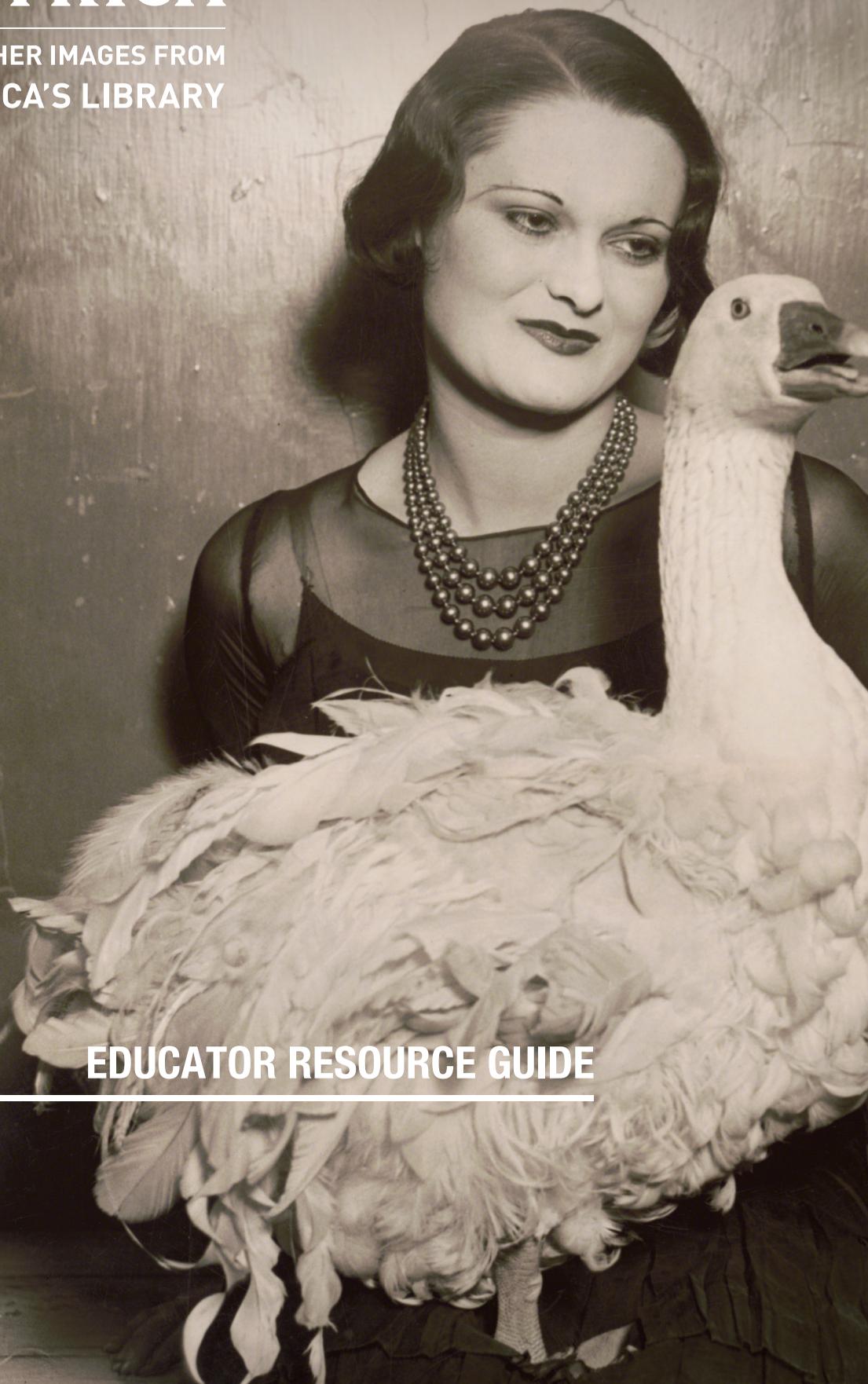


# NOT AN OSTRICH

AND OTHER IMAGES FROM  
AMERICA'S LIBRARY

 ANNENBERG SPACE  
FOR PHOTOGRAPHY



EDUCATOR RESOURCE GUIDE

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ANNENBERG SPACE FOR PHOTOGRAPHY

**HISTORY • EXHIBITS • DESIGN**

**HISTORY** The Annenberg Space for Photography opened to the public on March 27, 2009. It is the first solely photographic cultural destination in the Los Angeles area. The Photography Space is an initiative of the Annenberg Foundation and its board of directors. Its creation builds upon the Foundation's long history of supporting the visual arts.



**EXHIBITS** The Annenberg Space for Photography does not maintain a permanent collection of photographs; instead, exhibitions change every four to six months. The content of each show varies and appeals to a wide variety of audiences.

**DESIGN** The interior of the Space is influenced by the mechanics of a camera and its lens. The central, circular Digital Gallery is contained within the square building much as a convex lens is contained within a camera. The Digital Gallery's ceiling features an iris-like design reminiscent of the aperture of a lens. The aperture design also enhances the Gallery's acoustics.

The Print Gallery curves around the Digital Gallery, representing the way film winds within a camera. The curvature of the ceiling line in the Print Gallery mimics the design of a film canister.



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**THE DIGITAL GALLERY**

Our custom 13' rear projection glass screens are paired with the latest true 4K digital projectors to display photography with stunning clarity, brightness and contrast. The Digital Gallery allows for the display of thousands of images in a comparatively small location. In addition to showing images from the exhibiting photographers, the Digital Gallery screens short documentary films created to accompany the print exhibits.



THE CURRENT EXHIBIT

## AGE RECOMMENDATION • OVERVIEW

### AGE RECOMMENDATION

*Not an Ostrich: And Other Images from America's Library* is appropriate for all ages but recommended for students 10 and older.

### OVERVIEW

*Not an Ostrich: And Other Images from America's Library* is the result of celebrated American photography curator Anne Wilkes Tucker's excavation of nearly 500 images—out of a collection of over 14 million—permanently housed at the Library of Congress in Washington, D.C. While visitors to the exhibition might never see an ostrich, they will see the image entitled “Not an Ostrich” and a large selection of rare and handpicked works from the vaults of the world's largest library, many never widely available to the public.

This exhibition spans across the history of photography—from daguerreotypes, the first photographic process, to contemporary digital prints. Iconic portraits of Abraham Lincoln, John Lennon and Yoko Ono, Cesar Chavez, and Elizabeth Taylor appear alongside unusual images, such as, Stanley Kubrick's “Strong Man's Family” (1947), John Vachon's “Ice Fishing, Minnesota” (1956), Susana Raab's “Chicken in Love, Athens, OH” (2006) and Nina Berman's “Flammable Faucet #4, Monroeton, PA” (2011). Vivid color portrayals of America, across time, are highlighted in juxtapositions of popular travel views from the late 19th century, created by the Detroit Publishing Company using the then-latest “photochrom” technology, on a screen next to striking contemporary scenes captured by Carol M. Highsmith.

A nation's story is a reflection of its collective—and selective—memory. *Not an Ostrich: And Other Images from America's Library* invites visitors to experience our shared heritage.

A documentary film—produced by the Annenberg Foundation—featuring interviews with seven exhibit photographers, along with inside access to the Library of Congress, will be shown at the Space.



THE CURRENT EXHIBIT

## BIOGRAPHIES OF SELECT ARTISTS



### SHARON FARMER

Sharon Farmer has been a professional photojournalist and exhibition photographer for more than 40 years, shooting news stories, political campaigns, cultural events, conferences, and portraits. Most notably, Farmer was the first African-American woman to be hired as a White House photographer, as well as the first African American and first woman to become Director of the White House Photography office. She served as Director of the White House Photography Office from 1999-2001, and as White House photographer from 1993, documenting the beginning of the Clinton-Gore Administration.



### DONNA FERRATO

Donna Ferrato is a documentary photographer, whose gifts for exploration, illumination, and documentation—coupled with a commitment to revealing the darker sides of humanity—have made her a giant in the medium. She has four books, including *Living with the Enemy*—which has sold over 40,000 copies—and *Love & Lust*. She has participated in over 500 one-woman shows and founded the nonprofit Domestic Abuse Awareness which she ran for over a decade. In 2016, *Time* magazine announced her photograph of a woman being hit by her husband (“Behind Closed Doors,” 1982) as one of the “100 Most Influential Photographs of All Time.”



### CAROL M. HIGHSMITH

For more than 30 years, visual documentarian Carol M. Highsmith has captured life, people, and places across America on behalf of the Library of Congress, where her archive—freely available rights-free to anyone, anywhere in the world—has reached 50,000 images (and growing). In 2010, she undertook the project of a lifetime: visually documenting the nation, state by state, for a fresh, comprehensive, unfiltered digital record of our times that will last, in the words of the Library’s preservationists, “without end date.”



### DANNY LYON

Danny Lyon was born in 1942 in Brooklyn, New York. He is an American photographer and filmmaker. All of Lyon's publications work in the style of photographic New Journalism. He is the founding member of the publishing group Bleak Beauty, after being accepted as the photographer for the Student Nonviolent Coordinating Committee (SNCC). Lyon was present at almost all of the major historical events during the Civil Rights Movement. The first comprehensive retrospective of his career—*Danny Lyon: Message to the Future*—premiered at the Whitney Museum of American Art in New York, exhibited at the De Young in San Francisco, and at C/O Berlin. Lyon is also a two-time recipient of a Guggenheim Fellowship.



THE CURRENT EXHIBIT

## BIOGRAPHIES OF SELECT ARTISTS



CAMILO JOSÉ VERGARA

Camilo José Vergara is drawn to the urban fabric of America's inner cities—to the buildings that compose them and the life and culture embedded in its structures and streets. For more than four decades, he has devoted himself to photographing and systematically documenting the poorest and most segregated communities in urban America. Vergara developed a method to document entire neighborhoods and then return year after year to re-photograph the same places over time, from different heights, using different lenses, and blanketing entire communities with images. His collection of photographs at the Library of Congress is Vergara's attempt to preserve a "collective urban memory."



WILL WILSON

Will Wilson's art projects center around the continuation and transformation of customary indigenous cultural practice. He is a Diné photographer and trans-customary artist who spent his formative years living on the Navajo Nation. Wilson studied photography, sculpture, and art history at the University of New Mexico (MFA, Photography, 2002) and Oberlin College (B.A., Studio Art and Art History, 1993). Wilson is part of the Science and Arts Research Collaborative, which brings together artists and collaborators from Los Alamos National Laboratory. He is also the Program Head of Photography at Santa Fe Community College. In 2017, Wilson received the New Mexico Governor's Award for Excellence in the Arts.



## PRE-VISIT ACTIVITY

### Recommended for Grades 9-12

**Title:** Photographs as Primary Sources

**Connection to the Exhibit:** *Not an Ostrich: And Other Images from America's Library* features a large selection of rare photographs which reveal the complicated – and sometimes troubling – subject matter that is as much a part of United States history as its triumphs. One of the Library of Congress' most frequently researched subjects is their collection of Civil Rights era artifacts, including their extensive photographic collection. The following pre-visit activity is designed to prepare students to think critically about primary source photography by introducing important terms and concepts on the subject as outlined by the Library of Congress' website. At the end of this assignment, students should feel comfortable defining and using the essential questions recommended by the Library of Congress for studying primary source materials, as well as be prepared to respond to these questions during their visit to the Photo Space.

*Note: Some of the photographs involved in the pre-visit activity reflect sensitive themes. Teachers should consider the best way to introduce and discuss these photographs in a way that best supports their students.*

### Common Core Standards for English Language Arts 6-12

College and Career Readiness Anchor Standards for Speaking and Listening (CCR)

- Prepare for – and participate effectively in – a range of conversations and collaborations with diverse partners, building on others' ideas to express their own clearly and persuasively.

College and Career Readiness Anchor Standards for Writing (CCR)

- Write arguments to support claims in an analysis of substantive topics or texts, using valid reasoning and relevant and sufficient evidence.
- Write informative/explanatory texts to examine and convey complex ideas and information clearly and accurately through the effective selection, organization, and analysis of content.
- Produce clear and coherent writing in which the development, organization, and style are appropriate to task, purpose, and audience.

### Glossary of Relevant Terms and Concepts:

Primary source, supporting evidence, boycott, desegregation/segregation, civil rights, Ku Klux Klan, resistance.

### Materials Needed:

- Internet (overhead projector/Smart Board ideal) needed to access the following websites:
  - Library of Congress' teacher's resource guide, "Using Primary Sources": <http://www.loc.gov/teachers/usingprimarysources/>
  - Annenberg Learner: "Civil Rights Movements Across the Nation": <http://www.learner.org/courses/lens/collections/change-resistance/>
  - The photographs linked within the body of the activities below

**Pre-Lesson Activity:**

- Introduce the term “primary source.” The Library of Congress defines primary sources as the “raw materials of history” – original documents (including photography) that were created during the time which is being studied.
- Ask students to brainstorm some examples of primary sources. If students get stuck, you can steer them toward examples like the United States Declaration of Independence, *The Diary of Anne Frank*, or the famous photograph by Dorothea Lange known as “The Migrant Mother.”
- Explain to students that in preparation for their visit they will be focusing on photographic primary sources that show the Civil Rights era in America during the 1960s.

**Large Group Activity:**

- To begin, activate students' prior knowledge by asking them to share what photos, images, or subjects come to mind when they think about the phrase “civil rights movement.”
- Next, project the following photographs: ["Negro drinking at 'Colored' water cooler in streetcar terminal, Oklahoma City, Oklahoma" \(Russell Lee, 1939\)](#) and ["With the American flag as their banner, the Ku Klux Klan assembled in numbers for initiations. 300 gathered within two miles of the U.S. Capitol and received 50 candidates for membership in the mystic order," \(Underwood and Underwood, 1915\).](#)
- Ask students to describe what they see in the photos and to consider the following questions: Have they seen photographs similar to these before when learning about segregation? Are they aware of the slow progression of civil rights for people of color in the United States? What were some of the responses to the Civil Rights Movement in 20th century America?
- Introduce students to the following questions taken from the Library of Congress' “Using Primary Sources” page. Prompt them to respond to each of the following questions after looking at an image and take notes to share with the group once they have completed their responses:
  - What do you see that you didn't expect in this photograph?
  - What powerful words and ideas come to mind as you look at this photograph?
  - What feelings and thoughts do the photographs inspire in you?
  - What questions does the photograph raise?
- Ask students to volunteer and share their responses. For students who may not feel comfortable initially, encourage them to respond to the comments from their fellow students. Example prompts might be: “Does anyone feel the same way?” or “Does anyone have another question they'd like to add?”

**Small Group Activity:**

- After this initial conversation, project the following two images: "[Youths taunt Dorothy Geraldine Counts, 15, as she walks to enroll at the previously all-white Harding High School, Charlotte, NC](#)" (Don Sturkey, 1957) and "[Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. with Rev. Ralph Abernathy on the first desegregated bus, Montgomery, AL](#)" (Ernest C. Withers, 1956).
- Working in small groups, ask students to describe and discuss what they see in the photographs. Instruct students to take notes of their responses as they come up in conversation.
- Next, ask students to answer the previously used primary source questions from the Library of Congress to further analyze their response to the photographs.
- Ask students to share their responses with the larger group after the smaller groups have had time to discuss and share within their cohort.

**Homework Activity:**

- Instruct students to consider the following Essential Questions from Annenberg Learner's series, [Essential Lens: Analyzing Photographs Across the Curriculum](#):
  - What are strategies that people can use today to seek societal change and/or expand equal rights?
  - Why is the push for societal change often met with resistance?
  - Why does resistance to change often result in violent responses?
  - What are some reasons that societal change takes so long?
- Ask students to respond to the above questions with two to three paragraphs of reflection per question, making sure that their responses use the four photographs from the small-group classroom assignments as supporting evidence.

## EXHIBITION ACTIVITY

Recall the primary source analysis questions you worked on in the pre-visit activity. If your class did not complete that exercise (or if you need a refresher), the Library of Congress defines primary sources as the “raw materials of history” – original documents (including photography) that were created during the time being studied. The Library of Congress’ method for analyzing primary sources involves considering a set of questions when studying a primary source. Examples of primary sources might include a recording of a speech, a first edition of a book, or a photograph.

As you explore the exhibition, take a deeper look at the photography while practicing your primary source analysis skills. Work alone or with a friend to answer the prompts below for each image you select.

### IMAGE #1

- Brief description of the image:
  
- What do you see that you didn't expect in this photograph?
  
- What powerful words and ideas come to mind as you look at this photograph?
  
- What feelings and thoughts do the photographs inspire in you?
  
- What questions does the photograph raise?

**IMAGE #2**

- Brief description of the image:
  - What do you see that you didn't expect in this photograph?
  - What powerful words and ideas come to mind as you look at this photograph?
  - What feelings and thoughts do the photographs inspire in you?
  - What questions does the photograph raise?

**IMAGE #3**

- Brief description of the image:
  - What do you see that you didn't expect in this photograph?
  - What powerful words and ideas come to mind as you look at this photograph?
  - What feelings and thoughts do the photographs inspire in you?
  - What questions does the photograph raise?

## POST-VISIT ASSIGNMENT

### Recommended for Grades 9-12

**Title:** Fact or Fiction – The Legacy of Edward S. Curtis

**Connection to the Exhibit:** *Not an Ostrich: And Other Images from America's Library* is an exhibition that serves as a reflection of the United States' collective—and selective—memory. The subject of representation is one that is central to both the curatorial process behind this exhibition and to the questions we invite our guests to ask during their visit. For example, who has the cultural “authority” to tell certain stories? An illustrative example of this idea involves the photographs of Native Americans taken by photographer Edward S. Curtis (1868-1952). This post-visit activity asks students to build upon the pre-visit activity surrounding the evaluation of primary sources, this time focusing on questions of authenticity, representation, and what we do with primary sources that are problematic in either of those respects.

### Common Core Standards for English Language Arts 6-12

College and Career Readiness Anchor Standards for Writing (CCR)

- Write arguments to support claims in an analysis of substantive topics or texts, using valid reasoning and relevant and sufficient evidence.
- Produce clear and coherent writing in which the development, organization, and style are appropriate to task, purpose, and audience.
- Conduct short – as well as more sustained – research projects based on focused questions, demonstrating understanding of the subject under investigation.
- Gather relevant information from multiple print and digital sources, assess the credibility and accuracy of each source, and integrate the information while avoiding plagiarism.
- Draw evidence from literary and/or informational texts to support analysis, reflection and search.

College and Career Readiness Anchor Standards for Reading (CCR)

- Read closely to determine what the text says explicitly and make logical inferences from it; cite specific textual evidence when writing or speaking to support conclusions drawn from the text.
- Analyze how two or more texts address similar themes or topics, in order to build knowledge or to compare the approaches that the authors take.
- Read and comprehend complex literary and informational texts independently and proficiently.

### Glossary of Relevant Terms and Concepts:

Primary source, reliable source, authenticity, representation, relocation, assimilation, Westward Expansion, tribal territories, photograph retouching.

**Materials Needed:**

- Enlargements (printed or overhead) of the photographs in Appendices I and II
- Printouts of the bio and article in Appendices I and II

**Large Group Activity:**

- As a group, ask students to recall what the definition of “primary source” is, as outlined in the pre-visit activity they worked on before their visit to the exhibition. If primary sources are meant to reflect the time at which they were created, does that mean that they are the most accurate source of information? Ask students to think through some hypothetical scenarios below to help form their opinion:
  - Court transcript (primary source) versus a film adaptation of a famous court case (secondary)
  - The U.S. Declaration of Independence (primary source) versus a textbook chapter about the U.S. Declaration of Independence (secondary)In each of the above scenarios, students should be able to identify the primary source as the most reliable source of information about the topic and why.

- Next, provide handouts of the Edward S. Curtis photographs found in Appendix I, along with a piece of paper and the short biography of Curtis (also found in Appendix I). Ask students to look over the images and review the Curtis biography, and then to take a few minutes to work with a partner and answer the following questions:
  - What do you see in these photographs?
  - What are some thoughts or ideas that come up for you when you look at these photographs?
  - In a sentence, how would you describe these photographs?
- Once students have shared their responses with a partner, bring the students back together as a group and, with a show of hands, ask them if the photographs they’ve just seen are primary sources. Next, with another show of hands, ask how many of them think these photographs accurately depict their subjects. Take a count of how many hands you see raised.
- Pass out the article found in Appendix II and ask students to read the article to themselves. While they are reading, project an enlargement of the image in Appendix II in front of the class. Once students have finished reading the article, ask for volunteers who want to share their reactions to the article. Finally, ask the students again, with a show of hands, if they think that these photographs accurately depict their subjects and are a reliable primary source. Take a count of how many hands you see raised and compare that to the previous count.
- Ask students to look at the photograph from Appendix II projected at the front of the classroom and compare it to the copy of the image they have in front of them that is similar. If possible, switch between image projections of the photos in Appendix I and Appendix II to help students identify the subtle but important difference between the two photographs mentioned in the article from Appendix II.
- To close out this large group activity, invite students to share some of their reactions, prompting them to spend 15 minutes writing down some reflections on this activity for use in their homework assignment.

**Homework Assignment:**

- Instruct students to conduct a short research project on the life, photographic work, and legacy of Edward S. Curtis. Ask students to frame their writing assignment by considering the following essential question: Are the photographs of Native Americans taken by Edward S. Curtis valuable primary source materials, despite the controversy over his methods?
- To complete their writing assignment, students need to find at least three sources, online or in print, that they can reference in their writing assignment. It should be emphasized that these sources should be ones that students have taken the time to assess and identify as credible. Information from these sources should be used as evidence in the students' writing assignment in order to support their argument.

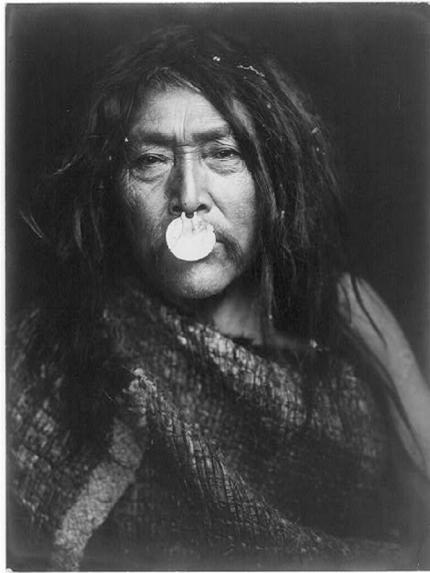
EDUCATOR RESOURCE GUIDE  
**APPENDIX I**



Caption: In Piegan Lodge  
Photographs from *The North American Indian*, circa 1904-1908



Caption: The seal hunter, Noatak, in kayak, facing left  
The Library of Congress - Edward S. Curtis Collection  
Published in: *The North American Indian* / Edward S. Curtis. [Seattle, Wash.]: Edward S. Curtis, 1907-30, v. 20, p. 200.



Caption: Naemahpunkuma, a Hahuamis man, head-and-shoulders portrait, facing front, wearing a nose ornament that covers his mouth.  
The Library of Congress - Edward S. Curtis Collection  
Published in: *The North American Indian* / Edward S. Curtis. [Seattle, Wash.] : Edward S. Curtis, 1907-30, v. 10, p. 66.



Caption: Village Herald- Dakota man, wearing war bonnet, sitting on horseback, his left hand outstretched toward tipi in background, others on horseback.  
The Library of Congress - Edward S. Curtis Collection

## **Edward Curtis: Shadow Catcher**

By George Horse Capture

4/23/2001

PBS.org

Beginning in 1900 and continuing over the next 30 years, Edward Sheriff Curtis, or the “Shadow Catcher” as he was later called by some of the tribes, took over 40,000 images and recorded rare ethnographic information from over 80 American Indian tribal groups, ranging from the Eskimo or Inuit people of the far north to the Hopi people of the Southwest. He captured the likeness of many important and well-known Indian people of that time, including Geronimo, Chief Joseph, Red Cloud, Medicine Crow and others. This monumental accomplishment is comprised of more than 2,200 sepia-toned photogravures bound in 20 volumes of written information and small images and 20 portfolios of larger artistic representations.

Edward S. Curtis was born near Whitewater, Wisconsin in 1868. His father, a Civil War veteran and a Reverend, moved the family to Minnesota, where Edward became interested in photography and soon constructed his own camera and learned how to process the prints. At the age of 17, he became an apprentice photographer in St. Paul. The family moved near Seattle, Washington, where Edward purchased a second camera and bought a half interest in a photographic studio. He married and the couple had four children.

In 1898, while photographing on Mt. Rainier, Curtis encountered a group of prominent scientists who were lost, among them George Bird Grinnell, a noted Indian expert, who became interested in Curtis’ work and invited him to photograph the Blackfeet Indian people in Montana two years later. It was there that Curtis practiced and developed his photographic skills and project methodology that would guide his lifetime of work among the other Indian tribes.

Such a massive project is almost incomprehensible in this day and age. In addition to the constant struggle for financing, Curtis required the cooperation of the weather, vehicles, mechanical equipment, skilled technicians, scholars and researchers, and the Indian tribes as well. He dispatched assistants to make tribal visits months in advance. With the proper arrangements, Curtis would travel by horseback or horse-drawn wagon over paths or primitive “roads” to visit the tribes in their home territory. Once on site, Curtis and his assistants would start work by interviewing the people and then photographing them either outside, in a structure, or inside his studio tent with an adjustable skylight. Employing these and other techniques over his lifetime he captured some of the most beautiful images of the Indian people ever recorded.

One of Curtis’ major goals was to record as much of the people’s way of traditional life as possible. Not content to deal only with the present population, and their arts and industries, he recognized that the present is a result of the past, and the past dimension must be included, as well. Guided by this concept, Curtis made 10,000 wax cylinder recordings of Indian language and music. In addition, he took over 40,000 images from

over 80 tribes, recorded tribal mythologies and history, and described tribal population, traditional foods, dwellings, clothing, games, ceremonies, burial customs, biographical sketches and other primary source information: all from a living as well as past tradition.

*Excerpted from the article "Edward Curtis: Shadow Catcher" retrieved on February 8, 2018 from PBS's website: <http://www.pbs.org/wnet/americanmasters/edward-curtis-shadow-catcher/568/>*



## APPENDIX II



Caption: In Piegan Lodge (original negative)

Edward S. Curtis Collection (Library of Congress)

Published in: *The North American Indian* / Edward S. Curtis. [Seattle, Wash.] : Edward S. Curtis, 1907-30, Suppl., v. 6, pl. 188.

## Edward Curtis' Epic Project to Photograph Native Americans

By Gilbert King

March 21, 2012

Smithsonian.com

It was in Montana, under Grinnell's tutelage, that Curtis became deeply moved by what he called the "primitive customs and traditions" of the Piegan people, including the "mystifying" Sun Dance he had witnessed. "It was at the start of my concerted effort to learn about the Plains Indians and to photograph their lives," Curtis wrote, "and I was intensely affected." When he returned to Seattle, he mounted popular exhibitions of his Native American work, publishing magazine articles and then lecturing across the country. His photographs became known for their sheer beauty. President Theodore Roosevelt commissioned Curtis to photograph his daughter's wedding and to do some Roosevelt family portraits.

But Curtis was burning to return to the West and seek out more Native Americans to document. He found a photographer to manage his studio in Seattle, but more important, he found a financial backer with the funds for a project of the scale he had in mind. In 1906, he boldly approached J.P. Morgan, who quickly dismissed him with a note that read, "Mr. Curtis, there are many demands on me for financial assistance. I will be unable to help you." But Curtis persisted, and Morgan was ultimately awed by the photographer's work. "Mr. Curtis," Morgan wrote after seeing his images, "I want to see these photographs in books—the most beautiful set of books ever published."

Morgan agreed to sponsor Curtis, paying out \$75,000 over five years in exchange for 25 sets of volumes and 500 original prints. It was enough for Curtis to acquire the necessary equipment and hire interpreters and researchers. With a trail wagon and assistants traveling ahead to arrange visits, Edward Curtis set out on a journey that would see him photograph the most important Native Americans of the time, including Geronimo, Red Cloud, Medicine Crow and Chief Joseph.

The trips were not without peril—impassable roads, disease and mechanical failures; Arctic gales and the stifling heat of the Mohave Desert; encounters with suspicious and "unfriendly warriors." But Curtis managed to endear himself to the people with whom he stayed. He worked under the premise, he later said, of "We, not you. In other words, I worked with them, not at them."

On wax cylinders, his crew collected more than 10,000 recordings of songs, music and speech in more than 80 tribes, most with their own language. To the amusement of tribal elders, and sometimes for a fee, Curtis was given permission to organize reenactments of battles and traditional ceremonies among the Indians, and he documented them with his hulking 14-inch-by-17-inch view camera, which produced glass-plate negatives that yielded the crisp, detailed and gorgeous gold-tone prints he was noted for. The Native Americans came to trust him and ultimately named him "Shadow Catcher," but Curtis would later note that, given his grueling travel and work,

he should have been known as “The Man Who Never Took Time to Play.”

[..]

While the onset of World War I coincided with a diminishing interest in Native American culture, Curtis scraped together enough funding in an attempt to strike it big with a motion picture, *In the Land of the Head-Hunters*, for which he paid Kwakiutl men on Vancouver Island to replicate the appearance of their forefathers by shaving off facial hair and donning wigs and fake nose rings. The film had some critical success but flopped financially, and Curtis lost his \$75,000 investment.

He took work in Hollywood, where his friend Cecil B. DeMille hired him for camerawork on films such as *The Ten Commandments*. Curtis sold the rights to his movie to the American Museum of Natural History for a mere \$1,500 and worked out a deal that allowed him to return to his field work—by relinquishing his copyright on the images for *The North American Indian* to the Morgan Company.

The tribes Curtis visited in the late 1920s, he was alarmed to find, had been decimated by relocation and assimilation. He found it more difficult than ever to create the kinds of photographs he had in the past, and the public had long ceased caring about Native American culture. When he returned to Seattle, his ex-wife had him arrested for failing to pay alimony and child support, and the stock market crash of 1929 made it nearly impossible for him to sell any of his work.

[..]

The photographs of Edward Curtis represent ideals and imagery designed to create a timeless vision of Native American culture at a time when modern amenities and American expansion had already irrevocably altered the Indian way of life. By the time Curtis had arrived in various tribal territories, the U.S. government had forced Indian children into boarding schools, banned them from speaking in their native tongues, and made them cut their hair. This was not what Curtis chose to document, and he went to great pains to create images of Native Americans posing in traditional clothing they had long since put away, in scenes that were sometimes later retouched by Curtis and his assistants to eliminate any modern artifacts, such as the presence of a clock in his image, “In a Piegan Lodge.”

Some critics have accused him of photographic fakery—of advancing his career by ignoring the plight and torment of his subjects. Others laud him, noting that he was, according to the Bruce Kapson Gallery, which represents Curtis’s work, “able to convey a dignity, universal humanity and majesty that transcend literally all other work ever done on the subject.” It is estimated that producing *The North American Indian* today would cost more than \$35 million.

“When judged by the standards of his time,” Laurie Lawlor wrote in her book, *Shadow Catcher: The Life and Work of Edward S. Curtis*, “Curtis was far ahead of his contemporaries in sensitivity, tolerance and openness to Native American cultures and ways of thinking. He sought to observe and understand by going directly into the field.”

*Excerpted from the article “Edward Curtis’ Epic Project to Photograph Native Americans”  
retrieved on February 8, 2018 from the Smithsonian Magazine’s website: [https://  
www.smithsonianmag.com/history/edward-curtis-epic-project-to-photograph-native-  
americans-162523282/](https://www.smithsonianmag.com/history/edward-curtis-epic-project-to-photograph-native-americans-162523282/)*



## APPENDIX III

### ***NOT AN OSTRICH: Exhibit Resource Connections from Annenberg Learner***

- America's History in the Making (<http://www.learner.org/courses/amerhistory/>)
  - Primary sources
  - Post-Depression and pre-WWII societal change
  - “Taming the American West”: Westward expansion and its impact on Native Americans
- Comparing Multiple Sources (<http://www.learner.org/courses/readwrite/video-detail/comparing-language-multiple-sources.html>)
  - Teaching how to evaluate sources: Reading and Writing in the Disciplines
  - Civil Rights: Demanding Equality ([http://www.learner.org/courses/democracyinamerica/dia\\_5/](http://www.learner.org/courses/democracyinamerica/dia_5/))
  - Civil Rights legislation and its influence on school segregation, Title IX, and rights of the disabled.
- Analyzing Artifacts (<http://www.learner.org/courses/amerhistory/interactives/artifacts/index.html>)
  - Interactives that focus on Native American representation
  - Placing Artifacts in Time (<http://www.learner.org/courses/amerhistory/interactives/pocahontas/index.html>)
  - This interactive exercise focuses on how interpretations of history change over time. By examining a series of images and descriptions of Pocahontas created over the course of four centuries, you will discover how drastically characterizations of her have shifted over time.