WELCOME!

Teaching with Primary Sources—Middle Tennessee State University, administered by the Center for Historic Preservation, engages learners of all ages in using primary sources to explore major issues and questions in many different disciplines.
Contact: Stacey Graham or Kira Duke at (615) 898-2947 or www.mtsu.edu/tps

NEWS

- Join TPS-MTSU and the Tennessee State Library and Archives on November 13th for “Examining Tennessee’s Last Campaign,” a teacher workshop offered in conjunction with the Tennessee Civil War Sesquicentennial Signature Event in Franklin. To register for the workshop, email Kira Duke.

- Resource guides for Kindergarten, first, and second grade social studies are now available on our Web site. Go to the Tools page for these and other great resources.

- Join us on October 1st at the Tennessee Council for History Education conference in Nashville. Dr. Carroll Van West, state historian and director of the MTSU Center for Historic Preservation, will be serving as the keynote speaker talking about “Place as a Primary Source.”

“AWESOME” SOURCE OF THE MONTH:

Watts Bar Dam, Tenn. 1935-40? A view of the dam and the Tennessee River
How do engineers build such massive structures that control the course of large rivers? What recreational opportunities are by-products of such engineering?

THEME: TENNESSEE VALLEY AUTHORITY (TVA)

The Tennessee Valley Authority is often considered a New Deal program, though its origins extend much earlier (see p. 2). The economic, social, military, environmental, and political impacts of TVA helped shape Tennessee culture and position the state for prosperity. Furthermore, TVA made Tennessee central to the larger national economy. This importance is obvious in the sheer number of primary sources about TVA (photographs taken in Tennessee) in the FSA-OWI Photographs collection on the Library of Congress Web site.

TVA is also a great way to teach multiple disciplines within one topical unit, since it involves science (engineering, electricity and environmental history), art, folklife, geography, government, economics, and history.

UPCOMING EVENTS:

- September 11 (Murfreesboro) — After-school Workshop Series “Teaching Strategies for Using Primary Sources in the K-5 Classroom” at the Heritage Center from 4 p.m. to 6 p.m. To register, email Kira Duke.

- September 16 (Memphis) — “Citizenship and the Civil Rights Movement” at the National Civil Rights Museum from 9 a.m. to 3 p.m. To register, email Kira Duke.

- September 19 (Knoxville) — “Teaching World History Using the Library of Congress” at the East Tennessee History Center from 9 a.m. to 3 p.m. EST. To register, email Lisa Oakley.

- September 25 (Cleveland) — “Exploring TVA and Its Impact” at the Museum Center at Five Points from 9 a.m. to 3 p.m. EST. To register, email Kira Duke.

- October 1 (Nashville) — Tennessee Council for History Education conference. Session times TBA.

- October 10 (Knoxville) — “Examining the Early Republic Period” at the East Tennessee History Center in Knoxville from 9 a.m. to 3 p.m. EST. To register, email Lisa Oakley.
LESSON IDEA– ROOTS OF TVA

Though TVA was not created until 1933, the controversy which led to its creation began at the end of World War I. During the war, the U.S. government built two nitrate plants and began construction of a hydroelectric dam at Muscle Shoals, Alabama. The function of these facilities was to free the U.S. from dependence on foreign materials to produce explosives for the war effort. When the war ended, the government had spent millions of dollars on two plants and an unfinished dam that were no longer needed. In the early twenties, Henry Ford attempted to buy control of Muscle Shoals. Senator George Norris, among others, fought the Ford offer. In 1933, Norris got his way, and TVA became the solution.

Start off by having your students read (in groups) portions of the front-page article of the *Evening star.* (Washington, D.C.), 22 Jan. 1922. How does this article depict the Muscle Shoals project? Students can then explore the photographs of the Nitrate Plant No. 2 and the Wilson Dam and power plant from the Historic American Buildings Survey collection. Be sure to read the cover text and illustrations for each of these two surveys, too (Nitrate plant [here]; Wilson Dam [here]). Have student groups select images that address the issues brought up in the article, and write new captions for these images.

This lesson idea can be adapted to meet state curriculum standards for grade 5 Social Studies (5.50), high school U.S. History and Geography (US.51), and grades 6-8 Science (T/E.1 and T/E.3).

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LESSON IDEA– BENEFITS AND CONSEQUENCES OF TVA

Founded by Congress and approved by President Franklin Roosevelt in 1933, the Tennessee Valley Authority was established to control flooding and navigation along the Tennessee Valley. TVA also provided inexpensive electric power to residents in the area. TVA established dozens of dams, power plants, and coal-fired steam plants to do this. While many jobs were created, the landscape of Tennessee and bordering states was forever changed. By 1946, TVA had removed over 72,000 people from their homes and acquired 1.1 million acres. By analyzing Tennessee primary sources from the *Farm Security Administration/Office of War Information Color Photographs Collection* through the Library of Congress, students will have the opportunity to address both the benefits and consequences of the Tennessee Valley Authority.

Using the *Farm Security Administration/Office of War Information Color Photographs Collection*, facilitate a discussion about the selected photographs (see p. 3 of the complete lesson activity). Students will view images that address the environmental effects of TVA, including "Early stages of construction work at the TVA’s Douglas Dam, Tenn." and "Switchyard at TVA’s Wilson Dam hydroelectric plant, vicinity of Sheffield, Ala., 260 miles above the mouth of the Tennessee River." What benefits did TVA bring to the region? What do the images show as benefits? What were some of the unintended consequences of the Tennessee Valley Authority (environmental, economic, etc)? Prompt students to write essays using these prompts, citing specific examples from images and topics discussed in class.

This lesson idea can be adapted to meet state curriculum standards for grades 6-8 Science (T/E.1 and T/E.3) and CCSS for English/Language Arts (Literacy in Science & Technical Subjects, Writing).
Lesson Idea– Making Art with WPA Posters

The Works Projects Administration (WPA) produced over 2000 posters in the United States between 1936 and 1943. Thousands of unemployed artists were selected to create these posters, which promoted public resources. Artists were also employed by the WPA to teach art programs in community centers and settlement houses, reaching nearly 50,000 children and adults. These posters were produced to advertise public resources such as libraries, community events, exhibits, and educational programs. The WPA was one of the first U.S. Government programs to support the arts. Using the WPA Poster Collection, students will have the opportunity to learn more about these works and create their own posters that address contemporary public issues.

First, distribute examples of posters from this collection. Remind the students of when the posters were produced. What was the artist’s intention for each poster? What message was he or she trying to convey? Notice that many of these posters fall under themes such as education, travel, health, conservation, and patriotism. Ask students if these themes are still relevant today. As a class, identify four new themes that would be appropriate for today in the United States, such as digital technology, fighting disease, and bullying. Instruct students to create their own poster based on one of the four themes. Explain that the goal of the poster is to convey a clear message about the theme. Remind students that the original posters were displayed publicly, and their posters should be designed with that intention.

Provide students with access to computer paper, poster board, markers, colored pencils, and crayons to complete their posters.

This lesson idea can be adapted to meet state curriculum standards for grades 6-8 Visual Arts (4.4 and 5.1). The entire “Benefits and Consequences of the Tennessee Valley Authority” activity can be found here.

Lesson Idea– TVA & Eminent Domain

Norris Dam was the first of TVA’s hydroelectric projects, but it actually predates TVA. Discussions of construction of a dam at the site, at the time called Cove Creek, began in 1927. When TVA was created during FDR’s first hundred days, construction of the dam, later named Norris after Senator George Norris of Nebraska who was a long-time proponent of TVA, was quickly pushed forward. The area was home to 3500 families who would have to be relocated. Many of them were landowners who were compensated for their land, but tenant famers were given no compensation.

To begin, ask students how they would respond if their homes and communities were seized and set to be demolished as part of a project that would benefit the larger populace. After students respond, explain that this is what happened to many during the construction of dams by TVA. For background on TVA and the building of Norris Dam, assign students this article. Be sure to have them click the arrow to access all three sections of the article. Next, show students this National History Day documentary produced by Tennessee student Lauren Collins on eminent domain. You may elect to show only the first 6:10 of the video that focuses on TVA. Ask students to revisit their earlier responses to the opening question. How have their thoughts changed?

Next, allow students to view images of Norris Dam from the FSA Photography collection. Have students select images from the first fifty in the search results list to focus on. What impression of the project do the images and their captions convey? How do these differ from these images and the article they read earlier? How might the people of the Norris Basin have felt about being portrayed as hillbillies?

This lesson idea can be adapted to meet state curriculum standards for high school U.S. History and Geography (US.51) as well as CCSS for English/ Language Arts (Reading: Informational Text; Speaking and Listening).
Fort Loudon [i.e., Loudoun] Dam, Tennessee. Tennessee Valley Authority (TVA). Part of the 1300 men in the 7 a.m. to 3 p.m. shift at Fort Loudon [i.e., Loudoun] Dam, Tennessee [1942]

During the 1940s, TVA employed 28,000 workers to help construct hydroelectric and steam plants in order to provide electrical power to aluminum plants for the war effort. What impact would these jobs have on the region and its people?

Tennessee Valley Area; pictorial map. [1939, detail]

This map shows the progress and the plans of the TVA to construct more dams in Tennessee. Students can analyze this map using the Map PSAT provided by the Library of Congress. Who was this map created for? Who are the famous men whose homes are listed and why are they listed? How many dams are complete and how many are proposed?

Wilson Dam, Alabama (Tennessee Valley Authority (TVA)). Feeding mosquitoes used for experiments in malaria control [1942]

One of TVA’s projects in Muscle Shoals was to learn how to control the spread of malaria. TVA employees collected mosquitoes for their experiments and tested the insecticides they had developed. Then TVA used planes and boats to spread those insecticides along the Tennessee river. According to the CDC, these efforts virtually wiped out malaria in the TVA region by the mid-40s. However, can you think of any problems with the TVA’s methods?