HISTORICAL BACKGROUND

Tennessee has three very distinct regions that make up the state: east, middle, and west. These are commonly referred to as the “grand divisions” and are represented by three stars on the state flag. The grand divisions of Tennessee are most visible by the different types of geological features across the state. Because of differences in geology and resources, the distribution of industrial and agricultural products varies widely. Furthermore, cultural differences have inspired different forms of folklife, including popular music, from blues in the west, to country in the middle, to bluegrass in the east.

Middle Tennessee is distinct for several reasons: it is
- Composed of 40-43 counties (differs according to source– Tennessee State Code states that there are 41)
- Situated between the Tennessee River on the west and the Sequatchie Valley on the east (or the time zone line)
- Formed into a Central Basin, surrounded by the Highland Rim
- Home of the state capital, Nashville
- Home to 2 U.S. Presidents: Andrew Jackson and James K. Polk
- Birthplace of “country music” and center of music recording industry in the state

SUGGESTIONS FOR TEACHERS & ADDITIONAL ONLINE RESOURCES


Topics for lesson plans and ideas include
- War-time innovations (military technology and homefront industrial efforts for World War II; and photography and map-making for the Civil War)
- Architecture and landscapes (historic buildings, roads, bridges, and other structures; engineering techniques and measurements; vernacular building styles over the decades)
- State government (the capitol building; the lives and careers of Andrew Jackson and James K. Polk; the formation of the state)

Library of Congress resources to examine:
- Primary Sources for Tennessee
- Explore the States: Tennessee
- Local Legacies: Tennessee

More interesting links:
- “Geologic Zones” entry in the Tennessee Encyclopedia of History and Culture
The Parthenon, Nashville, Tenn. [1909]

Premium List of the Sumner County Fair [1869] Courtesy of Duke University Libraries

Retained copy of letter, James K. Polk to the Committee of the Democratic National Convention accepting the Democratic presidential nomination, [12 June 1844], [no transcription]

Nashville, Tenn. Steps of the Capitol with covered guns; vista of the city beyond [1864]

Middle Tennessee / [1863]
Union Gospel Tabernacle, 116 Fifth Avenue, North, Nashville, Davidson County, TN [documentation compiled after 1933] (photograph on left)

Bird's eye view of the city of Clarksville, Montgomery County, Tennessee 1870. [1870; detail]

Working on a "Vengeance" dive bomber, Vultee [Aircraft Inc.], Nashville, Tennessee [1943]

Manchester (vicinity), Tennessee. Soldiers of headquarters company of the Armored Corps lifting a jeep to repair it at their bivouac area during Second Army maneuvers. Left to right: Private William Lowe, Captain Frank Yung, Private Sam Salen, and Private J.J. Nay. [1941; detail]

The Fisk Jubilee Singers [1938] Courtesy of the University of Iowa Libraries

Hundred Oaks, Oak Street near U.S. Route 64, Winchester, Franklin County, TN [documentation compiled after 1933] (above photograph)
CITATIONS: TENNESSEE'S GRAND DIVISIONS—MIDDLE TENNESSEE

Teachers,

Providing these primary source replicas without source clues may enhance the inquiry experience for students. This list of citations is supplied for reference purposes to you and your students.


“Retained copy of letter, James K. Polk to the Committee of the Democratic National Convention accepting the Democratic presidential nomination, [12 June 1844]. (James K. Polk Papers).” From the Library of Congress, Words and Deeds in American History: Selected Documents Celebrating the Manuscript Division's First 100 Years. http://lcweb2.loc.gov/cgi-bin/query/r?ammem/mcc:@field (DOCID+@lit(mcc/041)).


