

Native American Photography Source Analysis

Purpose: This lesson will familiarize undergraduate students with the fundamental questions asked by scholars as they approach historical source materials like journals and diaries, manuscripts, material objects, newspapers, illustrations, and photographs. To evaluate these sources as potential pieces of evidence, students and scholars should be mindful of authorship, time and place of publication, intended audience and purpose, genre, and other information. Answering these questions helps to establish broader historical context and enables critical analysis of the source material.

Resources:

- *'No, not even for a picture': Re-examining the Native Midwest and Tribes' Relationships to the History of Photography* [Online Exhibit](#) access
 - Introductory "Reading Photographs" section
- Photograph Set - selections from the [Richard Pohrt Jr. Collection of Native American Photography](#)
- Source Analysis Worksheet

Steps:

- View *'No, not even for a picture': Re-examining the Native Midwest and Tribes' Relationships to the History of Photography*. Students should understand that the exhibit makes arguments about representations of Native Americans, and should have a clear understanding of how the exhibit intertwines evidence and argument.
- Working individually, students should select one photograph from the included Photograph set and complete the Source Analysis Worksheet using their selected photograph.
- Once students complete the worksheet, pair or group students who selected the same photograph, and have students discuss their responses. If students' answers differ, have them explain their thinking.
- Instructors may also complete Worksheet and share answers with the class.

Source Analysis Worksheet

Respond to the questions and prompts below with as much detail as possible.

1) Identify and describe your photograph

2) Who produced this photograph? (individual, anonymous, etc.) When?

3) Why was this photograph taken? Or, who is the intended audience?

4) What biases, assumptions, or stereotypes do you see?

5) What else do you want to know about this photograph?
6) What are the strengths and weaknesses of using this photograph for research purposes?

Photograph Set:

See notes in catalog records for information on individual photographs. Titles of photographs derived from inscriptions and captions.

- [Sioux Indians of the Pine Ridge Reservation S. Dakota.](#)
 - Dressed in their Best.
 - Wm. (Crazy Bull) Girton. A Carlisle Graduate. Indian Policeman.
 - Ms. Bull Bear.
 - Fast Eagle and Family.
 - The Spotted Eagle Family at Home.
 - A typical scene.
- [Playing Wah-koo-chad-ah \(Moccasin\) a favorite game.](#)
- [Grand Council of the Hostile and Friendly Sioux Indian Chiefs at Pine Ridge Agency S.D. Jan 17th 1891.](#)
- [Scene at Indian Payment.](#)
- [Sophie Assiniway.](#)
- [Chippewa Indians making Birch Canoes](#)