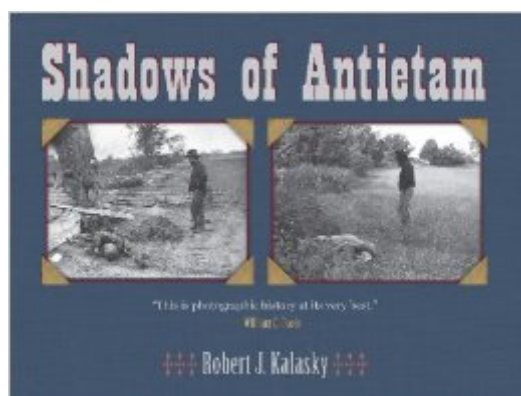


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# Shadows Of Antietam



## Synopsis

A revolutionary re-creation of the historic Antietam Battlefield photographsThe Battle of Antietam, fought in Sharpsburg, Maryland, on September 17, 1862, was the bloodiest single day of the Civil War, with 23,000 casualties on both sides. While the battle was tactically inconclusive, it resulted in two significant milestones. First, because Robert E. Lee failed to carry the war successfully into the North, Great Britain was dissuaded from recognizing the Confederate States of America diplomatically. Second, the battle gave President Abraham Lincoln the confidence to issue the Emancipation Proclamation. After the battle, two photographers sent by Mathew Brady--Alexander Gardner and James Gibson--recorded the horror of war with the first-ever images of dead American soldiers. Gardner's and Gibson's legendary photos have been the subject of debate for decades. The lack of information about locations, dates, and times in the thousands of photographs taken during the war has limited any thorough understanding of the photographers' work and led to much speculation. In *Shadows of Antietam*, Robert J. Kalasky has painstakingly re-created Gardner's and Gibson's output, retracing their footsteps by location, date, and time to chronologically and sequentially place their images. With the help of reenactors and black-and-white photography, Kalasky has assembled a comprehensive study, based on sunlight and shadow, of the 74 known glass plates recorded by Gardner and Gibson at Antietam. Civil War photography historians and buffs will appreciate this groundbreaking research for correcting previous errors and misjudgments made about the photographers' trek across the battlefield and for answering 150-year-old questions about their photographs. "Kalasky has produced a seminal study on the photography of Antietam. This important work should be required reading for all serious students of the battle." --Ted Alexander, Chief Historian, Antietam National Battlefield "Kalasky brings to the living the dead of Antietam." --Dennis Frye, author of *Antietam Revealed*

## Book Information

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## Customer Reviews

This book is a must for enthusiasts of the Battle of Antietam, Civil War photography, and the pioneering work of Civil War photographic historian William Frassanito. Kalasky sets out to pinpoint the exact dates and times at which Alexander Gardner and his assistants produced the groundbreaking series of photos in the days after the battle. For the most part, this is a fascinating book; I saw several Antietam pics which were new to me, and Kalasky does a good job of plotting Gardner's movements, mostly using shadows detected in the old pictures. I especially enjoyed seeing the magnified sections of some of the old photos, and updated "then and now" views (in 2009 I visited the National Park for the first time in 20 years, and Kalasky's present-day photos reflect the field as it is now, as opposed to when Frassanito's book came out in the 70s). For me the main flaw of "Shadows of Antietam" is in its prose; it begs for a copy editor, and typos abound. However, that does not detract from this book being essential reading for students of Antietam and Civil War photography; a labor of love from its author.

As a longtime fan of Frassanito's earlier work, and always interested in what good photo analysis can reveal, I eagerly awaited the publication of this new perspective on Alexander's photographs and I was not disappointed. This is great stuff. It is evidence of years of research and thought on the subject. Unlike Gettysburg, where there are so many recognizable landscapes and rock formations, it is difficult to picture rolling farmlands from 150 years ago and today. The Bloody Lane, the real focus of my attention on Sharpsburg, really looks nothing like the sunken road of 1862 with its bare ground, mud and ruts. The Park Service has neatly mowed grass banks and lane for the convenience and safety of the walking tourist, but the reality was an old farm lane. Only by substituting "bodies" can we begin to see the angles of the photographs and place the area in an historic perspective. I wish Kalasky had used an entire brigade of "corpses" to recreate the entire tableau, but a body here, a body there seems to work. And the most important part of his research is to finally come up with a good, well documented, thoughtful argument on the placement of Colonel Charles Courtenay Tew's body in the Bloody Lane. While his burial site will forever remain unresolved (yes, he is at Washington Cemetery in Hagerstown, Maryland, but where) I think Robert

Kalasky presents a strong argument and enlargement to identify the brave Colonel in death. Buy the book and spend hours revising American's bloodiest day. Take your copy to Antietam as I will do with mine and walk the ground with a better prospective of how it was September 17, 1862. Well done, Robert and a must have library addition to anyone interested in The War.

I don't have much to offer that has not been said in the other reviews but I just wanted to put a review that again encouraged people to pick up this book. The Shadows of Antietam analysis is amazing, and really opens up a lot of different thoughts that one who has seen these photos dozens of times before hadn't thought of before. The high resolution zoom in shots concerning details of the battle and individuals were really neat and I couldn't help but feel that the author should put together a book highlighting and using the zoom functions to catch missed details in all famous civil war photos. For example, one zoom captured the eyes of a burial detail soldier more clearly than I think any civil war photo at that distance I've ever seen. He's holding his hand over his face likely due to the smell but staring straight into the camera. Seriously great stuff here for anyone even remotely interested. Great job!

Very interesting book. A lot of research went into it. Trying to figure out what time the original Antietam photos were taken and exactly when makes for an interesting read.

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