



Using the *TimeLinks* Image Archive Image Interpretation Worksheet

Being an historian is kind of like being a detective. An historian's job is to put together bits and pieces from the past to try and learn more about how people lived.

Most historical information comes from what historians call "documents." A document is any piece of information that was created in the past and that has been preserved for us to look at. A document can take many forms. It can be a letter or diary, a legal contract, a newspaper or a brochure, a sales receipt, or a legal contract. Documents don't necessarily have to have words to tell a story. One of the most interesting types of documents to look at is old photographs.

By looking at old photographs, we can learn more about how people lived, what they wore and what kinds of activities they took part in. We can also find out more about the world that they lived in. We can see what kind of houses they lived in and what kinds of buildings that they worked in. We can learn about their technology and how they transported themselves and their goods.

In this exercise, you will become an historian-detective. Your job is to try and discover more about life in Manitoba in the first part of this century by piecing together the clues in an old photograph.

Exercise:

Take a few minutes to browse the image index, and select a picture that interests you. Don't take too much time making your choice, you will have plenty of opportunities to browse later-on. Next, work your way through some of the questions below. Be prepared to comment on your image, why you selected it, and what it tells us about Manitoba History.

What is the Title of the Photograph that you chose?

1. Who or what is the subject of the photograph?

2. Look closely at the photograph. If it is of people, what are they wearing? Do you think that they posed for the camera, or do you think that the photographer caught them acting normally?

3. What kind of things appear in the image? Are they similar or different from things that we use today?

4. What is in the background of the picture? Is the picture taken inside or outside? Does knowing where the picture was taken help you to understand the picture?

5. Most pictures are taken to try and deliver a message or to capture a special memory. Why do you think that this photo was taken? What is the photographer or the subject trying to show you or tell you?

6. Sometimes, we can learn things about the past from looking at a photo that the photographer and the subject never really thought of as important. We can learn how people lived, how they dressed, the kinds of activities that they engaged in, and the kind of things that they used in their daily lives. Is there anything in this picture that helps you to understand how the people in the photograph live? Explain your answer.

7. Overall, what can we learn about the past from looking at this picture?
