

## MISSISSIPPI STATE DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH PHOTOGRAPH ALBUM

SERIES 2176/BOX 8773

<http://da.mdah.ms.gov/series/msdh/2176>

The series contains a photograph album of sixty-eight black and white 5 x 7 inch prints depicting general health activities throughout Mississippi. The prints are arranged by subject: State Tuberculosis Sanatorium, County Health Camp for Tuberculosis Patients, Medical and Popular Health Education, Sanitation, Malaria, Child Health Conferences, Dental Hygiene, Maternity Center, Midwifery, Protection against Communicable Disease, Child Health Day Program, and Home Visits by Public Health Nurse. Most of the photographs are not dated but are believed to have been taken in the 1930s.

**Note:** This activity can be done as a full class discussion or as individual student work. A fillable PDF student version is provided at <https://www.mdah.ms.gov/learning-lagniappes>.

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

- Public health in early twentieth-century Mississippi
- Midwifery
- Tuberculosis and tuberculosis sanatoriums and preventoriums
- Health education
- Sanitation
- Mosquito prevention
- Proper methods of water drainage
- Dental hygiene
- Communicable diseases
- Home visits by public health nurses

### Curricular Connections

Below are key standards featured in this Learning Lagniappe.

### Mississippi Studies

- MS.7.1: Evaluate the impact of Reconstruction on Mississippi's social structure.
- MS.7.3: Analyze Reconstruction reforms that contributed to the social and economic realities for African Americans during the Jim Crow Era in Mississippi.
- MS.10.4: Compare types of services offered by local and state government to meet the needs of Mississippians.

### U.S. Government

- USG.1.1: Evaluate the fundamental worth and dignity of the individual.
- USG.4.7: Compare the major responsibilities and sources of revenue for state and local governments.
- USG.5.5: Assess the statement "It is every citizen's right to be treated equally under the law."

**Directions:** Use items from the MDAH Digital Archive entitled Mississippi State Department of Health Photograph Album found at <http://da.mdah.ms.gov/series/msdh/2176> to lead your class in analyzing and interpreting the following items.

**Note:** Navigate to items by going to <http://da.mdah.ms.gov/series/msdh/2176>, clicking on the first picture, and then entering the desired item number in the box below the image.

**Questions:**

1. **Navigate to Item 20 (top), Item 45 (bottom), and Item 47 (top).** The first image shows a walkway filled with water and debris in front of a home. The second image shows a nurse visiting a child at home. The third image shows a nurse using a plank bridge to visit with a person sitting in the window. What do all these homes have in common? How could this lead to disease?

**Answer:** All the homes are adjacent to standing water. Standing water could breed mosquitos that could transmit malaria, dengue fever, and other diseases. It also harbors other types of bacteria and parasites. Standing water is oftentimes polluted with animal and human feces, making it dangerous to drink.

2. **Navigate to Item 20.** This page shows a walkway to a home before and after a drainage ditch is added. Discuss the change in environment with the addition of a drainage ditch. How would the ditch have changed the living conditions of the residents nearby?

**Answer:** The ditch would decrease the amount of standing water in the area, lowering the risk of disease-transmitting mosquitos and cross-contamination of drinking water.

3. **Navigate to Item 18 (bottom).** The caption on the bottom image reads “Making screen doors on a plantation.” This could imply that working hours were used to make and install screen doors and windows on the homes of tenant farmers. If this was the case, what would have been the motivation of the plantation owner to allow or finance this installation?

**Answer:** The investment (in time and money) of installing screens in the homes of employees would have been far less than the investment of time if an employee became ill from a preventable disease spread by mosquitos.

4. **Navigate to Item 31 and Item 35.** The first page shows images of white women being assessed in the maternity center at a health facility. The second page shows African American children recently vaccinated standing on a porch. Discuss how segregation and racism affected health care in Mississippi in the 1930s.

**Answer:** Segregation usually meant that African Americans were not able to use health care facilities provided by government funding. They were often assessed and treated at home by midwives or public health nurses who would administer vaccinations but lacked equipment necessary to properly treat their illnesses. At times, diseases that affected more African Americans than white Americans were largely ignored by politicians and even physicians. Oftentimes, these diseases were caused by poor diet or living conditions and (because many were poor sharecroppers) African Americans had a higher incidence of certain diseases than white Americans.

5. **Navigate to Item 37.** This page shows images of nurses assisting patients at outdoor health clinics. What would have been the pros and cons of holding a health clinic outside in the 1930s?

**Answer:**

Pros: No need to erect or maintain a permanent building. Ability to travel to patients who may not have traveled to a permanent clinic. Public display of health care could encourage others to participate (get vaccinated, improve their diet or hygiene, etc.).

Cons: No ability to provide long-term care to patients in a hospital setting. Restricted by weather or climate changes. Only have access to medical supplies and equipment that can be easily transported.