

## Teaching with Primary Sources Across Tennessee

### LESSON ACTIVITY : Skyline Farms, Alabama: A New Deal Community



[Men "asettin," Skyline Farms, Alabama, near Scottsboro](#) [1936]

#### ACTIVITY

1. Read the [Encyclopedia of Alabama article on Skyline Farms](#). This article provides a brief history of the colony. Students can read the article themselves or you can summarize the article for them.
2. Have students search the [Prints & Photographs Collection](#) (keyword: Skyline Farms Alabama) for images of the colony in the 1930s (see “Selected Images from the Library of Congress” on the next page for more images of Skyline Farms). The images offer glimpses into various elements of life at Skyline Farms, including education, music, dance, work, home life, and crafts.
3. Have students pick one of these topics and find images that relate to it.
4. Students should use the [Primary Source Analysis Tool](#) to analyze the photographs they have chosen. Teachers should refer to the [Teacher's Guide, Analyzing Photographs & Prints](#) to prompt discussion.
5. Is Skyline Farms portrayed as positive or negative? What did you learn from the photographs?
6. Then have students pretend that they were hired in the 1930s to create a poster or a brochure advertising life at the colony. Students should think about who the audience is for their poster or brochure. Is it aimed at colony members or the general public? Have students share their work with the class.

#### OVERVIEW

This lesson activity explores the community of Skyline Farms, Alabama, formally known as Cumberland Mountain Farms, through photographs. Three Farm Security Administration photographers, Arthur Rothstein, Carl Mydans, and Ben Shahn, photographed Skyline Farms between 1935 and 1937.

#### GRADE LEVELS & SUBJECTS

5th grade Social Studies (Tennessee)

4th & 6th grade Social Studies, English, and Visual Arts (Alabama)

#### ADDITIONAL ACTIVITY

1. Read the article, “[Hard Times in Sharp Focus: Online Collection Show America, 1935-1945](#),” by Meg Smith on the Library of Congress Web site, and summarize for students.
2. Then, show students the untitled image below of three children at Skyline Farms. Point out the black circle in the image.
3. Search the [Prints & Photographs Collection](#) (keyword: Skyline Farms Alabama) to find other images of these three children. Compare and contrast the photographs. Why did Stryker hole punch this negative? Why do photographers take multiple images of the same subject? How do you think photographers felt when their images were “killed”? Look [here](#) and [here](#) for more hole punched images of Skyline Farms.



[Untitled](#) [1935-1942]

## EXTENSION

Search the [Prints & Photographs Collection](#) for images from another community established by the Resettlement Administration, such as Gee's Bend. Compare these photographs to the ones taken of Skyline Farms. How are they similar? How are they different?

## NOTE ON FINDING IMAGES

Additional images of Skyline Farms that are untitled, such as the ones featured on page 3, can be found on the Library of Congress Web site by first searching the [Farm Security Administration/Office of War Information Black-And-White Negatives Collection](#) (keyword: Skyline Farms Alabama), then clicking on an image, and then selecting, "Browse neighboring items by call number." Since the images are untitled and are often located next to untitled images of other communities, you must carefully examine each untitled photo to determine whether or not it is of Skyline. Compare and contrast titled photos of Skyline with untitled images. Ask yourself, are there similar features (i.e. people, architectural components, landscape)?



[View Larger](#)  
[JPEG \(60kb\)](#) | [JPEG \(106kb\)](#) | [TIFF \(20.0mb\)](#)

digital file from intermediary roll film  
<http://hdl.loc.gov/loc.pnp/fsa.8a17204>

**Related**

- [Browse neighboring items by call number.](#) ←

Collection: [Farm Security Administration/Office of War Information Black-and-White Negatives](#)

### Square dance, Skyline Farms, Alabama

[About This Item](#) [Obtaining Copies](#) [Access to Original](#)

**Title:** Square dance, Skyline Farms, Alabama  
**Creator(s):** [Shahn, Ben, 1898-1969](#), photographer  
**Related Names:**  
[United States. Resettlement Administration.](#)  
**Date Created/Published:** 1937.  
**Medium:** 1 negative : nitrate ; 35 mm.  
**Part of:** Farm Security Administration - Office of War Information Photograph Collection (Library of Congress)  
**Reproduction Number:** LC-USF33-006281-M1 (b&w film nitrate neg.)  
**Rights Advisory:** No known restrictions. For information, see U.S. Farm Security Administration/Office of War Information Black & White Photographs([http://www.loc.gov/rr/print/res/071\\_fsab.html](http://www.loc.gov/rr/print/res/071_fsab.html))  
**Call Number:** LC-USF33- 006281-M1 [P&P]  
**Other Number:** E 905  
**Repository:** Library of Congress Prints and Photographs Division Washington, DC 20540 USA <http://hdl.loc.gov/loc.pnp/pp.print>  
**Notes:**  
- Title and other information from caption card.

## TENNESSEE CURRICULUM STANDARDS

### 5th grade Social Studies

- 5.1.tpi.7. give examples of folk tales, art, or music that represent a particular culture or time period.
- 5.5.tpi.7. analyze primary sources not limited to but including artifacts, diaries, letters, photographs, art, documents, newspapers, contemporary media, and computer information systems to make generalizations about events and life in United States history since 1865.

## ALABAMA CURRICULUM STANDARDS

### 4th grade Social Studies

- 12. Explain effects of the events of the 1920s and the Great Depression on different socioeconomic groups.

### 4th grade English

- 12. Organize information on a specific topic obtained

from grade-appropriate reference materials. Examples: dictionaries, online resources, thesauruses, atlases, news and feature articles.

### 4th grade Visual Arts

- 2. Use traditional and digital media in the production of graphic design to communicate ideas and feelings.

### 6th grade Social Studies

- 7. Identify causes of the Great Depression  
Describing the effect of the Great Depression on the people of the United States

### 6th grade English

- 8. Compose in persuasive mode for a specific purpose and audience, including clearly stated opinions with supporting details and reasons or examples to influence thought or action.

### 6th grade Visual Arts

- 7. Describe historical and cultural influences on works of art.

## Selected Images from the Library of Congress



[Untitled](#) [1935-1942]  
<http://www.loc.gov/pictures/item/fsa1997017184/PP/>



[Untitled](#) [1935-1942]  
<http://www.loc.gov/pictures/item/fsa1997017209/PP/>



[Untitled](#) [1935-1942]  
<http://www.loc.gov/pictures/item/fsa1997017156/PP/>



[Untitled](#) [1935-1942]  
<http://www.loc.gov/pictures/item/fsa1997002029/PP/>



[Untitled](#) [1935-1942]  
<http://www.loc.gov/pictures/item/fsa1997007253/PP/>



[Untitled](#) [1935-1942]  
<http://www.loc.gov/pictures/item/fsa1997017188/PP/>