

The Analysis.

This analysis is based upon the pioneering work of the historian William Frassanito in his book *Gettysburg: A Journey in Time* (New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1975, pp. 186-192).

Frassanito studied six photographs of this dead soldier made by the photographers Alexander Gardner and Timothy O'Sullivan at the Gettysburg battlefield in July 1863. Geographic features place four of the six photographs at the southern slope of Devil's Den (top) and two at what Gardner called the "sharpshooter's den" (bottom). Frassanito argues that the original location of the body was the southern slope of Devil's Den, suggesting that the soldier was probably an infantryman, killed while advancing up the hillside. After taking pictures of the dead soldier from several angles, the two photographers noticed the picturesque sharpshooter's den -- forty yards away -- and moved the corpse to this rocky niche and photographed him again. A blanket, visible under the soldier in another version of the sharpshooter's den image (not shown here), may have been used to carry the body.

The type of weapon seen in these photographs was not used by sharpshooters. This particular firearm is seen in a number of Gardner's scenes at Gettysburg and probably was the photographer's prop. The amount of time expended photographing this one body indicates that this may have been one of the last bodies to be buried and Gardner may have felt that he was running out of subjects.

In his text in the [Sketch Book](#), Gardner recalls seeing the body again about four months after the battle, when the Gettysburg cemetery was dedicated in November 1863. Frassanito points out that the body would not have been left unburied that long, nor would the rifle have survived the hordes of relic hunters who swarmed over battlefields. But Gardner's story succeeded in transforming this soldier into a particular character in the drama, a man who suffered a painful, lonely, unrecognized death.

