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# A Long Arc

Photography & the American South since 1845

Oct 5, 2024–Jan 26, 2025

**VMFA**

VIRGINIA MUSEUM OF FINE ARTS

*A Long Arc* presents the diversity, beauty, and complexity of photography made in the American South since the 1840s. It examines how Southern photography has articulated the distinct and evolving character of the South's people, landscape, and culture and reckoned with its complex history. It shows the role played by Southern photography at key crisis points in the country's history, including the Civil War, the Great Depression, and the civil rights movement. And it explores the ways that photographers working in the region have both sustained and challenged its prevailing mythologies.

As both region and concept, the South has long held a central place within American culture. Profoundly influential American musical and literary movements emerged here, and many great political and social leaders hail from the region, yet histories of violence, disenfranchisement, and struggle dating back centuries continue to reverberate and shape it. For these reasons, the South is perhaps the most mythologized, romanticized, and stereotyped place in America.

The many contradictions inherent in this country's history, ideals, and myths are arguably closer to the surface in the South's unruly landscape and diverse faces than elsewhere in the United States. This makes it ideal terrain for photographers to critically engage with and examine American identity. Through the pictures in

this exhibition, the South—so often dismissed as backward or marginalized as a place of alluring eccentricity—emerges as the fulcrum of both American photography and American history.

Photography arrived in the American South very soon after its introduction in Europe in 1839. By the early 1840s, numerous portrait studios popped up throughout the region, affording people a way to preserve their likenesses. Portrait photography in the antebellum South was most distinctive for how it projected and channeled racial and social identity at a moment of intense debate over slavery. It was not unusual for Southern slaveholders to commission photographs of their children with enslaved members of their households, a means of reinforcing social hierarchies. Yet, significantly, the medium also offered free Black Americans a means to declare their presence and self-possession in a society that did not regard them as citizens.

With the outbreak of the Civil War in 1861, photography emerged as a crucial medium through which Americans witnessed and confronted the horrors of modern warfare and understood the conflict's significance to themselves and to their country. The mass mobilization of soldiers coincided with the development of cheaper and faster ways of making pictures, fueling a vibrant market for Civil War portraits. These precious keepsakes allowed sitters to display their political allegiances and sustain connections between the battlefield and the home front.

While portraiture was the most common form of photography at this time, the demand for photographs of battlefields, military encampments, and sites of conflict grew throughout the course of the war. These pictures circulated widely as both photographs and as newspaper illustrations made from photographs. Images of carnage, ruin, and especially the destruction of Southern cities helped Americans grasp the enormity of loss. They also introduced an enduring photographic trope: the Southern landscape as the repository of memory, history, and trauma.

**2nd Regiment, United States Colored Light Artillery,  
Battery A, ca. 1864**

TOP ROW, LEFT TO RIGHT:

**Attention  
Ready**

BOTTOM ROW, LEFT TO RIGHT:

**Ram  
Rest**

Albumen silver prints



Organized in Nashville in 1864 and dispatched until 1866, Battery A of the 2nd regiment of the US Colored Light Artillery accompanied the infantry and cavalry troops into battle with horse-drawn cannons. More than twenty-five thousand Black artillerymen, many of whom were freedmen from Confederate states, served in the Union Army. Artillerymen, including the cannoners shown here, were required to handle hundreds of pounds of supplies, such as the gun, its limber, a traveling forge, and caissons to store the ammunition. Though many batteries were relegated to everyday garrison duty, Battery A fought in the Battle of Nashville in December 1864, where these photographs chronicling the loading and firing of the gun may have been taken.

High Museum of Art, Atlanta, purchase with funds from the Lucinda Weil Bunnell Fund and the Donald and Marilyn Keough Family, 2021.274-277



**Jay Dearborn Edwards**

American, 1831–1900

**View of the New Orleans Cotton Wharves, 1858–61**

Coated salt print from a glass negative

Of his many views of New Orleans, Jay Dearborn Edwards's photo of a cotton wharf is one of the most powerful images of the South's robust antebellum agricultural economy, especially of cotton production. In 1860, Louisiana produced around one-sixth of all cotton grown in the United States and nearly one-third of all cotton exports. Here, Edwards's photograph documents the advancements of the steam engine and the industrial might of the Mississippi River Valley that generated so much wealth; it also cloaks the darker truth that slavery was the dominant reason for this success.

New Orleans Museum of Art, Museum purchase, Tina Freeman Fund, 2015.53



**Unidentified Photographer**

**Georgian house, with posed African-American family, Norfolk Harbor, Virginia, late 1850s**

Whole-plate ambrotype

Collection of Michael Mattis and Judith Hochberg



**Julian Vannerson**

American, 1827–ca. 1875

**Gilbert Hunt, 1859–60**

Salted paper print

Gilbert Hunt, a skilled blacksmith from Richmond shown here gripping a hammer, understood the power of photography as a tool for self-creation, especially for the formerly enslaved. Hunt, who was lauded for rescuing numerous people from two blazing fires, one in 1811 and one in 1823, ultimately purchased his freedom for \$800 in 1829. Over the next three decades, he led a remarkable life, traveling to Liberia to explore the possibilities for Black resettlement with the American Colonization Society before returning to Richmond and serving as an outspoken pastor and blacksmith. This portrait was commissioned by a benevolent society in Richmond who sold prints to raise funds for the elderly Hunt.

Collection of Michael Mattis and Judith Hochberg

**Andrew Joseph Russell**

American, 1830–1902

**Slave Pen, Alexandria, Virginia, 1863**

Albumen silver print

At the start of the Civil War, Northerners arriving in Alexandria, Virginia, were shocked to find a site known as the “old slave pen.” Designed by slave traders, these locations housed enslaved individuals as they awaited auction in the District of Columbia or before being transported south. Mathew Brady’s 1862 photograph of the notorious slave trading firm Price Birch & Company (see nearby case) testified to the utter inhumanity of slavery. Made in 1863, Russell’s photograph captured the site when it served a different function, as a holding cell for Confederate prisoners of war.

High Museum of Art, Atlanta, purchase with funds from the Lucinda Weil Bunnell Fund and the Donald and Marilyn Keough Family, 2021.266





Unidentified Photographer

**Woman wearing secession sash, ca. 1860**

Ambrotype

High Museum of Art, Atlanta, purchase with funds from the Lucinda Weil Bunnell Fund and the Donald and Marilyn Keough Family, 2021.279





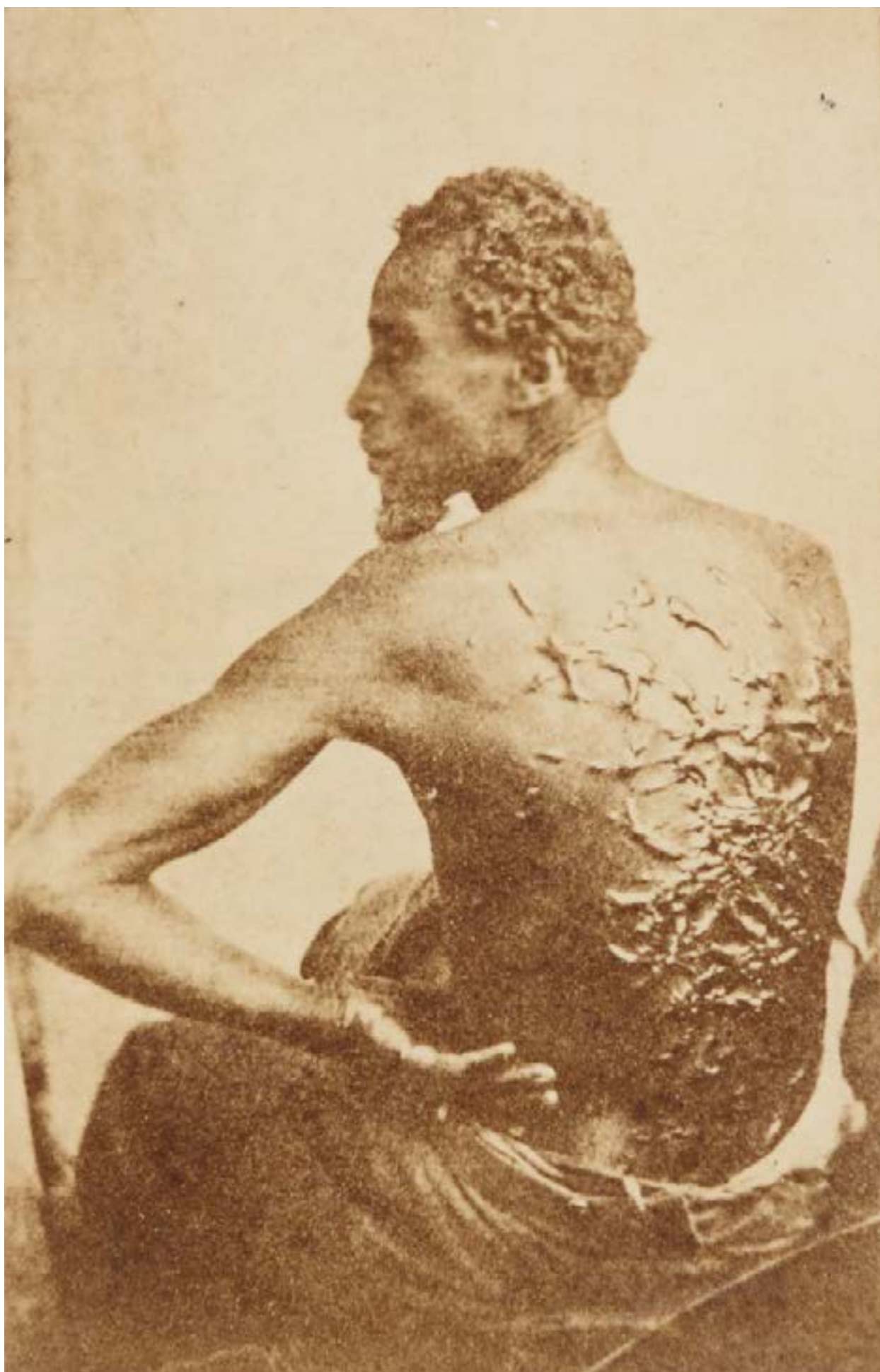
### Unidentified Photographer

**Young biracial artilleryman, 1861–65**

Tintypes

The majority of photographs made during the Civil War were inexpensive, small, portable portraits for soldiers on the field and their families at home. As precious keepsakes, these portraits served as testaments to familial bonds, social relations, economic positions, and political ideologies. In carefully orchestrating their dress, accoutrement, and bearing, sitters signaled their allegiances or staged their transformation from citizen to soldier. The opportunity to reinvent themselves before the camera at times even led to a bit of fakery, as soldiers sometimes gussied themselves up with props and uniforms that did not always fit with their military rank.

High Museum of Art, Atlanta, purchase with funds from the Lucinda Weil Bunnell Fund and the Donald and Marilyn Keough Family, 2021.280



**McPherson & Oliver**  
American, active 1860s

**Peter**, ca. 1863  
Albumen silver print (carte de visite)

During the Civil War, studio photographers produced and disseminated carte de visite portraits, or small format photographs that could be mass produced, of enslaved and emancipated Black individuals to promote abolitionist causes and reinforce support for the Union Army. Some were meant to shock and spur abolitionist outrage, especially among those who may have only heard accounts of cruelty. This portrait was made in a Union camp in the South where a formerly enslaved man named Peter—often misidentified as Gordon—sought refuge after escaping from a plantation. The image of his horrific whipping scars testified to the violence of slavery and contradicted the narrative that slavery was an economic concern rather than a racist institution. After *Harper's Weekly* reproduced the image, photography studios throughout the North duplicated and sold prints to raise funds for abolitionist causes.

High Museum of Art, Atlanta, purchase with funds from the Lucinda Weil Bunnell Fund and the Donald and Marilyn Keough Family, 2021.248



**United States Colored Troops picket, near Dutch Gap, Virginia, 1864**

Albumen silver print (stereocard)

High Museum of Art, Atlanta, purchase with funds from the Lucinda Weil Bunnell Fund and the Donald and Marilyn Keough Family, 2021.278



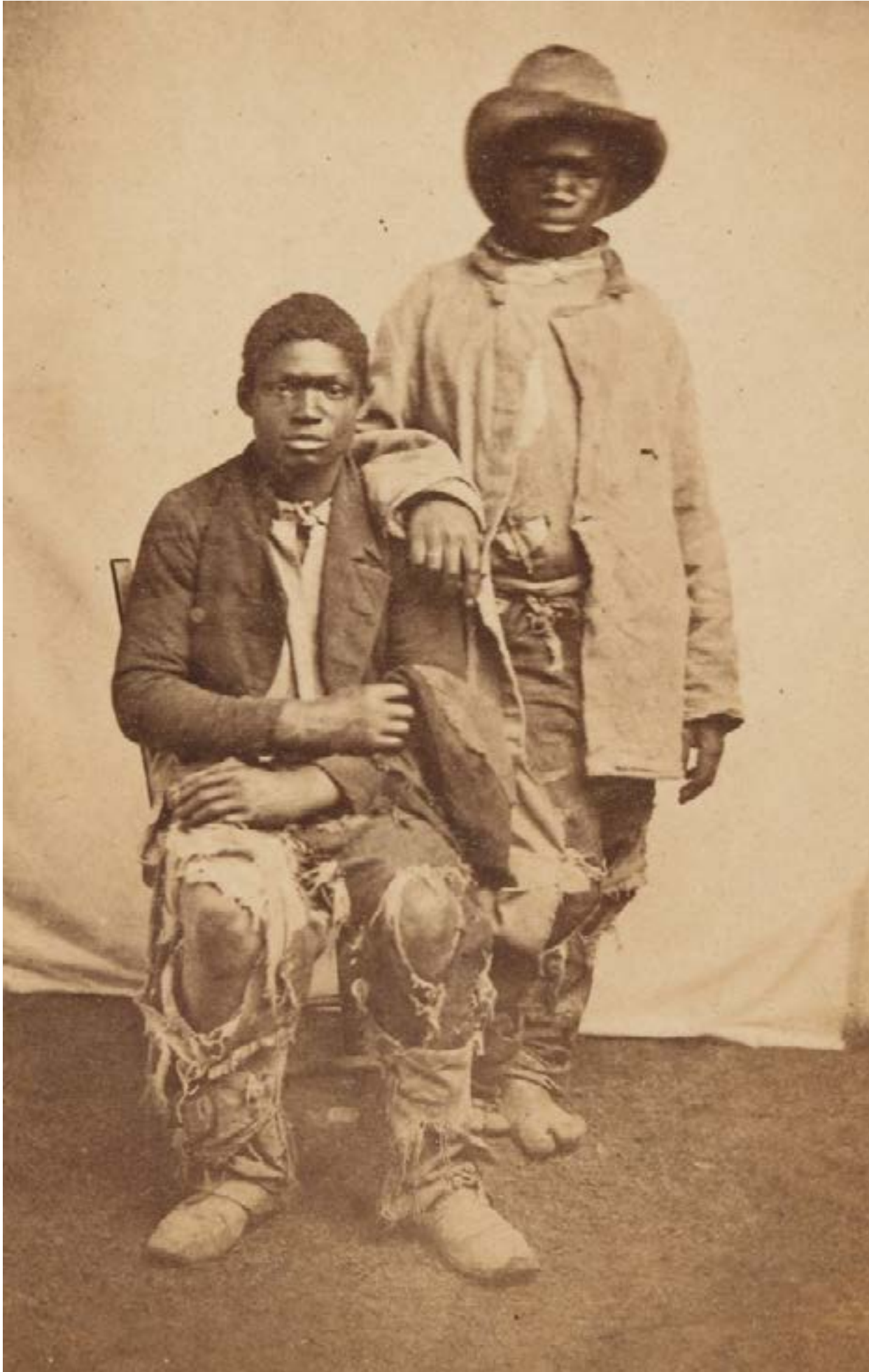
**Mathew B. Brady Studio**

American, active 1844–1873

**Slave Pens, Alexandria, VA, 1862**

Albumen silver print (carte de visite)

High Museum of Art, Atlanta, purchase with funds from the Lucinda Weil Bunnell Fund and the Donald and Marilyn Keough Family, 2021.270

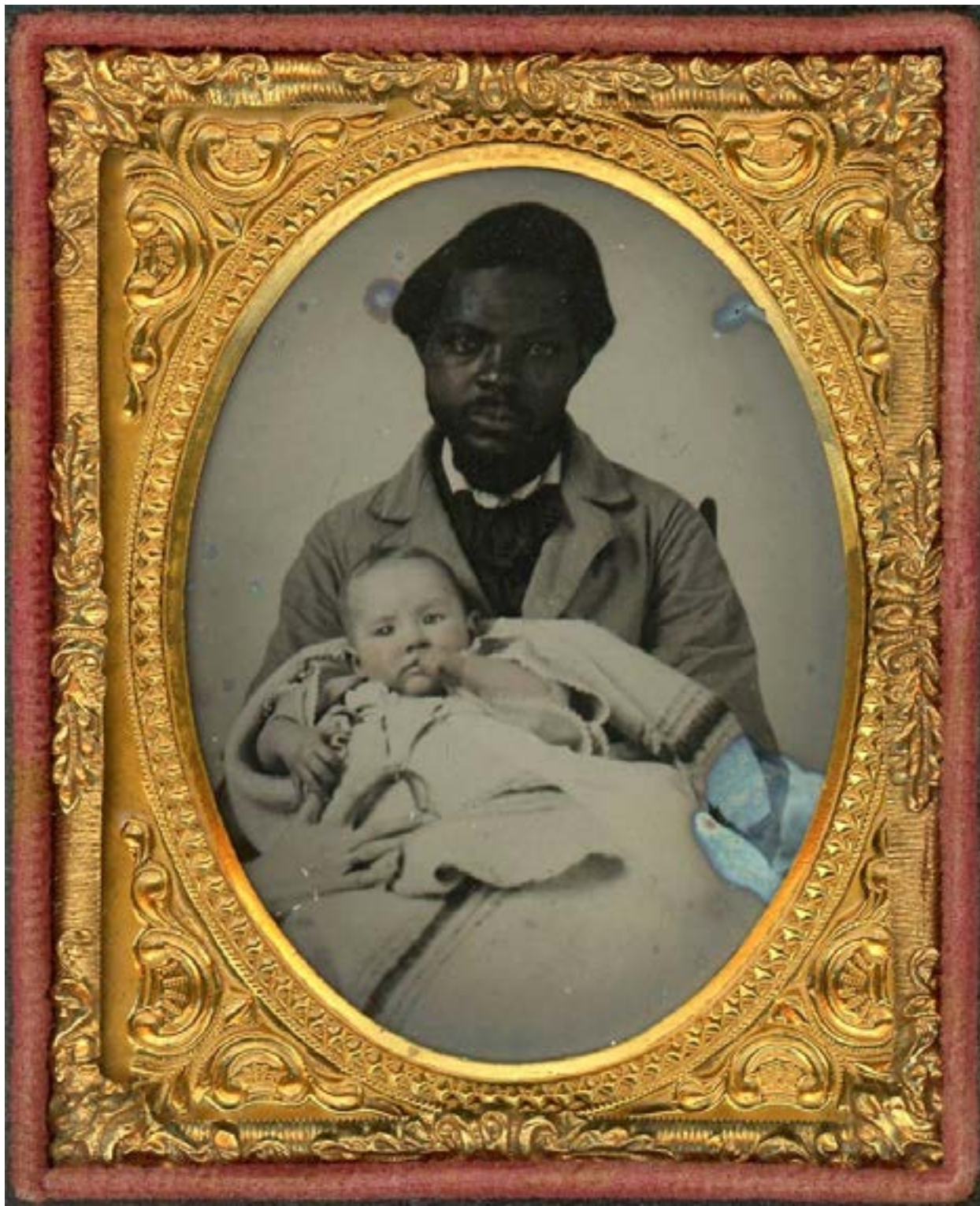


**McPherson & Oliver**  
American, active 1860s

**Two African American Young Men in Tattered  
Clothing, ca. 1861–65**

Albumen silver print (carte de visite)

High Museum of Art, Atlanta, purchase with funds from the  
Lucinda Weil Bunnell Fund and the Donald and Marilyn Keough  
Family, 2021.281



**Unidentified Photographer**

**Man and Child**, ca. 1860

Ambrotype

Addison Gallery of American Art, Phillips Academy, Andover,  
Massachusetts, Museum purchase, 2022.51

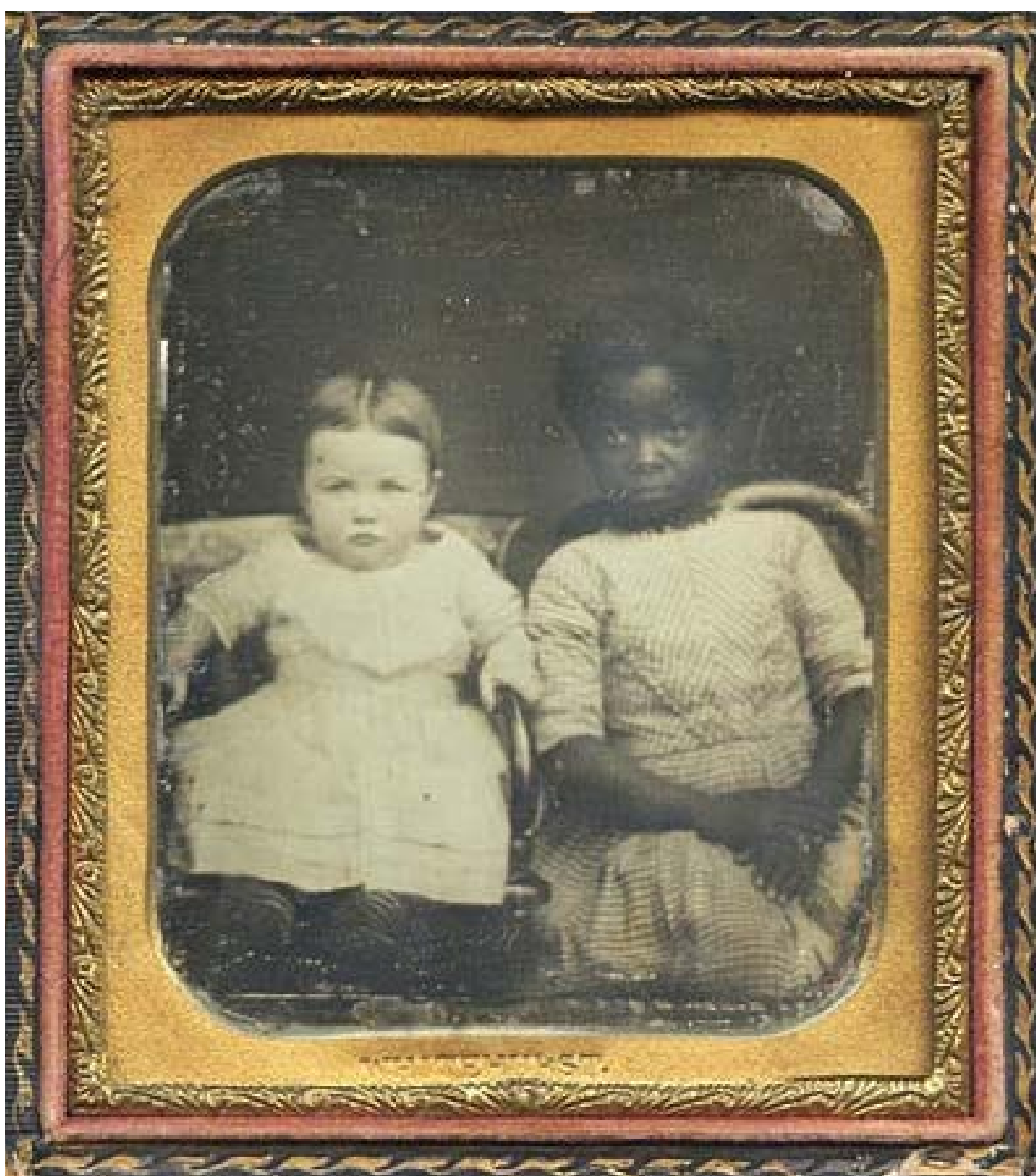


Unidentified Photographer

**Portrait of a Woman and Baby**, ca. 1850

Daguerreotype

High Museum of Art, Atlanta, purchase, 1982.118



**Whitehurst Studios**

American, active 1849–1860

**Mary Zulette Waterhouse, Age About Two, with Unidentified Enslaved Child, Richmond, Virginia, 1850s**

Hand-tinted sixth plate daguerreotype

This studio portrait depicts two-year-old Mary Zulette Waterhouse with an unidentified Black companion, a girl just a few years older than Waterhouse. Southern slaveholders often commissioned photographs of their children with enslaved members of their households. It was also common to assign enslaved children to serve as both playmates and servants to white children. These “nanny” portraits, which frequently portrayed Black subjects as at once intimate with and subservient to their white charges, simultaneously affirmed a white supremacist social order and projected myths of “benevolent” bondage at a time when slave owners were under increasing pressure to abolish slavery.

Addison Gallery of American Art, Phillips Academy, Andover, Massachusetts, Museum purchase, 2012.<sup>21</sup>



**William Abott Pratt**

American, born England, 1818, active 1844–1856

**Freemen of Color, Richmond, Virginia, ca. 1850**

Hand-colored quarter plate daguerreotype

In the 1860s, Frederick Douglass wrote of photography, “Men of all conditions and classes can now see themselves as others see them, and as they will be seen by those [who] shall come after them. What was once the special and exclusive luxury of the rich and great is now the privilege of all.” William Abott Pratt’s daguerreotype of two elegant, sophisticated freemen exemplifies Douglass’s conviction that photography could offer its sitters the opportunity to record and project identity and challenge stereotypes.

Chrysler Museum of Art, Norfolk, Virginia, purchase with funds given by Christina and Dr. George M. Kemp, and in memory of Alice R. and Sol B. Frank, 2001.23





**Unidentified Photographer**

**Zachariah Weil, Monroe, Louisiana, 1853**

Half-plate daguerreotype

Collection of Michael Mattis and Judith Hochberg



**Whitehurst Studios**

American, active 1849–1860

**Portrait of Philip Dougherty dressed as a Mountain Man, ca. 1847**

Hand-colored quarter-plate daguerreotype

Richmond-based Philip Dougherty, here costumed as a “mountain man,” practiced many peculiar hobbies outside of his position as a bookstore clerk, including raising, exhibiting, and selling rare fowl. In this portrait, he wears a fanciful mixture of Native American and Western garb, some of which may have been gifted by a Comanche friend. To reflect his enthusiasm for fowl, a prop falcon sits to the right of his shoulder. The local eccentric commissioned at least one other portrait of himself in this outfit, clearly understanding that photography was a marvelous means of self-presentation.

Virginia Museum of Fine Arts, Floyd D. and Anne C. Gottwald Fund, 2016.133



Attributed to **James Presley Ball**  
American, 1825–1904

**Greenbrier Resort in White Sulphur Springs, VA (now West Virginia), ca. 1845**

Quarter plate daguerreotype

James Presley Ball was born free in Frederick County, Virginia, and learned the daguerreotype process from John P. Bailey, a fellow Black photographer based in White Sulphur Springs. From a hilltop viewpoint, Ball captured the historic Greenbrier, one of only two photographs taken of the resort during the antebellum period. The irony of Ball as a Black abolitionist photographing a group of upper-class white vacationers at the height of slavery would not have been lost on him.

Chrysler Museum of Art, Norfolk, Virginia; Museum purchase, in memory of Alice R. and Sol B. Frank, 2019.16



**William Abott Pratt**

American, born England, 1818, active 1844–1856

**View of Main Street, Richmond, Virginia, 1847–51**

Half-plate daguerreotype

One of a handful of known daguerreotypes of the city of Richmond, this view of Main Street looking east toward Church Hill was probably taken from the window of William Pratt's first "Virginia Daguerreian Gallery," in the center of the city's printing and publishing industry. The distinctive roof of the Richmond Masonic lodge is visible in the distance, as is the three-story City Hotel just beyond the trees to the east. The hotel served as one of the major auction houses for enslaved individuals, as did the firm Pulliam & Davis across the street.

Virginia Museum of Fine Arts, Floyd D. and Anne C. Gottwald Fund, 2023.53



**Henry P. Moore**

American, 1835–1911

**“G’wine to de Field,” Hopkinson’s Plantation, Edisto Island, S.C., 1862**

Albumen silver print

After the Union victory at nearby Port Royal in 1861, James Hopkinson abandoned his plantation on Edisto Island, leaving the people he had enslaved to assume stewardship of the land. These families, most of whom were Gullah Geechee, established a collective social order and ran the plantation on which they had long labored for the benefit of others. In 1862, Henry P. Moore captured their self-sufficiency and unity to powerfully express the aspirations and determination of the formerly enslaved.

High Museum of Art, Atlanta, purchase with funds from the Lucinda Weil Bannen Fund and the Donald and Marilyn Keough Family, 2021.268



**Charles Paxson**

American, active 1860s, died 1880

**Rosa, Charley, Rebecca. Slave children from New Orleans, 1864**

Albumen silver print (carte de visite)

Charles Paxson's series depicting emancipated children from New Orleans was designed to evoke compassion in viewers—particularly white audiences in the North who would have encountered these images in *Harper's Weekly*—and garner support for the war. The photographs were also sold to support abolitionist efforts and provide funds to newly emancipated citizens. Yet in featuring primarily light-skinned children (thought more likely to elicit white sympathy), these photographs subtly reinforced racial hierarchies based on skin color.

Addison Gallery of American Art, Phillips Academy, Andover, Massachusetts, Museum purchase, 2006.29



**Timothy H. O'Sullivan**  
American, 1840–1882

**Fort Fisher, North Carolina, 1865**

Albumen silver print

High Museum of Art, Atlanta, purchase with funds from the  
Lucinda Weil Bunnell Fund and the Donald and Marilyn Keough  
Family, 2021.273



**John Reekie**

American, born Scotland, 1832–1885

**A Burial Party, Cold Harbor, Virginia, 1865**

Albumen silver print

High Museum of Art, Atlanta, purchase with funds from the  
Lucinda Weil Bunnell Fund and the Donald and Marilyn Keough  
Family, 2021.267



**Timothy H. O'Sullivan**  
American, 1840–1882

**Antietam Dead, 1862**  
Albumen silver print

High Museum of Art, Atlanta, purchase, 1978.88



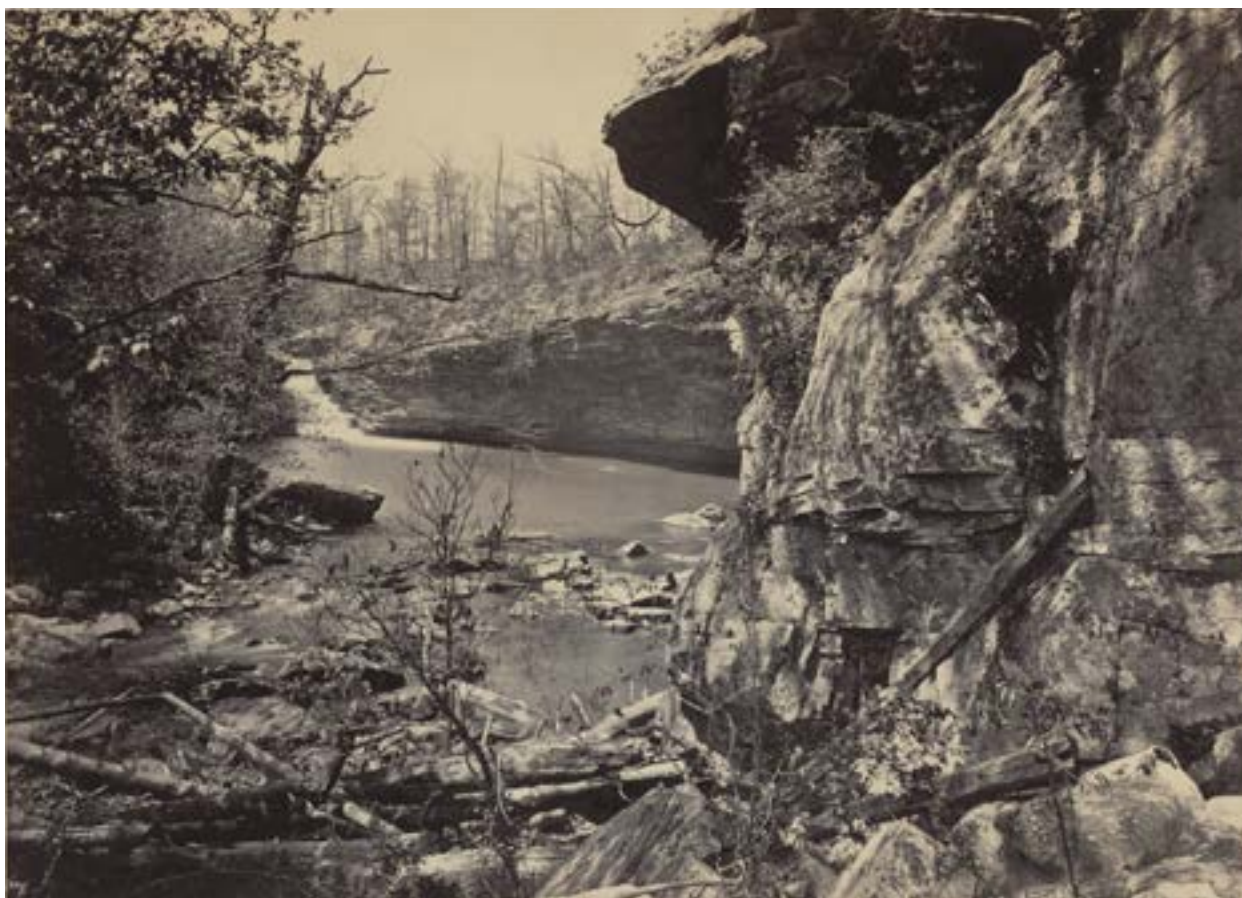
**A.J. Riddle**  
American, 1825–1893

**Union Prisoners of War at Camp Sumter,  
Andersonville Prison, Georgia. View from the main  
gate of the stockade, August 17, 1864**

Albumen silver print

High Museum of Art, Atlanta, purchase with funds from the  
Lucinda Weil Bunnan Fund and the Donald and Marilyn Keough  
Family, 2021.282



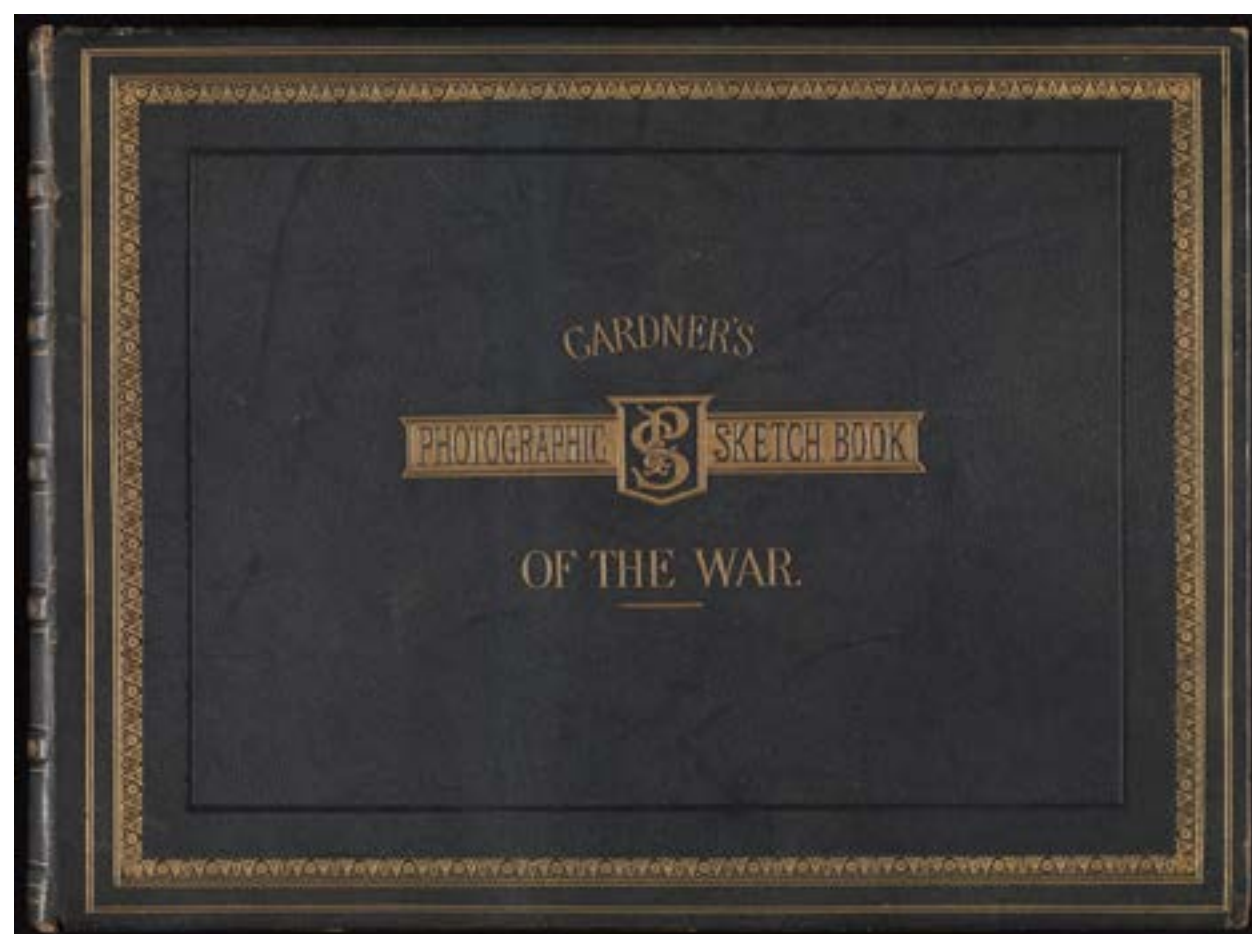


**George N. Barnard**  
American, 1819–1902

**Lu-La Lake, Lookout Mountain, 1864–65**  
Albumen silver print

This peaceful view of craggy rocks surrounding a limpid lake seems worlds away from the tumult of the war. In fact, Lookout Mountain, in northwest Georgia, was the site of a violent battle on November 24, 1863, which resulted in a Union victory.

Virginia Museum of Fine Arts, Adolph D. and Wilkins C. Williams Fund, 75.29.20



**Alexander Gardner**

American, born Scotland, 1821–1882

**Gardner's Photographic Sketch Book of the War,  
1862–67**

Bound volume of albumen silver prints

Between 1861 and 1865, hundreds of ambitious photographers traveled to Virginia and other states to record the events of the Civil War. While most catered to the soldiers' demand for portraits that could be sent home, the photographers who gained access to the battlefields were tied directly to a federal military unit and able to capture the shocking, violent struggle. Alexander Gardner employed several photographers who produced some three thousand images of military campaigns in Virginia, Maryland, and Pennsylvania. The album he produced of their work is considered one of the earliest examples of war photography, revealing the mass carnage and casualties of the war and reinforcing a pro-Union message at the start of Reconstruction.

Addison Gallery of American Art, Phillips Academy, Andover, Massachusetts, Museum purchase, Collection Care and Enhancement Fund, 1989.84.1–50 & 1989.84.51–100



**George N. Barnard**  
American, 1819–1902

**Destruction of Hood's Ordinance Train, 1864**

Albumen silver print

High Museum of Art, Atlanta, purchase, 1985.226.44

**George N. Barnard**  
American, 1819–1902

**Ruins in Charleston, S.C., 1865–66**

Albumen silver print

Before the war, landscape photography in the South was rare and usually indicated the social or economic function of a place. But as the war spread throughout the South, photographers not only documented the military encampments on the battlefields but often rendered the landscape itself as an object of contemplation, reverie, and mourning. In this work, Barnard carefully seated two figures amid the rubble, their gazes casting out onto the ruined city. Posed as observers taking in the scope and spectacle of tragedy, they stand in for the viewers who experienced the war from afar. Photographs like these also served rhetorical purposes by making the immense destruction seem like divine retribution. As Sherman himself wrote, "I doubt any city was ever more terribly punished than Charleston, but as her people had for years been agitating for war and discord, and had finally inaugurated the Civil War, the judgment of the world will be that Charleston deserved the fate that befell her."

High Museum of Art, Atlanta, purchase, 1985.226.60



**George N. Barnard**

American, 1819–1902

**Rebel Works in Front of Atlanta, Ga., No. 1, 1864**

Albumen silver print

George Barnard was one of several photographers who worked for Civil War photographer Mathew Brady before setting out on his own in 1863. Barnard's best-known works are striking images of General Sherman's March to the Sea as the Union Army burned nearly everything in its path between Atlanta and Savannah. He published sixty-one albumen plates from this project in 1866 as an album titled *Photographic Views of Sherman's Campaign*. More than a documentarian, Barnard wanted his landscapes made in the wake of destruction to convey the emotional complexity that followed the end of the war. He carefully retouched his negatives and often combined two negatives—one exposed for the ground and the other for the sky—to create moody, atmospheric images.

High Museum of Art, Atlanta, gift of Mrs. Everett N. McDonnell, 75.23





**Isaac H. Bonsall**

American, 1833–1909

**Bonsil's Photo Gallery, Chattanooga, TN, 1865**

Albumen silver print

Isaac H. Bonsall was one of many enterprising photographers who took advantage of the public's growing demand for portraits at the onset of the Civil War. In 1862, the *New York Tribune* published an observer's account of the onslaught of traveling portrait studios among the army: "A camp is hardly pitched before one of the omnipresent artists in collodion and amber [. . .] pitches his canvas gallery and unpacks his chemicals."

High Museum of Art, Atlanta, purchase with funds from the Lucinda Weil Bunnell Fund and the Donald and Marilyn Keough Family, 2021.269

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Between 1865 and 1930, the South experienced the abandonment of the promises of Reconstruction and the violent and legal enforcement of racial segregation. Yet this period also witnessed rebuilding of cities and industries, the founding of new institutions (including a significant number of Black schools), continued cultivation of the land, and the development of creative cultures that spread throughout the nation.

Photography bore witness to these developments. Some photographers used the camera to sell an idyllic vision of the South that was at odds with the harsh reality, while others documented injustice and poverty with the goal of calling broader attention to the region's struggles.

During this period, photography also became an increasingly familiar part of everyday life, accelerated by the rise of "penny picture" photography studios, cheap snapshot cameras, and the proliferation of inexpensive stereographs (a form of 3D photography) that brought the wonders of the world—and the South—into nearly every household. The greater accessibility of photography also opened the profession to a growing number of women and Black makers. Community portraiture in particular flourished, giving ordinary people the opportunity to document their lives and

envision themselves as modern citizens. Across the South, studio photographers produced thousands of pictures—of public events, private celebrations, city streets, architectural views, and landscapes—that reveal the texture of everyday life and observe the ways people in the South lived, both together and apart from each other.

**John Horgan Jr.**

American, 1859–1926

**James Richardson's Plantation, Jackson, Mississippi,  
1892**

Albumen silver print

As Alabama's "first commercial and industrial specialist," in the 1890s John Horgan Jr. photographed the vast cotton plantations owned by industrial magnate Edmund Richardson, who also founded the lucrative and exploitative practice of convict labor (leasing prisoners from the state for forced, unpaid labor in exchange for supplying housing). Photographing at a plantation owned by Richardson's son James, Horgan shows Black laborers, including young children, engaged in the backbreaking toil of harvesting and sorting cotton. Though made almost thirty years after the abolition of slavery, Horgan's views of antebellum-style labor were a form of propaganda that minimized the conditions of extreme poverty and inequality that shaped African American life in the South.

High Museum of Art, Atlanta, purchase, 1986.77





**William Henry Jackson**  
American, 1843–1942

**Florida. Tomoka River. The King's Ferry, 1898**  
Chromolithograph

Virginia Museum of Fine Arts, Gift of an Anonymous Donor,  
2014.159





**Unidentified Photographer**

**Liberty Place Monument, New Orleans, LA, 1898**

Cyanotype

This cyanotype is among the earliest known photographs of New Orleans's Liberty Place Monument. Built in 1891, the thirty-five-foot-tall obelisk was funded by white supremacist groups to commemorate an armed conflict that historians believe led to the end of Reconstruction in Louisiana. Following the election of 1872, militant conservatives occupied state buildings in September 1874 to overthrow the elected governor. Federal troops defeated them soon after in what became known as the Battle of Liberty Place. The incident sparked increased support for white supremacists, who soon took control of the state government and enacted oppressive and racist policies. After generations of protest against the racist symbolism of the monument, it was removed from public view in 2017 and placed in storage.

High Museum of Art, Atlanta, purchase with funds from Alan and Jewett Rothschild, Renee and Alan Levow, the Donald and Marilyn Keough Family Foundation, and Joe Williams and Tede Fleming, 2022.49



**William Henry Jackson**  
American, 1843–1942

**St. Charles Street, New Orleans, 1900**  
Chromolithograph

The painter, explorer, and survey photographer William Henry Jackson is best known for his images of the American West, many of which he produced as part of the United States Geological Survey. In 1897, Jackson became a director of the Detroit Publishing Company in a venture to publish color lithographic prints from black-and-white negatives by himself and other photographers. These views were taken across the United States, including the American South, and were widely disseminated as prints and postcards.

High Museum of Art, Atlanta, gift of Joshua Mann Paillet in memory of Charlotte Mann Paillet (1924–1999), 1999.176



**William Henry Jackson**  
American, 1843–1942

**Cotton on the Levee**, 1900  
Chromolithograph

High Museum of Art, Atlanta, gift of Joshua Mann Paillet in  
memory of Charlotte Mann Paillet (1924–1999), 1999.178



**Unidentified Photographer**

**View of the Potomac at Harper's Ferry, ca. 1880**

Albumen silver print

Addison Gallery of American Art, Phillips Academy, Andover, Massachusetts, Museum purchase, 2019.43



**Lewis Hine**

American, 1874–1940

**A Young Oyster Fisher, Apalachicola, Florida, 1909**

Gelatin silver print

Virginia Museum of Fine Arts, Virginia Museum Art Purchase Fund, 75.64



**Doris Ulmann**  
American, 1884–1934

**Laborers, Kingdom Come School House, ca. 1931**  
Platinum print

High Museum of Art, Atlanta, purchase, 1977.73



**Lewis Hine**

American, 1874–1940

**Cherokee Hosiery Mill, Rome, Georgia, 1913**

**Turner in a Hosiery Mill, Rome, Georgia, 1913**

Gelatin silver prints

As a member of the National Child Labor Committee, Lewis Hine was an activist who deployed photography as an instrument of social reform. At the turn of the 1900s, there were two million children in the labor force, and Hine traveled to mines, textile mills, and factories to document their dismal working conditions. In order to gain access to these sites, he often posed as a salesman, insurance agent, or other profession. His photographs of children working in textile mills in Georgia appeared in pamphlets and posters throughout the country, contributing to a shift in public perception that ultimately led to child labor laws, many of which are still in effect today.

High Museum of Art, Atlanta, gift of Murray H. Bring, 1984.207–208



**Prentice Herman Polk**  
American, 1898–1984

**The Boss**, ca. 1932  
Gelatin silver print

P. H. Polk worked as the official photographer for Alabama's Tuskegee Institute, a private, historically Black land grant university that was founded in 1881. For more than forty-five years, Polk documented the school's activities and its illustrious faculty and staff. He made photographs that challenged stereotypical images of Black life in the South by chronicling scientific, industrial, and academic advancements by Black innovators and capturing portraits of nearby residents. At a time when most popular images portrayed Black Southerners as subservient, Polk showed the aptly named "boss" standing self-assured, in full control of her image and addressing the camera confidently.

Virginia Museum of Fine Arts, Kathleen Boone Samuels Memorial Fund, 2018.311



**Prentice Herman Polk**  
American, 1898–1984

**Mildred Hanson Baker**, 1937  
Gelatin silver print

Virginia Museum of Fine Arts, John C. and Florence S. Goddin, by exchange, 2016.593



**Doris Ulmann**

American, 1884–1934

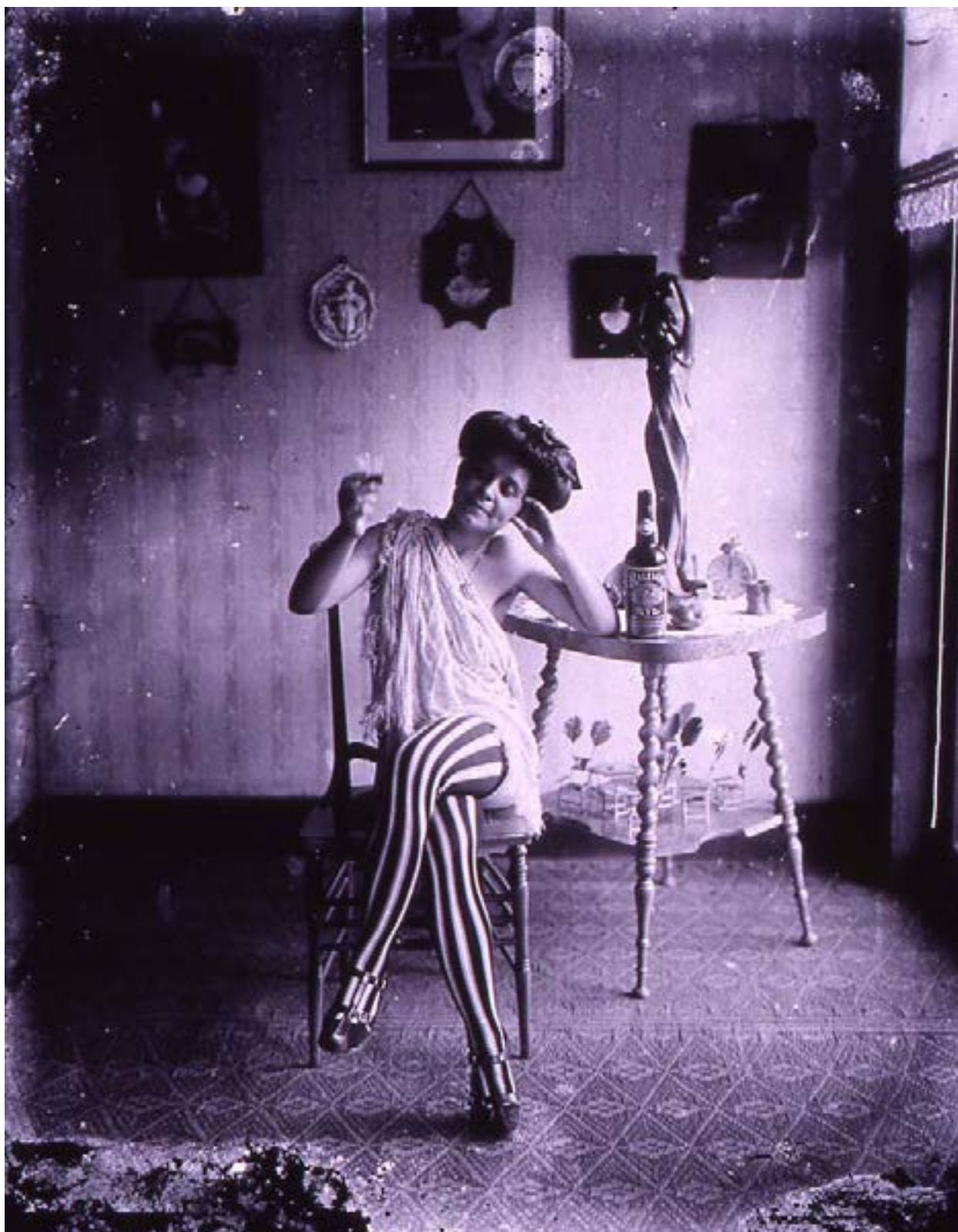
**Portrait of Two African American Women, 1929–30**

Gelatin silver print

Doris Ulmann first encountered photography as a student of Lewis Hine at New York's Ethical Culture School. After nearly a decade of successful portraiture work in New York, Ulmann began to travel extensively throughout Appalachia and the Deep South, interested in documenting and preserving rural traditions that she felt were threatened by urbanization and modernization. She made this tender, if slightly sentimental, photograph of two of the Gullah residents of Julia Peterkin's Lang Syne plantation in South Carolina. Ulmann's photographs were originally produced for Peterkin's 1933 novel *Roll, Jordan, Roll*, which explored the lives of Gullah Geechee people in South Carolina's low country.

Virginia Museum of Fine Arts, Gift of James H. Willcox, Jr.,  
2008.157





**Ernest James Bellocq**

American, 1873–1949

**Storyville Portrait, New Orleans, ca. 1912**

Gelatin silver print, printed 1966

From 1898 to about 1923, New Orleans's legally protected red-light district, known as Storyville, flourished with saloons, jazz clubs, gambling halls, and brothels. The prostitutes of these establishments were the favorite subjects of E. J. Bellocq, a photographer from a wealthy family of creole origins who was better known at the time for his industrial pictures of ships and machinery for local companies. His personal photographs of the women of Storyville do not glamorize or eroticize their subjects but instead show them in their private quarters, often at ease in varying states of dress. Although Bellocq destroyed many of his negatives before his death, in the mid-1960s the photographer Lee Friedlander discovered a cache of Storyville glass plates, made prints from them, and showed them at New York's Museum of Modern Art in 1970, launching the once-obscure Bellocq into newfound, posthumous fame.

Addison Gallery of American Art, Phillips Academy, Andover, Massachusetts, Museum purchase, 1989.45.2

**James Van Der Zee**  
American, 1886–1983

**Whittier Preparatory School, Phoebus, Va., 1907**  
Gelatin silver print

In the years following the Civil War, numerous schools were founded throughout the South to educate the emancipated Black population. Literacy, which was strictly forbidden by plantation overseers, became a beacon of hope and accomplishment for Black Americans. This dedication to education was so strong among freed peoples that the literacy gap between white and Black communities in the American South closed within a generation. The Whittier Preparatory School in Phoebus, Virginia, was distinguished among its peer institutions for its expanded curriculum, including classes up to ninth grade that encompassed art and music education and dedicated science facilities.

High Museum of Art, Atlanta, purchase, 74.143 B



**O. Pierre Havens**

American, 1838–1912

**Picking Cotton, 1870s**

Albumen silver print

Stereographs were among the most popular form of photographs in the second half of the 1800s, enabling folks to imaginatively travel the world. When viewed through the windows of a stereoscope viewer, the two side-by-side photographs of a stereograph merged to create the effect of a single 3D picture. As with larger photography formats, stereographs were widely disseminated and intended to present a particular image of the South. While many showed the increasing industrialization of the region, countless others depicted Black Americans picking cotton and sugarcane or acting out stereotypes derived from minstrel shows, offering a romanticized image of Southern commerce while reasserting a racialized status quo underneath.

Addison Gallery of American Art, Phillips Academy, Andover, Massachusetts, found in collection, 1987.318





Unidentified Photographer

**Harvesting Indian River Pineapples in Florida, ca. 1904**



Unidentified Photographer

**Awaiting Their Turn at the Cotton Gin, ca. 1900**



Unidentified Photographer

**Crude Oil Stills and Can Factory, Port Arthur, Texas, ca. 1915**



Unidentified Photographer

**Spindle Top—An Important Oil Region Near Beaumont, Texas, ca. 1910–15**



Unidentified Photographer

**Sponge Market, Key West Harbor, Florida, ca. 1898**

Unidentified Photographer

**Steel Furnace in Alabama's Great Iron Center, Birmingham, Alabama, 1910–20**



Albumen silver prints (stereocards)

Addison Gallery of American Art, Phillips Academy, Andover, Massachusetts, gifts of Suzanne Hellmuth and Jock Reynolds (PA 1965), 1997.12, .4, .10, .18–20

The impact of the Great Depression on the American South—a region that was already poorer than the rest of the nation—was devastating. In addition to economic havoc, many of the other problems convulsing the country—poverty, racism, and the erosion of rural cultures—appeared in their most concentrated and vivid forms in the South. Photographers responded to these crises with indelible images of hardship and injustice that they hoped would spur reform and modernize the region. In this way, the Great Depression changed the course of American photography by cementing the concept and practice of documentary photography as a tool for social reform.

Most of these documentary photographs were produced under the auspices of the federal government as part of a New Deal effort to provide relief to rural areas. From 1935–1942, some two dozen photographers were hired by the government to capture images of rural poverty in order to raise both public sympathy and congressional support for resettlement and other forms of aid.

Although there was not a single native Southerner among them, together this group of photographers produced around sixteen thousand photographs of the region and profoundly changed how the nation saw the South, and by extension, itself. Widely reproduced in newspaper articles, magazines, exhibitions, and photo books, these documentary projects brought the South into national focus and debate.

Not all of the photographers who flocked to the South during this time sought to document its stricken conditions. The region's seeming resistance to progress also seduced photographers who saw vestiges of agrarian life that nurtured distinctive folkways and vernacular architecture—that is to say, buildings based on regional or local traditions. To them, this South—so different from the rapidly changing urban centers in the Northeast and Midwest—resembled a cultural eddy, an alluring place cut off from the flow of time where one could photograph the beautiful remnants of a largely imagined past.



**Margaret Bourke-White**

American, 1904–1971

**At the Time of the Louisville Flood, Louisville, Kentucky, 1937**

Gelatin silver print

In 1937, the Ohio River flooded Louisville, Kentucky, displacing thousands of residents. LIFE staff photographer Margaret Bourke-White captured this scene of residents lining up outside a flood relief agency. Photographing from a makeshift raft, Bourke-White seized upon the ironic contrast between the billboard proclaiming America as possessing the “World’s Highest Standard of Living” and the reality faced by its poorest and most disenfranchised residents.

Herbert F. Johnson Museum of Art, Cornell University, gift of the artist, Class of 1927, and *LIFE* Magazine, 65.688



**Arthur Rothstein**  
American, 1915–1985

**A Cider and Apple Stand on the Lee Highway,  
Shenandoah National Park, Virginia, 1935**

Gelatin silver print

Virginia Museum of Fine Arts, Aldine S. Hartman Endowment Fund, 2014.3



**Marion Post Wolcott**  
American, 1910–1990

**Black Man Using “Colored” Entrance to Movie  
Theatre, Belzoni, Mississippi, 1939**

Gelatin silver print

High Museum of Art, Atlanta, gift of Ann and Ben Johnson, 2000.271



**Arthur Rothstein**  
American, 1915–1985

**Weighing Cotton, Texas, 1936**

Gelatin silver print

High Museum of Art, Atlanta, gift of Howard Greenberg, 2020.269



**Frances Benjamin Johnston**

American, 1868–1952

**Huggins House, ca. 1930–36**

Gelatin silver print

One of America's first female photojournalists, Frances Benjamin Johnston embarked on a project in the 1930s to document early American architecture in the South. She traveled across nine states and made more than seven thousand photographs of stately manors, ruined plantations, and vernacular structures such as cabins, barns, taverns, and dwellings built by and for enslaved people. Her expansive interests acknowledged how layered histories of the region were embedded in everyday life. Her photographs offer no overt agenda, presenting the South as neither a place needing reform and rebuilding nor as a picturesque, traditional region.

Virginia Museum of Fine Arts, Gift of the Carnegie Corporation,  
36.10.17





**Walker Evans**

American, 1903–1975

**Barber Shop, Atlanta, Georgia, 1936**

Gelatin silver print

High Museum of Art, Atlanta, purchase with funds from the Atlanta Foundation, 75.29



**Walker Evans**

American, 1903–1975

**West Virginia Living Room, 1935**

Gelatin silver print

High Museum of Art, Atlanta, purchase with funds from the Atlanta Foundation, 75.45



**Irving Penn**

American, 1917–2009

**Sign with Child's Head Missing, Louisiana, 1941**

Gelatin silver print

The Irving Penn Foundation, courtesy of Pace Gallery



**John Gutmann**

American, born Germany, 1905–1998

**The Game, 1937**

Gelatin silver print

High Museum of Art, Atlanta, purchase with funds from the Photography Acquisition Fund, 2008.238



**Peter Sekaer**

American, born Denmark, 1901–1950

**Phrenologist's Window, New Orleans, 1936**

Gelatin silver print

High Museum of Art, Atlanta, purchase with funds from Robert Yellowlees, 2008.114



**Dorothea Lange**

American, 1895–1965

**Formerly enslaved woman, Alabama, 1938**

Gelatin silver print

Dorothea Lange's Depression-era portrait of a woman who had been born enslaved offers a poignant and understated meditation on the legacy of slavery. Lange's empathic approach to portraiture was distinct for its ability to express the lasting effects of trauma, poverty, and prejudice in the lives of formerly enslaved people and their descendants. Her photographs demonstrate how the deprivation of the Jim Crow era was compounded by the aftermath of World War I and the Great Depression, making life in the South increasingly turbulent for Black Americans.

National Gallery of Art, Washington, gift of Daniel Greenberg and Susan Steinhauser, 2016.191.59



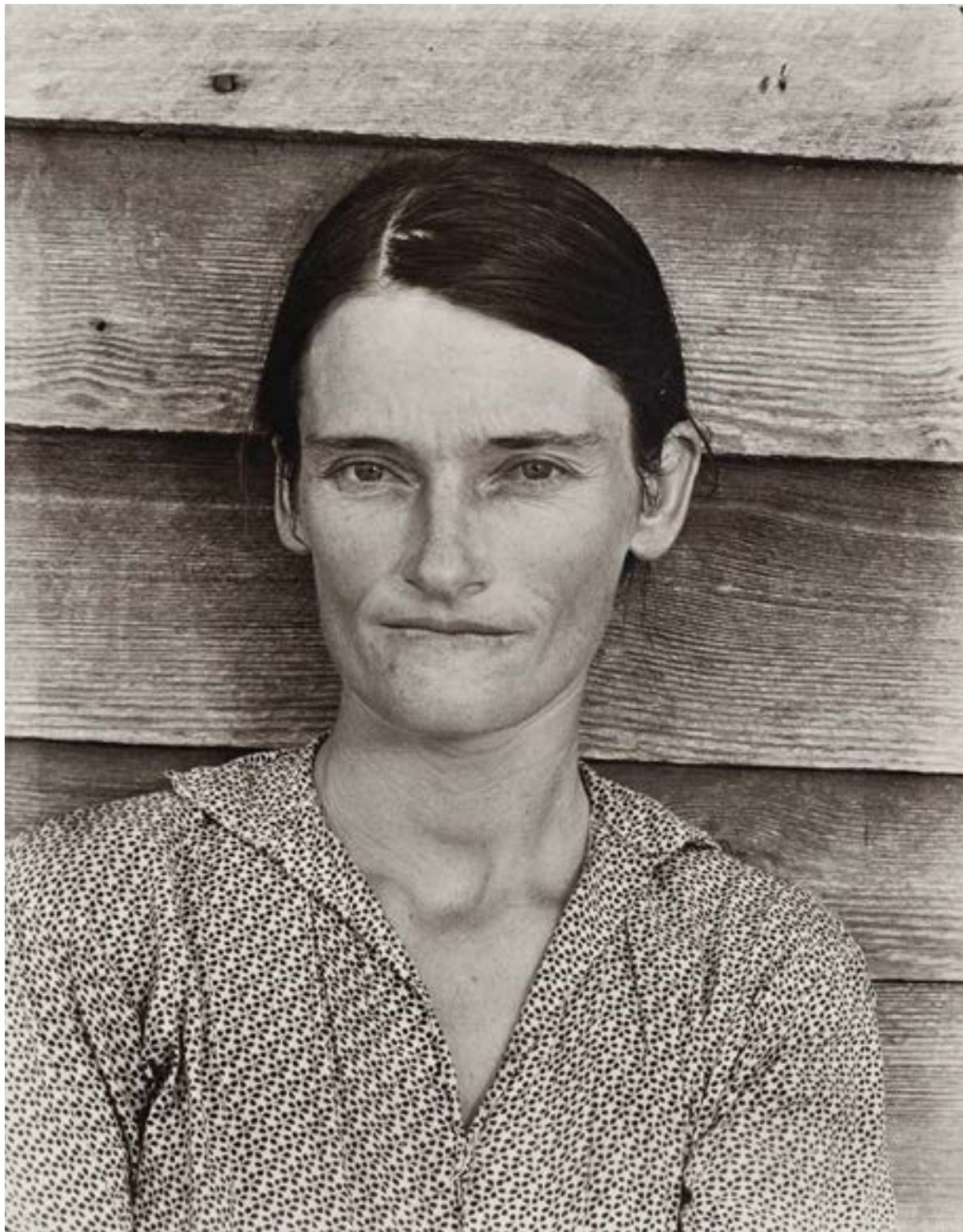
**Dorothea Lange**

American, 1895–1965

**Displaced Tenant Farmers, Goodlett, Hardeman County, Texas, 1938**

Gelatin silver print

Collection of Michael Mattis and Judith Hochberg



**Walker Evans**

American, 1903–1975

**Allie Mae Burroughs, Hale County, Alabama, 1936**

Gelatin silver print

On assignment for *Fortune*, Walker Evans collaborated with writer James Agee in Hale County, Alabama, for three weeks, recording the lives of three families of white tenant farmers. The photographs offer a raw, direct perspective on a sharecropper's life yet also diminish the depth and nuance of their subjects. In the original title, Evans referred to Allie Mae Burroughs as a sharecropper's wife, anonymizing her and negating her role in the farm's operations. Yet through the photograph, her face has become one of the defining images of the Great Depression. The story never ran in *Fortune*, whose wealthy readers wanted no reminder of the impoverished conditions of rural America, but it was published in 1941 as the book *Let Us Now Praise Famous Men* and remains one of the most influential works of photography and literary nonfiction.

Addison Gallery of American Art, Phillips Academy, Andover, Massachusetts, gift of Norman Selby (PA 1970) and Melissa G. Vail, 2020.<sup>31</sup>



**Marion Post Wolcott**  
American, 1910–1990

**Waiting to be Paid for Picking Cotton, Inside  
Plantation Store, Marcella, 1939**

Gelatin silver print

Collection of Michael Mattis and Judith Hochberg



**Robert H. McNeill**  
American, 1917–2005

**New Car, 1938**

Gelatin silver print

Virginia Museum of Fine Arts, Floyd D. and Anne C. Gottwald  
Fund, 2021.36

**Eudora Welty**

American, 1909–2001

**Courthouse Town, Grenada, 1935**

Gelatin silver print

Though known as a Southern gothic writer, Eudora Welty was also an accomplished photographer. After college, she returned to her home state of Mississippi and was hired as a publicity agent for the Works Progress Administration, documenting through writing and photography the effects of the Great Depression. What began as clerical documentation turned into a rich photography practice that she pursued until 1950. She noted that “in both cases, writing and photography, you were trying to portray what you saw, and truthfully. Portray life, living people, as you saw them. And a camera could catch that fleeting moment, which is what a short story, in all its depth, tries to do.”

High Museum of Art, Atlanta, gift of McKinsey & Company, 2020.35





**Eudora Welty**

American, 1909–2001

**Saturday Strollers, 1935**

Gelatin silver print

Virginia Museum of Fine Arts, Promised Gift of Deborah and Mark Wlaz



**Brett Weston**

American, 1911–1993

**Cypress Swamp, Florida, ca. 1947**

Gelatin silver print

The son of photographer Edward Weston, Brett Weston began photographing when he was thirteen. Like his father, he was drawn to the formal possibilities of photography and his work reveals a sophisticated understanding of abstraction. In this view of a cypress swamp draped with Spanish moss, Weston renders the forest as a mesmerizing filigree that seems to swallow all the available space. Yet the thin filaments of barbed wire at the base of the trees hint at the struggle between human endeavor and the chaotic power of nature.

Virginia Museum of Fine Arts, Gift of Brett Weston Archive, 2018.614





**Ellie Lee Weems**

American, 1901–1983

**Ethel Brown and Companion, 1946**

Gelatin silver print

Ellie Lee Weems was the premier portrait photographer in Jacksonville, Florida, where he catered to the city's Black population as they proudly positioned themselves in the evolving landscape of the Jim Crow South. In this photograph, two middle-aged women, one of them identified as Ethel Brown, stand side by side wearing near-identical formal wear with unique corsages and handbags slung on their forearms, signs of their fashionable sophistication. Atop the slim stand between the women, a beribboned cat eyes the photographer with a grumpy expression.

Collection of Maxine Payne and Sandra R. Murray Nettles, High Museum of Art, Atlanta, purchase with funds from Jane and Clay Jackson, 2022.<sup>56</sup>



**The Massengill Family**  
American, 20th century

**Portrait of Evelyn Massengill, 1937–41**  
Gelatin silver print with applied color

**Portrait of Evelyn and Lance Massengill, 1937–41**  
Gelatin silver print

**Portrait of Evelyn and Warren Massengill**  
Gelatin silver print

**Portraits of Evelyn Massengill, 1937–41**  
Gelatin silver prints

These remarkable portraits of Evelyn Massengill—a self-taught photographer—were made in a portable studio similar to a photo booth. The Massengill family made their living as itinerant photographers throughout rural Arkansas, with the studio built on a retrofitted truck bed, to make inexpensive portraits during the height of the Great Depression. From her mid-teens to early twenties, Evelyn photographed herself or posed for a family member between sessions with paying customers. Across these images, we see a woman coming into her own during early adulthood, exhibiting a distinct and often playful intentionality through pose, facial expression, and dress as she performs different facets of her evolving identity.

High Museum of Art, Atlanta, purchase with funds from the H.B. and Doris Massey Charitable Trust, 2022.136–141





**Mike Disfarmer**

American, 1884–1959

**Wallace Sloane, Elliot Smith and brother Homer,**

ca. 1940

Gelatin silver print

Mike Disfarmer operated the only professional photography studio in Heber Springs, Arkansas, between the 1930s and '50s. His spare and at times severe portraits offer a plainspoken vision of rural, predominantly white America during and after the Great Depression. For most of his sitters, being photographed was an unusual occurrence, and a visit to the studio marked a milestone. People often posed for Disfarmer in groups, as in his portrait of three young men casually draping their arms around each others' shoulders, reinforcing their sense of familiarity and friendship, perhaps on their last night together before one of them heads off for military service.



**Walker Evans**

American, 1903–1975

**Penny Picture Display, Savannah, Georgia, 1936**

Gelatin silver print

Walker Evans was enthralled by the traditional and folk cultures of the South. He developed a direct, often flat manner of photographing that echoed the sparseness of the signage and architecture he encountered throughout the region. In his photograph of a portrait photographer's studio window, he plays on the consonance between the flatness of the window, the plane of his camera, and the resulting photographic print. In photographing the anonymous photographer's advertisement, he not only condenses time, labor, individuality, and generations but also flattens history. When he made this image, forty percent of Savannah's population was Black, a fact belied by the over two hundred white faces that make up the image.

Virginia Museum of Fine Arts, Sherritt Art Purchase Fund, 74.48.7



**Clarence John Laughlin**

American, 1905–1985

**Time Phantasm, Number Six, 1941**

Gelatin silver print

High Museum of Art, Atlanta, gift of Joshua Mann Paillet in honor of his mother, Charlotte Mann Paillet, her family, and Sir Nicholas Winton, 2015.427

**Edward Weston**

American, 1886–1958

**Woodlawn Plantation, 1941**

Gelatin silver print

In 1941, Clarence John Laughlin and Edward Weston photographed alongside one another for a few days as Weston traveled the South making photographs to illustrate a new edition of Walt Whitman's *Leaves of Grass*. Both photographers produced images of the same location but in notably different ways. Weston, who is known for his mastery of sharp focus and a rich tonal range, created a precise and balanced view of the scene. Meanwhile, Laughlin, who was dubbed the "Father of American Surrealism" for his atmospheric depictions of decaying antebellum architecture, spun a more ambiguous and haunting tale. He even posed Weston's collaborator and wife, Charis Wilson, as a ghostly apparition on the second floor.

New Orleans Museum of Art, gift of Mr. and Mrs. Arthur Q. Davis, 82.126.23



Following World War II, two competing visions shaped popular views of the South: one based on the country's image of itself as optimistic and prosperous and the other grounded in the continued poverty, racial violence, and segregation that marked the region. Photographers grappled with the dissonance between conventional images of American affluence and progress in popular culture and mass media and the reality of life for many in the South by making a startling mix of images, from powerful examples of photojournalism to more subjective pictures that explored psychological and emotional states.

As the first Black staff photographer for *LIFE*, in 1956 Gordon Parks shocked Americans with lush, colorful pictures made in Mobile, Alabama, that powerfully revealed the ugliness and psychological anguish of segregation. Other photojournalists traveling to the American South—including Elliot Erwitt and Henri Cartier-Bresson—homed in on the contradictions between Southern gentility and the reality of race relations. While these photographers continued to employ the documentary style that had taken shape in the 1930s, with its crisp focus, straightforward compositions, and faith in the possibilities of objectivity, others, like Robert Frank, broke from this tradition to make raw, searing, and idiosyncratic pictures that grasped something elemental about American culture.

Other photographers—especially those who knew the South intimately—turned inward. Some, like Virginia native Emmet Gowin, chose to photograph their families and loved ones, seeking sustenance in what was closest at hand. Others, like the Kentucky optician-turned-photographer Ralph Eugene Meatyard, embraced a dreamlike surrealism to create pictures suffused with social and psychological tension, capturing the alienation produced within such a divided society.



**Consuelo Kanaga**

American, 1894–1978

**Young Girl, Tennessee, 1948**

Gelatin silver print

In the late 1940s, many photographers traversed the country with the support of fellowships and grants to capture the spirit of postwar America. Consuelo Kanaga traveled throughout the South, concentrating her lens on communities of color. Rather than dwelling on hardships or poverty, she presents her subjects with dignity, often framed in spare compositions that focus on the emotions conveyed in their facial expressions. Emblematic of this approach, her photograph of this contemplative girl silhouetted against a light sky while gazing upward echoes classical portraiture.

Virginia Museum of Fine Arts, Adolph D. and Wilkins C. Williams Fund, 89.11

**W. Eugene Smith**

American, 1918–1978

**Maude at Stove, 1951**

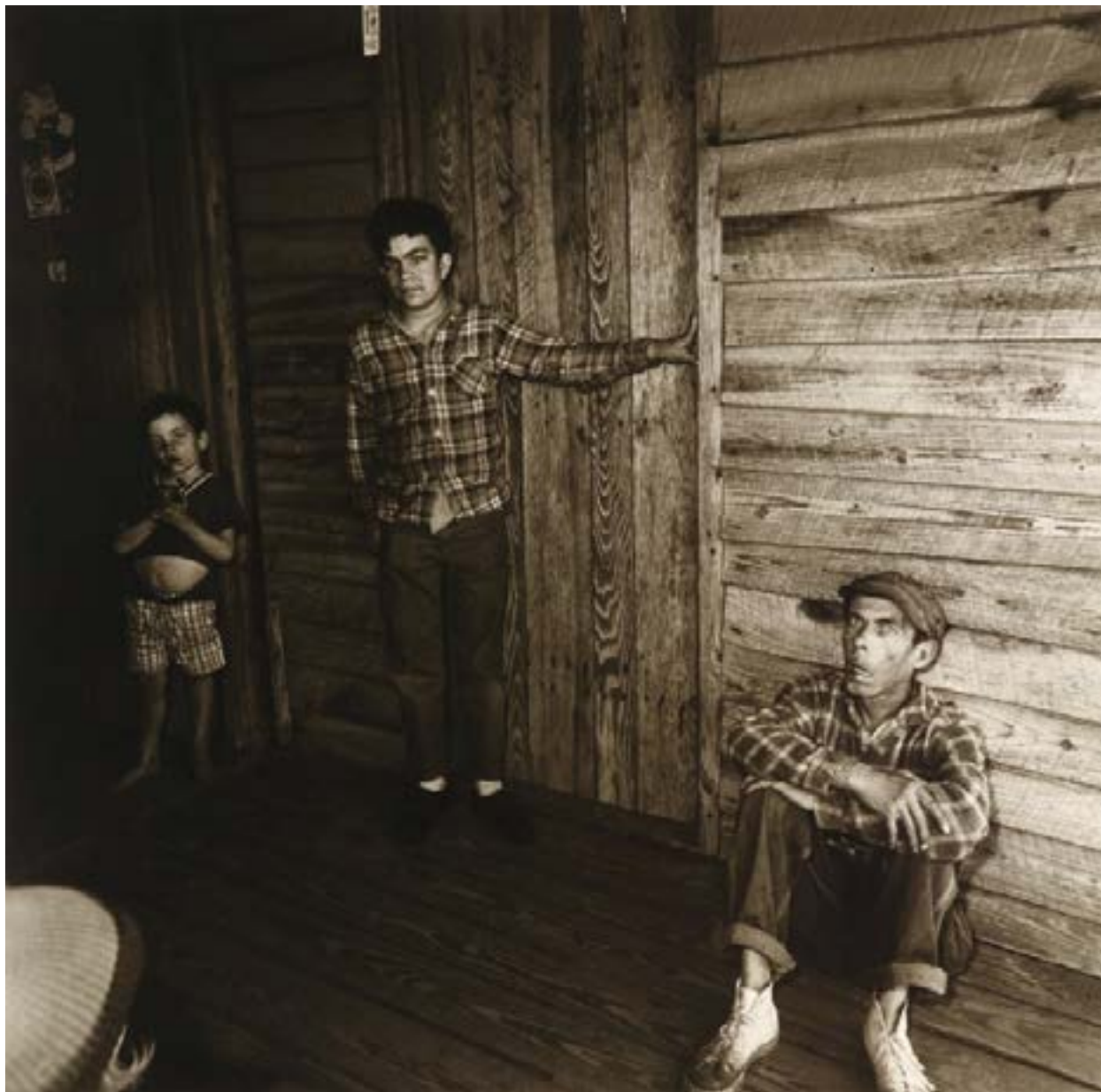
Gelatin silver print

In December 1951, *LIFE* published W. Eugene Smith's photo essay on Maude Callen, a nurse and midwife who worked in rural South Carolina. Smith's powerful photographs illuminated Callen's extraordinary efforts to serve her patients, who were among the poorest and most neglected in the country. As detailed in the magazine, "Callen drives 36,000 miles within the county each year, is reimbursed for part of this by the state, and must buy her own cars, which last 18 months. Her workday is often sixteen hours and she earns \$225 a month." After the article was published, readers sent donations totaling more than \$27,000, allowing Callen to build a clinic and train others to become healthcare workers.

Virginia Museum of Fine Arts, Floyd D. and Anne C. Gottwald Fund, 2019.299







**Diane Arbus**

American, 1923–1971

**Three Boys on a Porch, Beaufort County, S.C., 1968**

Gelatin silver print

Diane Arbus made this portrait on assignment from *Esquire* for a story about a doctor who fought parasitic diseases and hunger in the impoverished parts of Beaufort County, South Carolina. Arbus's unflinching depiction of rural deprivation recalls Walker Evans's photographs made three decades earlier of similar conditions in Hale County, Alabama. Her direct style of portraiture combined with the graphic qualities of the clapboard siding in the background echo the social documentary photography of the 1930s, underscoring how little conditions had changed for the South's rural poor in the years following the Great Depression.

High Museum of Art, Atlanta, purchase with funds from the Friends of Photography, 2017.291



**Danny Lyon**

American, born 1942

**From Lindsey's Room, Louisville, 1966**

Gelatin silver print

High Museum of Art, Atlanta, gift of Ron Beller and Jennifer Moses, 2007.71.16



**Leonard Freed**

American, 1929–2006

**Funeral of a Black Woman, Johns Island,  
South Carolina, 1964**

Gelatin silver print

High Museum of Art, Atlanta, gift of Brigitte and Elke Susannah Freed, 2016.573



**Henri Cartier-Bresson**  
French, 1908–2004

**The Daughters of the Confederacy, Richmond,  
Virginia, 1960**

Gelatin silver print

Virginia Museum of Fine Arts, Arthur and Margaret Glasgow  
Endowment, 2016.599



**Garry Winogrand**  
American, 1928–1984

**Apollo 11 Moon Shot, Cape Kennedy, Florida, 1969**

Gelatin silver print

Virginia Museum of Fine Arts, Gift of an Anonymous Donor,  
82.201.1



**Robert Frank**

American, born Switzerland, 1924–2019

**Photobooth, Tennessee, 1955**

Gelatin silver print

Addison Gallery of American Art, Phillips Academy, Andover, Massachusetts, Steil Family Collection, 2021.22



**Lee Friedlander**

American, born 1934

**New Orleans, 1968**

Gelatin silver print

Addison Gallery of American Art, Phillips Academy, Andover, Massachusetts, Museum purchase, 1987.31

**William Eggleston**

American, born 1939

**Sumner, Mississippi, ca. 1972**

Dye transfer print

Though he began his career working in black and white, by the late 1960s the Memphis-born William Eggleston had mastered the expressive possibilities of color, photographing ordinary subjects around Memphis and making deeply saturated dye transfer prints, a primarily commercial process. He explored how color could add psychological depth to his photographs, as in this scene awash in shades of brown aside from the stark white car and two figures—a Black man in a white coat and a White man in a black suit. Eggleston emphasizes the familiarity between the chauffeur and his employer through their identical stances, yet their attire and physical and psychological distance underscore the rigid social hierarchy that divides them based on race and class.

Collection of Winston Eggleston





**Builder Levy**

American, born 1942

**Coal Camp, Easter Week, Near Grundy, Buchanan County, Virginia, 1969–70**

Gelatin silver print

High Museum of Art, Atlanta, purchase with funds from the Friends of Photography and the Hagedorn Family, 2015.356



**John Cohen**

American, 1932–2019

**Perry County, Kentucky, 1959**

Gelatin silver print

Virginia Museum of Fine Arts, Adolph D. and Wilkins C. Williams Fund, by exchange, 2024.42



**Emmet Gowin**

American, born 1941

**Family, Danville, 1970**

Gelatin silver print

Since the 1960s, Emmet Gowin has made intimate and poignant photographs of his wife, Edith, and her family at their home in Danville, Virginia. Here, he shows three generations lounging in a yard, and though everyone is within touching distance of one another, all are separate, with their attention turned inward. Gowin's tender composition masterfully imbues the informality of a family snapshot with a sense of deep trust and precise thought, undermining the common stereotype of rural Southerners as backward and disconnected.

High Museum of Art, Atlanta, purchase with funds from the H. B. and Doris Massey Charitable Trust, 2009.50



**Ralph Eugene Meatyard**

American, 1925–1972

**Untitled, 1963**

Gelatin silver print

An optician from Lexington, Kentucky, Ralph Eugene Meatyard considered himself a “dedicated amateur.” He became widely known for his enigmatic scenes and dreamlike portraits that infuse the everyday with a sense of mystery and unease. Meatyard often staged his own family as actors, clad in rubber masks and enacting cryptic dramas that reveal the influence of Southern gothic literature. In this photograph of his son Christopher reclining in a bucolic field littered with masks, youthful innocence reckons with intimations of mortality.

High Museum of Art, Atlanta, gift in honor of Edward Anthony Hill, 2018.69





**Emmet Gowin**

American, born 1941

**Richmond, Virginia, 1965**

Gelatin silver print

Virginia native Emmet Gowin studied photography at Richmond Professional Institute (now Virginia Commonwealth University). His undergraduate thesis explored the social landscape of Virginia and especially Richmond, where he made this mysterious photograph of a young girl, her dog, and the shadows looming between them.

Virginia Museum of Fine Arts, Gift of Emmet Gowin, 66.86.2



**Ralph Eugene Meatyard**

American, 1925–1972

**Prescience #135**, 1960

Gelatin silver print

Collection of Joe Williams and Tede Fleming



**Ralph Eugene Meatyard**

American, 1925–1972

**Romance (N.) from Ambrose Bierce #3**, 1962

Gelatin silver print

Addison Gallery of American Art, Phillips Academy, Andover, Massachusetts, Museum purchase, 1974.22.4



**Robert Frank**

American, born Switzerland, 1924–2019

**Cafe, Beaufort, South Carolina**, 1955

Gelatin silver print

High Museum of Art, Atlanta, gift of David Dechman and Michel Mercure, 2020.167



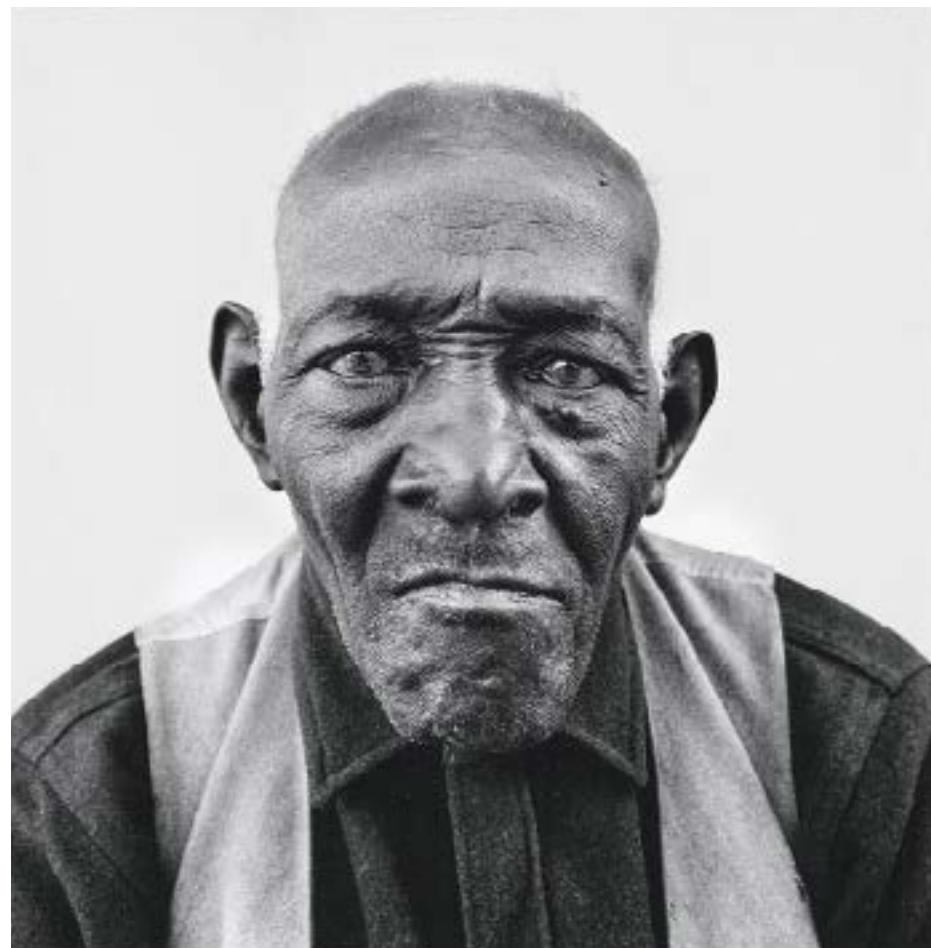
**Robert Frank**

American, born Switzerland, 1924–2019

**Charleston, South Carolina, 1955–56**

Gelatin silver print

Addison Gallery of American Art, Phillips Academy, Andover,  
Massachusetts, Museum purchase, 1989.77.13



**Richard Avedon**

American, 1923–2004

**William Casby, born in slavery, Algiers, Louisiana,**

**March 24, 1963**

Gelatin silver print

Courtesy of the Richard Avedon Foundation

**Robert Frank**

American, born Switzerland, 1924–2019

**Trolley, New Orleans, 1955**

Gelatin silver print

In 1955 and 1956, Switzerland-born photographer Robert Frank traveled across the United States with the support of a Guggenheim Fellowship. With an incisive, unsparring eye, he sought to understand and decode the brutal beauty of his adopted home. Raw, violent, tender, and edgy, his photographs of an America plagued by racial division, economic disparity, consumerism, and willful ignorance shocked viewers for how they savagely undercut the country's postwar view of itself as prosperous, peaceful, and progressive. In the South, Frank was keenly attuned to the persistence of segregation. His photograph of a New Orleans trolley, white people up front and Black people behind, succinctly captures the ruthlessness and anguish of racial stratification.

Addison Gallery of American Art, Phillips Academy, Andover, Massachusetts, Museum purchase, 1984.5





**Elliott Erwitt**

American, born France, 1928–2023

**Southern Charm/Alabama, 1955**

Gelatin silver print

Documentary photographer Elliott Erwitt once said, “I have a strong attraction to the American South. People there have a marvelous exterior—wonderful manners, warm friendliness until you touch on things you’re not supposed to touch on. Then you see the hardness beneath the mask of nice manners.”

Virginia Museum of Fine Arts, Gift of Kenneth G. Futter,  
79.165.9



**Gordon Parks**

American, 1912–2006

**Outside Looking In, Mobile, Alabama, 1956**

**Ondria Tanner and Her Grandmother Window-Shopping, Mobile, Alabama, 1956**

Inkjet prints

Gordon Parks was the first African American photographer to work for *LIFE*—the preeminent picture magazine of the day—and published some of the 20th century’s most iconic photo essays about social justice. In 1956, the magazine published Parks’s “Segregation Story,” a photo essay comprising twenty-six color photographs depicting a multigenerational family in Alabama. Despite the grave danger he faced as a Black photographer working in the South at the height of Jim Crow, Parks firmly believed that photographs could alter a viewer’s perspective and expose a wide readership to the pervasive effects of racial segregation.

High Museum of Art, Atlanta, gift of The Gordon Parks Foundation, 2014.386.8–9





**Marion Palfi**

American, born Germany, 1907–1978

**Wife of a Lynch Victim, Irwinton, Georgia, 1949**

Gelatin silver print

Born in Germany, Marion Palfi worked as a freelance photographer and portraitist in Berlin before emigrating to the United States in 1936. Shocked at the racial and economic inequalities she encountered, she devoted her photographic career to documenting various communities to expose the virulent effects of racism and poverty. In 1949, she made this portrait of Josie Hill, widow of Caleb Hill, the victim of the first reported lynching of that year. A father of three, the twenty-eight-year-old Hill had been arrested for allegedly stabbing a man. After the sheriff left the jail's front door open and the keys to the cell on his desk, Hill was pulled from jail in the middle of the night and shot to death. Two white men were charged with the crime, but the all-white grand jury did not indict them.

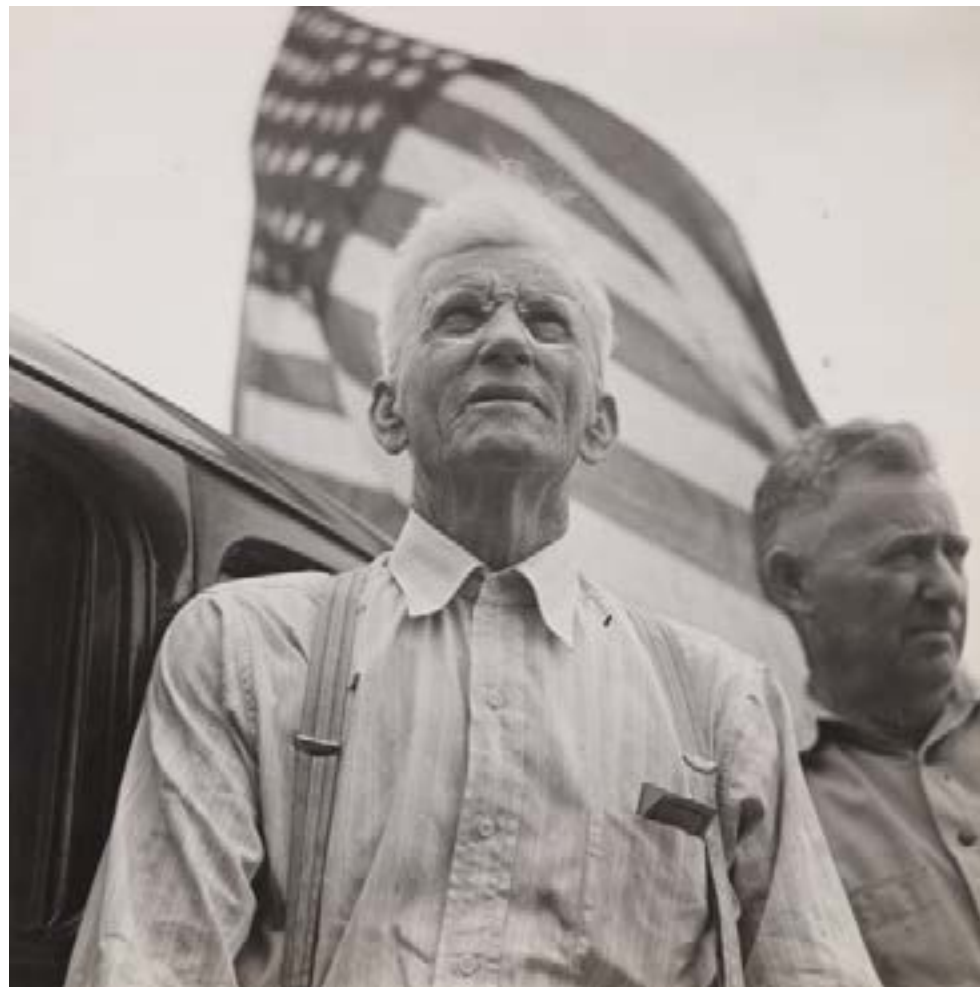
High Museum of Art, Atlanta, gift of Ben Bivins, 2000.262.14



**Clarence John Laughlin**  
American, 1905–1985

**The Masks Grow to Us, 1947**  
Gelatin silver print

High Museum of Art, Atlanta, purchase with funds from Robert Yellowlees, 2015.40



**Esther Bublely**  
American, 1921–1998

**On V.E. Day a public prayer meeting was held on Main Street. Men are listening to a speech by the school superintendent, Tomball, TX, 1945**  
Gelatin silver print

High Museum of Art, Atlanta, gift of Mel and Gail Mackler, 2013.652



From the start, photography was both a document of and engine for the civil rights movement. From the Montgomery Bus Boycott in 1956 to the Poor People's Campaign of 1968, photographs of the civil rights movement galvanized and shocked the nation with raw depictions of violence and the struggle for racial justice. Civil rights organizers recognized the power of the medium and ensured that its actions were thoroughly documented. Countless photojournalists, artists, movement photographers, and amateurs documented the marches, sit-ins, and showdowns with counter-protesters and law enforcement, communicating the urgency of these events to the public with an intimate proximity. These photographs appeared in widely circulated publications such as the *New York Times*, *LIFE*, *Ebony*, and *Jet* and played a crucial role in informing and motivating the public to challenge the complicated and deeply entrenched history of segregation.

On the other side of the camera, activists and organizers skillfully orchestrated their civic actions, knowing the singular power that photographs would have in shaping public opinion. A key tactic of many activists was nonviolent direct action—by refusing to defend themselves even when physically attacked, activists could bring attention to the immorality of the aggressors' actions and beliefs. Photographs of these violent public scenes lent a sense of martyrdom and

principled sacrifice to the protestors' efforts and sparked a social revolution unlike anything the country had experienced. The photographs gathered here show just a handful of the thousands of selfless acts of courage that helped transform the nation.



**James Karales**

American, 1930–2002

**Selma to Montgomery March, Alabama, 1965**

Gelatin silver print

Virginia Museum of Fine Arts, National Endowment for the Arts  
Fund for American Art, 2013.233



**Unidentified Photographer**

**Elizabeth Eckford Entering Central High School,  
Little Rock, Arkansas, 1957**

Gelatin silver print

The Little Rock Nine were the first Black students to integrate Arkansas's Little Rock Central High School on September 25, 1957, three years after the Supreme Court ruled segregation in public schools unconstitutional. After being stopped during multiple attempts to get in the school, they were finally able to enter while escorted by the 101st Airborne Infantry. This press photograph shows Elizabeth Eckford, one of the nine students, resolutely proceeding into the school building flanked by uniformed soldiers while white students jeer at her.

High Museum of Art, Atlanta, purchase with funds from Sandra Anderson Baccus in loving memory of Lloyd Tevis Baccus, M.D., 2007.108



**Gene Herrick**

American, born 1926

**Rosa Parks Being Fingerprinted, Montgomery,  
Alabama, 1956**

Gelatin silver print

High Museum of Art, Atlanta, purchase with funds from Sandra Anderson Baccus in loving memory of Lloyd Tevis Baccus, M.D., 2007.113

**Charles Moore**

American, 1931–2010

**Martin Luther King Jr. Arrested, Montgomery, Alabama, 1958**

Gelatin silver print

On September 3, 1958, as Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. tried to enter the Montgomery courtroom that was hearing a case involving his friend and colleague, the Reverend Ralph David Abernathy, King was arrested and charged with loitering. Charles Moore, a photographer for the *Montgomery Advertiser*, captured the moment as police officers aggressively placed him in handcuffs. Like many of the most well-known photographers of the civil rights movement, Moore was white, and his race allowed him to photograph many violent incidents involving law enforcement at close range. This photograph contributed to an outpouring of outrage and support for King's cause after its release nationwide by the *Associated Press*.

High Museum of Art, Atlanta, purchase with funds from Lucinda W. Bunn for the Bunn Collection, 1994.63





**Constantine Manos**  
American, born 1934

**Two-thirds empty bus with white riders in Jim Crow  
Seats, Montgomery, Alabama, 1955**

Gelatin silver print

Virginia Museum of Fine Arts, Arthur and Margaret Glasgow  
Endowment, 2016.147

**Bruce Davidson**

American, born 1933

**National Guard Soldiers Escort the Freedom Riders  
Along their Ride from Montgomery to Jackson,  
Mississippi**, from the **Time of Change** series, 1961

Gelatin silver print

Bruce Davidson captured this optimistic scene of four of the Freedom Riders—a group of interracial activists—singing or laughing, a rare moment of calm as they traveled from Montgomery, Alabama, to Jackson, Mississippi, in May 1961 to uphold the Supreme Court decision that desegregated interstate bus travel. This group of twenty-seven activists, including John Lewis and James Farmer, had been severely beaten by white counter-protesters in Montgomery and would soon be arrested and jailed in Jackson. The Freedom Riders' actions soon caught the attention of President Kennedy, who was compelled to call in the National Guard to protect the activists on the rest of their journey.

High Museum of Art, Atlanta, anonymous gift, 2018.451





**Bob Adelman**  
American, 1930–2016

**Kelly Ingram Park, Birmingham, Alabama, 1963**  
Gelatin silver print

High Museum of Art, Atlanta, purchase with funds from Dr.  
Henrie M. Treadwell, 2007.172



**Bill Hudson**

American, 1932–2010

**An African American high school student, Walter Gadsden, 15, is attacked by a police dog during a civil rights demonstration in Birmingham, Alabama, May 3, 1963**

Gelatin silver print

An experienced photographer of the civil rights movement, Bill Hudson often avoided hostility from the police by keeping his camera hidden under his jacket and only bringing it out at the optimal moment. He was in Birmingham's Kelly Ingram Park when he captured the moment a police officer grabbed fifteen-year-old protestor Walter Gadsden by the collar and pulled Gadsden toward his police dog. The photograph emblemized police brutality and was published in newspapers and magazines across the country, sparking nationwide support for the civil rights movement.

High Museum of Art, Atlanta, purchase with funds from Sandra Anderson Baccus in loving memory of Lloyd Tevis Baccus, M.D., 2007.100

**Bruce Davidson**

American, born 1933

**A female protestor being arrested and led away by the police, Birmingham, Alabama, 1963**

Gelatin silver print

High Museum of Art, Atlanta, anonymous gift, 2018.452







**Bruce Davidson**

American, born 1933

**Selma-to-Montgomery March, March 1965**

Gelatin silver print

Virginia Museum of Fine Arts, Arthur and Margaret Glasgow Endowment, 2016.160



**Charles Moore**

American, 1931–2010

**Confederate Flag, Oxford, Mississippi, 1962**

Gelatin silver print

Virginia Museum of Fine Arts, Arthur and Margaret Glasgow Endowment, 2016.152



**Steve Schapiro**

American, 1936–2022

**Dr. Martin Luther King's Motel Room after He Was Shot, Memphis, Tennessee, 1968**

Gelatin silver print

High Museum of Art, Atlanta, purchase with funds from the H. B. and Doris Massey Charitable Trust, 2007.225



**Burk Uzzle**

American, born 1938

**Horse Drawn Casket, Atlanta, 1968**

Gelatin silver print

High Museum of Art, Atlanta, purchase, 2016.98



**Diane Arbus**

American, 1923–1971

**Mrs. Martin Luther King Jr. on Her Front Lawn,  
Atlanta, Ga., 1968**

Gelatin silver print

High Museum of Art, Atlanta, purchase with funds from Wanda  
Hopkins, 2017.221



**Doris Derby**  
American, 1939–2022

**Voting at the polls, Hinds County, Mississippi, 1971**  
Gelatin silver print

High Museum of Art, promised gift of David Knaus,  
2023.341



**Bob Adelman**  
American, 1930–2016

**Mule Wagon for the Poor People's Campaign,  
Memphis, Tennessee, 1968**

Gelatin silver print

High Museum of Art, Atlanta, gift of the artist, 2007.171



**Doris Derby**

American, 1939–2022

**Women's sewing cooperative, Mississippi, 1968**

Gelatin silver print

Dr. Doris Derby was an educator, activist, and photographer who chronicled the crucial but often untold stories of women during the civil rights movement. She was an early member of community organizations such as the Student Nonviolent Coordinating Committee, the Mississippi Freedom Democratic Party, and the Adult Literacy Project, through which she organized voter registration drives, craft and agricultural co-ops, and education programs, primarily in Mississippi. Such efforts, though they lacked the visual drama of the civic protests often covered in the news, were critical in enfranchising rural Black Americans and establishing their economic stability.

High Museum of Art, promised gift of David Knaus, 2023.343



Unidentified Photographer

**Civil Rights Demonstrators and Ku Klux Klan Members Share the Same Sidewalk, Atlanta, 1964**

Gelatin silver print

High Museum of Art, Atlanta, purchase with funds from Sandra Anderson Baccus in loving memory of Lloyd Tevis Baccus, M.D., 2007.98



**Matt Herron**

American, 1931–2020

**The March from Selma, 1965**

Gelatin silver print

High Museum of Art, Atlanta, gift of Gloria and Paul Sternberg, 1999.154.5

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Following the tumultuous civil rights era, in the 1970s the South grappled as much with its history as with its future. Although the region continued to expand and diversify, particularly in urban centers like Atlanta, Nashville, and Charlotte, many photographers turned their lenses inward, exploring the past and their surroundings in an intimate and subjective manner. This shift in approach can be seen in a strong emphasis on portraiture, especially of family and community members. Meanwhile, the rise of color photography as a widely accepted artistic medium took hold in the South, thanks in no small part to the work of William Eggleston, who merged the casual banality of a snapshot with an enchanting use of color. In the process, he established a new Southern photographic aesthetic: the ordinary rendered extraordinary through lurid, eye-popping color.

Southern photography in this period was also marked by a new interest in landscape as the nexus of history and place. The impact of the civil rights movement and rise of more inclusive and critical histories of the South prompted a new generation of photographers to interrogate the region's prevailing myths, particularly those that established and reinforced racial hierarchies. Others bore witness to the ways that histories—of slavery in particular, but also economic and environmental destruction—left their traces on the land itself. Meanwhile, the ever-growing cracks in the image of the New South, with its dream of national

reconciliation, prosperity, and racial equality, drew the attention of photographers who sought to understand and convey the disparities they witnessed.



**Sally Mann**

American, born 1951

**Deep South, Untitled (Scarred Tree), 1999**

Gelatin silver print

In this evocative study of an oak tree, Sally Mann focuses on a dark gash across the trunk, its scarred appearance a metaphor for the South's traumatic history. The combination of beauty and brutality recalls Mann's description of the South as "a place extravagant in its beauty, reckless in its fecundity, terrible in its indifference, and dark with memories." The photograph also reveals Mann's mastery of the 19th-century wet plate process, which enabled her to materially conjure the past in the present.

High Museum of Art, Atlanta, purchase with funds from Jane and Clay Jackson, 2019.221



**William Christenberry**  
American, 1936–2016

**Black Building, Newbern Alabama, 1979**  
Chromogenic print

Virginia Museum of Fine Arts, Gift of Kent and Marcia  
Minichiello, 2022.667





**William Christenberry**

American, 1936–2016

**Red Building in Forest, Hale County, Alabama, 1983**

**Red Building in Forest, Hale County, Alabama, 1998**

**Red Building in Forest, Hale County, Alabama, 2001**

Dye coupler prints

After encountering a copy of Walker Evans's and James Agee's book, *Let Us Now Praise Famous Men*, William Christenberry began to photograph vernacular architecture in Hale County, a rural farming area of central Alabama where his family had lived for several generations. Christenberry was one of the first American photographers to harness and popularize color photography for artistic purposes, and he chronicled the march of time by returning to photograph specific buildings over decades. He exhibited these photographs—often made years apart—in groups to extend the experience of time through the lifespans of buildings and surrounding landscapes.

High Museum of Art, Atlanta, gift of the artist, 2014.101, 2014.106, 2014.107



**William Eggleston**

American, born 1939

**Halloween, Outskirts of Morton, Mississippi, 1971**

Dye transfer print

Born in Memphis, self-taught photographer William Eggleston photographed everyday life in lush, saturated color. This scene contains nearly all the hues in the color spectrum, from the violet darkening sky to the boy's red headscarf. Eggleston made this exposure at dusk, when the waning natural light mixed with the artificial light of streetlamps to dramatic effect. Since the two light sources register differently on film, Eggleston was able to render the scene as strange and fictional, which is fitting as the children masquerade on Halloween.

High Museum of Art, Atlanta, gift of Lucinda W. Bunn for the Bunn Collection, 1982.56



**William Eggleston**

American, born 1939

**Jackson, Mississippi, ca. 1972**

Dye transfer print

Virginia Museum of Fine Arts, Funds provided by the Museum Purchase Program of the National Endowment for the Arts, matching funds provided by the Volunteer Committees of Art Museums, 89.50



**Maude Schuyler Clay**

American, born 1953

**Bonnie Claire, Autumn Leaves, Sumner, Mississippi, 1983**

Pigmented inkjet print

Born in Greenwood, Mississippi, Maude Schuyler Clay got her professional start in photography as a studio assistant to her cousin William Eggleston. For more than forty years, Clay has photographed people and places in the Mississippi Delta, using both her technical mastery of color photography and her keen powers of observation to create nuanced and intimate pictures that convey the character and feel of the region.

Jackson Fine Art, Atlanta

**Alex Webb**

American, born 1952

**Atlanta, 1996**

Dye destruction print

In the spring leading up to the 1996 Olympic Games in Atlanta, Alex Webb set out to record the qualities that made the city the cultural and commercial capital of the “New South” and an increasingly international city. He worked with a handheld camera and Kodachrome film, wandering the streets to capture subtle moments of human drama and the bustle of the city. Taking advantage of the variously hazy and intense light of afternoon thunderstorms, he contrasted muted tones with pops of vibrant color to elicit the energy of people and cultures colliding and intermingling on crowded urban byways of a city on the rise.

High Museum of Art, Atlanta, commissioned with funds from the H. B. and Doris Massey Charitable Trust and Lucinda W. Bunn for the *Picturing the South* series, 1996.<sup>109</sup>





**Harry Callahan**

American, 1912–1999

**Atlanta**, ca. 1985

Dye coupler print

Harry Callahan moved to Atlanta in 1983 and photographed his adopted home primarily in color. He focused on inconspicuous lyrical moments within banal street scenes, wielding rich color and crisp focus to draw attention to overlooked elements of city life. Fourteenth Street, with high-rise buildings stretching skyward through fog, is peculiarly desolate in the image, though Callahan crowds the frame with a web of utility poles, streetlights, and signs.

High Museum of Art, Atlanta, gift of Jeff and Tiffany Wigbels for the Wigbels Collection, 2000.124



**Alec Soth**

American, born 1969

**Jimmie's Apartment, Memphis, TN, 2002**

Pigmented inkjet print

Courtesy of the artist



**Jeanne Moutoussamy-Ashe**

American, born 1951

**A Collection of Family Memorabilia, Daufuskie Island, South Carolina, 1979**

Gelatin silver print

Virginia Museum of Fine Arts, Aldine S. Hartman Endowment Fund, 2023.1341



**Chester Higgins**

American, born 1946

**The Artist's Great-Aunt Shugg Lampley, New Brockton, Alabama, 1968**

Gelatin silver print

Virginia Museum of Fine Arts, National Endowment for the Arts Fund for American Art, 2013.181



**Baldwin Lee**

American, born 1951

**Montgomery, Alabama, 1984**

Gelatin silver print

High Museum of Art, Atlanta, purchase with funds from Phyllis and Sidney Rodbell, 2023.53



**Mikki Ferrill**

American, born 1937

**Prayer, Rockford, Alabama, 1974**

Inkjet print

Virginia Museum of Fine Arts, Aldine S. Hartman Endowment Fund, 2017.197

**Oraien Catledge**

American, 1928–2015

**Untitled [father and baby], 1985**

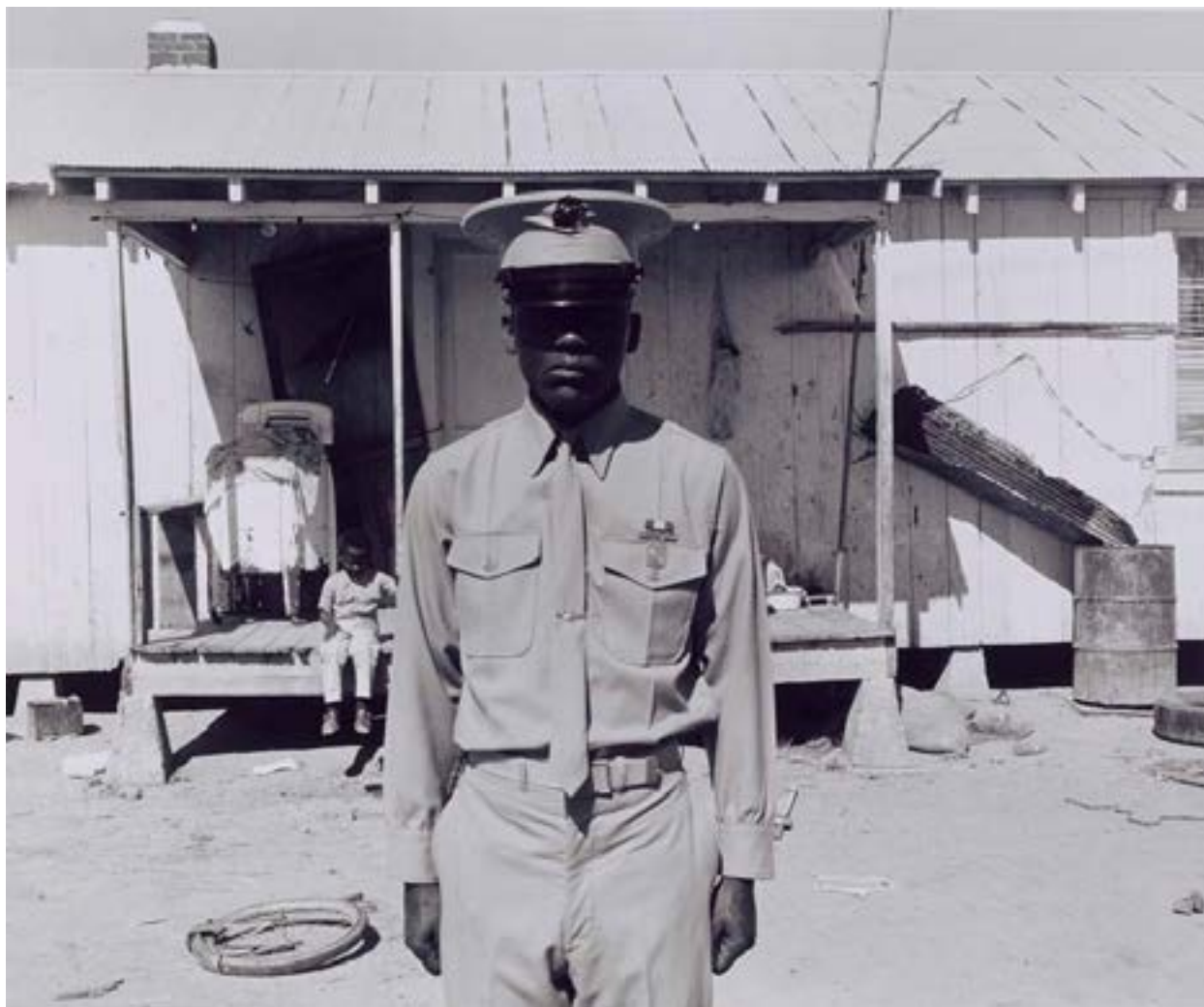
Gelatin silver print

Oraien Catledge, known as the “Picture Man” of Cabbagetown, made more than twenty-five thousand photographs of the east Atlanta neighborhood’s residents over twenty years. Originally built as a mill town, Cabbagetown withered after the Fulton Bag and Cotton Mill closed in 1978. Though Catledge’s subjects were navigating social and economic crises after the closure, they present themselves before the camera with composure and pride, rather than confined to their material circumstances. Here, Catledge captures a young man’s tentative expression as he protectively holds a swaddled baby—a soft foil to the father’s tough shell of black leather.

High Museum of Art, Atlanta, gift of Lucinda W. Bunnan for the Bunnan Collection, 2012.599







**Eugene Richards**

American, born 1944

**U.S. Marine, Hughes, Arkansas, 1970**

Gelatin silver print

Eugene Richards traveled to the Arkansas Delta as a healthcare advocate and photographed difficult living conditions in the rural South. Working at the height of the Vietnam War, he made this portrait of a young man rigidly posing in full uniform. The young man's military attire alludes to the conflict taking place far from home and serves as a reminder that the local is inextricably linked to and affected by larger forces at play. Richards subtly centers race and privilege, referring to the sacrifices Black soldiers made abroad even as they were denied equality at home.

Addison Gallery of American Art, Phillips Academy, Andover, Massachusetts, Museum purchase, 1974.77



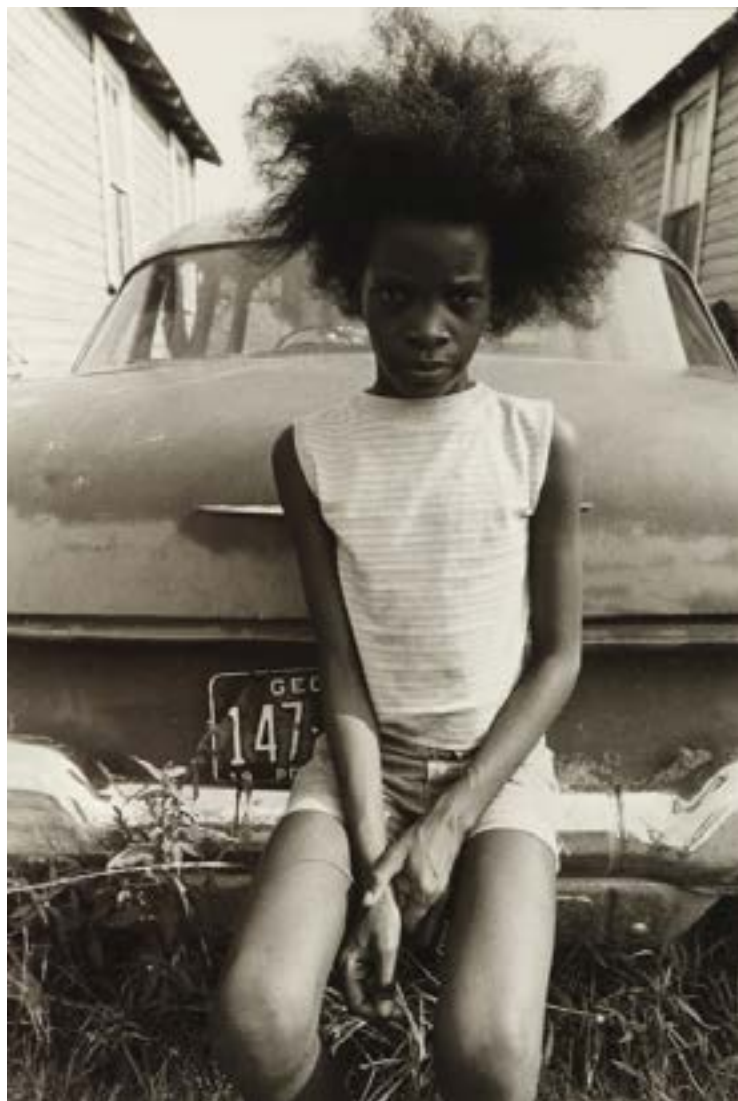
**Earlie Hudnall Jr.**

American, born 1946

**Wheels, 3rd Ward, Houston, Texas, 1993**

Gelatin silver print

Virginia Museum of Fine Arts, Lent by Michael Schewel and Priscilla Burbank, L2023.6



**Paul Kwilecki**

American, 1928–2009

**Girl, Battle's Quarters, 1971**

Gelatin silver print

Paul Kwilecki spent his life in Bainbridge, Georgia, running his family's hardware store and pursuing a decades-long project of documenting the people and events of the area, believing that "insight into a life in Decatur County is insight into lives everywhere." The homes in Battle's Quarters, a working-class neighborhood, were originally built for lumber workers employed by Battle and Metcalf Lumber Company. Decades later, the company had long since closed, and the area declined economically. Perched on the bumper of an old car, the girl in this photograph assertively faces the camera, rebuking any impulse of pity or shame on the part of the viewer.

High Museum of Art, Atlanta, gift of the artist, 74.234



**Baldwin Lee**

American, born 1951

**DeFuniak Springs, Florida, 1984**

Gelatin silver print

Beginning in 1983, Baldwin Lee made many road trips from his adopted home of Knoxville, Tennessee, throughout the South to photograph. He was drawn to Black Americans, often poor, at work, about town, or gathering on their yards or front porches. His strikingly dynamic and active compositions feel simultaneously spontaneous and meticulous in the way he arranges numerous people into complex scenes. His photographs offer poignant portrayals of daily life in rural and small towns across the South that are empathic, intimate, and often humorous, without shying away from his subjects' material and economic challenges.

Virginia Museum of Fine Arts, Arthur and Margaret Glasgow Endowment, 2022.48



**Nicholas Nixon**

American, born 1947

**Yazoo City, Mississippi, 1979**

Gelatin silver print

High Museum of Art, Atlanta, purchase, 1985.34



**Wendy Ewald**

American, born 1951

**Charles and the Quilts, Kentucky, ca. 1978**

Gelatin silver print

As a teacher in rural Kentucky, Wendy Ewald worked closely with her students, encouraging and empowering them to tell their own stories through writing and photography. Among her students was a boy named Johnny who created the narratives and staging for the pictures that Ewald would then photograph. In this work, Johnny posed his brother Charles hanging over a clothesline slung with tattered quilts while holding a small revolver in his hand. Yet Charles is careful to point the gun away from the viewer, as if uncomfortable with confrontation or violence—a demeanor echoed in his open, almost tender gaze.

Virginia Museum of Fine Arts, Collection of Ashley Kistler,  
L2023.5



**Mike Smith**

American, born 1951

**Southwest Virginia, 2002**

Chromogenic print

Mike Smith's work is largely centered on the culture and landscape of his home of Johnson City, Tennessee, and the surrounding areas of rural Appalachia, including southwest Virginia. His photographs explore the connections and disjunctions between rural and urban and past and present in an area that is often stereotyped or forgotten.

Virginia Museum of Fine Arts, Adolph D. and Wilkins C. Williams Fund, 2007.35



**Carrie Mae Weems**

American, born 1953

**Untitled (Boone Plantation), 1992**

Gelatin silver print

In Carrie Mae Weems's *Sea Islands* series, the landscapes of the barrier islands off the coasts of Georgia and South Carolina are centered as sites of history, trauma, and violence. Weems conjures the experiences of enslaved peoples who were forcibly brought there by pairing photographs made on the islands with texts drawn from regional folklore. A serene view of still-extant slave quarters from across a tree-canopied field contrasts with the tragic history of the site. Included alongside is a folktale about enslaved people who could fly home to Africa, a story of liberation in the face of bondage.

High Museum of Art, Atlanta, purchase, 1999.57 a–b.



**Sally Mann**

American, born 1951

**Blowing Bubbles, 1987**

Gelatin silver print

From 1985–1994, Sally Mann photographed her three children—Emmett, Jessie, and Virginia—at the family’s rustic cabin in the Shenandoah Valley. The pictures she created evoke the freedom and tranquility of unhurried days spent exploring outdoors but also capture the complexities of childhood, showing it from both the child and adult’s point of view. In this photograph, Mann presents childhood as at once magical and fleeting. While Jessie delights in producing the shimmering bubbles, Virginia faces us with an anxious expression. If the doll on the railing suggests the innocence of childhood, the pair of abandoned women’s shoes and toy shopping cart hint at its inevitable end.

High Museum of Art, Atlanta, purchase with funds from Lucinda W. Bunnell for the Bunnell Collection, 1995.177



**Rosalind Fox Solomon**

American, born 1930

**New Orleans, Louisiana, 1992**

Gelatin silver print

Rosalind Fox Solomon began taking photographs at thirty-eight years old after moving from New York to Chattanooga and quickly developed a distinctive perspective on the more complex subjects of Southern culture. Many of her photographs explore the social and psychic dimensions of racism and constructions of whiteness. In this youthful display of pomp and pageantry, she presents two girls, gloved and pristinely dressed, on the back of a parade float through New Orleans. The careful composition situates them far above their onlookers on a moving pedestal and confronts the idea that superiority, especially white superiority, is learned, instilled early on, and reinforced by upbringing and community.

High Museum of Art, Atlanta, purchase with funds from Renee Levow, 2021.93



**Rosalind Fox Solomon**

American, born 1930

**Scottsboro, Alabama, 1975**

Gelatin silver print

High Museum of Art, Atlanta, purchase with funds from the H.B. and Doris Massey Charitable Trust, Renee Levow, an anonymous donor, the Patrick Family Foundation, Jane and Clay Jackson, and Joe Williams and Tede Fleming, 2021.92





**Mark Steinmetz**  
American, born 1961

**Girl on Car, Athens, GA, 1996**  
Gelatin silver print

High Museum of Art, Atlanta, purchase with funds from the  
Friends of Photography, 2017.305



**Lucinda W. Bannen**

American, 1930–2022

**Ben Hardaway at Midland Hunt Club, Columbus, Georgia,** from the **Movers and Shakers** series, ca. 1977

Gelatin silver print

Past and present oscillate in Lucinda Bannen's photograph of Benjamin Hardaway III, a businessman and philanthropist from Columbus, Georgia, whose company built crucial infrastructure throughout the Southeast. Bannen depicts Hardaway not as a modern industrial magnate but as an heir to the Old South, as he sits astride a horse surrounded by hounds at his hunting club.

Stuart A. Rose Manuscript, Archives, and Rare Book Library,  
Emory University

**Joel Sternfeld**

American, born 1944

**Domestic workers waiting for the bus, Atlanta, Georgia, 1983**

Dye coupler print

In the tradition of Robert Frank's book *The Americans*, Joel Sternfeld embarked on a nationwide road trip for his book *American Prospects*, which grappled with the state of the country during the Reagan era. Here, three Black women are the only signs of life in the suburban Atlanta neighborhood of Sandy Springs. Driveways segment parcels of land within the seemingly endless subdivision, emphasizing the primary mode of transport for the affluent residents. By contrast, the women wait for public transportation to ferry them to and from their jobs maintaining their employers' homes. Sternfeld's critical stance lays bare the region's income and racial inequalities, still present twenty years after the civil rights movement.

High Museum of Art, Atlanta, gift of Dr. Judy and Kevin Wolman, 2017.466





**Deborah Luster**

American, born 1951

**Donald Garringer, Angola, Louisiana, September 17, 1999**

**Misty Buffington, St. Gabriel, Louisiana, October 22, 2000**

**Concita Dixon, St. Gabriel, Louisiana, October 27, 2000**

**Gary Faley, Angola, Louisiana, March 18, 1999**

**“REAL,” Transylvania, Louisiana, 1999**

**Jenar Jury, St. Gabriel, Louisiana, June 15, 2000**

**Matthew Haynes, Angola, Louisiana, October 27, 2000**

Gelatin silver prints on aluminum

In 1998, Deborah Luster began photographing incarcerated people in Louisiana, aiming to give this population visibility and voice. Some of her sitters posed with objects of importance, while others vividly expressed themselves through gesture and expression. Luster printed the portraits on small metal plates that evoke 19th-century tintypes, intimate objects meant to be touched and handled. On the back of each plate, she recorded information about the sitter, including name, age, length of sentence, prison job, number of children, and future hopes and dreams. While each photograph commemorates an individual's existence, the project serves as a disquieting reminder of the dehumanization, grief, and generational trauma the prison industrial complex produces.

Virginia Museum of Fine Arts, Eric and Jeanette Lipman Fund, 2024.35-41

In the past twenty-five years, the American South has emerged as one of the most dynamic locales for contemporary photographic production and has nurtured both homegrown talents and attracted photographers from across the world who seek to better understand both the region and the nation. For these artists, bearing witness to the people, places, and culture of the American South is crucial to comprehending the United States' collective ethos, and the images these artists produce are key to renegotiating our foundational myths and present realities.

The abiding preoccupations of photographers intent on articulating and scrutinizing the character of the region touch on a range of overlapping topics and themes: the unruly and understated nature of the landscape coupled with the looming threat of climate change; storytelling and mythmaking, with a penchant for the gothic and unsettling; history's persistence in the present and the need to challenge conventional narratives; the rapid urbanization and globalization of the region and the attendant shifting demographics; increasingly visible cultural and political division; and across all these other leitmotifs, race and the long shadow cast by slavery and Jim Crow.

In their efforts to expand and complicate both the myths and realities of the region, these contemporary

photographers prompt us to redefine our concepts of who, and what, counts as American. They also show how the South continues to serve as a crucible of American identity, the uneasy place where our contradictions meet our aspirations.



**RaMell Ross**

American, born 1982

**iHome, 2012**

Pigmented inkjet print

For years, RaMell Ross has immersed himself in Hale County, Alabama, a place made iconic in the history of photography by Walker Evans and William Christenberry. Where Evans and Christenberry studied the white residents and decaying architecture, respectively, Ross focuses on the Black community and their untold stories. In *iHome*, he intertwines present and past by photographing a cell phone screen that shows a white antebellum house, also shown out of focus in the background. He relishes in the anachronism of employing modern technology to view a structure of the past. His inclusion of the hand holding the phone authors a new perspective on time, place, agency, and who gets to write history and imagine the future.

Virginia Museum of Fine Arts, Arthur and Margaret Glasgow Endowment, 2024.17

**Sheila Pree Bright**

American, born 1967

**Untitled 28**, from the **Suburbia** series, 2007

Dye coupler print

In her *Suburbia* series, Sheila Pree Bright creates narratives that allude to socioeconomic status and racial identity. The arrangement of the rooms and their contents invites the viewer to imagine the lives of their inhabitants. Bright's inclusion in this well-appointed mid-century living room of titles such as *The End of Blackness*, books about Frida Kahlo and Pablo Picasso, masks from Africa, and vases from Asia underscore the inhabitant's refinement and expansive cultural sophistication. Bright's carefully composed photographs of the interiors of Black-owned homes in suburban Atlanta seek to counter often-stereotyped representations of Black communities in the mainstream media with a more realistic, nuanced view of middle-class African American family life.

High Museum of Art, Atlanta, purchase with funds from the Hagedorn Family and the Friends of Photography, 2015.344



Zora J. Murff

**Garden with Fruit (after Charles Ethan Porter), 2020**

Inkjet print

A lush still-life of a juicy, cracked watermelon by 19th-century American painter Charles Ethan Porter inspired Zora Murff to construct this photographic collage. When Porter, who was Black, made his painting around 1890, watermelons were highly politicized symbols that possessed dual meanings as both a delicious source of sustenance and even liberation for Black people and an object used to caricature and stereotype them. Recalling how watermelons originated in Africa and through trade and conquest came to America where enslaved people grew them both for others and themselves, Murff describes his fascination with the ways that “benign things become wrapped up with sociopolitical meaning; the color of one’s skin is only a physiological difference, a photograph is only a picture made by a machine, a watermelon is only a piece of fruit.”

Virginia Museum of Fine Arts, National Endowment for the Arts Fund, 2023.23



*Untitled (Cracked Watermelon)*, ca. 1890, Charles Ethan Porter (American, 1847–1923), oil on canvas, 19 1/8 x 28 3/16 in. The Metropolitan Museum of Art/ New York, Purchase, Nancy Dunn Revocable Trust Gift, 2015 (2015.118) Image copyright © The Metropolitan Museum of Art. Image source: Art Resource, NY







**Andrew Moore**  
American, born 1957

**Mrs. Clara Hornsby, Twiggs Street, 2014**  
Inkjet print

Virginia Museum of Fine Arts, Promised Gift of Deborah and  
Mark Wlaz



**José Ibarra Rizo**

American, born Mexico, 1992

**Rose Grower, 2021**

Inkjet print

José Ibarra Rizo's series *Somewhere In Between* documents the Latinx immigrant experience in the American South. Rizo's tender photographs focus on a community that is ubiquitous in the region yet often misrepresented or simply invisible in popular media and political debates. This portrait of a man standing in front of his prized roses—hand tightly grasping a bag of insecticide—was made soon after he retired from a grueling job at a poultry processing plant in Gainesville. Georgia's poultry industry employs numerous immigrants, including the photographer's own parents.

Virginia Museum of Fine Arts, Aldine S. Hartman Endowment Fund, 2023.1343



**Rahim Fortune**

American, born 1994

**Line Me Up, Kyle, Texas, 2020**

Gelatin silver print

Rahim Fortune's self-portrait shows him getting a haircut, his friend's fingers delicately but precisely steadying his head in a gesture of connection and community. Made in 2020, the image is part of the series *I Can't Stand to See You Cry*, in which the artist presents deeply personal images against the backdrop of a national uprising for racial justice and a global pandemic. Fortune's direct-yet-intimate approach to documentary photography pushes against common tropes that fetishize Black struggle or present an overly positive image of Black identity. He embraces the vulnerability of his subjects to create a more nuanced image of contemporary life.

High Museum of Art, Atlanta, purchase with funds from the H.B. and Doris Massey Charitable Trust, 2022.130



**Rahim Fortune**

American, born 1994

**Billy and Minzly, Buda, Texas, 2020**

Gelatin silver print

Courtesy Sasha Wolf Projects



**Susan Worsham**

American, born 1969

**Marine, Hotel near Airport, Richmond, Virginia, 2009**

Pigmented inkjet print

Virginia Museum of Fine Arts, Aldine S. Hartman Endowment Fund, 2017.117



**Peyton Fulford**

American, born 1994

**Rian with Friends, 2017**

Pigmented inkjet print

Though Southern cities like Atlanta, New Orleans, and Savannah have been bastions of queer culture for decades, the religious and social conservatism that pervades in much of the region has rarely foregrounded stories and images of LGBTQIA+ lives. Peyton Fulford's portraits center the queer experience within Southern life. *Rian with Friends* shows a group of gender nonconforming individuals, their bodies gently entwined and physically supporting one another within a lush bucolic setting. The portrait speaks to the complexities and fluidity of gender and expresses a collective identity for people forced to keep their true selves hidden in the face of a stridently resistant political culture.

The Do Good Fund, Inc.



**Gillian Laub**

American, born 1975

**Prom Prince and Princess Dancing at the Integrated Prom, 2011**

Dye coupler print

This photograph is part of Gillian Laub's twelve-year examination of race and inequality in rural Mt. Vernon, Georgia. *Southern Rites* documented Montgomery County High School's prom and homecoming, which were racially segregated almost every year from 1971–2002, when Laub began her investigation. Laub's photo essay, which was published in the *New York Times Magazine*, brought a torrent of attention and outrage upon the town, ultimately ending the practice of segregated proms.

High Museum of Art, Atlanta, gift of Pharrell Williams, 2015.368.7



**Tommy Kha**

American, born 1988

**Constellations (VIII), Prop Planet, Miami, 2017**

Pigmented inkjet print

In this surreal self-portrait, Tommy Kha, the child of Vietnamese and Chinese immigrants who grew up in a suburb of Memphis, Tennessee, made a cardboard cutout of himself dressed in a bedazzled suit and photographed it in a 1950s style prop room. Like Elvis, who appropriated and blended aspects of Black and white southern cultures, Kha, a queer person of color, asserts the mutability and playfulness of identity.

Virginia Museum of Fine Arts, Gift of Mr. and Mrs. Holt Massey, by exchange, 2023.26



**Kris Graves**

American, born 1982

**Lee Square, Richmond, Virginia, 2020**

Pigmented inkjet print

High Museum of Art, Atlanta, purchase with funds from the H.B. and Doris Massey Charitable Trust, 2022.161

**Alex Harris**

American, born 1949

**Thunder Road, Austin, Texas, 2017**

Pigmented inkjet print

Fascinated with the growth of the movie industry in the South, documentary photographer Alex Harris photographed a wide cross section of independent narrative movie productions from Louisiana to Virginia, with a keen eye to how contemporary cinematographers see, imagine, and depict the region. He photographed both the scenes orchestrated for the cameras and the activity that unfolded around the set, often blurring the lines between staged storytelling and actual life. This photograph from the dark comedy *Thunder Road* shows a moment of heightened emotion between two of the film's lead actors. Though the space is compressed by the flanking crew members, their presence also diffuses the tension of the scene by signaling its artifice.

High Museum of Art, Atlanta, commissioned with funds from the H. B. and Doris Massey Charitable Trust and the Picturing the South Fund, 2019.405







**Jill Frank**

American, born 1978

**Candidate, 2018**

Pigmented inkjet print

In the fall of 2018, an unprecedented number of women of color ran for public office, among them Triana Arnold James for Lieutenant Governor of Georgia. During her campaign, she collaborated with photographer Jill Frank to create a series of images that demonstrated the many facets of her life as Army reservist, beauty pageant queen, mother, and women's rights activist. For this portrait, an assistant placed stickers with the slogan "Believe Women" to the candidate's cheek, signaling her alignment with the #MeToo movement.

Courtesy of the artist



**Jim Goldberg**

American, born 1953

**Controlled Burn, Wynne, Arkansas, 2021**

Pigmented inkjet print

In 2020 and 2021, Jim Goldberg traveled to several small towns in Arkansas's Delta region, including Augusta, McCrory, and Wynne. He was interested in how the histories of lineage and land ownership continue to shape the dialogues and perspectives of the Delta's residents. There, he investigated small-town life, looking for visual evidence in the town's landscape, architecture, and familial ties of delicate social dynamics. Of his direct-yet-vibrant color photographs, he explained, "Every small-town has its share of mysteries and secrets, of racial divides, of haves and have nots, of how people dress and present themselves, of how buildings fall apart or are propped up . . . It's all there beneath the surface."

High Museum of Art, Atlanta, commissioned with funds from the H.B. and Doris Massey Charitable Trust and the National Endowment for the Arts for the *Picturing the South* series, 2022.62

**An-My Lê**

American, born Vietnam, 1960

**High School Students after Black Lives Matter  
Protest, Lafayette Park, Washington, DC, 2020**

Pigmented inkjet print

An-My Lê photographed evidence of the social unrest that emerged in Washington, D.C., in 2020 amid the COVID-19 pandemic and the aftermath of the murder of George Floyd. “It often seems that there are two Americas, left and right, looking at the same place from radically different and irreconcilable perspectives,” she explained. Centered here on the waning moment of a protest, with national monuments and federal buildings as the backdrop, Lê takes a wide view to offer context for a scene. She carefully assembles details that reveal how America’s challenges of the past shape and rhyme with the heated debates of the present.

High Museum of Art, Atlanta, commissioned with funds from the Forward Arts Foundation for the Picturing the South series, 2021.143



**Irina Rozovsky**

American, born Russia, 1981

**Untitled (Traditions Highway), 2018**

Inkjet print

Rozovsky's series *Traditions Highway* takes its name from Georgia's State Route 15, a road that runs north-south through the entire state and passes through Sparta and Athens, towns named after ancient Greek cities, the latter of which birthed the concept of democracy. Rozovsky's photographs explore contemporary ideas and expressions of democracy, especially as they are situated in the American South, and examine the ways that past and present are layered in the region. Here, an abandoned carriage decorated with hearts in the woods conjures myriad ideas and feelings: the romanticism and dilapidation of the Old South, the tension between beauty and destruction and between the natural and built environments, and the blurred lines between fantasy and reality.

Virginia Museum of Fine Arts, Kathleen Boone Samuels Memorial Fund, 2024.43





**Jeff Whetstone**

American, born 1968

**Eno River, North Carolina, 2004**

Gelatin silver print

The Do Good Fund, Inc.



**Debbie Fleming Caffery**

American, born 1948

**Stormy Sky, 2016**

Gelatin silver print

High Museum of Art, Atlanta, commissioned with funds from the H.B. and Doris Massey Charitable Trust and the Picturing the South Fund for the *Picturing the South series*, 2018.597

**Mark Steinmetz**

American, born 1961

**International Terminal, Atlanta Airport, 2016**

Gelatin silver print

Mark Steinmetz spent two years photographing in, around, and above Hartsfield-Jackson Atlanta International, the world's most heavily trafficked airport. He considered the activity and interactions that take place at this crossroads of the contemporary South and masterfully captured the ordinary-yet-fascinating human dramas that play out in a decidedly liminal public place. This image of a young woman relaxing on a luggage cart lends a poignant perspective to how this gateway to the wider world is a place of delightful paradoxes: a massive modern complex sitting in the midst of a sublime natural environment; a bustling global transit hub as the site of solitary experiences; and a stifling bureaucratic tangle as a portal to possibility and opportunity.

High Museum of Art, Atlanta, commissioned with funds from the H.B. and Doris Massey Charitable Trust and the Picturing the South Fund for the *Picturing the South series*, 2018.595





**An-My Lê**

American, born Vietnam, 1960

**Explosion**, from the **Small Wars** series, 1999–2002

Gelatin silver print

For her series *Small Wars*, An-My Lê photographed reenactments of Vietnam War battles in North Carolina and Virginia. In these elaborately staged theatrical events with authentically costumed reenactors, Lê photographed in a manner that mirrors the verisimilitude and immediacy of combat photography, blurring the lines between truth and fiction. The blast of fireworks in *Explosion* mimics the burst of an ordinance being discharged, illuminating the surrounding pine trees and thereby revealing that the battle is set in a temperate forest rather than in a dense Vietnamese jungle.

Virginia Museum of Fine Arts, Adolph D. and Wilkins C. Williams Fund, 2022.147



**Irina Rozovsky**

American, born Russia, 1981

**Untitled, Georgia**, from the **Traditions Highway** series, 2018

Pigmented inkjet print

High Museum of Art, Atlanta, purchase with funds from the Patrick Family Foundation and Newell and Tom Harbin, 2023.61



**Mitch Epstein**

American, born 1952

**Biloxi, MS**, 2005

Dye coupler print

The Warehouse, Atlanta





**Alec Soth**

American, born 1969

**Enchanted Forest (36), Texas, 2006**

Pigmented inkjet print

Traveling through the American South, Alec Soth explored the romantic allure of escape through the hermetic lives of outsiders living in the region. He photographed landscapes, structures (tree houses, forts, cabins), and people, primarily men, who choose to live on the outskirts of organized society. Distanced in their compositional and psychological approaches, Soth's photographs demonstrate empathic insight with the desire for solitude, without shying away from the potentially nefarious impulses that motivate some people to withdraw from the mainstream.

High Museum of Art, Atlanta, commissioned with funds from Photo Forum and the Friends of Photography for the *Picturing the South* series, 2009.12



**Angela West**

American, born 1971

**Blackberry Winter, from the My 33rd Spring series, 2003**

Dye destruction print

High Museum of Art, Atlanta, purchase with funds from the H. B. and Doris Massey Charitable Trust and Charlotte Dixon, 2006.180



**Curran Hatleberg**  
American, born 1982

**Untitled (Hole), 2016**  
Pigmented inkjet print

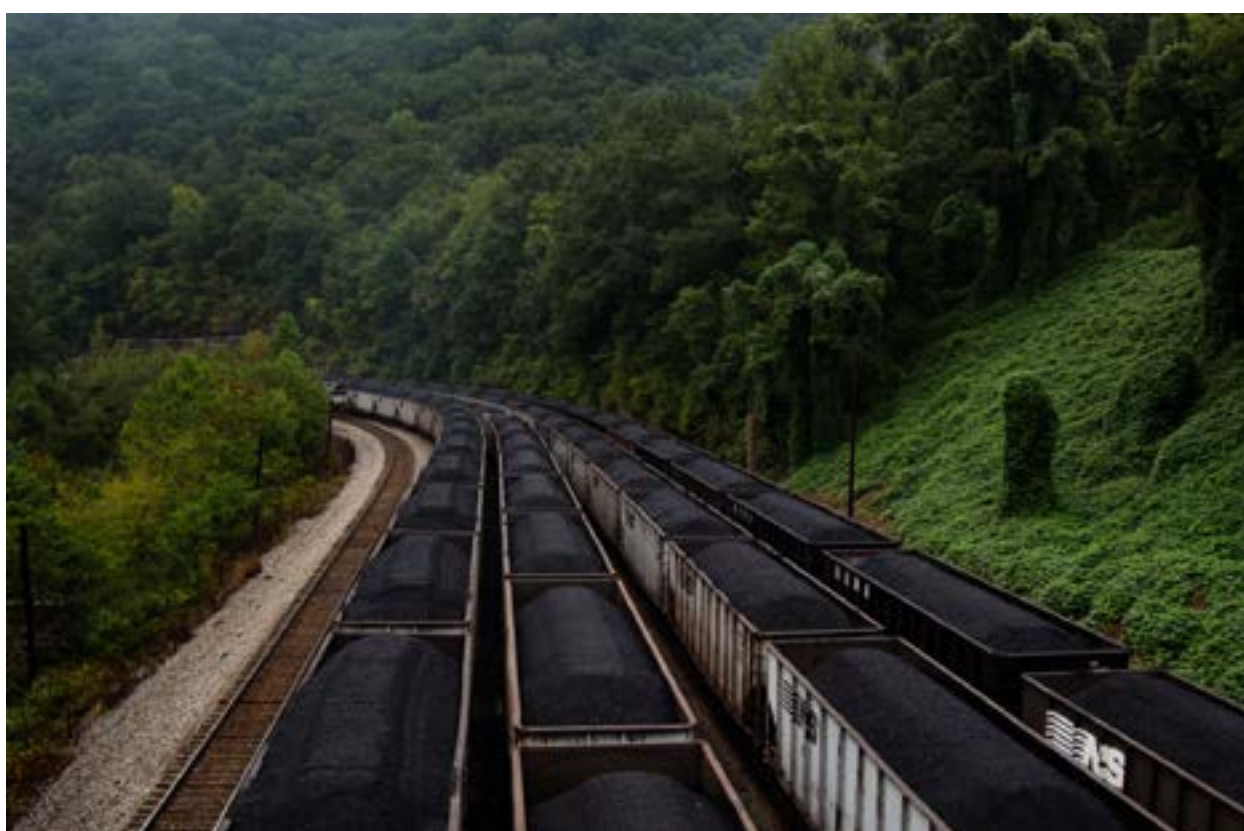
High Museum of Art, Atlanta, purchase with funds from Joe Williams and Tede Fleming, 2022.134

**Rose Marie Cromwell**  
American, born 1984

**Junkyard**, from the **A More Fluid Atmosphere** series,  
2018–19  
Pigmented inkjet print

In her ongoing series *A More Fluid Atmosphere*, Cromwell looks at her hometown of Miami as a microcosm of the increased mixing of global cultures in the United States and as a nexus of the country's struggles with economic inequality, excess, and climate change. By concentrating on lesser-known industrial, residential, and commercial spaces to capture the city's multicultural realities and economic disparities, her rough-hewn images counter the prevailing image of Miami as a sleek and glamorous playground. This photograph of scrap metal verges on abstraction to express a dreamlike state and a sense of disorientation in the face of globalization and climate change, throwing wider cultural and economic shifts into stark relief.

Collection of Erin Hoyt and Emmett Harris, Atlanta





**Stacy Kranitz**

American, born 1976

**Buchanan County, Virginia, 2011**

Pigmented inkjet print

Courtesy of the artist and Tracey Morgan Gallery



**Anastasia Samoylova**

American, born Russia, 1984

**Construction on Normandy Shores, 2017**

Pigmented inkjet print

Anastasia Samoylova's *Floodzone* series examines Miami's self-perpetuated reputation of luxury and glamour and how it converges with the city's daily battle to control the surrounding environment. The desire to build and artificially maintain the status quo contends with an infrastructure that is sinking into the ocean. Here, her conflation of a construction site and its idealized advertising image pointedly captures the city's utopian aspirations—high-rise condominiums are built even as streets are raised to combat flooding. Her dynamic composition acts as a puzzle to deconstruct, and her visual juxtapositions emphasize an absurd humor.

High Museum of Art, Atlanta, purchase with funds from Judy and Scott Lampert in memory of Lucinda W. Bunnell, 2022.160



**Richard Misrach**

American, born 1949

**Swamp and Pipeline, Geismar, Louisiana, 1998**

Pigmented inkjet print

In 1998, Richard Misrach produced a detailed and disturbing visual study of the ecological degradation along a 150-mile section of the Mississippi River between Baton Rouge and New Orleans—a stretch indelibly marked by the more than one hundred petrochemical plants that have spewed pollutants into the air, water, and land surrounding them. Through his evocative large-scale color photographs, Misrach reveals not only the destruction of the Mississippi’s delicate ecosystem but also the layers of history, power, and politics complicit in engineering a system that has both wreaked havoc on the land and covertly exploited and poisoned nearby residents, primarily African Americans.

High Museum of Art, Atlanta, commissioned with funds from the H. B. and Doris Massey Charitable Trust, Lucinda W. Bunnell, and High Museum of Art Enhancement Fund for the *Picturing the South* series, 2012.7



**David Alekhuogie**  
American, born 1986

**Birth Home, 2013**  
Pigmented inkjet print

In 2012, Los Angeles native David Alekhuoghie undertook a self-described pilgrimage to Atlanta to immerse himself in the history of the long fight for racial justice and equality. He visited and photographed numerous sites that resonated with this history, including the birth home of Dr. Martin Luther King Jr.

High Museum of Art, Atlanta, purchase with funds from the Friends of Photography, 2018.11



**Dawoud Bey**

American, born 1953

**Braxton McKinney and Lavone Thomas, 2012**

Pigmented inkjet print

Dawoud Bey's *Birmingham Project* bridges gaps of time to foreground how the past continues to resonate in the present. In this diptych, he reframes the tragic events of September 15, 1963, in Birmingham, Alabama—the bombing of the 16th Street Baptist Church, which killed four African American girls, and in its aftermath, the murder of two African American boys. The series pairs portraits of citizens of contemporary Birmingham: a child the same age as one of the victims with an adult the age the child would have reached had they lived. In this way, Bey memorializes the victims and effectively imagines a future that was never realized.

High Museum of Art, Atlanta, purchase with funds from the Friends of Photography, 2016.238



**Dawoud Bey**

American, born 1953

**Mary Parker and Caela Cowan, 2012**

Pigmented inkjet print

High Museum of Art, Atlanta, purchase with funds from the Friends of Photography, 2016.241



**Kristine Potter**

American, born 1977

**Delia, 2017**

Inkjet print

Courtesy Sasha Wolf Projects

**Kristine Potter**

American, born 1977

**Impasse at Sodom's Creek, 2017**

Inkjet print

In her project *Dark Waters*, Kristine Potter weaves together the rural landscape and narratives drawn from American popular music to explore the nexus of place, gender, and violence in the American South. Intrigued by the musical genre of murder ballads, a type of 19th and early 20th-century folk song that features and even celebrates gendered violence, Potter made theatrical portraits that evoke the victims and heroines of these folk ballads. She placed these imaginative portraits in dialogue with brooding, eerie landscapes produced at places that bear ominous names, referring to the acts of violence celebrated in song. The photographs ask us to contemplate the dark, sublimated aspects of American popular culture, including violence, shame, and fear.

Courtesy Sasha Wolf Projects





**Lucas Foglia**

American, born 1983

**Acorn with Possum Stew, Wildroots Homestead,  
North Carolina, 2006**

Pigmented inkjet print

Lucas Foglia's work examines the complex and delicate dynamic between humans and the natural world, with an emphasis on how belief systems shape our connections to the land. For his series *A Natural Order*, he traveled throughout the Southeast to photograph communities of people who had moved away from populated centers to create a life outside mainstream society, seeking a deeper connection to the land. The people Foglia encountered chose to live "off the grid" for many reasons, including environmental concerns, religious beliefs, or the global economic recession of the early 2000s.

High Museum of Art, Atlanta, gift of Irene Zhou, 2020.143





**Carolyn Drake**

American, born 1971

**Knit Club, 2017–20**

Pigmented inkjet prints

Carolyn Drake's *Knit Club* emerged from a several years-long collaboration with a group of women quilters she befriended in Water Valley, Mississippi. Like the stories these women told, *Knit Club* foregrounds the roles and perspectives of women in building narratives and preserving histories. Drake collaborated with the Knit Club to stage ambiguous scenes that are plausible and take place in familiar domestic settings yet possess surreal qualities expressed through disorienting shifts in scale, compositional disruptions, and enigmatic props such as masks and dollhouses. The photographs subtly evoke uncanny fairy tales and play with common expectations of Southern femininity.

High Museum of Art, Atlanta, purchase with funds from Joe Williams and Tede Fleming, 2022.126.a–bb



**Shane Lavalette**

American, born 1987

**Will with Banjo, 2011**

Pigmented inkjet print

High Museum of Art, Atlanta, commissioned with funds from Paul Hagedorn and the Friends of Photography for the *Picturing the South* series, 2012.27.12

**Kael Alford**

American, born 1971

**Joseph and Jasmon Jackson Play in the Bayou, Isle de Jean Charles, Louisiana, 2010**

Pigmented inkjet print

The Native American enclaves of Isle de Jean Charles and Pointe-aux-Chenes in Louisiana face a rapidly encroaching ocean due to coastal erosion caused by oil drilling and efforts to control the Mississippi River. Drawn to these Native American communities by their connection to the land and her own lineage, Kael Alford evocatively recorded the coastal marshlands and their marginalized inhabitants, who persevere on ancestral ground despite unceasing sea level rise. As she notes, “What is being lost on the coast of Louisiana is more than a neighborhood, or a storm buffer. It’s a piece of our collective memory and a unique piece of heritage that defines us as a nation.”

High Museum of Art, Atlanta, commissioned with funds from Paul Hagedorn, Phyllis and Sidney Rodbell, and the H. B. and Doris Massey Charitable Trust for the *Picturing the South* series, 2012.26.12



