Grades: 9-12
Subjects: African American History, English/Language Arts
Time required: 2 class periods
Author: Brittany Walker, Teaching With Primary Sources—MTSU

OVERVIEW
Founded by Congress and approved by President Franklin Roosevelt in 1933, the Tennessee Valley Authority (TVA) was established to control flooding and navigation along the Tennessee River Valley. TVA provided tens of thousands of jobs for citizens of the Tennessee Valley, including African Americans.

UNDERSTANDING GOAL
Using primary sources, students will identify what challenges African Americans were faced with while working for the Tennessee Valley Authority, and how they overcame these trials.

OBJECTIVES
- Students will analyze primary source photographs from the early to mid-1900s.
- Students will analyze texts and interview transcripts.

INVESTIGATIVE QUESTIONS
How did African American TVA workers and their families benefit from employment through the New Deal program? How did Jim Crow practices impact these workers and how did they respond?

MATERIALS AND RESOURCES
- Writing exercise: “Overcoming Challenges” worksheet

Primary Sources: Photographs
- Negroes speed war work for Tennessee Valley Authority... [1942]
- Defense housing. The second section of the experimental trailer-house is joined to the first section... [between 1940 and 1946]
- Production. Steam power plant equipment... [1942]
- Wilson Dam, Alabama (Tennessee Valley Authority (TVA)). Workers at safety meeting [1942]
- General planning. A graphic map used in conjunction with the river transport development program of the Authority [between 1933 and 1945]

Primary Source: Quilt
- Uncle Sam’s Helping Hand Quilt by Ruth Clement Bond and Rose Lee Cooper [1934] From: Trials and Triumphs: Tennesseans Search for Citizenship, Community, and Opportunity.

Primary Sources: Texts
- Interview of Ruth Clement Bond by Jewell Fenzi, November 12, 1992

CURRICULUM STANDARDS
African American History
- AAH.34 Analyze the impact of the Great Depression and the New Deal on the lives of African Americans.

English/Language Arts
- 9-10.RI.KID.1 Analyze what a text says explicitly and draw inferences; cite the strongest, most compelling textual evidence to support conclusions.
- 11-12.W.TTP.1 Write arguments to support claims in an analysis of substantive topics or texts, using valid reasoning supported by relevant and sufficient evidence.
Using photographs and interviews as primary sources.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Step 1</th>
<th>Download larger JPEG images for each of the primary source photographs listed under Materials and Resources. Save these images to show your students on a projector and print copies to distribute.</th>
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<tr>
<td>Step 2</td>
<td>Familiarize yourself with the history of the Tennessee Valley Authority by reading the brief article from the <em>Tennessee Encyclopedia of History and Culture</em>. If it has not been discussed in class, have students read the entry aloud or independently, or summarize the contents to provide context for this lesson.</td>
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<td>Step 3</td>
<td>Split students into five groups and distribute one of the five photographs from &quot;Materials and Resources&quot; to each group. Using the Library of Congress Primary Source Analysis Tool and the questions that go with it, each group will analyze the source it is given. This tool will allow students in each group to record what they observe about the source, their reflections by accessing prior knowledge, and questions they have about the source. Each group should be prepared to share its analysis with the rest of the class.</td>
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<td>Step 4</td>
<td>Each group will present its photograph and analysis to the rest of the class. Each student in the group is expected to contribute to the presentation of the group’s analysis. After the last presentation, every student in class should be familiar with all five photographs.</td>
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<td>Step 5</td>
<td>After each group has presented, prompt your students to find themes that connect all of the images. What do they have in common? When were they created? Why do you think they were created? What are some differences you see between the photographs and their titles? How do these images show African Americans working for the Tennessee Valley Authority?</td>
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<td>Step 6</td>
<td>Now divide the class into pairs and give each pair a copy of the Interview with Ruth Clement Bond, printable from page 5, page 6, and page 7. Each pair of students should take turns reading out loud until they complete the three pages. If other groups are still working, the students should discuss what they learned.</td>
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<td>Step 7</td>
<td>Once each group has finished reading the interview, facilitate a class-wide discussion. Who was being interviewed in this transcript? Why was she interviewed? What hardships did she and her family go through? How did they overcome these trials? What is significant about the quilts created during this time?</td>
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<td>Step 8</td>
<td>Project the image of the TVA quilt, <em>Uncle Sam's Helping Hand Quilt by Ruth Clement Bond and Rose Lee Cooper</em>. Ask your students to analyze the quilt as a class, given what they now know about TVA and Ruth Clement Bond. How does the quilt depict the same theme(s) as the photographs?</td>
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*Defense housing. The second section of the experimental trailer-house is joined to the first section. The workmen will have the house ready for occupancy in something like half a day from the time they started its assembly. The house will then be occupied by a worker at the Tennessee Valley Authority's (TVA) Fontana project, which is being [between 1940 and 1946]*

*Production. Steam power plant equipment. Oiling a horizontal boring mill used in machining parts for new high-pressure boilers. Steam boilers and other power-house equipment to supplement the hydroelectric installations of the Tennessee Valley Authority (TVA) system are produced in the large Chattanooga shops of the Combustion Engineering Company [1942]*
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Step 1</th>
<th>Review the lesson from Day 1. Prompt students to bring up themes from the primary source images they analyzed and the interview they read about Ruth Clement Bond. Review what the class learned about the Tennessee Valley Authority and explain that students will be reading a text that focuses on how African Americans were affected by the jobs created.</th>
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<tr>
<td>Step 2</td>
<td>Read your students the following quote from the Google Books entry on The Crisis: &quot;The Crisis, founded by W.E.B. Du Bois as the official publication of the NAACP, is a journal of civil rights, history, politics, and culture and seeks to educate and challenge its readers about issues that continue to plague African Americans and other communities of color. For nearly 100 years, The Crisis has been the magazine of opinion and thought leaders, decision makers, peacemakers and justice seekers. It has chronicled, informed, educated, entertained and, in many instances, set the economic, political and social agenda for our nation and its multi-ethnic citizens.&quot; The sources your students will be reading come from this publication. What is the purpose of The Crisis? Do you think it still exists today? Why or why not?</td>
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<td>Step 3</td>
<td>Distribute all three pages from an excerpt of The Crisis. Divide your students into five groups. Each group will be responsible for reading a different section to summarize for the class: Employment Problems, Lily-White Housing, TVA Social Planning, and No Light in the Valley. The final group will analyze the images and captions in the article and read the text in the box on the first page. Start off by having everyone read the Introduction together.</td>
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<td>Step 4</td>
<td>After completing the reading assignment, each group will summarize its excerpt, aloud and in order. Encourage your students to take notes and underline key ideas. Once the class has learned about all the sections of the article, distribute &quot;Writing Exercise: Overcoming Challenges.&quot; Read the instructions to your students and explain that this will be the rough draft of the essay they will complete for homework. Inform your students that both the draft and the final essay will be graded. Once the students have completed their essay drafts, facilitate a discussion about the challenges that African Americans faced while working for the Tennessee Valley Authority. Is this shown in the photographs? How is it shown in the article from The Crisis? Despite these trials, African Americans were often able to make the best of the opportunities they were given. Encourage your students to consider the Ruth Clement Bond interview. How did she and her family persevere? How did Ruth Clement Bond and her husband differ from the African Americans who worked for TVA in non-professional capacities and the &quot;quarter of a million&quot; others in the TVA region who were affected by their displacement from land?</td>
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<td>Step 5</td>
<td>Discuss the homework instructions at the bottom of the worksheet, including the grading rubric. Read the instructions to them and remind them to use the rubric provided. Students may use all of the materials covered during the last two classes, including images, interviews, and articles. Encourage them to use the notes they took during the class discussion.</td>
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**Uncle Sam's Helping Hand Quilt by Ruth Clement Bond and Rose Lee Cooper [1934]** From: Trials and Triumphs: Tennesseans Search for Citizenship, Community, and Opportunity.
Evaluation
1) The level of insight and effort in analyzing primary sources in groups (20%),
2) The thoughtfulness of their class participation about Ruth Clement Bond and The Crisis (10%),
3) The level of participation and effort in the group summary of The Crisis (20%),
4) Completion and analysis of the “Overcoming Challenges” essay draft written in class (20%), and
5) The homework assignment: a typed, cohesive essay based on the draft written in class (30%).

Extension Ideas
- Students can explore the Trials and Triumphs Web site to learn more about Tennessee’s history between the end of the American Civil War and the end of World War II.
- Students can examine the NAACP: 100 Years of History Web site and the Library of Congress exhibition, NAACP: A Century in the Fight for Freedom, to learn more about the organization and its actions doing during this time period.
- For a detailed timeline of the history of the TVA, students can explore the official Web site of the Tennessee Valley Authority. This timeline begins with President Roosevelt’s solutions to the New Deal through technological advances and ends with today, when TVA is the nation's largest public power provider and a corporation of the U.S. government.
- Students may also analyze the Tennessee Valley Authority Act, which was passed by Congress on May 18, 1933. Using the index at the end of the document, students can choose research topics that influenced or were effected by TVA. Possible research topics include: Southern Tennessee Power Company, Clinch River, Muscle Shoals, Mississippi Power Company, patents granted to employees of TVA, etc.
Interview with Ruth Clement Bond
(Excerpt, Page 2)

I was head of the English Department at Kentucky State College when we got married in 1931. My field was English and I had gotten my degree at Northwestern. My new husband got a scholarship to the University of Southern California, so I went West with him and started on my doctorate there. Unfortunately... I started to say “unfortunately I became pregnant.” That's not what I mean, but it was unfortunate for me because I was really enjoying my studies so much. I had to make a decision. I went to school as long as I could, and then I took time out to have the baby. Started back to school and left my baby with a woman who lived in one of those little [southern California] cottages, we lived in a cottage too. It was just a nice little neighborhood, a semicircle of houses with English, Korean and black American families, and of course we were black American too. A black American woman who lived in back of us, off the street, said, “Well, Mrs. Bond, I'll keep your baby for you.”

So I said, “All right.” I thought I had a solution. But about two days after I had started back to school I had to come home unexpectedly for something. I had my hours when I would come back regularly. I would leave the baby clothes, and a bottle with her, she knew when I was coming back. And then I came back unexpectedly. My baby was on her dirty kitchen floor, filthy, sucking on a piece of bacon and had an asafetida bag [a bitter resin with an obnoxious odor, thought to ward off disease] around her neck. So I began to think: which is more important to me, the health of my child or getting a PhD. I was making straight "A"s, I must say. I had even talked over with my advisor what my topic was going to be. I decided at that time that maybe I had better stay home with my baby. So I just gave up on my PhD, and thought I would do it later.

When my husband was called back to head a mission the Government was sending to the Tennessee Valley Authority, I found there was no college down there that I could attend to continue working on the PhD, so instead I set about organizing the women whose husbands were working on the TVA dam and who, for really the first time, were getting a lot of cash. Some of the workers had been sharecroppers. The Government built four houses for men who would move in with their families; the rest of the workers lived in big dormitories in a compound. We lived in one of the cottages that had been built as an experiment for people living there - because my husband thought that living outside the town provided me a chance to work with the women and show them what opportunities existed - they were buying pianos with cash, and they couldn't get them into their cottages! These country women were buying things they didn't need, yet weren't fixing up their houses.

I decided to start a program called "home beautification." We got donations from the cook in the dormitories, such as sacks he didn't need, which we dyed. We'd have one TVA room in each cottage and the women made curtains for it, wove some beautiful rugs, made new quilt patterns - our first quilt we called "Black Power." That was a pun, of course, TVA being about power, distinguished from black power of the 1960s. The first interns in the Authority came from many of the black colleges like Fisk and Tennessee State. My husband decided to open what he called a training and work program for them during the summer.
Interview with Ruth Clement Bond

(Excerpt, Page 3)

The women made a copy of the Black Power quilt for me, from the patterns I'd designed and with colors I'd chosen. It was stolen later, in storage with our effects in Atlanta. Someone told me that her husband might have given the first "Black Power" quilt to the TVA chief, Mr. David Lilienthal, though his son professed not to know about it. Now, I understand, the Smithsonian is taking the old quilt patterns, reproducing them for manufacture in China and sale in the U.S., which would probably diminish the value of U.S. handmade quilts. Some of us are protesting that these patterns are given to cheap labor in order to make quilts to sell at cheap prices.

The first quilt showed a bolt of lightning signifying power, held in the hand of a black worker[they locate a picture of the figure] instead of the banjo that he would normally hold. I gave the quilters the material cutouts and selected the colors. You can see the bolt of lightning he's holding in his right hand. [Fenzi asks to borrow the picture to make photocopy]

Q: This is fascinating. If you originated the term "black power"!

BOND: Some people say this. The student interns down there working on the dam with us who were from the universities were in the first intern program the Government had. Here's a write up that tells how the interns interpreted it.

Q: Thank you, and I'll copy the article about you, and the pictures.

BOND: I'm still trying to find where that first quilt is. I hadn't thought about the Smithsonian, possibly.

Q: Was each of the quilts making a political statement, or a woman's statement?

BOND: Well, in a way.

Q: Was there a theme to that do you remember?

BOND: The only thing I was trying to say was that things were opening up for the blacks in the South. This was in the early 1930s - I had only one child, born in California in 1933 when we down to TVA. My other son, J. Max Bond, Jr. was born in Louisville, Kentucky after we were moved to Knoxville to TVA headquarters. [Her second son, George Clement Bond was born in Knoxville, Tennessee.] When we went from California to TVA, my baby (she laughs) kept me from getting my PhD.
Interview with Ruth Clement Bond

(Excerpt, Page 4)

Q: Now, where did these very simple sharecropper women learn to do such marvelous quilting? From their parents?

BOND: You see, that's what the old black slaves used to do. And they told their stories in their quilts, you see. Oh, the quilts had names, you know, the kind that they made. I used to be able to call all that up. The one thing I could do was always to tie my husband in with the names he couldn't think of. Since he died there's a block there now.

Q: Because you've taken on all the things that he used to do and your mind is occupied.

BOND: I guess that's it. At any rate, we really beautified the people's homes. Everybody contracted to the TVA Authority had to have a "TVA room," we decided. If they didn't live in the compound, the husbands had to see that the steps were fixed up; we just fixed up the houses.

Q: And the TVA room had to have - what? Drapes made from the feed sacks?

BOND: They didn't have to have it but they didn't have any other way, so it meant most of them did have that - you know, like napkins. We approached the cook at the commissary, who had lots of sacks for flour and whatnot, and we bleached them and dyed them. The women were very skillful and knew how to quilt, beautifully because that's what they did. Their mothers had made quilts for the "big house", so they did a skillful job; I never learned to quilt but I made and cut the patterns and made the designs for them.

Q: Those quilts stayed in their homes, most of the time?

BOND: Yes.

Q: So the few surviving ones of course at this point must be very valuable?

BOND: They must be.

Q: And they should be.
MORE than a quarter of a million Negro citizens live in that section of our nation drained by the Tennessee River. It is in this area that for more than two years a vast social experiment, the Tennessee Valley Authority, has been carried on by the federal government. A year ago Mr. Charles Houston and I gave in The Crisis' our reactions to this experiment following an extensive visit through the Valley. At that time many aspects of the project were still in an experimental phase. We could only hazard an opinion as to the possible future outcome of the experiment as it affected Negroes. Today it is possible to restate those conclusions upon a basis of many additional facts. This is the purpose of this article. It is a result of experiences gained from two additional trips to the Valley area as well as from a year's attention to the problems which seemed vital to Negroes in the development of the TVA.

Employment Problems

Policies of TVA governing the employment and treatment of Negro workers on the job are of immediate concern to Negro citizens. In March of 1934 Dr. F. W. Reeves, director of personnel, felt it necessary to stress publicly the intention of TVA to employ Negro workers in proportion to their population percentages in the Valley area. This public announcement was a tacit admission that the employment of Negro workers presented a definite problem to TVA officials. There was also the implication that TVA officials intended to meet the problem of employment in a forthright and honest way. To be sure artificial limits to this display of fairness were implicit in the statement itself, since the stilled base of population percentages set as a criterion by Dr. Reeves did not take into consideration the excessive proportions of Negro workmen to be found among the jobless in the Valley. But even this artificial measure offered a promise of some fair dealing to Negro workers. And TVA officials cannot object to being judged by the yardstick which they themselves have established.

A contrast of performance with promise shows that Negroes have never been given their proportionate share of jobs on TVA projects. In addition when payrolls of Negro and white workers are contrasted even greater

SCLL Security

What is the real meaning of the social security law passed by the last Congress? What does it hold out for people generally and for Negroes in particular? Read Abraham Epstein's article next month in The Crisis. Mr. Epstein, executive secretary of the American Association for Social Security, is one of the foremost authorities upon this subject in the United States.

A second look at the TVA development leads Mr. Davis to say of the vaunted low cost electrification program that, for Negroes, it "might as well be lightning in the sky" and of other TVA objectives he has equally interesting things to say.

The Plight of the Negro

By John P. Davis

ing favor with white bosses, may a Negro worker once on the job hope to rise to a higher level of pay or skilled employment. Such instances are very few. Thus at Wheeler Dam where the largest number of Negroes were employed in June 1935, only eight Negro workmen out of 1,048 then employed received as much as $1.00 an hour. There were 300 white carpenters employed on the job there, but not a single Negro. Only 12 Negroes received as much as 75 cents an hour at Wheeler Dam.

There was an exception to the rule of exclusion of Negroes from skilled work. At Pickwick Landing Dam, Negro artisans were employed on the job. But they were only allowed to work on the "Jim-Crow" village set aside for Negroes. Now that work on this village is completed they have been dismissed. But at Pickwick as elsewhere it is well understood that Negroes are employed at skilled work on the white village or on other jobs which will open up as work on the project progresses.

At Wilson Dam, Negroes are employed primarily in unskilled work at the fertilizers plants at 37½ cents an hour. Only four Negro workers at the fertilizer plant receive as much as 50 cents an hour. The work given the others is hard disagreeable work in the almost uninhabited and dust-filled rooms. By reserving such occupations for Negroes, TVA effectively establishes a Negro differential, while at the same time loudly proclaiming: "No discrimination is made between the races with reference to wages paid or hours of work." (Dr. Reeves, March 1934.) What is true of jobs at Wilson Dam is more or less true on other projects of TVA. Negro workmen have also been the victims of mis-classification, doing skilled work while receiving pay as unskilled workers. In one instance two Negro workmen at Wilson Dam were allowed to drive trucks for more than eight months—a job which should have paid 75 cents an hour but for which they were paid at the rate of 45 cents an hour. The men testified they were afraid to complain because the experience of other Negro workers had been that complaints about false classification led to dismissal.

Another evidence that TVA officials have deliberately erected a color bar before most of the skilled work on the dam projects can be seen in the refusal to admit Negroes into the training and vocational schools established in the area.
in the Tennessee Valley

by TVA. Thus at Norris seven Negroes were admitted to a class in animal husbandry only after sharp protest. But even now Negroes are excluded from sections of the school dealing with carpentry, metal trades, automotive mechanics and other skilled work. Nowhere in the Valley are Negroes permitted to take training in foremanship, although there are numerous foremanship classes for white workers.

The failure to include a fair proportion of Negroes in skilled work not only places Negroes in an unequal position with white workers but as well makes almost certain the gradual elimination of Negroes from employment by TVA. This is true because unskilled work is only necessary in the early stages of the dam projects, which in their later stages use more and more skilled labor and less and less unskilled workers. Thus at Norris Dam within the last year Negro employment has dropped from roughly 100 workers to 17. Similarly at Pickwick and Wheeler Dams, where once only skilled work was required, Negroes will find increasingly less employment.

Lily-White Housing

The housing accommodations furnished Negro workers by TVA are notoriously inferior to those given whites. At Norris Dam site there are no accommodations for Negroes. For whites there is a model community of 450 modern homes and several dormitories for single white men. At Wilson Dam, Negroes are shuttled off into 20 improperly screened three- and four-room bungalows adjacent to a railroad track. The homes are hollowed shacks, many of them having no closet space, no windows in kitchens. There is no improved recreational grounds for the children of the village. By contrast there are two modern white villages with houses of varying sizes, a school and recreational space for children and a model community building. At Wheeler Dam Negroes live in a dormitory too small to accommodate the needs of the Negro workers. Many men are unable to find living quarters and must rely on busses to transport them 10 and 20 miles to and from work. Temporary tents have been constructed for some of the men. In addition there are ten unsubstantial houses of the cheapest kind provided for Negroes. There are no facilities for recreation other than a theatre for whites which Negroes may attend if they use a separate entrance and sit in a "Jim-Crow" section. For whites there is a modern community similar to the model town of Norris. At Pickwick the Negro community is separated from that for the white workers by a deep ravine. Officials of TVA suggested the reason for the separation to be the need for keeping down racial outbreaks which "would be occasioned if Negroes and whites lived together." Yet in order to get to the Negro village from the scene of work operation on the dam, Negroes must pass through a squatter village for whites off the government reservation. This village is the crime center of the community, where brothels, "speakeasies" and gambling joints are plentiful. Here if anywhere the constant passing through of Negroes will result in racial outbreaks. In addition at Pickwick Negroes can attend the white theatre, if they sit in a "Jim-Crow" section. When they apply for work at the personnel office they see the doors to the office plainly marked: "white" and "colored."

Now none of the conditions above described are much different from those of surrounding communities off the government reservation. But the fact that TVA has tacitly adopted a policy of residential segregation for Negroes consistent with the social patterns of the outside communities is one having grave implications for Negro citizens. It must be remembered that every one of these housing units is on land owned by the federal government, that funds for their construction were appropriated by the United States Congress out of the money of all the taxpayers. Thus by the introduction of a policy of residential segregation TVA officials are violating the well established Constitutional prohibition against the use of federal funds for purposes of segregation. We have the tragic picture of officials of the federal government, sworn to uphold the Constitution, teaching white citizens that Negroes are unfit to live in any but segregated communities. And we see this doctrine entering every phase of governmental activity in TVA.

(Continued on page 314)
TVA

(Continued from page 295)

What is even more reprehensible is the sophistic attitude of TVA officials, chief among them the so-called "liberal" Chairman Arthur Morgan, who declare that there is no rule of exclusion barring Negroes from any accommodations open to other TVA workers. This policy of no exclusion has been announced only recently in anticipation of legal suits to test the constitutionality of actions at TVA. It is by such declarations that TVA officials hope to evade their responsibility for the open and criminal extension of the policy of "Jim-Crow" housing by the federal government.

TVA Social Planning

But while the establishment of Negro ghettos for black TVA workers and discriminations encountered by these Negro workers in the matter of skilled employment are irritants which demand immediate protest and action by Negro citizens in every section of the country, by far the most important consideration in any discussion of TVA must be the ultimate fate of the quarter of a million Negroes in the Valley under the long term social planning of the Valley Authority.

The social objectives of TVA are given in the following statement of Chairman Arthur Morgan:

"The Tennessee Valley Authority is not primarily a dam building job, a fertilizer job or a power transmission job. When I first went to see President Roosevelt, he talked about an hour about its possibilities, and there was scarcely a mention of power or fertilizer. He talked chiefly about a designed and planned economic order. That was what was first in his mind. At the time I did not realize how far flung his ideas were, because his recovery program had not been fully revealed. The country as a whole did not realize how great a change in private and national life that program would require. . . . The government has provided about five billion dollars for its emergency program. About 1 per cent as much is to be used for the TVA. With that ratio in mind, the President wanted somewhere an undertaking that was not emergency, but a deliberate social planning for the future. The TVA is an expression of that desire."

Thus if TVA is to accomplish its purpose there must be created for the entire Valley population a more abundant life, and for the Valley a planned and rational economy. Now what is the present plight of the Negro dwellers in the Valley? John P. Ferris, industrial engineer of TVA, admits that in most of the rural counties in the Valley from 600 to 2,000 rural people of working age are no longer needed in agriculture or industry. A more than proportionate share of such people are Negroes. The Valley population is 76.5 per cent rural. Here again the number of rural Negroes to the total population is disproportionately high. As well Negroes in the area are especially the victims of inadequate relief, low wages, intolerable living conditions and complete lack of any type of labor organization.

It will thus be obvious that for the Negroes in the lowest income group in the Valley (and this is true also of a large segment of the white population) TVA planning must be of such a nature as to guarantee to them the possibility of economic advancement, or at least of economic survival. That so far benefit to Negro Valley dwellers has remained at most only a pious hope can readily be seen from a survey of actual facts concerning TVA planning.

No Light in the Valley

A basic concept put forward by TVA officials is that electric power may be used to remove many of the drudgeries of daily life, to effect many home and farm economies, and thus make possible a better life. It is on this basis that the policy of rural electrification was supposed to have been begun in the Valley. As first steps in putting this program into operation TVA successfully negotiated for the use of its power in Tupelo, Mississippi and Athens, Alabama. In Lee County in which Tupelo is located there are 11,225 Negroes or 31.8 per cent of the population. More than 50 per cent of the persons on relief are Negro. A rural county, a large share of the Negro population is engaged in sharecropping and tenant farming. In Tupelo the Negro population lives largely in grotesque rented slum dwellings.

For Negroes the introduction of cheaper electric rates into Lee County as result of the TVA power policy has meant nothing. Landlords, whether of Negro slum dwellers in Tupelo or of Negro tenant farmers in the rural section of the county, have not found it to their advantage to wire their Negro tenants' homes at the cost of $15 to $25, when already they are squeezing all the rent possible from these tenants.

The possibility of low income Negro groups taking advantage of electricity dwindles even more when present TVA rates for electric power and EHFA (Electric Home and Farm Authority) rates for electrical appliances are considered. According to EHFA the three electrical appliances "which are basic for the health and comfort of . . . family—range, water heater and refrigerator" can be purchased for as low as $5.33 per month. Electric current sufficient to generate them would cost at Tupelo (TVA) rates "only" $0.58 monthly. It is this family budget of $12.37 a month for electricity which EHFA offers to Negroes of Lee County, Mississippi under the slogan "Electricity For All." It is obvious that such rates are completely out of reach of the Negro resident of Lee County. The total sum represents more nearly his total monthly cash income than any amount which he would be able to spend for electricity. Thus so far as TVA's electrification program is concerned the Negro family is still in outer darkness.

Can Industry Be Decentralized?

Another concept emphasized by TVA planners is that of a new type of industrialization of the Valley. A decentralization of industry is conceived in the place of mass production in highly industrialized urban centers industrial centers of TVA have toyed with the idea of small industrial units in rural centers where the employees of such units may supplement their earnings with agricultural activity and where as well there may be developed cooperatives on a small scale.

Viewed realistically this new planning by TVA officials reveals itself to be little more than fanciful and wishful hoping. In the first place TVA can only play the role of "catalyst" in bringing about such decentralization. It cannot, therefore, control the economic forces which would tend to change the picture.
**TVA Opportunities for African Americans**

**Writing Exercise: “Overcoming Challenges”**

Name: _____________________________________________    Date: _______________________

**Writing Prompt:** How did African American TVA workers and their families benefit from employment through this New Deal program? How did Jim Crow practices impact these workers and how did they respond? Using specific examples from images, texts, and topics discussed in class, draft an essay. Prepare to discuss your ideas with the rest of the class and to expand this essay for homework.

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Homework Assignment: After discussing the drafts as a class, develop a well-crafted, three-paragraph essay. Use specific examples from images, texts, and topics discussed in class. The essay should be typed using the Times New Roman font (12 point size) and double-spaced. The following rubric will be used to grade your essay:

<table>
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<th>Score Range</th>
<th>Description</th>
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<tr>
<td>90—100</td>
<td>Essay has a strong thesis and addresses the prompt. Essay is 1 to 2 pages in length and addresses both the benefits and challenges of working for the Tennessee Valley Authority. Essay cites specific examples from images, texts, and topics discussed in class and ends with a strong conclusion.</td>
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<tr>
<td>80—89</td>
<td>Essay has 2 paragraphs, addresses either the benefits or challenges of working for the Tennessee Valley Authority, and cites specific examples from images, texts, and topics discussed in class.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>70—79</td>
<td>Essay has 1 paragraph, addresses one benefit or challenge of working for the Tennessee Valley Authority, and does not cite examples from images, texts, or topics discussed in class.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>69—0</td>
<td>Essay has 1 paragraph, is off topic, and does not cite examples discussed in class.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>