

The Great Depression: Tennessee and the Civilian Conservation Corps (CCC)

Lesson plans for primary sources at the Tennessee State Library & Archives

Author: Whitney Joyner, Northeast Middle School

Grade Level: 5th grade/11th grade

Date Created: March 2018, standards updated 2019

Visit <http://sos.tn.gov/tsla/education> for additional lesson plans.



Introduction: The following lesson plan and resources are designed to cover part of the 5th grade content standards for the Great Depression and the New Deal. It addresses the impact that the Great Depression and New Deal Policies, with a particular emphasis on the Civilian Conservation Corps, had on Tennesseans. This lesson plan does not address the causes and impact of the Great Depression, which will need to be covered prior to this lesson. It also does not cover all the New Deal policies, which will also need to be covered either before or after this lesson.

Guiding Questions:

- How did life change for Tennesseans during the Great Depression?
- What was the New Deal and how did it impact those living during this time?
- How did groups like the Civilian Conservation Corps help to improve the country while putting unemployed Americans back to work?

Curriculum Standards:

Social Studies Content Standards:

5.16 Describe how New Deal policies of President Franklin D. Roosevelt impacted American society with government-funded programs, including: Social Security, expansion and development of the national parks, and creation of jobs in the state (i.e., Tennessee Valley Authority and Civilian Conservation Corps). (C, E, G, H, P)

TN Social Studies Practices:

SSP.01- Gather information from a variety of primary and secondary sources, including:

- Printed materials (e.g., literary texts, newspapers, political cartoons, autobiographies, speeches, letters, personal journals)
- Graphic representations (e.g., maps, timelines, charts, artwork)
- Artifacts
- Media and technology sources

Lesson Activities Continued:

SSP.02- Critically examine a primary or secondary source in order to:

- Summarize significant ideas and relevant information
- Distinguish between fact and opinion
- Draw inferences and conclusions
- Recognize author's purpose, point of view, and reliability

Tennessee State English Standards for Informational Text:

Key Ideas and Details

1. Quote accurately from a text when explaining what the text says explicitly and when drawing inferences from the text.
2. Determine two or more main ideas of a text and explain how they are supported by key details; summarize the text.
3. Explain the relationships or interactions between two or more individuals, events, ideas, or concepts in a historical, scientific, or technical text based on specific information in the text.
6. Analyze multiple accounts of the same event or topic, noting important similarities and differences in the point of view they represent.
9. Integrate information from several texts on the same topic in order to write or speak about the subject knowledgeably.

Materials Needed:

- Print outs of primary sources from Tennessee State Library and Archives, National Archives, Teach Tennessee History, and Library of Congress. These need to be pre-organized according to the "Investigation Stations" for Activity 2. (They are all linked within the activity.)
- Secondary sources from Tennessee4Me website (Linked within the activity.)
- Copies of Lyrics for both "In the Fall of '29" and "Boys in Green" for each student
- Computer stations with headphone/earbuds for Investigation Stations
- "An Analysis of The Great Depression and The New Deal in Tennessee" Handout- Copies for each student
- "Primary Source Investigation Stations" Handout- Copies for each team
- Copies of the TeVA Civilian Conservation Corps Introduction for each team.

Lesson Activities Continued:

Background:

[“The Great Depression in Tennessee”](#) - Teach TN History

[TeVA Civilian Conservation Corps Introduction to Collection](#)



Tracy City Civilian Conservation Corps camp kitchen

Lesson Activities:

Activity 1: Building Background- An Overview of The Great Depression

Introduction/Hook:

TTW introduce students to the song, “In the Fall of ‘29” from The Great Depression. Lyrics and song written by: W. Lee, “Pappy” O’Daniel and recorded by his Light Crust Doughboys

TTW distribute copies of the lyrics for students to read along with, while the teacher plays the following track: <http://musicfromthedepression.com/in-the-fall-of-29/>

TTW then lead students in a whole group discussion of the following questions:

1. What historical event does the “Fall of ‘29” refer to in the song?
2. Several “characters” are sung about in this song? What types of people were affected by the “In the Fall of ‘29?”
3. What can you tell from listening to the song about life for people around the time of the stock market crash?

"In the Fall of 29" Lyrics

Lyrics: W. Lee O'Daniel

[Why, hello there, mister iceman. Where have I seen your face?]
Please don't try to tease me, mister, just because I lost the race;
I was once a great big banker, worth a million for a time,
But I lost the whole kaboodle in the fall of twenty-nine.

(CHORUS:)

In the fall of twenty-nine, in the fall of twenty-nine,
That's when we started sliding, in the fall of twenty-nine,
'Twas a fall of fifty-fifty, you lost yours and I lost mine,
But it made us all more human since the fall of twenty-nine.

[Hey there, mister taxi driver. Where have I seen you before?]
Listen, buddy, I'm the fella who had stocks and bonds galore,
My office was on Wall Street, everything was going fine,
But my stocks and bonds all vanished in the fall of twenty-nine.

(CHORUS)

[Hey there, mister apple vendor, with that old familiar toot!]
Gee whiz, you do remember, I'm the guy who played the flute,
I was making lots of money, the way I spent it was a crime,
But my income stopped completely in the fall of twenty-nine.

(CHORUS)

[Who's that ringing our front doorbell? She has magazines to sell.]
Well, wouldn't that surprise you! If it isn't Missus Swell;
She used to lead the whole Four Hundred, had twelve servants all the time,
But it seems she got a setback in the fall of twenty-nine.

(CHORUS)

There were folks in high-up places before the fall of twenty-nine,
But now you find their faces in that good old free breadline,
We thought we were intelligent before that fateful fall,
But now we've come to realize we didn't know it all.

(CHORUS)



Lesson Activities Continued:

Primary and Secondary Source Background Exploration

TTW use the Tennessee4me site to walk students through primary and secondary source materials providing background information on Tennessee and the Great Depression and New Deal. The information provided in the text and through the primary sources located on the site will give students the opportunity to see what life was like for many Tennesseans during this time.

While reading and analyzing the primary sources together, students will complete the “An Analysis of The Great Depression and The New Deal in Tennessee” handout. Students could also be broken into small groups or pairs to analyze the material before coming together to review their work in a whole class discussion.

The following Tennessee4me pages are used in the analysis activity:

- [The Great Depression](#)
- [Hard Times](#)
- [A New Deal](#)
- [Rise of Unemployment](#)
- [Going to School](#)



Tennessee State Library & Archives

Tennessee Secretary of State Tre Hargett

An Analysis of The Great Depression and The New Deal in Tennessee

Read the following section titled, "[The Great Depression](#)." Then, complete the following chart.

<p>WHAT- What was the Great Depression?</p>	<p>WHEN- When did the Great Depression begin? When did the Great Depression end?</p>	<p>WHO- Who did the Great Depression affect?</p>
<p>WHAT- What types of programs did the Federal Government create to help those affected by the Great Depression?</p>	<p>Choose a primary source photograph from this page. Describe the photograph and what it tells you about life in Tennessee during the depression.</p>	

Read the section titled, "[Going to School](#)." Pretend you are a school-age student living in Tennessee during the Great Depression. Write a letter to a friend living in another state, describing what life is like for you at school in Tennessee.

Activity 2: The New Deal and the Civilian Conservation Corps (CCC)

Introduction/Hook:

TTW ask students: In what ways could the government help unemployed people during the Great Depression? Have students share responses and discuss them as a class.

TTW read with students the following piece titled, "[A New Deal](#)," by Tennessee4me. Discuss the following questions with students.

- Who was elected to be President of the United States in 1932?
- What was the New Deal and how did it help people around the country?
- Name some of the relief projects set up as a part of the New Deal?

The Civilian Conservation Corps (CCC) Primary and Secondary Source Investigation Activity:

In this activity, students will work in groups to rotate through a series of investigation stations, analyzing and interpreting primary sources. Some of the stations will require computers with audio, in the form of headphones, to be pre-set for students. As students rotate through the investigation stations, they will complete the "Primary Source Investigation Stations" handout.

The Investigation Stations should be setup as follows:

Pre-Activity- All students will begin with a pre-activity set up to provide students with a context of the CCC and its role in the Great Depression. Students will need to complete the pre-activity portion of their handout prior to moving into their first station.

[TeVA Civilian Conservation Corps Introduction](#) (each team will need one copy of the Introduction or an online copy will need to be provided)

Station 1- Boys in Green

In this station, students will need computers with the audio recording of "Boys in Green" pre-set. Students will also need headphones or earbuds. A copy of the lyrics is in the "Primary Source Investigation Stations" handout. Students will complete the Station 1 Activity while listening to and reading the lyrics of the song.

[Recording of "Boys in Green"](#)

Station 2- Life in the Civilian Conservation Corps (CCC) Camps

In this station, students will need copies of the following primary sources, in order to complete their analysis. The sources in Station 2 will focus on life in CCC Camps.

- [1466th Company, Pikeville, Tennessee- Composite](#) (Poster #1)
- [3462nd Company, Collierville, Tennessee- Composite](#) (Poster #2)

Station 3- Recruitment for the Civilian Conservation Corps (CCC)

In this station, students will need copies of the following primary sources, in order to complete their analysis. The sources in Station 2 will focus on the government's recruitment of CCC enrollees, using two propaganda posters.

- [Poster 1](#)
- [Poster 2](#)

Station 4- Work, Work, Work

In this station, students will need copies of the following primary sources, in order to complete their analysis. The sources in Station 2 will focus on the work projects completed across the state of Tennessee.

- [Big Ridge Dam](#) Photograph
- [African American Civilian Conservation Corps Recruits](#) Photograph
- [CCC Preparing Slope for Seeding and Planting](#) Photograph
- [Concrete Pipe CCC](#)

Station 5- Memories through Oral History

In this station, students will need computers with the following oral history recordings pre-set. Students will also need headphones or earbuds. Students will complete the Station 5 Activity while listening to the oral histories.

- [Oral History #1](#)- Hobart Parrish Oral Histories
- [Oral History #2](#)- Hobart Parrish Oral Histories
- [Oral History #3](#)- Hobart Parrish Oral Histories

Station 1: "Boys in Green"

Directions: In this station, you will listen to a recording of the song "Boys in Green." Read the lyrics below while you listen. Then, complete the questions for Station 1.

"Boys in Green" Lyrics

Recorded by: John McCutcheon

In Nineteen Hundred and Thirty Three
Off in Washington, DC
Roosevelt created the CCC
Like nothing we'd ever seen

He called on fellers across the land
To join together, lend a hand
To learn a skill, to take a stand
We were the boys in green

Chorus

Hurrah for the love of the country
Hurrah for the patriot's dream
With their brains and their backs, with a pick and an axe
Hurrah for the boys in green

When I was lad of just eighteen
We stocked the rivers, lakes and streams
Together fueled this nation's dreams
We were the boys in green

We built the houses, cleared the land
Ran the fences, built the dams
Made quite a home for Uncle Sam
We were the boys in green

Chorus

We build the bridges, trails and roads
We dredged the lakes, we hauled the loads
No more the beach or dune erodes
We were the boys in green

We fought the fires, stemmed the floods
Gathered seeds and planted woods
That grew to be your neighborhoods
We were the boys in green

Chorus

With shovel, trowel, hammer and spade
We built this country, learned a trade
By God, it's quite a world we made
We were the boys in green

Now as an old man I stand perplexed
In a world all paved and multiplexed
And wonder, who is coming next
Where are the boys in green?

Chorus

<p>For whom do you think this song was written?</p>	<p>What was the purpose of the song?</p>	<p>What is the topic sung about in this song?</p>
<p>What does the piece reveal about the artist and the artist's viewpoint? Do you agree with this viewpoint?</p>	<p>Using the song, describe what life was like during this time period.</p>	<p>What questions do you have after listening to this song?</p>

Station 2- Life in the Civilian Conservation Corps (CCC) Camps:

Directions: In this station, you will see two posters of primary source photographs. These photographs show what life was like in Civilian Conservation Camps. Each poster shows a different camp in Tennessee. Please complete the activity below after looking at and analyzing these photographs.

[1466th Company, Pikeville, Tennessee- Composite](#) (Poster #1)

[3462nd Company, Collierville, Tennessee- Composite](#) (Poster #2)

Poster #1- 1466th Company, Pikeville, TN	Poster #2- 3462nd Company, Collierville, TN
What types of activities seem to be taking place in this camp?	What types of activities seem to be taking place in this camp?
What do you find most surprising about the photographs from this camp?	What do you find most surprising about the photographs from this camp?
Looking at both posters, what similarities do you notice between the two camps?	
Looking at both posters, what differences do you notice between the two camps?	

Station 3- Recruitment for the Civilian Conservation Corps (CCC)

Directions: Look at the two propaganda posters provided and complete the following chart.

- [Poster 1](#) [Poster 2](#)

Poster 1	
Scan the poster. What do you notice first?	
Words What words stand out the most?	Visuals List the people, objects, places, and activities in the poster.
Does it say who created it?	What are the main colors used?
Are there questions or instructions written for the audience? If so, what are they?	Are there any symbols? If so, what are they?
Write one or two sentences summarizing the message of the poster.	

Poster 2

Scan the poster. What do you notice first?

Words

What words stand out the most?

Does it say who created it?

Are there questions or instructions written for the audience? If so, what are they?

Visuals

List the people, objects, places, and activities in the poster.

What are the main colors used?

Are there any symbols? If so, what are they?

Write one or two sentences summarizing the message of the poster.

Station 4- Work, Work, Work

Directions: In this station, look at and analyze the primary source photographs and captions provided. Then, complete the chart provided.

Primary Source Photograph- A small image has been provided in the chart to help you match the image to the correct caption. Look at the larger, printed image to complete activity.	Caption Describing Photograph
	<p>At least eight Civilian Conservation Corps workers constructing Big Ridge Dam in Union County Tennessee. A large lifting crane can be seen with a bucket of concrete.</p> <p>With the purpose of relieving unemployment, the Civilian Conservation Corps was created in 1933, and was expanded by Congress in 1937. During this expansion, the Civilian Conservation Corps added vocation training and remedial education programs. The Corps employed young men to perform structural improvements to bridges and roads; erosion and flood control; and various conservation work projects. The Corps was instrumental in the infrastructure of the Tennessee State Parks System and National Parks in Tennessee. Big Ridge Dam is part of the Norris Dam System in Big Ridge State Park.</p>
<p>What impact did this project have on the future of Tennessee?</p>	

Primary Source Photograph- A small image has been provided in the chart to help you match the image to the correct caption. Look at the larger, printed image to complete activity.

Caption Describing Photograph



Six African American Civilian Conservation Corps recruits thinning trees and clearing brush along an unknown freeway. They are stacking trimmed branches and bushes into a flatbed truck on the road.

With the purpose of relieving unemployment, the Civilian Conservation Corps was created in 1933, and was expanded by Congress in 1937. During this expansion, the Civilian Conservation Corps added vocation training and remedial education programs. The Corps employed young men to perform structural improvements to bridges and roads; erosion and flood control; and various conservation work projects. The Corps was instrumental in the infrastructure of the Tennessee State Parks System and National Parks in Tennessee.

What impact did this project have on the future of Tennessee?

Primary Source Photograph- A small image has been provided in the chart to help you match the image to the correct caption. Look at the larger, printed image to complete activity.

Caption Describing Photograph



A team of Civilian Conservation Corps workmen preparing a slope near a road for planting trees. Such projects helped prevent erosion of bare slopes.

With the purpose of relieving unemployment, the Civilian Conservation Corps was created in 1933, and was expanded by Congress in 1937. During this expansion, the Civilian Conservation Corps added vocational training and remedial education programs. The Corps employed young men to perform structural improvements to bridges and roads; erosion and flood control; and various conservation work projects. The Corps was instrumental in the infrastructure of the Tennessee State Parks System and National Parks in Tennessee.

What impact did this project have on the future of Tennessee?

Primary Source Photograph- A small image has been provided in the chart to help you match the image to the correct caption. Look at the larger, printed image to complete activity.

Caption Describing Photograph



A man inspecting a concrete pipe manufactured by the Civilian Conservation Corps for use in constructing forest roads. Five rows of pipes are visible, the second of which has planks of wood, presumably for rolling the heavy concrete pipes in order to stack them.

With the purpose of relieving unemployment, the Civilian Conservation Corps was created in 1933, and was expanded by Congress in 1937. During this expansion, the Civilian Conservation Corps added vocation training and remedial education programs. The Corps employed young men to perform structural improvements to bridges and roads; erosion and flood control; and various conservation work projects. The Corps was instrumental in the infrastructure of the Tennessee State Parks System and National Parks in Tennessee.

What impact did this project have on the future of Tennessee?

Station 5- Memories through Oral History

Directions: In this station, you will listen to three oral history recordings. The recordings are part of an interview with Hobart Parrish. Mr. Parrish was an enrollee of the Civilian Conservation Corps and lived in Tennessee. In the recordings he describes his experiences.

Write a summary of Mr. Parrish's thoughts and experiences as an enrollee in the Civilian Conservation Corps. Be sure to include detail from each of the three recordings.

Independent Assessment Activity:

As a concluding activity for this lesson, students will create their own original recruitment poster for the Civilian Conservation Corps.

Problem: President Franklin D. Roosevelt has put you in charge of helping recruit new enrollees for the Civilian Conservation Corps (CCC).

By providing U.S. citizens with jobs, the president is hoping to help the U.S. recover and get out of the Great Depression.

Challenge: You must create a poster to try to recruit new workers for the CCC in Tennessee.

Criteria/Constraints:

- Your poster must contain the name or abbreviation of the program.
- It should include image(s) of the type of work that the program performs.
- The poster should have a catchy phrase or tag line to get people to join.
- The poster should include color to catch the eye of perspective workers.

Students will need to brainstorm ideas for their poster, prior to creating their final product. This assessment can be altered to make it a paired activity as well, if needed.