[Children in geography class viewing stereoscopic photographs] Library of Congress
c1908. | 1 photographic print on stereo card | Underwood & Underwood.
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Enhance, Engage, Reinforce, Connect: Classroom Uses of Civil War Photographs

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Biography
William Gleeson is *maître de conferences* in American Studies at the Université du Maine, Le Mans, France and member of the research group, 3L.AM. Besides Civil War photography, his interests include photographic

viewing technology, images in 19th century children's literature, and the use of 19th century images in contemporary classrooms. His dissertation, *Les lieux de la desolation. Evénement, espace et destruction dans la photographie de la Guerre Civile américaine (1861-1865),* was brought to fruition under the guiding hand of François Brunet at the Université Paris Diderot.

Abstract
Images have played an important role in the American classroom as means to connect students with the study of the past. The article proposes a preliminary look at how American schoolteachers incorporate photographs from the Civil War into their lessons plans and how the use of images can create a framework for a collective memory.

Résumé
Afin d'immerger les étudiants américains dans l'étude du passé, les images ont été amenées à jouer un rôle déterminant dans l'apprentissage dispensé dans les salles de classe. Cet article propose une première étude de l'inclusion des photographies de la Guerre de sécession par les enseignants d'écoles primaires et secondaires, et de l'utilisation qu'ils en font comme cadre pour aborder la mémoire collective.

Keywords
American Civil War, social studies, 19th century American photography, stereoviews, classroom pedagogy, Common Core, Boston Public Library, filmstrips.

The primary concern in this study is to outline the beginnings of a much larger project on the use of Civil War images as pedagogical tools, both in the American classroom and the American community at large, and eventually, the implications of Civil War photographs on a trans-national scale. This interest springs from an interest in education and is also the fruit of a felicitous discovery of an early 20th century catalogue of stereoviews; in this catalogue, the promoters urged teachers to contact them to learn how stereoviews and glass slides (among them photographic scenes from the Civil War) could be used in the classroom. This confrontation between the commercial and the educational intrigued me and beckoned me toward a number of theoretical and pragmatic paths. First, it goes without saying that inquiries into what the French call "les sciences de l'education" deserve a much larger place in our sector of "études Anglophones." The American education system, traditionally decentralized to the extreme, should provide diverse material for our understanding of the means by which knowledge is transmitted. All education systems are designed, you might argue, to inculcate young people into a worldview designated by the authorities. It is precisely this process of knowledge transmission throughout the United States that is at the heart of this project. The study of Civil War images in

the classroom presents a means of formulating the essential questions concerning history pedagogy: how do we teach and learn what we have never lived? And how does the question of time (its effects and its passage) operate on our ways of seeing? Fabienne Rousso-Lenoir has seen the use of images as central to how we think about history, which she found to be essential in the links we make between men. How we form those links, preserve and recreate them determines our capacity to make history as well as our ability to form an enlightened next generation:

> L'éducation à la citoyenneté est précisément ce qui prépare l'enfant, l'adolescent à devenir un homme capable de s'ancrer dans une histoire commune, dans un temps commun, qui se déroule dans un espace public, dont la sûreté peut seule garantir l'exercice de sa liberté privée (Rousso-Lenoir).

Or as Derek Edwards would have it, "The important thing about educational knowledge is that it is communal, rather than simply personal" (Edwards, 38).

Because education in the United States has long been relatively local, studying a national event like the Civil War (which is necessarily studied in American history classes at some point in the first 12 years of schooling, usually in 4th or 5th grade, in 8th grade, and junior year in high school) provides a unique opportunity to perceive variations in pedagogies on a temporal level where the question, is the Civil War taught differently today than in the 1950s, might be important and on a geographical level where differences in pedagogy according to section could be posed. For this, I have begun a series of interviews with elementary, junior high, and high school teachers in various parts of the United States. Primarily focused on existing lesson plans, these interviews are intended to look at the use of photographic primary sources in the classroom: what do teachers want their students to come away with from the Civil War? What expectations do teachers have? Do they think that their students are more likely to retain information if it is image-driven? Do the results bear this out? Is there a creation component to the plan? And if so, what sort of hands-on projects do the children create? I thought it would be necessary to look at a representative cross-section of systems across America based on the relationship of the state to the Civil War itself; that is, looking at states like Massachusetts, original states firmly entrenched in the Northern rhetoric of the war, or Virginia, scene of so many major battles; states like South Carolina or Mississippi, where the rhetoric of the Lost Cause still permeates the discourse of the interpretation of the "War of Northern Aggression"; states like Indiana or Ohio, that provided so many men to the Northern war effort; a state like Texas, whose very market weight determines the content of many "national" textbooks today; a state like California, extant but distant from the War and today heavily populated and incredibly diverse; and a state like Hawaii, not part of the American sphere during the war and whose population make-up today is unlike those who fought at the time. Obviously there are variables to take into consideration, such as minority population percentages (most notably, African-American and Native

American), urban/rural gulfs, the number of military families present, and technology divides.

Central to my investigations is precisely this question of technology. The means of visualizing images have altered the way we perceive and use the images, and no more so than in the classroom, scene of changes in technologies. One of the problems that schools face is the adoption of a particular technology, a choice that weds schools to that technology for a long period of time (even after it becomes obsolete) because of the investment costs involved (which means that generations of students had their lessons illustrated with filmstrips long after those filmstrips had begun to fade to point of invisibility). Whether it is done via stereoviews, filmstrips or powerpoint presentations, the introduction of Civil War images into the curriculum mediates the process of knowledge acquisition. A concrete example of this might be as follows. Should an elementary school teacher in the 1960s or 1970s have wanted to show a film (such as *The Civil War* [Encylopaedia Britannica Films, 1954—in collaboration with Henry Steele Commager]—or *Civil War: Its Background and Causes* [McGraw-Hill, 1962]) to his or her classes, he or she would have had to go to the district or county media office and charge out the movie, pull in the 16mm projector (through which a lucky student would have had the privilege of threading the film), pull the curtains, show the movie and quiz the class about what it was supposed to have learned on a purple-inked dittoed test sometime during the week. Viewed by today's standards, these made-for-the-classroom movies about the Civil War were somewhat static, based almost entirely on re-enactment and a chronological interpretation of the war (and at times a remarkably contemporary interpretation that places slavery firmly at the center of the war—which gives one pause to wonder about the impact of such films on today's scholars of the war, now in their 50s, who saw the Commager film and others like it during their early schooling). Primary sources do not play a role in the Commager presentation of the war (there are in fact relatively few original photographs from the war shown except for a couple of portraits). But we have to understand these as cutting edge pedagogical components at the time, as tools designed to make the war accessible to students, students who were already moving image savvy and who expected images to be part of the academic process. This, in fact, points to the image/text schism that came into place in 1950s and 1960s education theory that arguably harkened back to John Dewey's experiential learning, a debate that still rages today (see Labaree and Dewey, for example).

Another more theoretical consideration is the process of change in the photographs themselves. When does the physical object, the photograph, become purely image? For many young people (and perhaps not so young), the image has become completely dematerialized and the "graph" of photograph entirely erased (or at the very least, separated from the paper support that for so long defined it). This question, though, is perhaps more complex than we might think; certainly, during the Civil War people had actual photographs in their homes (cartes de visite or stereoviews), that they could have purchased through local photographic galleries through the distribution channels of E&H.T. Anthony. It is nevertheless important to remember that during the war, many images of the Civil War would have been known through their translation into prints in the popular illustrated press. This move towards the "imagification" of

the photograph continues in the post-war period after the adoption of the half-tone process and the public spectacles of the projection of lantern slides. One of the general questions to be answered is how the education system has traversed the various eras; if the stereoview catalogue that I consulted is not an isolated case, children might have had access to photographic prints in classrooms which postponed the shift to the study of pure imagery. This question, which may seem a mere detail to some, seems to me to talk directly to some of the fundamental questions around photography and visual studies: looking, seeing, the value of touch in an image which in turn invites questions of proximity and eventually authenticity. Another stereoview catalogue from 1915 suggests that "the best substitute for the real object is undoubtedly the stereograph which gives a life-size representation with an abundance of detail that rivals nature itself" (McMurry iv). Experiential education, rather than illustrative education, is thus the gauntlet that the image throws down to us. How can we provide our students with the necessary tools for them to feel the blistering pain that Oliver Wendell Holmes felt when looking at photographs of the Battle of Antietam, pain so real that he wished to lock up the images in a "secret drawer"? In an image-saturated world such as today's, it is easy to imagine young men and women jaded by their "experience", and so images from the Civil War become mere illustrations to the dusty prose of a textbook. The distancing process that Holmes implied—the battlefield receding with each further generation of print—is necessarily magnified by the passage of time. Should not the goal be to create the conditions necessary for the multiplicity of meanings to be expressed, a multiplicity that Holmes pointed out? Tempted, like Holmes, to lock away the images for fear of shocking the viewer or of boring the 21st century student, a teacher today may share the belief with Holmes that these photographs can serve a necessary purpose, namely coming to grips with the truth, the ugliness and the outrageous inevitability of the Civil War (Holmes 266-268).

When examining what schools are doing with Civil War photographs. I should nuance what I said previously and add that, even if schools remain local for the most part in terms of teacher hiring and evaluation and school direction, the individual states do retain final say in the development of curriculum and standards. In addition to this, state governors have put together what is called the "Common Core", a step towards a nationalization of curriculum planning through a series of standards in Mathematics and English Language Arts designed to prepare students for college and the work place. The English Language Arts standards include components for evaluation in History and Social Studies that comprises visual analysis for 6th to 8th graders and for 11th to 12th graders, precisely the time that students are looking into the Civil War. The standards anticipate levels at which students will:

> Integrate visual information (e.g., in charts, graphs, photographs, videos, or maps) with other information in print and digital texts.
> Integrate and evaluate multiple sources of information presented in diverse formats and media (e.g., visually, quantitatively, as well as in words) in order to address a question or solve a problem (Common Core).

Based on the goals set forth at the various levels (national, state, and local), teachers then develop lesson plans. Teachers can also use lesson plans devised by specific interest groups. For teaching Civil War images, the Civil War Trust is a major actor. The Trust has developed lesson plans devoted to photo analysis for middle school, coloring books for elementary school, and movies for high schools. Others in the field include the California History-Social Science Project (CHSSP) out of the University of California, Davis. The CHSSP gives teachers access to lesson plans, meetings and a magazine, *The Source*. The National Council for the Social Studies (NCSS), a teacher advocacy group near the nation's Capitol, has produced a photo analysis worksheet that leads students to categorize their observations of photographs between objects, people or action and between what can be seen in the photograph and what information might be supplied by asking questions especially addressed to the subjects or the author of the photograph. These initiatives suggest ways of approaching Oliver Wendell Holmes's experience of the immediacy impact of the content of a photograph while calibrating its limits and our distance from it too.

Most students in the United States study the Civil War in Social Studies classes, a particularly American concept in education. Often seen as another word for history, it is in fact more transversal in its approach. The NCSS defines it as:

> The integrated study of the social sciences and humanities to promote civic competence. Within the school program, social studies provides coordinated, systematic study drawing upon such disciplines as anthropology, archaeology, economics, geography, history, law, philosophy, political science, psychology, religion, and sociology, as well as appropriate content from the humanities, mathematics, and natural sciences. In essence, social studies promotes knowledge of and involvement in civic affairs. And because civic issues—such as health care, crime, and foreign policy—are multidisciplinary in nature, understanding these issues and developing resolutions to them require multidisciplinary education. These characteristics are the key defining aspects of social studies (National Council).

The aim of social studies would appear, then, to be one of citizen formation, with its incumbent requirements to think through complex issues rather than to memorize dates and names. As its name suggests, social studies underscores the importance of the intertwining factors of establishing a definition of a society (social, moral, economic, geographic, and legal among others); the desire is to distance itself from the event-driven narrative lessons of history. The question that we as teachers might ask is to what degree the reliance on social studies has produced a better-informed and better motivated citizenry.

A fascinating lesson plan entitled "How do we remember what we value," from a series of eight shown at the Boston Public Library devoted to

the Civil War exhibition on display there, is an appropriate way to conclude. Other lesson plans include analyzing slavery, weather, and agriculture as well as understanding the printed image in the Civil War. While this particular lesson plan does not concern a photographic image from the war per se, it does involve images central to the understanding and interpretation of the war. In this plan Children as young as 5 are asked to look at the Thomas Ball statue of Charles Sumner in Boston Commons along with other statues linked to the war including the Shaw Memorial. And after looking at them and thinking about them, deliberating about questions of memory and saving, the children are asked to create a memorial to someone or something important to them and asked to describe the importance behind it and why they have chosen to represent it the way they have. In this respect, the children understand the importance of narrative and its construction in their connection to the past:

> We have thought a great deal about the important skills and ideas that students learn in the first years of school and know how valuable it is to set a foundation and hope that these lessons will enable you to explore concepts such as CHOICE and PERSPECTIVE, as well as the different ways to TELL A STORY ("Torn in Two").

In a 1987 article, the sociologist, Derek Edwards, describes the process of formulating the passing on of a collective memory in the classroom. While it is always difficult to cite educational theory as definitive given the changing sways in fashions in the discipline, this particular passage seems to me to resonate with how the children using the Boston lesson plan might be able to understand the images from 150 years ago:

> The notion of memory or remembering as the rote learning of materials has little relevance to modern educational practice. But the notion of a developing consensus of shared knowledge is much more interesting. The idea that education involves the working of collective memory has two complementary foundations. One is that educational knowledge has the properties of a ready-made culture that precedes the coming together of teacher and pupils. The other is the process of collective remembering, the building of a context and continuity of shared knowledge as the activity and discourse of each lesson proceed. In developing a shared vocabulary for experience and understanding, and a jointly held version of events in the classroom, teacher and pupils construct a framework of educational knowledge which reflects both sides of the process (Edwards, 47).

Edwards encourages teachers to help their students understand that they, both educator and pupil, operate in a world of pre-existing assumptions of what constitutes "culture". What we should do with those assumptions and the direction in which we wish to venture with or away

from them lies at the heart of classroom teaching. Getting students not just to ask questions about those assumptions, but to question those assumptions head on and to investigate how the shaping of the past shapes the future are essential to inspiring students to see the importance of history. The pedagogy leading to image literacy is of prime importance to reach this goal, but such literacy (for literacy's sake, I'm tempted to say) should not diminish the objective of constructing and deconstructing historical narratives: that at the end of the day, history is about establishing a viable "story" based on verifiable facts and not on the manipulation of photographic objects. The irrelevance of the Civil War for most students today except as a point on a timeline and an exercise in numbers contrasts with the fervor of the post-bellum years when veterans marching in parades and being honored in speeches was a common feature of public occasions. The Civil War has lost its immediate emotional impact with each passing conflict, in distant lands as well as with the tarnishing effect of time. My research hopes to discover how teachers can urge their students to make century and a half year old photographic images not only talk to them but get them to engage in a conversation about what the images are, where the images came from and how the images have been used. At that point, students might be better equipped to know where they themselves have come from and how they might use the images of a war, any war, for their narrative, rather than being the subject to a pre-existing narrative of violence that any war can produce.

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