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## Connecting with Bullard's World: William S. Bullard Photographic Collection

**Essential Question:** How did photographers like William S. Bullard contribute to growth and change within the African American and Native American communities in the USA in the early 1900s?

**Materials:**

Available online with the materials for this program are profiles for selected works from the Bullard collection. He left a detailed ledger so the Worcester Art Museum was able to track down the families and lineages of those in the photographs.

Each student group will need a profile to discuss the implications of Bullard's works. It may be worthwhile to print multiple bios for the group so that they do not have to share one profile. Additionally they will need printed copies of the images related to their profile.

**Time:** On its own, this program should take approximately 30 minutes. This can be adjusted by adding or removing images as discussion points.

If time permits, it is recommended that this program, William S. Bullard Photographic Collection Pt.2, is combined with the previous program, William S. Bullard Photographic Collection Pt.1. Part one would be done first, followed by part 2. Together the programs last for approximately 1 hour and allow for a much deeper analysis of the historic era the photographs represent. This is a variant on the original gallery program, which would have included both activities.

**Introduction:** If this is being done as the second half of the hour long program, skip the following introductions and move straight into the activity.

This introduction helps students to situate the history of Bullard within the history of the community and art history.

1. *Who was William S. Bullard?* (5 minutes)

a. William S. Bullard was an itinerant photographer who lived in Worcester during the early 1900s. He photographed local community members including the African-Americans and Nipmuc peoples, the Native American tribe in the area.

i. What does itinerant mean? He traveled around and took photographs in many different, unplanned locations, like people's homes or yards.

ii. He kept a careful ledger of everyone he photographed. An image of the ledger is available online in the photographic archive.

b. Many of the African Americans in the photographs moved north after reconstruction.

i. Why do you think they moved? What were advantages to life in the North? Disadvantages?

c. What could we learn from his photographs?

i. What life was like, average people, clothes, jobs etc.

2. *Bullard used dry-glass plate photography. Why is that important?*

a. Dry-glass plate negatives were a new invention in photography which made it possible to photograph everyday people, making photography accessible to all.

b. Before this, you used wet glass plate photography, which meant you needed to develop the film immediately after the photograph was taken. Dry glass plate negatives could be developed later, which meant more people could take photographs outside of a studio. It became much cheaper and easier to take photographs and so they became a primary method of self-representation.

**Main Activity:***Meeting Bullard's Subjects (Group Work)*

Divide the students into groups. There will be six profiles available, so the groups should ideally be 3-5 students.

This can either be done in a class setting with print outs or in a computer lab. If the class is using a projector, then select 2-3 profiles to discuss and project the information for the entire class to see and use.

Distribute the profiles to the groups, making sure each group has a different person. Along with the profiles the students should receive a printed version of the photograph of the person in the profile.

Prompt the students to analyze why these photographs were taken.

- What is the artist trying to say?
- What is the family representing through this photo?
- What can we learn about them or their lives from this image?

Students should become familiar with the information in the profile and use this, along with their background knowledge, and what they can observe from the photograph in order to prepare a short presentation as a group for their assigned image/s.

*Group Presentations*

Each group gets a chance to present their information to the group at large. Encourage them to start by 'introducing' the class to the person in their photographs. Have the group describe their person given the information from their profiles in conjunction with prior knowledge and the guiding questions from earlier.

Lastly the groups should discuss why the photograph is significant or what about the photograph speaks to self-representation as discussed earlier in the class.

Where/when possible the teacher should encourage groups to reference and discuss other photographs brought up in the class making connections between figures and groups.

*Wrap Up*

Discuss the differences in the community in Worcester at the time and the insight we can gain from the photographs into the lives of the people in them. Remind the class about the power of self-representation.

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**Main Goals:** By the end of the program the students should be able to explain the following idea:

The figures represented in Bullard's photographs paint a diverse picture of Worcester and allow us to see them as they wanted to be perceived and presented.

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**State Standards:** Massachusetts State Standards: USI.41.C, USI.41.E, USI.41.G; ELA Speaking and Listening 1; History Concepts and Skills Grades (8-12) 7, 8; MA.Arts.5.11, MA.Arts.5.12, MA.Arts.9.6