



Slaves of Rebel General Thomas F. Drayton, Henry P. Moore

Slaves of Rebel General Thomas F. Drayton

Henry P. Moore
American, 1862
Albumen silver print
5 1/8 x 8 3/16 in.
84.XM.483.25



Questions for Teaching

Take the time to look closely at this photograph. What details do you notice?

What do you notice about the people in the photograph? *(The people who did not hold still during the exposure are blurred in the photo. All of the people except one are black.)*

When do you think the picture was taken? How do you know?

What do you notice about the clothes people are wearing? *(Most of the people in the photograph are wearing similar clothing and accessories. Several people have raw cotton stuck to their clothing. Women's heads are covered, which was a custom imposed on female slaves. The person in front is wearing a soldier's uniform.)*

What do you notice about where the soldier is posed in the composition? What do you think is the relationship between the soldier and the other men and women? *(The soldier is standing in the front as though he is overseer or master of the slaves behind him.)*

How are the women in this photograph posed differently from the men? *(Most are sitting down.)* What might this difference tell us about how women were viewed during the time when this photograph was taken? *(Women may have been considered inferior to men. On the other hand, they may have been considered more important or respected since they are positioned in front of the men and their seats on the ground could have been deemed more comfortable.)*

The photograph depicts a group of slaves who worked with cotton. Look closely at the ground and background. What other objects can you identify that will give you clues about the setting? *(Moore's photograph shows a glimpse of the landscape including several plantation buildings. Tarp and cotton can be seen on the ground. Also visible are carts and wooden tools that were built and repaired by slaves and used for sorting, storing, and ginning cotton.)*

Slaves of Rebel General Thomas F. Drayton, Henry P. Moore

Background Information

This photograph, depicting a large group of slaves, was taken by Henry P. Moore at Hilton Head, South Carolina, in 1862. In 1860, fourteen prominent families and their slaves lived on Hilton Head and most spent their time off the island. At the time the picture was made, Hilton Head's population had grown to over forty thousand individuals and included Union troops, civilian storekeepers, missionaries, prisoners of war, and slaves seeking refuge from their owners.

In 1856, soldier Thomas Fenwick Drayton took control of his wife's parents' seven-hundred-acre Fish Haul Plantation. The plantation was largely dedicated to producing cotton. Fifty-two slaves worked and lived on the plantation.

This image is one of several Moore made at Hilton Head. Revealing the everyday lives of slaves and former slaves, his photographs from this period include images of slaves' living quarters and workers ginning and sorting cotton. This image depicts slaves who were in the process of being made free by the federal government. The white soldier, who was likely a Union soldier, is standing in the front as though he is overseer or master. Details of the slaves' clothing and accessories can be seen in this picture. The women, who are all sitting in a lower position, relative to the men, are wearing wraps or kerchiefs on their heads. This African style was perpetuated in the United States by descendants of the original slaves from Africa. Although some garments worn by slaves could be bought ready-made, much of the clothing on a plantation was tailored by enslaved seamstresses.

About the Artist

Henry P. Moore (American, 1835–1911)

Born in Goffstown, New Hampshire, Henry P. Moore worked as a lithographer, printmaker, and photographer. He was the oldest of five children when his widowed father remarried and moved to Concord, New Hampshire. There, his family ran a prominent tavern that provided food, lodging, and entertainment for travelers, and Moore was praised for his singing, banjo playing, and skills as an entertainer. After Moore's father passed away when Henry was eleven, his step mother scaled down the business and opened a boarding house. Moore lived at the boarding house with his step mother until he was in his early twenties.

Like many other aspiring American artists during the mid-nineteenth century, Moore decided to work in the print industry. He sketched and published town views from 1854 to 1860. How Moore learned photography remains a mystery. However, by age twenty-seven his peers described him as a "well known photographer." A savvy businessman, his photography studio on the island of Hilton Head, South Carolina, comprised a tent set up in a sandy cotton field.

Like his contemporary Timothy O' Sullivan (see O'Sullivan's biography on the Getty Web site at www.getty.edu/art/gettyguide/artMakerDetails?maker=1928), Moore's photographs taken during the American Civil War in South Carolina and Georgia differed from the typical photographs of the day. Rather than shooting posed portraits of officers in a studio, Moore shot on location and captured images of former slaves, soldiers in camps, and Navy warships.