

Huddleston, John. **Killing Ground: Photographs of the Civil War and the Changing American Landscape.**

Johns Hopkins. (Creating the North American Landscape). 2003. 185p. photos. maps. bibliog. index. LC 2001000238.

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"Then-and-now" photography books usually pair antique sepia views with modern color images of the same location, often historic urban neighborhoods, on opposing pages. In a fascinating and macabre variation on this type of historical double take, photographer Huddleston combines present-day glimpses of 62 Civil War battle sites with archival views of the places and combatants. The formal and emotional correspondences between these photographic pairs are thoroughly compelling. Certain landscapes appear permanently infused with sorrow, while others are bandaged with pavement, dumpsters, and ugly buildings. A select few—photographed in the heat of summer—have returned to a lush, verdant life. Despite the intrusion of violent imagery into our daily lives, the scale of this tragedy was such that its shock value shows no sign of diminishing. Best demonstrating this fact are examples of the gruesome genre of amputated limb portraits, seen here alongside crisp depictions of velvety Southern grass where the lamented meaty feet and arms were last used by their young owners. Laconic captions convey bitter or sardonic irony. Typical examples are a strip-mall KFC described as the "site of the Union attack on the Confederate left" and "the center of the Confederate defensive position," now a cinderblock outhouse. Huddleston did some topnotch archival research in selecting his images and contributes an interesting, very readable explanatory essay. Sharing this photographer's search for the conflict's evolving spiritual traces is an unsettling experience but highly recommended.—*Douglas F. Smith, Oakland P.L., CA*