



Composition in Photography

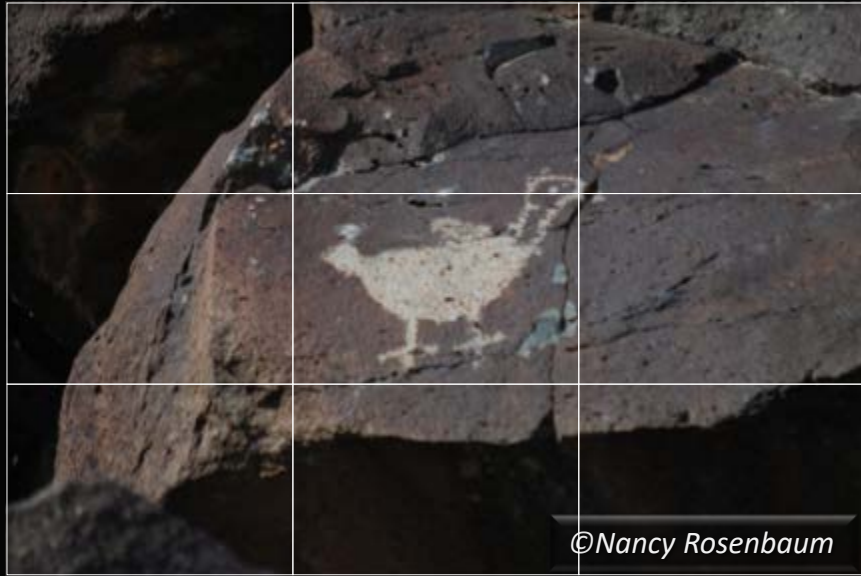
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June 2019

Composition

- Components
 - Rule of Thirds
 - Leading the Eye; Lines
 - Rhythm and Patterns
 - Framing and Orientation
 - Focus
 - Depth of Field
 - Focal Length
 - Point of View
 - Distractions, Mergers, and Intrusions
- Nature Photography
- Portrait Photography
- Gallery

The Rule of Thirds



Find Lines

- Lines lead the eye from one point to another
- Horizontals can convey stability, calm
- Verticals can convey strength, solidity, and power
- Diagonals can convey motion and energy
- Arcs and semi-circles can isolate, emphasize, and frame an area
- Patterns create rhythm and movement



Lines, Continued



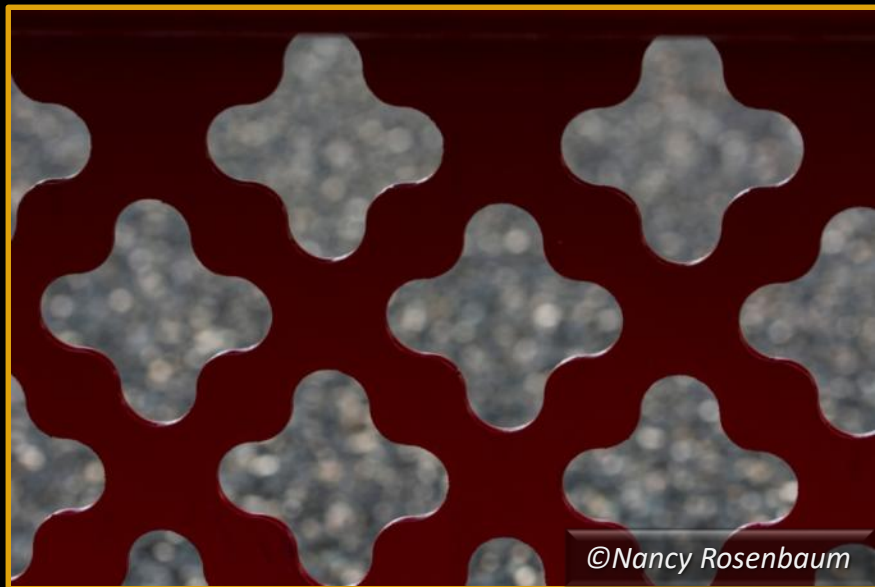
Lead the Eye into the Picture



Rhythm and Patterns

- We are attuned to finding patterns and find them interesting
- Rhythm and patterns use elements that are repeated:
 - Lines
 - Shapes
 - Colors
 - Tones
- Types of rhythm:
 - Repetition
 - Alternation
 - Progression
 - Undulation
- Emphasize the pattern:
 - Fill the frame end-to-end to suggest that the pattern goes on
- Break the pattern:
 - Capture the disruption in the flow and give the image a focal point

Rhythm and Patterns



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Rhythm and Patterns



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Rhythm and Patterns



Framing

- Filling the frame
 - How near or far will be the subject appear to the viewer?
 - Do you want the subject to fill the frame?
 - What other objects are in the frame (e.g., foreground and background objects)?
 - Do they support the visual story you are telling?
 - How do they contribute to or detract from the composition?
- Natural frames - use to your advantage
 - Look for natural elements to draw the eye to the subject
 - In landscapes, foreground objects can provide a sense of scale
- Arrangement of objects in the frame
 - Zoom in or out
 - Move closer or farther away

Filling the Frame



Natural Frames



Orientation

- Does the subject lend itself to either a vertical or horizontal orientation?



Orientation



Focus

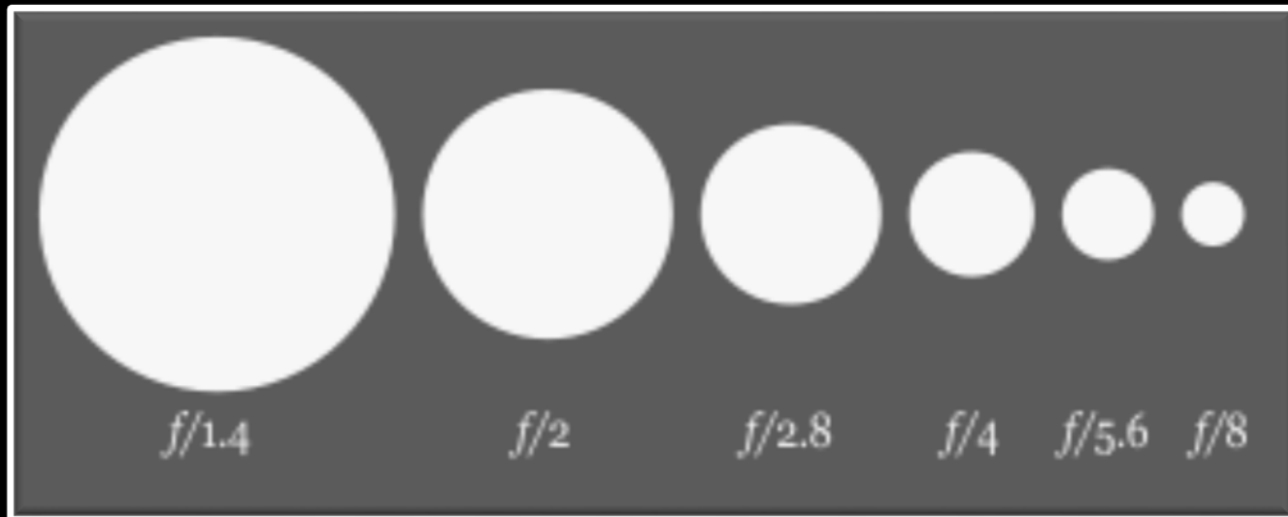
Out-of-focus objects in the foreground can be distracting



Depth of Field

Distance between the nearest and farthest objects in a scene that appear acceptably sharp in an image

- Small f/ number = large aperture = shallow depth of field
- Large f/ number = small aperture = long depth of field
- Longer focus distance = longer depth of field
- Longer focal length lens (e.g., telephoto = shorter depth of field)



Depth of Field



Focal length: 135 mm
Aperture: f/5.0
Subj. distance: 6.9 ft



Focal length: 18 mm
Aperture: f/3.5
Subj. distance: infinity

Depth of Field



Focal length: 82 mm
Aperture: f/8.0
Subj. distance: 4.6 ft



Focal length: 200 mm
Aperture: f/5.6
Subj. distance: 41 ft

Point of View

- Changing your position relative to the subject can make a scene more exciting
 - Get high; get low
 - Find a unique angle
 - Try going eye level with your subject

Point of View



Point of View



Point of View



Point of View



Pay Attention to the Light



The Golden Hours

Period of daytime shortly after sunrise or before sunset, during which daylight is redder and softer than when the Sun is higher in the sky



St. Marks Cathedral, mid-day



St. Marks Cathedral, just before sunset

Focal Length

- “Normal”
 - Field of view reproduces what the human eye would see
 - Relationships between distances appears “normal” to us
 - Focal length = diagonal size of the film or sensor
 - FL = 50 mm in a 35 mm camera; 28 mm in DX sensor camera; 22 mm in a four-thirds sensor camera)
- Wide angle
 - Field of view is wider than the eye would normally see
 - Objects appear farther away
 - Relationships between distances appear greater
 - FL numbers are less than the normal FL
- Telephoto
 - Field of view is narrower than the eye would normally see
 - Objects appear closer
 - Relationships between distances appear smaller
 - FL numbers are greater than the normal FL

Telephoto



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Wide Angle



Focal Length



Focal length: 55 mm



Focal length: 98 mm

Focal Length



Normal
Focal length: 35 mm



Wide Angle
Focal length: 18 mm

Distractions

- Distractions
- Train yourself to look at every element and object in the frame:
- Are there unwanted objects in the foreground or background?
- Are there places where colors or values (light/dark) are so similar that the subject seems to disappear into the background?
- Is there an extremely bright or dark spot that draws the eye away from the subject?

Intrusions

Unwanted objects that detract from the composition



Intrusions



Intrusions



Mergers

Two or more overlapping objects that appear to be joined



Mergers



Mergers

Border merger: object(s) cut off in an awkward place



Bright Spots or “Black Holes”

- The brightest values pull our attention
- Large areas of low value can also be a distraction



Seven Principles of Nature Photography Composition

- Clarify your message
- Keep it simple
- Be patient
- Fill the frame
- Consider verticals
- Find lines
- Place subjects off-center

from the *Beginner's Guide To Nature Photography* by Cub Kahn

Low OBX Sound, Ed Campion

<https://www.flickr.com/photos/gsfcpphoto/17634635099/in/photostream/>

Dawn in the Dunes - Karen Smale

<https://www.flickr.com/photos/gsfcpphoto/17237914874/in/photostream/>

Portrait Composition

- Fill the frame with your subject
- Keep eyes in the upper third
- Use framing to concentrate all attention on your subject
- Create texture
- Use lines
- Change your angles

6 Tips for Perfect Composition in Portrait Photography by [Christina N Dickson](#)

Read more: <http://www.digital-photography-school.com/6-tips-for-perfect-composition-in-portrait-photography#ixzz1mB7Y82zC>

Portraits



GALLERY

Photo Club Member Selections

On the Other Side of the Fence, Bob Haines: <https://www.flickr.com/photos/gsfcpphoto/17690996118/>

Brittney - Child's Play, Bonnie Bradley: <https://www.flickr.com/photos/gsfcpphoto/17240888853/in/photostream/>

Don't Hate Me Because I'm Beautiful, Scott Hull:

<https://www.flickr.com/photos/gsfcpphoto/17659197010/in/photostream/>

Ocean City Boardwalk at Sunset, Ed Campion:

<https://www.flickr.com/photos/gsfcpphoto/17818083992/in/photostream/>

Untitled, Bob Peters: <https://www.flickr.com/photos/gsfcpphoto/17176673254/in/photostream/>

Los Morrillos Lighthouse, Adán Rodríguez-Arroyo:

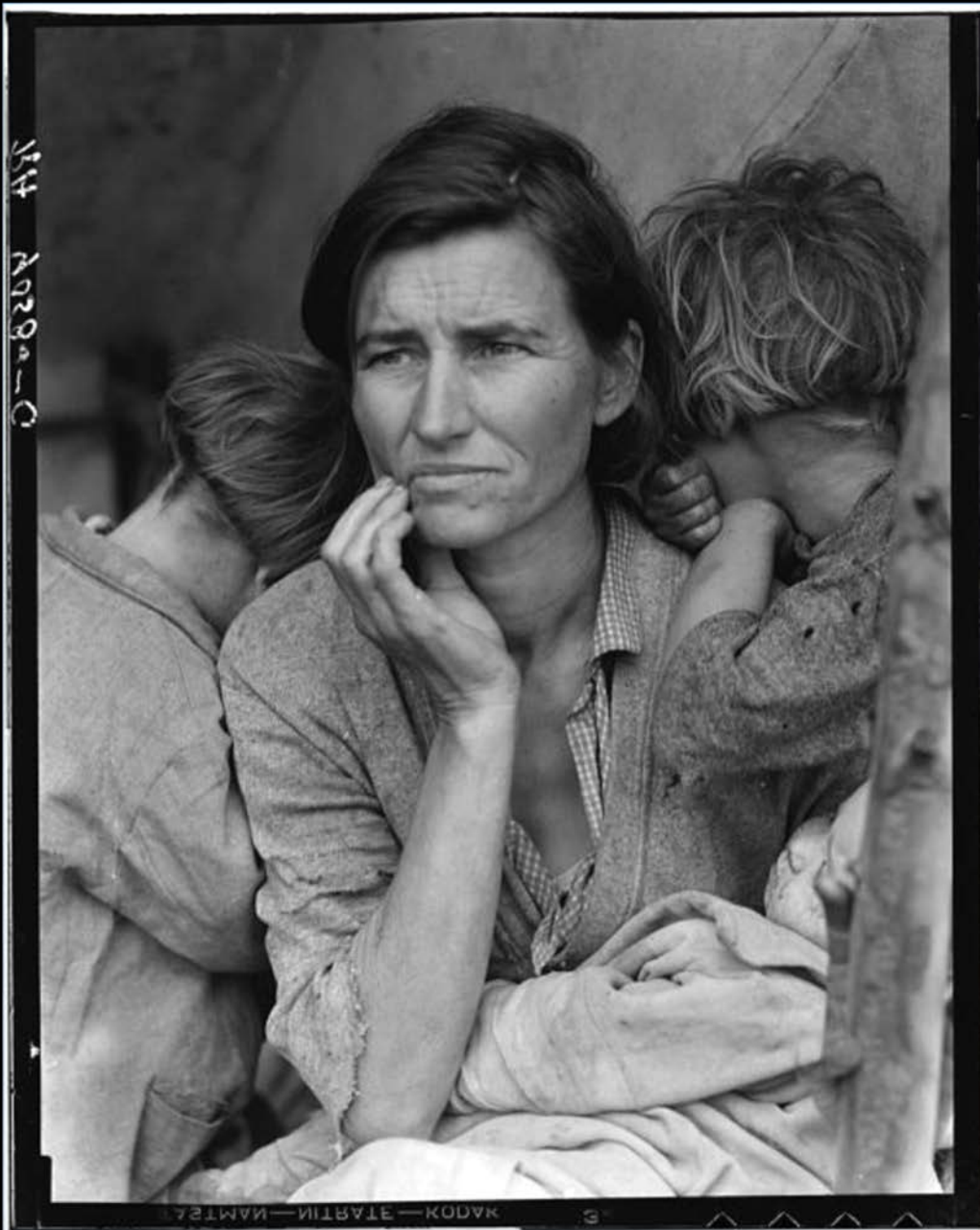
<https://www.flickr.com/photos/gsfcpphoto/17565712510/in/photostream/>

Cascade, Buttermilk Falls, NY, Melissa Meyers:

<https://www.flickr.com/photos/gsfcpphoto/17454899399/in/photostream/>

Tree Hugger, Karen Johnson: <https://www.flickr.com/photos/gsfcpphoto/17020599483/in/photostream/>

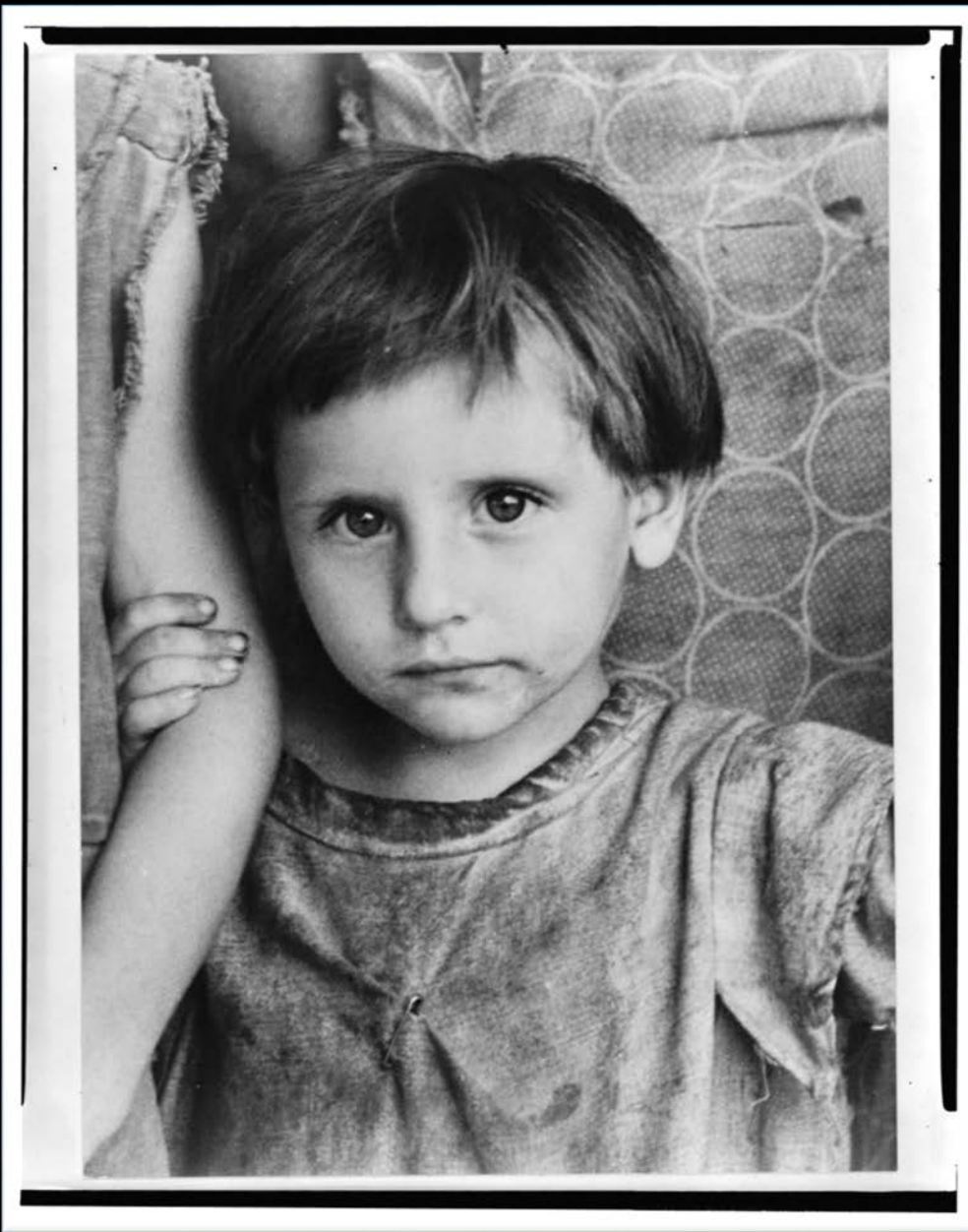
Peruvian Boat Ride, Kimberly Engle: <https://www.flickr.com/photos/gsfcpphoto/17584982156/in/photostream/>



Dorothea Lange

Migrant Mother, 1936

Courtesy Library of Congress



Walker Evans

Laura Minnie Lee Tenge , 1935

Courtesy Library of Congress



Thomas Askew

Courtesy Library of Congress

Atlanta University, Georgia, 1899
6/20/19

Goddard Photo Club



American Colony (Jerusalem), Photo Dept.

Egyptian camel transport passing over Olivet, 1918

6/20/19

Goddard Photo Club

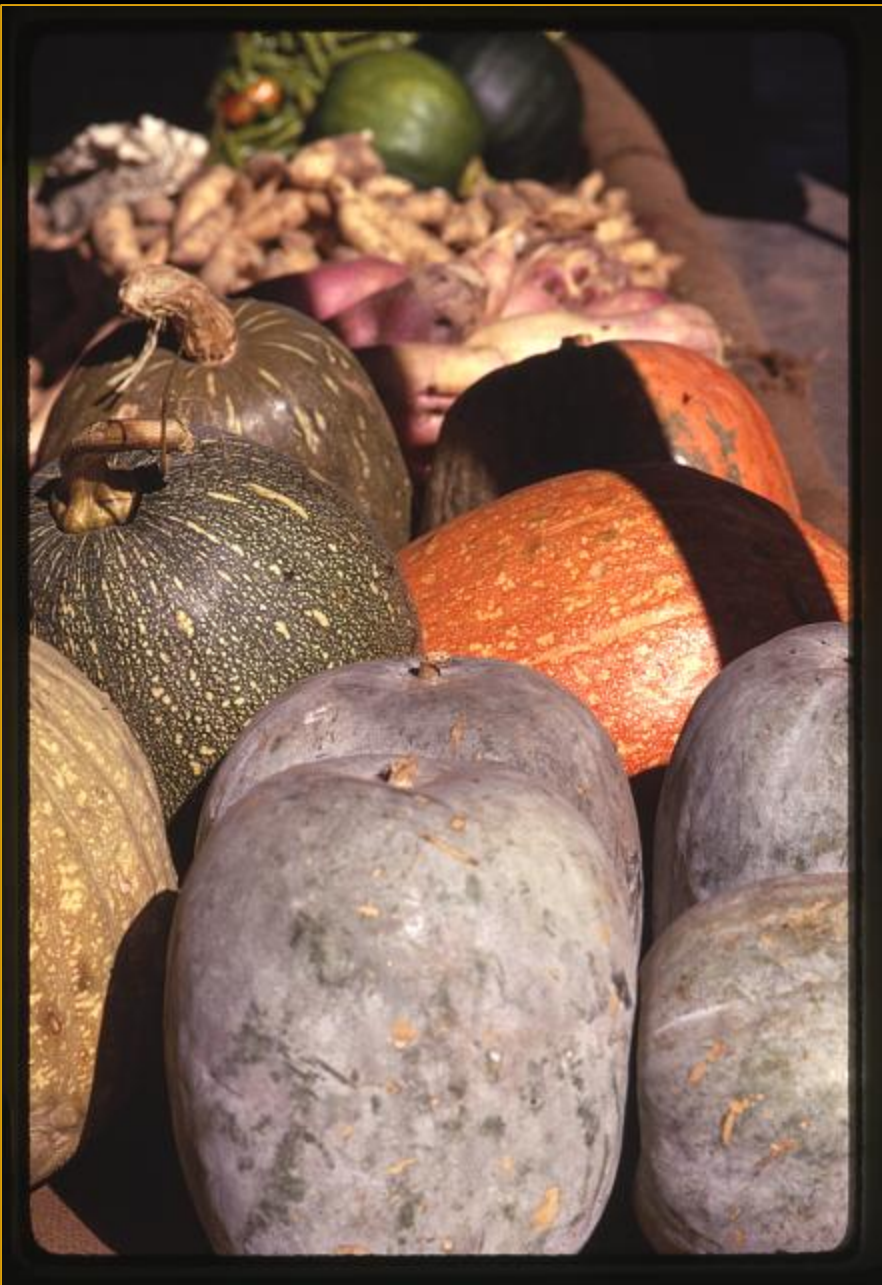
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Alice S. Kandell

Courtesy Library of Congress

Mount Kānchenjunga, Third Highest Mountain in the World, btw. 1965-1979



Alice S. Kandell

**Sikkim, Oversized Melons
and Fruit Grow, 1969**

Courtesy Library of Congress

Abdullah Frères

Tuberculosis Ward of the Hasköy Hospital for Women, btw. 1880 - 1893



Courtesy Library of Congress