George Barnard, *Ruins in Charleston, S.C. (1865 or 1866)*

George Barnard (1819-1902) was born in Coventry, Connecticut, and spent much of his childhood traveling throughout the United States following his father’s death when he was six years old. His Congregationalist family was religiously devout, committed to the virtues of education, culture, and social responsibility.

Regrettably, very little information about Barnard’s life has survived. Despite being one of the most important and respected photographers of his day, he left very few published statements and personal papers. However, from newspapers, photographic journals, and government records, one can assemble a skeleton of his career. The most noteworthy and acclaimed body of work Barnard produced was at the outbreak of the Civil War, when he was sent to photograph various locations in Virginia and Washington. This portfolio, *Photographic Views of Sherman’s Campaign*, are among the most iconic images of the Civil War. Barnard’s photographs are both extraordinary records of the devastated Confederacy, from Tennessee to Atlanta and South Carolina, and beautiful, carefully composed works of art filled with picturesque touches.

The Charleston photographs are particularly important, as they highlight the artistic sensibilities that permeate his documentary work. Although Barnard was contracted to create military records, these photographs always show a concern with aesthetics. Concerned with spatial tension between foreground and background, Barnard employed motifs and compositions common in landscape painting. Trees, water, human figures, and man-made structures are carefully framed to produce a reflective mood and provide picturesque interests. For Barnard, the South was a defeated realm filled with loss, death, and destruction, containing important moral lessons about war, heroism, and slavery.
Questions to Consider

1. What is the primary focus of this photograph?
2. What people can you find in this photograph? What are they doing?
3. What is the physical condition of the buildings in this photograph?
4. What is the overall mood of this image?
5. What title might you give to this photograph?

Connections
Art: Early photography, documentary photography, American landscape painting, 19th Century vernacular architecture
History: Civil War, Reconstruction

Further Reading

Teachers’ Extensions

Work: Ruins in Charleston, South Carolina (1865 or 1866)
Artist: George Barnard
Location of work: Indiana University Art Museum (IUAM)
Works on Paper

Vocabulary/Key Concept(s):
American Civil War A war between the 11 Southern States (Confederacy) that declared secession from the U.S. Federal Government (Union) (1861-1865).

Reconstruction Period of rebuilding after the Civil War during which the Southern states rejoined the Union (1865-1877).

Art Connection(s):
Documentary Photography usually refers to a type of photojournalism that attempts to produce truthful, objective and candid photography/pictures of a particular subject, most often including people in historical settings.

Vernacular Architecture is a term used to categorize methods of construction which use locally available resources and traditions to address local needs. Vernacular architecture tends to evolve over time to reflect the environmental, cultural and historical context in which it exists.

Geography Connection(s):
Charleston, South Carolina (USA)

Time Line Connection:
1865/1866

Resources:
National Endowment for the Humanities (NEH) Picturing America website: 
http://picturingamerica.neh.gov/

Connect to web links below by clicking on individual address or access through the NEH site for Additional Resources at: 
http://picturingamerica.neh.gov/about.php?subPage=about_ad_res

http://www.getty.edu/education/for_teachers/building_lessons/
 Getty Museum Education department Web site, Teachers’ Programs and Resources, is designed for K-12 teachers who wish to introduce art and art history into their classrooms. The site uses works form the museum’s collection along with pages A Grade-by-Grade Guide, The Elements of Art (teaching the formal components of art such as line and color) and a PDF file, Lesson Template. Also included are pages for the National Standards in the Visual Arts. Lesson Plans for Grade 9-12 use the photography of Dorothea Lange.
http://www.nga.gov/education/american/figure.htm
National Gallery of Art Web site, Themes in American Art, covers topics such as abstraction, historical subjects, narrative art, and portraiture; illustrated by works in the collection. Includes a glossary.
National Endowment for the Humanities, EDSITEment, Realistic Impressions: Investigating Movement in the Visual Arts, for Grade 9-12, teaches students about the meaning of the terms “movement” in the visual arts, and covers the major movements of Impressionism, Realism, and Romanticism, with links to other movements in the arts.

Monroe County Public Library (MCPL) Bloomington, Indiana University
(812) 349-3050 – To Reserve Resource Materials

American Civil War

Picture the American Past: Children of the Civil War by Candice F. Ransom
Call Number: J973.7 Ra (Children’s Collection)
Includes: Images, information, time line, additional resources and websites

Great Americans for Children: Abraham Lincoln DVD Video Series
Call Number: J921 Lincoln Abr (Children’s Collection)
Includes Historical Overview of Civil War, Vocabulary, Discussion Strategies, And Follow-up Activities

Reconstruction

The Civil War and Reconstruction: 1863-1877 by Rebecca Stefoff
Call Number: J973.7 Ste (Children’s Collection)
Includes: Images, maps, glossary and time-line

Photography

Snapshot: America Discovers the Camera by Kenneth P. Czech
Call Number J770.9 Cz (Children’s Collection)
Includes: Images of early American documentary photography

Web sites:

American Civil War

BrainPOP
http://www.brainpop.com/about/
http://www.brainpop.com/socialstudies/ushistory/civilwarcauses/preview.weml
Interactive units on the Civil War including a movie and related web link references.

Photography

BrainPOP
http://www.brainpop.com/about/
http://www.brainpop.com/socialstudies/secall/
Includes interactive unit on Photography, movie and related information on how photography has shaped the way we see the world – past and present.

Documentary Photography

Includes information, definition, and additional references

Vernacular Architecture
http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Vernacular_architecture
Includes: definition, images, literature selections, references
http://www.hvva.org/hvvanews6-7pt2.htm
http://www.hvva.org/hvvanew7-2pt3.htm
Includes images (lithograph by Currier and Ives, 1837) information, definitions, Images of structures and architectural elements, references

Indiana Academic Standards – Visual Arts Grade/Level 5
RESPONDING TO ART: History
Standard 1
Students understand the significance of visual art in relation to historical, social, political, spiritual, environmental, technological, and economic issues.
5.1.1 Identify the relationship between a work of art and the geography and characteristics of the culture, and identify where, when, why, and by whom the work was made (Focus: North America).
Standard 2
Students recognize significant works of Western and non-Western art and understand the chronological development of art movements.
5.2.1 Identify and be familiar with a range of selected works of art identifying artists, culture, style, and period.
5.2.2 Identify distinguishing characteristics of style in individual artists work and art movements.
RESPONDING TO ART: Criticism
Standard 3
Students describe, analyze, and interpret works of art and artifacts.
5.3.1 Analyze the artist’s use of sensory, formal, technical, and expressive properties in a work of art.
5.3.2 Construct meaning in the work based on personal response, properties found in the work, and background information on the context of the work.
Standard 4
Students identify and apply criteria to make informed judgments about art.
5.4.1 Listen to multiple critiques of works of art by peers, teachers, people from the art world and identify criteria used.
5.4.2 Apply criteria based on properties found in the work and research from the historical context of the work to make informed judgments.
RESPONDING TO ART: Aesthetics
Standard 5
Students reflect on and discuss art theories and aesthetic issues concerning the meaning and significance of art.
5.5.1 Identify problems or puzzles in a work of art or aesthetic issue, construct a hypothesis, and evaluate alternate hypotheses.
5.5.2 Identify and analyze a variety of well reasoned points of view on aesthetic issues (censorship, plagiarism) and develop a personal point of view.
Standard 6
Students theorize about art and make informed judgments.
5.6.1 Identify artwork made from the artist’s philosophy that art is at its best when it moves people to act for the betterment of society (instrumentalism).
5.6.2 Understand that personal preference is one of many criteria used in making judgments about art.

CAREERS AND COMMUNITY
Standard 11
Students recognize a variety of art-related professions and careers in our society.
5.11.1 Identify the roles of artists and critics in the community.
5.11.2 Identify various responsibilities of selected careers in art (illustrator, costume and set designer, sculptor, display designer, painter, graphic designer, animator, visual editor).

INTEGRATED STUDIES
Standard 13
Students identify and make connections between knowledge and skill in art and all other subject areas such as humanities, sciences, and technology.
5.13.1 Compare characteristics of a theme, historical period, or event through the multiple perspectives of different disciplines.

Standard 14
Students understand the connections between many art forms including dance, theater, music, visual arts, and media arts.
5.14.1 Compare characteristics of a theme, historical period, or event through the multiple perspectives of different art forms.

National Academic Standards – Visual Arts – Level 5
Content Standard #4: Understanding the visual arts in relation to history and cultures
Achievement Standard:
Students know and compare the characteristics of artworks in various eras and cultures
Students describe and place a variety of art objects in historical and cultural contexts
Students analyze, describe, and demonstrate how factors of time and place (such as climate, resources, ideas, and technology) influence visual characteristics that give meaning and value to a work of art

Content Standard #5: Reflecting upon and assessing the characteristics and merits of their work and the work of others
Achievement Standard:
Students compare multiple purposes for creating works of art
Students analyze contemporary and historic meanings in specific artworks through cultural and aesthetic inquiry
Students describe and compare a variety of individual responses to their own artworks and to artworks from various eras and cultures

Content Standard #6: Making connections between visual arts and other disciplines
Achievement Standard:
Students compare the characteristics of works in two or more art forms that share similar subject matter, historical periods, or cultural context
Students describe ways in which the principles and subject matter of other disciplines taught in the school are interrelated with the visual arts