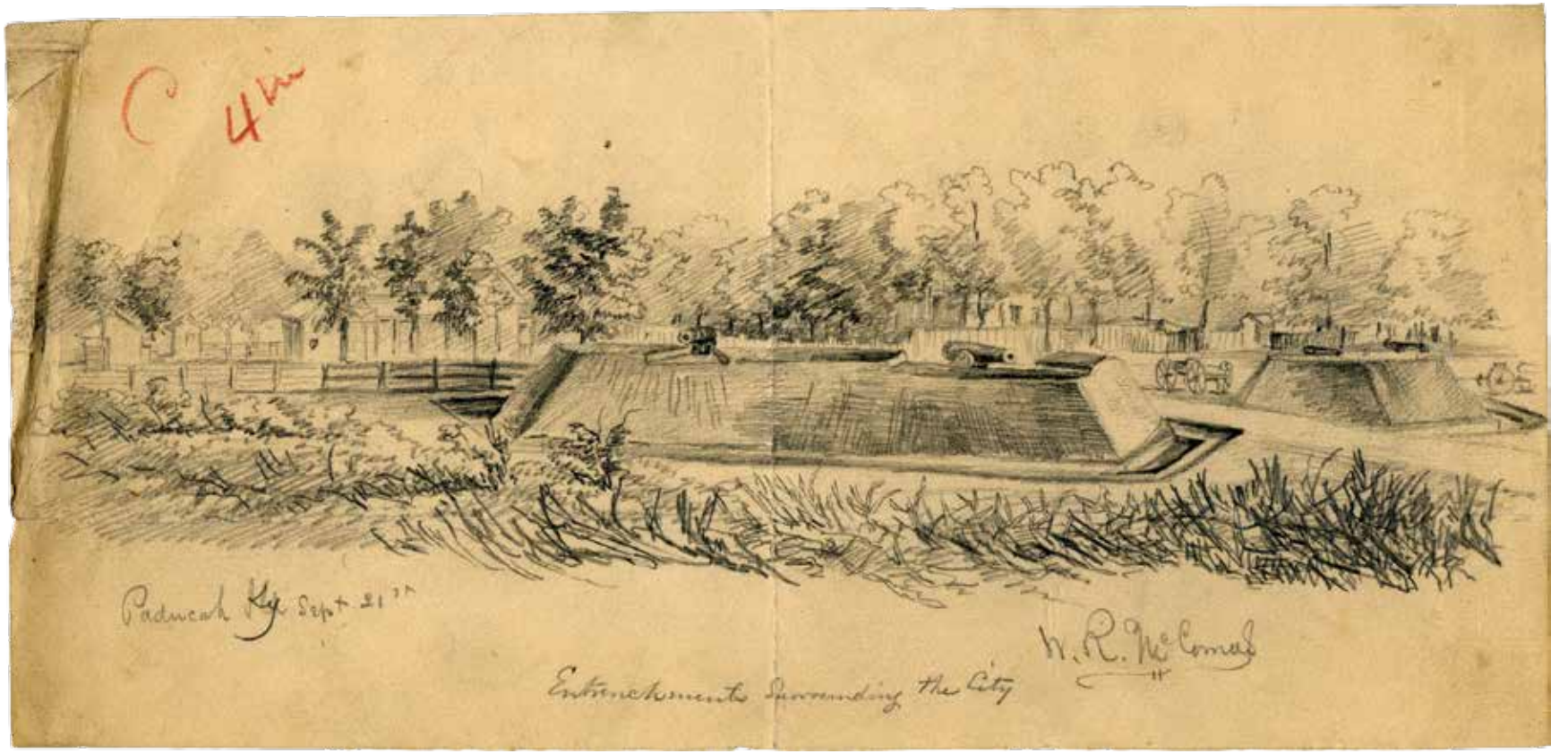
86. Andrew McCallum, *Siege of Petersburg: Charge into the Crater*, July 30, 1864.
Graphite on heavy wove paper, 12.5 x 8.0 in. (31.8 x 20.3 cm). CW-AM-VA-7-30-64b



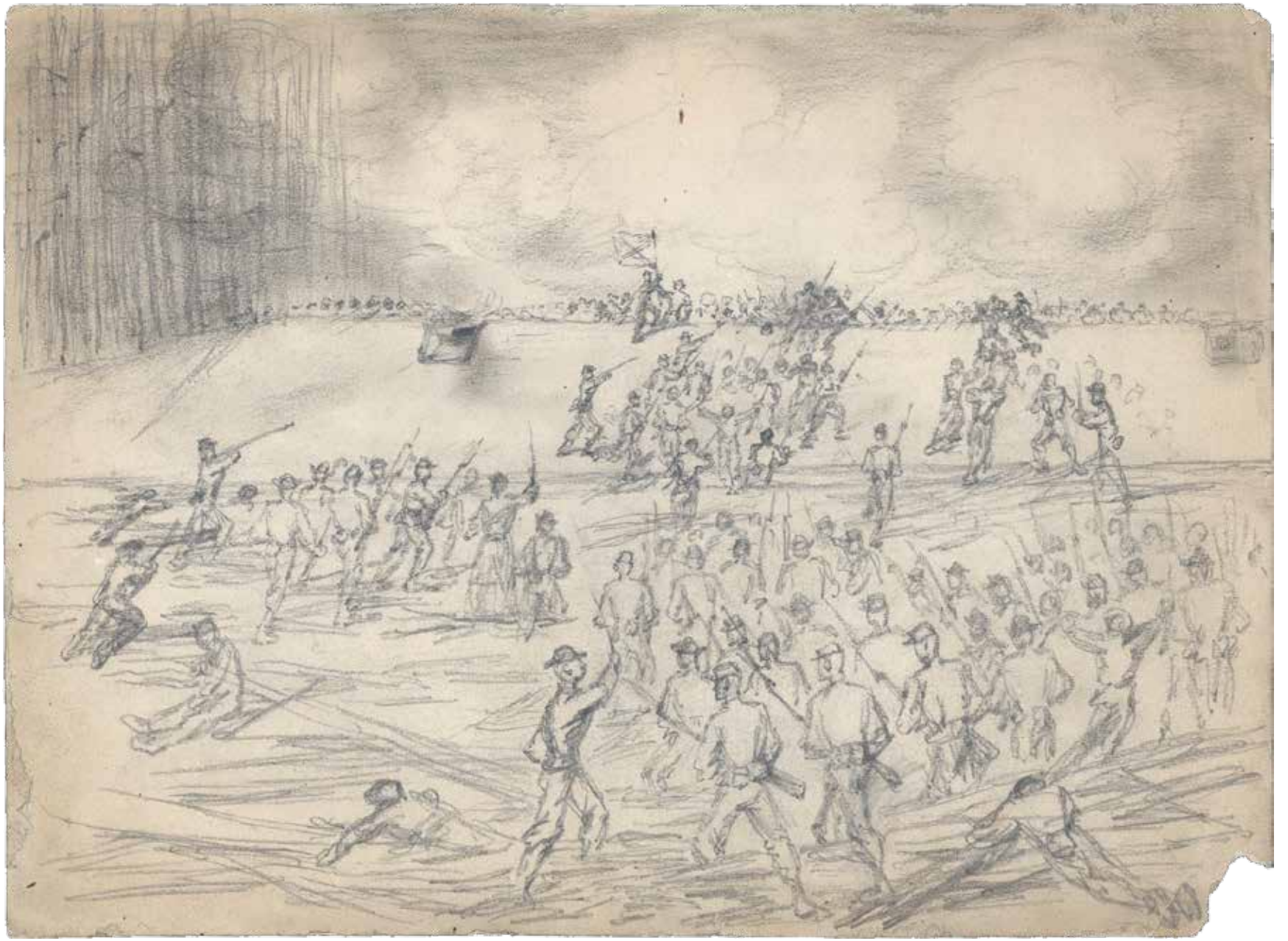
87. Andrew McCallum, *Siege of Petersburg: Shelling the Town from Captain Roemer's Battalion*, July 30, 1864.
Graphite on blue-lined laid white paper, 25.0 x 16.0 in. (63.5 x 40.6 cm). CW-AM-VA-7-30-64a



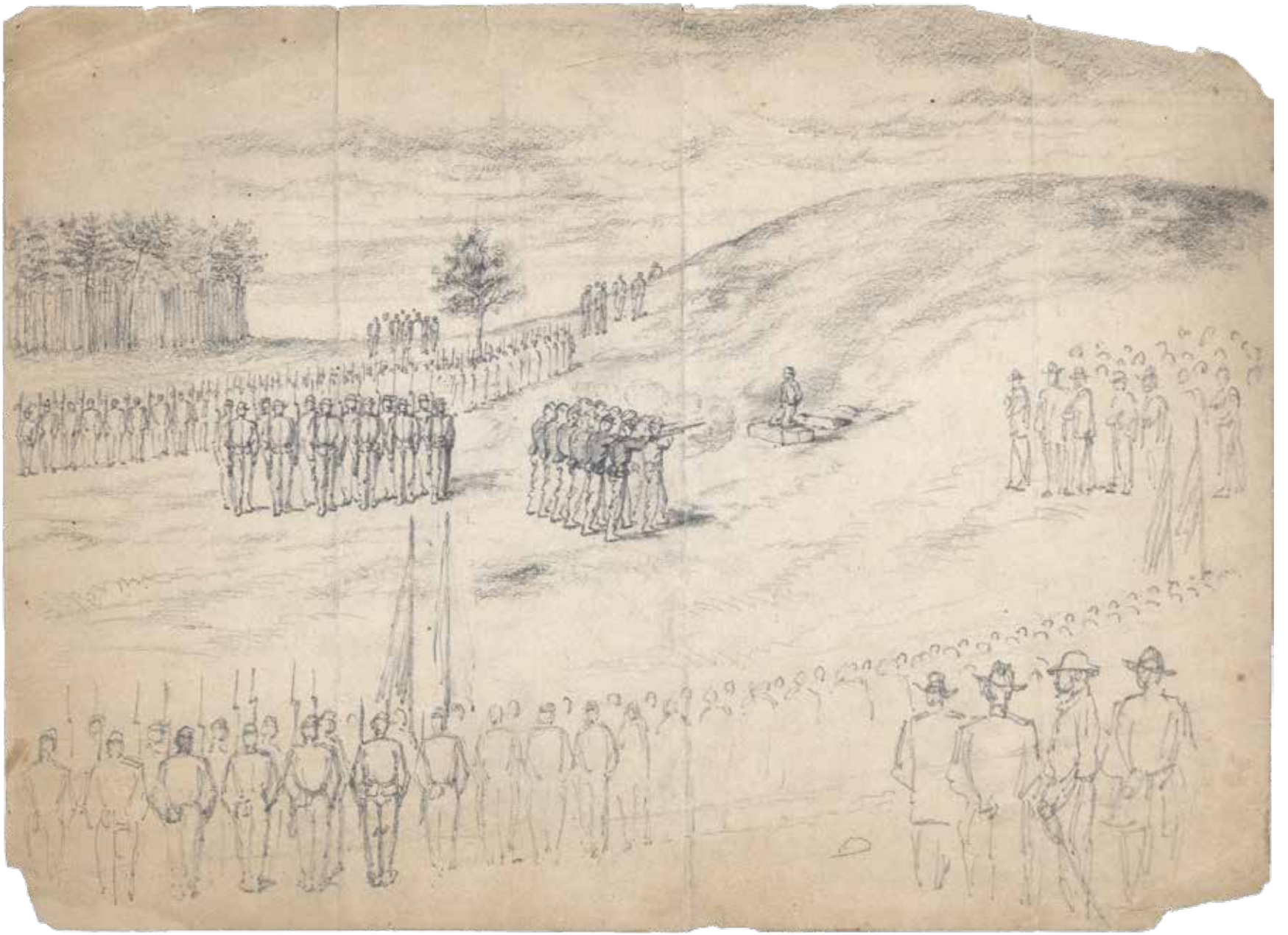
88. Andrew McCallum, *Siege of Petersburg: A Night Attack*, March 31, 1865.
Graphite on wove paper, 9.5 x 6.5 in. (24.1 x 16.5 cm). CW-AM-VA-3-31-65




89. William R. McComas, *Entrenchments Surrounding the City*, September 21, 1861.
Graphite on paper, 11.0 x 5.3 in. (27.9 x 13.5 cm). CW-WRMC-KY-9-21-61



90. Edward F. Mullen, *Regiment of the Eighteenth Corps Carrying a Portion of Beauregard's Line in Front of Petersburg*, July 23, 1863.
Graphite on heavy gauge wove paper, 9.8 x 13.3 in. (24.9 x 33.8 cm). CW-EM-VA-7-23-64

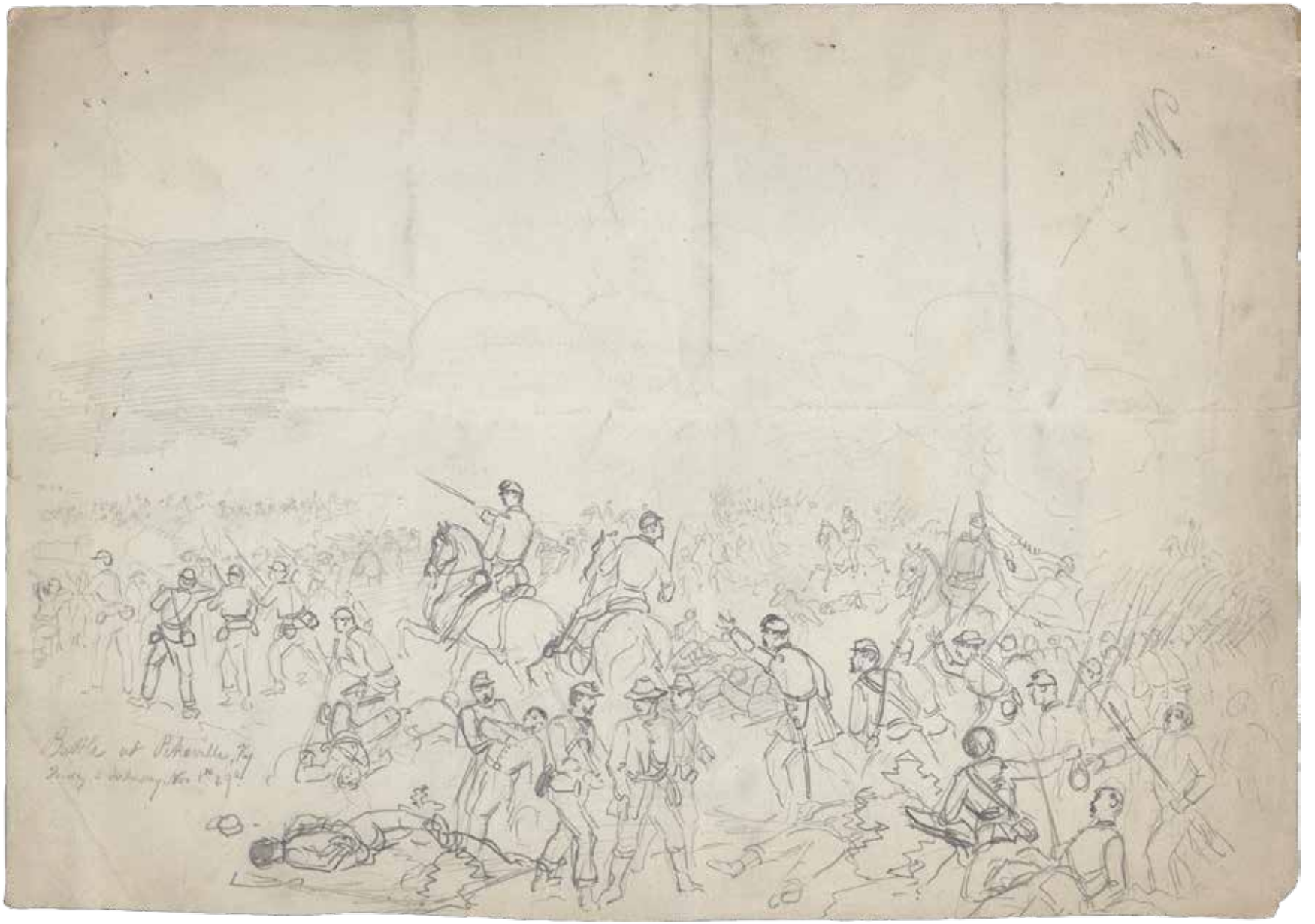


91. Edward F. Mullen, *Execution of Frank McIlhenney: Deserted to the Enemy*, August 8, 1864.
Graphite on heavy gauge wove paper, 9.8 x 13.3 in. (24.9 x 33.8 cm). CW-EM-VA-8-8-64

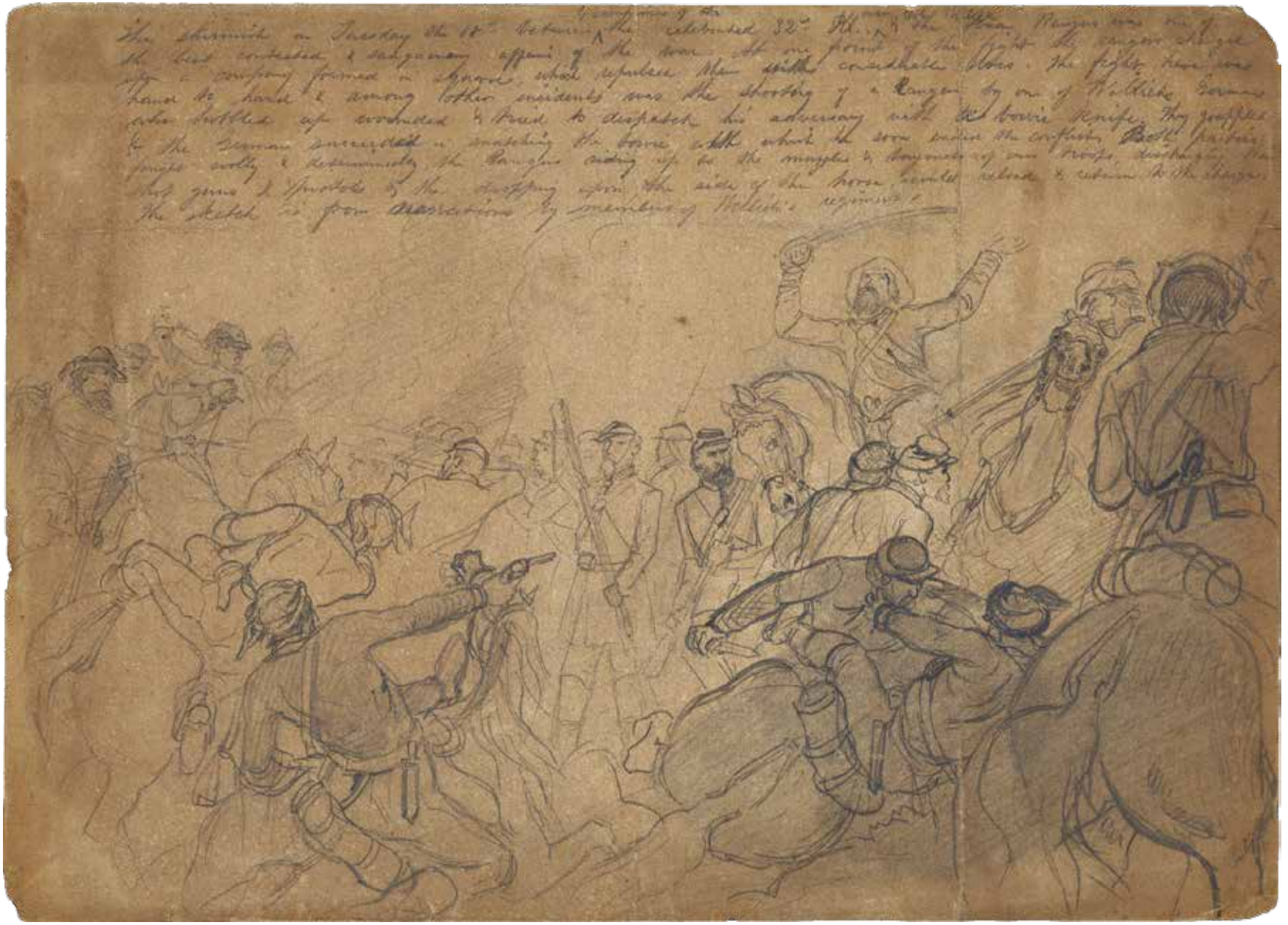
92. Edward F. Mullen, *Confederate Soldiers Taking the Oath of Allegiance*, October 1, 1864.
Graphite on heavy gauge wove paper, 9.8 x 13.3 in. (24.9 x 33.8 cm). CW-EM-VA-10-1-64

93. Edward F. Mullen, *Crows Nest Signal Station on the James River*, n.d.
Graphite on wove paper, 9.5 x 5.3 in. (24.1 x 13.5 cm). CW-EM-VA-64

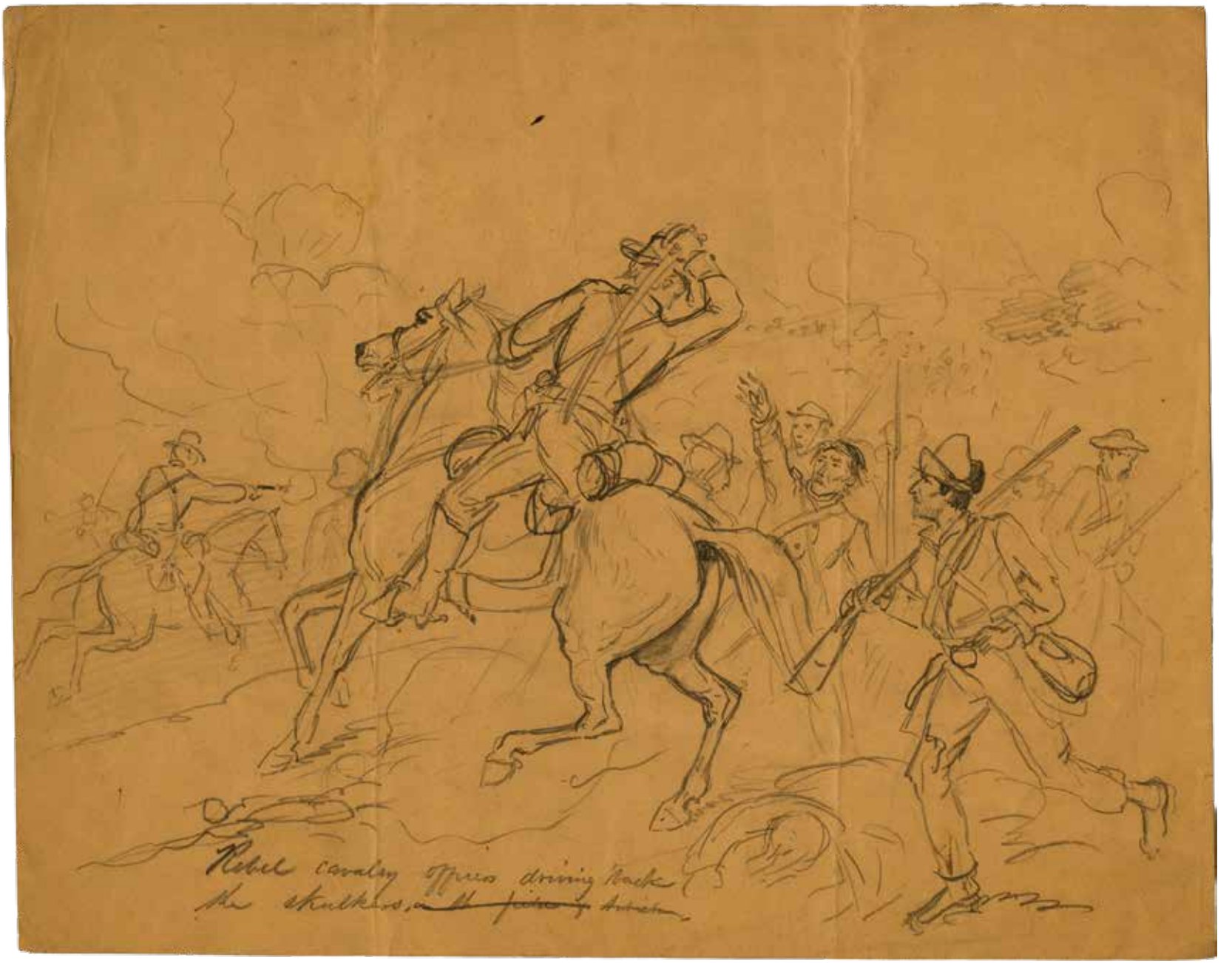
94. Edward F. Mullen, *Drumming out a Coward Officer*, n.d.
Graphite on heavy gauge wove paper, 6.8 x 9.5 in. (17.3 x 24.1 cm). CW-EM-NDd



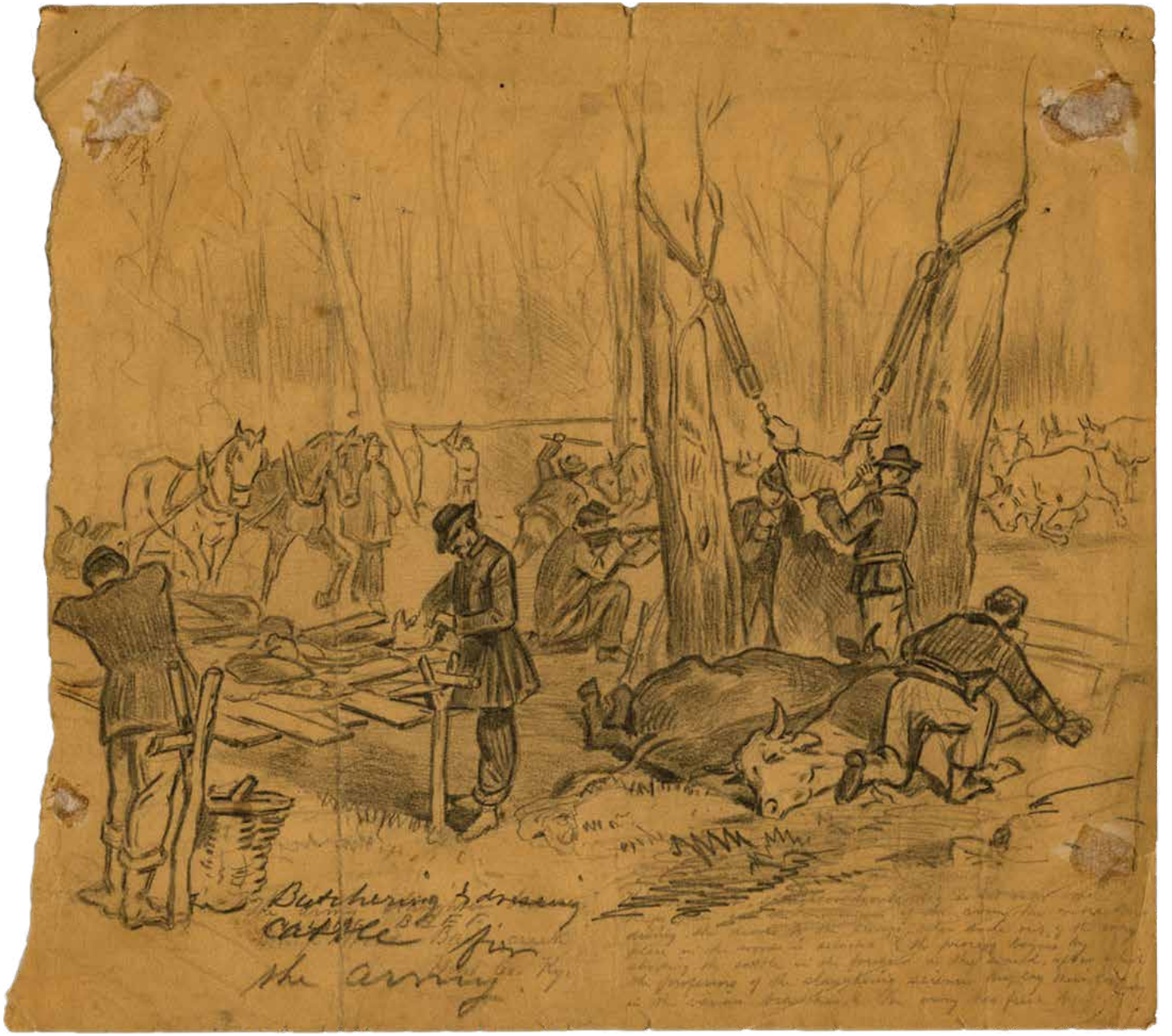
95. Francis H. Schell, *Battle of Pikeville, Kentucky*, November 8–9, 1861.
Graphite on wove paper, 9.8 x 14.0 in. (24.9 x 35.6 cm). CW-FHS-KY-11-8-61



96. Francis H. Schell, *Skirmish with the Texas Rangers on Tuesday the Eighteenth*, December 18, 1861.
Graphite on wove paper, 10.0 x 14.0 in. (25.4 x 35.6 cm). CW–FHS–KY–12–18–61

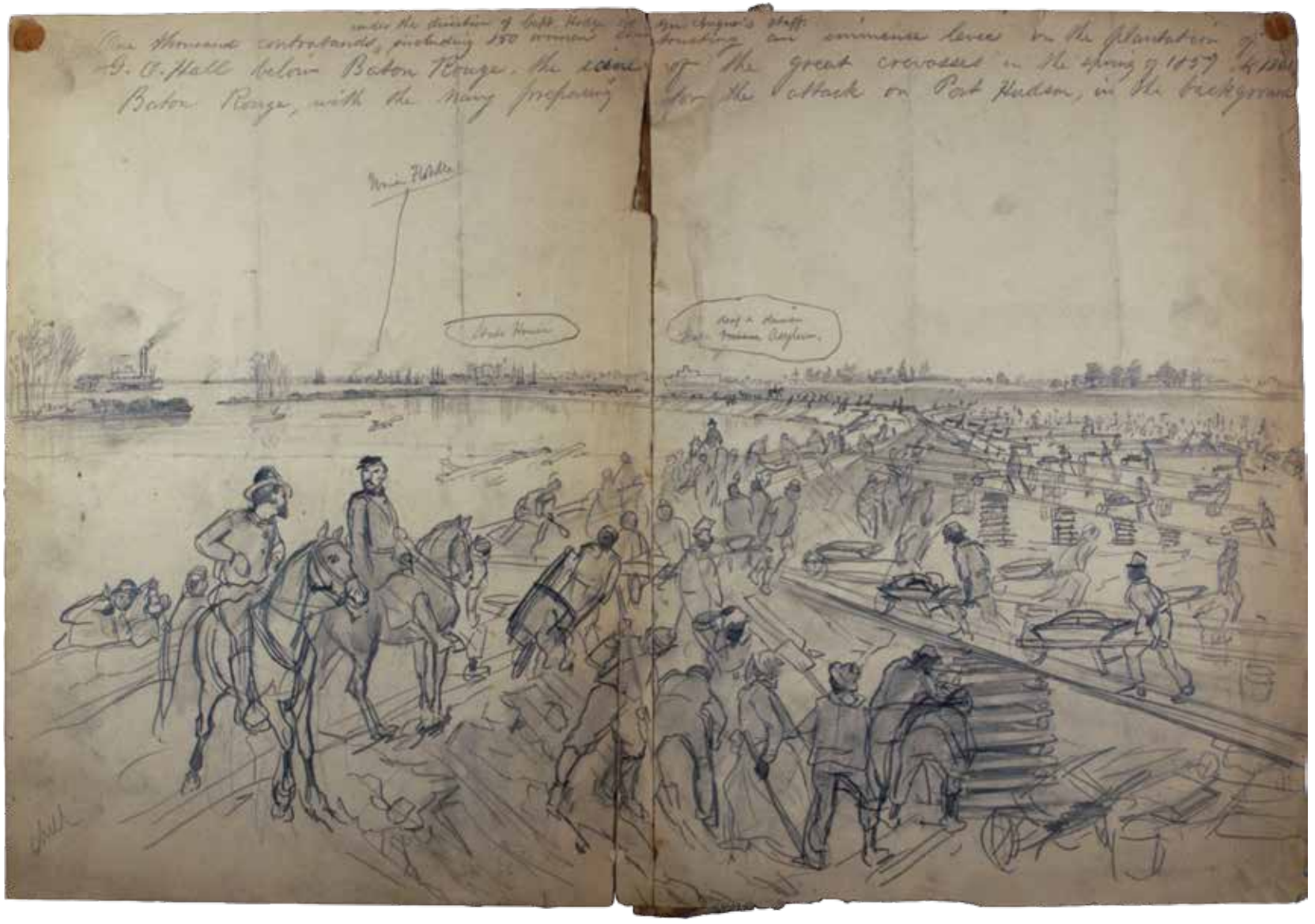



97. Francis H. Schell, *Rebel Cavalry Officers Driving Back the Skulkers*, September 17, 1862.
Graphite on wove paper, 8.0 x 10.0 in. (20.3 x 25.4 cm). CW-FHS-MD-9-17-62c




98. Francis H. Schell, *Butchering and Dressing Cattle for the Army Camp at Bacon Creek in Hart County, Kentucky*, February 7, 1863.
Graphite and black chalk on wove paper, 8.0 x 8.8 in. (20.3 x 22.4 cm). CW-FHS-KY-2-7-63

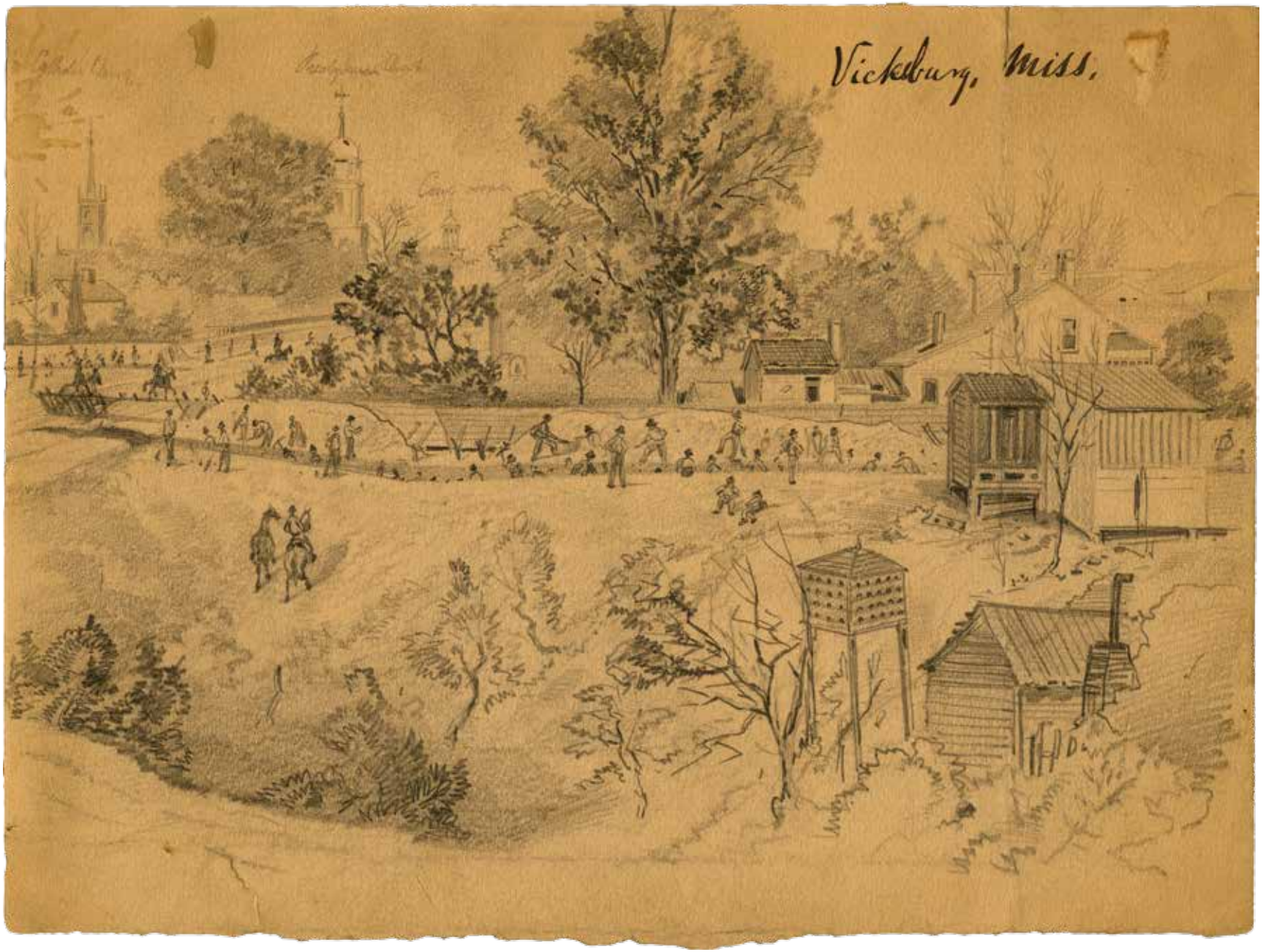
99. Francis H. Schell, *Scene on the Levee at Baton Rouge, Louisiana: Contrabands Discharge the Ammunition from the U.S. Transport North Star*, March 7, 1863.
Graphite on wove paper, 7.5 x 10.0 in. (19.1 x 25.4 cm). CW–FHS–LA–3–7–63




100. Francis H. Schell, *One Thousand Contrabands Building a Levee on the Mississippi River*, March 13, 1863.
Graphite on wove paper, 13.0 x 19.3 in. (33.0 x 49.0 cm). CW-FHS-LA-3-13-63

101. Francis H. Schell, *Making Fascines and Gabions in Kentucky*, 1863.
Graphite on cream heavy gauge wove paper, 7.3 x 9.8 in. (18.5 x 24.9 cm). CW-FHS-KY-NDc

102. Frederic B. Schell, *Siege of Vicksburg: Life in the Trenches*, May–June 1863.
Graphite on heavy gauge wove paper, 9.5 x 13.3 in. (24.1 x 33.8 cm). CW-FBS-MS-5-6-63a

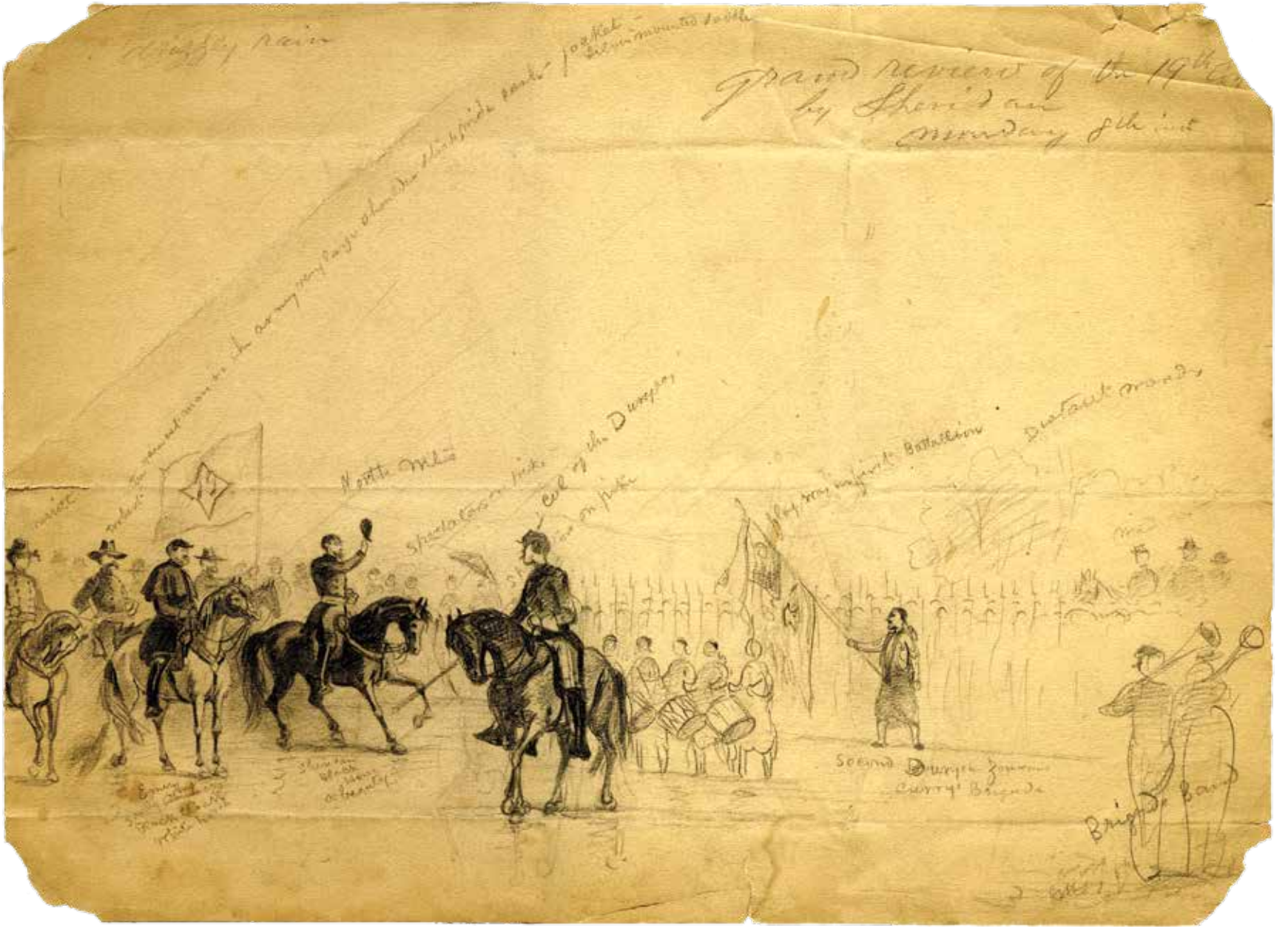



103. Frederic B. Schell, *Siege of Vicksburg: Soldiers at Work on the Fortifications*, May–June 1863.
Graphite on wove paper, 7.3 in. x 9.8 in. (18.5 x 24.9 cm). CW–FBS–MS–5–6–63c

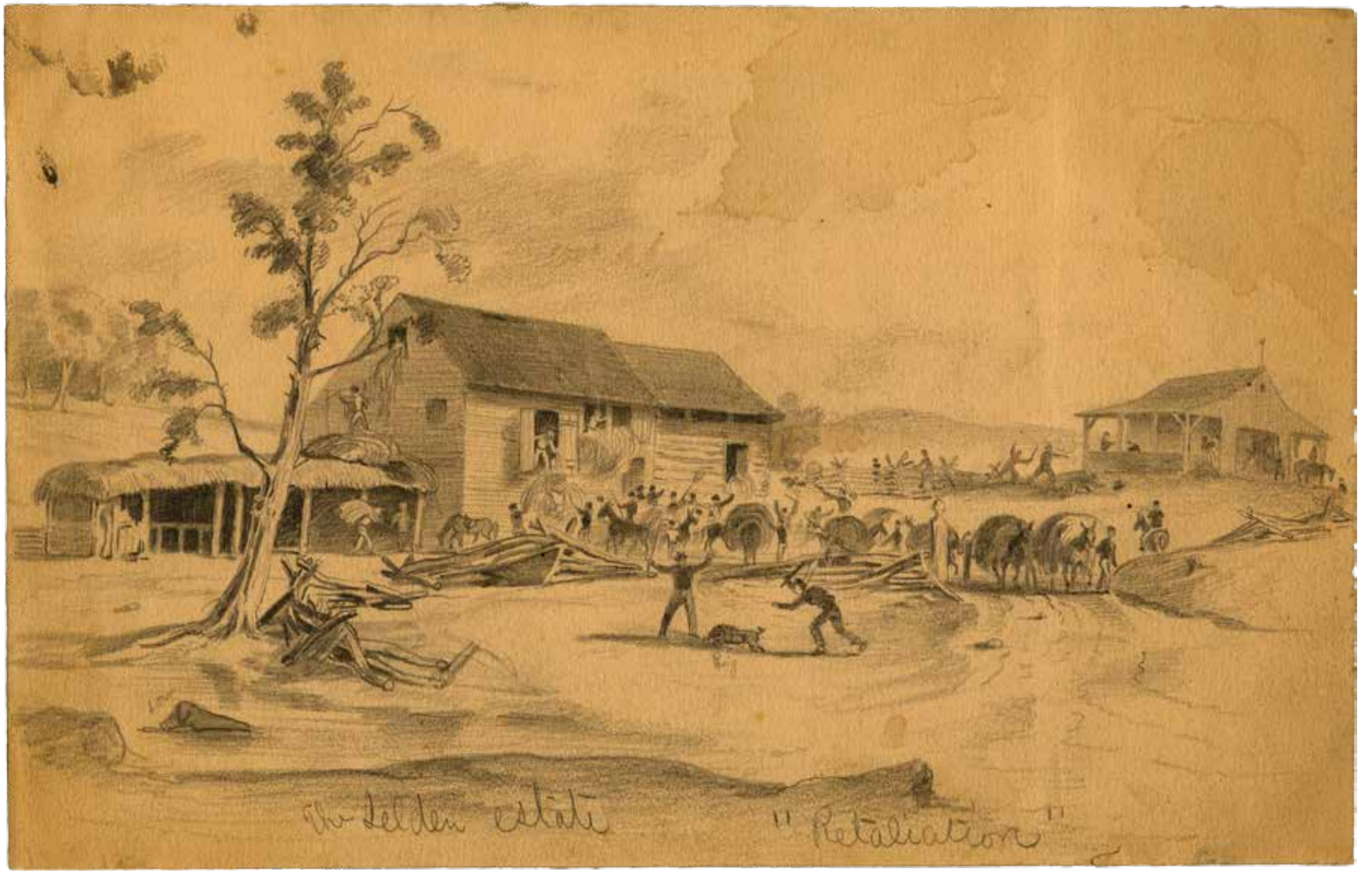
104. Frederic B. Schell, *General McPherson's Expedition into Mississippi*, October 17, 1863.
Graphite on wove paper, 9.5 x 13.3 in. (24.1 x 33.8 cm). CW-FBS-MS-10-17-63

105. Frederic B. Schell, *Chattanooga Valley Sketched from Lookout Mountain after Sherman's Victory*, November 25, 1863.
Graphite and ink wash heightened with white, 13.3 x 9.5 in. (33.8 x 24.1 cm). CW–FBS–TN–11–25–63

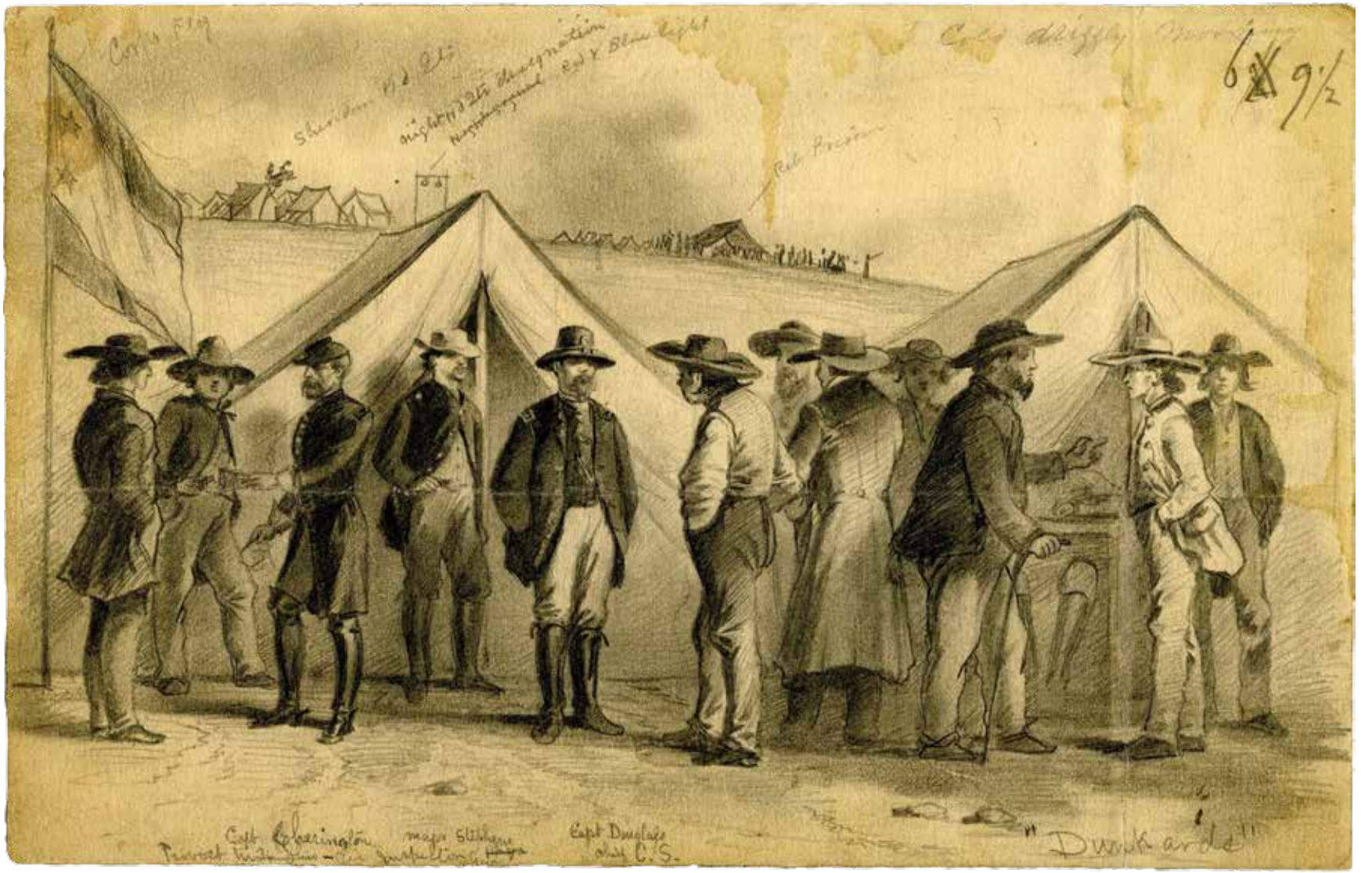
106. Charles Soule, Jr., *Camp Sherman*, 1861.
Graphite on wove paper, 21.3 x 7.8 in. (54.1 x 19.8 cm). CW-CS-OH-61




107. James E. Taylor, *Grand Review of Nineteenth Corps by Sheridan*, August 8, 1864.
Graphite on wove paper, 9.8 x 13.3 in. (24.9 x 33.8 cm). CW-JT-VA-8-8-64

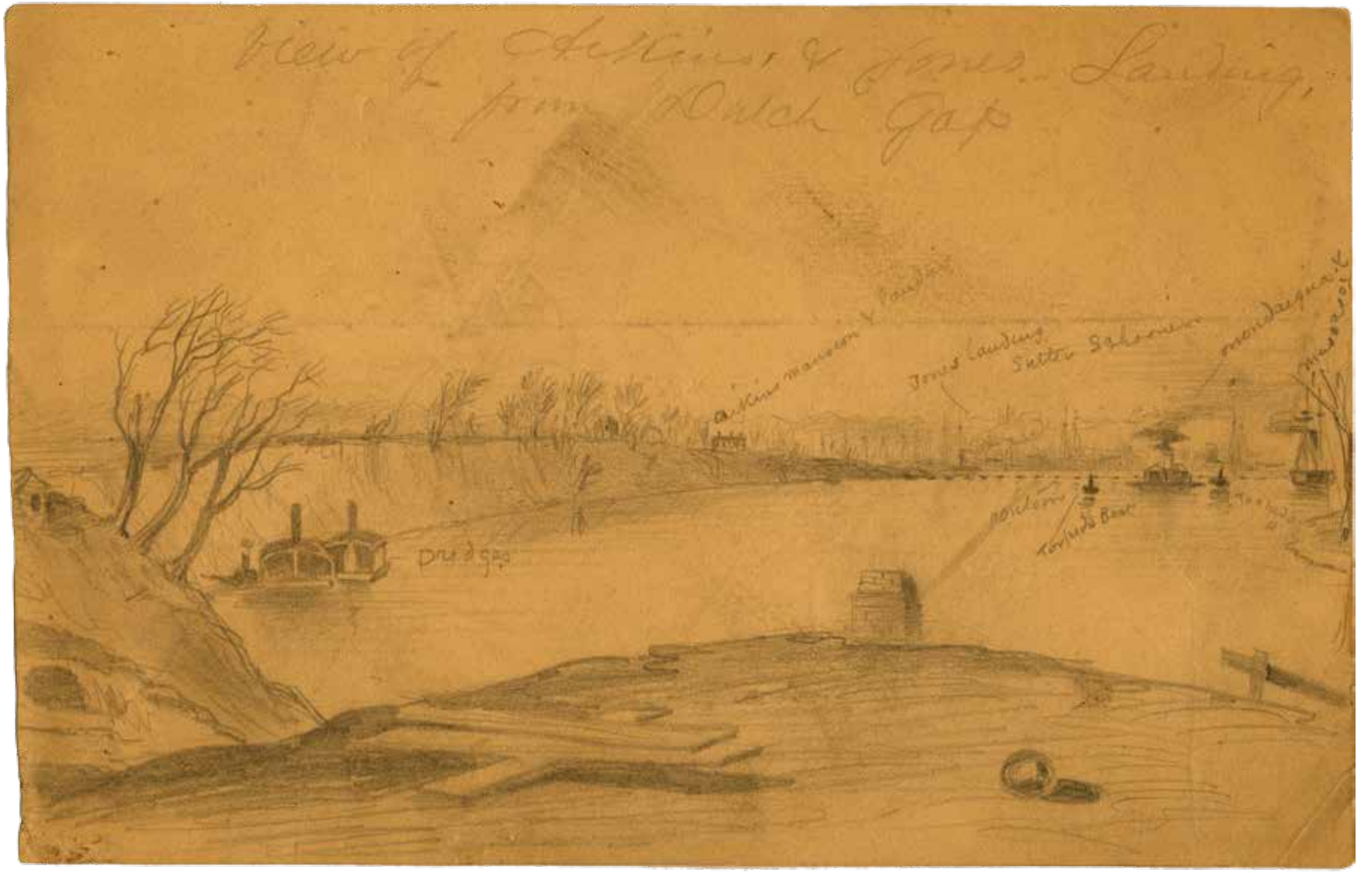



108. James E. Taylor, *Retaliation at the Selden Estate: Wilson's Cavalry*, October 1, 1864.
Graphite on wove paper, 6.5 x 10.0 in. (16.5 x 25.4 cm). CW-JT-VA-10-1-64




109. James E. Taylor, *Loyal Dunkards at General Crook's Headquarters*, October 2, 1864.
Graphite on heavy gauge wove paper, 6.5 x 10.0 in. (16.5 x 25.4 cm). CW-JT-VA-10-2-64

110. James E. Taylor, *Test Race for the Fastest Stock*, 1864.
Graphite on wove paper, 6.5 x 10.0 in. (16.5 x 25.4 cm). CW-JT-VA-1864a




111. James E. Taylor, *View of Aikin's and Jones's Landing from Dutch Gap*, January 2, 1865.
Graphite on wove paper, 5.5 in. x 8.5 in. (14.0 x 21.6 cm). CW-JT-VA-1-2-65b

112. James E. Taylor, *Hearing the News of the Fall of Richmond in Goldsboro, North Carolina*, April 6, 1865.
Graphite on wove paper, 9.8 x 13.3 in. (24.9 x 33.8 cm). CW-JT-NC-4-6-65

113. James E. Taylor, *Dedication of a Monument to the Memory of the Heroes of the New Hampshire Regiment Killed in the Battle of Winchester*, April 10, 1865.
Graphite on wove paper, 9.3 x 12.0 in. (23.6 x 30.5 cm). CW-JT-NC-4-10-65

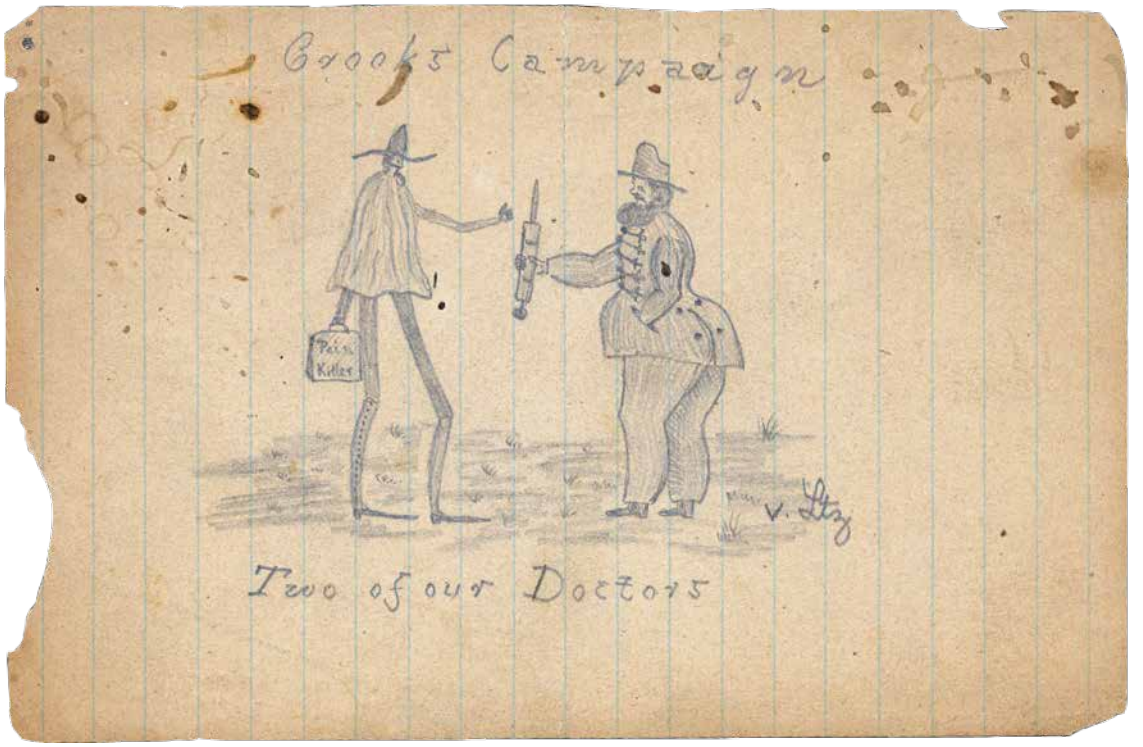
114. James E. Taylor, *Executive Committee Room Night Session*, 1871.
Graphite on paper, 9.3 x 7.0 in. (23.6 x 17.8 cm). CF-JT-IL-10-71j

115. James E. Taylor, *West Side Skating Rink*, 1871.
Graphite on paper, 9.3 x 7.0 in. (23.6 x 17.8 cm). CF–JT–IL–71e

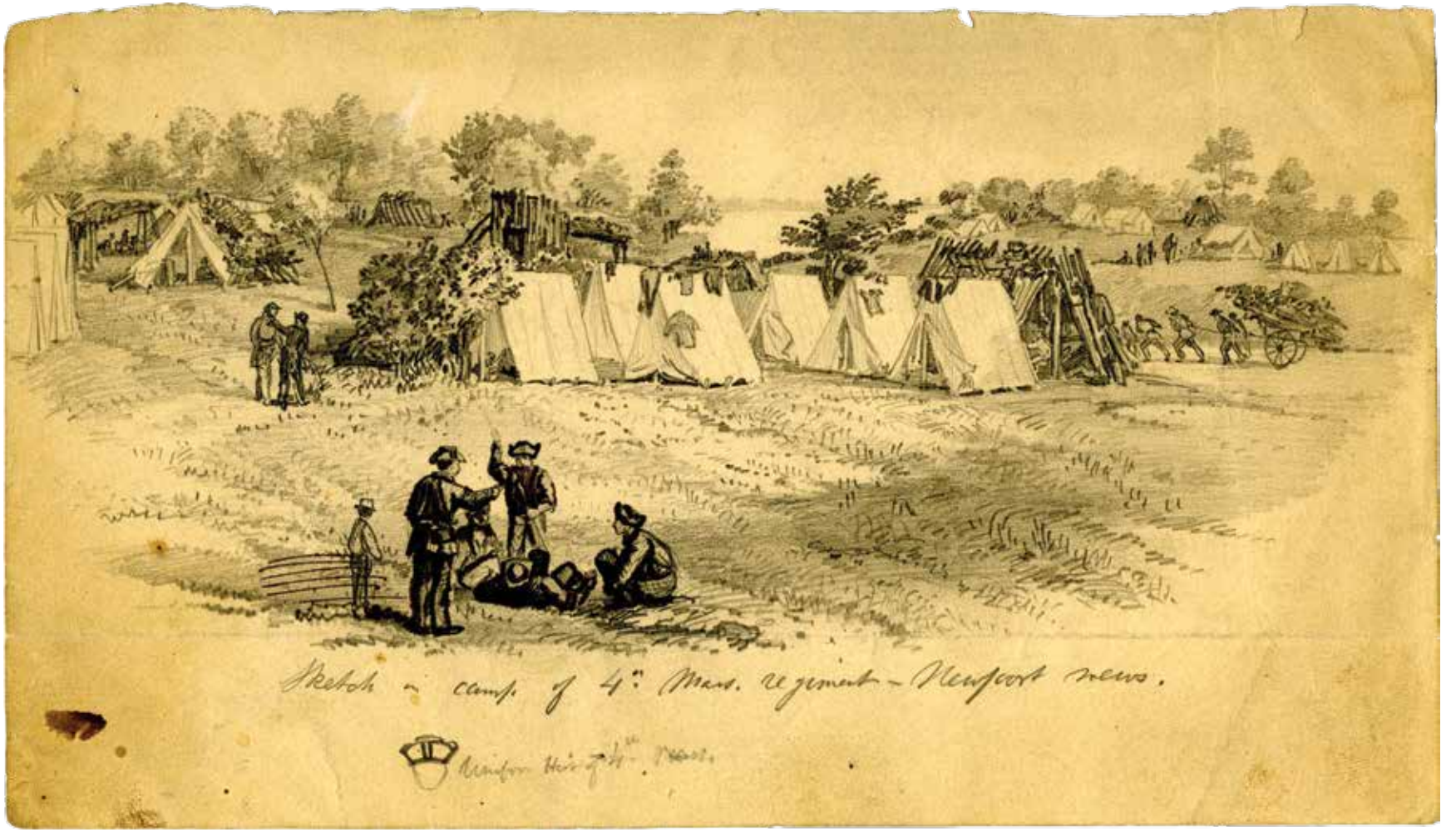
116. A. H. von Luettwitz, *General Crook's Campaign*, September 9, 1876.
Graphite on paper, 10.0 x 6.3 in. (25.4 x 16.0 cm). IW-AHVL-MT-9-9-76-1

117. A. H. von Luettwitz, *General Crook's Campaign: No Shooting Allowed*, September, 1876.
Graphite on paper, 10.0 x 6.3 in. (25.4 x 16.0 cm). IW-AHVL-MT-9-76-1

118. A. H. von Luettwitz, *General Crook's Campaign: Sled for Slightly Wounded Men*, September 1876.
Graphite on lined paper, 5.3 x 3.8 in. (13.5 x 9.7 cm). IW-AHVL-MT-9-76-2




119. A H. von Luettwitz, *General Crook's Campaign: Two of Our Doctors*, September 1876.
Graphite on lined paper, 5.8 x 3.8 in. (14.7 x 9.7 cm). IW-AHVL-MT-9-76-3




120. Unknown, *Sketch in the Camp of the Fourth Regiment of the Massachusetts Volunteer Infantry*, n.d.
Graphite on wove paper, 9.0 x 5.0 in. (22.9 x 12.7 cm). CW-UK-VA-ND-5

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