

Franklin D. Roosevelt in Tupelo

Objectives:

Students will learn about President Franklin D. Roosevelt's 1934 visit to Tupelo, Mississippi, in the context of the Great Depression, the New Deal, and the creation of the Tennessee Valley Authority.

The *FDR in Tupelo* lesson plan is adaptable for grades 9-12.

Curricular Connections		
Social Studies	9th Grade Mississippi Studies	1f, 3a, 5a
	U.S. History from Reconstruction to Present	1a, b, 2
Common Core Language Arts	Grades 9-10	RH 1, 6, 9
	Grades 11-12	RH 1, 6, 9

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Objectives: Students will learn about President Franklin D. Roosevelt’s 1934 visit to Tupelo, Mississippi, in the context of the Great Depression, the New Deal, and the creation of the Tennessee Valley Authority.

Materials: *Viewing FDR in Tupelo* images and worksheet; *Memories of FDR in Tupelo* transcript of the oral history with Ms. Janelle McComb and worksheet; Internet; *Speech of FDR in Tupelo* transcript and worksheet.

Procedures:

Activity One: Viewing FDR in Tupelo

1. Give each student the *Viewing FDR in Tupelo* worksheet and image sheets.
2. Have the students examine the six images from the Hamilton Collection and answer the questions on the worksheet.
3. Discuss your findings as a class.

Activity Two: Memories of FDR in Tupelo

1. Give each student the *Memories FDR in Tupelo* worksheet and transcripts handouts.
2. Have the students read the transcript of the *oral history with Ms. Janelle McComb* <http://www.lib.usm.edu/legacy/spcol/coh/cohmccombj.html> and answer the questions on the worksheet.
3. Discuss your findings as a class.

Activity Three: Speech of FDR in Tupelo

1. Give each student the *Speech of FDR in Tupelo* worksheet and transcripts handouts.
2. Have the students read the transcript of Roosevelt’s speech give in Tupelo in 1934. <http://www.presidency.ucsb.edu/ws/index.php?pid=14782> and answer the questions on the worksheet.
3. Discuss your findings as a class.

Activity Four: Comparing Accounts

Using the photographs, oral history, and speech, compare and contract the multiple points of view of this particular event. Discuss the following as a class.

1. What are the short comings of each medium?
2. Why is it beneficial to have multiple points of view of one event?
3. How does that apply to current events?
4. What are some other sources you could use to investigate this event?

Additional Resources:

- *Mississippi History Now*: “The Rural Electrification of Northeast Mississippi” <http://mshistorynow.mdah.state.ms.us/articles/376/the-rural-electrification-of-northeast-mississippi>
- *Northeast Daily Journal* “The Day FDR Came to Town” <http://djournal.com/opinion/the-day-fdr-came-to-town/>
- “Tupelo, TVA to Celebrate Shared Heritage” <http://djournal.com/news/tupelo-tva-celebrate-shared-heritage/>

Extension Activities:

- **Yesterday and Today:** When FDR visited Tupelo to promote the TVA, not everyone agreed with his views. Some were even opposed to electricity? What federally-supported programs have faced opposition today? (example: ObamaCare, Common Core, etc.)
- **Your Words or Mine?:** Have students research the author of FDR’s Tupelo speech. Did the president write it himself or did he (like today’s modern politicians) have a speech writer on his staff? Have students consider how media outlets such as radio and television have changed what politicians say to the public.

Viewing FDR in Tupelo Images



Images: 866 (left), 867 (lower left), and 868 (lower right) from the Hamilton Collection. MDAH, Archives and Records Services.





Images 869 (left) and 870 (right) from the Hamilton Collection. MDAH, Archives and Records Services.



Image 871 (above) from the Hamilton Collection. MDAH, Archives and Records Services.

Luther Hamilton Photograph Collection, images 866–871.

http://mdah.state.ms.us/arrec/digital_archives/series/hamilton

“11/34,” President Franklin Roosevelt’s Nov. 18, 1934 appearance in Tupelo.

Photographer: Luther M. Hamilton, Jr.

1934

Tupelo, Mississippi

Lee County

Name: _____ Date: _____

Viewing *FDR in Tupelo* Worksheet

Examine images 866-871 from the Hamilton Collection. Answer the following questions based on your observations of the images.

1. Who attended President Franklin D. Roosevelt's speech in Tupelo? _____

2. By examining the images what does the atmosphere surrounding the event appear to be? Use specific details from the photographs to support your answer.

3. Are there any details that reveal why President Roosevelt visited Tupelo in 1934? Support your answer with specific details from the photographs.

Name: _____ Date: _____

Memories of FDR in Tupelo Transcript

Oral history with Ms. Janelle McComb F341.5 .M57 vol. 746, pt. 1. Center for Oral History and Cultural Heritage at the University of Southern Mississippi. <http://www.lib.usm.edu/legacy/spcol/coh/cohmccombj.html>

Biography

Mrs. Janelle McComb was born in Lauderdale County, and moved to Tupelo, Mississippi, when she was two weeks old. Her parents were Ralph and Kathleen Patey. She married Roy McComb and taught school in Lee County, Mississippi, for two years, then worked at Monts Tobacco Company for forty years.

In 1936, Mrs. McComb survived the Tupelo tornado in her grandfather's storm cellar, then witnessed the wreckage left in Tupelo in the wake of that storm. As a child, she enjoyed the annual Mississippi / Alabama Fair and Dairy Show. Mrs. McComb enjoyed the privilege of a personal friendship with Elvis Presley. She chaired the Elvis Presley Memorial Foundation at Elvis Presley Park for twenty-five years and served on Alpha House, a boys home, for twenty-eight years. Additionally she served on two other civic clubs.

Mr. and Mrs. McComb have one son who is the planning commissioner of a large town near New York City. Roy and Janelle McComb live in Tupelo, Mississippi.

Interview excerpt related to FDR's visit to Tupelo. Complete transcript available online.

This is an interview for the Mississippi Oral History Program at The University of Southern Mississippi. The interview is with Ms. Janelle McComb and is being conducted on February 20, 2000. The interviewer is Marty Ramage.

Ramage: Now, let me ask you this. November 18, 1934, in Tupelo, Mississippi, the president, President Roosevelt came. Do you remember that?

McComb: I certainly do. I was standing on the corner of a Red Lawhon service station with my dad. We didn't go to the ball field, but Daddy carried us all up to see history. And they were first, I guess, the car did not have a top, it was turned back, if I remember that correctly. And I thought that was the greatest thing in my whole life. I didn't go when Truman came, when Bush came or when anybody else. But to see President Franklin Delano Roosevelt, and I think the thing that Dad, Granddaddy impressed upon us was the fact that he didn't let a physical impediment keep him from being the highest—holding the highest office in the land. *(Telephone rings.)*

(There is an interruption in the interview.)

Ramage: So, President Roosevelt came to town.

McComb: He came to town, and—*(telephone rings.)*

(There is an interruption in the interview.)

Ramage: So, when President Roosevelt came to town, was everybody excited in Tupelo?

McComb: Oh, very excited. And Natchez Trace Villas, he was going to visit a home there. And it happened that the brother [and sister I went to school with was the home he visited. They lived at the Natchez Trace Parkway

homes, federally funded homes for federal park employees].

Ramage: *(Inaudible)* Natchez Trace Park *(inaudible)*.

McComb: Park, right. And he was going to visit a home. No one knew exactly which home he was going to visit, but till he got there, and it happened to be the home of two of my classmates, a brother and sister. And we couldn't wait till they got to school the next day because they got to go through all the rooms. And we just wanted to touch them that they had *(laughter)*—the president of the United States had been in their home. But—

Ramage: Do you remember seeing President Roosevelt in the car?

McComb: In the car. But I did not go; Dad did not take us to the ball field.

Ramage: Where he spoke.

McComb: Right. But I can remember that my granddaddy's store, as many stores did, was a voting place for people to vote. And Granddaddy was always a politician. And I think one of the biggest thrills I ever got, Bilbo would visit Mitchell Court[?]. And they were having his birthday there. Granddaddy closed. Nothing stopped Granddaddy from grand-kids and politics. So he closed that store, got my brother and I by the hand, my grandmother; we went down to Mitchell Court to hear Bilbo speak. And he did wear the proverbial red suspenders. Granddaddy said, "I want you to look at his suspenders." But he could make a speech.

Ramage: Bilbo could?

McComb: Bilbo could make a speech that you'd just—I can understand, you didn't have to like him, and my granddaddy would always go saying, "I wouldn't vote for that son of a gun." By the time we got back home, he was ready to vote for him fifty times. *(Laughter.)* He had a charisma about him, and he predicted so many things, now, this era, that we're facing. But he was quite a politician, and he just completely captivated his audience. And so we sort of grew up on—and as we would walk, Granddaddy would say, "This is your heritage. If you don't vote, don't ever complain about any situation that evolves from it, because you're the guilty person."

(End of tape one, side one. The interview continues on tape one, side two.)

Name: _____ Date: _____

Memories of FDR in Tupelo Worksheet

Read the transcript of Ms. Janelle McComb's oral history, archived at the Center for Oral History and Cultural Heritage at USM. Answer the questions below based on your observations of Ms. McComb's memories of FDR's visit to Tupelo. <http://www.lib.usm.edu/legacy/spcol/coh/cohmccombj.html>

1. What does McComb remember about this event? _____

2. How old do you think she was? Cite examples to support your answer.

3. How does she describe the atmosphere in Tupelo surrounding the President's visit? _____

3. Why was Roosevelt in Tupelo according to Ms. McComb? _____

Name: _____ **KEY** _____ Date: _____

Memories of FDR in Tupelo Worksheet

Read the transcript of Ms. Janelle McComb's oral history, archived at the Center for Oral History and Cultural Heritage at USM. Answer the questions below based on your observations of Ms. McComb's memories of FDR's visit to Tupelo. <http://www.lib.usm.edu/legacy/spcol/coh/cohmccombj.html>

1. What does McComb remember about this event? _____

McComb remembers standing with her father "on the corner of a Red Lawhon service station" and seeing FDR's car.

2. How old do you think she was? Cite examples to support your answer.

McComb was school age. She mentions that FDR visited a home and that "no one knew exactly which home he was going to visit, but till he got there, and it happened to be the home of two of my classmates, a brother and sister."

3. How does she describe the atmosphere in Tupelo surrounding the President's visit? _____

It was exciting and historic. She mentions other presidents who visited later (page 7), but that "...Daddy carried us all up to see history. And they were first, I guess, the car did not have a top, it was turned back, if I remember that correctly. And I thought that was the greatest thing in my whole life. I didn't go when Truman came, when Bush came or when anybody else. But to see President Franklin Delano Roosevelt, and I think the thing that Dad, Granddaddy impressed upon us was the fact that he didn't let a physical impediment keep him from being the highest—holding the highest office in the land."

3. Why was Roosevelt in Tupelo according to Ms. McComb? _____

FDR was in Tupelo to visit the Natchez Trace Villas, "federally funded homes for federal park employees."

Name: _____ Date: _____

Speech of FDR in Tupelo Transcript

Franklin D. Roosevelt

189 - Remarks at Tupelo, Mississippi, November 18, 1934

Public Papers and Addresses of Franklin D. Roosevelt

Franklin D. Roosevelt, 1934

Location: United States, Mississippi

The American Presidency Project

<http://www.presidency.ucsb.edu/ws/index.php?pid=14782>

Senator Harrison, Governor Conner, Mr. Mayor, my friends:

I shall not make a speech to you today because we are assembled on this glorious Sunday morning more as neighbors than as anything else.

I have had a very wonderful three days; and everywhere that I have gone, the good people have come as neighbors to talk with me, and they have not come by the thousands—they have come literally by the acres.

This is the first time in my life that I have had the privilege of seeing this section of the State of Mississippi. Many, many years ago, when Pat Harrison and I were almost boys, I became acquainted with his stamping ground down on the Gulf. Today I am especially glad to come into the northern part of the State.

Two years ago, in 1932, during the campaign, and again in January, 1933, I came through Kentucky—through the Tennessee Valley—and what I saw on those trips, what I saw of human beings, made the tears come to my eyes. The great outstanding thing to me for these past three days has been the change in the looks on people's faces. It has not been only a physical thing. It has not been the contrast between what was actually a scarcity of raiment or a lack of food two years ago and better clothing and more food today. Rather it is a something in people's faces. I think you understand what I mean. There was not much hope in those days. People were wondering what was going to come to this country. And yet today I see not only hope, but I see determination and a knowledge that all is well with the country, and that we are Coming back.

I suppose that you good people know a great deal more of the efforts that we have been making in regard to the work of the Tennessee Valley Authority than I do, because you have seen its application in your own counties and your towns and your own homes; and, therefore, it would be like carrying coals to Newcastle for me to tell you about what has been done.

But perhaps in referring to it I can use you as a text—a text that may be useful to many other parts of the Nation; because people's eyes are upon you and because what you are doing here is going to be copied in every State of the Union before we get through.

We recognize that there will be a certain amount of—what shall I say?—rugged opposition to this development, but I think we recognize also that the opposition is fading as the weeks and months go by—fading in the light of practical experience.

I cite certain figures for the benefit of the gentlemen of the press, who have come hither from many climes. I am told that from March of this year, when you started using T.V.A. power, the consumption of power for residential purposes has risen from 41,000 kilowatts to 89,000 kilowatts—an increase of—26 percent. I understand that from the financial point of view, in spite of various fairy tales that have been spread in other parts of the country, your power system is still paying taxes to the municipality. That is worth remembering. Furthermore, I understand that, as a whole, it is a remarkable business success.

I talk about those figures first, for it has been so often wrongly alleged that this yardstick which we are using could not be applied to private businesses, because a Government yardstick receives so many favors, because it is absolved from paying this and paying that and paying the other thing. Well, we are proving in this Tennessee Valley that by using good business methods we can instruct a good many business men in the country.

And there is another side of it. I have forgotten the exact figures and I cannot find them in this voluminous report at this moment, but the number of new refrigerators that have been, put in, for example, means something besides just plain dollars and cents. It means a greater human happiness. The introduction of electric cookstoves and all the other dozens of things which, when I was in the Navy, we used to call “gadgets,” is improving human life. They are things not especially new so far as invention is concerned, but more and more are they considered necessities in our American life in every part of the country.

And I have been interested this morning in seeing these new homesteads—not just the buildings, not just the land that they are on, not just the excellent landscaping of the trees among which those homes have been set, but rather the opportunities that those homes are giving to families to improve their standard of living.

And finally, my friends, there is one significant thing about all that you are doing here in Tupelo, that others are doing in Corinth, in Athens and Norris, and the various other places where accomplishment can be seen today—aye, the most important thing of all I think is that it is being done by the communities themselves. This is not coming from Washington. It is coming from you. You are not being Federalized. We still believe in the community; and things are going to advance in this country exactly in proportion to the community effort. This is not regimentation; it is community rugged individualism. It means no longer the kind of rugged individualism that allows an individual to do this, that or the other thing that will hurt his neighbors. He is forbidden to do that from now on. But he is going to be encouraged in every known way from the national capital and the State capital and the county seat to use his individualism in cooperation with his neighbors' individualism so that he and his neighbors together may improve their lot in life.

Yes, I have been thrilled by these three days, thrilled not only in the knowledge of practical accomplishment but thrilled also in the deep-seated belief that the people of this Nation understand what we are trying to do, are cooperating with us and have made up their minds that we are going to do it.

And so, in saying “Good-bye” to you for a short time—because I am coming back—I ask all of you, throughout the length and breadth of the Tennessee Valley and those areas which form an economic portion of that Valley, to remember that the responsibility for success lies very largely with you, and that the eyes of the Nation are upon you. I, for one, am confident that you are going to give to the Nation an example which will be a benefit not only to yourselves, but to the whole one hundred and thirty millions of Americans in every part of the land.

Name: _____ Date: _____

Speech of FDR in Tupelo Worksheet

Read the transcript of President Roosevelt's 1934 speech in Tupelo and answer the questions below.

1. What changes has Roosevelt seen in the people of the Tennessee Valley in the past two years? _____

2. Based in your reading, what industry is the Tennessee Valley Authority (TVA) a part of? Give examples to support your reasoning.

3. How are the people benefiting from the TVA? What examples does Roosevelt give? _____

4. Reread the speech and note Roosevelt's use of language. What is his position or point of view on the TVA? Identify examples from the speech that support your answer.

Name: _____ **KEY** _____ Date: _____

Speech of FDR in Tupelo Worksheet

Read the transcript of President Roosevelt's 1934 speech in Tupelo and answer the questions below.

1. What changes has Roosevelt seen in the people of the Tennessee Valley in the past two years? _____

“The great outstanding thing to me for these past three days has been the change in the looks on people’s faces. It has not been only a physical thing. It has not been the contrast between what was actually a scarcity of raiment or a lack of food two years ago and better clothing and more food today.... today I see not only hope, but I see determination and a knowledge that all is well with the country, and that we are Coming back.”

2. Based in your reading, what industry is the Tennessee Valley Authority (TVA) a part of? Give examples to support your reasoning.

Electricity and the power industry “I am told that from March of this year, when you started using T.V.A. power, the consumption of power for residential purposes has risen from 41,000 kilowatts to 89,000 kilowatts—an increase of—26 percent. I understand that from the financial point of view, in spite of various fairy tales that have been spread in other parts of the country, your power system is still paying taxes to the municipality.”

3. How are the people benefiting from the TVA? What examples does Roosevelt give? _____

“...the number of new refrigerators that have been, put in, for example, means something besides just plain dollars and cents. It means a greater human happiness. The introduction of electric cookstoves and all the other dozens of things which, when I was in the Navy, we used to call “gadgets,” is improving human life.”

“And I have been interested this morning in seeing these new homesteads—not just the buildings, not just the land that they are on, not just the excellent landscaping of the trees among which those homes have been set, but rather the opportunities that those homes are giving to families to improve their standard of living.”

4. Reread the speech and note Roosevelt’s use of language. What is his position or point of view on the TVA? Identify examples from the speech that support your answer.

“I understand that from the financial point of view, in spite of various fairy tales that have been spread in other parts of the country, your power system is still paying taxes to the municipality.”

“And finally, my friends, there is one significant thing about all that you are doing here in Tupelo,.... You are not being Federalized.”

**MISSISSIPPI DEPARTMENT OF HISTORY LESSON PLANS
TEACHER EVALUATION**

COMPLETE BOTH SIDES AND PLEASE MAIL OR FAX TO THE ADDRESS ON THE NEXT PAGE. THANK YOU!

TEACHER NAME _____

SCHOOL NAME & ADDRESS _____

EMAIL (OPTIONAL) _____

TOTAL NUMBER OF STUDENTS _____ GRADE LEVEL _____

LESSON TITLE *Franklin D. Roosevelt in Tupelo* _____

1. In your opinion, did this unit elicit better than average student response; if so, how?
2. Which segments of the unit exceeded your students' attention span?
3. Will this unit be of assistance to you in developing future classroom activities; if so, how?
4. How did this unit add to your earlier teaching on the same subject?
5. Would this teaching unit be handier to use as a:
___multi-day unit ___multi-week unit ___other
6. Were the activities and lessons appropriate for your students? How?

Please rate the following lesson materials and activities by circling the appropriate number.

4=excellent, 3=good, 2=average, 1=inadequate

<u>Directions and Notes</u>	<u>4</u>	<u>3</u>	<u>2</u>	<u>1</u>
<u>Curricular Connections</u>	<u>4</u>	<u>3</u>	<u>2</u>	<u>1</u>
<u>Student Worksheets</u>	<u>4</u>	<u>3</u>	<u>2</u>	<u>1</u>
<u>Interactive Activities</u>	<u>4</u>	<u>3</u>	<u>2</u>	<u>1</u>
<u>Historic Images</u>	<u>4</u>	<u>3</u>	<u>2</u>	<u>1</u>
<u>Historic Transcripts</u>	<u>4</u>	<u>3</u>	<u>2</u>	<u>1</u>

<u>Activity One</u>	<u>4</u>	<u>3</u>	<u>2</u>	<u>1</u>
<u>Activity Two</u>	<u>4</u>	<u>3</u>	<u>2</u>	<u>1</u>
<u>Activity Three</u>	<u>4</u>	<u>3</u>	<u>2</u>	<u>1</u>
<u>Activity Four</u>	<u>4</u>	<u>3</u>	<u>2</u>	<u>1</u>
<u>Additional Resources</u>	<u>4</u>	<u>3</u>	<u>2</u>	<u>1</u>
<u>Overall Lesson</u>	<u>4</u>	<u>3</u>	<u>2</u>	<u>1</u>

We would appreciate any additional comments on this teaching unit and any suggestions for improvement.
Comments may be entered in the space below.

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