

## Looking for Clues

This learning activity teaches students how to extract information from historical photographs, how photographs were taken in the past, and why photographs are important in understanding and recording history.

Time required: 20 to 30 minutes

### Materials

- Two photographs
  - Photo 1 Exterior of Royal Oak Grocery in 1913
  - Photo 2 Interior of Royal Oak Grocery in 1913

### Instructions

- Have students look at the photographs carefully and discuss what they see in each photo

### Ideas for Discussion

#### People

- Who are the people in the photograph?
- How old are they?
- What can you tell about them from the clothes they are wearing?
- What are the people doing?

#### Place

- Where was the photograph taken (e.g. indoors, outdoors, city or rural area)?
- What time of day, or year, was it taken?
- What do the signs tell you?
- Where's the post office inside the store?
- Can you describe some of the things for sale in the store?
- What's in the barrel inside the store?

#### Technology

- What are the horses and wagons for?
- What would you use today in place of a horse and wagon?
- Are the roads paved and are there sidewalks? Why not?

#### Photography

- Who do you think took this photo?
- Why are the people not smiling?
  - *Explain that cameras were expensive and few people could afford to have their picture taken so being photographed was a special occasion*

- *It could take 30 seconds to 2 minutes for each photograph to be taken so people were careful to stand still and not blur the picture. Could you stand still for that long?*
- Would this make historical photographs more precious?
- How easy is it to have your picture taken today?

**Do the students have any other observations about the photographs?**