



Battlefield Photographer

Lee the “Devil” Discovered at Image of War Seminar Derisive Graffiti Appears in 1865 Brady Photo of Lee

By Michael D. Gorman

Photo-historians usually do their work in solitude, rarely getting the chance to share the thrill of discovery with anyone else. For the most part, a historian’s research is interesting only to himself and his mother.

At the Center for Civil War Photography’s Image of War Seminar in Richmond in October, however, a dramatic, previously unknown element from one of the most historic photographic sittings of the Civil War revealed itself in the middle of the climatic seminar session.

The revelation—that the Richmond home of Robert E. Lee was scarred with derisive graffiti when Lee was photographed by M. B. Brady in April 1865—began to unfold in the weeks before the seminar. But the most important discovery—what the graffiti said—did not happen until the seminar session itself, which was held at the very spot where Brady made the photographs.

It started when Garry Adelman, vice president of the Center for Civil War Photography and organizer of the seminar, joined me in Richmond to reconnoiter the tour route for the photo seminar, including the planned visit to the back door of the famous Lee house on Franklin Street, now owned by the Home Builders Association of Virginia.

Continued on page 3

The Civil War Photograph That Keeps Growing



Published here for the first time on the printed page, this print of a Peter S. Weaver photograph of the exhumation of Union dead at Hanover, Pa., shows a significantly wider view of the scene than any previous known print. (Gettysburg National Military Park).

Story by John J. Richter on page 2.

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Civil War Photography

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To educate the public about
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To promote the continuing
study of its rich variety of forms
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To preserve original Civil War
photographs and equipment as
well as original methods and
techniques.

To present interpretive
programs that use Civil War 3-D
photographs and regular images
to their full potential.

Expanded View of Weaver Photo Found

By John J. Richter



Our featured image—a photograph by Peter S. Weaver of laborers digging up the graves of Union dead in Hanover, Pa., on Feb. 6, 1864—is an example of a Civil War image that has actually grown larger as time has passed. This previously unpublished version of Weaver's distinctive image shows more of the scene than ever before.

The image was first reproduced in an obscure book *Encounter At Hanover: Prelude To Gettysburg* (1962), published locally in Gettysburg. This version was from a copy print that was cropped very tight. It was trimmed on the right just beyond the headstone with the jacket draped over it, and the left side it included just the three children standing behind the coffin. The top was also cut down so the school roof in the background was not completely visible.

William A. Frassanito used a more expansive version in his *Early Photography at Gettysburg* (Thomas Publications, 1995) that had a bit more on three sides, including the girl on the left. It also showed the cupola on top of the school. This broader view is owned by Philip B. Kunhardt, Jr., who first used it in his 1983 book *A New Birth of Freedom: Lincoln at Gettysburg*.

In 2005, Garry Adelman found an even-more-expansive version tucked away in the Gettysburg National Military Park archives. It greatly extends the view to the left and top, and shows just how dramatically the first version was cropped.

The image shows Samuel Weaver (the man with the white beard and notebook) supervising the digging up of the Union dead killed in the Battle of Hanover the day before the main battle at Gettysburg began. The 1864 disinterment preceded their reburial at the Soldiers' National Cemetery in Gettysburg. Weaver, who lived in Gettysburg, operated a photographic gallery there in the 1850s and was in charge of identifying the bodies during the exhumation and reburial. His son, Peter S. Weaver, who took this photograph, operated a photographic gallery in Hanover from 1861 until his death in 1906.

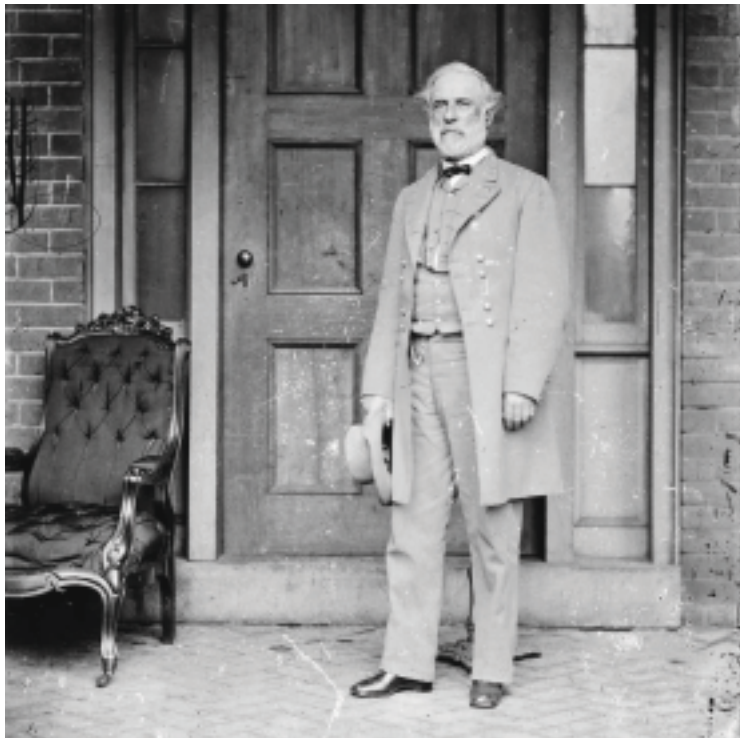
The building in the background with the cupola is the Old Walnut Street School (1852-1904); a new building stands in its place today. The brick burial vault is also no longer standing, but the cemetery is still there today behind Trinity Reformed Church. The exhumation of Union soldiers and their reburial at the National Cemetery was repeated hundreds of times in Gettysburg and the surrounding area in 1863 and 1864, but this is the only known photograph that documents the somber, gruesome operation.

Lee the “Devil” Discovered at Seminar

(Continued from Page One)

This was the spot where Lee appeared after Brady managed to convince the general, just 11 days after his surrender at Appomattox, to have his photograph taken wearing the uniform of the vanquished Confederate cause.

Brady was not the only photographer in Richmond. T. C. Roche, working for the E. & H. T. Anthony Company, was there, as well as Alexander Gardner. They did not photograph Lee (Gardner and his men tried twice!). Only Brady secured that remarkable photographic scoop. It happened on April 20, 1865.



Undetected for 140 years, a single word of graffiti appears scrawled on a brick next to the back door of Robert E. Lee’s home in Mathew Brady’s famous portrait of the Confederate general.

We know the exact date because Brady’s accomplishment, as I discovered several years ago, was reported in the Richmond Whig of April 21, which said, “GENERAL LEE AND STAFF—or rather those who accompanied him to Richmond—were yesterday photographed in a group by Mr. Brady, of New York. Six different sittings were then taken of General Lee, each in a different posture, and all were pronounced admirable pictures.”

Brady, though in Richmond at the same time as his chief competitors, had scooped them all. Brady made the great shot on the strength of his own name—he had known and photographed Lee long before the war. Gardner or Roche had neither the fame nor the acquaintance that Brady had. So, with Brady scoring access, and his assistant (probably Egbert Guy Fowx) behind the lens, the classic visage of Robert E. Lee was preserved for all time.

As Garry and I prepared for the seminar and studied the six photos, I noticed that there seemed to be a single word of soldier graffiti on a brick in the wall behind Lee in two or three of the famous shots of the great man behind his Franklin Street home. The graffiti looked like it said “DeWit” or “Devit.”

Both of us thought this interesting, and I resolved to try

to find a Union soldier with such a name. With the impending seminar, I had plenty of work to do and very little time to chase down our mysterious vandalistic Union soldier.

At the seminar session itself, on Sunday, Oct. 9, while standing upon the same spot where the images were recorded, I lectured about the Lee house and Brady’s photo session, taking time to describe my recent discovery of the graffiti, and to point out the actual brick where it had been written. As I contemplated aloud what the graffiti might say, Garry held an 11 by 14-inch photocopy blowup of the brick with the graffiti.

Barry Larkin, one of the seminar participants, blurted out, “It says ‘Devil!’”

Sure enough—it did.

This was not a soldier placing his name on an important building, as I had previously thought, but a Unionist voicing an opinion that must have been widely prevalent in 1865, but only rarely voiced today, that Lee was evil—the Devil himself. Also noteworthy is that in two of the famous of six photographs—the two images of Lee with his aides—the offending word had been rubbed out.

Someone on the scene—perhaps Brady himself—noticed in the middle of the photo session that the derisive word had been scrawled on the brick (probably in chalk). The “Devil” was promptly removed. This additional discovery tells us that Brady first took the photographs of Lee standing by himself and then took the group photos.

The fact that the finding was made by a group, not a troglodyte who drinks too much caffeine, makes this discovery all the more compelling. Discoveries such as these belong not to one individual, but to all of us, as they should.

“It was one of the most cosmic experiences I’ve ever been a part of,” said photo-historian Bob Zeller, president of the Center for Civil War Photography. “I talk all the time about the wonder of Civil War photo discovery. It’s always been a very individualistic, private thing. This discovery was made right in the middle of the program.”

Civil War photographic re-enactor and wet plate photographer Rob Gibson had set up his wet plate camera and aimed it at Lee’s back door. It may have been the first time a wet plate camera had been set up there since Brady’s camera in

1865. Seminar member Tom Rinaldi was posing as Lee, standing on the very spot where Lee stood.

“Boom, it happens,” said Zeller. “We discover a hidden story in the famous Lee photos.”

As with all of the Civil War images he created, Brady took the photos (he had operators handling the actual camera and darkroom work) not only to preserve history, but also to make money. Lee obviously had different ideas,



A detail of the graffiti-scarred brick in the Brady photo reveals the words as “Devil.”

Moments before the “Devil” discovery, National Park Service Ranger Mike Gorman lectures at the back door of the Robert E. Lee home in Richmond, where the general was photographed



by Mathew B. Brady in 1865. CCWP Vice President Garry Adelman stands at right, while CCWP member Tom Rinaldi prepares to pose as Lee for Rob Gibson’s wet-plate camera.



In the images of Lee with his eldest son, Gen. Custis Lee (left) and Col. Walter Taylor, the “Devil” graffiti has disappeared from the brick, which is just below the white streak visible just to the left of Custis Lee’s right shoulder.

Lee the “Devil” Discovered at Seminar

(Continued from Page One)

and sought to remake his public image. Under these circumstances, satanic graffiti simply would not do.

Of the six images, those deemed as the best exposures of Lee were offered for public sale as cartes de visite (card photographs) and in larger formats, with direct-contact albumen prints pasted unto firm board mounts pre-printed with Brady’s name.

In fact, during the session, Gibson held up a crisp photocopy of one of the whole negatives of Lee standing and showed how someone had scrawled at the edge of the plate: “Do Not Use”, indicating that the other poses of Lee standing were preferable. Original, mounted albumen prints from this photo session today command \$5,000 or more, depending on

condition and other factors. All the negatives but one are preserved today at the Library of Congress and National Archives.

The Richmond seminar was the fifth annual program presented by the Center for Civil War Photography. The 2006 seminar will include Washington, D.C. and the battlefields of Manassas and Brandy Station. More information will be available at www.civilwarphotography.org later this year.

Mike Gorman is a National Park Service ranger who is an expert in the Civil War photography of Richmond and maintains a comprehensive Civil War Richmond website at www.mdgorman.com. This story also appeared in the January 2006 edition of *The Civil War News*.

Chrysler Museum Exhibition Opens in Virginia

The Chrysler Museum of Art in Norfolk, Va., will put 50 of its finest Civil War photographic prints on display beginning Feb. 3 and continuing through Oct. 29, 2006.

The exhibition, *Civil War Photographs from the David L. Hack Collection*, runs concurrently with *Civil War Redux: Pinhole Photographs by Willie Anne Wright*, a presentation of modern “pinhole” photographs of Civil War reenactors by the Virginia photographer.

The 50 images of the Hack collection will be presented on their original mounts. Some have been restored to more closely resemble their original condition.

“Although the collection contains such icons as Alexander Gardner’s classic photograph *Lincoln and Tad*, most of the other works have rarely if ever been published or exhibited,” the museum reports on its webpage. “Among the facets that make this collection unique is its assortment of print sizes and shapes, as well as its wide range of subjects, including haunting images of Andersonville and Gardner’s

dramatic series of the hanging of the Lincoln conspirators in 1865.”

The photographs to be displayed are from the more than 300 original prints in the collection of retired New York attorney David L. Hack, an avid collector of original Civil War photographic prints. Many of Hack’s prints were displayed in the Chrysler’s groundbreaking Alexander Gardner exhibition in 1991. Seven years later, Curator of Photographs Brooks Johnson acquired Hack’s collection for the museum. In appreciation, the museum named a permanent photography gallery in honor of Mr. Hack, and made a commitment to keep Civil War photography continually on view in that gallery.

The Museum is located at 245 West Olney Road (at Mowbray Arch) in Norfolk. It is open from 10 a.m. to 9 p.m. Wednesday, 10 a.m. to 5 p.m. Thursday through Saturday, and 1 p.m. to 5 p.m. Sunday. It is closed Monday and Tuesday.

Richmond Image of War Seminar Perhaps Best Ever

The mid-session discovery that someone had written “Devil” at Robert E. Lee’s back door in 1865, as documented in Mathew Brady’s famous photos of the Confederate general, alone might qualify the 2005 Image of War seminar in Richmond as the best of the five annual seminars held thus far. But other aspects also helped set a high standard for the Richmond visit.

Although rain was an ever-present threat throughout the day on Saturday, Oct. 8, it fell only during Eric Mink’s outstanding tour of Malvern Hill battlefield. Even then, it was not oppressive enough to deter most seminar attendees from hiking the field and hearing Eric talk about how he and other historians have learned how the battlefield looked during the war from a group of fascinating but obscure early post-war photographs of Malvern Hill.

Mike Gorman, a National Park Service ranger, and Richmond’s resident expert on Civil War photography, lectured Saturday morning and afternoon, as well as Sunday. His presentations were concise and informative and were delivered with passion and wit. But what really distinguished Gorman’s presentations was his ability to incorporate the photographs and issues about photography into his talks while simultaneously providing a comprehensive battlefield tour.

The seminar opened with CCWP Vice President Garry Adelman’s slide show on the visual legacy of the campaigns around Richmond, and also featured CCWP President Bob Zeller’s dual lecture on 3-D photos in and around Richmond as well as his discovery of the Alexander Gardner photograph of McClellan’s staff drinking on the Antietam battlefield. The drinking photo is published for the first time in Zeller’s new book, *The Blue and Gray in Black and White: A History of Civil War Photography*. He received his first copies of the book at the seminar and opened the package in front of the crowd.

Praeger Publishes *The Blue and Gray in Black and White*

CCWP President Bob Zeller’s new book, *The Blue and Gray in Black and White: A History of Civil War Photography*, was published in October 2005 by Praeger. Bob received his first copies of the book at the Omni Hotel in Richmond before the start of the Image of War seminar, and opened the express package in front of the Friday evening audience.

The 224-page, fully noted book features a narrative of about 80,000 words as well as 163 illustrations, some never previously published, including several photographs of battle.

It follows the careers of the war’s greatest photographers, including M. B. Brady, Alexander Gardner, George S. Cook, and George Barnard, from the earliest years of American photography, and shows how they pioneered many firsts, including the first combat action photographs, the first photo essays of news events as they happened, and the first photos deemed so controversial by the federal government that they were banned.

The Civil War was photographed not only to preserve history, but because the leading American photographers realized they could make a profit through the mass marketing of their images. As Bob explains, a majority of the war’s documentary photographs were created as stereoscopic views, to be seen in 3-D, one of the earliest forms of American home entertainment.

Mike McAfee, curator of the West Point Museum, was our banquet speaker on Saturday night and showed us some of the outstanding images in his portrait and carte de visite collection in his lecture *Union Soldiers in the Campaign*



National Park Service Ranger Eric Mink lectures in the rain at the battlefield of Malvern Hill, Va., on Saturday Oct. 8.

Against Richmond. Our always popular fund-raising raffle generated \$1,270, while the seminar overall netted \$2,567 for the Center.

Preceding Sunday’s dramatic discovery during the reenactment of Brady’s photographs of Lee in 1865, curators Heather Milne and Meghan Glass lectured about the photography collections at their respective institutions, the Museum of the Confederacy and the Valentine Richmond History Center.

Seminar attendees voted to hold the sixth annual Image of War seminar in Washington, D.C., including Manassas. The Washington location received 40 votes, closely trailed by Charleston (33 votes) and Petersburg, Va. (29).

The historic work of Southern photographer George S. Cook is, for the first time, put in proper perspective with his Northern counterparts, and his legacy shines as brightly as that of Brady or any other Civil War photographer. Cook’s photographs of Maj. Robert Anderson and his staff holed up in Fort Sumter in early 1861 sold by the thousands North and South. He was the first photographer to capture images of Civil War prisoners of war. At Fort Sumter in 1863, Cook became history’s first war combat photographer—the first photographer to capture images of the enemy in action while under fire himself. In 1864, he would keep his Charleston, S.C. gallery open despite the daily Union bombardment of Charleston. Ultimately, Cook would flee to Columbia, S.C., and lose nearly everything when the Union Army burned the city.

Zeller will be speaking about Cook’s remarkable story as a Civil War photographer in a slide presentation at Civil War Life—The Soldier’s Museum in Fredericksburg, Va., at 12:30 p.m. on Tuesday, Feb. 7, 2006. The presentation is being considered for taping by C-SPAN for later airing on Book TV.

If you’d like to purchase an autographed copy of the book or want to learn more about it, e-mail Bob at bobzeller@civilwarphotography.com or call him at (336) 476-9808.

Our 3-D Show Amazes Museum Visitors

The Center for Civil War Photography's first permanent 3-D slide show of Civil War stereographs, "Civil War Life in 3-D," has been a smashing success since it opened in June 2005 at *Civil War Life—The Soldier's Museum*, in Fredericksburg.

"As soon as the first title slide comes on, you hear, 'Whoa!' That is the typical reaction," said museum owner Terry Thomann.

From the show's opening on June 6, 2005, through Dec. 20, a total of 1,908 people paid the modest \$2 admission fee to see the 79 images in the 20-minute show. Fifty percent of the ticket receipts go to the Center, so the show generated almost \$2,000 in less than a year, more than paying off the approximate \$1,500 it cost the Center to produce it.

"Civil War Life in 3-D" gives viewers an overview of the Civil War from beginning to end through its stereoscopic photography, with a special emphasis on images taken in and around Fredericksburg and Spotsylvania County. The presentation features some of the most famous images of the war,

including Alexander Gardner's startling images of the dead on the Antietam battlefield and Mathew Brady's unforgettable photograph of the three Rebel prisoners at Gettysburg. Viewers wear theme park-style 3-D glasses and see the images on a large screen in Thomann's small theater.

Thomann said he'll usually stand near the back of the theater to make sure all the equipment is working right when he starts the show. "I kind of always wait for that 'Whoa!' and then I know everything is working right," he said. "They'll come out of the show and say, 'I never knew they took Civil War photos that way.' Most people just don't know that."

Thomann, a former training director for Con Edison in Illinois and avid collector of Civil War memorabilia, moved to Virginia with his wife, Jane, and opened the museum in 2001, featuring his collection. In 2002, they saw Bob Zeller give his 3-D slide show at South Mountain State Park in Maryland, and immediately began pursuing the possibility of establishing a permanent show at their museum.

CCWP Supports Photography Contest

For the third year in a row, the CCWP is co-sponsoring the Civil War Preservation Trust's (CWPT) Civil War photography competition.

The six categories of the photo contest are: Endangered Battlefields, Scenic Places, Historic Sites, Then and Now, Close-up, and Junior Photographer. The History Channel is CWPT's major sponsor while CCWP awards a free Image of War Seminar registration to the winner of the "then & now" category. CCWP Vice President Garry Adelman also acts as a

judge for the competition.

The first place winner in each category will receive \$250. In addition, CWPT will award the grand prizewinner (the best in all six categories) with a free registration (a \$515 value) to its April 2006 annual conference in Memphis, Tennessee. Second and third place winners are eligible for CWPT merchandise and gift certificates at The History Channel's online store. For more information on this annual competition, please visit www.civilwar.org.

In Brief

Help The Center for Civil War Photography in Your Everyday Shopping

Be a philanthropist every time you shop online for everyday items. When you shop online at over 600 online stores, like Barnes and Nobles, eBay, Target, JC Penney, Best Buy, and Expedia, up to 26% of each item you buy will be donated to the CCWP at no extra cost to you. Go to <http://www.iGive.com/CCWP> and register for FREE—no extra costs or obligations.

We would especially like to thank the following CCWP members that have already signed up to support CCWP on iGive.com: Alice Bampton, Jay Barrick, Tom Danninger, and Thomas Rinaldi.

John J. Richter Elected to Board of Directors

John J. Richter, an avid collector of Civil War stereo views and a member of the Center since its inception, has been elected to the Center's board of directors. John has been involved in various Center activities and has co-produced the Center's publications of Civil War photos of Fredericksburg and Spotsylvania, as well as Richmond. John lives in Hanover, Pa., with his wife, Jodi, and two children.

Walton Owen Becomes Center's first Ambrotype-level Member

The Center would like to welcome and thank Walton "Wally" Owen of Alexandria, Va., who is our first member to join at the \$250 "Ambrotype" level. Wally is the curator of the Fort Ward Museum in Alexandria, a student and collector of the photography of Capt. A.J. Russell and co-author of *Mr. Lincoln's Forts*, a comprehensive guide to the Civil War forts ringing Washington, D.C.

Soldier Search

CCWP member Terry Thomann knows it's a long shot, but he's looking for a photograph of a Civil War soldier, William Cline, of Co. D., 26th Illinois Regiment. Terry has about 120 of Cline's wartime letters that he would like to compliment with an image. You can reach Terry at (540) 834-1859.



The Center for Civil War Photography

www.civilwarphotography.org

Join our preservation effort!

Paid memberships, donations and other fundraising activities will help establish a permanent center site.

“The photographs of the Civil War allow us to actually see what that war was all about. Yet no other aspect of Civil War scholarship is more frequently misconstrued and taken for granted. The mission of the Center for Civil War Photography is to educate the public about Civil War photography and its role in the conflict; to promote the continuing study of its variety of forms and formats; to preserve original Civil War photographs and equipment as well as original methods and techniques; and to present interpretive programs that use Civil War 3-D photographs and standard images to their fullest potential. In the future, we plan to open a permanent center and 3-D theater.

Won't you join our cause?”—Bob Zeller, President

2006 Membership

Benefits of membership include: a subscription to CCWP newsletter, a discount on the price of seminar and center activities, and a copy of the center's exclusive limited edition compilation of Alexander Gardner's *Photographic Incidents of the War*. Additional benefits of membership are noted below.

To join the CCWP, fill out the form below and mail with a check for the proper amount to:

**The Center for Civil War Photography,
P.O. Box 1740, Oldsmar, Florida 34677**

Membership Type: _____ **New** _____ **Renewal**

Check category of membership:

_____ **\$25 Tintype** (Student) _____ **\$35 CDV** (Individual) _____ **\$50 Stereoview** (Family)

_____ **\$250 Ambrotype:** Listed as a center supporter in newsletter; (2) books signed by author. *Civil War in Depth, Vol 1.- The first 3-D photo history of the Civil War* (Bob Zeller) (Value: \$24.95) and *Civil War in Depth, Vol II.* (Zeller) (Value: \$27.50).

_____ **\$500 Daguerrotype:** Same benefits as Ambrotype (2 books) plus a free sitting at Gibson's Photographic Gallery in Gettysburg – the world's only authentic full time working 1860's studio (Value: \$100)

_____ **\$1,000 Folio:** Same benefits as Daguerrotype (2 books) plus a gouache (11 x 14 inch unframed canvas transfer oil painting) of Alexander Gardner at the Slaughter Pen at Gettysburg signed by the artist Rick Reeves – a center exclusive 100 numbered limited edition gouaches (Value: \$150)

_____ **\$5,000 Imperial (Life Member):** Same benefits as Folio; both books listed in Ambrotype membership; two full scholarships to future CCWP Seminars.

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Join Us For Image of War 2006!

*A Detailed Seminar
on Battlefield
Photography*

Washington, D.C.,
Manassas and
Brandy Station

Date to be announced



Rob Gibson works his wet-plate magic at the Richmond Seminar.

Image of War 2006, the sixth-annual seminar devoted to the study of Civil War photography, will visit our nation's capital for the first time. We'll also be visiting the battlefields at Manassas and Brandy Station. Visit www.civilwarphotography.org for more information or call Garry Adelman at (301) 528-2825.

The Center for Civil War Photography
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A photographer for E. & H.T. Anthony & Co., possibly Egbert Guy Fowx, holds a glass plate as he sits by his photo wagon somewhere in Virginia late in the Civil War. (Library of Congress, detail of negative LC-B811-2447).