

# Family Portraits

Historic New England has many family portraits in its collections. Before photography, families posed in their homes for painters and silhouette-makers. When photography was first invented, families put on their best clothes and visited photographers' studios, just as we still do today. Once cameras became more readily available and easier to use, people took their own family portraits, at home and on vacation.

Look at the images on the following pages with your students. Before looking at the captions, try asking the "5 W's" questions. You probably won't be able to answer all of the questions just from the portraits, but it will help your students think critically and imaginatively about them.

Have students create their own family portraits. Young students can draw their families. Who do they want to include in the picture? What will the setting be? Home? A favorite vacation spot? Older students can use cameras to take family portraits. Again, who will they include in the photos? Where will they take the photo? Will they ask their family members to dress up? If they can't get all the people together at the same time, they could create collages with photos of individual people.



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# 5 W's Question Sheet

When you look at historic family portraits, ask the following questions. You probably won't be able to answer them all, but they help you think critically about each image.

Who is in the picture? \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

Who created the picture? \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

Where was the picture created? \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

When was the picture created? \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

Why was the picture created? \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

What else is in the picture (other than the people)? \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

How was the picture created? \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_



Roger and Marjorie Curtis Pierce (seated), with their children Anne Grenway and Roger Curtis Pierce, in front of their home (now known as the Pierce House Museum) in Dorchester, Mass. 1940.  
Photographer Unknown.



Studio Portrait of an Unidentified Family, Boston, Massachusetts, c.1885.  
Photographer: Lemuel Wallace Cook (dates unknown)





Silhouette of the family of Samuel Appleton, Boston, Massachusetts, c.1840-1850.  
Artist: Auguste Edouart (1789-1861).

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Draw a family portrait or attach a photograph of your family here.



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