FROM DEWEY TO SKYLINE FARMS: PROGRESSIVE EDUCATION IN NEW DEAL RESETTLEMENT COMMUNITIES

by

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ABSTRACT

The Great Depression of the 1930s created some of the most difficult economic times in the history of the United States, with the agricultural sector of the economy taking an especially severe hit. President Franklin D. Roosevelt's New Deal programs aimed to help the rural poor, including those who were uprooted from the land as well as those who stayed on their farms despite worsening conditions. The federal government created forty-three cooperative, rural agricultural communities to assist destitute farming families. Following George Hein's book *Progressive Museum Practice: John Dewey and Democracy*, this dissertation examines the influence of progressive education ideology on the creation and organization of these resettlement communities, focusing on one of the largest of these communities, Skyline Farms, Alabama. Additionally, this study examines modern efforts to share the community's New Deal history by providing a framework for interpretation for the Skyline Farms Heritage Association.

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Just as with food, they cannot conceive of or be interested in what they have never tasted or heard of. All except the simplest knowledge of immediate materials and of the senses is completely irrelevant to the life they are living.
– James Agee, *Let Us Now Praise Famous Men*[1]

In the summer of 1936, two men set off to Alabama to document the lives of three white tenant farmers for a piece in the New York-based magazine, *Fortune*. Writer James Agee and federal photographer Walker Evans spent about a month in the Alabama Black Belt living with the Ricketts, Woods, and Gudger families. Each family had similar stories. They only owned a mule or two and basic tools. They were dependent on their landlord for housing, farmland, seeds, and some, if not all, farming implements. The families each had four or more children, little, if any, education, and lived in housing that Evans described as "rudimentary as a child's drawing".[2] The families lived on the meagerest of incomes, clearing $300 annually in the years leading up to the Great Depression, and only $50 *per annum* during some Depression years. Often families could end the year in debt to their landlord if there was an unexpected illness or other unforeseen circumstance.[3] Over the course of the next several weeks, Agee and Walker got to the know the individual family members, their struggles, and their pride. The two went on to write and document their experiences in the seminal work, *Let Us Now Praise*

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[1] James Agee and Walker Evans. *Let Us Now Praise Famous Men* (New York: First Mariner Books, 2001), 276.

[2] Ibid, 127.

[3] Ibid, 103-105.

Famous Men. The book was one of the many ways the country learned of the impoverished conditions of the American South.

Poverty loomed constant for many Southerners in the early twentieth century. With the decline in plantation farming and the rise in tenancy, stagnant industrial wages, and damaged cotton crops caused by the boll weevil, the Alabama state economy struggled even before Black Monday in October 1929. Many tenant farmers moved often to find better contracts as the Depression progressed, but for some, that opportunity never manifested. Out-of-work tenants had few other job prospects. Others who found work in the state's timber industry encountered no demand for their back-breaking labor. With little education and high illiteracy rates, the majority of poor white tenant farmers did not have the transferable skills to find other avenues of work.[4]

At first, efforts by emergency relief from charities, such as the Red Cross and religious organizations, helped to address some of the needs. But these resources depleted quickly with the overwhelming need.[5] Then in the early 1930s came relief agencies. The first glimmer of hope in northern Jackson County came from the Reconstruction Finance Cooperation (RFC). It provided funding for much needed infrastructure improvements, which included a roadway connecting the county seat of Scottsboro across the Cumberland Mountain to the town of Paint Rock to the west. This created the opportunity for economic development by the Two Rivers Lumber and Mining Cooperation, who

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[4] David L. Carlton and Peter A. Coclanis, eds. *Confronting Southern Poverty in the Great Depression: The Report on Economic Conditions of the South* (New York: Bedford/St. Martin's, 1996) 56-57.

[5] Wayne Flint. *Poor but Proud – Alabama's Poor Whites* (Tuscaloosa: University of Alabama Press, 1989), 283.

proposed the construction of an industrial village called the Two Rivers Project. The company sought to build on the existing timber industry on the Mountain. Thanks to the Tennessee Valley Authority (TVA), created in May 1933, electricity was available for the first time and allowed for the construction of sawmills and the clearing of land. However, the industrial village never came to fruition.[6]

Education was an issue for the South prior the Great Depression. The first problem was the difficulty of funding. According to a report issued in 1936, "the South must educate two-thirds of the Nation's children with one-sixth of the Nation's school revenues".[7] Scarcity of educational funding was especially true in the state of Alabama. This problem became worse in 1891, when state legislators revoked provisions allocating funds according to the number of students by race. Instead, they allowed municipalities and counties to award funding "as they saw fit", leading to a huge disparity in resources between white and African American schools. More restrictions arose with the adoption of the 1901 state constitution, which took away power from local governments and made any proposed raise in property tax or local reforms subject to approval by a statewide vote, resulting in a constitutional amendment. Due to unpopularity of taxation across the state, many of these statewide votes failed, therefore denying much needed funding to local school systems. While there were some steps to improving education during the early part of the twentieth century, such as the restructuring of the state Board of

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[6] *Skyline Farms National Register of Historic Places Multiple Property Nomination*, E2-E3.

[7] Carlton and Coclains, *Confronting Southern Poverty in the Great Depression*, 57.

Education, the development of an illiteracy program, and the creation of the Alabama Special Education Trust, they were not enough to spur widespread change. Upon the eve of the Great Depression, schools were struggling to keep their doors open, much less increase services to the state's youth.[8]

The New Deal, under President Franklin Delano Roosevelt, ushered in numerous national aid programs during the Great Depression. In order to address the immediate need of destitute families and inadequate education, the federal government initiated rural rehabilitation operations in three southern states, including Alabama. Over 30,000 families were enrolled by March 1934. In Alabama, the program partnered with Auburn University (then known as Auburn Polytechnic Institute) to assist enrolled families with learning new farming techniques and by teaching home economics. Land grant colleges were especially valuable to the rural rehabilitation programs due to their scientific research into progressive agricultural technologies.[9] Another agency that helped educate Alabama's farmers, the Civilian Conservation Corps (CCC), employed young men, ages eighteen to twenty-five, for the purpose of conservation and development of the nation's natural resources. More than forty CCC camps existed across the state of Alabama and focused their efforts on educational projects such as soil conservation, combating erosion,

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[8] Gordon Harvey, "Public Education in the Early Twentieth Century." *Encyclopedia of Alabama*, http://encyclopediaofalabama.org/article/h-2601 (accessed July 25, 2020). For more information on the 1901 Alabama state constitution, see *Bailey Thomson, ed. A Century of Controversy: Constitutional Reform in Alabama* (Tuscaloosa: University of Alabama Press, 2002).

[9] Flynt, *Poor But Proud*, 297.

crop rotation, and contour plowing.[10] The Works Progress Administration (WPA) allocated funds to varied local and state organizations for wages only. Materials for building projects were matched by the receiving organizations. WPA projects including the construction of streets, public buildings, schools, parks, waterworks and drainage systems, and public health efforts.[11] Notably, the WPA funded the creation of the sandstone school building at Skyline Farms.

In addition to giving children a better opportunity, federal reformers also sought to re-establish and nurture what they perceived as fractured rural communities. Perhaps one of the most experimental federal programs was the creation of subsistence homesteads under the Federal Emergency Relief Administration (FERA), later under the Resettlement Administration (RA), and finally the Farm Security Administration (FSA). These communities established by FERA (or later iterations of it) were then locally managed by state headquarters and created new communities for the unemployed. The program provided housing, farmland, and tools in an effort to give farmers a fresh start. Residents were chosen under strict guidelines and were expected to put in the sweat equity needed to clear land and construct houses and public buildings for recreation and administration. Additionally, every member of the family received an education and/or training in some capacity.

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[10] Carolyn Barske, "Civilian Conservation Corps" *Encyclopedia of Alabama* http://www.encyclopediaofalabama.org/article/h-3682 (accessed September 26, 2020).

[11] Julius E. Linn Jr., Katherine M. Tipton, Marjorie L. White, eds. *Digging Out of the Great Depression: Federal Programs at Work in and Around Birmingham* (Birmingham, AL: Birmingham Historical Society, 2010), 73.

The Alabama subsistence homestead projects came out of the involvement of one of its U.S. senators, John H. Bankhead. He saw that the subsistence homesteads were adequately funded by allocating $25 million toward the program in the National Industrial Recovery Act of 1933.[12] There were eight resettlement communities in the state: Bankhead Farms (Jasper), Cahaba Homestead Village (Trussville), Mount Olive Homesteads (Jefferson County), Gee's Bend Farms (Wilcox County), Greenwood Homesteads (Jefferson County), Palmerdale Homesteads (Pinson), Prairie Farms (Macon County), and Skyline Farms (Jackson County).

This study focuses on Skyline Farms, the largest rural resettlement community in the state, especially its educational programs. Community members from Skyline started a grassroots effort in 1998 to save the New Deal-era school from destruction. Their success led to the establishment of the Skyline Farms Heritage Association, a nonprofit committed to sharing the community's history and protecting its existing New Deal landscape. The organization reached out to the Center for Historic Preservation in 2010 seeking guidance on continuing preservation efforts. The Center produced a Heritage Development Plan, as well as a National Register for Historic Places nomination for the community Commissary and multiple property nomination for the resettlement project. PhD candidate Rebecca Duke completed a year-long residency working with the Skyline Farms Heritage Association to develop their community museum. This dissertation is the culmination of that work.

Presentation of Thesis Statement, Literature Review, and Dissertation Organization

[12] Flynt, *Poor But Proud*, 305-306.

There is a paucity of published sources available on Skyline Farms outside of a thesis written during the early 1980s by sociologist David Campbell, who now serves as the president of Northeast Alabama Community College, and a recent publication in the *Alabama Heritage* by Skyline Heritage Association historian, Cynthia Rice. Dr. Campbell claims that the organization and structure for rural resettlement community programs stemmed from sociologist Carl Taylor's views on social programming. Taylor worked for the Rural Resettlement Division of the RA and believed that programs should provide more social opportunities to offset isolation.[13]

Following George Hein's book *Progressive Museum Practice: John Dewey and Democracy*, I argue that educational reform was a primary goal at Skyline Farms, with the school building becoming a community focal point then, as it is today. Resettlement communities attempted to break the cycle of farming tenancy through educating its residents on various methods of farming and farm management, as well as other specialized skills. One of the tenets of progressive education is the belief that humans are social animals who learn best in a communal environment. Educator and philosopher John Dewey claimed that for education to be beneficial to both the individual and society, it must be based in experience.[14] This concept of hands-on, experiential learning is the

[13] David Campbell, "The Skyline Farm Band Plays for President Mrs. Franklin Roosevelt" draft of manuscript accessed at the Skyline Farms Heritage Museum, accessed December 3, 2012.

[14] John Dewey. *Education and Experience* (New York: Touchstone Publishing), 89.

essence of resettlement communities. There are four components associated with progressive education:

1. Broadening education to include concern for health, vocation and quality of life for family and community;
2. Applying new scientific research in psychology and social sciences to classroom pedagogy;
3. Creating individualized instruction to meet a vast variety of learning styles; and
4. Upholding the ideals of a democratic republican society by addressing social problems through social and political action.[15]

My dissertation will address how reformers shaped these components at Skyline Farms and how they wished to reshape community in the rural resettlements.

In order to understand the use of progressive education within New Deal resettlement communities, chapter two provides a concise overview of education in the United States. Since the founding of our country, education has been a priority for its government leaders, as well as its citizens. The Founding Fathers stated that for the republic to survive, it was imperative that the population was educated. Chapter two chronicles the history of American schools from the 1600s to the 1930s, discussing educational trends, problems/controversies, and different ways of learning. Variances in education amongst colonial regions is presented first and shows the correlation between religion and schooling trends. Industrialization ushers in common schools, the precursor to the American public-school system, created by Horace Mann. Students learned how to live by the clock, how to read and write, and how to be good American citizens. Compulsory school laws were passed, which made attendance required for children.

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[15] George Hein, *Progressive Museum Practice: John Dewey and Democracy* (Walnut Creek, CA: Left Coast Press, 2012), 11.

Disparities in education were apparent early and depended on race and local economies. The chapter ends by discussing issues in the Southern education systems and the origins of progressive education.

Important works that support the American education section include Lawrence Cremin's *American Education: The Colonial Experience 1607 – 1783*, John Pulliam's *History of Education in America*, William Reese's *The Origins of the American High School*, and various works on John Dewey. Lawrence Cremin was an eminent scholar of the history of American education. In the first volume of his three-part series, he explains how the seeds of the American education system were planted very early in the nation's history. Cremin describes the "transfer of culture from the Old World to the New World" as the responsibility of the family, church, and eventually, communities.[16] Pulliam's *History of Education* provides a chronological overview of major movements in American education, serving as an outline to the subject as a whole. Reese, another prominent historian of American education, focuses on the period of 1820-1860 in his history of the American high school. He puts the change in importance of the high school in both a social and political context.

No explanation of progressive education would be complete without mentioning John Dewey. During my research, I have found a direct connection between John Dewey, known as the father of progressive education, and resettlement communities. He was on the school board in Arthurdale, West Virginia, the country's first resettlement

[16] V.P. Franklin. "Education in Urban Communities in the United States: Exploring the Legacy of Lawrence A. Cremin." *Paedagogica Historica* 39 (No. 1/2, 2003), 153-154.

community. Although Dewey's board position seemed to be more honorary than hands-on, his philosophies were brought to action by the Arthurdale principal, Elsie Clapp, a former graduate assistant of Dewey's from Columbia University.[17] Arthurdale's educational structure served as the model for future resettlement communities. Dewey emphasized the importance of education as a force for democracy and an impetus for social change. George Hein explains this in his description of an attribute of Progressivism, "a faith in public education as a particularly useful tool for improving society in the direction of greater social justice and more equitable dispersal of benefits derived from progress in science and technology".[18]

Chapter three offers historical context for the New Deal, as well as prominent programs that directly affected communities such as Skyline Farms. A section is devoted to the Agricultural Adjustment Act and the Resettlement Administration and its solutions for destitute families, including rural resettlement communities. Once the national historical context is established, the chapter addresses New Deal efforts in the South with a focus on Alabama and how education was used within New Deal programs to get people back to work. This chapter relies on works by Alabama historian Wayne Flynt, *Confronting Southern Poverty in the Great Depression: The Report on Economic Condition of the South with Related Documents,* edited by David Carton and Peter Coclanis, and primary sources of the FDR administration. Wayne Flynt writes at length

[17] Mary Wuenstel. "Participants in the Arthurdale Community Schools' Experiment in Progressive Education from the Years 1934-1938 Recount Their Experiences." *Education* 122 (No. 4 Summer 2002): 759-770.

[18] Hein, Progressive Museum Practice, 11.

about the southern poor white experience in his work, *Poor But Proud*, paying particular attention to tenant farmers. This is a must read for any student of southern history. The 1936 report on the condition of the South provides primary source material as well as historical context for the information by editors Carton and Coclanis. It is clear why FDR called the South the "nation's no. 1 economic problem" after reading their work.[19]

Chapter four takes a deep dive into the formation, organization, and educational effort of Skyline Farms under the New Deal management years of 1934 – 1944. Information produced by the Center for Historic Preservation, including the Skyline Farms Heritage Development Plan and the National Historic Register application for the Skyline Farms Rock Store, provided the basis for Skyline research, as well as the Skyline Farm Heritage Association's archives housed at the Skyline Farms Rock Store Museum. Articles from local newspapers, the *Jackson County Sentinel* and *the Progressive Age*, and documents from the National Archives branch in Atlanta, GA, and the Library of Congress provided primary sources relating to Skyline Farms.

To address the public history component of my dissertation, I link progressive education and modern museum best practices in chapter five. Various documents I created during my public history residency provide a framework for establishing a sustainable heritage museum including an interpretive plan and collections management policy. A Teaching with Primary Sources-MTSU unit written about Skyline Farms is included as an appendix. The interpretive plan provides a clear strategy in order to promote the local, regional, and national historical significance of this community by

[19] Carton and Coclanis, 19.

outlining the Museum's educational goals, exhibit design, visitor experiences, educational programming, marketing, volunteer development, and long-term goals. The collections management policy defines the scope of the museum collection, access to the collection, and the roles and responsibility of those responsible for the care and upkeep of the collection. The Teaching with Primary Sources unit provides lesson plans for children in grades three through five and high school that will provide context for Skyline Farms in their overall curriculum, relating to state standards.

Skyline Farms served as one of the largest resettlement communities of the New Deal. Its importance to local, state, and national history is clear. The efforts of the local community to preserve their community's legacies serve as a blueprint for other small communities and how they can tell the story of their people.

CHAPTER TWO – TRENDS IN PUBLIC EDUCATION, 1630-1930

Above all things I hope the education of the common people will be attended to; convinced that on their good sense we may rely with the most security for the preservation of a due degree of liberty.

--Thomas Jefferson to James Madison, December 20, 1787[20]

Since the establishment of the United States, national leaders have always spoken of the need for public education. The Founding Fathers deemed education essential for a successful democracy. Thomas Jefferson, for instance, linked literacy with democracy: if white men were to vote and choose their own leaders, they must be able to read and write. Jefferson believed public education provided a way to teach basic political principles to the country's future voters, creating a basis for self-rule.[21]

The Founding Fathers may have spoken in favor of public education, but few leaders on either the local or state levels were willing to fund it.[22] Not until the early twentieth century would public education become a primary focus in the American South.[23]

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[20] Thomas Jefferson. *A Letter to James Madison, December 20, 1787*. http://www.let.rug.nl/usa/presidents/thomas-jefferson/letters-of-thomas-jefferson/jefl66.php (accessed September 22, 2013).

[21] Jennings, L. Wagoner, Jr., *Jefferson and Education* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2004).

[22] Sarah Mondale and Sarah B. Patton, eds., *School: The Story of American Public Education* (Boston: Beacon Press, 2001), 10-13.

[23] Leon H. Prather, *Resurgent Politics and Educational Progressivism in the New South* (Cranbury, NJ: Associated University Presses, 1979).

Trends in Educational History

Historian Ellwood P. Cubberley has identified seven phases in the development of an American public education system:

1. Attempts to solve the problems through private benevolence or church charity, often aided by small grants of public lands;
2. The granting of aid to private schools or school societies in the form of small money grants, license taxes, lotteries, or land endowments to enable them to extend instruction or reduce tuition fees or both;
3. The granting of permission to form a tax district and organize schools, often only for pauper children but later for others;
4. Enactment of laws requiring education for the indigent poor;
5. Enactment of laws requiring local effort for school maintenance in return for state aid, with permission to supplement this support by tuition fees;
6. Elimination of tuition fees, thus establishing free schools;
7. Elimination of the pauper school idea and of aid to sectarian schools, thus establishing the common school.[24]

These seven patterns characterized American public education from the colonial era to the Progressive movement of the early twentieth century. A free, public education did not exist during colonial times. Wealth, race and gender were key factors in determining who received schooling and who did not. Responsibility for education fell to parents and churches and control was left to male property owners. Minimal education was available for girls and far less than that existed for the poor or people of color.

Most public education was faith-centered, placing emphasis on individual responsibility to know the work of God and learn proper religious behavior. Young

[24] Robert Marshall, The *Story of Our Schools: Short History of Public Education in the United States* (Washington D.C., Association of State Universities and Land Grant Colleges and the National Council for the Social Studies and the National School Public Relations Association, 1962), 12-13.

children of the elite class attended dame schools or nursery schools, where they first learned the alphabet and numbers. The curriculum progressed to the memorization of biblical hymns and verses, reading, writing, and basic calculation. Students learned how to read so they could understand biblical texts and learn how to live life in a godly manner. The Bible was the primary reading text and Protestant principles influenced what little curriculum that existed.[25]

A formal system of education first developed in the Massachusetts colony. With a population of approximately 6,000 residents in 1690, Boston was the largest colonial center. Massachusetts enacted the first schooling requirements in 1647, which mandated that any area having at least fifty households appoint a community teacher for the instruction of area children. The 1647 law required districts with more than 100 households to establish a grammar school. The law also set curriculum standards and operating procedures for these grammar schools. A year later in 1648, officials approved the first property tax to fund the construction of school buildings. [26]

New England colonists believed that education was synonymous with religion and should be available primarily for those of the elite class, including merchants,

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[25]Donald C. Orlich and S. Samuel Shermis, *The Pursuit of Excellence: Introductory Readings in Education* (New York: American Book Company, 1965), 12-16. Also see: Allan Ornstein, et al., *Foundations of Education*, 11th ed. (Belmont, CA: Wadworth, 2010).

[26] Joel Spring. *The American School, 1642-1996* (New York: McGraw-Hill, 1997), 8-9. The 1647 law was named the Old Deluder Satan Act and opens with the famous words "It being the chief project of old deluder, Satan, to keep men from the knowledge of the Scriptures…it is therefore ordered…"; Also see: E. Jennifer Monagham, *Learning to Read and Write in Colonial America* (Amherst: University of Massachusetts Press, 2007).

planters, clergy, and lawyers, who would then train the masses. The Puritans, strict, devout Protestants who immigrated to America starting in 1620, thought children harbored an inherently evil nature and deemed a religious education essential for individuals to receive salvation and lead a moral life. Children not only learned to read and write so they could read the Bible, but so they would become productive citizens and obey the laws of the land.[27]

After attending dame schools, only young men from prominent families were admitted to Latin grammar schools where they were taught more advanced skills. Literacy and writing skills were requirements for admission to these schools and the curriculum aligned with the needs of their social group and maintaining their status among the wealthy elite.[28] Class disparities were even more apparent after grammar school. The elite would often continue to college while the working-class children began apprenticeships. As early as 1636, Puritan settlers had established a university to educate their religious leaders. This college, eventually known as Harvard University, was the first institution of higher learning built in the colonies. The school had limited curriculum but was established for one main purpose – to educate in Godliness.[29]

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[27] James Axtell, *The School Upon a Hill* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1974).

[28] William J. Reese, *The Origins of the American High School* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1995), 5-7.

[29] Samuel E. Morrison. *Harvard in the Seventeenth Century* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1936).

Schools in the southern colonies existed only for the planter class and reflected English ideals. A general lack of interest in public education existed. The planter class believed that it was each man's responsibility to see to his own education and felt no responsibility for paying for educating his neighbor's children. Any governmental support went to supporting private schools. The idea of public schools did not manifest in the South until the 1820-30s.[30] More resources and energy were devoted to strengthening the cotton empire than to establishing a school for all the region's children. For those with wealth, occasionally school buildings would be built on dormant pastureland of a plantation and were referred to as "field schools".[31] A hired tutor or Anglican minister served as teachers for field schools. For younger children, education began at home. Commonly referred to as dame schools, mothers taught children letters and numbers and lessons from the Bible. [32] The South's geography and dependence on the plantation economy lent itself better suited for schooling close to home. Children would be available to work as needed or look after younger siblings. Additionally, there was a concerted effort amongst the upper class to limit schooling for poor whites and restrict learning all together for the enslaved population. Southern planters viewed education as a mark of status and believed the poor only needed to know enough to perform basic business

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[30] Sarah Hyde. *Schooling in the Antebellum South: The Rise of Public and Private Education in Louisiana, Mississippi, and Alabama* (Baton Rouge: Louisiana State University Press, 2016), 4-5.

[31] John D. Pulliam and James Van Patten, *History of Education in America* (New York: Macmillan Publishing, 1994), 16-17.

[32] Ibid, 16-17.

transactions. Both wealthy and poor whites agreed that it was in their best interest if the enslaved population was restricted from education to avoid any conflicts or retaliation.[33]

While the Puritan faith dominated all aspects of life in the North and the Anglican Church influenced education in the South, the Middle colonies represented a more diverse population. This diversity consisted of Dutch, English, Scottish, Swedish, African, and German settlers, each nationality bringing its own language, faith, and customs. These ethnic groups developed their own schools based on their belief systems. The Quakers, who settled the area around Philadelphia in the 1680s, believed in educating the general population. They were more tolerant to those of different faiths and ways of life and strongly influenced the development of education in Pennsylvania. Instead of focusing on a religious-based and classical education, the Quakers, led by William Penn, encouraged vocational skill training, which he brought to the poor children of Philadelphia. [34]

Common Schools and the Emergence of a Public System

In 1787, the Continental Congress passed the Northwest Ordinance, which provided for the sale of public lands to support education as a condition for admitting new states into the union. This ordinance confirmed the idea that an education was essential for the development and support of strong government. The ordinance

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[33] Richard Middleton and Anne Lombard, *Colonial America: A History to 1763* (Chirchester, West Sussex: Wiley-Blackwell, 2011), 469.

[34] John D. Pulliam. *History of Education in America* (Columbus, OH: Charles E. Merrill Publishing Company, 1968), 14-20; Lawrence Cremin, *American Education – The National Experience* (New York: Harper-Collins, 1980), 18-20.

proclaimed: "religion, morality, and knowledge being necessary to good government and the happiness of mankind, school and the means of education shall forever be encouraged."[35] However, social changes resulting from the birth of the new country deepened concerns regarding the nature and purpose of the country's educational system.

In the 1820s and 1830s, transportation in the United States improved drastically with the creation of canals, steamboats, and plank roads. Individuals could move more freely and were not as location bound as they were in previous years. This transportation revolution connected communities from the Atlantic to the Pacific. Cities grew faster during the antebellum period than any other time thus far in United States history.[36]

An important correlation exists between industrialization and the spread of a systematic approach to education in the United States. Much of the northeast United States experienced increased industrialization and immigration during the 1820-1840s, which resulted in much discussion on social and educational improvement. Reformers insisted that new immigrants needed to be taught American values, language, and ways. Curriculum often reflected the necessities of working in the factories. Students needed to know life by the time clock and to develop proper habits to be successful in the workforce. However, the rise of industry did not always have positive results. Society was still largely agricultural and apprenticeships for young men were disappearing due to the mechanization of farming implements. In many eastern cities, unskilled laborers

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[35] *An Ordinance for the Government of the Territory of the United States, North-West of the River Ohio* (New York: n.p., 1787).

[36] George R. Taylor, *The Transportation Revolution, 1815-1860* (New York: M.E. Sharpe, 1977).

outnumbered craftsmen, thus increasing social tensions.[37] The rise in factory work also meant that more students were likely to skip school in favor of earning a wage to help support their family. Rapid urbanization from rural areas and immigration led to a variety of problems including poverty, crime, and social conflict. Political and cultural leaders looked to educators for answers.[38]

The first advance in education came in 1821 through the establishment of the high school in Boston. Until this time, children received a primary education, and then accepted an apprenticeship to learn skills in order to be successful in the business world. However, numerous advances in mechanical technology rendered many apprenticeships obsolete. With the number of apprentice opportunities dwindling, many looked to the American high school to obtain a more advanced education. The first high school was named the English Classical School but was renamed English High School. Other high schools were established during the 1820s and 1830s throughout the nation but were found mainly throughout the northeastern states. Proponents of the high school promoted the idea by focusing on the fact that local people administered and taught by these schools, as opposed to sending children off to live with strangers at boarding school.

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[37] Reese, *Origins of the American High School*, 17-21.

[38]Michael Schuman. "History of child labor in the United States—part 1: Little Children Working" Monthly Labor Review (U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics, January 2017) https://www.bls.gov/opub/mlr/2017/article/history-of-child-labor-in-the-united-states-part-1.htm (accessed August 5, 2020). See also: Hasian R. Diner, *Erin's Daughters in America: Irish Immigrants in the Nineteenth Century* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1983; Aristide R. Zolberg, *A Nation by Design: Immigration Policy in the Fashioning of America* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 2009).

In order to attend high school, children had to pass a written admission test. Advocates claimed these tests would ensure that those with the best abilities and ambitious demeanors attended. However, this logic proved to be problematic. The only children qualified and properly educated to pass these tests were those who previously attended some sort of formal schooling. This admission test left out the poor, most immigrants and women, and essentially all African Americans.[39]

The Massachusetts models impacted the rest of the nation largely due to the work and influence of Horace Mann. He established what was known then as the *common school*, which would be the precursor for the American public education system. Mann was the Secretary of Education for the state of Massachusetts, the first position of its kind in the nation. Like Thomas Jefferson, Mann observed the inequality in educational opportunities. Under no state legislation, schools varied from city to city. There was a need to 'normalize' the influx of immigrants into society, as well as teach them appropriate skills for working within the new industrial economy. Mann proposed a system that was free of charge, of the highest quality in order to lure the wealthy away from academies, and funded by state tax dollars. Mann's system stressed four major tenets: punctuality, reliability, concentration, and silence, characteristics he deemed as essential to success in an increasingly industrial world.[40]

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[39] Reese, *Origins of the American High School*, 21-25.

[40] William Jeynes, *American Educational History: School, Society, and the Common Good* (Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage, 2007), 145-149.

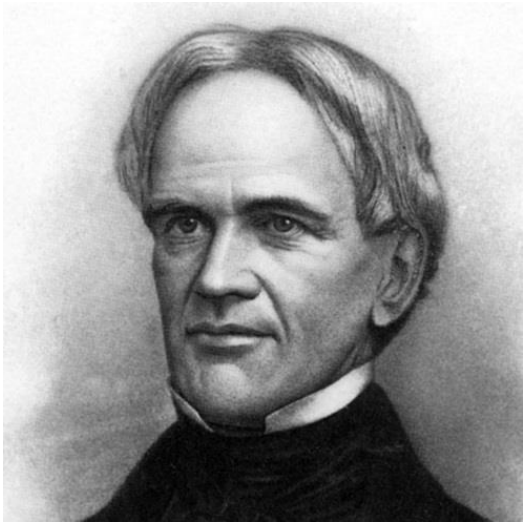

Fig. 2.1. Image of Horace Mann[41]

Other reformers disagreed with Mann's system.[42] His view of education was based heavily in the Protestant faith, which posed a conflict amongst the influx of Irish Catholic immigrants. Many voters did not think that government had the right to interfere with education. Others saw the issue as a political divide – many Democrats of the day believed the common school was an invention of the Whig party. The prime reason for disapproval, however, was the mandate for state property taxes to fund the public schools. Schools needed money to fund changes in the length of the school year, more classroom resources, and professional development for teachers. [43] The taxation debate went back and forth, but by 1860, across the Northeast and Midwest, state legislators

[41] *Horace Mann*. The League of Horace Mann website, accessed February 15, 2016, http://www.hmleague.org/quotes-by-horace-mann/

[42] Patrick W. Carey, *Orestes A. Browson: American Religious Weathervane* (Grand Rapids, MI: Wm. B. Eerdmans Publishing, 2004), 86-87.

[43] John Rury, *Education and Social Change: Themes in the History of American Schooling* (London: Routledge, 2002), 68-72.

called for the creation of state superintendents of instruction who were to "publicize educational causes and exemplary practices, collect and summarize statistics on education, and administer the new education laws of the state." [44]

With other states following suit to establish similar systems to the common school, antebellum social and economic systems in the South varied greatly from their Northern counterparts. The only free schools that existed were the charity houses for orphans or destitute children. Families who lived on small farms depended on the labor of their children to help maintain fields and did not regard formal schooling as a top priority. Thus, many children who lived in this region did not obtain the same level of education as their northern counterparts.[45]

The southern upper class saw public schools as charity for those who could not provide for themselves. Many of the social elite hired private tutors or sent their children to boarding schools, often as far as England. However, many private academies were organized throughout the southern region. In Alabama alone, between the years of 1820 and 1840, educators established over 200 of these private schools. These school's funding came from tuition which translated to roughly ten to thirty dollars per class.[46] Most of the learning for elite whites in the Antebellum South took place inside the home. Mothers assumed responsibility for providing basic education for young children and felt it was

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[44] Marshall, *The Story of Our Schools*, 6-15.

[45] Christie A. Farnham, *The Education of the Southern Belle* (New York: New York University Press, 1994).

[46] Alabama State Board of Education, *History of Education in Alabama Early Years to 1865*. Bicentennial Intern Project (Bulletin 1975, No. 7), 9-10.

part of their motherly duties. Further instruction might come from an elder sibling, an educated aunt, or other family member that obtained formal education. Subject matter depended on the education, expertise, and interest of the teaching family member. Children could then go on to more formal schooling if finances allowed. If the family was particularly wealthy, they might hire a private, live-in tutor. Arrangements for private tutors usually included room and board with their salary.[47]

Prior to the Civil War, unadorned vernacular buildings housed most of the few schools that existed in the south. School rooms often contained no decoration or embellishment of the walls and had little equipment – even blackboards were in short supply. The school year largely depended on the agricultural calendar and the weather. A term, on average, lasted six months and was usually broken up due to demands of the harvest or planting season. [48]

The curriculum in antebellum schools centered on spelling, arithmetic, reading, writing, geography, and grammar. Teachers demanded control and discipline in the classroom; demand was evident even in the pedagogy teachers used with the curriculum. Memorization and recitation proved to be the optimal activity for a room of up to fifty students and one teacher. The 1889 Alabama state superintendent's annual report suggested twenty-one recitations in all the core subjects per day. Repetition led to

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[47] Hyde, *Schooling in the Antebellum South*, 7-8.

[48] Tullye Borden Lindsay and James Armour Lindsay, "Some Light upon Antebellum Alabama Schools," *Peabody Journal of Education* 20 (No. 1 July 1942), 37-40.

memorization; the constant activity left little room for children to misbehave. If students decided to stray off task, there was no shortage of switches for whippings.[49]

Along with class, race played a major factor in the availability of educational opportunities. Southern planters heavily restricted any education for enslaved people. Officials in Massachusetts noticed a difference in the quality of education available to African Americans in their own state and commissioned a report on the state of black schools. However, little was done about the situation. Even early in the most progressive systems, educational leaders realized that the system was by no means perfect.[50]

Economic depression in the late 1830s spurred movements for social changes in the following decade. Education of the country's youth seemed to be the only way to guarantee a successful future for the country. Additionally, the importance of republican motherhood played a large part in academic policy during this time. The term republican motherhood, coined by historian Linda Kerber in her book *Women of the Republic: Intellect and Ideology in Revolutionary America*, refers to a woman's civic duty to raise a generation of children who would withhold the ideals of republicanism. [51] For once, women were given importance by managing the domestic sphere, that is, all things that

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[49] Edith Miriam Ziegler. "The Shaping of Alabama's Educational System: Localism, Community and Domain as Persistent Influences on the Development of Alabama's Public Schools, 1865-1915" PhD thesis, (Armidale, Australia: University of New England, 2008), 137-141.

[50] Mondale, *School*, 40-46.; also see: Heather A. Williams, *Self-Taught: African American Education in Slavery and Freedom* (Chapel Hill: University of North Caroline Press, 2005).

[51] Linda Kerber, *Women of the Republic: Intellect and Ideology in Revolutionary America*. (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1980), 200.

happened at home. For middle- and upper-class white females, this arrangement brought new opportunities for formal education. Private academies were developed specifically to educate young women so they might support the new republic by training their future sons in patriotism and virtue.[52] Kerber refers to motherhood as a perceived fourth branch of the government, "a device that ensured social in the gentlest possible way".[53] While most educated women were seen as a threat to masculinity or society in general, *the learned lady* was not held with the same criticisms because she was using her intellect for the betterment of her family.

Horace Mann promoted education for women and believed in the ideals of republican motherhood. He perceived women as having specific roles to play in the educational system and were "naturally suited for teaching" given their "maternal disposition of patience and affection; especially with small children".[54] These characteristics pertained to white, Protestant women and did not include the likes of Catholics, immigrants, blacks, and other racial minority groups who were ignored.[55]

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[52] Maxine Schwartz Seller. "Boundaries, Bridges, and the History of Education." *History of Education Quarterly*. Vol 2(Summer, 1991): 203-205.

[53] Kerber, "Women of the Republic," 200.

[54] Rury, "Education and Social Change," 78.

[55] Ibid, 76-78.

Fig 2.2. This portrait represents the quintessential republican mother.[56]

During the mid-nineteenth century, curricula shifted to include a more sensorial experience of learning. The Enlightenment had favored science and reason and stressed critical thinking. European educators such as Jean Jacques Rousseau, Johann Heinrich Pestalozzi, and Friedrich Frobel affected the way many teachers taught in the classroom. Educators encouraged independent thinking in the classroom and considerations were made regarding the individual children, rather than what worked best for the whole class. This change in instruction was not immediate or widespread; however, this new philosophy would continue to permeate the minds of scholars in the field of education throughout the coming decades.[57]

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[56] Charles Willson Peale. *Mary Gibson Tilghman and Sons, William Gibson and John Lloyd Tilghman*, 1789, oil on canvas, 49 13/16" x 39 5/8"Smithsonian National Portrait Gallery, Washington D.C., accessed October 26, 2020, https://npg.si.edu/object/npg_73.13.1

[57] William Reese, "In Search of American Progressives and Teachers" *History of Education* 42 (No 3, 2013): 323-324.

After the Civil War and until the turn of the twentieth century, the United States experienced enormous changes. Not only was the country recovering from a vicious war that left the country in an economic depression and social dislocation, it experienced an influx of immigrants and massive industrialization and urbanization, especially in the northern urban centers. Political leaders of the time found the public school to be the best way to deal with these issues. Strict schedules regimented school life, thereby teaching students how to work according to a time clock. In an 1874 report, *A Statement of the Theory of Education in the United States*, the four main objectives stressed in the classroom were punctuality, regularity, attention, and silence. All these attributes were deemed as habits necessary to lead a successful life.[58] Lessons taught children that America was the greatest and most powerful nation in the world and promoted patriotism and citizenship. Students quite literally learned what it meant to be an American.

Education for Special Needs Students during the Nineteenth and Twentieth Century

For those school systems that did not have designated classrooms for special needs children, many of the area's disabled ended up in the care of institutions. Before the mid-1800s, care for these students fell to the responsibility of the family. A few existed during this time in the New England states, but were designed specifically for people who were blind, deaf, or labeled feebleminded.[59] In 1793, just a year after gaining

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[58] David Tyack, *Turning Points in American Educational History*, (New York: Wiley Publishing, 1967), 314-315.; also see: Lawrence Cremin, *The Transformation of the School: Progressivism in American Education, 1876-1857* (New York: Vintage, 1964).

[59] Gary Albrecht, Katherine D. Seelman, Michael Bury. *Handbook of Disability Studies* (Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage Publications, 2001), 38 and "Helen Keller." *Perkins*

statehood, Kentucky was the first state to create a state-operated funding program for those families that provided care for those with cognitive disabilities. It also established a pension plan for families of the disabled, who received monies according to the severity of their disability. This payment system was in effect until 1928 with an annual annuity of approximately $75 per year.[60]

Following 1850, the number of these institutions skyrocketed following the increased call for social reform.[61] It was common practice during this time to separate the disabled child from his or her parents, especially in the case of poor families. After all, according to professionals during the time, the only way to break the connection between the two was for physicians or professionals to assume the parental roles within the secure walls of an institution. Here they could attempt to retrain and reverse the negative influence of these seemingly unfit parents. While research has indeed revealed that disabled children came from a diverse variety of socioeconomic backgrounds, it was those families that were struggling financially that were usually willing to send their children to an institution because they saw no other permanent solution for offering a better life for them.[62]

School for the Blind website https://www.perkins.org/history/people/helen-keller (accessed August 7, 2020). The first mental asylum in the United States was established in Virginia in 1773. The first school for the deaf was the American Asylum for the Education of the Deaf and Dumb in Hartford, Connecticut, opened in 1817. The nation's first school for the deaf was the Perkins Institute in New York in 1832. Alabama native, Helen Keller, was admitted to Perkins in May 1888.

[60] Albrecht, et. al, *Handbook of Disability Studies*, 27.

[61] Osgood, *History of Special Education*, 13.

[62] Albrecht, et. al, *Handbook of Disability Studies*, 378.

Alabama established its first mental institution in 1859. Prominent disability activist Dorthea Dix toured the state in mid-1840s and encouraged the state legislature to establish a facility especially for the mentally ill. After meeting with the Alabama Medical Society and members of state government, laws providing for the funding and construction of the Alabama Insane Hospital, later known as Bryce Hospital, passed in 1852.[63]

Fig. 2.3. Patients sewing at Bryce Hospital in Tuscaloosa, Alabama, c. 1900[64]

Beginning in the 1890s and continuing through the early 1900s, the field of special education experienced rapid change. There was an increased movement to move

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[63] Bill Weaver, "Bryce Hospital (Alabama Insane Hospital)." *Encyclopedia of Alabama.* http://encyclopediaofalabama.org/article/h-1564 (accessed August 7, 2020).

[64] Patients sewing at Bryce Hospital in Tuscaloosa, Alabama, c. 1900, *Alabama Department of Archives and History Digital Collection*, accessed August 7, 2020, https://cdm17217.contentdm.oclc.org/digital/collection/photo/id/32109/rec/24

students from specialized institutions to classrooms within the public-school system. A detailed vocabulary emerged from physicians, teachers, and researchers to help identify various disabilities. For example, the concept of cognitive disabilities, or mental retardation, spurred from this new dialog. Professionals developed three categories to identify "mental defectives": the insane, the epileptic, and the feeble minded. The latter was considered the most severe level of mental retardation – one in which an individual was permanently afflicted - and included an additional three-tiered system of identification: moron, imbecile, and idiot. These distinctions were eventually replaced with the classifications of mild, moderate, and severe retardation.[65]

Attitudes toward those deemed as feebleminded changed from a philanthropic approach to one that perceived this group as being a burden on society. While new research was being conducted during the late 1800s, public opinion on the disabled changed. The general public lost its optimistic outlook on the future for this group of people. Some went so far to say that they were a "menace" to the greater society. The state of Indiana offers a great case study for the overall trends of special education throughout the United States during this time period. By 1912, focus had shifted from a general academic education for the disabled in institutions to one that taught only vocational and life skills. Indiana went one step further to decrease the negative affects this group might have on society.[66] "The state opened a new village for epileptics at a

[65] Robert L. Osgood, "From 'Public Liabilities' to 'Public Assets': Special Education for Children with Mental Retardation in Indiana Public Schools, 1908 – 1931," *Indiana Magazine of History* (September 2002): 204.

[66] Ibid, 202 – 207.

considerable cost in 1906, passed an involuntary sterilization law – the first of its kind in the nation – in 1907, and restricted marriage among certain groups of defectives."[67]

Public Education in the South

Government officials felt as though they should step in to intervene through various educational and political policies. Reformers rallied for the need to replace the "old education" with "new education." Historian William Reese explains that many writers on pedagogy during this time often replaced the word "new" with "progressive," without providing a clear definition on what progressive meant. However, progressive education has always been linked to a larger social movement in the United States led by the growing number of middle-class families. Progressivism in education was "a many-sided effort to use the schools to improve the lives of the individual."[68]

Historian George Tindall stated that Southern progressivism was based in conservatism, individualism, and traditionalism and deep reliance on the concept of the agrarian myth. The agrarian myth perpetuated the idea that the life of a small yeoman farmer was preferable to that of an urban worker. But, the reality of many Southern farmers was shocking. Many of the South's farmers were merely tenants, not landowners. The number of tenant farmers increased during the first three decades of the twentieth century, rising from 32% in 1880 to 55% by 1930. Farmers' economic dependence on

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[67] Ibid, 207.

[68] Diane Ravitch, *The Troubled Crusade, American Education 1945-1980* (New York: Basic Books), 44.

cotton in many parts of the South meant that their entire yield depended on the success of one crop. They hesitated to try to farming techniques or diversify their crops because funds were not available to purchase new agricultural technologies and they lacked agricultural education about more progressive farming methods. Moreover, their lenders often only provided support *if* the farmers planted cotton. Progressives rallied for the improvement of school conditions in the South. With new, improved facilities and modern practices, farmers could be educated, or re-educated in some cases, to newer methods of farm management. Rural agents of the General Education Board, a group funded by John D. Rockefeller, helped Southern states "in making a thorough and dispassionate survey of rural education in his state, including law, organization, finance, equipment, teaching force, and methods."[69] Their surveys revealed that southern states desperately needed reforms like those implemented in the North.[70]

The turn of the twentieth century brought new educational efforts through partnerships between land-grant schools and the Department of Agriculture. The passage of the Smith-Lever Act in 1914 established the Cooperative Extension Service and provided practical and technical education for children and adults living in rural areas. The act mandated that land-grant colleges and universities administer the extension services. This act was the first time that the federal government passed legislation

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[69] Ronald K. Goodenow and Arthur O. White, eds. *Education and the Rise of the New South*. (Boston: G.K. Hall and Company, 1981), 49; William A. Link, The Paradox of Southern Progressivism (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2000); Mary S. Hoffschewelle, Rebuilding the Rural Southern Community (Knoxville: University of Tennessee Press, 1998).

[70] Goodenow and White, 46-51.

providing agricultural education for communities members of all ages and required matching funding from the states to fund the program.[71] Alabama's Extension Service formed in 1915, executing programs through Alabama A&M and Auburn University, with support from Tuskegee University.[72] These programs proved to be especially important during the New Deal, as efforts were made to provide skills to those who were unemployed.

Race and Education

Wealth disparities in the South have always been apparent and this gap extended to educational institutions. After the Civil War, African Americans faced a Jim Crow education system with poorly funded schools and decreased learning opportunities. School-aged African American children after Reconstruction completed approximately three years less schooling than did their white counterparts. State legislatures did not address these disparities because they only represented the white population. However, during the years of 1913-1932, the gap in education decreased thanks to the Rosenwald School program. Julius Rosenwald, president of Sears Roebuck & Company, and Booker T. Washington, president of Tuskegee Institute, collaborated to develop a matching-grant

[71] Cynthia Rose, ed. "Smith-Lever Act of 1914." *American Decades Primary Sources.* (Vol 2:1910-1919), 161.

[72] "History of Alabama Cooperative Extension." The Alabama Cooperative Extension System. https://www.aces.edu/blog/topics/about-us/history-of-alabama-cooperative-extension-system/ (accessed August 7, 2020). The Alabama Cooperative Extension System's mission statement make clear the intent of improving the lives of the members of the community: "The Alabama Cooperative Extension System, the primary outreach organization for the land-grant mission of Alabama A&M University and Auburn University, delivers research-based educational programs that enable people to improve their quality of life and economic well-being.

program for southern rural black communities. [73] Almost 5000 schools were funded through the initiative, including 400 in the state of Alabama. The curriculum provided agricultural education, home economics, and health and hygiene, in addition to the reading, writing, and arithmetic. The Rosenwald Initiative made such an impact in providing educational opportunities, that "at the height of the matching-grant program, at least one in five rural schools for black students in the South was a Rosenwald school."[74]


Figs 2.4.[75] and 2.5.[76] Exterior and Interior of Mt. Sinai School in Pine Level, Alabama, one of nearly 400 Rosenwald Schools in Alabama.

[73] Daniel Aaronson. "The Impact of Rosenwald Schools on Black Achievement." *Journal of Political Economy* 119 (No 5, 2011): 822. See Mary S. Hoffschwelle, *Rosenwald Schools of the American South* (Gainesville: University of Florida Press, 2006).

[74] Abraham Aamidor, "Rosenwald Schools in Alabama." *Encyclopedia of Alabama*. http://encyclopediaofalabama.org/article/h-2126 (accessed August 5, 2020).

[75] "Exterior of Mt. Sinai School in Pine Level, Alabama," Alabama Dept. of Archives and History Digital Collections, accessed August 10, 2020, https://cdm17217.contentdm.oclc.org/digital/collection/photo/id/20348/rec/11.

[76] "Interior of Mt. Sinai School in Pine Level, Alabama," Alabama Dept. of Archives and History Digital Collections, accessed August 10, 2020, https://cdm17217.contentdm.oclc.org/digital/collection/photo/id/20347/rec/6.

Not only did the program bring modern equipment and materials to the hands of the students, it provided for the teachers at these schools as well. Minimum salary requirements, training, and even housing for educators were funded by the Rosenwald program. By the end of the program, it is estimated that 36 percent of the South's African American population could have attended Rosenwald schools. [77]

Despite the accomplishments of the Rosenwald program, African Americans received little attention from professional organizations such as the National Education Association (NEA). There was limited contact between the NEA and black schools, mainly through the Committee to Cooperate with the National Association of Teachers in Colored Schools. The committee was established in 1926 and did spur some conversations between the two groups. The National Association of Teachers in Colored Schools was established to serve as the black equivalent of the NEA because of their general lack of concern for black issues. The group thought black schools needed more professionalism and to teach about the "economic and social realities" in order to encourage social change.[78]

Progressive Education Reform in the United States

Proponents of progressive education challenged traditional thinking regarding the nature of children, teaching methods, and the general purpose of education. This group of school reformers championed for schools to engage in a more child-centered curriculum.

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[77] Aaronson, "The Impact of Rosenwald Schools on Black Achievement", 823.

[78] Goodenow and White, *Education and the Rise of the New South*, 195-200.

Concerned with the legitimacy in learning of the constant drilling and memorization of facts in most of the turn-of-the-century classrooms, reformers instead encouraged classroom activities that involved experiential learning. Twentieth-century progressives also believed there were clear social goals with education and learning opportunities were meant for all people in a society, not just rich whites.[79] Progressive education was part of a larger social movement that swept through the United States that wanted to end all the suffering and poverty "through the promotion of moral and intellectual advancement". [80]

In order to understand the impact of the twentieth-century education progressives in the United States, we must explore who influenced their ideas and practice. Jean Jacques Rousseau, a philosopher of the French Enlightenment, thought that a naturalistic education was most effective for children because they learned best when they explored objects in their natural environment. He rejected the child depravity theory which stated that children were inherently evil, and it was up to authoritarian leaders to guide them to a moral life. [81] Rousseau believed that children went through stages of growth and development that would guide effective teaching methods. He thought schools interfered with these developmental stages, going so far as to say children needed to be liberated from artificial social restrictions.

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[79] William Reese. "The Origins of Progressive Education." *History of Education Quarterly*, 41 (No. 1, Spring 2001): 1-3.

[80] Ibid, 3.

[81] For more on Jean Jacques Rousseau's thoughts on education, read William Boyd, *The Emile of Jean Jacque Rousseau* (New York: Teachers College Press, 1962) or Allan Bloom, *Emile or On Education* (New York: Basic Books, 1979).

Another educational pioneer that influenced twentieth-century American progressives was Johann Heinrich Pestalozzi, who believed in nurturing the natural developmental stages in children, and in the power of the school environment. He believed social change could be brought about through pedagogical reform. First, the school environment should be a warm, safe place, evoking a home-like quality where children are comfortable. Instead of being strict disciplinarians, Pestalozzi believed teachers should gain the trust and affection of their students. He understood that a child's basic needs must be satisfied before learning can begin.[82]

A third influence was German educator Friedrich Froebel who emphasized early childhood education, developing the first kindergarten. His kindergarten featured a prepared environment that stimulated the child's inner sprit to learn. There was much social interaction in the kindergarten classroom with games, stories, creative play, music, songs, arts, and crafts.[83]

Above all, there was the influence of John Dewey, the most noted philosopher to write about progressive education in the United States. Dewey believed education to be "the supreme human interest" and was central to his philosophical system.[84] After

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[82] W.S. Monroe, *History of the Pestalozzian Movement in the United States* (New York: Arno Press, 1970).

[83] Ron Best, "Exploring the Spiritual in the Pedagogy of Friedrich Froebel." *International Journal of Children's Spirituality*, 21 (Nos. 3–4, 2016), 272–282. Froebel was a student of Pestalozzi, but they had some very key differences. While he maintained the basic principles of Pestalozzi's educational theory, Froebel had stronger ties to religion. He believed that everything in the world developed according to God's plan.

[84] Stephen Rockefeller, *John Dewey: Religious Faith and Democratic Humanism* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1994), 233.

receiving his PhD in philosophy from Johns Hopkins University, he accepted the position of head of the department of philosophy, pedagogy, and psychology at the University of Chicago. Dewey founded the Laboratory School at Chicago in 1896, where he envisioned to inspire educational reform.[85] The school performed two functions: "first, to test and evaluate his theories about schooling and teaching and, second, to appraise the findings of these studies and work out subject matters and teaching methods for a curriculum that did not focus on books and recitations but on children and activities."[86] Dewey designed the curriculum after the "learn by doing" theory of Pestalozzi and the emphasis on learning through play that was stressed by Froebel. [87]

Fig. 2.6. Image of John Dewey[88]

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[85] Michael Knoll. "Laboratory School, University of Chicago" *Encyclopedia of Educational Theory and Philosophy*, (Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage 2014. Vol. 2) 455-458.

[86] Ibid, 456.

[87] Rockefeller, *John Dewey: Religious Faith and Democratic Humanism*, 250.

[88] "John Dewey, bust portrait, facing left," [No Date Recorded on Caption Card] Library of Congress, accessed October 26, 2020, https://www.loc.gov/item/2005685701.

Progressive reformers believed that the nature of the child and service to society should be controlling factors in school and wanted to recast education to meet the challenges of the period. Society was lacking the moral influence of the nuclear family due to industrialism and urbanization. Families before the industrial revolution educated their children in practical skills: how to make and mend clothing, plant and harvest crops, how to construct houses. All these activities taught children about social cooperation as they learned about the world around them. Progressive education rejected the rampant corruption and destitution in the slums and the general working conditions in many of the urban factories.[89]

Public schools prior to the Progressive era (1890s-1920s) were intended to prepare children for work in the factory. Punctuality, regularity, attention, and silence were the key habits stressed in the traditional classroom. From this standpoint, there was no need to teach critical thinking.[90] In the article "What was Progressive Education?" historian Lawrence Cremin explains what he believes are the main characteristics of American progressive education. First, schools broadened their scope by including instruction and concern for health, vocation, and the quality of family and community life. Second, instruction began to accommodate multiple learning styles and was tailored for the individual. An education for everyone meant that the instruction had to apply to all learning styles within the classroom. Finally, education would improve society toward

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[89]Tyack, *Turning Points in American Educational History*, 316-318.

[90] William E. Doll, Jr. "A Re-visioning of Progressive Education." *Theory into Practice, 22* (Summer 83): 169, 171.

greater social justice and a more equitable dispersal of benefits derived from progress in science and technology.[91] As Reese summarized, "many school critics would say that the child should be an active, not passive learner; that the teacher should be a guide, not master; that the curriculum should adapt to a changing industrial society, not remain lodged in the past; and that something needed to be done about the many incompetent teachers who sent their pupils to nearly eternal sleep."[92]

Dewey believed that schools should represent a microcosm of society. He wrote perhaps his most noted text, *Democracy and Education,* in 1916. He perceived education to be intertwined with democracy and consistently linked social action with the educational system. He wrote *Experience and Education* twenty-two years later in reaction to criticisms his theories received during the rising popularity of progressive schools during the New Deal. In this text, Dewey evaluates the differences between traditional and "new" education. While traditional classrooms relied on subjects for its content, "new" schools used current problems of a changing society to invoke the learner's impulse. Dewey maintained that neither old nor new education was enough because they lack the philosophy of experience.[93]

Public historian George Hein has identified four keystones in John Dewey's educational philosophy. First is his belief in empirical naturalism. Dewey thought natural

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[91] Lawrence A. Cremin. "What was Progressive Education?" *Education Digest* 25 (January 1960): 722.

[92] Reese. "The Origins of Progressive Education," 23.

[93] John Dewey. *Experience and Education* (New York: Touchstone, 1938), 9-11.

phenomena explained life, as opposed to spiritual or supernatural. It is our shared experiences that give explanation to life. Two, his philosophy was steeped in the process of thinking. Society should not be working toward absolute goals, but always progressing towards better conditions, lives, and social justice. Education methods should change based on what we have learned after reflecting upon our experiences. The third keystone to Dewey's philosophy was based on the idea that humans are social creatures and interaction with other individuals is essential for learning. Finally, Dewey recognized the importance of the Darwinian evolutionary theory because it allowed for the naturalistic interpretation of growth and development. One's interaction with their environment brought about change to the individual and influenced change and modification in their environment.[94]

Dewey's laboratory school at the University of Chicago put his ideas of progressive education into practice. For Dewey the progressive classroom implemented two main ideas: students learn through engaging and reflecting on meaningful activities and classrooms were to represent a cooperative community where experiences were shared between students and teachers. Dewey insisted learning did not stop once students left the classroom. He saw benefit in both formal and informal education and perceived libraries, museums, workshops, kitchens, and gardens to be just as effective learning environments as a prepared classroom.

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[94] George E. Hein, *Progressive Museum Practice: John Dewey and Democracy* (Walnut Creek, CA: Left Coast Press, Inc, 2013), 22-28.

Dewey frequently used the term "experience" to describe a human's encounter with their environment. He was referring to the activity of the experience, the doing, but also to what was learned by the interaction, the thinking or contemplating. In *Democracy and Experience*, he wrote:

> In determining the place of thinking in experience we first noted that experience involves a connection of doing or tying with something which is undergone in consequence. A separation of the active doing phase forms the passive undergoing phase destroys the vital meaning of an experience. Thinking is the accurate and deliberate instituting of connections between what is done and its consequences. It notes not only that they are connected, but the details of the connection. It makes connecting links explicit in the forms of relationships. The stimulus to thinking is found when we wish to determine the significance of some act, performed or to be performed. Then we anticipate consequences. [95]

Two things were necessary for an educational experience in Dewey's mind: transaction and continuity. Transaction between us and our environment *is* experience. Educational experiences demonstrate stability and growth. Experience transpires as habits and each of our experiences allow us to modify these habits according to what we anticipate and respond to future experiences. Dewey used the example of a child putting his finger over an open flame:

> The child first acts and then suffers to the painful consequences. Unless thought connects the doing and the being done to, unless the activity is continued into the consequences and reflected back into a change made within the child, no learning takes place. If the child makes a backward and forward connection between what he did and what he suffered as a consequence, then the sticking of the finger into flame comes to mean a burn.[96]

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[95] Hein, *Progressive Museum Practice*, 29-30.

[96] James W. Garrison, "John Dewey's Philosophy as Education." *Reading Dewey* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1998), 66-67.

Under the influence of John Dewey, teaching went beyond the basic reading, writing and arithmetic to teaching to the "whole child".[97] This approach includes nurturing the academic needs of the child as well as the social and emotional aspects of the child. To focus all attention on measured academic performance, Dewey thought, was to blind educators to the needs of young children's ability to live a satisfying life. Dewey saw traditional education as something as too static. Learning in the traditional classroom was described as the "acquisition of what is already incorporated in books and in the heads of the elders...It is taught as a finished product, with little regard either to the ways it was originally built up or to the changes that will surely occur in the future."[98] Static education could not succeed because it teaches what has been and has limited benefits for the future since we live in a world that is constantly changing.

Throughout his teachings and writing, Dewey promoted the link between education and politics. When people were actively engaged in learning, they were more motivated to think critically about the world around them. Progressive education was an important ingredient in the recipe for a successful democracy. These assumptions and approaches would guide the education program at Skyline Farms in the 1930s and 1940s.

Throughout the nineteenth and twentieth centuries, school educators have focused on preparing for the ever-changing workplace. They turned to schools to develop an

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[97]Daniel W. Stuckart and Jeffrey Glanz. *Revisiting Dewey: Best Practices for Educating the Whole Child Today* (Lanham, MD: Rowman & Littlefield, 2010).

[98] Dewey, *Experience and Education*, 19.

efficient, satisfied workforce. By the time New Deal reformers established Skyline Farms in northern Alabama, the school was the central, most important community building.

CHAPTER 3 – A NEW DEAL FOR JACKSON COUNTY

"It is my conviction that the South presents right now the Nation's No. 1 economic problem – the Nation's problem, not merely the South's. For we have an economic unbalance in the Nation as a whole, due to this very condition of the South. It is an unbalance than can and must be righted, for the sake of the South and the Nation." -- Franklin Delano Roosevelt, 1938[99]

The Great Depression of the 1930s created some of the most difficult economic times in the history of the United States. Banks collapsed around the country, agriculture prices fell, and jobs disappeared. The Great Depression shook people's trust in capitalism and democracy. It seemed to be a betrayal of the American dream.

Although the Great Stock Market Crash of 1929 is credited as the beginning, no one event was responsible for the Great Depression. Many factors contributed to the United States' most severe economic crisis. The first contributing factor to the Great Depression was international money problems following World War I. War debts left the international economy in shambles. European nations owed the United States $10 billion in reparations. The U.S. demanded payment even though the European economy was left a disaster. Great Britain and France demanded that Germany pay reparations under the terms of the Treaty of Versailles. Great Britain and France in turn repaid the United States for loans incurred during the Great War. High and growing tariffs also added to the

[99] David L. Carton and Peter Coclanis, eds, *Confronting Southern Poverty in the Great Depression: The Report on Economic Condition of the South with Related Documents* (Chapel Hill, NC: University of North Carolina, 1996), 19. This statement appeared in a letter from FDR to the Advisory Committee and served as the thematic basis for the *Report on Economic Conditions of the South*.

uneasy international economy. The Hawley-Smoot Act raised tariffs on over 20,000 American-made, industrial products. Other countries retaliated and international trade practically ended.[100]

Due to expansion of acreage and crop output to compensate for demands from World War I, the agricultural sector of the economy experienced collapse as early as the mid-1920s. Farmers were producing more than Americans could consume. Some farmers lost so much money they could not keep up their mortgages. Many had to rent their land or move. According to historian William E. Leuchtenburg, during the years of 1919 through 1924, 13 million acres of land were virtually abandoned. Farmers felt as though they were being left behind during the period of urban prosperity. Once the farming economy started to drop, it plummeted quickly. [101]

Industrial changes during the 1920s left long lasting effects on the nation's economy. A large number of industries went through major transformations in the 1920s. Oil replaced coal, leaving thousands of miners out of work. Textile mills moved to the South due to lower wages and the lack of unions. There was also an uneven distribution of income. Twenty percent of the population controlled 50 percent of the wealth. Factories were producing goods, but workers could not afford to purchase them, and the wealthy could not consume enough to keep up. The boost in consumerism in the 1920s brought on by the availability of credit left people with very little savings and too much

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[100] Michael Parrish, *Anxious Decades: America in Prosperity and Depression, 1920-1941* (New York: WW Norton and Company, 1992), 261-264.

[101] William E. Leuchtenburg, *Perils of Prosperity* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1958), 101.

debt. There was a thin line between success and failure. Those who were standing on the line during the Crash, fell hard.[102]

The breaking point that led to the Great Depression was the stock market crash in October 1929. For two days known as "Black Tuesday" and "Black Thursday," the New York Stock Exchange was in panic as corporate securities fell at dizzying speeds. In the two years prior to the Crash, the stock market climbed, increasing value of common stock unlike any time in history. Investors bought stock they believed would quickly rise in value. Once the value of the stock rose as high as the investor thought it would go, it was sold. Stocks appreciated at a rate of 85 percent over the course of a twenty-month period. However, on the morning of October 24, 1929, large batches of securities were being unloaded with no buyers, striking panic along Wall Street. Stock prices plummeted and by noon, the market had taken a loss of $9 billion. A buying effort from J.P. Morgan & Company eased the massive sell off in the afternoon of the 24th. The market held steady for the next few days, but relief did not last long. On October 29th, another massive sell off of shares occurred. In one single day, the average price of industrial securities listed by the New York Stock Exchange fell 43 points, effectively wiping out the entire year's gain. Terror struck all those involved in the market that day.[103] Sidney J. Weinberg, a young investment banker with Goldman Sachs recalls the day, "October 29, 1929 – I remember that day very intimately. The [ticker] tape was running, I've forgotten how long that night. It must have been ten, eleven o'clock before we got the final report. It

[102] David M. Kennedy, *The American People in the Great Depression* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2003).

[103] Parrish, *Anxious Decades*, 217-220.

was like a thunderclap. Everybody was stunned. Nobody knew what it was all about. The Street had general confusion." [104]

Fig. 3.1. A crowd of people gather outside of the New York Stock Exchange following the Crash of 1929.[105]

A relatively low number of people overall suffered a direct loss from the Great Crash. So how did the Crash contribute to the Great Depression? The event left long lasting consequences that were felt all over the nation. It revealed inherent flaws in the economic structure of the country. Big investors lost billions, which limited investment capital and personal consumption. Banks no longer had cash to lend and called on

[104] Parrish, *Anxious Decades*, 220.

[105] Pacific & Atlantic Photos, Inc. "Crowd of people gather outside of the New York Stock Exchange following the Crash of 1929," accessed October 26, 2020, http://hdl.loc.gov/loc.pnp/cph.3c23429.

payment of other loans to investors. They restricted any new loans, effectively cutting off all sources of new credit. The slippery slope to an economic tailspin was in full effect.[106]

Hoover's response

Herbert Hoover took office as the thirty-first president of the United States in March 1929, seven months before the Crash. A man who rose from poverty to be a millionaire, Hoover believed in Jeffersonian republicanism – a small national government with limited federal spending.[107] During his inaugural speech, Hoover stated his views on the nation. "We are steadily building a new race, a new civilization great in its own attainments. I have no fears for the future of this country. It is bright with hope." [108] However, just over a year later, over three million Americans were out of work. Many presidents had experienced economic panics in the past. Hoover refrained from using the term and instead called the downturn a depression, hoping that would ease the nation's fears.[109] As troubles mounted after 1929 he remained firm in his response to critics that he was doing enough: "The fundamental business of the country, that is production and

[106] Ibid, 233-235.

[107] Joan Hoff Wilson, *Herbert Hoover: Forgotten Progressive* (New York: Little, Brown, 1975).

[108] William E. Leuchtenburg, *Herbert Hoover: The American Presidents Series: the 31st President 1929-1933* (New York: Henry Holt & Co, 2009), 80.

[109]Ibid,104

distribution of commodities, is on a sound and prosperous basis. Any lack of confidence in the economic future…[of] the United States is foolish."[110]

The president called on governors and local municipalities to increase construction by public works. He called on the business sector to do its part in stimulating the economy. He encouraged railroad executives and the National Electric Light Association to increase projects and spending. Henry Ford pledged to follow the president's request and vowed to raise worker's wages. However, with all his efforts to increase spending in the private sector, Hoover sought to limit the federal government's role in the crisis. Hoover believed that the depression was a short-term problem and it was unnecessary for the federal government to get involved. Individuals should help their neighbors in times of crisis, not get doles from the government. Philanthropic organizations such as the Red Cross and individual churches did what they could, but the demand for aid was too great.[111] Hoover mistakenly declared in May 1930 that the worst of the financial crisis was over.[112]

Herbert Hoover received national criticism for the Depression and his "inaction" to lessen its effects. By 1931 anger regarding Hoover's attitude toward relief was widespread and his moniker was used to describe many sights seen during the Depression. Shanty towns built by the homeless were called "Hoovervilles" and sprang up in areas all over big cities as unemployment rose to eight million. Crumpled

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[110]Ibid, 104.

[111] Parrish, *Anxious Decades*, 243-244.

[112]Wilson, *Herbert Hoover*, 146.

newspapers used for warmth were called “Hoover blankets”. Motor vehicles that were pulled by horses or mules were called “Hoover wagons.” The list proved long.[113] Despite his perceived inaction, one program implemented by Hoover had a direct effect on Jackson County and literally paved the way for Skyline Farms. The Reconstruction Finance Corporation, established in 1932, provided funding for necessary public works projects, including the construction of a paved road across Cumberland Mountain.

Fig. 3.2. Hooverville of Bakersfield, California. A rapidly growing community of approximately one thousand people set up a make-shift village on edge of the town. April 1936.[114]

[113] Parrish, *Anxious Decades*, 240.

[114] Dorothea Lange, “Hooverville of Bakersfield, California. A rapidly growing community of people living rent-free on the edge of the town dump in whatever kind of shelter available. Approximately one thousand people now living here and raising children,” April 1936, *Library of Congress Digital Collections*, accessed October 26, 2020, http://hdl.loc.gov/loc.pnp/fsa.8b27057.

The presidential campaign of 1932 demonstrated the nation's aversion to Hoover's policies. Democrats chose Franklin Delano Roosevelt to run against the incumbent. Roosevelt was clear as to what needed to be done to ease the nation's suffering. Relief "must be extended by Government, not as a matter of charity, but as a matter of social duty; the State accepts the task cheerfully because it will help restore that close relationship with its people which is necessary to preserve our democratic form of government."[115] Roosevelt won the 1932 election by a landslide. It was clear that the country wanted a president to stop the Depression. Herbert Hoover's presidency advocated tax increases and limits to government spending. He left the White House with millions out of work and numerous banks collapsing. The country anxiously awaited its new leader.[116]

Roosevelt's New Deal

Franklin D. Roosevelt brought hope and self-assurance to the nation in a time of deep uncertainty. His goals were to end the Depression at any cost and restore hope in capitalism and the democratic republic. He did not make outrageous claims of fast recovery. He was pragmatic but was quick to take action. He used the power of the radio to bring the presidency into the family home, an attempt to connect to the "everyman"

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[115] Franklin D. Roosevelt, *The Public Papers and Addresses of Franklin D. Roosevelt. Volume one, The Genesis of the New Deal, 1928-1932* (New York: Random House, 1938), 459.

[116]Kennedy, *The American People and the Great Depression,* 70 – 103.

and provide solace during an uncertain time. FDR's weekly "Fireside Chats" allowed people to hear for themselves the president's plan for recovery.[117]

FDR was responsible for creating the "New Deal" – a series of programs developed in response to the Great Depression with the intention of addressing the three R's: relief, recovery, and reform. These programs aimed to help the rural poor including those who were uprooted from the land, as well as those who stayed on their farms despite worsening conditions. In a Fireside Chat on June 28, 1934, Roosevelt proclaimed, "In our administration of relief we follow two principles: first, that direct giving shall, wherever possible, be supplemented by provision for useful and remunerative work, and, second, that where families in their existing surroundings will in all human probability never find an opportunity for full self-maintenance, happiness, and enjoyment, we shall try to give them a new chance in new surroundings."[118]

The New Deal was known for its "ABC programs," many of them having some form of educational element.[119] The Civil Works Administration (CWA), later known as the Works Progress Administration (WPA), provided jobs rather than handing out welfare checks. WPA funding went strictly toward wages. Local agencies allocated

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[117] Paul Conkin, *The New Deal* (New York: Crowell, 1967).

[118] Franklin D. Roosevelt, "Fireside Chat – June 28, 1934," *The American Presidency Project*, https://www.presidency.ucsb.edu/documents/fireside-chat-21 (accessed October 26, 2020).

[119] A summary of the major agencies can be found in Carroll Van West, *Tennessee's New Deal Landscape* (Knoxville: University of Tennessee Press, 2000), 7-24.

money toward supplies and materials for improvement projects for city and county roads, public buildings, schools, sewers and public health efforts.[120] The CWA and WPA employed approximately 192,000 Alabamians.[121] WPA workers constructed essential infrastructure in some of the poorest parts of the nation. The agency also employed people to teach life skills and literacy, giving many women employment opportunities for the first time outside the home.[122] Individuals taught public health courses, supervised and coordinated recreational activities, and made mattresses, weaved rugs, and repaired furniture for the needy.[123]

The Civilian Conservation Corps (CCC) employed unmarried, young men, aged 18-25, who were sent to secluded camps to work on internal improvements of the state. These men worked primarily on natural resource projects. An average of 30 individual camps existed across Alabama during years of 1933-1942. Early iterations of the camps had men living tents provided by the Army, but eventually they grew to include numerous buildings and accommodated up to 50 men. Those enlisted in the CCC built 1,800 miles of roads, 490 bridges, and strung 1,430 miles of telephone lines in Alabama

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[120] Julius E. Linn Jr., Katherine M. Tipton, and Marjorie White, eds., *Digging Out of the Great Depression: Federal Programs at Work in and Around Birmingham*. (Birmingham, AL: Birmingham Historical Society, 2010), 73.

[121] Mathew Downs, "New Deal in Alabama," *Encyclopedia of Alabama*. http://encyclopediaofalabama.org/article/h-3663 (accessed October 26, 2020); Linn, Tipton, and White, eds., *Digging Out of the Great Depression,* 73.

[122]Downs, "New Deal in Alabama."

[123] Linn, Tipton, White, *Digging Out of the Great Depression*, 78, 80.

alone.[124] The CCC not only built and improved recreational areas, it also focused on soil erosion prevention, a problem that plagued farmers. The CCC partnered with local and federal agencies, including land-grant schools, to provide education in crop rotation, contour plowing, and terracing.[125]

The National Youth Administration (NYA) was designed to meet the needs of the poor youth. The program provided employment for youth in private industries or on projects that suited their needs or skills, gave vocational guidance and training, and offered part-time employment for high school and college students so that they might continue their studies. Each of these programs had the purpose of employing those who were without jobs, giving those that had been through such hard times a sense of self-worth, and educating them on new skills and techniques so that they could contribute towards the greater good of society.[126]

The Agricultural Adjustment Act (AAA) was an early New Deal program, passed in 1933, designed to address the farming crisis that developed following World War I. Several issues led to this crisis: overproduction of crops for the military during the War, the overextension of credit to many of the nation's farmers to purchase machinery and modernize production, and finally, the drastic drop in crop prices due to the Great Crash

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[124] Ibid, 18.

[125] Carolyn M. Barske, "Civilian Conservation Corps in Alabama," *Encyclopedia of Alabama*, http://www.encyclopediaofalabama.org/article/h-3682 (accessed October 26, 2020).

[126] Doak S. Campbell, C. Currien Smith and Mary H. Fairbanks. "The Evolution of New and Emergency Federal Education Programs," *Peabody Journal of Education* 16, (No 5 March 1939): 309 – 323.

in the fall of 1929. Programs of the AAA were overseen by a new agency within the Department of Agriculture, the Agricultural Adjustment Administration, and evolved out of President Roosevelt's First Hundred Days as a means to ease issues from this crisis and to offset the effects of the Smoot-Hawley tariff, passed by Herbert Hoover in 1930. The tariff added to farmers' troubles as it raised tariffs to provide more revenue to the U.S. government. However, because the tariff was retaliatory in nature, farmers could no longer sell surplus goods overseas for additional profit.[127]

This cumbersome legislation featured objectives which benefited most of the nation's landowning farmers. The Government paid farmers for allowing portions of their farmland to remain uncultivated, for both planting and raising livestock. Participation in the AAA subsidies was voluntary. Those that opted in received payment for reducing acreage. The goal was to reduce supply and increase demand, therefore raising the prices. However, this led to many farmers slaughtering livestock and destroying crops, which was looked at unfavorably during a time when many citizens were starving.[128]

Criticism of the AAA led to a judicial battle that resulted in a Supreme Court ruling against the Act. In January 1936, the Court ruled that the nature of the funding for

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[127] Keith J. Volanto, "New Deal and Southern Agriculture," *The New Encyclopedia of Southern Culture. Vol 11: Agriculture and Industry.* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press), 92-93. For more information on the Smoot-Hawley Act, see Douglas A. Irwin, *Protecting Protectionism: Smoot-Hawley Act and the Great Depression* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 2001). The AAA was first passed in 1933 but later deemed unconstitutional. A second AAA was passed in 1936.

[128] Paul Conkin, *The New Deal*, 42-43. Basic commodities included under the AAA were wheat, cotton, corn, hogs, tobacco, rice, and milk. The Jones-Connally Farm Relief Act of 1934 added barley, rye, peanuts, flax, cattle, and grain sorghum. The Jones-Costigan Act of 1934 added sugar beets and sugar cane.

AAA programs and the production control contracts with farmers were unconstitutional. Roosevelt and Congress responded quickly, passing the Soil Conservation and Domestic Allotment Act (SCDAA), which continued payments to farmers and provided funding for soil-conservation practices.[129]

The AAA had significant connection to Alabama due to its two main legislative backers, Senator John H. Bankhead II and Representative William B. Bankhead. The brothers urged farmers to diversify cash crops in order to limit production of cotton in the state. An unforeseen issue caused by the AAA arose, with another Alabama connection. The AAA's subsidies to farmers did not extend to the tenants and sharecroppers who worked the land due to pressure from the American Farm Bureau Federation's president, Alabama's own Edward O'Neal III. Instead of passing money to the tenants, landowners instead used AAA funds to purchase modernized farm equipment, which reduced the need to contract workers. Thousands of farm workers were left unemployed with nowhere to go.[130]

Congress established the Federal Emergency Relief Administration (FERA) at the same time as the Agricultural Adjustment Act as the first agency to provide immediate relief for southern poverty. FERA was one of the first agencies to partner with state governments in order to provide grants. States wrote reports on relief need, their plans to address it, and what resources they had locally that would pair with the federal grants. There were many programs that fell under the purview of FERA, including the

[129] Volanto, "New Deal and Southern Agriculture," 94.

[130]Downs, "New Deal in Alabama."

Emergency Work Relief Program for white collar workers. The agency's director, Henry Hopkins wrote,

> During 1932 and 1933 a growing number of unemployed teachers applied for relief after their resources had become exhausted. Shortly after the FERA was initiated we attempted to do something for this group of needy teachers. Obviously, it was hardly enough to give them direct relief. With thousands of teachers out of work there were, at the same time, hundreds of thousands of men and women in need of educational facilities. We decided to put these unemployed teachers to work teaching those unemployed who wanted instruction.[131]

At the peak of FERA's education program in March 1935, there were more than 1.7 million students getting instruction in general adult education, adult literacy courses, vocational education and rehabilitation, or preschool services.[132]

Another key feature for FERA was their rural rehabilitation programs, which promoted independence and self-reliance by providing credit, creating communities near urban centers for unemployed industrial workers, and resettlement projects that moved farmers from inferior to more fruitful land.[133] Program administrators believed that poor land created poor people and that small farmers disproportionately settled in areas with infertile or less productive soil.[134] This division worked closely with other agricultural agencies including the Department of Agriculture, the Agricultural Adjustment

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[131]Harry L. Hopkins, *Spending to Save: The Complete Story of Relief* (Seattle: University of Washington Press, 1936), 113.

[132] "Essay: The Federal Emergency Relief Administration*," University of Washington Libraries Digital Collections*, https://content.lib.washington.edu/feraweb/essay.html (accessed August 25, 2020).

[133] Volanto, "New Deal and Southern Agriculture," 95.

[134] Jess Gilbert, *Planning Democracy: Agrarian Intellectuals and the Intended New Deal* (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 2015), 88-90.

Administration, and the Farm Credit Administration. Forty-five states held local division offices by June 1935. Each office hosted the following positions: a regional representative of FERA, a state administrator for relief, the director of the State Extension Service, a representative of the AAA, and three local residents.[135]

FERA helped over 300,000 families leave direct relief rolls and rehabilitate themselves through grants.[136] Other agencies were involved in community planning and eventually these were combined by executive order in April 1935 to form the new Resettlement Administration.

[135] Paul Conkin, *Tomorrow a New World – The New Deal Community Program* (London: Forgotten Books, 1959), 134-135.

[136] *The Resettlement Administration*, (Washington D.C.: Government Printing Office, 1935), 4.

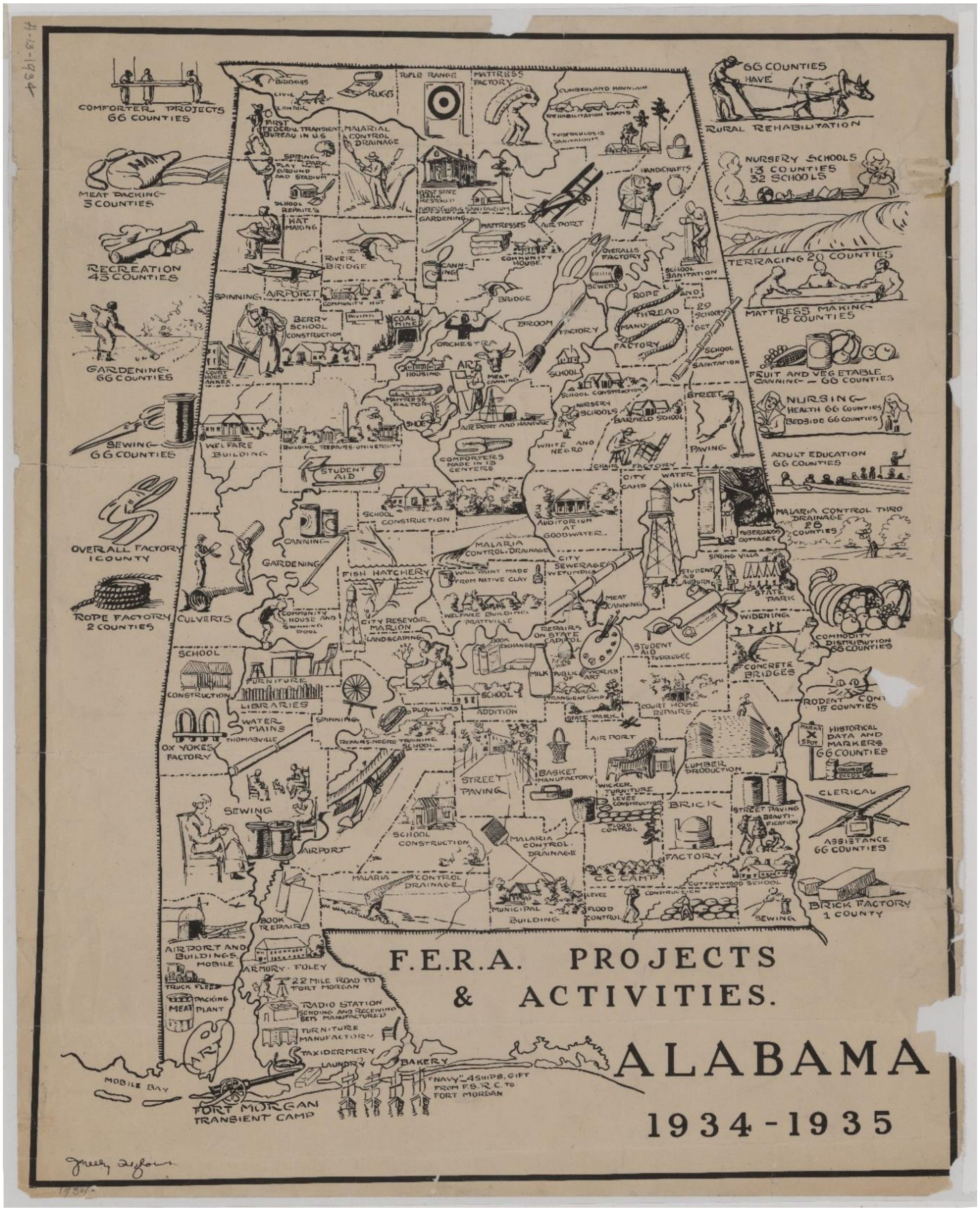

Fig. 3.3. A map showing FERA administered projects in the state of Alabama.[137]

[137] "F.E.R.A. Projects and Activities – Alabama 1934-1935," Created by Federal Emergency Relief Administration, accessed October 26, 2020,

The Resettlement Administration and Farm Security Administration – Help for Destitute Families

New opportunities for destitute and low-income families came after the President signed the Resettlement Administration (RA), under Executive Order 7027, into existence on April 30, 1935. The purpose of the Resettlement Administration was to manage programs that involved the relocation of low-income families from rural and urban areas, including the establishment of new communities; to make loans to purchase farm lands, livestock, and equipment by farmers, tenants, or farm laborers; and to purchase land and devote it to the best possible use. The activities of four agencies were transferred to the Resettlement Administration: the Division of Subsistence Homesteads of the Department of the Interior, Division of Rural Rehabilitation of the Federal Emergency Relief Administration (FERA), the Land Program of the FERA, and the Land Policy Section of the Agricultural Adjustment Administration. Before being transferred to the RA, the Subsistence Homestead Division had plans for seventy rural and urban communities. About thirty had either been completed or construction started. [138]

Prior to becoming President, FDR served as the governor of New York where he commended the work of the state's Emergency Relief Administration for "assisting people back to the land."[139] He alleged city life to be more tolerable if residents had suburban farms and went on to say,

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http://digital.archives.alabama.gov/digital/collection/maps/id/152.

[138] *The Resettlement Administration*, 4.

[139] Conkin, *Tomorrow a New World*, 34.

> …I might almost say that the political salvation of the country lies with the country men and boys. Not because they are more honest or more patriotic than their brothers in the cities, but because they have more time to think and study for themselves.[140]

The first administrator for the Resettlement Administration was Rex Tugwell. His name is synonymous with the New Deal. Tugwell made his "radical" views known, which gave him the reputation as a "dangerous Red."[141] Many knew him for his intolerance for injustice and inhumanity – a social reformer with an extreme temperament.[142] Before his position at the RA, Tugwell held the position of Undersecretary for the Department of Agriculture. He used FDR's affinity towards the country in order to form the Resettlement Administration. At the heart of the RA's inception was the desire to break the cycle of waste of people and resources. Without outside intervention, many of these people "were caught in situations they were powerless to escape without assistance."[143]

Tugwell was essential in the creation of many government-built communities, however his primary concern centered on the importance of bettering farming practices in the Appalachian hills and the cotton belt. Many families lived on land that was so poor it would not produce enough to sustain an adequate standard of living. People living in these rural slums inhabited primitive shacks in areas devastated by flood and erosion or

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[140]Conkin, *Tomorrow a New World*, 34.

[141] Ibid, 147. Tugwell had many critics which included an Anti-Tugwell Club in Chicago. He wrote on many things, including articles on wine drinking, which turned many churches against him.

[142] Ibid, 147.

[143] Rexford G. Tugwell, "The Resettlement Idea," *Agricultural History Vol 33 No 4* (October 1959): 160.

left barren from the over cutting of timber.[144] Many families that could fled barren lands in hopes of a better future elsewhere. Abandoned farms were then placed on tax delinquency rolls "and offered temptation for some other misguided family to try making a living another time when conditions temporarily improved."[145] Through the education of new agricultural techniques, Tugwell thought farmers could "reclaim land leeched of its wealth by erosion and indifference to conservation."[146]

The RA had two primary divisions: one focused on suburban resettlement communities and the other, called the Division of Rural Rehabilitation and Resettlement, which dealt with those families who were displaced in the countryside. Rehabilitation provided temporary relief while resettlement was the permanent phase of the RA. RA programs aimed to produce modern, efficient communities that would promote the utmost opportunities for destitute farming families. These communities were known as subsistence homesteads because families were given land to farm and raise livestock and a place to work. Tugwell chose sociologist, Dr. Carl C. Taylor, and M.L. Wilson, who worked in the Division of Subsistence Homesteads prior to its incorporation into the RA, to direct rural resettlement. The country was divided into eleven regions. These regions

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[144] *The Resettlement Administration*, 1.

[145] Tugwell, "The Resettlement Idea," 160.

[146] Roger Biles, *The South and the New Deal* (Lexington: University Press of Kentucky, 2006), 48.

featured their own administrative office. Smaller offices were established in each state and in most rural counties.[147]

Most of the rural projects occurred in the South. Community plans required several prerequisites for consideration including "good land, economically adequate farms, an emphasis on home production, adequate buildings for health and demonstrational purposes, modern conveniences, complete supervision, and co-operative production."[148] Federal contracts stipulated families provide lease payments for their homesteads based on a percentage of the annual crop production. Administrators carefully selected applicants along certain criteria. Families had to make under $1600 per year. Factors such as economic stability, health, number of children, and personal integrity were considered in choosing residents. Applications were so detailed that one family from the Cahaba project in Alabama "joked about having to count out how many pillowcases the family had before getting approved."[149]

After two years of operation, federal officials moved the Resettlement Administration into a new agency, the Farm Securities Administration (FSA) in 1937. During the same year, the FSA was granted the ability to make loans to worthy tenant farmers and farm laborers so they could purchase their own farms under the Bankhead-Jones Farm Tenancy Act. This act developed after a 1937 report from the President's

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[147]Conkin, *Tomorrow a New World*, 155.

[148]Ibid, 168.

[149]Charles Roberts, "New Deal Community–Building in the South: The Subsistence Homesteads around Birmingham, Alabama," *The Alabama Review 66* (2013): 107.

Committee on Farm Tenancy stated the number of tenants in the United States threatened the "American system of independent, family-type farms, owned by the people who tilled them."[150] The report alleged that growing tenancy numbers led to further soil erosion and depletion. Congress allocated $10 million for farm ownership loans for the 1938 fiscal year and increased each following year. Funding was guaranteed through June 30, 1941.

The RA initiated and planned some resettlement projects, but many of these communities were not completed until the Farm Security Administration took over administration in 1937.[151] Resettlement communities "hoped to open up a new type of frontier, not a new geographic frontier, but a frontier of farm independence" and were organized in the same basic pattern.[152] Large tracts of land were purchased in areas with exceedingly low incomes. Communities ranged in size from 100 to 1000 families. Projects were created for both white and African American families, but never together. After the families were selected, they formed a "cooperative organization to direct various necessary activities."[153] Membership dues were required from each family to buy into the cooperative. It was important that the communities were self-governing and work together with local communities. The administrative structure was clear at Skyline Farms. Businesses from the closest town of Scottsboro would come visit the colony to see the latest agricultural techniques. Jackson County Board of Education schools hosted county-

[150] *Farm Security Administration, United States Department of* Agriculture (Washington DC: Government Press, 1941), 26.

[151]Conkin, *Tomorrow a New World*, 168.

[152] *The Resettlement Administration*, 19.

[153] Ibid, 21.

wide PTA meetings on-site or, if held at other locations, a member of the Skyline School PTA would represent the colony.[154]

Residents generated income through both agricultural and industrial occupations. Factory work was an integral part of the homestead experience, including canning factories, a metal shops, and cheese shops. Skyline Farms had a wood shop that created furniture for the colony residents, for example. Schools were important institutions in these communities and often served as the center of the community. Multiple recreational facilities were also built for community families. The initial cost of establishing these communities came from federal dollars, but the families were expected to repay the government for their homesteads. The hope of these communities was to provide those in the worst economic conditions the opportunity to become self-reliant citizens.[155]

Alabama benefited from many of the federal programs, thanks in part to seniority held by Senator John Hollis Bankhead, who perceived, like President Roosevelt, the family farm as a "refuge against the uncertainties of the industrial economy."[156] Approximately a fourth of federal subsistence funds came to the state's resettlement communities in Walker County (Bankhead Farms), Macon County (Prairie Farms), Wilcox County (Gee's Bend), Jefferson County (Greenwood, Palmerdale, Cahaba and

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[154] "County-wide P.T.A. Meeting at Cumberland Farms," *Progressive Ave*, October 22, 1936.

[155] *Resettlement Administration,* 19-21.

[156]Roberts, "New Deal Community–Building in the South," 86.

Mount Olive Homesteads), and Jackson County (Skyline Farms). [157] President Roosevelt praised Alabama's relief plans, saying they were among the most complete and actionable directives. In April 1935, FDR touted the state's $116 million plan as a "model for the nation." [158]

The Southern Experience during the Depression

Poverty in the South was not brought on by the Great Depression. Since the end of the Civil War, southern states had been on the economic decline. Only fifteen years after the Civil War ended, the per capita income for the region was about half of that of the rest of the nation. By the 1930s, it still lagged behind the national average. Historian C. Vann Woodward observed that the South lacked "the good things that money buys, such as education, health, protection, and the many luxuries that go to make up the celebrated American Standard of Living."[159]

President Franklin Delano Roosevelt called the South "the Nation's No. 1 economic problem" in the National Emergency Council's *Report on Economic Conditions in the South,* drafted in June 1938.[160] Not only was there concern for people in this region, reformers believed that the South's severe economic struggle was dragging

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[157]Downs, "New Deal in Alabama".

[158] "Graves' Relief Plan Used by F.D.R. as Model for the Nation," *The Progressive Age* (April 25, 1935).

[159] C. Vann Woodward, *The Burden of Southern History* (Baton Rouge: LSU Press, 1960) 13.

[160] Carton and Coclanis, *Confronting Southern Poverty in the Great Depression*, 19.

the country down as a whole. The lack of southern "purchasing power" also greatly impeded recovery.[161]

Alabama's economic condition, like many other southern states, was unstable long before the economic collapse. Agricultural decline plagued the state beginning in the early 1920s and eventually spread to other industries and urban areas. Employment numbers fell rapidly as did the annual income of individuals – from $311 in 1933 to $195 in 1935. [162] While some people remember the years of the Great Depression as a time of increasing recognition of poverty, relief programs, and the development of welfare state capitalism, many southerners recall the depression as "another episode in lives filled with trouble, not as a sudden reversal of wealth."[163]

In the fall of 1935, President Roosevelt sent a form letter to 100,000 clergymen across the nation asking them to describe the living conditions of those in their communities. Fifty-one Alabama preachers responded to the President's call. These letters came from clergymen of all levels of class and educational backgrounds. Preachers took the opportunity to describe not only their living situation, but also that of their worshippers. One pastor from Samson, Alabama, pleaded for the plight of tenant farmers, who lived off of a mere five dollars per month. Another minister outside of Andalusia described his community as "consisting of hungry, poor, and hopeless people who lived

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[161] *Resettlement Administration,* 8-9.

[162]Downs, "Great Depression in Alabama."

[163] Wayne Flint, *Poor but Proud: Alabama's Poor Whites* (Tuscaloosa: University of Alabama Press, 1989), 281.

in unscreened, unsanitary shacks 'not fit for a horse."[164] These letters painted a horrific picture of destitution and despair.

African American sociologist Charles S. Johnson conducted a survey of four states in 1934 that examined the economic conditions of various agricultural workers including tenant farmers and sharecroppers. The survey revealed that the 1933 average annual family income was a mere $105.43. Sharecroppers often received their pay in non-cash form such as coupon books. It was not uncommon for some families to eat only fat back and corn meal.[165]

According to the 1930 census, Alabama recorded a workforce of 1.1 million full time workers. Half of these people worked in the agricultural field. Prior to the stock market crash, the state contained 206,835 cotton farms. Owners ran approximately 30 percent of these farms, while tenants worked 70 percent, with almost half being sharecroppers.[166] Farmers were making approximately 60% less for their crops than they did before the crash.[167] By the end of 1932, farming prices had fallen close to 50 percent, causing many farmers to lose their land and, therefore, their source of income.[168] "The extreme reliance on a few crops and the refusal to diversify contributed to glutted markets

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[164] Wayne Flint, *Alabama Baptists: Southern Baptists in the Heart of Dixie* (Tuscaloosa: University of Alabama Press, 1998), 360-362.

[165]Biles, *The South and the New Deal*, 37-38.

[166] Flint, *Poor but Proud*, 282.

[167] Biles, *The South and the New Deal*, 36-37

[168] Robert G. Pasquill, *The Civilian Conservation Corps in Alabama, 1933-1942* (Tuscaloosa, AL: University of Alabama, 2008), 3-4.

and depressed prices."[169] These conditions resulted in malnutrition, threadbare clothing, illiteracy, and dilapidated housing. Alabamian farmers desperately needed financial support.

Two University of Alabama professors, Paul Terry and Verner Simms, conducted a study of a group of tenant families living near Gorgas, Alabama, with funding by the Civil Works Administration in 1934. The professors deemed this area to be a typical rural community located at the mouth of the Black Warrior River, at the foothills of the Appalachian Mountains. Its residents consisted of mostly white landowning farmers and tenants. According to their research, these tenants were not new families, or young people just starting out - the average age was 42 years old. Another deficiency the professors saw was lack of adequate livestock - many of the families in the study only owned one mule. In order to supplement income, women would often hire out their labor by quilting or selling some other type of craft. [170] As it was with many parts of Alabama, it was clear that people in this region were living a destitute life.

Education and the New Deal

Education and educational institutions have long been directives of social change. Education as an entering wedge of change was the primary intention of Horace Mann's

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[169] Biles, *The South and the New Deal*, 37.

[170] Paul W. Terry and Verner M. Simms, *They Live on the Land: Life in an Open Country Southern Community*, (Tuscaloosa, AL: University of Alabama Press, 2015). The study was called "A Comprehensive Survey of the Behavior Patterns of the People of a Single Rural Community and of the Social, Cultural, Intellectual, and Economic Forces That Influence Them."

common schools during the industrial revolution. The importance of public education was lauded again after the Civil War. Educator James P. Wickersham addressed the National Education Association in 1865 during a speech entitled *Education as an Element in Reconstruction* stating, "There is no agency the Government can use, so well calculated to reconcile the diverse interests of the country, to unit into different parts, to make us one people, as well devised as the system of education."[171]

Educational reform might not have been one of the intended goals at the beginning of the New Deal, but during the development of FDR's relief programs the importance of education was at the heart of almost every social program. Sociologist Jess Gilbert writes, "Probably the most unusual innovation of the New Deal, USDA aimed to advance democracy through adult continuing education classes…Inspired by Jefferson, Lincoln, and Dewey the agrarian New Dealers undertook to expand democracy to rural America."[172]

Roosevelt sought to use education to help those at the very bottom of the social system.[173] The condition of the United States' public education system was in crisis when Roosevelt took office in 1933. Entire school systems in the South were closing their doors due to lack of funding. School closures presented a dual problem. Not only were children being deprived an education, but teachers were without a job. Even in those

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[171] C.A Bowers, "The Ideologies of Progressive Education," *History of Education Quarterly VII* (Winter 1967): 458.

[172] Gilbert, *Planning Democracy*, 142-143.

[173] David Tyack, Robert Lowe, and Elisabeth Hansot, *Public Schools in Hard Times* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1984), 106.

districts that were not in as dire straits, deep budget cuts took place which resulted in layoffs and a decrease in educational programming.

The Roosevelt administration responded to this educational crisis on a variety of fronts. The president allotted $20 million in federal appropriations to assist those school districts on the verge of collapse. Most of these funds were not direct lines of funding to local districts, but took the form of various New Deal agencies such as the Works Progress Administration, the National Youth Administration and the Civilian Conservation Corps. In the fall of 1934, the Federal Emergency Relief Administration employed 40,000 teachers in education programs from nursery programs to adult education programs through the Emergency Educational Program (EEP). This program provided for elementary and high schools in rural communities who had exhausted all state and local funding sources to employ teachers from relief funds. Schools in 33 states benefited from this emergency funding. Congress allocated funds to each participating state, and the State determined how to implement the funds depending on their own plan. State board of education and local relief administrations worked together to administer the funds of the EEP. There were five projects included in the EEP: literacy classes, adult education, vocational training, vocational rehabilitation, and nursery schools. Classes in general education were offered and programs in industry, business, commerce, and domestic science provided learning opportunities for those looking to learn a new skill set. Instruction in handicraft was also offered to make efficient use of down time. This was demonstrated at Skyline Farms. Both men and women learned how to make

decorative objects, but the activities were usually gender specific. Men tended to participate in woodworking while women sewed and quilted.[174]

Land grant colleges played a major role in adult education during the New Deal. These schools partnered with state and local governments to educate farmers on the new, progressive farming practices. College staff met with community representatives to discuss the specific needs of the area and training in leadership, so that new skills could be disseminated throughout the area. Also linked to land grant colleges were state extension services. The AAA provided funding to college campuses so they could expand their outreach to the rural farmer. The program linked "neighborhoods to national policy making" and held group discussions with county groups.[175] The AAA provided training and education to extension workers to facilitate the local programs.[176] State extension services sought to educate and organize within rural counties. County agents publicized the program to area residents and introduced the idea of agrarian planning and cooperative land use during community meetings. So that every neighborhood had a voice in planning, each rural community had a representative on the county's extension committee.[177]

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[174] Center for Historic Preservation, *Skyline Farms Heritage Development Plan*, 12.

[175] Gilbert *Planning Democracy*, 130.

[176] Ibid, 117-157.

[177] Ibid, 129-131.

Serving as a precursor to the Head Start program of the 1960s, emergency nursery schools were established for children aged two to four for those from disadvantaged families. These schools were an extension of the public school and an effort to provide positive, developmental opportunities. These day programs provided lunch and nap time for the children and became educational centers for parents of these youngsters as it offered guidance in childhood development. [178]

One of the unintentional consequences of the New Deal programs was the creation of new data to drive reform of education across the country. Illiteracy was a major problem in both youths and adults. It was estimated that over 12 million adults could not read or write in 1935. The WPA provided literacy courses to the community. By 1938, it helped over a million people learn to read. The agency built hundreds of libraries across the country and incorporated libraries in their public school projects. WPA educational courses went beyond literacy, offering career training, classes in the arts, and public forums for discussion of social and cultural issues.[179] The leaders of the CCC, an organization that served young men, soon discovered that they needed to offer not only technical instruction but also literacy classes. The Corps offered remedial classes for enrollees who needed them. Advanced courses were also available that taught math and history. These classes in turn employed out-of-work teachers. The educational aspect of the CCC program was so important that over 90 percent of those in the program were

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[178] L.R. Alderman, "The Emergency Educational Program," *Opportunity, Journal of Negro Life* (January 1935): 1-4.

[179] Tyack, Lowe, and Hansot, *Public Schools in Hard Times*, 131.

enrolled in some sort of class.[180] Thad Holt, director of relief for the state of Alabama, made efforts to include African Americans in CCC programs. Yet only a paltry 750 African American men were allowed to enroll in state CCC camps through June 1933. However, many residents entrenched in Jim Crow ideology even resented that number. In order to avoid social unrest within the state, the CCC segregated camps throughout its existence from 1935 through 1942.[181]

Another New Deal program that stressed the importance of education was the National Youth Administration. The main goal of the NYA was to provide opportunities for students to remain in school. Both in the North and the South, children would often have to quit school at a very early age in order to enter the work force to help support their family. The NYA provided employment, many times at a student's school, as janitors, members of a construction crew, library assistants, or clerks. They also placed young men and women in important community projects including flood control studies, soil experiments, and even cancer research.[182] The agency offered wages for survival, but also gave young people hope for the future by providing necessary skills to be productive members of society.

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[180] James P. Barnett and Anna C. Burns, *The Work of the Civil Conservation Corps: Pioneering Conservation in Louisiana* (Ashville, NC: US Forest Service Southern Research Station, 2012), 16.

[181] Carolyn Barske, "Civilian Conservation Corps."

[182] Federal Security Agency and War Manpower Commission, *Final Report of the National Youth Administration, Fiscal Years 1936-1943* (Washington, DC: U.S. Government Printing Office, 1944), 59-63. Also see Richard A. Reiman, *The New Deal and American Youth* (Athens: University of George Press, 2010).

Many New Deal programs allowed children, and even some adults, to receive training for the first time. Harry Hopkins, the director of the WPA, stated in 1935:

> All this about anyone being able to go to school who wants to is sheer nonsense…I grant you there are a few exceptional students who can do it, but the great majority of people cannot; and anyone who knows anything about his games knows the good old days of [19]28 and 29, tens of thousands of young people were leaving school to go to work for no other reason than that they were poor.[183]

The South led the nation in the employment of children in industrial and agricultural work. Entire families would often have to work in order to make a living. If the children were working, they were not in school. Generally, compulsory laws were lower in the Southern states and the average school year was much shorter than those in the North.[184]

President Roosevelt often fell into conflict with those in educational administration. He did not respond well to those he called the "school crowd".[185] He viewed traditional models of education as unsatisfactory. Many New Dealers shared the same view. The director of the NYA and Alabama native, Aubrey Williams, thought that most teachers of the time did not have the courage to "teach the truths about the injustices of modern society, that educators regarded many people as uneducable, and that the

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[183] David Woolner, "The New Deal's Unintended Impact on Education," *Roosevelt Institute* http//:www.rooseveltinstitute.org/new-roosevelt/new-deal/s-unintended-impact-education (accessed January 25, 2013).

[184] Carton and Coclanis, *Confronting Southern Poverty*, 65-67.

[185] Tyack, Lowe, Hansot, *Public Schools in Hard Times*, 107.

present system of schooling did not equip either youths or adults to cope with the massive dislocation of society."[186]

In order to showcase the efforts of the New Deal programs and uncover the plight of those affected by the Great Depression, the Farm Security Administration sent teams of photographers to capture of the daily lives of families. Photographs from the West showed the devastation of the Dust Bowl. In the South, lives of tenant farmers showed the nation the dire straits of the rural farm. Roy Stryker, director of the Farm Security Administration's photographers, commented on his team's work, "Was it education? Very much so…If I had to sum it up, I'd say, yes, it was more education than anything else. We succeeded in doing exactly what Rex Tugwell said we should do – we introduced Americans to America."[187]

The purpose of the New Deal was to provide relief to those families in need, most notably getting people back to work so they can become contributing members of society. The primary goal for many of these New Deal programs was to provide the masses with the education and skills they needed to become employed. New Deal programming focused on the unique needs of the communities instead of a one-size-fits-all approach to education. In Chapter four, we will look at a case study in these programs by exploring Skyline Farms, a resettlement community established in 1935 in Jackson County, Alabama.

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[186] Ibid, 108.

[187] Tyack, Lowe, Hansot, *Public Schools in Hard Times*, 112-114.

CHAPTER IV – ESTABLISHING SKYLINE FARMS

"… on this mountain, you have an opportunity to make a living, an opportunity to educate your children and to improve your own education, an opportunity to develop a new community whose future lies in the hands of you people and your children, a special and privileged opportunity in the market place."

-Mr. William J. Davis, Assistant Regional Director of Resettlement Administration to Skyline community members, July 4, 1936[188]

When the effects of the Great Depression hit, Alabama experienced an unemployment rate of 25 percent at its peak in 1933. Farming tenancy increased throughout the state, from 148,000 to 166,000 during the 1930s due to decline in landownership.[189] Those who depended on farming to make a living were struggling to survive.

Jackson County, located in the northeast corner of Alabama, was particularly hard hit as timber sales dwindled along with the decline in farm products. The county's rugged landscape, part of the southern Appalachians, meant that most residents were subsistence farmers to begin with.[190] In addition to farming, there existed some small-scale mining and timber industry on the plateaus of the Cumberland and Sand Mountain.[191] Like other

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[188] "Fully 3000 Attend Picnic at Colony," *The Progressive Age*, July 9, 1936. Mr. Davis addressed the community members at a July 4th celebration, praising the community on their work thus far, and urging them not to take this opportunity for granted.

[189] Mathew Downs, "Great Depression in Alabama," *Encyclopedia of Alabama.* http://encyclopediaofalabama.org/article/h-3608 (accessed August 17, 2020). While 25 percent unemployment was the peak for Alabama, numbers largely stayed close to this for the remainder of the decade.

[190] Donna J. Siebenthaler, "Jackson County," *Encyclopedia of Alabama*, http://www.encyclopediaofalabama.org/article/h-1343 (accessed August 17, 2020).

areas in the region, employment opportunities dried up as the Depression progressed and thousands of people found themselves on relief rolls.[192]

Once claimed as "the most successful of all homestead projects under the Roosevelt administration," an experimental resettlement project initially called Cumberland Farms was developed atop the Cumberland Mountain approximately 16 miles from the city of Scottsboro.[193] The colony's name changed in 1937 to Skyline Farms to avoid confusion with another resettlement community, Cumberland Homesteads, near Crossville, Tennessee.[194] For clarity, this chapter will address the community as Skyline Farms. Plans called for approximately 200 families to clear the land, build community buildings, and settle homesteads on the mountain plateau. The area was chosen for the county's high tenancy rate and large amounts of contiguous, undeveloped land.[195]

Over the course of the next ten years, the Skyline Farms resettlement community supplied destitute families with food, shelter, employment, education, and the opportunity to own their own land. Many curious people – businessmen, government agents, and area

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[191] *National Register of Historic Places Multiple Property Nomination Skyline Farms Resettlement Project,* 4.

[192]Downs, "Great Depression in Alabama."

[193] P.I. Pruitt. "Mountain Plateau Made into Model Homestead," *The Huntsville Times* (November 6, 1938).

[194] "Skyline Farm is New Name for the Colony," *The Progressive Age*, February 18, 1937.

[195] David Campbell and David Coombs, "Skyline Farms: A Case Study of Community Development and Rural Rehabilitation," *Appalachian Journal 10.3* (April 1983): 245.

residents - visited Skyline to see the federal government's utopian socialist experiment "in a land where every man still fiercely guarded his castle."[196] Historians have debated the success of the colony and others like it. But the memory and appreciation of Skyline Farms still resonates with the community today. The following chapter traces the establishment of Skyline Farms during the New Deal project years, showcases the settlement's successes (and occasional missteps), and highlights the use of progressive education to benefit the lives of its residents.

Early New Deal Efforts in Jackson County

At the dawn of the twentieth century, Jackson County, Alabama, needed extensive infrastructure improvements. Accessible roadways existed in the valley portion of the county thanks to bonds sold in the early 1900s, but this did not extend to the mountainous regions. Transportation across Cumberland Mountain was limited to travel by assistance from hooved animals, as was necessary for the past century. There were some rail lines built in 1879 to service Belmont Coal Mines and later Pierce Mining Company operations, but they were for industrial, not commercial use.[197]

In order to open the mountain for development, Jackson County Probate Judge J.M. Money advocated for federal relief funds for the construction of highways throughout the county and wages to pay those on relief rolls for the work. The Reconstruction Finance Corporation (RFC), instituted during the Hoover administration

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[196] Phoebe Culter, *The Public Landscape of the New Deal* (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 1985), 116.

[197] *Skyline Farms National Register of Historic Places Multiple Property Nomination,* E2.

in January 1932, provided funding to state and local governments in order to make loans to struggling banks, mortgage companies, railroads, and other businesses, as well as providing financial relief to the needy.[198] Local newspapers announced RFC funds were putting people to work on road building in Jackson County as early as January 1933.[199] Thus Skyline benefited from both Hoover and Roosevelt programs. In 1933, the newly established Civilian Works Administration (CWA), also provided wages for those working on the project.[200] These roads were completed in 1934 and connected the county seat of Scottsboro across Cumberland Mountain to Paint Rock Valley.[201]

The formation of good roads on Cumberland Mountain garnered the interest of the Two Rivers Lumber and Mining Corporation in 1934. Company President W.S. Douglas announced intentions to establish an industrial village on top of the mountain. By June of that year, Two Rivers had constructed sawmills and cleared some land, but the company's vision never came to fruition.[202] However, the project served beneficial to the next major relief project in Jackson County funded through the Federal Emergency Relief Administration.

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[198] Ibid, E2.

[199] "Plans Being Made for Relief Money," *The Progressive Age* (January 19, 1933).

[200] "Cumberland Mountain Farms Physical Set-Up," Skyline Farms Collection, Skyline Farms Heritage Association, Rock Store Museum Archives, Skyline, Alabama.

[201] *Skyline Farms National Register of Historic Places Multiple Property Nomination*, E2.

[202] Ibid, E3.

The Federal Emergency Relief Act of 1933 granted funds to state and local governments in order to bring direct relief to those suffering during the Depression. The Act established the Federal Emergency Relief Administration (FERA) to manage the funds. The Division of Rural Rehabilitation within FERA promoted independence and self-sustainability through the establishment of resettlement communities for out-of-work industrial workers and farmers.[203] For rural Jackson County, FERA goals led to the establishment of a brand new community to start their lives anew, using modern farming techniques and technology.

The idea for resettlement communities came from the "back to the land movement" that gained popularity around World War I. Several legislators, including Alabama Senator John Bankhead, proposed bills to develop soldier settlements to help returning veterans.[204] The importance of land, however, has been around since the foundation of the country. The Jeffersonian ideal of an agrarian society stressed the association of hard working, virtuous citizens with living in the countryside.[205]

Creating Skyline Farms

Judge Money once again saw opportunity for Jackson County residents in FERA-funded resettlement communities. The land atop Cumberland Mountain seemed ideal for a new community project. Judge Money, along with a delegation of eight men, travelled

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[203] Keith J. Volanto, "New Deal and Southern Agriculture*," The New Encyclopedia of Southern Culture Vol 11: Agriculture and Industry*, (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press), 92-93.

[204] C.J. Maloney, *Back to the Land: Arthurdale, FDR's New Deal, and the Costs of Economic Planning* (Hoboken, NJ: Wiley and Sons, 2011), 7.

[205]Campbell and Coombs, "Skyline Farms," 245.

to Montgomery on November 30, 1934, to speak with the state relief administrators about establishing a farm colony.[206] The men explained that Cumberland Mountain was conducive to resettlement because of the availability of nutrient-rich land, including the area already cleared by Two Rivers Lumber Company, and the extensive number of families on relief aid in Jackson County and surrounding areas.[207] Additionally, due to the work of the RFC and CWA, roadways made access to the area easier.

The Alabama state relief department approved the project and work began in mid-December. Skyline Farms was the largest and most expensive of the twenty-eight rural communities established by FERA.[208] The Rural Rehabilitation Division, staffed by mostly agricultural personnel, oversaw community resettlement for farmers. The state appointed Harry N. Ross as the community project manager. Local papers described Ross as a "modern-day Moses leading the children out of land depression."[209] The first group of twenty-five men were to meet Ross on December 10, 1934, at the base of Cumberland

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[206] "Observations from the Editor: To Establish a Farm Colony," *The Progressive Age*, December 6, 1934. The following men accompanied Judge Money to Montgomery to advocate for the farm project including Commissioner W.C. Selby, H.G. Graham, Representatives O'Neal and Kirby, Messrs, J.F. Proctor, J.L. Staples, J.O. Walls, and Jack Red, Circuit Court Clerk – elect.

[207] "Birmingham News Reporter Writes of Cumberland Farms," *The Progressive Age*, December 3, 1936.

[208] Campbell and Coombs, "Skyline Farms," 245. The article incorrectly identifies 26 FERA established communities but there were 28 according to Paul Conkin's *Tomorrow a New World* (London: Forgotten Books), 335. Other resettlement communities were established by the Division of Subsistence Homesteads or later iterations of FERA including the Resettlement Administration and the Farm Security Administration. There were 99 communities total.

[209] "200 Families Find Security at Cumberland Farms by Murry E Wyche in Chattanooga News on Friday December 4, 1936," *The Progressive Age*, January 7, 1937.

Mountain. Only eleven showed up on that cold, snowy day. Ross explained the immense, treacherous work in front of them, as well as expectations of the workers. Before making the trek to the site, Ross tested the men's conviction to work hard for a better life, telling them to stay behind if they were not willing to put forth sweat equity for the future. Only eight of the men joined Ross up on the mountain.[210]

Those that lived closest to the highway were given priority to work first. This eased the cost and improved efficiency of transportation to the work site.[211] However, it became clear that temporary housing needed to be provided on-site so men could work through the week and return home on weekends.[212] Assistant community manager, J.P. Wall, explained, "The county loaned us a tractor and we hired a sawmill on credit (leased from the Two Rivers project). At first, we camped out, but a snowstorm convinced us they need temporary shacks."[213] Around fifty barracks were "thrown up almost overnight."[214] Originally, plans called for men only to live on the property while the land was cleared and the first buildings erected. However, word about the government project

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[210] Wayne Flint, *Poor but Proud: Alabama's Poor Whites*, (Tuscaloosa: University of Alabama Press, 1989), 307. The three men who stayed behind later applied again to be a part of the project but were denied.

[211] "Cumberland Mountain Farms Outline of Plan and Procedure of Operation of the Cumberland Mountain Farms – Jackson County Rural Homesteading Project," Federal Emergency Relief Administration, Rock Store Museum Archives, Skyline.

[212] "Relief Administration of Work on Colony," *The Progressive Age*, January 24, 1935.

[213] "200 Families Find Security at Cumberland Farms by Murry E Wyche in Chattanooga News on Friday December 4, 1936."

[214] "Birmingham News Reporter Writes of Cumberland Farms."

spread quickly and soon, landlords started to evict those families that were slated to move to the colony. Having nowhere else to go, women and children moved into the temporary units with their husbands.[215] Workers kept vigilant work records and houses were assigned first to those who had the most documented hours.[216]

Fig. 4.1. Temporary shacks used by resettlement families while new homes are being constructed. Skyline Farms, Alabama, September 1935.[217]

Many of the men had no prior experience in construction and had to be taught the basics. Project construction manager, B.J. East claimed, "Some of the men had never

[215] "Cumberland Mountain Farms Physical Set-Up."

[216] Flint, *Poor but Proud,* 307-308.

[217] Arthur Rothstein, "Temporary Shacks Used by Resettlement Families While New Homes Are Being Constructed. Skyline Farms, Alabama," September 1935, Library of Congress Digital Collections, accessed August 31, 2020, https://www.loc.gov/item/2017758973/.

driven a nail. But they were willing and anxious to learn."[218] He reported later that within a year and a half, "these same men were classified as skilled carpenters, stone masons, and workers and draw pay accordingly."[219]

The initial plan for Skyline Farms included an allocation of federal funds to purchase 8,000 acres of land and supplies to accommodate 200 families.[220] Additional acreage was purchased later to total 13,000 acres. Strict qualifications existed for potential homesteaders. They must have agricultural experience, a "favorable outlook on farm life,"[221] a male head of household that is between the ages of 30 and 45, and an accommodating family that is of appropriate size and of good health and stamina.[222] Families were chosen from group II on the Jackson County relief rolls. Group II consisted of people with farming experience but lacking managerial experience, therefore they were to be strictly supervised with finances and resources by government officials.[223] Those chosen for the project had lived in the mountain area for generations and had become handicapped by years of low income and lack of employment

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[218] "200 Families Find Security at Cumberland Farms by Murry E Wyche in Chattanooga News on Friday December 4, 1936."

[219] Ibid.

[220] "Cumberland Mountain Farms Physical Set-Up."

[221] John B. Holt, *An Analysis of Methods and Criteria Used in Selecting Families for Colonization Projects* (Washington, D.C.: Farm Security Administration, 1937), 4.

[222] Ibid, 4-17.

[223] "Cumberland Mountain Farms Physical Set-Up."

opportunities.[224] The average number of children per family was seven and 80 percent of the adults were illiterate. [225] It was noted by Katherine F. Deitz, regional education and activities director in Atlanta, that families tended to be very patriarchal. The women were timid in nature and served men of the family, even eating separately from them.[226]

Skyline Farms was exclusively for white residents. There was a very small percentage of African Americans living in Jackson County. Those who did lived in segregated areas apart from white communities.[227] As a rule, resettlement communities ascribed to the Jim Crow laws of the time. Specific settlements for African American Alabamians were established in Wilcox County (Gee's Bend) and Macon County (Prairie Farms).[228]

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[224] Farm Security Administration. *Project Descriptions Report – US Department of Agriculture*, Division of Information (Washington D.C.: Government Printing, 1940), RG 96 – Records of the Resettlement Division, 1934-1941, Entry 96, Box 2, folder 85-060, National Archives Atlanta Branch.

[225] Wayne Flint, *Poor but Proud*, 307.

[226] Katherine F. Deitz, "Factors to be Considered in the Plan Book for Cumberland Mountain Project, Jackson County, Alabama," (June 1936), Box 44, RG 96

[227] "Cumberland Mountain Farms Physical Set-Up."

[228] Robert Zabawa, "Prairie Farms Resettlement Community," *The Encyclopedia of Alabama*, http://encyclopediaofalabama.org/article/h-2148 (accessed August 31, 2020).

Fig. 4.2. Photo of men clearing land by burning stumps, Skyline Farms, Alabama, September 1935.[229]

Officials assigned the male heads of household a 40-acre plot (up to 60 acres depending on family size) with a permanent home containing three to five rooms made of local wood and sandstone foundations. Farms also featured outbuildings including a barn, chicken house and poultry run, crib, a well, and a smokehouse. The men were expected to build their own houses as well as assist in the construction of community buildings. Families were given a grocery allowance of $7.50 per month, $1.25 per week cash allowance, and credit of 15 cents per hour from the week's work which was applied to their family account.[230]

[229] Arthur Rothstein, "Clearing Land By Burning Stumps, Skyline Farms, Alabama," September 1935, The Library of Congress Digital Collections, accessed August 30, 2020, https://www.loc.gov/item/2017721057/.

[230] "200 Families Find Security at Cumberland Farms."

Plans for gaining title to their homesteads were unclear for Skyline residents. FERA had no blueprint or strategy to follow as the program was unprecedented. The desire to place destitute families was the priority and FERA would "work out purchase details later."[231] Initially, families thought they would pay off debts on their home from work completed on the project and a 40-year loan would be taken out to pay for the land. Another version heard by residents was that after five years of residing in the colony, they would be given the deed. Finally, an agreement was made official – by declaring a lease and purchase contract system. FERA and its successors, the Resettlement Administration and the Farm Security Administration, used this plan going forward. Farmers agreed on a set price for their farm and paid 25 percent of the total sum from credit on their family account from crops sold. Once this amount was paid, federal agents drafted a quit claim deed to the farmer. He then had 40 years to pay off the loan with an applied three percent interest. There were two caveats to the quit claim deed. First, the government owned any mineral rights found on the property (there had been some small coal mining operations on the mountain, so the possibility was known). Second, the government held the right to supervise the property until the balance was paid in full, thus indenturing residents to government supervision for the next four decades.[232]

The first homestead opened on February 7, 1935. County inspectors viewed the property and permitted it for habitation. In addition to local officials, state relief administrators from Montgomery came to see the progress on the mountain. The

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[231] Campbell and Coombs, "Skyline Farms," 247.

[232] Ibid.

surrounding community was very interested in the progress of the colony. The general public was invited to the opening and were persuaded to contact their local county commissioners if they needed transportation for the event.[233] However, not everyone shared the same enthusiasm for the project. For example, in the week following the first inspection, a disgruntled citizen paid for space in a Scottsboro newspaper and stated, "To go out on top of a poor mountain and destroy trees, building houses and expect poor people without anything to make a living on a few acres of poor, stumpy land and pay for it is nothing short of stupidity ad (sic) waste."[234] Federal officials needed to work hard to convince the general public that the outcome of the millions of dollars spent on resettlement communities nationally justified the cost.

Governance of all FERA community projects, as well as all additional government departments engaged in resettlement, went to Resettlement Administration, created in May 1935, under the direction of Rex Tugwell.[235] Tugwell shaped the future of the resettlement communities and initiated policies that lasted the tenure of the national program, even after his departure from the agency in December 1936. He intensely promoted the idea of collectivism which placed the importance of the group over an

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[233] "Opening Date Set for Homestead Colonies," *The Progressive Age*, January 31, 1935.

[234] "Stupidity and Haste," *The Progressive Age*, February 14, 1935.

[235] Paul Conkin, *Tomorrow a New World*, 113. The Division of Subsistence Homesteads of the Department of Interior, Division of Rural Rehabilitation and the Land Program of FERA, and the Land Policy Section of the Agricultural Adjustment Administration fell to the Resettlement Administration under Executive Order 7027 on April 30, 1935.

individual.[236] This attitude was in contradiction to the individualist ideals of the agrarian tradition and garnered widespread criticism.[237] Tugwell visited Skyline Farms in person in March 1936 and congratulated the community manager, Harry Ross, on the progress made and ensured his support in the future.[238]

Figure 4. 3. A new Colony House, Skyline Farms, Alabama, September 1935.[239]

Skyline's homesteads centered around several community buildings: the Commissary, the school, an administration building, a cotton gin, and warehouse. Initially, there were no separate church buildings constructed. A variety of services took place inside the Skyline School auditorium. A group of citizens came together in 1939 to

[236] Conkin, *Tomorrow a New World*, 150.

[237] Ibid, 160.

[238] "Tugwell Okehs (sic) Relief Project," *The Huntsville Times*, March 23, 1936.

[239] Arthur Rothstein, "New House, Skyline Farms, Alabama," September 1935, Library of Congress Digital Collections, accessed October 26, 2020, https://www.loc.gov/item/2017758974/.

build a Baptist church on one homesteader's property.[240] The first school building was constructed of wood but the WPA built an updated ten-room, sandstone building. The school and educational efforts at Skyline are discussed in depth later in the chapter. The town center also had a health clinic that employed a full-time nurse and a part-time doctor. The federal government set up a prepaid group plan for the colonists. For two dollars a month, participants received health care. Administrators stressed the importance of preventative care including proper nutrition and regular inoculations and check-ups.[241]

Other efforts to improve the county took place after the creation of the Tennessee Valley Authority (TVA) in 1933 during Franklin Delano Roosevelt's First Hundred Days.[242] Congress mandated the TVA "to regulate the flow of the Tennessee River system, to create a deep-water navigation channel, and to regulate flood waters in the Tennessee and lower Mississippi valleys."[243] A beneficial byproduct from the creation of dams was inexpensive electricity. This advantage granted access to electricity for many residents of northern Alabama for the first time. Prior to TVA's inception, only three

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[240] "Notice to Skyline Baptist Church," *The Progressive Age*, October 12, 1939 and "Skyline News," *The Progressive Age*, October 26, 1939.

[241] Campbell and Coombs, "Skyline Farms," 248. Notices were posted in local papers (*The Progressive Age* and *the Cumberland Farms News*) announcing nutrition classes and when vaccines were available.

[242] Ibid, E3.

[243] Patricia Bernard Ezzell, "Tennessee Valley Authority," *The Encyclopedia of Alabama*, http://encyclopediaofalabama.org/article/h-2380 (accessed August 29, 2020).

percent of farms in the Tennessee Valley had access to electricity.[244] Skyline residents enjoyed the modern amenity of electricity in their newly built homes.

Farming on the Mountain

Agriculture was the main revenue for the residents of Skyline Farms. While it was a requirement to have previous farming experience, the main reason for living on the settlement was learning modern, progressive farming techniques in order to make the most profit, leading to self-sufficiency. Children and adults learned about the newest technologies in agriculture, whether it was in school, during guest lectures and presentations, or reading material provided by government agencies. Community managers taught farmers how to properly fertilize for the next season's crops.[245] State extension agents conducted terracing schools to give "the farmer practical experience in laying out and the construction of the most modern type of terraces" and teach about the cause and effect of soil erosion.[246] The Future Farmers of America established a chapter at the Skyline School where it taught members about careers in the science, business, and technology of agriculture. Agricultural experts from Auburn University (then called the Alabama Polytechnic Institute) taught how to properly plant seeds.[247] Every occasion was an educational opportunity.

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[244] Ibid.

[245] "Colony Farmers Hold Get-together."

[246] "Terracing Schools Held," *The Progressive Age*, September 3, 1936.

[247] David Campbell and David Coombs, "Skyline Farms," 247.

It took a full two years to see bountiful harvest at Skyline Farms. Every bit of manpower was devoted to clearing land and building the community center and permanent residences. Some small plots of potato and cabbage were planted in 1936, but no real cash crops.[248] Ross commented to a Birmingham reporter the same year,

> Some of the more industrious have made some money on the side and lot of them have bought cows and chickens. Before planting crops, we plan to furnish mules for many families and next fall should see a substantial number of the colonies on a real start toward ownership of their places.[249]

While cotton was the main cash crop in the South, the government sought to diversify what farmers planted. For Skyline, the goal of diversification meant experimenting with Irish and sweet potatoes.[250] Colonists constructed a potato house to store incoming harvests. The house featured two stories, each floor with a sliding door and stove to "facilitate heating and curing."[251] An average of 4,500 pounds per acre were produced during a particularly successful year. Skyline Irish potatoes were sold in Birmingham and Atlanta and as far away as Cincinnati and Chicago in 1939. Twenty-five carloads were rented to deliver the potato crop, each car containing 250 bags. A "conservative estimate of gross summers sales on potatoes" were valued at $12,500.[252] Unfortunately, the success of the potato crop that occurred that year did not continue.[253]

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[248] "Birmingham News Reporter Writes of Cumberland Farms."

[249] Ibid.

[250] "Model Project," *Huntsville Times*.

[251] Ibid.

[252] "Amazing Irish Potatoes Crop Grown at Skyline Farms This Year," *The Progressive Age*, July 13, 1939. With inflation, the summer's gross sales were almost $180,000 in present day dollars.

Fig 4.4. A community sign alerting of residents of an upcoming farmers meeting and movie showing at Skyline Farms.[254]

Cooperation and Community

A key feature in all resettlement communities was the existence of cooperatives. Theoretically, individuals paid membership dues to the cooperative and the group owned and ran the organization. The intention of cooperatives was to provide members a voice in community matters and teach colonists about the democratic process and how to work

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[253] Cambell, "Skyline Farms", *Encyclopedia of Alabama*.

[254] Arthur Rothstein, "Sign at Skyline Farms, Alabama," Library of Congress Digital Collections, accessed August 31, 2020, https://www.loc.gov/resource/fsa.8b35816/.

in groups.[255] The Resettlement Administration realized that residents needed education and supervision throughout this process. Therefore, the government supervised and advised the co-ops, having ultimate control. RA officials supplied topical reading material, gave lectures, and held group discussions on democracy and representative government. Skyline members met regularly with project managers to address concerns, discuss plans for the future, and receive reminders for seasonal farming issues.[256] New Deal historian Paul Conkin wrote, "Voluntary, democratic cooperation was to be the alternative to the economic insecurity and chaos of an individualistic, capitalistic past and to the involuntary, totalitarian collectivism of both fascism and communism."[257]

[255] Conkin, *Tomorrow a New World*, 209.

[256] "Colony Farms Hold Get-to-gether Meeting," *The Progressive Age*, December 17, 1936.

[257] Conkin, *Tomorrow a New World*, 202-203.

Fig. 4. 5. Men waiting to make a purchase inside the Skyline Farms Commissary.[258]

The community Commissary operated on a cooperative agreement starting January 23, 1937. The Cumberland Farms (Skyline) Cooperative Association was incorporated on May 13, 1936 in the state of Alabama as a nonprofit cooperation without capital stock. The co-op received an advanced payment of $8,500 out of a $15,000 loan to take over the assets and liabilities of the Cumberland Mountain Farms Store, which was owned by Alabama Rural Rehabilitation Corporation. Annual cooperative membership fees were one dollar per person.[259] A percentage of profits from the

[258] Arthur Rothstein, "Store," Library of Congress Digital Collections, accessed August 31, 2020, https://www.loc.gov/item/2017775679/.

[259] Memorandum for Mr. C.B. Baldwin, Cumberland Farms Cooperative Association Audit Correspondence, Farm Security Administration, Audit Division, Box No 1, Acc. 54A701, National Archives Atlanta Branch.

cooperative were set aside for community projects and improvements and the rest was split amongst the members.[260]

Relating to cooperatives was the idea of building a "community consciousness."[261] By its nature, farming is an isolating engagement with long hours toiling away with a select few individuals in the fields. RA communities wanted to break isolation by the intentional planning of community events and activities. Rex Tugwell sought the expertise of rural sociologist Carl Taylor to help "break the social pattern of rural isolation."[262] Taylor believed that creating a sense of community with the colony's residents made colony management easier while breaking the monotony of farming life.

Several fairs, field days, arts and craft opportunities, and recreational activities were held frequently at Skyline Farms in order to allow fellowship and celebration of their hard work. An annual Independence Day picnic took place on the mountain each July, with the first event hosting over 3000 people. The day featured music, BBQ, a baseball game, and several speakers including Congressman of Alabama's eighth district, John J. Sparkman. He spoke to the opportunities allotted to the people of Skyline Farms and touted, "the principles of the Democratic Party which made the project possible were taken from the Declaration of Independence…In the last three years (since the creation of the New Deal) we have seen the Declaration of Independence come to life."[263] The

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[260] "Birmingham News Report Writes of Cumberland Farms."

[261] Campbell and Coombs, "Skyline Farms," 249.

[262] Ibid.

[263] "Fully 3000 Attend Picnic at Colony," *The Progressive Age*, July 9, 1936.

colony also held annual Yule Pageants in December. Plays, written by representatives of the Special Skills Division, were performed by local talent and school children.[264]

Fig. 4.6. Men and women participating in square dancing activities at Skyline Farms, 1937.[265]

Perhaps one of the most well-known attempts at creating a collective culture was the creation of a folk music program at Skyline. The Resettlement Administration sent a teacher from the Special Skills Division, Margaret Valiant of Memphis, to teach community members about mountain music and square dancing.[266] The New Deal reformers chose folk music because they perceived it was was native to the Appalachian

[264] "Cumberland Farms Offers Yule Pageant," *The Progressive Age*, December 17, 1936.

[265] Ben Shahn, "Square Dance," 1937, Library of Congress Digital Collection, accessed September 1, 2020, https://www.loc.gov/item/2017730998/.

[266] Jannelle Warren-Findley, ed., "Journal of a Field Representative by Charles Seeger and Margaret Valiant," *Ethnomusicology* 24(May 1980): 173.

Mountain, having its roots in England, Scotland, Ireland and Wales. The music showed the "dramatic histories of age-old human struggle, others are based equally on the ability to laugh."[267] Charles Seeger, who was the head of the Special Skills Division, thought the music program would bring calm and reassurance to those who were frightened by changes and new experiences involved in resettlement.[268]

Square dances were very popular at Skyline. Seen as "clean and wholesome recreation for both the old and the young," square dancing also evoked mountain traditions from the past.[269] Dances were held most weekends and Skyline Dancers performed locally. The dances also served as a way for Jackson County residents to visit the government colony. Advertisements in county papers invited the general public to join in on the fun. Music became part of daily life on the mountain and was incorporated into almost every event.

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[267] "Good Old Mountain Music," *The Progressive Age*, February 11, 1937.

[268] Warren-Findley, "Journal of a Field Representative by Charles Seeger and Margaret Valiant," 173.

[269] "Folk Program Popular," *The Progressive Age*, February 18, 1937.

Fig. 4. 7. Members of the Skyline Farms Band sing at a gathering.[270]

Bascom Lunsford, well-known Appalachian Mountain historian and banjo player, created the Mountain Folk and Music Festival in 1928. Lunsford was also assigned to teach music and dance at Skyline Farms. Seeger championed Lunsford's abilities and believed that his festival was superior to others because "the rural element predominated to such an extent that even the hardened urban visitor felt partly absorbed by it. I should say that I think it is a very worthwhile affair."[271] The Skyline Band and dancers were invited to perform at Lunsford's festival in August of 1937.[272] Eight couples traveled to

[270] Ben Shahn, "Music for Square Dancing,", 1937, Library of Congress Digital Collections, accessed August 31, 2020, https://www.loc.gov/item/2017730987/.

[271] Warren-Findley, ed., "Journal of a Field Representative by Charles Seeger and Margaret Valiant," 120.

[272] "Dance Team Plans Trip to Ashville Festival," *The Progressive Age*, August 5, 1937. J.S. Shavers, Sister Ada Clarke, N.E. Waldrop, Maude Lindsay, Jack Bradley, Mrs. Robin Adair Pronce Whorton, Opal Holsonback, Mr. and Mrs. Elton Kennamer, Mr. and Mrs. Verbon Hodges, Oakland Paradise and Mr. and Mrs. Otis Sharp were the dancers who attended. The Skyline Band also attended: H.L Green Rubin Rousseau, Chester Allen, Joe Sharp, Thomas Holt, and Clifford Anderson.

North Carolina along with the six members of the Skyline Farms Band. Fundraising dances were held back in the colony to offset costs of the trip.[273] The dance team and band performed several times throughout the duration of the event.

Fig. 4.8. Audience at Square Dance, Skyline Farms, Alabama, 1937.[274]

The most distinguished performance for the Skyline Band and dancers came when First Lady Eleanor Roosevelt invited the performers to a White House garden party in 1938. The Skyline Farms Band, along with community dancers and singers, travelled to Washington, D.C., to perform for President and Mrs. Roosevelt and 2,323 party guests. Ike Floyd, who led timber cutting at Skyline, served as the master of ceremonies. The Skyline Band, described as "not the least self-conscious," played the songs "Alabama

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[273] "Public Invited to Square Dance at Skyline Farms," *The Progressive Age*, July 22, 1937.

[274] Ben Shahn, "Audience at Square Dance, Skyline Farms, Alabama," 1937, Library of Congress Digital Collection, accessed September 3, 2020, https://www.loc.gov/item/2017731001/.

Jubilee," "Fox Chase," and "Cacklin' Hen."[275] Band leader Chester Allen captured the attention of everyone at the gathering with his signature sound "wailing like a dog."[276] According to Chester's son, Roger, "the President laughed so hard and was so amused by Chester's 'bark' he could not quit slapping his knee."[277] Mrs. Roosevelt paid the way for the guests from Skyline Farms to the nation's capital. This event was the first time a traditional music act performed at the White House.[278] While in D.C., the Band went to the Library of Congress to record some songs for Alan Lomax, who was over the Archive for American Folk Music.[279] The group also enjoyed a viewing of Congress in session by the Alabama state district representative, John J. Sparkman.[280] This would not be the last time Skyline representatives performed for the President and First Lady.

Skyline dancers traveled to D.C. the next year to perform a second time. Bascom Lunsford was invited to a special performance in honor of British royalty, King George VI and Queen Elizabeth. Mrs. Roosevelt looked forward to showing off diverse varieties of American music to the monarchs. Lunsford brought Sam Queen, Queen's Soco Gap Dancers, and the Skyline dancers to perform for the esteemed crowd. In addition to

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[275] "Group from Skyline Farms On Way To Washington, D.C.," *Jackson County Sentinel*, 10 May 1938.

[276] Ibid.

[277] Skyline Farms Heritage Development Plan, 23.

[278] "Skyline Farms Band," *Encyclopedia of Alabama*, http://www.encyclopediaofalabama.org/article/m-3966 (accessed September 3, 2020.)

[279] David Campbell, "Skyline Farms," *Encyclopedia of Alabama*, http://encyclopediaofalabama.org/article/h-1546 (accessed August 28, 2020).

[280] "A Time to Remember," *Jackson County Sentinel*, January 19, 2018.

Lunsford's crew, the First Lady invited Marian Anderson, Lawrence Tibbett, Kate Smith, and Alan Lomax.

Fig. 4.9. Crowd Watching Skyline Band Perform at the White House Garden Party. May 1939. Photograph from the personal collection of Roger Allen.

Some of Skyline's entertainers experienced success in the music industry. Joe Sharp, mandolin and fiddle player for Skyline Band, gained notoriety for his rendition of "Cotton Mill Colic." The song was recorded during the Skyline Band's trip to the Library of Congress in 1939. Daniel McCarn, the song's creator, was laid off from his job as a textile worker in Victory Yarn Mills in South Gastonia, North Carolina. According to an interview by McCarn in 1961, he wrote the song because of the dreadful conditions of working in the mill. When his former boss heard the lyrics, he promptly blacklisted the

song's creator from being reemployed.[281] However, Sharp's delivery became synonymous with the song.

Chester Allen gained some national attention from his performances on *Renfroe Valley Barn Dance* on CBS radio, which was heard by thousands across the country. He performed with notable artists such as Red Foley and Ernest Tubb on the show. In addition, Allen performed on an affiliate of ABC Chicago called WLS and was recognized as a Music Achiever by the Alabama Music Hall of Fame.[282]

Handicrafts were another important way community members socialized and garnered community pride. Even in the early days of the Division of Subsistence Homesteads, director M.L. Wilson, as well as the First Lady, thought teaching the art of handicrafts to resettlement residents not only provided an additional source of income, but offered a way to evoke pride in an individual while perfecting craftsmanship and skill. After the creation of the Resettlement Administration, the Special Skills Division taught courses and managed programs in arts and crafts. The program put out of work artisans to work in such positions as Associate Advisor of Woodworking and Weaving.

In the case of Skyline, handcrafts also provided useful products for the residents of the community. The work of Mr. J.A. Houston was widely known in the area. He was the resident woodworker and made chairs, cabinets, and tables for many colony houses on his homemade lathe.[283] The RA was not the only organization to assist with handicraft

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[281] Skyline Farms Heritage Development Plan, 23-24.
[282] Ibid, 24.

[283] "Nearly 200 Contented Families Find Home on Cumberland Mountain," *The Progressive Age*, December 3, 1936.

programs. The National Youth Association (NYA) employed college students to teach youth at resettlement project in handicrafts in order produce goods to sell for extra money. The CCC built looms and benches.[284]

Fig. 4.10. Mr. J.A. Houston in his cabinet shop, Skyline Farms, Alabama, 1937.[285]

Industrial Opportunities at Skyline Farms

A partnership between Skyline Farms and Dexdal Hosiery Mills of Lansdale, PA brought a $500,000 hosiery mill in 1938. Skyline was one of three resettlement communities picked to build a silk hosiery mill. Residents established the Skyline Industrial Company, a for-profit business, that shared in the operation, management, and profits of the mill with Dexdal.[286] The federal government loaned $3,050,000 to the three

[284] Conkin, *Tomorrow a New World*, 196.

[285] Ben Shahn, "Cabinet Maker, Skyline Farms, Alabama," 1937, Library of Congress Digital Collections, accessed September 1, 2020, https://www.loc.gov/item/2017731029/.

[286] "Model Homestead Project Operated at Skyline Farms."

projects ($490,000 to Skyline), with Dexdal contributing $320,000 total. Loan terms stipulated that Skyline Farms Cooperative had 40 years to repay the loan with three percent interest. The partnering companies paid the government rental on the plants, plus taxes and maintenance costs. The mill provided around 100 industrial jobs for Skyline residents that paid minimum wage.[287] Many people celebrated the hosiery mill, viewing it as opportunity for additional money for the family. Commissary manager, Talmadge Hooper, claimed he was "broke as doodlum hell" before he came to Skyline.[288] Hooper, who had lived in the colony for four years when the mill was announced, looked forward to sending his sons to work when they were old enough. The government sent several individuals to Pennsylvania to receive training from Dexdal Mills, as most residents had little or no industrial experience.[289]

Education at Skyline – Progressive Education in Rural Communities

Education was at the heart of many New Deal programs and was especially true of the Resettlement Administration. While they provided immediate relief and a stable home, RA communities were designed to teach rural residents how to be better farmers and provide skills to make them productive citizens. Learning opportunities existed for a basic education in reading, writing, and arithmetic, and learning new handicrafts and home economics. In the South, reformers thought it was particularly important to educate

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[287] "Skyline Farms to Get $500,000 Knitting Mill," *The Progressive Age*, September 1, 1938.

[288] "New Silk Mill to Aid Farmers in Experiment," *The Anniston Star*, May 26, 1939.

[289] Ibid.

colonists, many of whom were illiterate. The region had problems getting families to adhere to compulsory school laws as many of them depended on child labor to work the fields. Advertisements could be found almost weekly in Jackson County papers stating the importance and benefits of sending their children to school. Some of the more aggressive notices shamed parents for not sending their children asking, "Which is more valuable to you – your children's education or the cotton they pick?"[290]

As mentioned earlier, most of the residents of Skyline were illiterate at the beginning of the project and had very little schooling. Government officials did not shy away from the fact that community members needed to expand their capacity for learning. At one community event, Alabama Congressman John Sparkman told Skyline residents about a recent article claiming administrators of TVA project come from other states and that "…Alabama could furnish the brawn but not the brains. I stand pledged to keep working until Alabama can furnish both the brawn and the brains."[291]

[290] "Notice to Parent," *The Progressive Age*, September 24, 1936.

[291] "Fully 3000 Attend Picnic at Colony."

Fig. 4.11 Interior of Skyline school showing teacher and students, 1937.[292]

If the government wanted to develop a new cooperative society, then the method of education needed to be different than the status quo. The 1910s and 20s ushered in a new type of education called progressive education, "which seemed ideally suited for the transition from competitive to cooperative society."[293] Progressives held certain goals in their philosophy including equal governance, better, safer working conditions, better wages, and an egalitarian society. Progressives used education to direct social change.[294] Supporters of this ideology understood that education was central to a democratic society. John Dewey, known as the father of progressive education, believed children should be

[292] Arthur Rothstein, "School at Skyline Farms," 1937, Library of Congress Digital Collections, accessed September 3, 2020, https://www.loc.gov/item/2017775685/.

[293] Conkin, *Tomorrow a New World*, 192.

[294] George Hein, *Progressive Museum Practice: John Dewey and Democracy* (Walnut Creek, CA: Left Coast Press, 2013), 71-72.

invested in what they were learning, not merely practicing rote memorization. If students were engaged actively with the subject, learning would be more meaningful. Dewey maintained children should learn-by-doing and engage in hands-on experimentation.[295]

Fig. 4.12. Students studying outdoors at Skyline School. This was typical in a progressive education classroom. June 1936.[296]

Dewey's teachings were evident in all the planned communities of the New Deal and many relief agencies employed his followers. Chief Educational Specialist of the Resettlement Administration was Dr. Morris R. Mitchell, former member of the Advisory

[295] For more on Dewey, see *John Dewey on Education: Selected Writings* by Reginald A. Archambault, ed., (University of Chicago Press, 1964); *Understanding John Dewey: Nature and Cooperative Intelligence* by James Campbell (Chicago: Open Court, 1995); and, *Democracy and Education* by John Dewey, (New York: The Macmillan Company, 1916).

[296] Carl Mydans,"School Scene at Cumberland Mountain Farms (Skyline) near Scottsboro, Alabama," June 1936, Library of Congress Digital Collections, accessed September 1, 2020, https://www.loc.gov/item/2017715854/.

Committee of the Progressive Education Association. This meant progressive education was the standard for resettlement community schools. The RA took over operation of the communities created by the Division of Subsistence Homesteads in 1935, including its first, most well-known homestead, Arthurdale, in Preston County, West Virginia. Started in 1934, Arthurdale's school became the pet project of First Lady Eleanor Roosevelt. Having first learned about reeducation efforts for destitute families in her work with the American Friends Service Committee, Roosevelt became involved in the project at Arthurdale, then known as the Reedsville Project. In fact, for the first six years of the community's existence, either the President or Mrs. Roosevelt personally delivered the address during the school's graduation ceremonies.

Mrs. Roosevelt suggested Elise Clapp, student of John Dewey, for Arthurdale's first school principal. Ms. Clapp wanted the school to support and encourage a "cooperative, democratic spirit".[297] Administrators were so dedicated to progressive education at Arthurdale that they asked John Dewey himself to serve on the advisory committee of the school. Both Clapp and RA director, Rex Tugwell, saw school not just confined to one building, but existing everywhere in an individual's environment. Additionally, the concept of school was not limited to children, but was available to every member of society.[298] Conceivably, due to its early construction and involvement of Mrs. Roosevelt, Arthurdale served as an example for future resettlement schools.

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[297] Maloney, *Back to the Land*, 160.

[298] Ibid, 162.

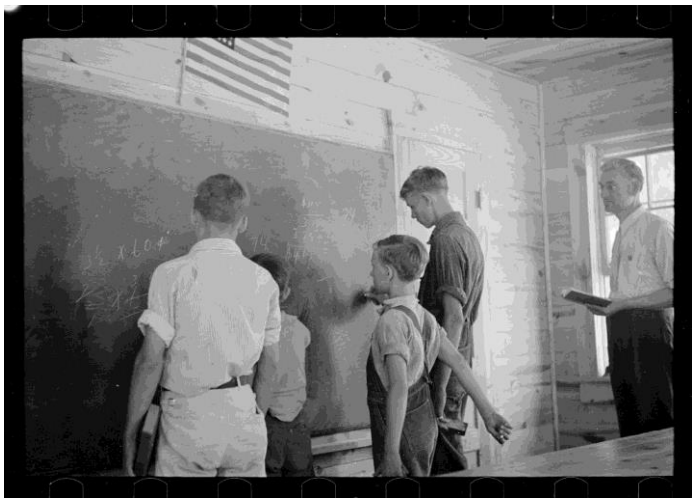

Fig. 4.13. A group of boys write on a chalk board inside the Skyline Farms School. June 1936.[299]

A common day at a progressive school consisted of cooperative learning in groups, outdoor time studying natural surroundings, and a meeting of the classroom discussing the next day's events. It also included some informal learning time for socialization.[300] Additionally, progressive schools did not feature grades as was common in most institutions. They grouped students according to their ability.[301] All of these concepts existed at the school at Skyline Farms.

The school at Skyline, which started as a wooden structure, was later reconstructed with funds provided through a Works Progress Administration grant of $25,000.[302] The new structure was built from local sandstone and featured ten

[299] Carl Mydans, "Untitled photo: Possibility related to: School Scene at Skyline Farms, near Scottsboro, Alabama," June 1936, Library of Congress Digital Collections, accessed August 30, 2020, https://www.loc.gov/item/2017715859/.

[300] Conkin, *Tomorrow a New World*, 192.

[301] Maloney, *Back to the Land*, 159.

[302] "200 Families Find Security at Cumberland Farms."

classrooms. Skyline School employed six teachers, a principal (G.P. Helms), and had between 150-200 students enrolled. Boys received agricultural education while girls attended home economics classes. Students received individualized instruction according to their specific needs. [303] They also learned about the world around them. Classes were often held outside where children learned about natural resources. A school newspaper showcased a recent field trip where students travelled to Lauderdale County to visit the Wilson Dam, a project of the TVA, where they learned about hydroelectricity.[304] Community events often showcased the latest developments of Skyline School. Community fairs welcomed visitors inside the school for an open house to show the classrooms' beauty and modern technology.[305]

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[303] Campbell and Coombs, "Skyline Farms," 248.

[304] "Field Trip to Wilson Dam" *Skyline School News*. Rock Store Museum Archives, Skyline Farms.

[305] "Skyline Farms Has Great Fair," *The Progressive Age*, October 20, 1936.

Fig. 4.14. Students inside of the Skyline School, February 1937.[306]

Roy Stryker and the FSA photographers

Resettlement Administration director, Rexford G. Tugwell, wanted positive publicity for his programs, realizing that some might be viewed as controversial. He commissioned photographers to document the farm projects from the construction of the community in 1935 until 1943. The photographers focused on the ordinary lives of the families that lived there. Tugwell believed that photographs would be the easiest way to convey the successes of the resettlement program. He also thought it was important for those that resided in the cities to see for themselves the plight of the rural poor.[307]

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[306] Arthur Rothstein, "School. Skyline Farms, Alabama." February 1937, Library of Congress Digital Collections, accessed September 1, 2020, https://www.loc.gov/item/2017775680/.

[307] Michael L. Carlebach, "Documentary and Propaganda: The Photographs of the Farm Security Administration," *The Journal of Decorative and Propaganda Arts* 8 (Spring 1988): 15-17.

Tugwell commissioned the task to the director of Farm Security Administration Historical section, Roy Stryker. His job as director consisted of collecting all materials that might have some bearing on the history of the Farm Security Administration. Stryker focused on the collection of rural life, using a heavy editing hand. He had a vision of what he wanted to create and would "kill" images that did not fit this plan by punching a hole through the image. He had previous experience, serving as editor of a photography collection and teacher at Columbia University where he developed his critical eye.[308] During Stryker's tenure, over 270,00 images by FSA photographers documented daily American life during the Depression.[309]

Three FSA photographers visited Skyline Farms over the course of the project years, including Arthur Rothstein, Ben Shahn, and Carl Mydans. Rothstein, one of Stryker's first hires, came to Skyline in September 1935. He focused on construction efforts and new families joining the community. His images documented clearing of land, men working at the sawmill, those who were joining the project and were settling into temporary shacks, and families who moved into permanent housing. His photos showed the progress of the project. Rothstein returned to Skyline in 1937 and focused on subjects he did not capture during his first visit.[310]

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[308] Stuart Cohen, *The Likes of Us: America in the Eyes of the Farm Security Administration,* (Boston: David R. Godine, 2008).

[309] Roy Emerson Stryker and Nancy C. Wood, *In This Proud Land: America, 1935 – 1943, as seen in FSA Photographs* (New York: Galahad Books, 1973), 7.

[310] *Skyline Farms Heritage Development Plan*, 27, 37.

Carl Mydans previously worked as a journalist for the *Boston Globe* and *Boston Herald*. Mydans appreciated the ordinary man as was clear in his people-oriented approach to photography. His photographs centered on events in and around Skyline school. Classroom scenes show children actively engaged in lessons. This was likely Mydans' last assignment for Stryker as he took a job at *Life* later that year.[311]

The third FSA photographer to travel to Cumberland Mountain was Ben Shahn. Shahn was not a photographer by trade. He was a noted muralist, painter, and designer. While working for the Special Skills Division of RA, Shahn took some photographs for his personal use while travelling through the South. Stryker happened to see the images and Shahn gave him permission to keep the images on file at the historical section. Shahn had an interesting technique when photographing that helped keep subjects at ease. The use of an angle finder allowed Shahn to shoot without having to pose subjects, giving a more candid image. This is evident in his images of Skyline dances.[312]

Photographs of daily life on the colony were an immediate and gripping way to demonstrate rural life. Not only did the images provide a glimpse into rural life, they served as promotional material for resettlement communities as a whole. They exhibited the progress of each community, as well as the perceived success of the homestead project. FSA photographs of Skyline Farms are available through the Library of Congress digital collections and provide extensive document of the colony from its creation of the built landscape to the daily life of residents on the mountain.

Troubles within the 'Utopian' Society

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[311] Ibid, 39.

[312] Ibid.

While Skyline Farms was one of the largest and most lauded resettlement communities, that did not guarantee its success. Even with extensive planning, the future of Skyline residents was often unclear. In May 1939, Henry Ross declared that 26 families were squatting in an undeveloped portion of the mountain, dubbed Bluff City. Temporary shacks left over from the project's early days occupied the homeless families that had run out of benefits from WPA work programs or were turned down or let go from Skyline Farms. John Michaels was one of those evicted from Bluff City. He was removed by court order because the land he occupied was being sold to another individual.[313] Community manager H.L. Ross claimed that removing squatters from Bluff City had been a gradual process since the beginning of the project. People who were equipped to farming life or did not abide by the community rules would take refuge in the abandoned temporary buildings.[314] Squatters often caused issues with community management spouting unfair practices.[315]

What to do with the homeless was not the only issue facing the colony. Internal community conflict also threatened the success of Skyline, namely the "fierce individualism, pride, and general cantankerousness of the clients."[316] Residents started to complain about the inadequate housing of the temporary shacks before permanent houses were built. Anyone who refused to work overtime was let go.

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[313] "Socialism Tinged with Irony," *The Selma Times-Journal*, May 29, 1939.

[314] "Evicted Homesteaders Create Problem of Slum Clearance at Federal Farm Utopia," *The Selma Times-Journal*, May 24, 1939.

[315] Flynt, *Poor but Proud*, 309.

[316] Ibid, 308.

Everything on the project cost more than projected. The lack of skills of many workers required more time and resources devoted to teaching things like rudimentary carpentry. Poor planning led to the need to re-drill many of the wells in 1939. Management of the cooperative was sloppy at best. Poor accounting practices and lack of record keeping caused many members to withdraw their membership. The situation became so bad that the Resettlement Administration sent in an expert to reorganize the cooperative in January 1936.

Struggles between government staff and community residents caused further issues. Those in authority positions, including the many educators, were sometimes met with resistance from the colonists. The farmers felt inferior to the officials who managed the project, creating a class conflict. After all, they were under the watchful supervision of the government. [317] Historian Wayne Flynt noted about Skyline residents, "cultural paternalism was as much a problem as a class conflict."[318] Men were reluctant to learn from female teachers, including Margaret Valiant from the Special Skills Division. Valiant was also criticized because her song choices for the folk music program were not conservative enough. Health care officials found it difficult to educate women on health and hygiene issues due to their modest nature. Rapid change is difficult for most people and the people of Skyline endured change at a lightning pace. Resentment and reluctance

[317] Ibid, 309-310.

[318] Ibid, 310.

toward the government rules were common, as these were often seen as insulting to the salt-of-the-Earth colonists.[319]

The Fate of the Skyline Farms Project

Even with planning by multiple New Deal agencies and hundreds of thousands of dollars spent, that the Skyline Farms resettlement community struggled for success. Resettlement communities fell further out of favor with the American public as the nation's economy improved in the 1940s. The collectivist nature of the program went against mainstream culture and was deemed too radical. Communities were viewed as wasteful and extravagant, some saying they reeked of communist influence.

Many colonists stayed at Skyline until properties were liquidated, mainly because they did not have many other options. Families who owed a balance with the government (this included almost everyone) were not allowed to purchase liquidated property. Only two families were able to purchase their homes by finding alternative ways to save money. One person said he "put off farming so I didn't owe anything."[320] Instead he made money by working at the hosiery mill and lived on his mother's homestead. The other owner saved some of the money each year from the loan he received to plant crops so he would not be in as much debt.[321]

Ultimately, the government's plan for colonists to make profit on an agricultural settlement failed. Crop production and sales did not provide enough profit for home ownership. In fact, many people saw themselves as just tenant farmers for the

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[319] Conkin, *Tomorrow a New World*, 213.

[320] Campbell and Coombs, "Skyline Farms," 251.

[321] Ibid.

government. Was the project worth it? It depends on who you ask. For many, it provided a new economic platform that saved them from a quickly sinking ship into destitution. While home ownership was not the outcome for most of the families, Skyline Farms provided residents with new skills and experiences that would benefit them in years to come. For the first time, many children attended school in one of the most well equipped facilities in the area. Adults learned skills that helped them with careers after the project. It also created a unique community in an area that was previously undeveloped. Many modern-day residents of Skyline are descendants from those who worked on the colony. The opinion of government influence is mixed, but the bond of the community stays strong to this day.

In 1998, concerned members of the community rallied to save the New Deal-era school from destruction. They formed the Skyline Farms Heritage Association, Inc. in order preserve the memory and existing remnants of the project years, including the rock store Commissary. Chapter five will discuss the efforts made by the group to begin a community museum and historical park and ways progressive methods are still used today to teach others about Skyline history.

CHAPTER 5 – SKYLINE IN 2020 – A COMMUNITY MODEL FOR INTERPRETING NEW DEAL HISTORY

"So we take our children to see the real thing, whatever that may be, and then to the museum where hand specimens of it may be found to remind us of it, and then we reduce our knowledge of it to language, and finally, we look into books to be reminded by language of our experience-gained knowledge."
– Louise Connolly, progressive museum educator[322]

Skyline High School in Jackson County, Alabama is located on County Road 25, across from the Rock Store Museum (the former WPA-built Commissary building) and next to the former WPA-built administrative building for the Skyline Farms resettlement community. The present high school campus includes and preserves the 1936 stone school building, also built by the New Deal. These three buildings – the store, the office, the school – remain the center of Skyline today as they were in the late 1930s. [323]

In August 1998, the Jackson County Board of Education contemplated demolishing the original stone school building to build a facility to serve an expanding school-age population. A group of local residents voiced their concerns to save the historic building. The community members contacted Robert Gamble at the Alabama Historical Commission (AHC). Gamble, an architectural historian who administered the state's endangered properties program, suggested the Skyline residents collaborate with another group, the newly formed Alabama Preservation Alliance (APA) - a volunteer-run, nonprofit organization devoted to preserving Alabama's cultural resources. Since the

[322] George Hein, *Progressive Museum Practice: John Dewey and Democracy* (Walnut Creek, CA: Left Coast Press, 2012), 79.

[323] A frame building was originally built in 1935 but was replaced with the stone building by a WPA funded grant in 1936.

APA was a nonprofit not affiliated with the state government, they could file an injunction to stop destruction of the school building. The organization hired legal counsel and obtained a temporary restraining order to halt demolition. The APA and the AHC developed a plan which involved intensive work from local residents, engineers, and architects. They had to prove that the building in question was still feasible and economical to save. To accommodate public outcry, the Jackson County Board of Education held a public forum. The APA and community members made their case for saving the building, citing its historical significance and the economical savings of keeping the building versus demolition and building a new building. Ultimately, the Board of Education voted to save the school. The events surrounding the Skyline School spurred other attempts within the state to save historic school buildings. The AHC and APA joined forces again to host annual conferences dedicated to educating school systems on how to use historic buildings in modern campuses or finding ways for adaptive reuse, thus avoiding razing these properties. [324]

After the success of saving the school building, several of the concerned community members formed the Skyline Farms Heritage Association, a nonprofit organization incorporated in August 1998. Its mission exists to "preserve, restore, protect, and promote the history of Skyline Farms and the Cumberland Mountain area in order to inspire residents to shape the communities' future with a greater appreciation and respect for their shared heritage, and to foster among all Cumberland Mountain residents and

[324] Kerri Rubman, *A Community Guide to Saving Older Schools* (Washington D.C.: The National Trust for Historic Preservation), 22. The first collaborative conference of the AHC and APA occurred in 1999.

visitors a deeper appreciation of the important role that the mountain's people have played in local, state, and national history."[325] The heritage association worked with the Alabama Historical Commission to list the school on the Alabama Register of Landmarks and Heritage in October 1998.[326]

The 1936 school building stands today as part of the Skyline High School campus. The Skyline Farms Heritage Association continues to meet monthly to discuss potential improvements to the extant New Deal-era buildings and ways to interpret its history. In May 2010, the Skyline Heritage Association contacted the Center for Historic Preservation (CHP) at Middle Tennessee State University for some guidance on further preservation and interpretation. The project was given to the historic preservation essentials graduate course in the fall of 2010 to develop a Heritage Development Plan. Over the course of the semester, nine students researched and documented Skyline's resources and gave recommendations for improvements and future developments.[327] The CHP also wrote two National Historic Register nominations: for the Rock Store Commissary and a multiple property nomination for the Skyline Farms Resettlement Project. The nominations were accepted in 2013.

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[325] Skyline Farms Heritage Association membership pamphlet, author's collection.

[326] The Alabama Register of Landmarks & Heritage as of June 22, 2020, *Alabama Historical Commission*, https://ahc.alabama.gov/AlabamaRegisterPDFs/Alabama%20Register%20of%20Landmarks%20&%20Heritage%20Property%20Listing%206.23.20.pdf (accessed September 10, 2020).

[327] *Skyline Farms Heritage Development Plan*, 1.

As a partial fulfillment of the doctoral program in public history at Middle Tennessee State University, PhD candidate Rebecca Duke completed a year-long residency working with the Skyline Farms Heritage Association to develop its community museum. The board had been collecting objects for quite some time without a professional plan. Duke developed a collections management plan, interpretative plan, and helped catalog over 600 objects related to Skyline Farms. She worked with the board to focus on a scope of collections and presented a workshop on collections management. The board had fallen into the common practice of becoming the "community attic" – a place to store everything deemed historic. The following collections management policy and interpretative plan serves as a guide to collecting artifacts, governance of the museum, access to its collections, and potential for interpreting local, state, and national history related to the Skyline Farms resettlement project. The documents explain the impact of the board's efforts in their community and ways progressive education will be utilized to engage the public.

COLLECTIONS MANAGEMENT POLICY

Skyline Farms Rock Store Museum
802 County Road 25
Skyline Farms, Alabama

The Skyline Rock Store Museum was founded in 2010 by the Skyline Farms Heritage Association. The museum is housed in the former community Commissary, built in 1935 during the construction of Skyline Farms, a New Deal rural resettlement project. The Skyline Farms Heritage Association Board of Directors is the governing body of the Skyline Rock Store Museum.

MISSON STATEMENT

The Skyline Farms Rock Store Museum will serve as an educational resource to promote the rich history of the Skyline Farms community from New Deal rural resettlement project years and the evolution of the community after the federal project ended. The mission of the Museum is to collect, preserve, study, exhibit, and stimulate appreciation for the material culture and history of the Skyline community.

COLLECTIONS STATEMENT (Purpose of Collections)

The purpose of the Collections Management Policy ("the policy") is to document the basic guidelines that direct the advancement of the Museum and reflect the mission statement, as well as establish best practices in operation and preservation of artifacts. The policy guarantees that:

- Its collections are accounted for and documented;
- Acquisition, deaccession, and loans of works in collections are handled consistently and appropriately according to the mission statement;

- Disposal of works from the collection are recommended by the site director and approved by the Skyline Farms Heritage Association Board;
- Collection-related activities (i.e. changing exhibits, public tours) promote the public good and not the means of an individual or private organization; and
- Access to the Museum and its collections are available and regulated.

SCOPE OF COLLECTIONS

The Skyline Farms Rock Store Museum was formed to establish, conduct, operate, and maintain a museum in the community of Skyline Farms, Alabama, for the display and preservation of items relating to the settlement of the New Deal program community from 1934- 1945 and the evolution of the community after the federal project ended. Special emphasis is placed on early history of the colony, the Commissary, education, music, farming, home life, and agriculture. With this framework, the museum seeks to educate all ages and segments of the general public, to provide consistent programming that promotes the mission statement, and preserve and interpret items of historical significance. The museum will achieve its educational interpretive goals through research, school and community outreach programs, tours, special events, and a variety of exhibits and displays. The museum will strive to achieve program excellence and conduct best practices in museum operation.

No expansion of the collections beyond that outlined in *scope of collections* is permitted without recommendation from the site director and approval of the Skyline Farms Heritage Association Board.

TYPES OF COLLECTIONS

The *permanent collection* contains accessioned items that have been considered under the criteria established in the Scope of Collections above. These objects have been acquired by the museum for preservation, study, exhibition, and programming purposes in fulfillment of the Museum's mission. Only those objects deemed suitable for acquisition into the Museum's permanent collection are accessioned, curated, and managed by the Collections Management Section.

The *teaching collection* contains materials acquired for use in exhibitions or educational programs as props or teaching tools which are not accessioned to the Museum's permanent collection. They consist of objects that may be reproductions or duplicates from the permanent collection. It is expected that these items will be touched/handled by the visitors of the museum.

ETHICS

No member of the Board is permitted to individually collect works that are relevant to the collection or that conflict with the Museum's interests. If a Board member is personally offered an item that is known to be desired by the Museum, the Museum's collection must be considered over the individual's interest. Museum staff will not appraise artifacts for any purpose. Museum staff or Skyline Farms Heritage Association shall not acquire any artifacts through the deaccessioning process.

ACQUISTION OF OBJECTS

The Museum will collect artifacts consistent with the collection's goals outlined *scope of collections*. The Skyline Farms Heritage Association Board must approve any exceptions, upon recommendation of the site director. Objects are considered for

acquisition based on a variety of factors: relevance to Skyline Farms History, provenance, size or quantity of the objects, cost of conservation, storage and maintenance, and potential for use in exhibitions, educational programming, publications, and research.

Objects may be added to the collection by means of gift, bequest, purchase, or any transaction by which title to an object passes to the Museum. All objects accepted into the collection become the Skyline Farms Rock Store Museum's exclusive property and may be displayed, loaned, retained, or disposed of in the best interest of the Museum and the community it serves.

The Museum will not accept any object collected in circumstances that contradict international or local laws regarding cultural property.

Purchases

The Museum will not purchase any object if it can be obtained by gift or donation. For all purchases, the site director must write a report, including a description of the work and its current condition, relevance to the museum's collection, and justification for acceptance. The purchase request report will be submitted to the Skyline Farms Heritage Association Board for approval. If an item is approved for purchase, the seller must sign a statement of understanding that the museum has the legal right to dispose of the object.

Gifts

In the case of gifts and donated objects, the site director will first assure that the item(s) are consistent with the organization's mission statement and are deemed acceptable by the criteria set forth in the *scope of collections*. The Museum shall ensure that a valid deed of gift (see deed of gift form in appendices) is created to transfer ownership for objects donated. Each of these documents will describe the object's physical features,

convey title of ownership, and be signed by the donor and authorized representative of the Museum. The site director will keep all documentation related to objects as part of the permanent accession records.

Loans

Loans are temporary assignments of collection objects from the Museum or temporary assignments of similar objects to the Museum for stated purposes, such as exhibition and research. These assignments do not involve a change in ownership. Loans to the Museum will only be considered under the following circumstances:

- Loans must be approved and documented by the site director. Appropriate paperwork (see incoming loan condition form) must be filled out by both the lender of the item(s) and the site director. The form will include the borrower's responsibilities, as well as condition report. The condition of the item(s) will be thoroughly documented upon arrival at Museum and at the end of the loan period using a loan item condition form.
- Items loaned must be relevant to the Museum's current collection and mission statement.
- Loaned items will be insured while in the custody of the Museum.
- Loans will be accepted for exhibition for a specified amount of time.
- Loans will be monitored and supervised by the site director.

Outgoing Loans

Loans from the Museum collection will not be made to individuals. Loans are only made to nonprofit, educational institutions with the ability to properly care for artifacts. Any institutions that wish to borrow an article from the Museum must submit the request in

writing before consideration. All outgoing loan requests must be approved by the site director. Upon arrival, said institution must fill out outgoing loan form, which includes purpose and length of loan, as well as detail of exhibition location.

Insurance of loaned items, as well as shipped and packing costs to and from the Museum are the direct responsibility of the borrower.

Deaccessions

Deaccessioning is the *permanent* removal of objects from the Museum's collection. No one's personal taste will play a factor when deaccessioning an artifact. In order to avoid this, the process of deaccession will meet at least one of the following criteria:

- The object does not correspond with the Museum's mission statement;
- The object has deteriorated beyond repair or is no longer identifiable;
- The object is difficult or impossible to care for or store properly;
- The object is hazardous to other collection items, staff, or visitors of the Museum;
- There are multiple examples of the object;
- The object has been lost or stolen for more than a year;
- The object is incorrectly identified or a forgery.

The site director may recommend deaccessioning material if one or more criteria have been met. If so, the site director will make a written referral to the Skyline Farms Heritage Board. The recommendation will include the source or provenance of the object, current market value (if any), reasons for recommendation, and anticipated means of disposal. The Skyline Farms Heritage Association Board will respond in writing, approving or denying the recommendation of disposal. These records shall be posted with

the object file in the collection inventory. When possible, the donor of object will be notified of the possibility of deaccessioning.

When appropriate, consideration will be given to donating the object to another cultural institution. If possible, a donation will be given in exchange for another object. Objects will not be sold to or gifted to Museum staff or volunteers. All material that has been deaccessioned will be documented and these documents will be available upon inquiry.

Operations

The Skyline Farms Heritage Association will appoint a site director to oversee the daily operations of the Museum.

Care of Collections

- The site director will be responsible for documenting and maintaining the inventory. Delicate manuscripts will be scanned and properly archived. A reproduction of any fragile documents will be available for public display to increase the longevity of the original document. Any object that is unstable or in poor repair will not be displayed but will be housed in curatorial storage.
- An intensive review of the inventory of the Museum's collection will take place yearly to ensure that all artifacts are properly labeled and placed, and to monitor the condition of the collection. A conditions report will be written at this time.
- There will be a routine cleaning schedule for the collection. Weekly dusting will be conducted, with more intensive cleaning scheduled for monthly maintenance. Objects will be inspected during monthly cleaning. Anything unusual will be noted and reported to the site director.

- Recommendations will be made if an object needs repair. If an object is missing, the site director will try to determine its whereabouts. If the object is not retrieved, it will be placed on the missing items listing. If the object is not located within one year, it will be reviewed for deaccessioning.
- The site director is responsible for the protection of the collection. This includes, but is not limited to, protection from fire, theft, and vandalism. Conservation reviews will be conducted at the yearly inventory assessment. Every effort will be made to provide a stable environment for the collection.

Access to the Collection

The collection is an educational resource and will be made available to the public for research, close inspection, and photography, under proper control, subject to the approval of the site director. Access to storage and conservation areas is limited to those who are accompanied by the site director. The size of the group may be limited at the discretion of the site director. No food or drink is permitted in collection storage of exhibit areas.

Visitors wishing to use the collection for research purposes must request an appointment in advance of time of visit and must be approved by the site director. Access to the collection will be decided using the following criteria:

- The individual must have a legitimate reason for examining collections. (e.g., scholarly research, family relation, etc.)
- The individual should be instructed in the appropriate techniques for handling objects. Gloves will be provided if appropriate.
- The individual is expected to visit during the Museum's regular operating hours or make an appointment with the site director if further research time is needed.

- If the individual wants to take images of artifacts, authorization will be required from the site director, even for private and personal use. Images used for publication must follow all Museum credit guidelines.
- Visitors who have previously abused their access to the collection will be denied further access.

The Skyline Farms Rock Store Museum will be open one Saturday a month and by appointment. More frequent hours can be set if proper staff can be scheduled. Appointments can be made by calling the site director.

Insurance and Risk Management

The Museum recognizes that insurance is not the primary risk-management method for providing protection for its collection and records. The Museum understands that proper documentation, handling, security, environmental control, and good housekeeping provide the first line of defense regarding loss or damage of artifacts. However, the Museum recognizes that insurance can be used to acquire similar objects, and for this reason, the Museum maintains insurance on its collection.

- The Museum will carry insurance to cover all objects in the collection.
- The Museum will provide insurance coverage on all loaned items not owned by the Museum.
- Objects owned by the Museum that are on loan to other institutions will be insured by those institutions in the amount on the loan agreement.

Policy Approval and Change

This policy may be revised to reflect the current needs of the Museum, providing the changes relate to the Museum's purpose and are approved by the governing body of the Museum.

Appendices to Collections Management Policy

- Forms

Skyline Farms Museum Catalogue Sheet

Date of Acquisition:___/___/____ Acquisition No:_____

Object Name:_____

Description:_____

_____

_____

Distinguishing Marks: (inscriptions, serial no, patent dates, trademarks, labels etc and their
location)_____

_____

_____

Dimensions: Height: _____ Width _____Length _____ Diameter _____

Condition and Completeness:

_____

Maker:_____

Place of Manufacture: _____

Date: _____

Provenance: (History, previous owners, historical importance)

_____

_____

References: (books or research files):

_____

_____

Indexing: (subject classification)

1. Primary _____
2. Secondary _____

Location: _____ Location Date:_____

Significance to collection:

_____

_____

Storage/Display requirements:

_____

_____

How Acquired: Gift Purchase Transfer Unknown

Source/Donor:_____

Address:_____

Telephone:_____

Email:_____

Collections Management Checklist	Date
Receipt register completed	
Accession register attached	
Tag attached	
Acquisition number applied	
Catalogue form completed	
Thank you letter sent	
Relevant documents filed	

ATTACH PHOTOGRAPH OF OBJECT – SAVE PHOTO AS ACQUISTION NUMBER

DEED OF GIFT

Accession No. Division:

I (We),_____, hereby give to the Skyline Heritage Association, absolute and unconditional ownership of the property described below. I (we) assign to the Skyline Heritage Association full powers of management, access, display, conservation and disposition at its sole discretion. I (We) also give to the Skyline Heritage Association any copyright and associated rights to the property that I (we) may have. (If there is a copyright to which you do not own the rights please specify the owner:)
Item/Property description:

I (We) wish that the gift be identified to the public as:

Gift of _____

I (We) own the property described above absolutely and without encumbrance and I (we) have the right to convey it. To the best of my (our) knowledge, this property has not been imported or exported into or out of any country contrary to its laws. The Museum is relying on these representations in accepting this donation.

Donor:_____ Date: _____

Donor:_____ Date:_____

Donor Address, Phone and Email: _____

_____

_____

Accepted on behalf of the Skyline Farms Heritage Association by:

Board Member:_____ Date: _____

INCOMING LOAN AGREEMENT

The Skyline Farms Heritage Association agrees to borrow the following object(s), subject to these conditions:

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

Incoming loans may be accepted for the purpose of exhibition, research, duplication, teaching or for review by the Collections Committee as a pending acquisition. Object(s) borrowed must be consistent with Museum purposes and fall within its scope. The Museum will give the object(s) lent the same care and consideration as it does to comparable property of its own. Insurance may be secured for the object(s) lent, but only at the Lender's request and expense. Object(s) shall not be altered in any way, cleaned, repaired, retouched or unframed, without the approval of the owner. The Museum cannot accept a loan for an indefinite period of time, such as a "permanent loan." Loan tenure is **five** years or shorter. Requests for a loan renewal can be considered by the Collections Committee.

Object(s) lent shall remain in the possession of the Museum for the entire duration of the loan period, unless prior written agreements are made. Exhibition of loaned object(s) is entirely at the discretion of the Museum. It is the responsibility of the Lender to notify the Museum of a change of address or of a change in the ownership of the loaned property. Lent property will be returned only to the Lender of Record, unless the claimant can provide proof satisfactory to the Museum that he or she has the legal authority for the return of the loan. If after reasonable efforts and through no fault of its own, the Museum is unable to contact the Lender Of Record following the expiration of the loan, the Museum will have the right to store the loan object(s) in any manner at the Lender's expense. *If after **five** years such property has not been withdrawn, and in consideration for its storage and safeguarding during this period, the property shall be deemed as an unrestricted gift to the Museum*.

The lender hereby acknowledges that he or she is authorized to lend the objects below and agrees to the above conditions:

Purpose of Loan_____

Loan Duration_____

Notes (delivery, exact location, etc.)_____

_____

Signature of Lender: _____ Date: _____

Lender's Address, Phone, and Email:

_____

_____

_____

Received by: _____Date: _____

OUTGOING LOAN – CONDITION FORM

Skyline Farms Rock Store Museum
Skyline, AL

Borrowing Institution's Name and Contact Person _____

_____

Date of Loan Period _____

Item Requested _____

Accession Number_____

Description of Item _____

_____

Noticeable Marks/Blemishes _____

_____

Insurance Value _____

Handling Requirements _____

_____

Installation Requirements _____

Packing Requirements _____

Name and Address of Institution requesting loan _____

_____

Contact person/position from the borrowing institution _____

_____

Contact Person's Email and phone number _____

_____

Skyline Farms Heritage Association Interpretive Plan

802 County Road 25
Skyline, Alabama

Executive Summary

Skyline Farms was one of forty-three New Deal rural resettlement communities established by the Federal government in order to assist destitute families during the Great Depression. The Skyline Farms Rock Store Museum was founded in 2010 by the Skyline Farms Heritage Association (SFHA), a nonprofit organization formed to honor and preserve the history of this community. The Museum is in the original New Deal-era Commissary building, built in 1935.

The Skyline Farms Heritage Association contacted the Center for Historic Preservation at Middle Tennessee State University to seek assistance with preservation and recommendations for the site. While the SFHA has collected an expansive collection, it lacked proper interpretive exhibit themes and educational direction. This interpretive plan is one of several documents that were created by PhD Candidate, Rebecca Duke; in order establish a framework for a sustainable heritage museum and historic site plan. The plan will provide a clear strategy in order to promote the local, regional, and national historical significance of this community.

Mission Statement

The Skyline Farms Rock Store Museum will serve as an educational resource to promote the rich history of the Skyline Farms community from New Deal rural resettlement project years and the evolution of the community after the federal project ended. The mission of the Museum is to collect, preserve, study, exhibit, and stimulate appreciation for the material culture and history of the Skyline community.

Site Overview

Skyline Farms, located in Jackson County near Scottsboro, Alabama, is a New Deal farming community established in 1934 by the Resettlement Administration. Federal officials established this cooperative, agricultural colony atop a plateau on the Cumberland Mountain in the Appalachian region of Northeast Alabama.[328] Skyline was

[328] Wayne Flynt, *Poor but Proud* (Tuscaloosa, AL: University of Alabama Press, 1989), 307.

one of forty-three rural resettlement projects that were created in order to provide jobs for out-of-work farmers during the Great Depression. During this time, the landscape endured tremendous changes, including the clearing of land and the construction of roads and structures throughout an 18,000 square-acre area.

Many of Skyline's current residents were children during the project years and continue to have great pride for the area. Several of these people, including local teachers and businessmen, formed the Skyline Farms Heritage Association (SFHA) in 1998 in reaction to the possible razing of the community's school, which was built during the colony years. Together with the Alabama Preservation Alliance, the group filed an injunction that saved the building. The building was then listed on the Alabama Register of Landmarks and Heritage. The mission of the Skyline Farms Heritage Association is "to preserve, restore, protect, and promote the history of the Skyline and Cumberland Mountain area in order to inspire residents to shape the communities' future with a greater appreciation and respect for their shared heritage, and to foster among all Cumberland Mountain residents and visitors a deeper appreciation of the important historical role that the mountain's people have played in local, state, national and world history."[329]

After the successful preservation of the school, the SFHA rallied again in 2005 to save the Commissary from being sold to a private party for use as an apartment building.[330] A SFHA board member purchased the building, and has since entrusted it to the SFHA board to use as the community heritage museum. Upon the initial opening of the Museum, artifacts were displayed in a rather unorganized fashion with little to no identification of the objects. Artifacts were not displayed or stored using museum best practices. The majority of the object labeling identified who owned it and provided no context or historical significance for the piece. The SFHA entered a partnership with the Center for Historic Preservation at Middle Tennessee State University in the fall of 2010, and the museum has since endured a complete restructuring of the physical layout and exhibit design. Additionally, numerous management policies have been developed to create a sustainable framework for operating the museum.

The Commissary is one of the existing buildings that was part of the community town center. Construction on the building started in 1935 and opened as the New Deal

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[329] Skyline Farms Heritage Association, Membership Pamphlet, accessed at the Rock Store Museum, Skyline Farms, Alabama.

[330] Presentation by Cindy Rice at the Alabama Association of Museums Annual Meeting. February 21, 2013.

project's Commissary in 1937. It continued to operate as a general store until 2005. The Commissary is one of the public buildings that is extant from the project years. The New Deal-era administrative building and community school, which is still in operation, are located across the street from the Commissary building.

The Skyline Farms Rock Store Museum is located at the intersection of County Road 25 and County Road 107 in Skyline, Alabama. The museum currently houses approximately 600 artifacts, a research area, and numerous photographs of the community taken during the project years by the Farm Security Administration.

Purpose of the Interpretive Plan

An interpretive plan is an outcome-based plan that sets interpretive goals by relating content in a meaningful way to a visitor's own experience. The plan considers the needs of its collections, its management, and its visitors and determines the most effective way to communicate that message.

The interpretive plan addresses things like major exhibit themes, exhibit design, and public programming. It identifies interpretation, education, and the overall visitor experience and effective ways to meet these goals.

The Skyline Farms Rock Store Museum interpretive plan will identify and guide proper interpretive and educational programming which preserves and enhances the site's local, state, and national historical significance. The plan highlights recommendations related to:

- Interpretation
- Exhibit Design
- Educational Programming
- Marketing
- Volunteer Development

Goals:

- To spark interest in the history of Skyline Farms and visitation to the Skyline Farms Rock Store Museum.
- To educate the community of its own historical significance, as well as visitors.
- To provide a meaningful, educational experience for its visitors.
- To serve as a location for research for the Skyline Farms project.
- To educate the visitor of the impact of New Deal programs on the nation's poor.
- To increase the volunteer base for the Skyline Farms Rock Store Museum.

Major Interpretive Themes Represented in the Museum Collection

After examining the museum's collection, there are seven distinct interpretive themes represented. Artifacts were placed into thematic sections accordingly. They are:

- Establishing Skyline Farms
- The Significance of the Commissary
- Education at Skyline Farms
- Music
- Handicrafts
- Life in the Colony
- Agriculture

Establishing Skyline Farms

The establishment of the Skyline community is historically significant on a local, state, and national level. It is not only the story of the struggles of local families during the Great Depression, but it also demonstrates the Federal government's actions to help relieve destitute families.

The creation of Skyline Farms altered the landscape of an 18,000-square-acre area by the clearing of land and the construction of roads and numerous structures. Population in this area grew from 128 residents in 1930 to 1,495 in 1940 and assisted 238 families during the project's tenure.[331]

The Commissary

The Commissary, known locally as the "rock store," was the business hub for the community during the project years. Farmers would gather here to talk about the day, consult the community bulletin board to find out about the latest events, and purchase farming products and groceries. The Commissary also housed the community bank and the only telephone on the mountain. The Commissary building served as a general store from its opening in 1937 until it was sold to a private party in 2005.

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[331] Department of Commerce, *1940 Census*, http://1940census.archives.gov/viewer/show.asp?signature=08eb22ca14b6f900407fe801f3e08d9c&mode=normal (accessed April 16, 2012). Wayne Flynt, *Poor but Proud* (Tuscaloosa, AL: University of Alabama Press, 1989), 307.

Education at Skyline Farms

Education played a central role in the activities at Skyline Farms. One of the principle goals of these communities was to break the cycle of farming tenancy through educating its residents on various methods of farming and farm management, as well as other specialized skills. The children of Skyline Farms also benefited from the community's focus on education and, for many, it was the first time they had ever attended school. The school used a progressive education curriculum. Classes were arranged according to skill level, not grade. Experiential learning took place over rote memorization.

Music

Music was a favorite pastime on the mountain. Every Friday the community would gather for the weekly square dance. Members of the Skyline Farms band gained some national attention when they were invited to play for the President and First Lady at the White House.

Handicrafts

Handicrafts were not only a well-liked hobby of the residents of Skyline Farms, but they also served as an additional source of income. Sewing and quilting were popular activities, as well as furniture making. Most of the furniture in the colony houses were made in a shop located in the community.

Life in the Colony

The Great Depression left many people destitute and homeless, especially in the South. The lives of those chosen to live in Skyline Farms changed dramatically during their time on the mountain. Members of the community had access to suitable housing, food, health care, and education.

Agriculture

Every family chosen to live in Skyline farmed. The selected families received a 50-acre plot of land, a house, and farming equipment from the Resettlement Administration. Men were taught modern farming techniques. The federal government selected which crops to grow on the Mountain – first cotton, then potatoes.

Museum Exhibits

Current Museum Exhibits

There are two entrances to the museum; a set of double doors with a walk-up ramp and a secondary entrance to the left of the double doors. The double doors are kept open during the hours of operation. Upon entering the museum, visitors will find the exhibits to their right and the gift shop, research area, and video viewing area to the left. The research area consists of two shelves that house numerous yearbooks, photograph reproductions, and research binders for visitors to explore. A folding table and cash register are adjacent to the front door. A Skyline Farms Heritage Association board member greets the visitors upon arrival. Visitors can choose to have a guided tour by a SFHA board member or view the exhibits on their own. There are distinct areas within the museum for hands-on exploration. This area is isolated from the main exhibit area to deter inappropriate handling of artifacts.

As mentioned previously, museum artifacts are arranged into seven exhibit areas. Exhibit shelves, which are original Commissary shelves from the 1930s, are lined against the walls. Visitors begin their museum tour with a photo wall that features a brief introduction about the New Deal community and several photographs from the Farm Security Administration collection at the Library of Congress. The information on the wall is from a temporary exhibit designed in the early 1990s by Dr. David Campbell and has been rearranged to better suit the layout of the exhibit space. Next, the visitors view the "Establishing Skyline Farms" exhibit, followed by "The Commissary." Another smaller photo wall is next, followed by the exhibits: "Education at Skyline," "Music," "Handicrafts," and "Life in the Colony." The agriculture exhibit completes the tour.

The room that housed the former post office and barber shop is located between the agriculture exhibit and the research area. This area has undergone several renovations since 2013 and now serves as a gift shop and entrance to an ADA accessible bathroom.

Fig. 5.1 Original Commissary shelving units used to display artifacts, 2020.

Suggestions for Future Exhibits

Interpretive information is currently being presented in a temporary format until funding can be secured for permanent exhibit panels. Duke is working with the board historian, Cindy Rice, to develop permanent exhibit panels. Plans exist to apply for grant funding through the Alabama Humanities Foundation to cover the costs of permanent, wall-mounted panels.

It would be beneficial to visitors to design a complete timeline of the community, outlining how the creation of the community related to the overall context of the Great Depression and New Deal.

There are a few spaces available for temporary exhibits. One is located near the research area. A small exhibit case could be placed in this area. Another option would be to have a temporary display located on top of the tables in the center of the museum.

Recent approaches to progressive museum practice serve as a sort of social work – improving relationships of family and groups and addressing the "social functioning of

society".[332] Future exhibitions could explore wealth inequality, educational disparities in rural environments, and other social issues facing small, rural communities.

Educational Programming

Education should be a central component to museum practice. Museum professionals identified a "paradigm shift" in the purpose of museums in the mid-1900s, moving from the cabinet of curiosities model where museums were keepers of dusty collections to an active environment that encourages "exploration, study, observation, critical thinking, contemplations, and dialogue."[333]

Progressive museum practices could emulate the educational pedagogy used during the project years. Visitors tend to engage in museum experiences that relate to personal, situational, and social parameters. Information and activities should be developed in a manner that goes beyond just imparting knowledge, but rather tells captivating stories that allows visitors "to interpret exhibition content in terms of their own backgrounds and experience."[334]

Little educational programming currently exists for the Skyline Farms Rock Store Museum. Whiles some members of the board provide tours of the museum; there is no formal script written for tours. SFHA board members point out artifacts of interest to the visitor and provide known information if requested. However, there are numerous possibilities for educational programming. Suggestions for educational programming are listed below.

Documentary

A short video is currently shown to visitors of the museum that consists of a slideshow of historic photographs and audio recordings of the Skyline Farms Band. However, there is no historical information presented. The creation of a short (10 minute) documentary that provides context, history of the community, and interviews with former colony members (and/or their children) is suggested. This would provide useful orientation information to the visitors upon entering the museum.

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[332] Hein, *Progressive Museum Practice*, 180. For more on incorporating social issues into museum work, see Lois Silverman, The Social Work of Museums (London: Routledge, 2009).

[333] Ibid, 178.

[334] Ibid, 179.

Exhibit Pamphlets

A one page, tri-fold pamphlet should be created which correlates with the museum exhibits. This would offer visitors consistent information regarding the history of the community and the artifacts and a chance to showcase more of the FSA photographs. The pamphlet would also serve as a souvenir for the guests.

Museum Scavenger Hunt

A museum scavenger hunt is an easy and inexpensive way to engage children with the museum exhibits. Questions can be written to allow exploration of the artifacts and exhibit texts. There should be scavenger hunts written to accommodate various age groups (K-2 grade, 3-5 grade, and 6-8 grade). The scavenger hunt can be used by an individual or in a group setting, like a field trip. After completing the hunt, answers should be discussed with a docent.

Skyline Farms Lesson Plans

A unit of lesson plans was designed for the Teaching with Primary Sources - MTSU program, an educational outreach program in partnership with the Library of Congress. These lesson plans were developed for school children in grades 3-5 and 11, and correlate with both Alabama and Tennessee State Curriculum Standards and can be found in the appendices.

Field Trips

Skyline High School is located approximately one block from the Skyline Farms Rock Store Museum on County Road 25 and is the original school used during the project years. The school serves children in kindergarten through twelfth grade. Skyline High School has had a close relationship with the museum since it opened its doors in 2010. Several teachers at Skyline serve on the SFHA board. A few high school classes were brought to the museum in the past to help clean the building and dust.

Given the close proximity to the school, Skyline Farms Rock Store Museum should be thought of as a learning lab for, or an extension of the classroom for those at Skyline High School. Students of all ages could easily walk to the museum.

Field trips should be limited to one or two classes at a time due to the restricted space in the museum. More classes could be accommodated if an activity was conducted outside the museum while another group looked at the exhibits. Activities could include period appropriate children’s games, planting seeds, square dancing, or another appropriate activity.

Field trips are not limited to the Skyline High School. Outreach should be made to other local schools and other organizations like Boy Scout and Girl Scout troops, church groups, retirement homes, and the like.

Driving Tour

A driving tour of the existing New Deal structures could easily be created. A pamphlet, which could be obtained at the museum, will provide a map of the area with points of interest including: Skyline High School, Rock House Administration building, several mostly unaltered colony houses that feature outbuildings, the original factory (most recently used as a rope factory), the warehouse, and the Skyline Farms Rock Store Museum.

If funds were available, the driving tour could be developed into a mobile app.

Special Events

Dutch Treat Banquet: The Skyline Farms Heritage Association hosts an annual *Dutch Treat Banquet* in the spring. This banquet serves as the annual member meeting for the organization. Dinner and live music are provided during this event. The museum is opened prior to the dinner. In the past, the dinner has been held in the community center on county road 17 in Skyline. While this is an acceptable location for banquet, it is a missed opportunity for members to see the progress in the museum. While the building is open prior to the dinner, not everyone is able to make it over to see the exhibits before the banquet starts. Picnic tables can be set up outside for the dinner, music, and guest speakers. (Food should not be allowed inside the museum).

Demonstration Days: A popular educational event for many museums and historic sites are demonstration days, sometimes marketed as “heritage days”. This type of event can be approached in two ways. First, this could be an event exclusively for the Skyline High School. Older high school students, namely juniors and seniors, can set up informative booths outside the museum that relate to the Great Depression and the New Deal featuring information on farming, cooking, games, quilting, etc...Younger grades (second – fifth grade) can visit the booths. Each grade could have a set time to visit throughout the day. This is an educational opportunity for all students and creates leadership opportunities for the older students.

The second option would be an educational event, open to the public for all ages. Demonstrators would showcase various activities from the 30s and 40s, and informational tables and displays would be set up around the property. Live musicians could play period music and the event could host a square dance, a popular community event during the project years that was held every Friday night. The local chapter of 4-H

should be consulted for possible demonstrators and activities that relate to agricultural practices. 4-H is part of the Alabama Cooperative Extension Services (ACES), a cooperative program managed by Alabama A&M and Auburn University. ACES was one of many organizations that provided educational support during the New Deal project.

Folk Music Days: Similar to events held during the project years, the Museum could hold folk music presentations/concerts on the Museum grounds. Musicians would play music traditional Appalachian folk music, perhaps even songs played by the Skyline Band.

Christmas Program with Skyline School: The Museum currently serves as a place for children of the Skyline School to hold their final day of class before dismissing for winter break. The SFHA board members set up hands on displays (corn shucking, cotton carding, etc.) for students to explore.

Teacher Appreciation Day with Skyline Teachers: The SFHA board hosts a teacher appreciation luncheon at the Museum for Skyline teachers at the end of each school year. Further collaboration with the school faculty is highly encouraged.

Publications

A local history book, like those produced by Arcadia publishing http://www.arcadiapublishing.com/, should be written about the Skyline Farms community. These books are usually heavily based on photographs and given the numerous photos in the public domain available from the Library of Congress, as well as those in private collections, a publication would be fairly easy to produce. The book could be sold in the museum gift shop, promoted during special events, and sold in bookstores across the state.

Hands-on Garden

Farming was an integral part of daily life for residents at Skyline Farms. The museum should have numerous opportunities to explore this topic. There is plenty of space on the east side of the building to plant a garden.

Marketing

The Skyline Farms Rock Store Museum needs a strong marketing campaign to increase awareness and visitation to the site. First, the SFHA must determine *who* their intended audience is. Every audience is looking for something different. Examples of potential audiences are current and former Skyline residents, Jackson County residents, families, school-aged children, and tourists from around the region.

Visitor attendance should be tracked to record numbers and the demographics of people who visit in order to make a more detailed marketing plan.

Fig. 5.2 Outside Signage for Rock Store Museum, 2020.

Outdoor signage and orientation: The SFHA board developed signage for both the Rock Store Museum and the colony administration building. A historic marker dedicated to Skyline Farms is located on the south side of the building.

Fig. 5.3 Signage Outside of the Administrative Building, 2020.

Wayside exhibit signs would be beneficial to the interpretation and orientation to the site. This wayside would feature a brief history of the building (a history of the community is given on the historic marker), historic photographs, and map showing the closest extant New Deal structures. This would be a perfect opportunity to address the similarities and differences between the historic and modern landscape.

Signage should also be placed on Alabama Highway 75, the main thoroughfare through the community, in order to increase awareness of the museum and give directions to its location. Additionally, another sign should be placed at the bottom of Cumberland Mountain at the intersection of AL Highway 35 and AL Highway 75 in Scottsboro. This is a major intersection and would have to potential to peak interest in the museum. It is suggested to consult the Alabama Department of Transportation's guidelines for roadside signage. A permanent sign here might not be possible. If that is the case, a temporary sign can be placed there on days the museum is open.

Website: A website is a great promotional and research resource for Skyline Farms. It is suggested that the SFHA develop and update an interactive website where calendar events, community history, photographs, field trip information, and the like can be available here for users to utilize. The Teaching with Primary Sources - MTSU unit lesson on Skyline Farms should be linked to this page as well. Other resettlement communities have designed websites and should serve as templates for the design of Skyline's website. Examples: Arthurdale Heritage, Inc., West Virginia http://www.arthurdaleheritage.org/ and Cumberland Homesteads, Tennessee http://www.cumberlandhomesteads.org/

Social Media: The Skyline Farms Heritage Association has an active Facebook page. The SFHA uses it to announce upcoming board meetings, hours of operation for the museum, and the date for the annual banquet. Fans of the page also post historic photographs of the community. Many people who grew up in Skyline but no longer live in the area use the site as a place to network with old friends or family members. It serves as a community message board for all of those who have a connection to the Skyline Farms community.

The SFHA should also "like" other cultural institutions' fan pages, as well as local government Facebook pages. This would allow for networking amongst organizations and their fans. The SFHA could then post information regarding their museum's events on other institutions' pages.

Rack Cards: A rack card is a promotional document used for advertising. Museums and other cultural institutions frequently place these in welcome centers, local hotels, rest areas, and other cultural institutions. A draft of a promotional rack card is currently under design for the Skyline Farms Rock Store Museum.

North Alabama Mountain Lakes Association: North Alabama Mountain Lakes Tourist Association exists to promote North Alabama's travel industry and marketing the region to the traveling public. The group serves sixteen counties, one of which is Jackson County. Other Jackson County members of NAMLA include Bridgeport Depot Center and Cultural Center, Scottsboro Depot Museum, Scottsboro Jackson Heritage Museum, and the Stevenson Railroad Depot Museum. The association hosts a number of annual workshops on subjects such as fundraising and grant writing and ways to work with your local tourism board to increase visitation to your site. They also provide members with rack card displays to market other destinations of note. Membership with NAMLA provide Skyline with extensive marketing potential.

Alabama Museums Association: The Alabama Museums Association (AMA) is a membership organization of Alabama state museums. The membership fee is nominal for small museums ($50 per year). It is suggested that the Skyline Farms Rock Store

Museum join this institution. Membership offers many benefits including: institutional listing on the AMA website, attendance to the annual members meeting, subscription to the AMA newsletter, discounted registration fees for workshops and conferences, access to conference scholarships, professional referral services, and networking opportunities with state and regional organizations.

Volunteer Development

A dependable volunteer base is the key to success for any museum. This is especially true for the Skyline Farms Rock Store Museum. The museum is entirely run by the volunteer labor of the SFHA board. Several members of the board are responsible for the physical refurbishment of the interior of the museum including scraping and painting interior walls, patching holes in the floorboard, and repairing, painting and moving exhibit shelves. Board members also serve as docents when the museum is open to the public. However, utilizing these faithful few is not sustainable. The Skyline Farms Rock Store Museum needs to develop a strong, diverse volunteer base in order to help maintain and run the museum successfully.

Recruitment

The SFHA should hold a volunteer recruitment campaign that targets a wide variety of individuals of varying ages, talents, and availability. Calls for volunteers should be made through social media and the proposed museum website and in person to SFHA members, local church groups, high schools, retired teachers, community members, and local Boy Scout and Girl Scout troops.

Since Skyline High School is in proximity, a teen docent program should be explored. Students would have the opportunity to learn about their community history and serve as volunteer museum docents.

Training

Every volunteer, *including board members*, should be trained on proper museum practices based on their assignment within the museum. Docents will be given historically accurate information about the museum, artifacts, and community history and have a friendly, welcoming demeanor when interacting with visitors. It would be beneficial to develop scripts or talking points for docents if visitors have questions.

Individuals who assist with curatorial practices (object accessioning, creating displays, etc.) will follow best practices while handling museum artifacts.

It is advised that board members attend annual conferences of the Alabama Museum Association and/or the North Alabama Mountain Lakes Association to gain museum administration techniques and network with similar institutions.

Volunteer Records

Every volunteer that is interested in working with the museum should fill out a volunteer application. This application would include the volunteer's contact information, educational background, areas of interest, availability, and references. These applications should be reviewed carefully and not be taken lightly. While the museum needs volunteers, it should only involve responsible people to work at the site.

Improvements Since Initial Contact with CHP (2010 -2020)

Commissary Building

The Commissary building that houses the museum had many physical issues that needed to be addressed to ensure the safety and comfort of the visitors to the museum.

The following improvements have been made to the exterior and interior of the building:

- roof replacement;
- replacement of asbestos tile ceiling with wood boards;
- removal of fluorescent lights with historically accurate lighting;
- replacement of exterior windows on front façade and in former barber shop area;
- rewiring of interior;
- removal of cage in back storage room;
- replacement of rotten or missing floorboards throughout the museum;
- painting of all exterior woodwork;
- replacement of wooden stairs leading to basement;
- cleaning of debris in basement area and water sealing;
- addition of a handicap-accessible restroom that complies with the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA).

Fig. 5.4. Interior of Commissary ceiling and interior lighting, 2010.

Fig. 5.5. New ceiling interior and historically appropriate lighting, 2020.

Fig. 5.6. Entrance to former barber shop area; closed off due to structural issues with floor and windows, 2011.

Fig. 5.7. Old doorway torn down and area opened, floorboards replaced, windows replaced; area now serves as gift shop and leads to new restrooms, August 2020.

Fig. 5.8. Front of Commissary building, 2011.

Fig. 5.9. Front of Commissary showing new roof and windows. Windows were returned to New Deal-era location, 2020.

Installation of HVAC System

Climate control is essential for the preservation of the museum artifacts, especially textiles and paper. An HVAC system was installed in 2018 providing a more comfortable atmosphere for the visitors and a drier indoor climate for artifacts.

The museum was previously closed during the coldest months of the year (December – February) because it was uncomfortable for volunteers to work inside during cold weather. Similarly, the museum was very hot during the summer months and did not make for a pleasant visitor experience. By installing heating and air, the museum can now be open year-round and provides a more accommodating space for the artifacts.

Purchase of the Administration Building or "Rock House"

The board purchased the Administration Building in 2014. This additional space allows for more exhibit and research space, as well as areas for educational programming activities. There are plans to house the research archives in the Administration Building. Museum offices could also be located here.

The roof has been replaced on this building as well as several windows. The fireplaces have been sealed to prevent entry of wildlife. Regular lawn maintenance is provided by a local service.

Fig. 5. 10. Exterior of Administration Building, prior to renovations, 2015.

Fig. 5.11. Entrance to Administration Building, 2020.

Fig. 5.12. Front office of the former Skyline Farms Community Manager set up in the Administration Building, 2020.

Fig. 5.13. Assistant Director's office featuring a sandstone floor and fireplace, 2020.

Purchase of an original colony house

The board bought and moved an original Colony House in April 2020. The house now sits on the same lot as the Rock Store Museum. There are plans to restore the house to 1930s-era construction and display some of the domestic artifacts that are in the museum collection. It would expand the interpretive potential greatly.

Fig. 5.14. Front of Colony House, 2020.

Fig. 5.15. Interior of a bedroom of Colony House, 2020.

Issues and Opportunities – Future Goals

Parking

There is currently a small parking lot by the front entrance of the museum, but it is not in good shape. Repaving the existing lot and designating individual parking spots would improve this space. In the case of larger events, additional parking may be used in the Skyline School parking lot.

Safety and Security

A security system should be installed for the protection of the exhibits and artifacts.

Commissary Building

While many improvements have been made, there are projects to complete in the Commissary Building. The basement area has been cleaned of debris, but it still lacks appropriate water proofing.

Administration Building

This building has been cleaned of much of the debris and the lawn has been cleared of wild growth. Some wooden boards and materials are in the former construction manager's office.

Fig. 5.16. Debris in former construction manager's office, 2020.

The former owners were in the process of turning the building into a hunting lodge. A full bathroom has been partially constructed in the middle of the back office. The bathtub could be removed so that the bathroom can be turned into an ADA-compliant restroom. ADA accessibility in the front entrance is also needed.

For more improvements, see the Skyline Farms Heritage Development Plan.

Colony House

The Colony House requires a permanent foundation and entry stairwell. The sandstone fireplace crumbled while moving the house to its current location, but the stone was saved. The hole in the floor needs to be temporarily sealed to keep wildlife and intruders from entering the building until the fireplace can be rebuilt.

A thorough inspection of the building should be done to verify its safety before the public is allowed to enter.

Purchase of Tidwell Property

The current owner of 40 Hensley Lane, the property adjacent to the Rock Store and Warehouse, has contacted a few members of the SFHA board to discuss the possibility of selling the property at a “very low cost” after her death. Jewel Tidwell owns the property. Her husband, Walter Tidwell, owned and operated the store in the Commissary building prior to its closure in the early 2000s. He was very active in preserving his community history until his death in 2016 and was often interviewed about his childhood on Skyline Farms. While the house does not date to the project years, the property would provide more space for activities, potential office space, and possibilities to expand the historical park.

However, funds should be prioritized to restoring currently owned buildings.

APPENDICES

TO THE

SKYLINE FARMS INTERPRETIVE PLAN

– Lesson Plans

Lesson Activity: Exploring Natural Resources of Skyline Farms, Alabama

Recommended Grade Level: 3rd and 4th Grade

Overview: Students will explore the natural resources available to the residents in Skyline Farms and how they used these resources to successfully build a community on the mountain by observing photographs of Skyline Farms in the FSA-OWA collection and historic resource maps of Alabama. They will also contemplate how the area's natural resources contributed to the community's economic development.

Investigative Question: How does man impact the natural landscape to survive?

Tennessee Standards

3rd grade

Social Studies

3.05 Use different types of maps (e.g., political, physical, population, resource, and climate), graphs, and charts to interpret geographic information.
3.14 Compare natural resources within the three grand divisions of Tennessee and trace the development of a product from natural resource to a finished product.
3.18 Analyze how people interact with their environment to satisfy basic needs and wants, including: housing, industry, transportation, and communication.

Science

3.LS4: Biological Change: Unity and Diversity 1) Explain the cause and effect relationship between a naturally changing environment and an organism's ability to survive.
3.ETS1: Engineering Design 1) Design a solution to a real-world problem that includes specified criteria for constraints.

4th grade

Science

4.ESS3: Earth and Human Activity
1) Obtain and combine information to describe that energy and fuels are derived from natural resources and that some energy and fuel sources are renewable (sunlight, wind, water) and some are not (fossil fuels, minerals).
2) Create an argument, using evidence from research, that human activity (farming, mining, building) can affect the land and ocean in positive and/or negative ways.

GLE 0407.7.2 Evaluate how some earth materials can be used to solve human problems and enhance the quality of life.
0407.7.3 List factors that determine the appropriate use of an earth material.
90407.7.4 Use data from a variety of informational texts to analyze and evaluate man's impact on non-renewable resources.

Alabama Standards

3rd grade
Social Studies
Objective 3.4.1: Describe ways people are impacted by geographic, economic, and historic changes
Objective 3.7.1: Describe ways people throughout the world are impacted by their geographic environments.
Science
Objective 13.) Describe ways to sustain natural resources, including recycling, reusing, conserving, and protecting the environment.
4th grade
Social Studies
Objective 4.16.2: Discuss how Alabama's natural resources attracted economic advancement during the twentieth century

Materials

- Copies of photographs from the FSA/OWA collection (see image list)
- reproductions of historic Alabama resource maps[335]
- primary source analysis worksheet[336]
- pencil
- poster paper
- colored pencils

Common Core Standards
English Language Arts

Grade 3
Reading Standards for Informational Text
1. Ask and answer questions to demonstrate understanding of a text, referring explicitly to the text as the basis for the answers.
3. Describe the relationship between a series of historical events, scientific ideas or concepts, or steps in technical procedures in a text, using language that pertains to time, sequence, and cause/effect.

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[335] "Historical Maps of Alabama, 1931-1940," Alabama Maps, accessed October 26, 2020, http://alabamamaps.ua.edu/historicalmaps/alabama/index2_1931-1940.htm.

[336] "Primary Source Analysis Worksheet," Library of Congress Digital Collections, accessed October 26, 2020, https://www.loc.gov/static/programs/teachers/getting-started-with-primary-sources/documents/Primary_Source_Analysis_Tool.pdf

7. Use information gained from illustrations (e.g., maps, photographs) and the words in a text to demonstrate understanding of the text (e.g., where, when, why, and how key events occur).

Speaking and Listening Standards

1. Engage effectively in a range of collaborative discussions (one-on-one, in groups, and teacher-led) with diverse partners on grade 3 topics and texts, building on others' ideas and expressing their own clearly.

a. Come to discussions prepared, having read or studied required material; explicitly draw on that preparation and other information known about the topic to explore ideas under discussion.

b. Follow agreed-upon rules for discussions (e.g., gaining the floor in respectful ways, listening to others with care, speaking one at a time about the topics and texts under discussion).

c. Ask questions to check understanding of information presented, stay on topic, and link their comments to the remarks of others.

d. Explain their own ideas and understanding in light of the discussion.

Grade 4

Integration of Knowledge and Ideas

7. Interpret information presented visually, orally, or quantitatively (e.g., in charts, graphs, diagrams, timelines, animations, or interactive elements on Web pages) and explain how the information contributes to an understanding of the text in which it appears.

Speaking and Listening Standards

1. Engage effectively in a range of collaborative discussions (one-on-one, in groups, and teacher-led) with diverse partners on grade 4 topics and texts, building on others' ideas and expressing their own clearly.

a. Come to discussions prepared, having read or studied required material; explicitly draw on that preparation and other information known about the topic to explore ideas under discussion.

b. Follow agreed-upon rules for discussions and carry out assigned roles.

c. Pose and respond to specific questions to clarify or follow up on information and make comments that contribute to the discussion and link to the remarks of others.

d. Review the key ideas expressed and explain their own ideas and understanding in light of the discussion.

Procedure

Day One

1. Introduce natural resources the class. There are many websites with introductory material including: Alabama Cooperative Extension Services—Natural Resources[337]and Alabama Dept. of Conservation and Natural Resources. [338]
2. Have a class discussion about the importance of natural resources. What are natural resources? What are some examples of natural resources? Why are they important? How are they used? Why would these be important for creating a new community?
3. Show students the historic maps of Alabama, specifically the Alabama Products and Resources, FERA projects and activities, and Soil Province Map of Alabama. *Technical note: The map is not easily printed and is best to project the map for the entire class to view. You may click on specific points on the map to zoom in for a closer view.
4. Have the students locate Jackson County. Discuss with the class: What natural resources were available in Jackson County? How can these resources be used? What do we use in present day that are made from these resources? Can you find anything in this room that is made from these resources?
5. Project one of the photographs from the image list for the entire class to view. Analyze the photograph as a class, using the photography analysis worksheet[339] as a guide. Model analysis process first using the analysis worksheet - this will model the process of analyzing photographs to the class.
6. Divide class into small groups of 2 or 3 students per group. Provide each group one photograph of the Skyline community (see image list). Each group will have a different photograph. Have each group fill out a photograph analysis worksheet.
7. After the worksheet is complete, have a class discussion about the students' findings.

Day Two

1. Using the evidence found in the photographs and historic maps, have the students work in small groups to create posters showing the natural resources in the Skyline Farms community and what finished, man-made products were made from these resources. Each group should focus on one specific resource. (Example: one group could focus on

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[337] Alabama Cooperative Extension Services, Natural Resources, accessed October 26, 2020, https://www.aces.edu/?s=natural+resources&cat=aboutus.php&q=natural+resources.

[338] Outdoor Alabama accessed October 26, 2020, https://www.outdooralabama.com/programs.

[339] Teacher's Guide, Analyzing Photographs and Prints, Library of Congress Digital Collections, accessed October 26, 2020, https://www.loc.gov/static/programs/teachers/getting-started-with-primary-sources/documents/Analyzing_Photographs_and_Prints.pdf.

trees/lumber. What is lumber used for? What manmade product can be made from lumber?)

2. When making the posters, tell the children to consider the following questions: Do you think the natural resources of this area influenced the decision to establish the community at this location? What finished product can be made from these natural resources? How did these products benefit/affect the people of Skyline Farms? How important are these resources in our daily lives?

3. When the students are finished, each group will display their work. Children may walk around and evaluate each other's posters.

4. Were the children surprised by the man-made items? Were the surprised by the resources available in the area?

Evaluation

Students may be graded for participation in class discussions, completion of photography analysis worksheets, and/or for the completion of a group poster.

Lesson Extension

To spend more time on the subject, have students research modern uses of land in Jackson County. The Outdoor Alabama website provides an interactive map of the state.

Suggested images from the Library of Congress—US Farm Security Administration/Office of War Information Collection

Farmers resettled on Skyline Farms, Alabama and at work in sand quarry under supervision of the manager, 1935.[340]

Men working at the sawmill at Skyline Farms, 1935.[341]

[340] Arthur Rothstein, "Farmers resettled on Skyline Farms, Alabama and at work in sand quarry under supervision of the manager," August 1935, Library of Congress Digital Collections, accessed October 26, 2020, https://www.loc.gov/pictures/item/2017759004/.

[341] Arthur Rothstein, "Sawmill, Skyline Farms, Alabama," September 1935, Library of Congress Digital Collections, accessed October 26, 2020, https://www.loc.gov/pictures/item/2017721062/.

Stone quarry at Skyline Farms, 1937.[342]

Stream at Skyline Farms, Alabama, 1937.[343]

[342] Ben Shahn, Stone quarry, Skyline Farms, Alabama, 1937, Library of Congress Digital Collections, accessed October 26, 2020, https://www.loc.gov/pictures/item/2017731025/.

[343] Carl Mydans, Schoolhouse and School Scene at Skyline Farms," (incorrectly named in database), June 1936, Library of Congress Digital Collections, accessed October 26, 2020, https://www.loc.gov/pictures/item/2017761621/.

New Colony House, 1935.[344]

Vegetables grown by a farmer at Skyline Farms, Alabama, 1935.[345]

[344] Arthur Rothstein, "New House, Skyline Farms, Alabama," September 1935, Library of Congress Digital Collections, accessed October 26, 2020, https://www.loc.gov/pictures/item/2017758974/.

[345] Arthur Rothstein, "Vegetables grown by resettled farmer, Skyline Farms," September 1935, Library of Congress Digital Collections, accessed October 26, 2020, https://www.loc.gov/pictures/item/2017721051/.

Lesson Activity: Square Dancing

Recommended Grade Level: 3-5th grade

Overview: Students will learn and demonstrate basic steps in a square dance. Students will also understand the significance of square dancing in rural America.

Investigative Question: How did folk music and folk-dance impact the people of Skyline Farms?

Tennessee Standards

Physical Education

Grade 3

MS 1.3 Combines at least two locomotor skills with smooth transition.
MS.5.3 Performs a simple teacher and/or student designed rhythmic activity.
MKA.2.3a Recognizes clockwise and counterclockwise directions. MKA.2.3b Combines levels, directions, and pathways into simple travel, dance, and gymnastic sequences.
MKA.4.3a Differentiates relationships with people (mirror/ matching, leading/following).
MKA.4.3b Demonstrates relationships with people (mirror/ matching, leading/following).

Grade 4

MS 1.4 Uses various locomotor skills in a variety of small-sided games/ practice tasks, dance, and/or educational gymnastic experiences.
MS.5.4 Performs a cultural dance on beat with correct pattern.
MKA.2.4a Compares and contracts use of pathways, levels, and directions.
MKA.2.4.b Uses pathways, levels, and directions in a variety of small-sided games/practice tasks, dance, and/or educational gymnastic experiences.
MKA.5.4b Applies movement principles in a variety of dance and/or educational gymnastics experiences.

Grade 5

MS.5.5 Creates and performs dances on beat with correct pattern.
MKA.2.5a Analyzes the use of pathways, levels, and directions in movement activity.
MKA 2.5b Combines pathways, levels and directions in a variety of small sided games/practice tasks, dance, and/or educational gymnastics experiences.

Music

Grade 3

3.GM.P1.A Demonstrate and explain how the selection of music to perform is influenced by personal interest, knowledge, purpose, and context.
3.GM.Cr2.A Using musical ideas to be performed, demonstrate and discuss personal reasons for selecting musical ideas.

3.GM.Cn1.A Demonstrate how interests, knowledge, and skills relate to personal choices and intent when creating, performing, and responding to music (such as identifying pieces of music that are important to one's family or how music is used in daily life).
Grade 4
4.GM.P1.A Demonstrate (through performance) and explain how the selection of music to perform is influenced by personal interest, knowledge, context, and technical skill.
4.GM.Cr2.A Using musical ideas to be performed, demonstrate and discuss personal reasons for selecting musical ideas for arrangement, improvisation, or composition.
4.GM.Cn1.A Demonstrate how interests, knowledge, and skills relate to personal choices and intent when creating, performing, and responding to music (such as identifying pieces of music that are important to one's family or how music is used in daily life).
Grade 5
5.GM.P1.A Demonstrate and explain how the selection of music to perform is influenced by personal interest, knowledge, context, and technical skill.
5.GM.Cr2.A Using musical ideas to be performed, demonstrate and discuss personal reasons for selecting musical ideas for arrangement, improvisation, or composition.
5.GM.Cn1.A Demonstrate how interests, knowledge, and skills relate to personal choices and intent when creating, performing, and responding to music (such as identifying pieces of music that are important to one's family or how music is used in daily life).

Alabama Standards
Physical Education
4th grade
4.) Perform multicultural rhythmic dances, including introductory square dance.
9.) Identify formations and steps associated with dance.
5th grade
4.) Demonstrate rhythmic dances, including modern, aerobic, and ethnic.
Music
4th grade
13.) Recognize styles of twentieth-century music

Materials:

- images of square dancing from the FSA/OWA collection (see image list)
- mp3 player
- open space for a large group of children

- photography analysis worksheet[346]

Procedure:

Day One

1. Tell the class that you are about to play a song. Ask them to listen to the music and the lyrics. Play the mp3 recording of "Gents Go Center"[347] from the Library of Congress digital collection.
2. Class discussion: Analyze the song with the Library of Congress sound recordings primary source analysis worksheet.[348] What is your first reaction to the song? Have you ever heard this type of music before? Can you identify any of the instruments you hear? Does this sound similar to any music you listen to today? How is it different? Tell them this particular song was recorded in the 1930s (one reason why the sound quality is different than they are used to hearing.)
3. Explain to the students that this type of song is used for a specific dance. What do you think the dance would look like? Do you think people would dance individually or in groups to this type of music? Do you think the dance would be fast or slow?
4. Notice that the song lyrics are instructions on how to dance. A transcription of the lyrics can be found on the Library of Congress digital collections website. Pass out the song lyrics for the children to read. Then play the song again and have them read along.
5. Give an introduction of the history of square dancing (popular in rural America around World War II). The America's Story from the America's Library (children's website of the Library of Congress) has a square-dancing section. Did you know that square dancing is the official state folk dance of Alabama?[349]

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[346] Teacher's Guides and Analysis Tool, Library of Congress Digital Collections, accessed October 26, 2020, https://www.loc.gov/programs/teachers/getting-started-with-primary-sources/guides/.

[347] John A. Lomax, Ruby T. Lomax, and Ruby Wilson. "Gents Go Center," American Folklife Digital Collections, accessed October 26, 2020, https://www.loc.gov/item/lomaxbib000150/.

[348] Teacher's Guide: Analyzing Sound Recordings, Library of Congress Digital Collections, accessed October 26, 2020, https://www.loc.gov/static/programs/teachers/getting-started-with-primary-sources/documents/Analyzing_Sound_Recordings.pdf.

[349] Official Symbols and Emblems of Alabama, Alabama Department of Archives and History, accessed October 26, 2020, https://archives.alabama.gov/emblems/st_dance.html.

6. Show the photographs of square dancing at Skyline Farms. Residents would gather every Friday night for the weekly dance. Men, woman, and children would participate. Fill out a photograph analysis worksheet.
7. Class Discussion—use the worksheet as a guide to lead the discussion: What is happening in the photograph? What is the setting? Does squaring dancing look different than you imagined? Who participated? Do people dance in groups or individually?

Day Two:

1. Show the class a short video[350] demonstrating the basics of square dancing.
2. Tell the children to pick partners. Square dancing partners were typically a man and woman. (It is not necessary for them to dance in male/female partners, especially if there are an uneven number of children.
3. Demonstrate the basic steps of square dancing for the class: forward and back, dosido, swing, promenade.
4. Practice the steps individually, then try them together in a series.
5. Play a traditional square-dancing song like "Gents Go Center" (beginner songs can be found online). Have the groups follow the basic steps of the song.

Day Three:

1. Perform a square dance as a class. The class may perform in front of another class, school administrators, or at a school assembly.
2. After the dance, have a discussion with the group. Consider the following questions: Do you think the dances were fun for the people of the community? How would dancing bring a community together? How do you think square dances benefitted the new community of Skyline?

Lesson Extension

Review some photographs of square dancing at Skyline Farms. Having learned some basic steps, can you identify specific steps demonstrated in the pictures?

[350] "Square Dance Demonstration", accessed October 26, 2020, https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=0rIK3fo41P4.

Suggested images from the from the Library of Congress—US Farm Security Administration/Office of War Information Collection

Couple square dancing, Skyline Farms, 1937.[351]

Men and women dancing at a square-dancing event at Skyline Farms, 1937.[352]

[351] Ben Shahn, "Square dance, Skyline Farms, Alabama," 1937, Library of Congress Digital Collections, accessed October 26, 2020, https://www.loc.gov/pictures/item/2017730971/.

[352] Ben Shahn, Square dance, Skyline Farms, Alabama, 1937, accessed October 26, 2020, https://www.loc.gov/pictures/item/2017730997/.

Band plays for crowd at Skyline Farms, 1937.[353]

Spectators at square dance, Skyline Farms, Alabama, 1937.[354]

[353] Ben Shahn, Music for square dance, Skyline Farms, Alabama, 1937, Library of Congress Digital Collections, accessed October 26, 2020, https://www.loc.gov/pictures/item/2017730987/.

[354] Ben Shahn, "Spectators at square dance, Skyline Farms, Alabama," 1937, Library of Congress Digital Collections, accessed October 26, 2020, https://www.loc.gov/pictures/item/2017730978/.

Lesson Activity: The New Deal in Alabama—A Look at Rural Resettlement Communities

Recommended Grade: 11th grade

Overview: Students will learn about two rural resettlement communities in Alabama: Skyline Farms in Jackson County and Gee's Bend in Wilcox County. Students will learn why these communities were established, how the residents of these communities were affected by these programs and compare and contrast the lives of the residents before the New Deal program started.

Investigative Question: How did New Deal programs impact the lives of residents at Skyline Farms and Gee's Bend?

Tennessee Standards:
Grades 9-12 Social Studies
CI.07 Analyze the relationship between historical facts and historical interpretation.
CI.08 Analyze how causal factors (e.g., cultural differences, boundary disputes, imperialism, and religious conflicts) fostered past and current conflicts.
CI.11 Analyze the lasting impact of history on contemporary issues (e.g., Treaty of Versailles, Cold War, ethnic cleansing, urbanization, human rights, immigration, modern medicine).
E.32 Analyze economic costs and benefits of government policies (e.g., Social Security, Medicare, earned income credits, military expenditures, and public education).

Alabama Standards:
US History – 11th Grade
Objective 11.6.1: Describe the economic impact of the Great Depression on the people of the United States.
Objective 11.6.3: Describe major contributions of the administrations of Franklin D. Roosevelt.

Common Core Standards:
Literacy in History/Social Studies 11-12
CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RH.11-12.1 Cite specific textual evidence to support analysis of primary and secondary sources, connecting insights gained from specific details to an understanding of the text as a whole.
CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RH.11-12.2 Determine the central ideas or information of a primary or secondary source; provide an accurate summary that makes clear the relationships among the key details and ideas.

CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RH.11-12.7 Integrate and evaluate multiple sources of information presented in diverse formats and media (e.g., visually, quantitatively, as well as in words) in order to address a question or solve a problem.
CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RH.11-12.9
Integrate information from diverse sources, both primary and secondary, into a coherent understanding of an idea or event, noting discrepancies among sources

Materials:

- Copies of photographs of Gee's Bend and Skyline Farms (see image list),
- Additional Library of Congress and external sources listed below
- photograph analysis worksheet[355]
- primary source analysis worksheet
- pencils
- journal

Additional Library of Congress sources:

Traveling exhibit.[356] Rural Resettlement Administration program. Panel One. July 1936
Traveling exhibit.[357] Rural Resettlement Administration program. Panel Two. July 1936
Traveling exhibit.[358] Rural Resettlement Administration program. Panel Three. July 1936

External Sources:
Campbell, David. "Skyline Farms." Encyclopedia of Alabama article.
Stevens, Kyes. "Gee's Bend." Encyclopedia of Alabama article.
Summary of New Deal programs in Alabama. "The Great Depression, the New Deal, and Alabama's Political Leadership."
Fireside Chat 7: On the Works Relief Program and Social Security Act (April 28, 1935)

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[355] Teacher's Guides and Analysis Tool, Library of Congress Digital Collections, accessed October 26, 2020, https://www.loc.gov/programs/teachers/getting-started-with-primary-sources/guides/.

[356] Traveling exhibit. Rural Resettlement Administration program. Panel one, Library of Congress Digital Collections, accessed October 26, 2020, http://loc.gov/pictures/resource/fsa.8c52308/.

[357] Traveling exhibit. Rural Resettlement Administration program. Panel two, Library of Congress Digital Collections, accessed October 26, 2020, http://loc.gov/pictures/resource/fsa.8c52314/.

[358] Traveling exhibit. Rural Resettlement Administration program. Panel two, Library of Congress Digital Collections, accessed October 26, 2020, http://loc.gov/pictures/resource/fsa.8c52309/.

Procedure:
Day One

1. Introduce the class to the Great Depression and the New Deal. The Library of Congress has a wonderful Teacher's Guide[359] regarding the New Deal that contains useful introductory information and a timeline.
2. Give the students a copy of President Roosevelt's *Fireside Chat* "On the Works Relief Program and Social Security Act", in which he discusses the government's role in providing relief to the Nation. An audio file of the speech is also available at the link located above.
3. Have a class discussion about the *Fireside Chat* using the Primary Source Analysis worksheet as a guide for inquiry. Who is the intended audience for the speech? What was the goal of the *Fireside Chat*? What was the role in government during the Great Depression as stated by FDR?
4. The class should be familiar with the following vocabulary words: rural, urban, destitute, agriculture, stock market crash, tenant farmer, sharecropper, transients, economy.

Day Two

1. Have the students read "The Great Depression, the New Deal, and Alabama's Political Leadership."[360]
2. Group Discussion: How was the economy in the South prior to the Stock Market Crash of 1929? Did the Great Depression affect the South differently than other parts of the nation? What did the New Deal programs do for the citizens of Alabama?
3. Introduce the Resettlement Administration as part of the New Deal programming and explain its purpose. Read the *Encyclopedia of Alabama* articles on Skyline Farms and Gee's Bend.
4. Group Discussion: What did you find out about the people of these communities prior to their lives in the resettlement communities?

Pass out reproductions of photographs (see image list) of both Skyline Farms and Gee's Bend, two rural resettlement communities in Alabama.

1. What do you notice about the people that live in these communities? What type of activity do you see? What are common activities in both communities? Pay

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[359] Primary Source Set – The New Deal, Library of Congress, accessed October 26, 2020, https://www.loc.gov/classroom-materials/new-deal/.

[360] "The Great Depression, The New Deal, and Alabama's Political Leadership," Alabama Moments in History, accessed October 26, 2020, http://www.alabamamoments.alabama.gov/sec48det.html.

special attention to the titles of the photographs—they can reveal context of the picture.

2. Divide students into small groups of 2-3 people. Give each group one photograph to analyze, using a photograph analysis worksheet.
3. Have each group present their finds to the class.
4. Group Discussion: Compare and contrast your findings. Answer the investigative question.

Day Three

Using the information gathered during the previous classes, students will write a comparative essay portraying lives of farmers residing in these resettlement communities. How did their lives change because of the New Deal programs? How was life for the sharecroppers and tenant farmers before the Great Depression? Do you think the government agencies involved improved the lives of the community residents? What was the benefit? Were their drawbacks to living in these communities?

Suggested Images from the Library of Congress—US Farm Security Administration/Office of War Information Collection

Man walking to the Commissary Building at Skyline Farms.[361]

[361] Arthur Rothstein, **"**Skyline Farms store. Alabama," February 1937, Library of Congress Digital Collections, accessed October 26, 2020, https://www.loc.gov/pictures/item/2017775681/.

Farmers at Skyline Farms, Jackson County, Alabama, 1937.[362]

Mrs. Mary McLean, Skyline Farms, Alabama, 1937.[363]

[362] Arthur Rothstein, **"**Farmers at Skyline Farms, Jackson County, Alabama," February 1937, Library of Congress Digital Collections, accessed October 26, 2020, https://www.loc.gov/pictures/item/2017775941/.

[363] Ben Shahn, "Mrs. Mary McLean, Skyline Farms, Alabama," 1937, accessed October 26, 2020, https://www.loc.gov/pictures/item/2017731019/.

"Gees Bend family. Gees Bend, Alabama" Arthur Rothstein, 1937[364]

"Old School Building, Gee's Bend, Alabama" Marion Post-Wolcott, 1939[365]

[364] Arthur Rothstein, "Gees Bend family. Gees Bend, Alabama" April 1937, Library of Congress Digital Collections, accessed October 26, 2020, https://www.loc.gov/pictures/item/2017775829/.

[365] Marion Post-Wolcott, "Old School Building, Gee's Bend, Alabama," Library of Congress Digital Collections, accessed October 26, 2020, https://www.loc.gov/pictures/item/2017800720/.

Outdoor games and recreation with an adult group. They meet in the church (at left) for classwork including reading, writing, arithmetic and general. Gee's Bend, Alabama,1939.[366]

[366] Marion Post-Wolcott, "Outdoor games and recreation led by Florence Wright (in white slacks), recreation supervisor for adult group. They meet in church at left for classwork. Reading, writing, arithmetic and general discussion and educational activities. Gee's Bend, Alabama," Library of Congress Digital Collections, accessed October 26, 2020,

Lesson Activity: Then and Now—Education in a New Deal Rural Resettlement Community

Grade Suggestion: 3-5th grade

Overview: Students will compare and contrast the classroom experience of children in the Skyline Farms community during the Great Depression and their own experience in the modern-day classroom using photographs from the FSA collection. Students will write a comparison essay or journal entry to communicate the similarities and differences.

Investigative Question:

Tennessee Standards

English/Language Arts

Grade 3

3.FL.VA.7a Determine or clarify the meaning of unknown and multiple-meaning words and phrases based on grade 3 reading and content, choosing flexibly from a range of strategies. i. Use sentence-level context as a clue to the meaning of a word or phrase. ii. Determine the meaning of the new word formed when a known affix is added to a known word. iii. Use a known root word as a clue to the meaning of an unknown word with the same root. iv. Use glossaries or beginning dictionaries, both print and digital, to determine or clarify the precise meaning of key words and phrases.

3.FL.VA.7c Acquire and use accurately grade-appropriate conversational, general academic, and domain specific words and phrases, including those that signal spatial and time relationships.

Grade 4

4.FL.VA.7a Determine or clarify the meaning of unknown and multiple-meaning words and phrases based on grade 4 reading and content, choosing flexibly from a range of strategies. i. Use context as a clue to the meaning of a word or phrase.

iii. Consult reference materials, both print and digital, to find the pronunciation and determine or clarify the precise meaning of key words and phrases.

4.FL.VA.7c Acquire and use accurately grade-appropriate general academic and domain-specific words and phrases, including those that signal precise actions, emotions, or states of being and that are basic to a particular topic.

Grade 5

5.FL.VA.7a Determine or clarify the meaning of unknown and multiple-meaning words and phrases based on grade 5 reading and content, choosing flexibly from a range of strategies. i. Use context as a clue to the meaning of a word or phrase.

5.FL.VA.7c Acquire and use accurately grade-appropriate general academic and domain-specific words and phrases, including those that signal contrast, addition, and other logical relationships

Alabama Standards

English – Grade 3

Objective 3.9.4: Organize complete sentences into a paragraph to address a topic or tell a story

Objective 3.12.5: Collect information from print and non-print resources to investigate selected topic.

Common Core Standards

English Language Arts

Grade 3

CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RI.3.1Ask and answer questions to demonstrate understanding of a text, referring explicitly to the text as the basis for the answers.

CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RI.3.3 Describe the relationship between a series of historical events, scientific ideas or concepts, or steps in technical procedures in a text, using language that pertains to time, sequence, and cause/effect.

CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RI.3.5 Use text features and search tools (e.g., key words, sidebars, hyperlinks) to locate information relevant to a given topic efficiently.

CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RI.3.7 Use information gained from illustrations (e.g., maps, photographs) and the words in a text to demonstrate understanding of the text (e.g., where, when, why, and how key events occur).

Grade 4

CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RI.4.1 Refer to details and examples in a text when explaining what the text says explicitly and when drawing inferences from the text.

CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RI.4.3 Explain events, procedures, ideas, or concepts in a historical, scientific, or technical text, including what happened and why, based on specific information in the text.

CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RI.4.6 Compare and contrast a firsthand and secondhand account of the same event or topic; describe the differences in focus and the information provided.

Grade 5

CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RI.5.3 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.

CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RI.5.6 Analyze multiple accounts of the same event or topic, noting important similarities and differences in the point of view they represent.

CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RI.5.9 Integrate information from several texts on the same topic in order to write or speak about the subject knowledgeably.

Materials:

- Copies of photographs of Skyline Farms School (see image list)
- copy of the *Skyline Herald*
- photograph analysis worksheet[367]
- primary source analysis worksheet
- journal
- pencil

Procedure:

Day One

1. Explain to the class that they will be looking at photographs of a rural community named Skyline Farms during the Great Depression. A background of Skyline Farms can be found on the Encyclopedia of Alabama website.
2. Project one photograph of a school scene at Skyline from the image list for the entire class to view together. What is happening in the photograph? Can you tell what they are studying? Use the photography analysis worksheet as a guide for inquiry during the class discussion.
3. Now that the process for analysis photographs has been demonstrated, divide students into small groups of 2 or 3. Give each group one photograph of the Skyline Farms community school. Tell each group to fill out one photography analysis worksheet.
4. Provide excerpts from the Skyline school paper, the *Skyline Herald* for the students to read. Class discussion: What types of activities are discussed in the newspaper? Does this newspaper look similar to modern day school papers? Do modern day students participate in similar activities that were discussed in the *Skyline Herald*? Have the children fill out the primary source analysis worksheet.
5. Class discussion: Describe the classroom/school scene. How is it different than the room you are in now? What are the children doing in the photos? Are the children all the same age in the photographs? What did you think of the school newsletter?

Day Two

Have the students write a comparative essay, comparing schools from the 1930s (like Skyline Farms) and their modern-day school, using information they gathered in the analysis worksheets. How are modern schools different than those in the photographs?

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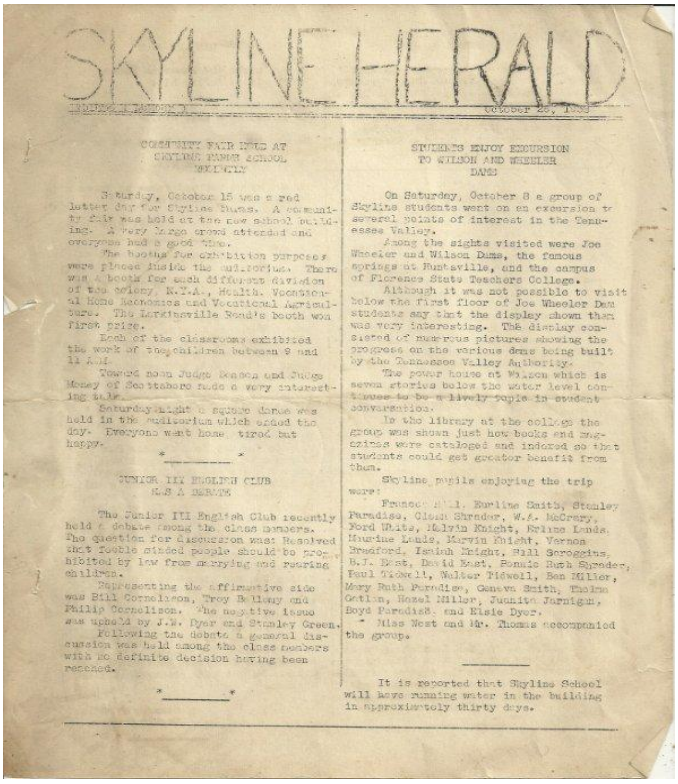
[367] Teacher's Guide Analyzing Photographs & Prints, Library of Congress Digital Collections, accessed October 26, 2020, https://www.loc.gov/static/programs/teachers/getting-started-with-primary-sources/documents/Analyzing_Photographs_and_Prints.pdf.

How are they the same? Do you think children at the first Skyline school learned the same things as students today? How do you think their day differed? How do you think it felt to go to school in the 1930s?

The Skyline Herald—the school newspaper of the Skyline Farms School. October 26, 1939.



SKYLINE HERALD

[illegible] October 26, 1939

COMMUNITY FAIR HELD AT SKYLINE FARMS SCHOOL SATURDAY

Saturday, October 15 was a red letter day for Skyline Farms. A community fair was held at the new school building. A very large crowd attended and everyone had a good time.

The booths for exhibition purposes were placed inside the auditorium. There was a booth for each different division of the colony, N.Y.A., Health, Vocational Home Economics and Vocational Agriculture. The Larkinsville Seed's booth won first prize.

Each of the classrooms exhibited the work of the children between 9 and 11 A.M.

Toward noon Judge Beason and Judge Money of Scottsboro made a very interesting talk.

Saturday night a square dance was held in the auditorium which ended the day. Everyone went home tired but happy.

* _____ *

JUNIOR III ENGLISH CLUB H.S A DEBATE

The Junior III English Club recently held a debate among the class members. The question for discussion was: Resolved that feeble minded people should be prohibited by law from marrying and rearing children.

Representing the affirmative side was Bill Cornelison, Troy Bellamy and Philip Cornelison. The negative issue was upheld by J.B. Dyer and Stanley Green.

Following the debate a general discussion was held among the class members with no definite decision having been reached.

* _____ *

STUDENTS ENJOY EXCURSION TO WILSON AND WHEELER DAMS

On Saturday, October 8 a group of Skyline students went on an excursion to several points of interest in the Tennessee Valley.

Among the sights visited were Joe Wheeler and Wilson Dams, the famous springs at Huntsville, and the campus of Florence State Teachers College.

Although it was not possible to visit below the first floor of Joe Wheeler Dam students say that the display shown them was very interesting. The display consisted of numerous pictures showing the progress on the various dams being built by the Tennessee Valley Authority.

The power house at Wilson which is seven stories below the water level continues to be a lively topic in student conversation.

In the library at the college the group was shown just how books and magazines were cataloged and indexed so that students could get greater benefit from them.

Skyline pupils enjoying the trip were:

Frances [illegible], Eurline Smith, Stanley Paradise, Glenn Shrader, W.A. McCrary, Ford Wells, Melvin Knight, Erline Lands, Maurine Lands, Marvin Knight, Vernon Bradford, Isaiah Knight, Bill Scroggins, B.J. Hunt, David East, Bonnie Ruth Shrader, Paul Tidwell, Walter Tidwell, Ben Miller, Mary Ruth Paradise, Geneva Smith, Thelma Gotlan, Hazel Miller, Juanita Jarnigan, Boys Paradise and Elsie Dyer.

Miss West and Mr. Thomas accompanied the group.

_____

It is reported that Skyline School will have running water in the building in approximately thirty days.

The front page is transcribed below. Note: a space (_____) indicates that the word was illegible due to the quality of the paper

"Community Fair _____ at Skyline Farms School"

Saturday, October 15 was a red-letter day for Skyline Farms. A community fair was held at the new school building. A very large crowd attended, and everyone had a good time.

The booths for distribution purposes were placed inside the auditorium. There was a booth for each different division of the new colony, N.Y.A., Health, Vocational Home Economics, and Vocational Agriculture. The _____ _____'s booth won first prize.
Each of the classrooms exhibited the work of the children between 9 and 11 AM.

Toward noon Judge ___ and Judge Money of Scottsboro made a very interesting talk.

Saturday night a square dance was held in the auditorium which ended the day. Everyone went back home tired and happy.

"Junior III English Club Has a Debate"

The Junior III English Club recently held a debate among the class members. The question for discussion was: Resolve that feeble-minded people should be prohibited by law from marrying and rearing children.

Representing the affirmative side was Bill Cornelison, Tracy Bellemy, and Philip Cornelison. The negative issued was upheld by J.W. Dyer and Stanley Green.

Following the debate, a general discussion was held among the class members with no definite decision been reached.

It is reported that Skyline School will have running water in the building in approximately thirty days.

"Students Enjoy Excursion to Wilson and Wheeler Dams"

On Saturday, October 8 a group of Skyline students went on an excursion to several points of interest in the Tennessee Valley.

Among the sights visited were Joe Wheeler and Wilson Dams, the famous springs at Huntsville, and the campus of Florence State Teachers College.

Although it was not possible to visit below the first floor of Joe Wheeler Dam students say that the display shown ____ was very interesting. The display consisted of numerous pictures showing the progress on the various dams being built by the Tennessee Valley Authority.

The powerhouse at Wilson which is seven stories below the water level continues to be a lively topic in student conversation.

In the library at the college the group was shown just how books and magazines were cataloged and indexed so that students could get greater benefits from them.

Skyline pupils enjoying the trip were: (list of names given) Miss West and Mr. Thomas accompanied the group.

Suggested images from the from the Library of Congress—US Farm Security Administration/Office of War Information Collection

School at Skyline Farms, Alabama, 1937.[368]

Interior of classroom at Skyline School, 1937.[369]

[368] Arthur Rothstein, "School. Skyline Farms, Alabama," Library of Congress Digital Collections, accessed October 26, 2020, https://www.loc.gov/pictures/item/2017775680/.

[369] Arthur Rothstein, "School. Skyline Farms, Alabama," Library of Congress Digital Collections, accessed October 26, 2020, https://www.loc.gov/pictures/item/2017775685/.

Students working in a classroom in Skyline School, 1936.[370]

Boys writing on a blackboard inside a Skyline School classroom, 1936.[371]

[370] Carl Mydans, "School scene at Skyline Farms, near Scottsboro, Alabama," Library of Congress Digital Collections, accessed October 26, 2020, https://www.loc.gov/pictures/item/2017715857/.

[371] Carl Mydans, "School scene at Cumberland Mountain Farms (Skyline Farms) near Scottsboro, Alabama," Library of Congress Digital Collections, accessed October 26, 2020, https://www.loc.gov/pictures/item/2017715848/.

Children playing outside of the Skyline School, 1936.[372]

[372] Carl Mydans, "Schoolhouse and school scene at the Skyline Farms near Scottsboro, Alabama," Library of Congress Digital Collections, accessed October 26, 2020, https://www.loc.gov/pictures/item/2017761617/.

CHAPTER VI – CONCLUSION

The Great Depression sank an already weak economy in Alabama's Jackson County. Efforts by many New Deal agencies including the Reconstruction Finance Cooperation, Work Progress Administration, Civilian Conservation Corps, and ultimately, the Resettlement Administration changed the lives of those who lived in Skyline Farms during the resettlement project years of 1934 – 1945. The use of progressive educational methods helped prepare Skyline residents to be active participants in the modern workforce and society. Although the resettlement project did not achieve the goal of home ownership for most of its families, it provided years of stability, health care, socialization, and education that they would not have had otherwise.

Pride for the Skyline community endures amongst the town's residents. With a population of just over 900 people, community activities center around the Skyline School, just as they did during the project days.[373] The Skyline Farms Heritage Association maintains a positive relationship with Skyline School administrators. The school has provided classroom space for board meetings, board workshops, and fundraising dinners. The Rock Store Museum hosts annual teacher appreciation days and Christmas programs for school students. Several Skyline teachers have either served on the SFHA board or volunteer at the museum. The SFHA has a unique opportunity to instill the importance of their community within future generations given their

[373] Population information taken from the Niche website https://www.niche.com/places-to-live/skyline-jackson-al/ (accessed September 29, 2020). According to the Jackson County Board of Education website, the Skyline School population was 470 students for preK- high school during the 2015-2016 school year.

relationship with the school. Many of the initial volunteers that started the heritage association in 1998 are either deceased, have moved away, or are no longer able to help with the project. It is vital that community appreciation and support continue, not only for educational purposes, but for the longevity of community preservation.

It has been 10 years since the Skyline Farms Heritage Association first contacted the Center for Historic Preservation. Much has been accomplished by the board members. Volunteers used the Heritage Development Plan created by the CHP to plan their renovations for existing New Deal era-community buildings. These physical improvements were outlined in chapter five. During my residency year, I worked with board members to clean, organize, catalog over 600 artifacts and develop policies that would help guide their collection and interpretation efforts. In spring 2013, board historian Cynthia (Cindy) Rice and I presented at the Alabama Museums Association meeting, where we discussed the importance of preserving and interpreting local history though grassroot efforts. The board completed the purchase of the administration building and bought and moved an original colony house onto museum property. They also implemented some new policies involving board governance, including a term limit for the position of board president.

The creation of the Rock Store Museum has made an overall positive impact on the local community. In addition to its partnership with the school, the museum has acted as a point of homecoming to many of those who grew up on the mountain. Visitors often drive through the town center and are surprised to see the progress on the former Commissary building. For those who cannot make it to the site physically, the SFHA

Facebook page serves as a space for people to learn, connect, and reminisce. Former residents, including Roger Allen, son of Skyline Band member Chester Allen, post personal photographs of life on the mountain on the website and help identify events and people in the photographs. The annual Dutch Treat Dinner serves as a board fundraiser and features a guest speaker that talks about local history. Many past speakers had direct connections to the colony, including Joyce Kennamer, who spoke in 2018. Her father was Judge J.M. Money, the Jackson County probate judge who was pivotal in getting the attention of state relief administrators for the creation of Skyline Farms. Kennamer spoke about her father's involvement in Skyline Farms and her career at Skyline School, where she worked as a history teacher.

Preservation efforts at Skyline attracted the attention of the Alabama Department of Archives and History (ADAH). While developing the Alabama Museum in 2012, ADAH assistant director, Debbie Pendleton, visited Skyline and obtained one of the Rock Store Museum's cotton-picking bags to be included in the ADAH exhibition. This long-term loan led to the inclusion of Skyline Farms in the "Forces of Change" gallery, part of the Alabama Voice permanent exhibit. In spring 2014, the Alabama Historical Association held its annual conference in Scottsboro. Conference events included a tour of local museums. The Rock Store Museum was one of the featured stops. About half of the conference's 250 attendees traveled Cumberland Mountain to see the museum's progress.[374]

[374] Dewayne Patterson, "Historical Conference Considered a Success," *Jackson County Sentinel*, April 17, 2014.

Reflections on the Skyline Farms Rock Store Museum Project

When thinking about my residency and research for my dissertation on Skyline Farms, there are a few things that I feel could have been done differently. First and foremost is the length of time away from the project. Various major life events kept me from steady research and prolonged my writing period. Aside from that obvious setback, and with hindsight, I now see that I should have engaged more members of the heritage board during my fieldwork days on site. While I spent extensive time with one volunteer, Cindy Rice, I did not get in the consistent face-to-face time with other volunteers. While Rice and I cataloged and assessed the museum collection, I explained best practices for collections management and label making. Resources were given to her for future use. In January 2012, I conducted a board workshop in on collections management. It was well received. However, I do not feel it was adequate for some of the board members, since these practices must be used consistently and collectively by all board members. The museum continues to deal with unsolicited items that are deemed "historic" by the donors. Often these items are given to a board member or volunteer without proper documentation or approval from the board. It is important that all volunteers and board members understand the museum's mission and have a basic understanding of the collection management policy. Now, Rice and a "faithful few" volunteers are left to monitor and work with collections.

Another obstacle to research was finding a central repository for state relief offices. Many items were found at the Atlanta branch of the National Archives and a few at the Alabama Department of Archives and History. While a few planning documents

were found, there was no common blueprint or outline for the creation and management of resettlement communities. Many decisions were based on specific communities' needs and were addressed when those needs arrived, sometimes it seemed with little planning. Thankfully, the use of progressive education appeared consistent in these communities, starting with the first homestead project, Arthurdale in West Virginia. Resettlement schools preferred hands-on experiential learning, often with mixed-age classrooms. Students worked in cooperative environments, learning how to work with others and sharing what they had learned. Learning occurred not only in the classroom, but within the community. If anything was consistent, it was the importance of educating project participants.

Finally, the Skyline project afforded me the opportunity to form a partnership with this passionate community. I had to navigate an interesting dynamic with community members that helped me later in my career. As mentioned, the residents of Skyline are a very proud people. I had to be mindful when working with a few volunteers, who sometimes were leery of an "outsider's" help. I likened it to the original colony members feeling resentful of perceived paternalism of government officials during the project years. Ultimately, I became a familiar face and never had major issues personally interacting with the community. This dynamic should be considered for those working with the communities in general. The importance of having shared inquiry and authority was made very clear during this project. Public historian Barbara Franco writes on community partnerships, "While we have a responsibility to monitor accuracy, our public partners are seeking understanding and meaning. It is a constant negotiation, based

on trust and mutual respect that sometimes takes a great deal of time and work that seems far from the historical practices we have been trained to follow."[375]

Thoughts for the Future

Public history practitioners view "small towns as essential partners in documenting and understanding American history and promoting civic engagement."[376] While the SFHA operates with a volunteer staff and without large financial resources, they have no shortage of local history expertise. With the addition of this dissertation, there are three graduate projects on Skyline Farms including a master's thesis written in 1978 by Joyce Kennamer and a dissertation by David Campbell written in the 1980s. Members of the board have scoured local libraries, newspapers, and deed offices to obtain primary sources for the museum's research collection. With the Library of Congress' digital collections, Farm Security Administration photographs of Skyline Farms are available to anyone with internet access. While public history work is based on in-depth historical knowledge and scholarship, further planning is essential for continued success. Long-term strategic planning is needed to safeguard the longevity of the SFHA and community buildings. The following areas should be considered:

[375] Katharine T. Corbett and Howard S. Miller, "A Shared Inquiry into Shared Inquiry," *The Public Historian* 28 (No. 1 2006): 20.

[376] Robbie Davis, "Public History in Small-Town America: Twenty Years of Museum on Main Street," *The Public Historian* 36 (No. 4 November 2014): 59.

Board Development

Consistent board development and training is important for a well working nonprofit board. Members must have a clear understanding of the organization's mission statement. The current by-laws should be reviewed to make sure they are consistent with contemporary goals. It is encouraged that the board create a member handbook, if one does not currently exist. The handbook should include board member position descriptions and clearly state obligations for individuals including any required volunteer hours, financial giving, fundraising, or in-kind donations. Board members should be elected with specific areas in mind, matching those with specific skills and community connections to museum needs.

Best practices for nonprofit boards can be found at the Alabama Association of Nonprofits website: alabamanonprofits.org. They administer the Standards of Excellence program which "aims to raise the level of accountability, transparency, and effectiveness of all nonprofit organizations to foster excellence and inspire trust. The Standards for Excellence code provides a framework and step-by-step guidelines to achieve a well-managed and responsibly governed organization."[377]

Professional Development Board Training

While a formal education in the museum field is not required, professional development in the field would be beneficial for all board members. There are many free

[377] Alabama Association of Nonprofits website, http://www.alabamanonprofits.org/standards-for-excellence/ (accessed October 1, 2020).

resources available online or affordable texts that may be utilized to better understand museum administration, including:

- Cinnamon Catlin-Legutko and Stacy Klinger, eds. *Small Museum Toolkit*. Lanham, MD: AltaMira Press, 2012.
- National Association of Interpretation. "Standards and Practices for Interpretive Methods." https://www.interpnet.com/docs/BP-Methods-Jan09.pdf
- Nina Simon. Museums 2.0 Blog. http://museumtwo.blogspot.com/
- National Parks Service Museum Handbook. https://www.doi.gov/museum/nps-handbooks
- National Parks Service Conserve-O-Grams. https://www.nps.gov/museum/publications/conserveogram/cons_toc.html#collectionpreservation
- American Association of State and Local History. https://learn.aaslh.org/

I would also suggest annual training for board members at state or regional conferences. This would allow the board to gain training on best practices and learn about similar efforts at other cultural institutions, as well as provide networking opportunities.

Volunteer Training and Expectations

Just as important as board training is volunteer training. Clear guidelines and expectations must be established for any volunteer program, including efforts to recruit new volunteers. Given the aging population of the museum's volunteer base, volunteer opportunities should be advertised and promoted within age-diverse groups to ensure the effectiveness and longevity of the program. The American Association for Museum Volunteers published a "Standards for Best Practices for Museum Volunteer Programs," and can be found at https://aamv.wildapricot.org/Standards-and-Best-Practices.

Collaboration and Community Engagement

The heritage board needs to clearly define the role of museum within the community, not only within the town limits of Skyline, but as it relates to other local, state and regional organizations. The efforts of the museum and the museum mission should be known by local municipalities, the county government, and other cultural institutions. Networking with these organizations provides for financial opportunities, board and volunteer recruitment, professional development, sharing of resources, and marketing opportunities. A board committee should be formed to organize these efforts. A short list of suggested organizations include:

- Skyline and Scottsboro municipalities, Jackson County government (community development grant opportunities)
- Jackson County businesses
- All Jackson County museums
- Alabama Department of Archives and History, specifically the Museum Field Services Division: 334-353-9152
- Alabama Mountain Lakes Tourism Association
- Alabama Museums Association
- Alabama Humanities Association

Long Term fundraising

Funding from just one source is not sustainable. Long-term fundraising should be included in any strategic planning. Since the museum currently does not charge admission, how it is going to support itself? It appears that most of the preservation costs have been covered by individual board members and/or volunteers. Though this is generous, it is not sustainable. Capital improvements should be addressed with clear fundraising goals. Some things to consider for future fundraising:

- Do funding desires match the museum's mission?
- What is the project's intended audience?
- Have relationships been built within the community for sponsorships and in-kind donations? How about donations from corporate foundations?
- Are there public funding opportunities? Many city, county, state, and national funders must be thought about in advance. Having a timeline for fundraising is important.
- Fundraising events – Is the cost and effort of the event worth the money raised? What is the return on investment?

The National Council on Nonprofits provides resources and guidelines for ethical fundraising on their website: https://www.councilofnonprofits.org/tools-resources/fundraising

With these guidelines and considerations moving forward, paired with the combined enthusiasm of both the Skyline Board Heritage Association and community volunteers, a strategic plan would provide an effective framework for continued success.

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