



Pictorial Field Book of the Civil War: Journeys through the Battlefields in the Wake of Conflict

Mr. Benson J. Lossing

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"The Battle of Bull's Run, so disastrous to the National Arms, and yet so little profitable, as a military event, to the Confederates, was in its immediate effects a profound enigma to the people of the whole country. They could not understand it. The Confederates held the field, yet they did not seek profit from the panic and flight of their opponents, by a pursuit. The Nationals were beaten and dispersed; yet, after the first paralysis of defeat, they instantly recovered their faith and elasticity. There had been marches, and bivouacs, and skirmishes, and a fierce battle, within the space of a week; and at the end of twenty-four hours after the close of the conflict, the respective parties in the contest were occupying almost the same geographical position which they did before the encounter."--from *The Pictorial Field-Book of the Civil War*

Before the rise of "professional" academic history, there were devoted Brahmins of a literary bent (George Bancroft, Francis Parkman, and Henry Adams) and skilled researchers and chroniclers, men such as J. Thomas Scharf of Maryland history fame and--the most prolific of all--Ben Lossing of New York, who, since they made their living by writing history, could rightly be labeled "professional" after all. Every literate history lover in the mid-to-late nineteenth century knew of Lossing and his work; he may not have been academically trained, but he knew where to look for evidence, did the digging we would expect him to do, and wrote with a flair for the dramatic. In his *Pictorial Field Book of the Civil War*, Lossing takes the same "on-the-scene approach" to the Civil War--visiting the sites of battles and other events, making sketches of these places, talking with people about their experiences--that earned his earlier *Pictorial Field Book of the Revolution* and *Pictorial Book of the War of 1812* a wide and enthusiastic readership.

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