



Battlefield Photographer

THE NEWSLETTER OF THE CENTER FOR CIVIL WAR PHOTOGRAPHY

THE UNTOLD STORY OF TWO SOUTHERN PHOTO PIONEERS



'NEW' RICHMOND PHOTO ENHANCES 150TH ANNIVERSARY ★ SEE PAGE 12 ★
LIBRARY OF CONGRESS ACQUIRES ROBIN STANFORD COLLECTION ★ SEE PAGE 19 ★

VOL. XIII, ISSUE 1 - APRIL 2015

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FRONT COVER IMAGE

In this detail from an extremely rare, possibly one-of-a-kind carte de visite from the Nicholas

Picerno collection, the developing tent of Charleston photographers Osborn & Durbec sits between the Gamble House (left), a new hotel in Florence, S.C., and the town's train station in 1860. This superb, fresh window into the photographic history of the United States helps us showcase the first-ever detailed look at the lives of these two Confederate photographers, an article by Andy Douglas House that begins on page 3.

BACK COVER IMAGE

In this detail from a stereo view in the Robin Stanford Collection, Charleston photographers Osborn & Durbec capture the crumbling veneer of antebellum plantation life in the South in this image of an African-American slave posing at a gate to the Accabee plantation in 1860. The image has rarely if ever been published on the printed page before now.



BATTLEFIELD PHOTOGRAPHER IS THE NEWSLETTER OF THE CENTER FOR CIVIL WAR PHOTOGRAPHY

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MISSION STATEMENT

- To educate the public about Civil War photography, its role in the conflict, and its rich variety of forms and formats;
- To digitally secure original images and preserve vintage prints;
- To enhance the accessibility of photographs to the public;
- To present interpretive programs that use stereoscopic and standard images to their fullest potential

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CHARLESTON'S CIVIL WAR PHOTOGRAPHERS:

OSBORN & DURBEC

BY ANDY DOUGLAS HOUSE

Among the most important Civil War photographers were J. M. Osborn and F. E. Durbec, yet they were partners for only three and a half years. The images they took of plantation life in South Carolina in 1860 are among the only American documentary photographs showing scenes with African-American slaves. They were at the epicenter of the rebellion and their photographs of the shell-torn forts in Charleston Harbor in April 1861, after the surrender of Fort Sumter, which are still widely published today, established that Confederate photographers took the war's first images. The story of these two men and how they came together as unlikely partners in photography until the war ended that alliance has never been told until now.

James M. Osborn was an early daguerreian artist who would move from his native New York to Charleston in the early 1850s. He would become very prosperous, but his success came at a high price. He would suffer great tragedy in his life not once but twice, but would help make photojournalism history in September 1863 in the taking of the world's first combat action photos while under fire.

Frederick Eugene Durbec, from Charleston, was a well-educated, free-spirited young man who would put down his camera after the war began to take up arms for the Confederacy. He saw fierce combat during his service, but a crippling disease would end his military service.

Ironically, despite their enterprising work as photographers, it appears they may have never gotten around to taking images of themselves. No photographs of Osborn or Durbec are known to exist.

Born in New York in 1811, Osborn opened his first photographic studio in New York City at 156 Bowery Street in 1849. He was 38. Just two years later, in 1851, he helped found and became president of the

American Photographic Institute, an association that, in part, delivered lectures on the practice and theory of the art. In early November 1852, he and his wife Sarah moved to Charleston where they each opened a business at 233 King Street. While James operated the Eagle Daguerreian Gallery and advertised himself as an artist with long experience, his wife was a milliner with a dress-making business. (1)

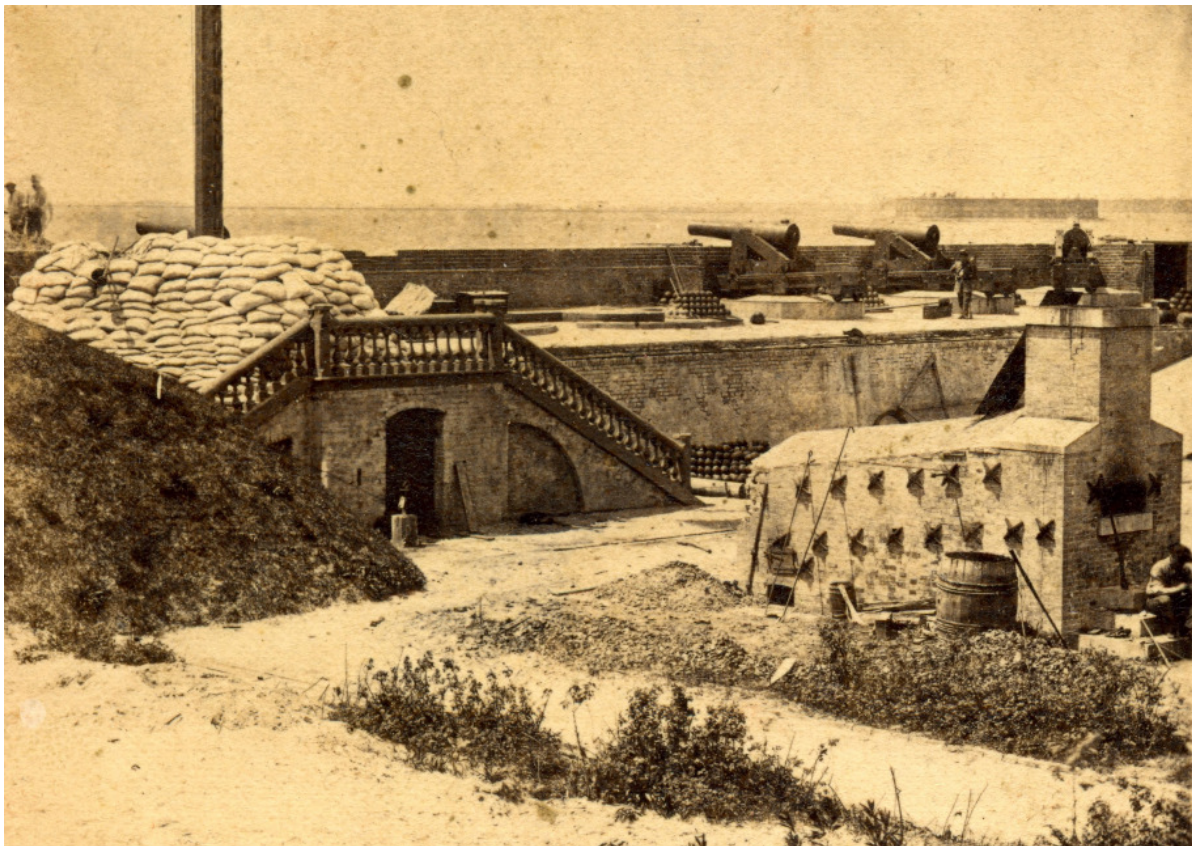
In late November 1852, Osborn attended the South Carolina Institute's Fourth Annual Fair which was held at the Citadel Green (today known as Marion Square) in Charleston. It was here that Osborn was awarded the top honor – a silver medal – for the superiority of the composition of his daguerreotypes. He also witnessed at the fair the address given by Edmund Ruffin of Virginia, an outspoken proponent of secession who would eventually come to claim to have fired the first shot of the Civil War.

In December 1855, the couple sold their businesses and returned to New York City, but came back to Charleston in 1857. Osborn became a photographer for Quinby & Co. at 233 King Street. By late 1858, Osborn had left Quinby & Co. to go into business with Durbec. The very first advertisement of the new partnership was printed in the *Charleston Courier* on November 23, 1858: "Osborn & Durbec's new photographic gallery, 223 King Street, (In the bend.) Photographs, Ambrotypes, & c." (2)

Frederick Eugene Durbec, who preferred to be called Eugene, after his father, was born in Charleston in 1836. His father was a successful commission merchant, hotel owner, and businessman. The educated young Durbec was described as having a lively and jovial disposition. He made friends wherever he went. He was a humorist, actor, singer, an all-around good fellow, and a social butterfly. In 1857, when he was 21, Durbec enlisted as a private in the Lafayette Artillery, which



More than a century before William A. Frassanito began his then-and-now examination of Civil War photographic locations, Osborn & Durbec were doing it as the war started. Their image of Fort Moultrie and the distant Fort Sumter in August 1860 is strikingly different than when they returned to the same exact camera location in April 1861 to photograph the aftermath of the Civil War's first engagement. (Ron Perisbo Collection).





Use your CCWP anaglyph glasses to see the 3-D in this remarkable 1860 “Plantation” image by Osborn & Durbec taken inside the Zion Chapel, an Episcopal missionary church on Rockville Plantation, during a church service for slaves. There is no positive ID for the image, but the Zion Chapel minister was a white pastor, the Rev. Paul Gervais Jenkins, who joined the Confederate Army in 1862, according to *A Historical Account of the Protestant Episcopal Church in South Carolina* (page 339). (Robin Stanford Collection, anaglyph by John Richter).

This anaglyph 3-D version of a battery of the Lafayette Artillery, taken in early 1861, comes alive when you view it with your CCWP 3-D glasses. Author Andy Douglas House reveals here for the first time the fascinating connections the photographers had with this artillery militia unit. (Robin Stanford Collection; anaglyph by John Richter).





Osborn & Durbec mounted the Civil War's first 3-D photographs on bright orange cards and pasted their "Southern Stereoscopic and Photographic Depot" label on the back. This historic images shows the Confederate flag flying high above the fort, on the side facing Charleston. At left is the fort's regular flag pole, with the upper part having been shot off. This vintage stereo gem is from the Robin Stanford Collection, now owned by the Library of Congress.

was part of the 1st Regiment Artillery, South Carolina Militia. The Militia were voluntary unpaid units held in reserve that could be called upon in an emergency should the need arise. (3)

Durbec began his career in photography in December 1855 working as a "coater" for the Tyler & Co. gallery, and then for Quinby and Co. when Quinby bought out Tyler in February 1857. While working together for Quinby, Osborn and Durbec no doubt became good friends and by late 1858 made plans to join forces. At 47, Osborn was much older than the 22-year-old Durbec. They seemingly were unlikely business partners, but Durbec's photographic experience, combined with his education, business background, and magnetic personality, made have gone a long ways toward making up for the age difference.

In November 1858, the Osborn & Durbec gallery opened, "in the bend" at 223 King Street, at "the sign of the big camera," and was described as a "two story brick building whose front is made of granite while the sills and lintels of the front are made of marble. To the south, having an entrance to the second story separate from the lower." Today, 223 is now 239 King Street, a Starbucks Coffee House. (4)

They quickly built their business into a state-of-the-art, high-volume studio. In November 1859, they

attend the South Carolina Institute's Ninth Annual Fair and received the award for the best unretouched photograph. In October 1859, they advertised they had the "largest and most varied assortment of stereoscopic instruments and pictures ever offered in this country, on glass or paper, plain or colored, consisting of views of the principle cities and monuments in the world. Groups of parlor and domestic scenes. Also offering photographs, ivorytypes, ambrotypes, melainotypes, ect." By early 1860, they had reached a national audience, providing one of their photos of "Tom, the blind negro boy pianist – The musical prodigy" to be converted into a woodcut engraving for publication in *Frank Leslie's Illustrated Newspaper* in New York.

By 1859, just two years after his enlistment, Durbec had risen from private to Colonel in the Lafayette Artillery. And he probably paved the way for his friend and partner Osborn to become affiliated. In June 1860, Osborn was listed as an honorary member when the unit had a social reunion at Accabee plantation on the banks of the Ashley River in Charleston, a place they visited often and photographed. (5)

In the spring and summer of 1860, Osborn began working outside of the studio, taking an extensive series of outdoor scenes to be marketed as stereographs and cartes de visite. Osborn photographed landmarks in



This carte de visite of the interior of Fort Sumter on Sept. 8, 1863 is mounted on a card with an "Osborn's Gallery" stamp on the reverse, establishing that Osborn also sold the images he and Cook made in the fort that day for the Confederate government. (Andy Douglas House Collection).

Charleston as well as places such as Mount Pleasant, Sullivan's Island, Goose Creek, Accabee Plantation and Rockville Plantation. He and Durbec even ventured as far as Florence, S.C., 135 miles distant.

The *Charleston Courier* reported on August 2nd, 1860: "J. M. Osborn (of Osborn & Durbec) has been for some time engaged in taking stereoscopic views of the most attractive and valuable features of our city and its suburbs and surroundings. Mr. Osborn has an excellent apparatus specifically prepared for field work, and from the specimens of his negatives we have examined, we predominately predict great success. It is his intention, we learn, to take views all in portions of the state, if proper encouragement be given."

Then again on August 6th, the paper reported: "Mr. Osborn on Friday [Aug. 3rd] visited Mt Pleasant and succeeded in taking some capital views of that place, as well as some views of Charleston and Sullivan's Island in the distance. In the course of a few weeks the sets complete will be ready for sale."

On August 27th, Osborn's documentary photography was advertised: "Southern Stereoscopic

and Photographic Depot at 223 King, offers stereoscopic views of the city and vicinity. Among which are eight different views of the Battery, the principle hotels, custom house, Accabee, Mt. Pleasant, Sullivan's Island, Goose Creek, &c. also a fine lot of stereoscopic boxes manufactured to their order."

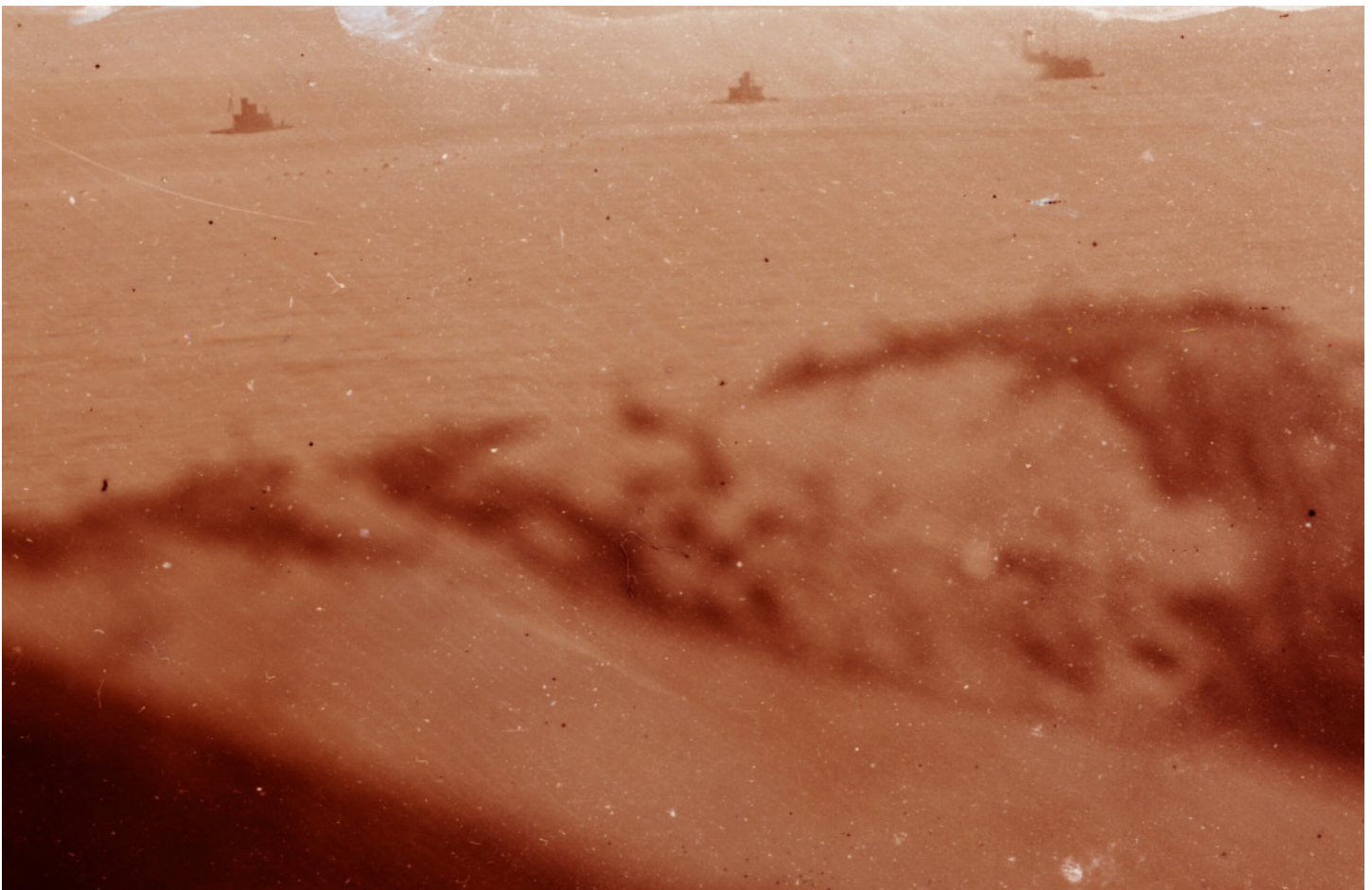
On November 1st, the *Charleston Mercury* reported: "For four months, Osborn & Durbec have been steadily engaged in obtaining the most accurate stereoscopic views of places in and around Charleston. Among these we may mention the Charleston Hotel, Mills House, Pavilion Hotel, Sullivan's Island, and a number of plantation scenes, including negro quarters, cotton picking, ect." The plantation views, taken in and around Rockville, S.C., which is on Wadmalaw Island 22 miles southwest of Charleston, are particularly significant as they are among the only documentary images of enslaved African-Americans. The images show plantation homes, slave quarters, an Episcopal church, a slave church, a church service for slaves, a slave cemetery, and even slaves spending some recreational time fishing.

There is no mention in the newspapers of their trip to Florence in the summer of 1860 but at least five images are known to exist, including the Gamble House Hotel on Front Street and the Northeast Railroad Line near Coit Street. It may never be known why they chose to visit the small town of Florence as it was quite a journey, but the images taken by Osborn & Durbec are the first known photographs of Florence. (6)

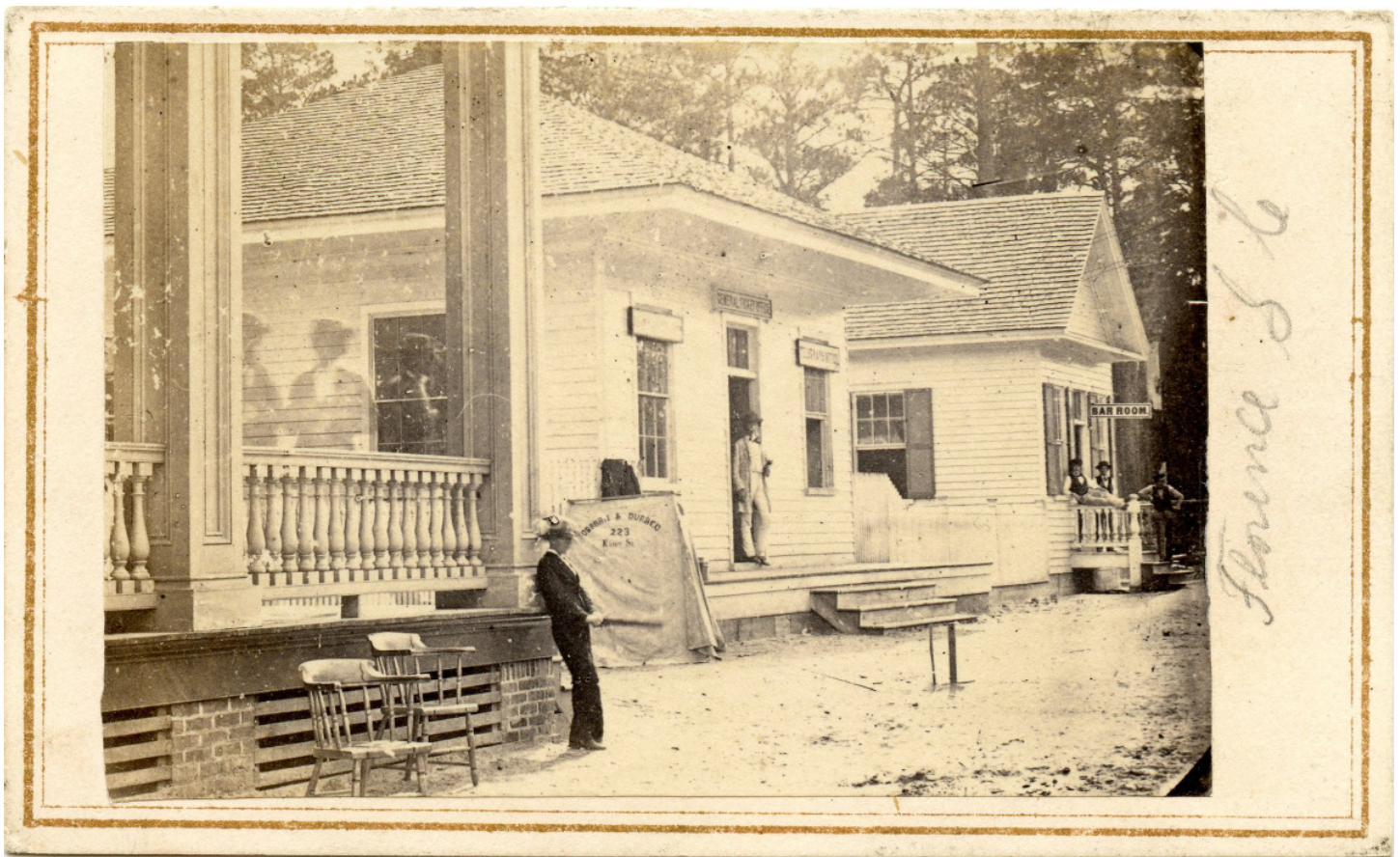
Their photographs were popular and apparently sold quite well, because counterfeiters began to copy their work. Their ad in the *Charleston Courier* on September 26, 1860 warned: "Caution. To the public generally. Osborn & Durbec, having received information that their pictures have been purchased by parties for the manifest purpose of copying them expressly for sale, and having gone to an considerable expense to obtain them, warn the public of the fact that none are genuine" without their Osborn & Durbec label on the back. They warned violators "that they will be prosecuted and dealt with according to law."

Along with success and prosperity came tragedy. On October 8, 1860, Sarah Osborn died suddenly of yellow fever. Only 33, she was buried at St. John's Church in Charleston. In a touching tribute to the young wife of his partner and friend, Durbec wrote the obituary published on October 13th: "Died, in this city, on the morning of the 8th of October, 1860, after a short illness, Mrs. Sarah Osborn, in the 33rd year of her age. Weep not for her, that faith assures us that: Blessed are they that wash their robes in the blood of the Lamb, that they may have a right to the tree of life, and may enter in by the gates into the city. F. E. D. [Frederick Eugene Durbec]." (7)

Osborn's loss came as Secession fever gripped the city and state, growing day by day. Though born a Yankee, Osborn was sympathetic to the southern cause and was quoted in October 1860 as saying that he was "an adopted son of South Carolina". On Nov. 22, 1860, the city's Young Men's Secession Club held a Torchlight Procession that was "generally acknowledged to have



James M. Osborn was with George S. Cook when they took the famous "Ironclads in Action" stereo view for the Confederacy from the battered parapet of Fort Sumter showing the U.S.S. New Ironsides leading two Monitor-class ironclads as they bombard Fort Moultrie on Sept. 8, 1863. This detail from the original left negative is rich with visual information. (Courtesy Richmond Valentine History Center).



The entire carte de visite of the Gamble House and train depot in Florence, S.C., in 1860 by Osborn & Durbec is published here on the printed page for the first time. This is the second known view of the photographers' developing tent, joining a stereo image they took of the Trapier Mortar Battery on Morris Island in 1861. The CDV is one of five owned by Nicholas Picerno, a collector of images and memorabilia of the 10th and 29th Maine regiments. It is in an album acquired by Picerno that had been kept by Corporal Abiah Edwards of the 29th Maine, who was Florence postmaster right after the war ended. (Nicholas Picerno Collection).

been a very credible and successful affair," the *Charleston Mercury* reported the following day. "At the head of the line was borne in a wagon a huge transparency, which had been provided by Messrs. Osborn & Durbec. This bore the motto: In God we trust, our arms and hearts are strong." (8)

The growing Secession crisis exploded on the morning of April 12, 1861, with the bombardment of Fort Sumter as Charlestonians by the thousands crammed the Battery to watch the spectacle. On April 14th, after 34 hours of bombardment, Union commander Major Robert Anderson surrendered. Durbec would always remember the first day of the Civil War for another, far sadder event: His father died on April 12th. (9)

On April 17, Osborn arrived at Fort Sumter with his stereo camera, having received special permission to photograph the fort. (The first images of the damaged fort were taken by Jesse H. Bolles's assistant, Alma A. Pelot, on April 15). Osborn took more than

20 views of the fort on April 17 showing the damage wrought by Confederate artillery and the fires that followed. Osborn also visited Fort Moultrie, where he took at least 10 views, and exposed at least six more stereo glass plate negatives at Morris Island. He also visited Cole's Island and took four photographs which included Fort Palmetto as well as the aforementioned Lafayette Artillery. As he went, he found no shortage of Confederate soldiers eager to pose for the camera and be forever linked to the victory.

The *Charleston Mercury* reported on April 23rd: "We learn that Mr. Osborn, of the firm Osborn & Durbec, the well-known photographers, has, by special permission, been allowed to visit Fort Sumter and has taken 26 views of the fort, interior and exterior. Mr. Osborn has also visited Morris and Sullivan's Island and taken several views of these points, all of which we may expect to see in a few days". On May 6th, the *Charleston Courier* had a similar report, but noted they had also produced "six large photographs for framing." The

paper said the gallery also had “one hundred different stereoscopic views of Charleston and vicinity, views of plantations in the state, ect.”

In all, Osborn & Durbec produced more than 40 images after the bombardment, creating one of the most complete photographic records of any Civil War battle or engagement. Recent image discoveries showing Fort Sumter in 1861, as previously published in *Battlefield Photographer*, suggest that after Osborn’s initial visit, he returned to the fort once or twice more in the spring of 1861.

Durbec, for unknown reasons, resigned from the Lafayette Artillery between August and November 1860, but that did not quell his martial fervor. By August 1861, he had rejoined the local militia as a sergeant in the Beauregard Light Infantry (attached to the Regiment of Rifles). On September 13th, the unit helped take charge of Union prisoners from Bull Run and escorted them through the streets of the city to the Charleston Jail. They were transferred to Castle Pinckney a few days later. (10)

On November 14th, at a ceremony at the Charleston Race Course, the Beauregard Light Infantry was presented with a unit flag by the young ladies of Charleston. The Captain, Peter Lelane, entrusted the company flag to Durbec, stating: “Sergeant F. E. Durbec: Into your hands is entrusted this flag. Preserve it unsullied and protect it from dishonor. Never allow it to depart from your hands while life lasts. Take it, and always remember the responsibility.” Soon enough, Durbec would fight for that flag in battle. (11)

On September 17, 1861, Osborn displayed his devotion to the Southern cause by enlisting in the Confederate Army as a private in the 1st Regiment Artillery, South Carolina Militia, Lafayette Artillery (Capt. J. J. Pope Jr.’s Company). The unit served less than two months, from September 17th to October 31st, when Osborn found himself briefly stationed on Cole’s Island, where five months earlier he had taken photographs of the same unit of which he was now a

member. (12)

Although Charleston would soon face damage and destruction under a relentless Union wartime bombardment, Osborn & Durbec were hit by calamity well before then. On Dec. 4, 1861, a fire broke out in the store below their studio. It nearly cost them everything. The *Charleston Courier* reported on December 5th that: “At half past eight o’clock in the evening [Dec. 4th] the bells sounded the fire alarm, and considerable excitement was caused by the discovery of a fire in the rear of H. W. Kinsman’s store [223 King Street] on the west side of King Street, near the corner of Beaufain. These premises are connected with several large stores, containing valuable stocks of goods. The fire is supposed to have originated in the rear of the shop. The second story was occupied by Messrs. Osborn &

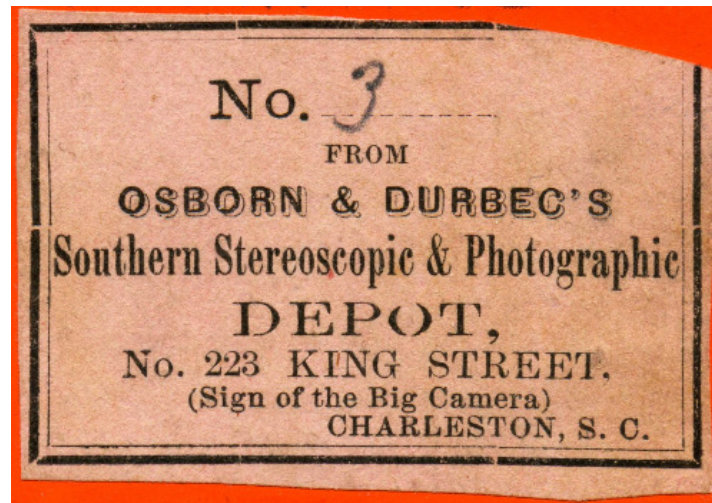
Durbec, Daguerreotypists. Mr. Kinsman lost some twenty-five or thirty sewing machines. Some of the stock was removed in time to a place of safety. Osborn & Durbec’s loss is primarily from the damage sustained by water.”

Ironically, the Great Fire in Charleston was only one week later, on Dec. 11th. It destroyed about a quarter of the city, but the already damaged Osborn & Durbec studio was spared any further damage, though the massive conflagration

reached within half a block of their location.

By then, their ambitious partnership, in which was born their unique photographic chronicle of Southern life, was in its final months. On February 21, 1862, their business partnership came to an end. But their friendship would endure.

Durbec would soon be off to the front lines. At age 25, he enlisted in the Confederate Army as the Beauregard Light Infantry Volunteers militia unit was officially mustered into Confederate service on February 22nd. That same day, Durbec was elected as Orderly Sergeant of the unit. Over the next few months the Beauregard Light Infantry was joined by other local units to form the Eutaw Battalion. In July 1862, the Beauregard Light Infantry, Eutaw Battalion, would



This is the printed label that appears on the back of vintage, original Osborn & Durbec stereo views. (Courtesy of Bob Zeller).

become Company E of the 25th Regiment, South Carolina Volunteers. (13)

In March 1862, Osborn, now on his own, moved the studio to the corner of King and Liberty Streets (at the time, 281 King), the recently vacated location of photographer Jesse H. Bolles.

"Mr. Osborn, who has perpetuated the aspect of the ruins of Fort Sumter in his admirable stereoscopic views, has been engaged during the past week in photographing and stereoscoping the ruins of the public buildings as they were left by the great fire December last," the *Charleston Mercury* reported on March 24th. "Mr. Osborn has some excellent views of the Circular Church, and the Cathedral of S. S. John and Finbar. They will be ready for sale at his gallery, corner of King and Liberty Streets, early this week."

Durbec, meanwhile, was stationed in early 1862 on Battery Island, James Island, and also at Secessionville. On June 3, 1862, Durbec was on the front line of defense with his unit as the Union launched the first land offensive on Charleston at Sol Legare's Island.

"We reached the woods where the enemy were," a fellow unit member wrote, "and experienced one of the sharpest little fights of the season. It seemed that a thousand balls

fell around us in a minute, but our little band seemed determined to do or die. The enemy retreated from the woods to Legare's house. It was here that a bayonet charge was made, where they fought desperately, and at last fell back. Too much praise cannot be given to the Beauregard Light Infantry Volunteers, for they seemed to fight for their God, their country, and their name."

(14)

Less than two weeks later, on June 16th, Durbec was

once again in the thick of combat, this time at the battle of Secessionville at Fort Lamar. The Eutaw Battalion, including the Beauregard Light Infantry, was "placed in a line of battle some 400 yards west of the marsh which flanks Lamar's battery [Fort Lamar] on the right side." It "was opposed by the 3d New Hampshire and 3d Rhode Island Artillery. The field in front of them was strewn with the dead and wounded of the enemy. The regiment was exposed to a very heavy enfilading fire of infantry, and under a cross fire of gun boats and


field artillery. The field and staff officers and rank and file of the whole regiment acted admirably. Not a man flinched." For his bravery in this battle, Durbec was promoted on Sept. 13 from 1st Sergeant to Brevet 2nd Lieutenant. (15)


Durbec had struggled with rheumatism throughout his young life, and around October 1862, it rendered him unable to serve. Allowed an extended furlough, he went to Columbia, SC to recover. But despite his willingness to fight, Durbec's condition would no longer allow him to perform his military duty. A medical review board evaluated and confirmed his condition. On January 9, 1863, he lamentably applied to resign his Commission. His request was personally granted by General Beauregard and

he was allowed to resign on January 31, 1863, just three weeks short of his one-year enlistment. He would stay in Columbia for the remainder of the war, sending what money he could to Charleston to help care for wounded Confederate soldiers. (16)

From July 10th to September 26, 1863, Osborn

OSBORN & DURBEC'S
PHOTOGRAPHIC MART,
223 KING STREET, Charleston, S. C.



STRANGERS visiting the city would do well to give us a call before
going elsewhere,
5,000 DIFFERENT PATTERNS
— OF —
FANCY CASES, &c.
ALSO, A SLENDID ASSORTMENT OF

CONSISTING OF VIEWS OF RUINS IN EGYPT, &c. WITH
INSTRUMENTS, &c.
JAS. M. OSBORN. F. E. DURBEC.

By 1860s standards, Osborn & Durbec ran a full service photographic gallery, as evidenced by their detailed advertisement in the 1860 Charleston Business Directory. (Courtesy of Bob Zeller).

CONTINUED ON PAGE 14

A NEW WINDOW TO



RICHMOND'S RUINS



CCWP member Fred C. Sherfy, who contributed the December 2013 cover photo of the Gettysburg Address ceremony, comes to us with another fantastic find just in time for the 150th anniversary of the fall of Richmond in April 1865. This maker-marked print (opposite page at bottom) by obscure photographer William Hathaway of the ruins of Richmond is published here on the printed page for the first time. "Wow, totally an unknown pano," said Richmond Civil War photo expert and National Park Service historian Mike Gorman. "I've never seen that one before. This is one hell of a find just before April!" The printed title on the board mount reads: "Panoramic View from the Petersburg Road." Gorman also quickly realized that Sherfy's image combined with another photo at the Library of Congress to form a spectacular two-plate panorama of the city (above) and its smoking "Burnt District." (Fred C. Sherfy Collection; two-plate panorama by John Richter).

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Nancy and Ed Miville
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found himself once again called into service with the 1st Regiment Artillery, South Carolina Militia, in the newly designated Company C. His company was detached for special duty at different foundries in the city and also to work on gun boats. In the midst of this assignment, however, Osborn would be detached for much more significant work. By September 1863, Union guns were bombarding Fort Sumter daily, reducing the elegant, three-level brick fort into a massive pile of rubble. The Confederate guns there had been silenced, but the Rebel forces stubbornly continued to occupy this birthplace of the Rebellion. In early September came a request for photographs from General Thomas Jordan, Beauregard's chief of staff, "to preserve a faithful delineation of the ruins of Fort Sumter, and to show to future generations what Southern troops could endure in battle." (17)

Osborn volunteered and was joined by fellow Charleston photographer George S. Cook on the expedition, and as they photographed the interior of the fort on Sept. 8th, a large naval battle broke out between Confederate batteries at Fort Moultrie and Union warships. At least 46 Union shells were directed at Fort Sumter that day, but despite the risk, Osborn and Cook crawled to the parapet and, for the first time in history, took an action photograph of the enemy in battle as the U.S.S. *New Ironsides*, trailed by two Monitor-class gunships, blazed away at Fort Moultrie, gun smoke rising off its port side. Today, all of the credit has gone to Cook as the first Civil War photographer to take an action photograph while under fire. What has been ignored and forgotten, however, is Osborn's equal role in the event. It has been assumed that Osborn was Cook's assistant and that Cook was the only one to produce any images from that day. But there is no evidence that Osborn worked for Cook and, in fact, there is evidence to suggest that Osborn was able to keep his own studio open during the entire war. A recent discovery of photographs shows that Osborn also produced images of Fort Sumter that day from the same negatives as Cook, but sold them on cards bearing his own gallery's backmark, indicating that they were equal partners in the expedition. Having braved the same hazards and endured the same hardships working side-by-side, both Cook and Osborn deserve equal credit as the first photographers to take battle action photographs while themselves under fire. (18)

Considering that Osborn was on active duty on Sept. 8th, it is likely that he received special permission to be detached from his unit and wore his Confederate uniform during the visit. At least one wartime stereo view by Cook from the Sept. 8th series is known to exist, and a number of sales of the images are recorded in his account books. War-date cartes de visite from Osborn's Gallery of the same Sept. 8th images also exist, as well as post-war CDVs. (18)

By the end of 1864, though still burdened by his illness, Durbec began to rebound and went into the auction and commission merchant business in Columbia, maintaining an auction house on Assembly Street. In a small corner of his auction house, Eugene continued to practice the "daguerreian art." No examples of his Columbia photographs are known to still exist, even though it appears his business escaped major damage from the burning of Columbia by General William Tecumseh Sherman's troops in February 1865. He sold the business in July 1866 and returned to Charleston in December to continue in auction business, forming Durbec & Co. In November 1868, Durbec became partners with Randy Issertel in a photographic studio at 265 King Street formerly operated by Cook, who had moved down the street in 1867. (19)

Osborn, meanwhile, had remarried sometime between 1861 and 1864. But his second wife, Eliza, would also die young. On December 19, 1868, *The Charleston Daily News* told the story of the disturbing and gruesome tragedy: "There was quite a commotion in the city yesterday at the studio of Mr. Osborn that keeps an art gallery over the store of Miles Drake, Esq. Yesterday afternoon, after several days of mental aberration, Mrs. Osborn procured a large can of kerosene oil and erupted it about the gallery, then applied a match to the inflammable substance. She then came running into his apartments enveloped in flames. He managed to put her out but she was fearfully burned." The next day, with her husband at her side, powerless to save her, Eliza died after enduring terrible agonies. The cause of death was stated as an accidental burning. A native of Maine, she was 37 and had lived in Charleston since 1858. She was buried in Magnolia Cemetery.

This tragedy appears to have deeply affected the photographer, for on February 17, 1869, *The Charleston Daily News* reported that Issertel & Durbec had bought out part of Osborn's stock of negatives as he intended to leave the city. One can only speculate in what frame

of mind Osborn was as he left Charleston on Feb. 26, 1868, and returned to New York City. But it is not hard to imagine he was broken in both spirit and health. On Christmas Day 1868, Osborn died in New York after what was reported to be “a long and severe illness.” He was 58. The funeral was held at his father John’s residence. He was buried at Evergreens Cemetery in Brooklyn.

Durbec was unable to attend, but later did make the long journey to visit his grave of his friend. (20)

In Charleston, Issertel & Durbec dissolved their partnership in October 1869, after only eleven months is business. Considered extremely rare, there are but a handful of known examples of Issertel & Durbec’s work.

Durbec continued to enjoy a life and career filled with variety. In June 1869, he founded a Charleston weekly newspaper called *The Referee* and was its proprietor, editor and publisher. He started another newspaper in June 1870, *The Monthly Visitor*. Both were very successful. In addition, he became the business manager of the *Charleston Daily Sun* in 1874. He also maintained his martial connections as a member of the Charleston Riflemen Society and Lafayette Artillery Charitable Association. He even had a shooting gallery, which was very popular. (21)

In late 1875, still shy of his 40th birthday, Durbec moved to Savannah to work for the Atlantic and Gulf Railroad Company, and also the Charleston and Savannah Railroad Company. He was elected president



The grave of F.E.Durbec, who died in 1894, was once an elaborate burial chamber of brick and mortar in the Old Clarkesville Cemetery in Clarkesville, Ga., Today it lies in complete ruins, more closely resembling the appearance of Fort Sumter late in the Civil War. (Photograph by Andy Douglas House)

of the Employees’ Mutual Relief Association as well. In 1886, he married the nearly 20 years younger Manuela Victoria Rogero. They moved in 1890 to the small town of Clarkesville, Georgia, in the Appalachian foothills, where he purchased and ran the Eureka Hotel. In early 1892, the Durbecs had their first child, a daughter. In May, however, Durbec’s health

suddenly and rapidly deteriorated and his physician ordered him to the warmer climate of St. Augustine, Florida. After less than a month’s stay, Durbec suffered a stroke from which he never fully recovered. He returned to Clarkesville, where he remained until his death on October 1, 1894. He was buried the next day in the Old Clarkesville Cemetery. His young daughter also died a short time later and was buried next to him. (22)

Durbec’s tomb was enclosed by four beautifully constructed brick walls covered in a thin layer of concrete. Today, it lies in ruins, much like the battered walls of Fort Sumter in 1863. Only here, the Union artillery wasn’t the cause. Instead, it was more than a century of neglect.

All vestiges of identification have disappeared, and the crumbling tomb is unmarked. There is nothing to indicate that this is the final resting place of Frederick Eugene Durbec, who, in partnership with James M. Osborn for a mere three and a half years, produced some of the most historic early American images as well as some of the first photographs of the Civil War.

ABOUT THE AUTHOR

Andy Douglas House was born and raised in Charlotte, North Carolina. He received his education at the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill and at the University of North Carolina at Charlotte. He has many interests which include the Civil War and he has been researching the Charleston, South Carolina area for more than 25 years. He believes that “walking the ground” where history took place is essential in his research. Two of his research studies have been recognized at The Library of Congress. In 2011, he was awarded the top photographer honor by the Civil War Trust for his sesquicentennial photograph of Fort Sumter entitled: “*A Moment of Silence*.” His current Civil War project involves a highly detailed photo-archaeological study of Morris Island, South Carolina. His book, *Still on the Battlefield: The Civil War in Charleston* was published in 2014. If you wish to reach him, you may contact him directly at: adhouse37@aol.com.

NOTES

- (1) New York City Census 1850. *New York City Directories*, 1850-1852. *The Photographic Art Journal*, vol. 3, p 21, 1852. *Charleston Courier*, November 10, 1852. *Charleston Courier*, November 16, 1852. *Charleston Courier*, November 8, 1862. *Charleston Courier*, January 25, 1855.
- (2) *Charleston Courier*, November 30, 1852. *Charleston Courier*, November 20, 1862. *Charleston Courier*, August 21, 1855. *Charleston Courier*, December 10, 1855. *Charleston Courier*, December 24, 1855. *New York City Directories*, 1857-1858. *Charleston Courier*, December 1, 1857. *Charleston Courier*, November 23, 1858.
- (3) South Carolina Federal Census 1840, 1860, 1870. North Carolina Federal Census 1850. *Catholicity in the Carolinas and Georgia: Leaves of Its History; A.D. 1820 - A.D. 1878*, by Jeremiah Joseph O’Connell, p 445. *History of Edgefield County from the earliest settlement to 1897*, by John Abney, p 258. Henderson County Heritage and History, slave owners list, 1850-1860, E. H. Durbec: 6 slaves. *The Daily Phoenix* (Columbia S.C.), May 25, 1865, August 22, 18654, and April 15, 1866. *Charleston Mercury*, November 9, 1857.
- (4) *Charleston Courier*, April 18, 1856. *Charleston Courier*, February 19, 1857. *Charleston Courier*, August 2, 1860. *DeBow’s Review*, vol VII, no. 1, January, 1862, ad started July 1861. *Charleston Courier*, February 15, 1851, *Charleston Mercury*, July 1, 1863. 223 King Street is today 239 King Street as the street numbers on King changed in 1863 and 1888, 223 became 243 which became 239.
- (5) *Charleston Courier*, November 30, 1859. *Charleston Courier*, October 13, 1859. *Frank Leslie’s Illustrated Newspaper* (New York), March, 3, 1860, photo of Tom, the blind negro boy -- The musical prodigy, photograph provided by Osborn & Durbec, Charleston, S. C. *Charleston Mercury*, April 22, 1859. *Charleston Courier*, June 7, 1860.
- (6) *From Village to City, Florence, SC 1853 to 1893*, by E. Nick Zeigler,

2008, contains four Osborn & Durbec photographs of Florence taken in the summer of 1860.

- (7) *No Chariot Let Down: Charleston’s Free People Of Color On The Eve Of The Civil War*, by Michael P. Johnson , 2001, p. 124. Return of Deaths within the City of Charleston, from the 7th to the 13th of October 1860, no. 3 on the list. *Charleston Courier*, October 13, 1860.
- (8) Osborn’s letter to the editor of the *Charleston Courier*, written on October 22, 1860, published October 23, entitled “*Pray for Our Country*”.
- (9) *Charleston Mercury*, April 12, 1861, Mr. E[ugene] H[enry] Durbec, funeral services at St. Mary’s Church, Hasell Street at 4pm.
- (10) *Charleston Mercury*, August 9, 1861. *Charleston Mercury*, September 14, 1861.
- (11) *Charleston Courier*, November 15, 1861.
- (12) Capt J. J. Pope’s Company, 1 Reg’t Art’y, South Carolina Militia, Sept 17 to October 31, 1861, company muster roll: lists station of company as: Cole’s Island. Osborn’s service record shows he enlisted on September 17, 1861 and was present until October 31, 1861. He received no payment for his service.
- (13) Durbec’s service records show that he enlisted in the Confederate Army on February 21, 1862 and mustered in on February 22nd into E Company - also known as Beauregard Light Infantry, Captain Robert D. White. *Charleston Mercury*, February 26, 1862 reports: Beauregard Light Infantry Volunteers - The following is a correct roll of the members for twelve months Confederate service. They were mustered into service on the 22nd instant, Officers, of those listed is F. E. Durbec, Orderly Sergeant. The B.L.I. would become part of the Eutaw Battalion as listed on his service record. The Eutaw Battalion would then become part of the 25th Regiment, South Carolina Volunteers, also noted on his service record. The 25th was also known as the Eutaw Regiment, also noted on his service record.
- (14) *Charleston Courier*, June 7, 1862, *Our Coast & Vicinity*, “We have received the following account of the skirmish which occurred on Tuesday morning , from a gallant member of the Beauregard Light Infantry Volunteers, of the Eutaw Battalion”. The name of the soldier that gave the account was not provided.
- (15) *Charleston Courier*, June 18, 1862, as reported by adjutant J. C. Palmer. Durbec’s service record and also the *Charleston Courier*, October 15, 1862, confirms his brevet promotion to 2nd Lieutenant. On his wife’s Confederate Widow application, as sworn by Captain J. Alfred Cay, he confirms Durbec fought at Secessionville and was a good and valiant soldier. This is also confirmed by sworn statement of Captain Joseph S. Hannahan.
- (16) Durbec’s service records contain the letter of resignation, medical review, and Beauregard’s signature of approval. *Charleston Mercury*, August 8, 1864 confirms \$247 sent.
- (17) Company C, 1 Regiment Artillery, South Carolina Militia, July 10 to September 26, 1863, company muster roll: lists station of company C as: detached on special duty, various foundries and working gun boats. It would be incorrect to say he was once again in the 1st Regiment Artillery, south Carolina Militia, Company C without adding the words: “the newly designated”. This is because when he was in this unit in 1861, there was no company C. *Charleston Courier*, September 12, 1863, the article on Osborn & Cook.
- (18) *Charleston Mercury*, January 10, 1865: “Wanted, a woman to take charge and do the work of a family of two persons [Osborn and his wife Eliza]. Apply at the Daguerian Gallery, corner King and Liberty Streets [Osborn’s Gallery]. This suggests Osborn was

open, even in the darkest time of the city, near the end. War-date CDV from Osborn's Gallery of Fort Sumter in 1863 in author's collection. Post-war CDV of same at the Beaufort County Public Library, Reed collection #40.

(19) *The Daily Phoenix* (Columbia S.C.), April 15, 1866. *The Daily Phoenix* (Columbia S.C.), July 21, 1866. *The Charleston Daily News*, December 24, 1866. *The Charleston Daily News*, November 2, 1868. *The Charleston Daily News*, November 6, 1867 (Cook moves).

(20) *The Charleston Daily News*, February 26, 1869. *The New York Herald* (New York), December 27, 1869. *The Charleston Daily News*, January 17, 1872.

(21) *The Charleston Daily News*, October 16, 1869. "*The Referee*" 1869-1875, weekly on Saturday. F. E. Durbec, proprietor, editor, and publisher. Established June 12, 1869. It was printed at the office of the paper, 235 King Street, and distributed gratis, the publisher depending solely upon the advertising patronage of a paper, which is in size, only 23 by 32. Last published in 1875. Circulation claimed

at 3,240. "*The Monthly Visitor*" newspaper published by F. Eugene Durbec, Charleston. 4 pages. Size 16 x 22. Subscription 50 cents. F. Eugene Durbeck, editor and publisher. Circulation about 500. *The Newberry Herald* (Newberry, S. C.), July 29, 1874, "*The Sun*". *The Charleston News & Courier*, July 29, 1874, *The Charleston Daily News*, January 17, 1872.

(22) *The Charleston Evening Post*, October 3, 1894. *The Charleston News & Courier*, October 4, 1894. Clarksville-Habersham Public Library, Genealogical Records, *Who's Who in the Old Cemetery*, by Mrs. J. T. Pittard, 1927, "Next of brick and covered with cement is a structure beneath which rest a Mr. Durbec and his little child. Mr. Durbec came to Clarksville about 1890 with his young wife".

The very old and very tiny sign that was on the grave in 2005 is no longer there. It used to read: "Mr. [D]urbec came to Clarksville in 1890 with his young wife and her brother Will Meynarde. He built a rambling two story house which was later used as a Boarding house".

CIVIL WAR TRUST ANNOUNCES PHOTO CONTEST WINNERS

The winners of the Civil War Trust's 2014 Photo Contest have been announced. CCWP co-sponsors the "Then & Now" category each year, and this year the winners are: First Place: "Council Then and Now 2 BW" by Carl Staub; Second Place: "Lutheran Seminary Then and Now" by Matthew Huntley; Third Place: "Fort Pulaski - Then and Now" by Shanna Harbuck. You can view all the photos on the Trust's website at <http://www.civilwar.org/photos/annual-photo-contest/2014-photo-contest-winners/>

FIRST
PLACE
Then and Now



WILLIAM C. “JACK” DAVIS WILL BE KEYNOTE SPEAKER AT ANNUAL SEMINAR

In 1975, the same year William A. Frassanito's landmark *A Journey in Time* was published, *Civil War Times* editor and publisher William C. “Jack” Davis and his colleagues at The National Historical Society began an ambitious effort to assemble a new compilation of the photographs of the Civil War.

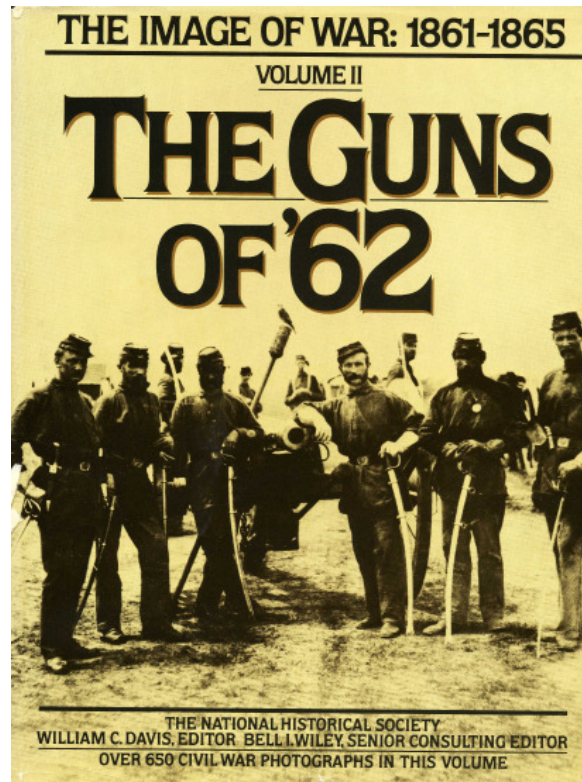
Six years later, Doubleday published *Shadows of the Storm*, volume one of Davis's landmark *Image of War* series. In 1984 came the sixth and final volume, *The End of An Era*, completing Davis's breathtaking effort, bringing together for the first time more than 4,000 Civil War photos, with more than half having never been previously published on the printed page.

Davis will tell us the remarkable story of how his landmark *Image of War* series was assembled when he delivers the keynote speech at The Center for Civil War Photography's 15th annual Image of War seminar Oct. 16-18, 2015 at Manassas, Va.

For almost 10 years, Davis and his associates, including the late Bell I. Wiley, senior consulting editor, scoured the country looking for Civil War images. Frassanito was one of four photographic consultants. Davis estimated that they traveled more than 30,000 miles to look at more than 150,000 images in more than 300 repositories or places.

Davis's memories of that experience are sure to enthrall our seminar attendees.

“It is hard for me to realize now that it has been over thirty years since I completed work on my series *The Image of War*,” Davis said. “I don't think anything in my long career was more fun than the years I spent putting that series together, but when I look back



on it now and see what you and others are continuing to unearth, and how far the study of Civil War photography has come, I am both amazed and gratified.”

Davis's keynote speech is only one highlight in a seminar packed with fascinating battlefield visits and fun events. Other highlights include a special 4-D Manassas Battlefield experience with historian Bobby Krick and CCWP Vice President Garry Adelman.

President Bob Zeller and Imaging Director John Richter will present their annual Civil War photography 3-D show, a unique feature that has been a staple at all 15 seminars. This

year's show will feature explorations into the depths of Civil War photos, both well-known and uncommon.

We'll also have 3-D presentations on the field, as well as a special access tour on private property at Brandy Station and an all-new photo-based tour at Cedar Mountain. Attendees receive a historic image book, a souvenir and a custom 3-D photo packet with glasses.

The base hotel will be the Holiday Inn Manassas Battlefield. A limited number of rooms have been blocked at the special rate of \$99 per night. When you call for reservations, make sure you say you want the rate for the Center for Civil War Photography / Image of War Seminar. You may have to say both.

If you'd like to sign up and join us, or if you'd simply like more information about the seminar or The Center for Civil War Photography, visit us at www.civilwarphotography.org

LIBRARY OF CONGRESS ACQUIRES ROBIN STANFORD STEREO COLLECTION

BY BOB ZELLER



During a visit and media event at the Library of Congress Prints and Photographs Division on March 27, longtime CCWP member Robin G. Stanford sits beside some of the rarest of the stereographs acquired by the library from her lifetime collection. (Photograph by Bob Zeller).

Back around 1971, at a small antique show, Robin Stanford saw for the first time a stereo viewer and a small stack of 19th century stereo views. She was intrigued, and bought them, telling herself, “This would be kind of fun to put in the living room of our farmhouse to use on rainy days.”

Stanford’s late husband, John, was a prominent physician in Houston, where they lived, but they also had a farm with an old farmhouse in Giddings, east of Austin.

What started as a casual purchase grew into something far more than that over the next three decades, and by the late 1990s, Stanford had assembled

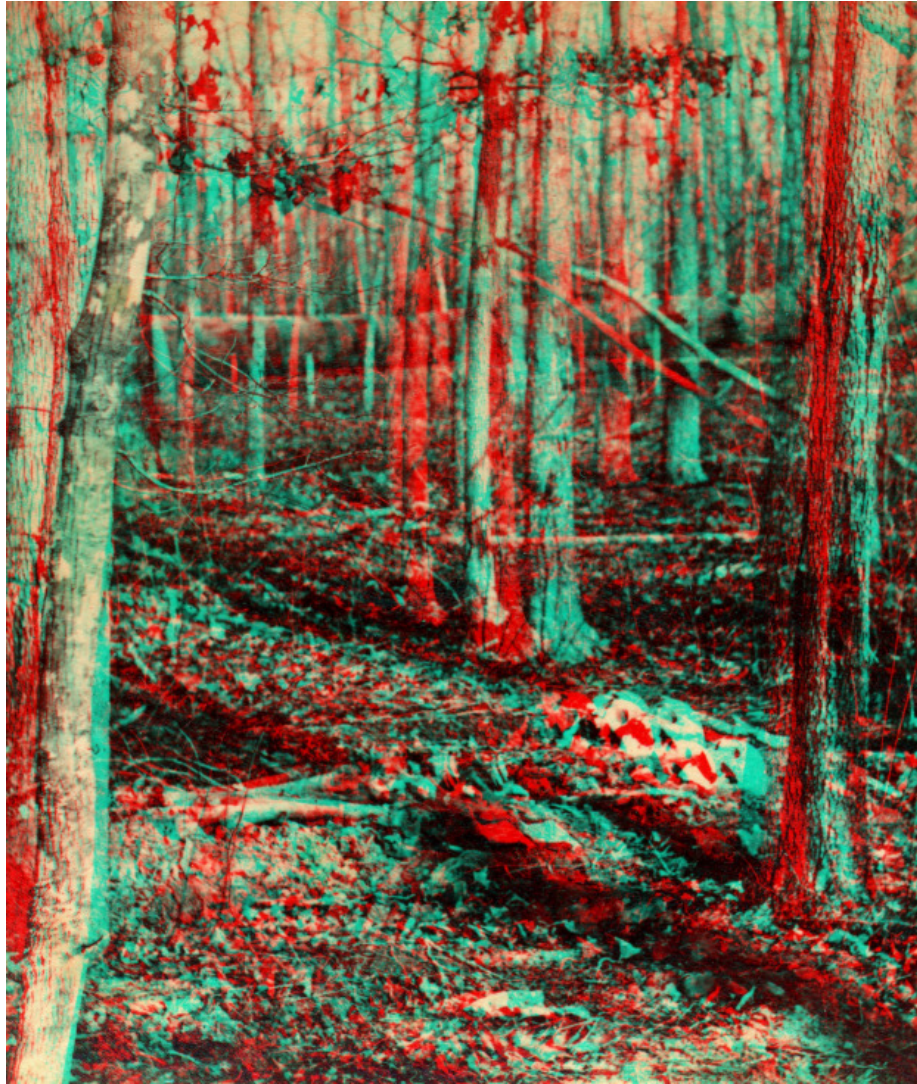
perhaps the finest private collection of Civil War stereo photographs in existence.

She took in just about anything and everything that came her way, and the result was remarkable. She assembled more than 50 vintage views by the Confederate photographers Osborn & Durbec – the largest known group of original stereo views by these pioneering Charleston photographers. She acquired at least 20 rare

stereo views of the Wilderness battlefield by photographer G. O. Brown – images that photohistorian William A. Frassanito has called the “Rosetta Stone” of that series. She collected more than 20 views of plantation life and the historic Penn School on St. Helena Island, S.C. She owned dozens of views by Samuel Cooley and a large group of images of Port Hudson, La., by the Baton Rouge photographers McPherson & Oliver. In some cases, her stereo views are the only surviving full-stereo versions of Civil War images.

Now, with the assistance of The Center for Civil War Photography, more than 500 of her rarest, most important and choicest views have been preserved for all time at the Library of Congress and will be made available to the public, at high resolution, for the free use and enjoyment by all.

The acquisition, formally revealed by the library on March 27, allows the country to preserve and offer a vast array of ‘new’ images not already in its collections. For example, the library had no vintage Osborn & Durbec views at all before acquiring Stanford’s treasure trove. The library has acquired for an undisclosed sum a total of 541 images, nearly all stereo views but a few cartes de visites as well.



This anaglyph 3-D image of the battlefield graves of three soldiers was converted from a stereo view taken by Baltimore photographer G.O. Brown in the Wilderness in 1866 – one of 19 rare, vintage views by Brown in the Robin Stanford Collection. (Anaglyph by John Richter).

“To be able to add 500 stereographs that we didn’t have before – that’s pretty phenomenal,” Library of Congress Prints and Photographs Division Chief Helena Zinkham told Clint Schemmer of the *Fredericksburg Free Lance-Star*. “And why is it possible? Because a woman in the 1970s. . .caught the history bug and moved from a fascination with three-dimensional viewing to really looking closely and carefully at the cards. The pictures bring the war alive to her.” The library welcomed Stanford at the Prints and Photographs Reading Room on the afternoon

March 26 as well as March 27, a day that included interviews with Schemmer as well as the Associated Press, Michael Ruane of *The Washington Post* and Mark Hartsell of the library’s Communications Office. Zinkham also showed Stanford priceless Civil War

glass plate negatives, daguerreotypes and other images in the family of national photographic treasures that her “babies,” as Stanford calls the stereographs, will be joining.

“I’m so glad they’re here, because they will be available for everybody,” Stanford, a longtime CCWP member, told *The Washington Post*. “On the other hand, I’m going to miss them.”

The Center played a key role throughout the process. We put Robin in touch with the library, we sponsored a visit to Robin’s home in Houston by the library’s retired Curator of Photographs Carol Johnson to assess the collection, we prepared the descriptive information and formal offer and through the generous assistance of two of our members, we sponsored the scanning of several dozen images with a gift of more than \$2,200. The library was able to finance most of the scanning costs after receiving more scanning funds in its current budget.

Stanford has been interested in history since childhood, but she developed a passion for Civil War

history in the late 1950s while working as a stay-at-home mom watching her first son, Gill. She began reading *Lee’s Lieutenants* by Douglas Southall Freeman and was captivated by the saga.

She attended Randolph Macon in Lynchburg, Va., starting in 1946, and she realized as she read that she had traveled the same rail beds as the armies and seen some of the same sights. “I got there just 81 years after Appomattox, so things were still relatively fresh,” she said. “There were people around there no older than I am now who could remember the Civil War.”

For Stanford, Civil War stereo views conveyed that same sense of immediacy. “It brought people back to life,” she said. “You look at one of those pictures and you see people and horses and you think, ‘These are ghosts. Everybody here is dead.’ And yet, they’re rounded and in depth and doing stuff and they all look alive.” Stanford had continued reading about the Civil War through the Centennial and the rest of the 1960s, but seeing stereo views was a transformative experience. “They made everything come so much more alive,” she



This row of cabins of ex-slaves at a plantation at Perry Clear Point on Port Royal Island, S.C., jumps out in hyper-stereo in this view in the Robin Stanford Collection. It was taken by the Beaufort, S.C. photographers Hubbard and Mix in 1866. (Anaglyph by John Richter).

said.

Stanford quickly saw that a stereo view could provide a much more informative look at a particular scene. "When you look at a photo in 3D, you realize there is a swale here or a dip there that you can't see in a flat image," she said. "So it makes it a little more clear just what it was like on a battlefield and how and why the battle went the way it did."

Those first views she bought around 1971 were not Civil War views. She started by collecting any views she encountered, but by the 1980s had narrowed her subject areas to the Civil War and Texas. She also owns hundreds of views of her native state. "I remember being surprised that so much of our history was so immediate," Stanford said.

Hers is certainly not the first great collection of Civil War stereo views. In the mid-20th century, collectors Gordon Hoffman and William Culp Darrah, to name just two, assembled massive collections of thousands of all types of views.

When those collections were sold, Stanford was a major buyer. "At that time, views were inexpensive and I bought large lots of views from Gordon Hoffman at a set price. And I bought a lot of things from Darrah's collection after he died. I also bought his first book (*Stereo Views*) and started learning about the views."

Soon, she was collecting war views and Texas views more avidly than her two sons were collecting baseball cards. As the years passed, one box grew to two, then three, then five, and then seven. By 1999, when I first



One of two boxes with hundreds of Civil War stereo views from the Robin Stanford Collection is packed and almost ready for shipping to the Library of Congress in December 2014. (Photograph by Robin Stanford).

met her, she had eight large plastic storage boxes full of Civil War views.

"At some point, I think I did make a conscious decision that I'd like to have as complete a stereoscopic record of the Civil War as possible," she told me in December 1998, when I visited her home and saw her collection for the first time. I knew from my own years of collecting and study that new photographic treasures of the Civil War continue to surface quite frequently. So I suspected that anyone who had collected for as long and relentlessly as Stanford had was bound to own a treasure trove.

My suspicion was correct. As I slowly went through box after box of views, I found myself staring at many unfamiliar images. Stanford was gratified by my reaction. She believed she had many rarities, but hadn't really known for sure. When I assembled and published *The Civil War in Depth Volume II* more than half of the views in the book came from her collection.

Stanford had intended to pass along the collection



Prints and Photographs Division Chief Helena Zinkham shows where the three boxes of the Robin G. Stanford Collection will reside in a P&P vault at the Library of Congress. (Photograph by Bob Zeller)

to her second son, John, a Center for Civil War Photography member who was avidly interested in the views and had attended several Image of War seminars with his wife, Stacey, and daughters Sarah and Rachel. Dr. Stanford, who was a professor of astronomy and physics at Concordia University, was stricken with a fatal heart attack in February 2014 at age 53.

Several months later, on June 4, Stanford emailed me to say that “I believe that I’m well and truly through collecting. It was great fun, but that ended when I lost my son.” She said she wanted to sell the collection but preserve it.

“Well, there’s no better place than the Library of Congress,” I told her. “Let’s start there.” We did not have to go any further. Johnson flew to Houston and spent three long days tabulating the collection and estimating its value. From this, we helped Stanford formulate an offer to the library that it accepted. A fine arts shipper packed the views and they were in Washington before Christmas, where staff members began scanning and cataloging views.



From left, Helena Zinkham, chief of the Prints and Photographs Division at the Library of Congress, Robin Stanford, writer Michael Ruane of The Washington Post and the library’s Donna Urschel and Gay Colyer examine some of the stereographs in the Robin G. Stanford Collection acquired by the library. (Photograph by Bob Zeller).



The Robin Stanford Collection includes 37 stereo views taken by the Baton Rouge photographers McPherson & Oliver of the damage at Port Hudson, La., after the siege and battles there in 1863.



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