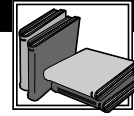


Chapter 22 Biography Activity

The development of photography in the mid-1800s was both a step forward in technology and a new art form (textbook pages 576–577). One person who helped develop the new art was an English woman who became famous for her remarkable portraits. ♦ *As you read, think about the kind of imagination it takes to use new technology artistically. Then, on a separate sheet of paper, answer the questions that follow.*

Julia Margaret Cameron (1815–1879)

Julia Margaret Cameron was a somewhat eccentric woman who took a clumsy camera—a new fad in Victorian England—and became one of the first artistic and imaginative photographers. She made remarkable portraits of prominent people, including the poets Tennyson and Longfellow, the historian Thomas Carlyle, the actress Ellen Terry, and the astronomer Sir John Herschel.

Julia Cameron was in her forties when she began her photographic work. She had grown up and married in Calcutta, India, where her father worked in the British colonial civil service. Her family was noted for being eccentric, but she was generous and energetic. When word reached India of the 1845 famine in Ireland, she almost single-handedly raised 14,000 pounds sterling to send as relief.

In 1848 Cameron returned to England with her husband and six children and, through her sisters, met many noted painters and poets. Well-educated, she herself published poetry and translated some European literature. She was not beautiful like her sisters, but she dressed colorfully, often draped in velvet or bright Indian shawls.

The Cameron family moved in 1860 to the Isle of Wight, off southern England, where they were

neighbors of Tennyson. The Camerons' hospitality was well known, and many famous people visited them there. Julia's husband, along with several of their sons, spent much of his time at his coffee plantations on Ceylon (now Sri Lanka).

In 1863, fearing her mother would be lonely, one of Julia Cameron's daughters gave her a camera and darkroom equipment. In a few years she became skillful and artistic in using it. She turned a chicken coop into a studio and a coal shed into a darkroom. She posed her friends and family in the romantic poses that were fashionable at the time but also made serious portraits of all the interesting people she could arrange to meet—famous men and beautiful women. She wanted, she said, to record “the greatness of the inner man as well as the features of the outer man.”

Her photographs illustrated an edition of Tennyson's long poem *Idylls of the King*.

Cameron never worked as a professional photographer, but she showed her portraits in London and in international exhibitions. She won medals in Austria, Germany, and the United States as well as in England. In 1875 she went out to Ceylon to join her family and later died there.

“... the greatness
of the inner man as
well as the features of
the outer man.”

Questions to Think About

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|--|---|
| 1. How did Julia Margaret Cameron get started as a photographer? | 3. Recognizing Ideologies What do you think Julia Margaret Cameron wanted to show in her photographic portraits? |
| 2. What kind of photographs made Cameron well known? | |