

Mississippi Department of Archives and History

# Learning Lagniappe: Educator Extras

## The Cooper Postcard Collection

PI/1992.0001

[http://www.mdah.ms.gov/arrec/digital\\_archives/series/cooper](http://www.mdah.ms.gov/arrec/digital_archives/series/cooper)

On November 13, 1991, the Mississippi Department of Archives and History acquired approximately 4600 color and black-and-white postcards from Forrest Lamar Cooper, a former Senior Customer Service Agent with Delta Air Lines. The theme of the collection is Mississippiana, and Cooper especially focused on scenes of small towns, mineral springs, agricultural and forestry activities, and railroads. The cards span the years 1892 to the 1940s and depict people and places from seventy-seven of Mississippi's eighty-two counties, and even three other states (Illinois, Massachusetts, and Tennessee).

### **Subjects that can be addressed within this Digital Archive:**

Development of cities and towns, early twentieth century Mississippi, Mississippi Gulf Coast, architecture, transportation, civic life, tourism, fishing industry, colleges and universities, monuments, agricultural industry, advertisements, and leisure activities.

### **Suggested Classroom Activities:**

Search for your town or county in the keyword search box and discuss as a class how similar or different the places found on the postcards look today.

*For more lessons and activities based on the Digital Archives and other collections visit the Classroom Materials page on our website at*

<http://www.mdah.ms.gov/new/learn/classroom-materials/lesson-plans-and-teaching-units/>

## Teacher Discussion Guide

Use images from the MDAH Digital Archive entitled “Cooper Postcard Collection,” (found at [http://www.mdah.ms.gov/arrec/digital\\_archives/series/cooper](http://www.mdah.ms.gov/arrec/digital_archives/series/cooper)) to lead your class in a discussion analyzing and interpreting the following images:

- 1. Type “greetings” in the “search for keyword” box.** These are souvenir postcards depicting popular places and activities from the early twentieth century from a given town or city. Select any of the postcards with multiple images. Consider the following questions:
  - a. What buildings or activities do you see in the postcards?
  - b. Why do you think some of these places or activities were chosen?
  - c. What popular places or activities would capture life in your hometown today?
- 2. Type “steamboat” in the “search for keyword” box.** Have your students analyze two or three of the postcards.
  - a. What other modes of transportation do you see in the images? What are their purposes? *Horses and carts, street cable cars; some of the carts are transporting goods similar to those on the steamboats (goods that are important to Mississippi’s economy) and others are moving people from place to place.*
  - b. What made steamboats important in the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries? What was their impact on city development? *Steamboats were a primary way to transport large amounts of goods during this time, particularly the movement of cotton to distributors and sellers. Cities located on rivers (Vicksburg, Natchez, and Memphis) grew to accommodate ports. People also began to utilize steamboats for travel.*
  - c. In what ways are goods transported today? *Automobiles, freight vehicles, expansion of railroads, airplanes.*
- 3. Type “football” in the “search for keyword” box.**
  - a. Note the date on the postcards. What differences or similarities do you see in these images from a football game today? Look at the athletes as well as the bystanders watching the game. Take notice of the team’s uniforms and observe the differences from present day uniforms requiring more safety equipment. *The crowd watching the game surrounds the team much like football games today, but there are no bleachers or stadiums for the onlookers.*
  - b. There is an image of “Jackson & Son Pharmacy” from Starkville, Mississippi (Item 3674). Use this image to discuss the use of athletes in advertisements and sponsorships. *The football player in this image is one of the managers of the store, and the use of his picture lends to the credibility of the store in hopes to attract customers. Athletes today are often given sponsorships to increase the credibility or image of a product.*
- 4. Type “school children” in the “search for keyword” box.** The four images showing groups of children (Items 2204, 2206, 3311, 3312) can be used to discuss changes in education in the state of Mississippi. Consider the following questions:
  - a. What do you see the children wearing? Are you required to wear a school uniform at your school? *The girls are wearing dresses and the boys have on button up shirts with pants, some even wearing jackets with a tie.*
  - b. In two of the images, groups of students are playing outside during a break in their school day. What are some of the activities you see? What games or activities do you play during recess?
  - c. What do you notice about the race of children in the images? *The children were divided into white schools and African American schools due to segregation, a practice that didn’t become illegal until the 1950s.*