

of photographs taken at Sharpsburg. Brady and other photographers had been taking pictures related to the war since its start in early 1861, but those were mostly portraits of soldiers. What was different about Brady's Antietam exhibit was the inclusion of images of corpses, horribly twisted, mangled, and bloated from the summer sun, strewn across the fields of Sharpsburg. In a review published on October 20, 1862, the *New York Times* praised the photographs' realism:

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 door-yards and along the streets, he has done something very like it. At the door of his gallery hangs a little placard, "The Dead of Antietam." Crowds of people are constantly . . . bending over photographic views of that fearful battlefield, taken immediately after the action. . . . There is a terrible fascination about it that draws one near these pictures, and makes him lo[a]th to leave them. You will see hushed, reverend groups standing around these weird copies of carnage, bending down to look in the pale faces of the dead, chained by the strange spell that dwells in dead men's eyes.

Ironically, Brady had not taken any of the photographs that he exhibited in his gallery that October. Although his name had become synonymous with photography in the United States that made him famous. Instead, Brady hired and trained others to do much of the photography published under his name. The Antietam images were taken by Alexander Gardner, who managed a gallery owned by Brady in Washington, D.C. A few months before the Battle of Antietam, Gardner had joined General McClellan's staff as its official photographer. This appointment enabled him to travel with the army and to photograph battle-fields immediately before and after action took place. It was this sort of inside access that gave his Antietam gallery.

Gardner's Antietam photographs were a tremendous commercial success, but the two men parted ways a few months later and became commercial rivals for the rest of the war, with Gardner working out of his own gallery in Washington, D.C. (see Figure 12.1). Brady, who had made his name in the 1850s as the photographer of the nation's leading citizens, continued to publish photographs of the war's famous figures and landmarks. Meanwhile, Gardner led a new wave of photographers who focused their work on images of wartime destruction: battlefield dead, blasted buildings, and landscapes transformed by the hard hand of war.

Photographers such as Brady and Gardner produced a rich visual record of the Civil War. Previous wars had been photographed: military portraits and landscapes date to the Mexican-American War (1846–1848) and the British-Russian Crimean War (1854–1856). Both of those conflicts, however, occurred when the technology of photography was in its infancy, and their battlefields