

FROM FARM TO FACTORY

Lesson
8

THE GREAT DEPRESSION
From Farm to Factory



NORTH CAROLINA
MUSEUM OF HISTORY

History Happens Here

Objectives

- Through primary source photograph analysis, students will learn about the difficult lives of farmers and ~~their farm~~ families during the Great Depression; ~~and they will also learn how~~ photography can be a powerful tool ~~used to in~~ affect change ~~and to communicate~~ing an idea or problem ~~and affecting change~~.
- Note: Curriculum standards for this lesson are listed under the “Lesson Plans and Curriculum Standards” tab.

Introduction

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Historical Overview

While ~~much most~~ of the country ~~was enjoying~~ economic prosperity throughout the 1920s, farmers ~~and farm families were hit by~~ suffering through an agricultural depression ~~early on~~ that only ~~became~~ grew worse after the nation-wide financial crash of 1929. ~~Their b~~Basic frame houses, ~~a~~ lack of sanitary privies, and ~~no an~~ absence of electric ~~ity~~al service in rural North Carolina were just ~~the beginning~~ a few of the struggles farmers faced ~~throughout even into~~ the 1930s. Everyday necessities—food, clothing, and shelter—became everyday struggles.

Commented [sEvans1]: ... you need an introduction, to fit into the format ...

??? possibly a brief intro to the photographic documentation efforts of the FSA, since that is so pivotal to this lesson and is not clearly introduced ???

??? you might even discuss the terminology of “photograph” vs “image” since you use the term interchangeably and some students may not know what an “image” is ...

Commented [sEvans2]: ... since “most” were still farmers at that time ...

Commented [sEvans3]: ... let’s make this more of a continuing action ...

Commented [sEvans4]: ... ditto ...

Commented [sEvans5]: ??? isn’t this more active ???

Commented [sEvans6]: ??? can you define “basic” to give a better impression? do you mean small, old, unkempt, “shack-like” ??? please paint a better picture for persons who *really* might not know ...

Commented [sEvans7]: ... “privies” isn’t really the right word—by definition, a “privy” is unsanitary by definition; but I hesitate to replace it because I don’t know if you’re implying “a lack of sanitary conditions” or “a lack of sanitary services” in general or if you really only want to focus on “a lack of sanitary sewers” or “a lack of indoor toilets” or what ... I’ll let you fix this one ...

Commented [sEvans8]: ??? well, not really-- in *most* cases, farm families had all the food they could want and as much clothing as they needed ... please be more specific here -- I KNOW you have points to make; I’m just not sure you make them ...

FROM FARM TO FACTORY

Beginning During his first term in office as pPresident of the United States in 1933, Franklin Delano Roosevelt offered the nation a “New Deal,” a series of programs that were implemented partly to help revive the economy and provide support for the unemployed. One of the New Deal’s most influential programs for farmers was the Agricultural Adjustment Act of 1933. The AAA offered payments, or subsidies, to farmers to who reduced their crop production, which in turn caused the prices of crops to rise. A number of oOther programs that were part of the New Deal benefitted farmers included the Civilian Conservation Corps (which brought a variety of service buildings to nonurban areas and improved rural road networks), the Rural Electrification Administration, the Soil Conservation Service, and the Resettlement Administration (which became part of the Farm Security Administration).

Commented [sEvans9]: ??? okay to explain how this benefitted farmers, since it’s not generally thought of as serving that purpose ???

Commented [sEvans10]: ... at the time of the initial New Deal, this was the proper name; it merged into the FSA a little later ...

Time

One or two 45-minute sessions

Materials

Items in activities notebook

- “A Look Through the Lens: FSA Photographs” by Emily Catherman; from *Tar Heel Junior Historian* 49:2 (Spring 2010).
- [Teacher Information Sheet: Analyzing Photographs](#)
- Transparency ([Image 1](#))
- Photographs (9; [Images A–H](#))

Commented [sEvans11]: ... even though you’re starting to separate and define these, you should keep using the bullets/bangers that are used in other sections ...

Items that need to be provided by teacher

- Copies of the [THJH](#) article “A Look Through the Lens: FSA Photographs,” as needed, for individuals or each group
- Copies of the “Photograph Analysis” aActivity sSheet, as needed, for each group
- Blank sheets of 8½" x 11" paper cut into quarters

Commented [sEvans12]: ??? where are these in the notebook ???

Commented [sEvans13]: ??? to be more clear ???

Commented [sEvans14]: ... lowercase, since you don’t use the proper title ...

Commented [sEvans15]: ??? to be more clear ???

Procedure

FSA-Photograph Analysis

1. Introduce this lesson by projecting the enclosed transparency of Image 1 or by passing around Image 1 while students listen to or read the article “A Look Through the Lens: FSA Photographs.” by Emily Catherman.
2. Using the transparency as an example, have the students cover the photographs with all four quarters of a sheet of paper that has been cut into quarters. Have them uncover one section-quarter of the photograph and ask them-students to look at it more-closely-at it. Discuss what they see. Continue the process, uncovering one additional section of the image at a time. Do they see different things as different parts of the image are unveiled? What things change?
3. Have the students work-togetherdivide into small groups, and giveProvide each group with one or more of the photographs-nine images (Images A–H). Hand out sections of the quartered paper sheets and a copiesy of the Pphotograph Aanalysis activity worksheet for students each group to complete as a group. *Note: students can also complete this exercise individually with as long as they have copies of the photographs. Give the students time to analyze the photographs.*
4. Allow students enough time to analyze the photographs—quarter by quarter and as a whole—in their groups or on their own. When enough time has passed, have the each group or students share what they was learned by from analyzing their analysis photographs. *Note: Use the Teacher information sheet about the photographs to help guide them; —some of the information will be easily discovered in the photographs and understood, but some of the information what they see might need identification and some explanation.*
- 4.5. After all the groups and/or students have presented, show all the photographs to the class and a. Ask the students for their additional thoughts and reactions. To spur conversation, consider asking the following:
 - a. to the photographs and if Has their understanding of the Great Depression or agriculture in North Carolina during the 1930s changed after as a result of

Commented [sEvans16]: ??? above, you call them “Photographs”; since I don’t have them in the notebook, I can’t change to be the term that’s appropriate ...

Commented [sEvans17]: ??? okay to add ???

Commented [sEvans18]: ... I moved this wording up from below, since this is where you really need it in the process ...

Commented [sEvans19]: ??? or whatever action(s) you want them to do at this point ...

Commented [sEvans20]: ... ditto ...

Commented [sEvans21]: ... ditto ...

Commented [sEvans22]: ??? are these different than Image 1 ???

Commented [sEvans23]: ... another rearrangement and division of steps in the process ...

FROM FARM TO FACTORY

viewing these photographs?

b. Ask them if and how Do they think these photographs like these helped farmers in North Carolina during the Great Depression? How? What kind of social impact do they think might these photographs may have had?

c. Ask the students to think of photographs they have seen in newspapers or magazines that helped them become more aware of, or better understand, a current local, national, or global issue.

Writing Activity Number 1 *for elementary students*

1. Have the students bring in a photograph from home of their family or their favorite place.
2. Have them trade photographs with a partner whose photograph they have not seen before.
3. Then have them students analyze each photograph, quarter by quarter, and make observations about the photograph, and writing a short narrative about what they think is important about the photograph or what they think is happening in the photograph.
4. After they have completed their narrative, have them each student share it with their partner. Then, have the partners reveal what they know about the photographs they each brought in.
5. Ask the students how accurate or inaccurate their narratives were after finding out "more information the real story" from their partner. Explain to the students *Note: Make sure students understand that this concept: photographs may tell us a lot about the time and place in which they were taken, but that there are also even photographs have limitations to on the amount of information we can obtain from photographs them alone.*

Writing Activity Number 2 *for middle school students*

1. Have students work in groups or individually to write an article for a magazine as a photojournalist. Have them choose a topic related to this lesson, to agriculture, to the environment, or to another theme that correlates with your curriculum goals. Depending on the topic chosen, it can be an informational article, an opinion article, a letter to the editor, a promotional article, or some other type of article. Ask that The students should conduct

Commented [sEvans24]: ??? I would suggest just having two separate writing activities and letting teachers adapt them for their students-- I see no reason that this one, for example, couldn't work for any level ...

Commented [sEvans25]: ... I broke this into steps, to match your format ...

Commented [sEvans26]: ... see note above ...

FROM FARM TO FACTORY

research on their topics using reliable Internet *and* library resources; interview at least one person; and find 3three to 5five photographs to use in their article thatto help tell their story.

42. Have them present their articles and photographs to the class.

Additional Resources

For more photographs from the Farm Security Administration, including color photographs of the 1930s-and '40s, visit the following links:

<http://www.loc.gov/pictures/collection/fsa/>

http://www.flickr.com/photos/library_of_congress/sets/72157603671370361/

Commented [sEvans27]: ??? okay to add, to make the assignment more "photojournalistic" !!!