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Harpers Weekly Reports Events of 1865

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Harpers Weekly
Reports events of
1865

Jack L. Dickinson
Marshall University
Special Collections Dept.
March 2015
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INTRODUCTION

In late 2014, Marshall University’s Special Collection Department received a donation of 12 years of important newspapers in excellent condition. The 13 bound volumes contain a complete set of *Harper’s Weekly* newspapers for the period which include the Civil War and Reconstruction (1859 – 1870.) Harper’s is one of the most referenced and desired newspapers of the Civil War period, due to its liberal use of maps, engravings, and images. A significant feature is the newspaper’s coverage of President Abraham Lincoln’s assassination. The collection was a donation from the Denver Public Library.

Published from 1857 through 1916, this highly sought after newspaper provided a visual face to the Civil War and was the most widely read journal in the country during this period. It featured foreign and domestic news, fiction, essays on many subjects, and humor, populated with numerous illustrations.

The newspaper utilized many of the most famous and well-known artists, photographers, and illustrators of the period, such as:

- Matthew Brady
- A.L. Carroll
- Ed Forbes
- Alexander Gardner
- Andrew McCallum
- Thomas Nast
- A.R. Waud and his brother William Waud

Many of the images published were engravings or sketches made from the actual photos. Technology of the time was not available to produce a plate for printing directly from a photo.

This document gives a sample of *Harpers Weekly’s* coverage of many of the significant events of the year 1865, the last year of the Civil War.

*Jack L. Dickinson*

March 2015
*Harper’s Weekly* issue: Jan. 21, 1865

Cover image: “View of General Butler’s Dutch Gap Canal Before the Explosion of the Bulk-head.”

The issue reported Union Gen. William T. Sherman’s “march to the sea” which took place Nov. and Dec. of 1864.
Harper’s Weekly issue: Jan. 28, 1865
Image caption: “Paris Fashions for January, 1865.”

Harper’s published at least twice a year images of the latest Paris fashions.
On Jan. 13 to 15, 1865, after an attack by US Navy ships, a Union Army under Gen. Alfred Terry mounted a land attack that resulted in the surrender of the fort, located near Wilmington, N.C.
*Harper’s Weekly* issue: Feb. 11, 1865

Image caption: “General Sherman Reviewing his Army at Savannah, sketched by William Waud.”

This was the end of Union Gen. Sherman’s “march to the sea,” which took place in November and December of 1864. Sherman described this 285-mile march as necessary to make the population “old and young, rich and poor, feel the hard hand of war.”

**William Waud** (1832 - 1878) was an architect and illustrator born in England. He spent the first three years of the Civil War as a special artist for a competitor of Harper’s: *Frank Leslie’s Illustrated Newspaper*. In 1864 Waud joined the staff of *Harper's Weekly* and worked along with his brother Alfred (also with *Harper's*) during the Petersburg Campaign. He covered Sherman’s March in the south and Lincoln’s funeral.
This issue featured a short story titled ‘A Wife’s Secret.’
On February 8, 1865 occurred one of the great fires of Philadelphia. It began when 3,000 barrels of coal oil stored in a warehouse ignited. The fire destroyed several blocks in every direction, and killed eight persons.
Harper’s Weekly issue: Mar. 4, 1865
Cover image: “Sherman’s March Through South Carolina-Road at the Swamp Crossings”
This is another scene from Sherman’s March to the Sea.
Harper’s Weekly issue: Mar. 11, 1865
Image caption: “Junction of the Potomac and Shenandoah Rivers From the Cemetery Above Harper’s Ferry – sketched by A.R. Waud.”

Harpers Ferry (West Virginia after 1863,) located where the states of Maryland, Virginia, and West Virginia meet, was a key railroad junction and location of the Harper’s Ferry Arsenal, which was captured by Stonewall Jackson in 1861. It was the location of John Brown’s raid of 1859. It is now a National Historic Park.

Alfred R. Waud (1828-1891) was an artist and illustrator, working for the New York Illustrated News at the start of the Civil War. He joined Harper’s Weekly in late 1861 or early 1862. His brother, William, joined him at Harper’s in 1864.
Harper’s Weekly issue: Mar. 18, 1865
Cover image: “President Lincoln taking the oath at his second inauguration—Gardner photograph”

Alexander Gardner (1821 – 1882) emigrated from Scotland before the Civil War, and learned photography. He became a staff photographer under Union General George B. McClellan, commander of the Army of the Potomac. He was well-known for his photos of the Battle of Gettysburg.
Harper’s Weekly issue: Mar. 18, 1865
Image caption: “President Lincoln’s reinaugeration at the capitol, Mar. 4, 1865-photographed by Gardner, Washington.”

Another photo by Alexander Gardner. Gardner worked for Matthew Brady during the first year of the war.
Fort Stedman was part of the defenses of Petersburg, Va. In a pre-dawn assault on March 25, Confederate forces under Maj. Gen. John B. Gordon, overpowered the garrisons of Fort Stedman and its three Union batteries. During the day, elements of the II and VI Corps (Union) assaulted and captured the entrenched picket lines and recaptured the fort. This was a devastating blow for Lee’s army, setting up the Confederate defeat at Five Forks.
Harper’s Weekly issue: Apr. 22, 1865

Image caption: “Cavalry charge at the Battle of Five Forks”

This pivotal battle was fought on April 1, 1865 at Five Forks, Va. Confederate Gen. George Pickett, known for his charge at Gettysburg, dug a fortified position at the crossroads, where he was routed by Union Gen. Phil Sheridan’s cavalry and the Union Fifth Corps. The Union triumph heralded the end of the stalemate outside Petersburg and set the stage for the breakthrough that followed the next day. On April 2, Lee informed Jefferson Davis that Petersburg and Richmond would have to be evacuated. Lee surrendered to Grant only seven days later. Harper’s called it “The Final Victory.”
Oddly enough, Harper’s included no image in this issue of Lee’s surrender on April 9 at Appomattox Court House, Va. Harper’s published its first images of the surrender in their issue of May 20, 1865.
One of the features of Harper’s was the excellent maps of the many theaters of the Civil War. On this map, the location of the Battle of Five Forks is in the lower left corner of this map. After that victory, the Union Army marched northeast to the Petersburg defenses.
By April of 1865, Sherman’s army had taken possession of Savannah, Charleston and Atlanta. Richmond, the Confederate capitol, was the remaining large city still under Confederate control. When the Union Army broke through the defenses around Petersburg, Va., Gen. Lee sent a message to Confederate Pres. Jefferson Davis that he could no longer defend the Confederate capitol, and it should be evacuated. The Confederate Army burned a part of the city as it evacuated.
Harper’s Weekly issue: Apr. 29, 1865
Cover Image caption: “J. Wilkes Booth”

Harper’s first issue to cover the assassination of President Abraham Lincoln appeared two weeks after the event of April 14, 1865. Oddly the image on the cover of this issue is of John Wilkes Booth, the assassin. The paper described the event as “a dark day in our country’s calendar.”
Harper’s Weekly issue: Apr. 29, 1865
Image captions: (top) “The assassination of President Lincoln at Ford’s Theater on the night of April 14, 1865.”
(bottom) “The assassination of President Lincoln at Ford’s Theater – after the act.”
Engraving showing the death figure over Fort Sumter, marking the beginning of the Civil War, and at bottom the angel of peace. Oval figure in center is Major Robert Anderson, Union commander of the fort in 1861.

Art by Thomas Nast: Thomas Nast (1840-1902) was a German-born American caricaturist and editorial cartoonist who was the "Father of the American Cartoon." He began at Harper’s in 1859, and his engravings were said to “vividly go beyond reporting.” His distinctive signature appeared on all his engravings in Harper’s:
Another engraving by Thomas Nast. Note the grieving soldier in upper left, grieving sailor in upper right.
Harper’s Weekly issue: May 6, 1865
Cover image: “President Lincoln at Home – photographed by Brady”

The original Brady photo is captioned “Tad Lincoln with his father looking at a photo album.”

Matthew Brady (1823-1896) is referred to as the father of photojournalism. He is most well known for his documentation of the Civil War. In the early 1850’s Brady opened a studio in Washington, DC, and began making daguerreotypes of prominent politicians. At the start of the Civil War he organized a group of photographers and staff to follow the troops as the first field photographers.
Surgeon General Joseph K. Barnes attending Lincoln in the early morning hours of April 15. Lincoln was pronounced legally dead at 7:22 am on the 15th. His death was said to have been: “the cause of such mighty changes in the world’s history as we may perhaps never realize.”
The pursuit and killing of John Wilkes Booth held the nation’s attention for eleven days following the assassination of Lincoln. The bottom image appears to be from the lost glass plate taken by Alexander Gardner, although not credited in Harper’s to anyone.
Harper’s Weekly issue: May 20, 1865

Another Thomas Nast collage, it contains the first image Harper’s used of Lee’s surrender.
This was the worst maritime disaster in U.S. history. The *Sultana* had been used on several occasions during the Civil War to transport Union troops on the Mississippi. It was approved to carry 376 persons including her crew. The boat left New Orleans on April 21 to transport Union soldier home. It stopped in Vicksburg and picked up approximately 2,200 Union soldiers most of whom had been prisoners of war. The crew patched a known boiler problem and sailed on to Memphis. After a stop there she set out again, and late in the night of April 27 or the morning hours of April 28* the boilers exploded, killing some 1,700. There was a small article in the May 13 issue, and with the funeral of Lincoln occupying most of this issue, this image appeared eleven pages in.

(*The date appears in various other sources as April 26, 27th or 28th.)
Harper’s Weekly issue: May 27, 1865
Image caption: “President Lincoln’s funeral- Burial service at Oak Ridge, Springfield, Ill. – sketched by W. Waud.”

Lincoln’s body arrived by train in Springfield on May 3, 1865.

Another sketch by William Waud, one of two brothers working for Harper’s.
Harper’s Weekly issue: June 3, 1865
Cover image caption: “Check Mate!”

This sketch by A.L. Carroll shows Lincoln beating the Confederacy in strategic chess, revealing that Generals Grant, Sherman, and Sheridan have backed Lee into a corner. (lower left corner of the board)
*Harper’s Weekly* issue: June 3, 1865
Image caption: “The court-room at the old penitentiary, Washington, during the trial of the conspirators – sketched by Mr. Andrew M’Callum.”

**Andrew McCallum** was a Civil War artist who did several sketches of battle scenes and other historical events in 1865 for Harper’s.
*Harper's Weekly* issue: June 10, 1865

**Alexander Gardner** (1821-1882) was a photographer and jeweler born in Scotland. He worked with Matthew Brady until 1862. He is best known for his photos of the execution of the conspirators. He published a two-volume work: "Alexander Gardner's Photographic Sketch Book of the Civil War" in 1866.
*Harper’s Weekly* issue: June 10, 1865

Image caption: “Victory and Death.”

Another allegorical collage by Thomas Nast. Abraham Lincoln “our martyred president” is at the peak on top. “Everyman” is humbled before death.
Harper’s Weekly issue: June 24, 1865
Image caption: “Our Arms Victorious.”

Harper’s Weekly issue: July 1, 1865
Cover image captions:  (Top) “Monument erected on the field of the First Battle of Bull Run – photographed by Gardner, and published by Philip and Solomons, Washington, D.C.” (Bottom) “Consecration of the Bull Run monument – reading the service, June 11, 1865.’

The top image is another famous image from a photo by Alexander Gardner.
Harper’s Weekly issue: July 8, 1865
Cover image caption: “Peace – Fourth of July, 1865”

The Angel of Peace leads the soldiers returning home.
Harper’s Weekly issue: July 8, 1865
Image caption: “Peace on earth and good will towards men.” “The Fourth of July, eighteen hundred and sixty-five.”

Another collage of vignettes by Thomas Nast.
Harper’s Weekly issue: July 22, 1865

Engraving of another of Alexander Gardner’s famous photos of the capture, trials, and executions of the conspirators in the Lincoln assassination.
*Harper’s Weekly* issue: July 22, 1865

Image caption: (Several images of the conspirators and their execution.)

Top two images are from other Alexander Gardner photos. Bottom left is from an Andrew McCallum photo.
Harper’s Weekly issue: July 29, 1865
Cover image caption: “The great labor question from a southern point of view”

This is meant to illustrate the problem in the south of the freed slaves. The plantation owner is saying: “My boy, we’ve toiled and taken care of you long enough now you’ve got to work!”
Famous showman P.T. Barnum's Museum was located at the corner of Broadway and Ann Street in New York City, from 1841 to 1865. It was “a combination zoo, museum, lecture hall, wax museum, theater and freak show.” The museum was the first American institution to combine sensational entertainment and gaudy display with instruction. Barnum immediately built another museum in the city, which also burned to the ground in 1868. After the second fire, Barnum turned to the circus, for which he remains well known to this day.
*Harper’s Weekly* issue: Aug. 5, 1865
Image caption: (Left) “Pardon – Columbia: ‘Shall I trust these men,’” (Right) “Franchise – and not this man?”

Another pair of images by Thomas Nast. Man bowing in left image is an ex-Confederate soldier; man in the right image is an African-American US Army veteran.
*Harper’s Weekly* issue: Aug. 12, 1865

Image caption: “The Atlantic telegraph cable”

Images and collage by Ed Forbes.

This was actually the third attempt at laying a transatlantic cable. A permanent connection was finally achieved with the 1866 cable and this 1865 cable, which were laid and repaired by the ship SS *Great Eastern*, captained by Sir James Anderson.
Before the days of block signals and centralized traffic control, train collisions were a common occurrence. This wreck in Connecticut claimed eight lives and injured dozens. It was caused by a passenger train encountering a north-bound freight train whose locomotive had become disabled.
Harper’s Weekly issue: Sept. 2, 1865
Image caption: “Newly-arrived immigrants at Castle Garden, New York City – sketched by A. R. Waud.”

Castle Garden, within the Battery in New York City at the tip of Manhattan, was where 11 million immigrants came into the United States from 1820 through 1892, the year Ellis Island opened. More than 100 million Americans can trace their ancestors to this early immigration period.

Another collage of images by A.R. Waud.
Confederate Captain William Henry Wirz was the only ex-Confederate tried and executed for war crimes.
Several Civil War photographers and artists created scenes of the Andersonville horrors, many from descriptions given by survivors. Sketches on this page are not credited.
Harper’s Weekly issue: Oct. 14, 1865
Cover image caption: “President Andrew Johnson pardoning rebels at the White House – sketched by Mr. Stanley Fox.”

The pardoning of ex-Confederates was a controversial issue of 1865. Stanley Fox sketched many battlefield and other scenes for Harper’s in 1865.
Harper’s Weekly issue: Oct. 21, 1865
Cover image caption: “Trial of Captain Wirz, the Andersonville jailer, in the Court of claims, Washington, D.C. – sketched by Jos. Hanshew.”

The upper sketch depicts the finding of Dr. Mudd hiding in a cannon barrel aboard the ship Thomas A. Scott.
Col. Jenyns C. Battersby commanded this unit briefly in 1865. The unit was recruited in New York City and contained many Germans, Hungarians and Poles.
*Harper’s Weekly* issue: Nov. 25, 1865

Image caption: (Top) “Execution of Captain Henry Wirz – adjusting the rope-photographed by Gardner.” (Bottom) “Execution of Wirz – lowering the body photographed by Gardner.”

Two sketches from the Alexander Gardner photographs.
Harper’s Weekly issue: Dec. 2, 1865

Image caption: “Solution of labor question in the South.”

In this engraving, the “Inquiring Stranger” on horseback asks: “Well, now that the war is over, what are you people going to do for a living?” The ex-slaves on the left say they are going to draw rations, the “ex-dominant race” on the right say they are going to run—run for Congress, or notary public.
Harper’s Weekly issue: Dec. 9, 1865
Image caption: “Lieutenant General Ulysses S. Grant –photographed by
F. Gutekunst, Philadelphia”

Frederick Gutekunst (1857-1917) was a photographer from Philadelphia. He was famous for images of Walt Whitman and Grant.
Harper’s Weekly issue: Dec. 9, 1865
Image caption: “National Thanksgiving Dec. 7, 1865”

This collage by Thomas Nast includes the proclamation by President Andrew Johnson, creating the Thanksgiving holiday as the first Thursday in December.
“The Drive” was described as “a spacious Macadamized road for vehicles, with a foot path on either side.” It ringed the entire circle of Central Park.
The Freedman’s Bureau was a U.S. federal government agency that aided “distressed freedmen” (freed slaves) during the Reconstruction Period. The Bureau’s powers were extended to help find lost families for African Americans and teach them to read and write.
Another excellent allegorical collage by Thomas Nast. Notice some of the players in the bottom stage scene are Grant, Sherman and other Union generals, and on the floor of the stage are the heads of Lee and other Confederate leaders.