



Source: Yale University Art Gallery, Trumbull Collection.

George Washington leading the Continental Army forward

Compare Mercer's facial expression with that of the dead soldier in the foreground of O'Sullivan's image

Mercer dies in close proximity to the enemy, witnessing the tide of battle around him

nineteenth century. Compare his *Death of General Mercer at the Battle of Princeton, New Jersey, 3 January 1777* (above) with the most famous photograph from the Gettysburg battlefield, Timothy O'Sullivan's "A Harvest of Death, Gettysburg, Pennsylvania" (on p. 247). Both depict battlefield carnage, but convey very different messages to their viewers.

Trumbull's painting, which he started ten years after the Battle of Princeton took place, makes Mercer's death heroic: he dies with sword in one hand, his other hand grasping the bayonet that will deliver his fatal wound. He literally stares death in the face, gazing directly into the eyes of his adversary. The worth of his sacrifice is evident by the action occurring behind him. While Mercer dies, General George Washington leads the Continental Army forward to victory.

Now consider O'Sullivan's 1863 photograph "A Harvest of Death," which he took two days after the fighting at Gettysburg. Corpses litter the battlefield to