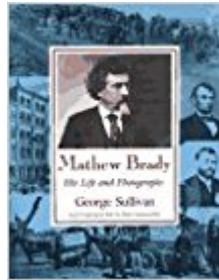




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# **Mathew Brady: His Life And Photographs**



## Synopsis

Reproductions of historical photographs mark this look at the life and vision of Civil War photographer Mathew Brady, whose work, along with the work of his assistants, provides a visual record of the people and events of his time.

## Book Information

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## Customer Reviews

Grade 6-10-This well-researched, well-written biography of the man credited with documenting the American Civil War focuses on Brady's professional life as a photographer. Although Brady is shown on the battlefield, he seldom photographed these scenes himself since his eyesight failed rapidly. Instead, as an enterprising entrepreneur, he hired others to trek to the sites and capture on film the horrors of the war. These pictures quickly dispelled the idea for the American public that battles were merely Sunday afternoon entertainment. Civil War buffs will find this excellent resource useful for information for reports as well as interesting reading about Brady and the part his photographs played in American history. A fascinating look at photography in its earliest stages, competently illustrated with black-and-white photos and reproductions of prominent figures of the time, battle scenes, and appropriate places and events in the subject's life. Nancy E. Curran, Decatur Public Schools, IL Copyright 1994 Reed Business Information, Inc.

Gr. 6-10. Mathew Brady, photographer of the rich and famous of his time, is primarily remembered today for his visionary decision to create a photographic record of the Civil War. Sullivan skillfully recounts details of Brady's life and times, interweaving a history of the development of photography

in the nineteenth century. Images created by Brady and his staff photographers still play important roles today; the portraits of Lincoln on the penny and the five-dollar bill were drawn from Brady's photographs. In addition, Ken Burns relied heavily on Brady's photographs for the television series *The Civil War*. Sullivan's text is notable not only for its historical relevance, but also for the analogies the author draws between events of Brady's time and events of our own; for example, he refers to the Civil War as the world's first living room war because of Brady's photographs, a characteristic sometimes attributed to television coverage of Vietnam and the Persian Gulf War. Brady's ability to cope with the changes in his profession, and to use them to his advantage, is also well presented. Scattered throughout are clear reproductions of many of Brady's photographs, including portraits, as well as pictures of the Civil War. This book will find an audience among readers who like biography and is an excellent choice for Civil War curricular units. Merri Monks

The life and vision of Mathew Brady from his early days of recording events and people from celebrated figures of the time: Presidents, actors, writers to the images of the American Civil War.

In 2002, a couple of weeks before Dad died at eighty years of age (he was in the throes of Parkinson's disease), he was in the living room, sitting immobile and was insistent we be quiet. As he believed a Mr. Brady was taking his picture for posterity. Mr. Brady was angry, he didn't want my father to move and Brady wanted us to be quiet. Brady, reportedly, was furious with the noise level, when I was trying to find out from the only other person in the house -- my mother -- if there was a BRADY photography studio on Staten Island (New York) where my parents originally were born and lived for a majority of their lives (nor, nowhere else we resided, for that matter.) After 2 1/2 hours, I had quite enough, as I was angry because I really thought the medications were doing this to my father. I kept searching for a Brady studio in the telephone books, as well as the Internet. Two days after Dad died, all of a sudden I realized: Brady... Mathew Brady. "But attempting to hold a pose for so long a time could result in a blank stare. To avoid that, the sitter might be instructed to gaze at some distant object, instead of looking directly into the camera lens. *Photographic Art Journal*, in 1851, advised subjects to think serious or pleasing thoughts, depending on which ever expression they desired..." "...the sitter's head and the rod behind the sitter's body, they could not be seen in the photograph... When all was in readiness and the camera focused, the plate was inserted in the back of the camera. 'Don't move a muscle!' the sitter was told. 'Don't even breathe!' The operator then removed the cap from the camera's lens. The subject strained to remain as still as a statue. No one even spoke. After the required exposure time, the lens cap was replaced and everyone breathed a

sigh of relief. The plate was removed from the camera, then developed and mounted. At some studios the process was completed in fifteen minutes to half an hour..." [Page 18]. (Do take a look pages 16-20 which is like what occurred in our living room.) So this book about Mathew Brady was helpful far beyond its original intention. A very interesting book, about a very intriguing photographer!

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