



Name: _____

Date: _____

Part 1: What's In a Photograph?

Meet Sarah Gudger. You're going to get to know more about her later. Right now, all you have is this picture. What do you see in this photograph?

Discuss what you see in this photo with your partner, and then answer the questions below. All students need to complete their own worksheets.

- 1. Describe the woman in the photograph.**

- 2. How old do you think she is? Explain how you came up with your answer.**

- 3. When do you think this photo was taken? Explain your reasoning.**

- 4. What do you think she might be like in person, based on this photograph?**

- 5. What do you observe from her clothes and appearance?**

- 6. Did you and your partner have the same description of this woman? _____**

What was the same? _____

What was different? _____

Part 2: In Somebody Else's Words

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Small in stature, about five feet tall, Aunt Sarah is rathered rounded in face and body. Her milk-chocolate face is surmounted by short, sparse hair, almost milk white. She is somewhat deaf but understands questions asked her, responding with animation. She walks with one crutch, being lame in the right leg. On events of the long ago her mind is quite clear. Recalling the Confederate "sojers, marchin', marchin'" to the drums, she beat a tempo on the floor with her crutch. As she described how the hands of slaves were tied before they were whipped for infractions she crossed her wrists.

Owen Gudger, Asheville postmaster (1913-21), member of the Buncombe County Historical Association, now engaged in the real estate business, says he has been acquainted with Aunt Sarah all his life; that he has, on several occasions, talked to her about her age and early associations, and that her responses concerning members of the Gudger and Hemphill families coincide with known facts of the two families.

Interviewed by a member of the Federal Writers' Project, Aunt Sarah seemed eager to talk, and needed but little prompting.

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Part 2: In Somebody Else's Words

When Sarah Gudger was interviewed for the *Born in Slavery: Slave Narratives from the Federal Writers' Project, 1936-1938*, her interviewer included a personal description of Sarah. Read the interviewer's description found on the previous page.

How did the interviewer describe Sarah Gudger's physical appearance and personality?

Does the interviewer's description match yours?

How are your descriptions similar or different?

Think about what you learned from the listening to the interviewer's description. Why do you think that both a photo and a written description were included with Sarah Gudger's narrative?

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Part 3: In Her Own Words

Below is an excerpt from the interview with Sarah Gudger:

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I 'membahs de time when mah mammy wah alive, I wah a small chile, afoah dey tuk huh t' Rims Crick. All us chilluns wah playin' in de ya'd one night. Jes' arunnin' an' aplayin' lak chillun will. All a sudden mammy cum to de do' all a'sited. "Cum in heah dis minnit," she say. "Jes' look up at what is ahappenin'", and bless yo' life, honey, de sta's wah fallin' jes' lak rain.* Mammy wah tebble skeered, but we

*(One of the most spectacular meteoric showers on record, visible all over North America, occurred in 1833.)

chillun wa'nt afeard, no, we wa'nt afeard. But mammy she say evah time a sta' fall, somebuddy gonna die. Look lak lotta folks gonna die f'om de looks ob dem sta's. Ebathin' wah jes' as bright as day. Yo' cudda pick a pin up. Yo' know de sta's don' shine as bright as dey did back den. I wondah wy dey don'. Dey jes' don' shine as bright. Wa'nt long afoah dey took mah mammy away, and I wah lef' alone.

On de plantation wah an ole woman whut de boss bought f'om a drovah up in Virginny. De boss he bought huh f'om one ob de speculators. She laff an' tell us: "Some ob dese days yo'all gwine be free, jes' lak de white folks," but we all laff at huh. No, we jes' slaves, we allus hafta wok and nevah be free. Den when freedom cum, she say: "I tole yo'all, now yo' got no larnin', yo' got no nothin', got no home; whut yo' gwine do? Didn' I tell yo'?"

I wah gittin along smartly in yeahs when de wah cum. Ah 'membah jes' lak yestiddy jes' afoah de wah. Marse William wah atalkin'

(An excerpt from the interview with Sarah Gudger, continued)

t' hes brothah. I wah standin' off a piece. Marse's brothah, he say: "William, how ole Aunt Sarah now?" Marse William look at me an' he say: "She gittin' nigh onta fifty." Dat wah jes' a lil while afoah de wah.

Dat wah awful time. Us da'kies didn' know whut it wah all bout. Ony one of de boys f'om de plantation go. He Alexander, he 'bout twenty-five den. Many de time we git word de Yankees comin'. We take ouh food an' stock an' hide it till we sho' dey's gone. We wan't bothahed much. One day, I nebbah fo'git, we look out an' see sojers ma'chin'; look lak de whole valley full ob dem. I thought: "Poah helpless crittahs, jes' goin' away t' git kilt." De drums wah beatin' an' de fifes aplayin'. Dey wah de foot comp'ny. Oh, glory, it wah a sight. Sometime dey cum home on furlough. Sometime dey git kilt afoah dey gits th'ough. Alexander, he cum home a few time afoah freedom.

When de wah was ovah, Marse William he say: "Did yo'all know yo'all's free, Yo' free now." I chuckle, 'membahin' whut ole woman tell us 'bout freedom, an' no larnin. Lotta men want me t' go t' foreign land, but I tell 'em I go live wif mah pappy, long as he live. I stay wif de white folks 'bout twelve months, den I stay wif mah pappy, long as he live.

I had two brothahs, dey went t' Califonny, nebbah seed 'em no mo', no' mah sistah, nuther. I cain't 'membah sech a lot 'bout it all. I jes' knows I'se bo'n and bred ^{here} in dese pa'ts, nebbah been outten it. I'se well; nebbah take no doctah med'cine. Jes' ben sick once; dat aftah freedom.

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Part 3: In Her Own Words

1. This interview was documented in writing on May 5, 1937, not recorded in an audio file. The interviewer was able to use correct grammar and spelling, but chose to write Sarah Gudger's words as you saw in the document. Why do you think that the interviewer chose to write Sarah Gudger's words as she did?

2. Who was Sarah Gudger?

3. In her interview, Sarah describes watching stars falling from the sky with her mother when she was a child. Why do you think she shared this story?

4. If Sarah Gudger was "nigh onta fifty" near the start of the Civil War in 1861, how old was she in 1937 when this interview was recorded?

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5. Sarah describes what they used to do when the Yankees were coming near their home. What did she protect?

6. What happened to Sarah's father, brother, and sisters after the war?

7. Slavery was abolished in 1865. Why do you think that the United States Government created this program to interview and photograph ex-slaves in the 1930's, 70 years later?

8. What did you think was the most interesting part of Sarah Gudger's interview? Why?
