

Myth: Mathew Brady shot Tintypes during the Civil War.

No! and No! some more, absolutely Not! Brady and his staff used the wet-plate collodion process, yes, yes, to photograph scenes of the war. But, they only used glass plates. The glass negatives were used to print unlimited numbers of albumen prints in the form of the extremely popular stereo views, carte de visite size albumen prints, and larger mounted prints.

Brady considered himself to be a photographer of the highest order and a savvy businessman. He loathed the cheap, lowly Tintype and wouldn't be caught dead doing them, nor would anyone under his employ be allowed to waste their time with shooting Tintypes. Brady expressly shot negatives to make as many prints as the market would bear and thus make lots of money. Tintype images, being more of a one of a kind item, not printed from a negative, were not well suited to mass production and potential high profits.

History tells us he grossly over estimated America's appetite for the often all too real and gory scenes of the long and tragic conflict they'd rather not be reminded of. He ended up bankrupt as a result. Perhaps he should have lowered himself to just shooting quick cheap Tintype portraits of the ordinary troops. He probably would have made out a whole lot better financially in the end. But, the fact remains he didn't shoot Tintypes. Not a One! The photographic history of the Civil War is clearly far richer because of the fact that he did not shoot Tintypes.

I'm sure the great Mathew Brady would be furious if he heard of himself being compared to those who today shoot cheap aluminum plate Tintypes of America's professional soldiers in this country and in lands our military has invaded as "not having been done since Brady and the Civil War". What next, will someone be crowing about their farby aluminotypes of Russian soldiers in the Crimea as not having been done since Roger Fenton and the Crimean War?!

Yes, agreed, the average Hollywood informed mind lumps together all 19th century photography as being 'Tintypes'. Why feed that kind of ignorance with bold faced lies or quietly letting certain misinformation slip by with a wink and a nod?

As true artists we should be instruments of enlightenment and not Tom Foolery!