Worksheet for Analysis of a Photograph

Prepare a written report on your assigned photograph by answering these questions about it.

A. FIRST IMPRESSIONS
   • What is the first thing you notice about the photograph?
   • Is the photo a portrait, a landscape, or a record of an event?
   • What are the most striking details of the photo?
   • Are there people in the photo? How many? What are they doing?
   • On what person(s) or object(s) does it predominantly focus?
   • What secondary person(s) or object(s) do you see?
   • Is the picture posed or candid?
   • Was the photo taken indoors or out?
   • What features or objects could help determine where this photograph was taken?
   • What features or objects could help determine when this photograph was taken?
   • Is there anything unusual or surprising about the photo?

B. WHAT FACTS CAN YOU DETECT FROM STUDYING THE PHOTO?
   • Record any writing you find on the face or back of the photo.
   • Divide the photo into sections and look carefully at each section. What new details come into view?
   • List any person, building, or object you recognize.
   • List any person, building, or object that is identified.
   • What is happening in the picture?
   • What can you tell about the season and/or time of day this photo was taken?
   • Are there items such as clothing, hairstyles, or automobiles that can provide clues to the year or historical period?

C. WHAT FACTS MIGHT YOU SURMISE AFTER CAREFUL STUDY?
   • For what purpose do you think this picture was taken?
   • Do you think the picture was taken by a professional or amateur photographer?
   • Did the people in the picture know they were being photographed?
   • A photograph can address only the sense of sight – if you had been present when the photo was taken, what might you also have heard, smelled, felt?

D. FURTHER STUDY
   • What is missing from the photograph?
   • What questions does the photograph leave unanswered?
   • Where might you find answers to those questions?

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