If the nineteenth century was dreaming of cinema, as it has so often been said, then its paintings are some of the most lucid expressions of this dream. The Civil War paintings anticipated war cinema in many striking ways, notably in their ability to provide the memory of the war with emotional context. On the one hand, if pathos formulas aim to create within the spectator an encounter with death and destruction that is outside their everyday consciousness, yet at the same time tap into familiar sensations, then we can see plenty of overlap between paintings, war photography, and soldier writings. Regardless of whether it was combat, camp life, or an altered home front that was being depicted, paintings reduced the overwhelming chaos and inhumanity of the bloody affair into an identifiable moral and political message, just as Timothy O’Sullivan’s “death harvest” photographs and Rhode Island soldier Elisha Hunt Rhodes’s war diary would do. Large-scale panorama paintings would place the viewer into the thick of battle, making it a navigable experience, drawing upon photographs and sketches of battlefields for inspiration. On the other hand, these paintings can also be seen as a rehearsal of the war film independent of photography and epistolary traditions. The panorama paintings, for example, anticipated the role of telemetry and surveillance in future combat scenarios, providing a field of vision that has been replicated in many war films (and challenged in many others), as we will see in the following chapter. Although this chapter will primarily consider

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the influence of the war panorama painting and its development in the United States during the mid-nineteenth century, it is also important to discuss other paintings that responded to the Civil War and the many changes in the American experience that lead up to the war. The paintings of the American romantics and luminists—members of the Hudson River School and those inspired by it (Frederic Church, Sanford Robinson Gifford, Conrad Wise Chapman, and others)—and the paintings of Winslow Homer provided the history of the war with an emotional meaning that was rooted in concepts of American destiny. The panorama paintings, by contrast, were derived from a rich European tradition of large-scale painting, depicting battles on an epic scale, and whose production was fueled by exhibition practices in European capital cities that resemble a form of protocinematic theatrics. When the panorama was introduced to the United States, their subjects and exhibition practices were reshaped by American history and uniquely American conditions. This chapter will chronicle this history and focus on Paul Philippoteaux’s *Gettysburg Cyclorama* (1883), the most famous panorama painting of the Civil War, as a prime example of American war panoramas. If the advent of cinema in the United States is the product of motion picture science and the aesthetic and narrative practices of the nineteenth century, what Tom Gunning refers to as a “historical succession of styles” (Gunning 1991, 5), then my examination of Civil War paintings and panoramas will also show that the rise of cinema can be linked to explorations of the American landscape, the rise of travel technology (namely, the railroad), and military targeting technology.

A crucial thing to take into consideration at the outset is the role that news media played in covering the war. Later I will discuss how war photography contested the sketch illustrations in newspapers and how soldier testimonials challenged war reportage, but for this chapter it is important to note how these journalistic illustrations also informed the response to the war by painters; both painters and newspaper sketch artists attempted to provide the story of the war with an emotional content beyond the written word. There are many instances of painters taking their cues from sketches, as well as photographs and eye-witness testimonies (as we will see specifically in the creation of the *Gettysburg*