

Teaching with Primary Sources Across Tennessee

COMPARING & CONTRASTING COMMUNITIES: CUMBERLAND HOMESTEADS, TN & SKYLINE FARMS, AL

Grades: 9-12

Subjects: U.S. History

Time Required: Two 50-60 minute class periods

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OVERVIEW

In this lesson plan, students will compare and contrast two Resettlement Administration Communities: Cumberland Homesteads, TN and Skyline Farms, AL. Students will analyze photographs taken by Farm Security Administration photographers of the communities in the 1930s in order to learn similarities and differences as well as understand how images can be used as propaganda.

GOAL

Students will

- Learn how to analyze photographs
- Understand the similarities and differences between Cumberland Homesteads and Skyline Farms
- Understand how photographs and posters are used as propaganda

OBJECTIVES

The learner will

- Analyze a photograph of Cumberland Homesteads or Skyline Farms
- Compare and contrast images of Cumberland Homesteads and Skyline Farms
- Analyze a Resettlement Administration poster to understand how posters were used as propaganda
- Understand how FSA photographs were used as propaganda

INVESTIGATIVE QUESTION

What can you learn about life in Cumberland Homesteads and Skyline Farms from comparing, contrasting, and analyzing photographs of the communities, and how were photographs and posters used as propaganda in the 1930s?



Trading post at Cumberland Homesteads, Crossville, Tennessee (1936)



Skyline Farms store, Alabama (1937)

CURRICULUM STANDARDS

9th-12th grade U.S. History, Era 8 State Performance Indicators:

8.4 Identify the changes in social and cultural life caused by the Great Depression and the Dust Bowl (i.e., Hoovervilles, Bonus Army, migrations, worldwide economic depression, Democrat Victory in 1932, widespread poverty, unemployment, religious revivalism).

8.6 Identify New Deal Programs/Initiatives (i.e., Social Security, WPA, TVA, Indian Reorganization Act, FDIC, CCC, Wagner/Fair Labor Standards' Act)

Teacher Performance Indicators:

8.10 Assess the lasting impact of the New Deal (e.g., political parties, social security, works projects).

MATERIALS

- [Primary Source Analysis Tool](#)
- [Teacher's Guide, Analyzing Photographs & Prints](#)
- Worksheet (see p. 7)

RESOURCES

- Campbell, David, "Skyline Farms," from *Encyclopedia of Alabama*. <http://www.encyclopediaofalabama.org/face/Article.jsp?id=h-1546>
- Straw, Elizabeth A., "Cumberland Homesteads," from *The Tennessee Encyclopedia of History and Culture*. <http://tennesseeencyclopedia.net/entry.php?rec=339>
- Bryson, Bernarda, "A mule and a plow—Resettlement Administration—Small loans give farmers a new start," [poster]. <http://www.loc.gov/pictures/item/97520475/>
- "History of the Cumberland Homesteads," by *Cumberland Homesteads Tower Association*. <http://cumberlandhomesteads.org/history.html>



Dancers taught by Leonard Kirk, Cumberland Homesteads, Crossville, Tennessee [1937]



Square dance, Skyline Farms, Alabama [1937]

PROCEDURE

Day 1:

Step 1:

Before beginning this lesson, students should have some knowledge about the Great Depression and the Resettlement Administration (RA). Have students research these topics in the school library or on the Internet. What is the Resettlement Administration? Why was it created? How did the program affect farmers? What is the significance of the RA in Tennessee's history?

Step 2:

Before class, print two copies of the [Primary Source Analysis Tool](#); the poster, "[A mule and a plow--Resettlement Administration--Small loans give farmers a new start](#)"; and the Worksheet (on page 7) for each student. Also, try to reserve a computer lab for the class. If you are unable to reserve a computer lab then print out the following items: the article, "[Cumberland Homesteads](#)," in *The Tennessee Encyclopedia of History and Culture* (enough for half of the class), and the article, "[Skyline Farms](#)," in the *Encyclopedia of Alabama* (enough for half the class).

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PROCEDURE (continued from p. 2)

Step 2: (cont.) In addition, search the [Prints & Photographs Collection](#) on the Library of Congress Web site (keywords: “Cumberland Homesteads” and “Skyline Farms”) for photographs of Cumberland Homesteads and Skyline Farms. Print out a different photo for each student in the class (half the class will be assigned Cumberland Homesteads, and the other half will be assigned Skyline Farms).

Step 3: Divide the class into two groups. One group will be researching Cumberland Homesteads, Tennessee and the other group will be researching Skyline Farms (formally Cumberland Mountain Farms), Alabama.

Step 4: INVESTIGATE Depending on what group students are assigned, have each student read the article, “[Cumberland Homesteads](#),” in *The Tennessee Encyclopedia of History and Culture* or the article, “[Skyline Farms](#),” in the *Encyclopedia of Alabama*. Students can also find more information about Cumberland Homesteads on the [Cumberland Homesteads Tower Association](#) Web site. Allow students time to ask any questions they have about either article.

Step 5: CONNECT Have students search the [Prints & Photographs Online Catalog](#) on the Library of Congress Web site (keyword: “Skyline Farms Alabama” or “Cumberland Homesteads”) for photographs of his or her assigned community. Have each student select a different photograph and print it out. Then, have student fill out copies of the [Primary Source Analysis Tool](#) to help them analyze the image. Teachers should refer to the [Teacher's Guide, Analyzing Photographs & Prints](#) to prompt discussion and help the students to critically examine the image.

Step 6: EXPRESS Have each student show the class the photograph they selected (display the images on a wall, so students can see all the images at once). How does the photograph depict Cumberland Homesteads or Skyline Farms (positive or negative, progress or failure)? What did you learn about life at Cumberland Homesteads or Skyline Farms from your photograph? Why do you think the photographer photographed what he did? Do you have a better understanding of what Cumberland Homesteads and Skyline Farms was like in the 1930s?

Step 7: CONSTRUCT Group the students together based on a common theme of the photograph (i.e. homes, crafts, dancing). Have students compare and contrast the images of the two different communities. Make a list of what the similarities and differences are. Draw upon the articles for information too.

Step 8: EXPRESS Have each group present the similarities and differences to the class. Viewed as a whole what similarities and differences do you see? Did anything surprise you about the images?

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PROCEDURE (continued from p. 3)

Day 2:

- Step 9: WONDER** Have the students get back in their groups. Have them look at their images from Day 1 as a group. What is the message the photographer is trying to convey? What is the purpose of these photographs?
- Step 10: EXPRESS** As a class, have a discussion on what propaganda is and write the definition of it on the board. Look at the photographs again. How are each group's photographs considered propaganda?
- Step 11: CONNECT** Give each student a copy of the poster, "[A mule and a plow--Resettlement Administration--Small loans give farmers a new start,](#)" and a copy of the [Primary Source Analysis Tool](#). Have students fill out the primary source analysis tool.
- Step 12: EXPRESS** As a group, have students answer the questions on the Worksheet. Once the groups have answered the questions, discuss the answers as a class.
- Step 13: CONNECT** (This step can be done in class if there is time or it can be assigned as homework.) Have students find three additional images of Skyline Farms on the Library of Congress Web site that are untitled. Untitled images 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), clicking on an image, and then selecting, "Browse neighboring items by call number" (see box below). 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)? (If you choose to do this step in class and do not have access to a computer lab, then print out images before class to give to students.)



[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

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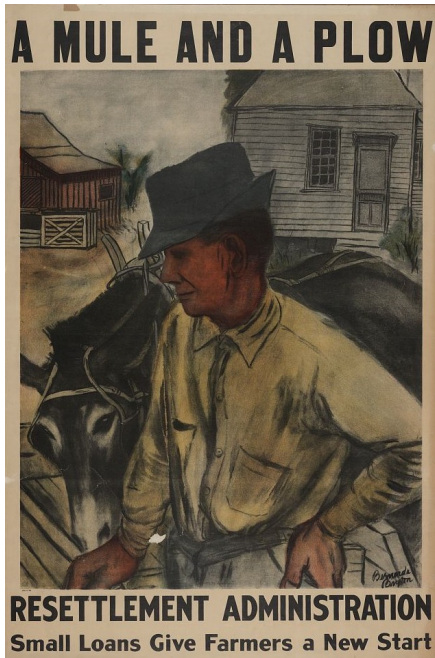
Title: Square dance, Skyline Farms, Alabama
Creator(s): [Shahn, Ben, 1898-1962](#), photographer
Related Names: [United States. Resettlement Administration.](#)
Date Created/Published: 1937.
Medium: 1 negative : nitrate ; 35 mm.
Part of: Farm Security Administration - Office of War Information Photograph 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)
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:

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PROCEDURE (continued from p. 4)

Step 14: COSTRUCT Have students create titles and captions for the three untitled images they have chosen. Keep in mind these images were often used as propaganda. The images were always meant to show the government's programs in a positive light, and the titles and captions should represent this.

Step 15: EXPRESS & REFLECT Have several students in the class share their images, titles, and captions with the class. Do titles and captions change the meaning of an image? If so, how? How did this activity change your perspective on what information photographs convey?



A mule and a plow--Resettlement Administration--Small loans give farmers a new start [1935-1937]

EVALUATION

90-100	Thoroughly fills out the Primary Source Analysis Tool, frequently participates in class discussions and group discussions, thoroughly answers all of the questions for the reflective essay.
80-89	Fills out most of the Primary Source Analysis Tool, participates in class and group discussions several times, answers all of the questions for the reflective essay.
70-79	Fills out some of the Primary Source Analysis Tool, participates at least once in group and class discussions, answers most of the questions for the reflective essay.
69 and below	Only writes one or two items under each category on the Primary Source Analysis Tool, does not participate in group and class discussions, only answers one or two of the questions for the reflective essay.

EXTENSION

Plan a field trip to Cumberland Homesteads to tour the Tower Museum and the Homestead House Museum. Is the community what you expected it to be? Do you recognize anything from the photographs that can still be seen today? What is the current day community like? Did visiting the community help answer any of the questions you still had about Cumberland Homesteads? If you cannot plan a field trip, then have students pretend they are working for the government. Their job is to create a poster about Cumberland Homesteads or Skyline Farms. The poster should represent the community in a positive light, just as the government would have done. Choose appropriate images to go along with your poster. Also, make sure you have an appropriate title, like the poster, "A mule and a plow--Resettlement Administration--Small loans give farmers a new start." Have each student present their poster to the class. Do you have a better understanding of why the government used posters and photographs as propaganda?

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- Mydans, Carl, photographer. "Trading post at Cumberland Homesteads. Crossville, Tennessee." Photograph. March 1936. From the Library of Congress, *Farm Security Administration/Office of War Information Black-and-White Negatives Collection*. <http://www.loc.gov/pictures/item/fsa1998018512/PP/> (accessed November 30, 2010).
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- Shahn, Ben, photographer. "Mrs. Mary McLean, Skyline Farms, Alabama." Photograph. 1937. From the Library of Congress, *Farm Security Administration/Office of War Information Black-and-White Negatives Collection*. <http://www.loc.gov/pictures/item/fsa1997017195/PP/> (accessed November 30, 2010).
- Shahn, Ben, photographer. "Square dance, Skyline Farms, Alabama." Photograph. 1937. From the Library of Congress, *Farm Security Administration/Office of War Information Black-and-White Negatives Collection*. <http://www.loc.gov/pictures/item/fsa1997017174/PP/> (accessed November 30, 2010).
- "[Untitled]." Photograph. [Between 1935 and 1942]. From the Library of Congress, *Farm Security Administration/Office of War Information Black-and-White Negatives Collection*. <http://www.loc.gov/pictures/item/fsa1997017202/PP/> (accessed November 30, 2010). [see image on page 3]
- "[Untitled]." Photograph. [Between 1935 and 1942]. From the Library of Congress, *Farm Security Administration/Office of War Information Black-and-White Negatives Collection*. <http://www.loc.gov/pictures/item/fsa1997007243/PP/> (accessed November 30, 2010). [top image on page 6]





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WORKSHEET

Answer the following questions:

1. How is this poster an example of propaganda?
2. Why would the government create posters like this?
3. How would a poster like this make people want to apply for relocation in a resettlement administration community, like Cumberland Homesteads or Skyline Farms?
4. How does this poster play into the “40 acres and a mule” myth?