

Methods for choosing a global threshold are discussed in Section 10.3.1. In Section 10.3.2 we discuss allowing the threshold to vary, which is called *local thresholding*.

### Global Thresholding

One way to choose a threshold is by visual inspection of the image histogram. The histogram in Figure 10.12 clearly has two distinct modes; as a result, it is easy to choose a threshold  $T$  that separates them. Another method of choosing  $T$  is by trial and error, picking different thresholds until one is found that produces a good result as judged by the observer. This is particularly effective in an interactive environment, such as one that allows the user to change the threshold using a *widget* (graphical control) such as a slider and see the result immediately.

For choosing a threshold automatically, Gonzalez and Woods [2002] describe the following iterative procedure:

1. Select an initial estimate for  $T$ . (A suggested initial estimate is the midpoint between the minimum and maximum intensity values in the image.)
2. Segment the image using  $T$ . This will produce two groups of pixels:  $G_1$ , consisting of all pixels with intensity values  $\geq T$ , and  $G_2$ , consisting of pixels with values  $< T$ .
3. Compute the average intensity values  $\mu_1$  and  $\mu_2$  for the pixels in regions  $G_1$  and  $G_2$ .
4. Compute a new threshold value:

$$T = \frac{1}{2}(\mu_1 + \mu_2)$$

Repeat steps 2 through 4 until the difference in  $T$  in successive iterations is small enough.

600 800 1000 1200 1400

