



# People of the Tennessee River

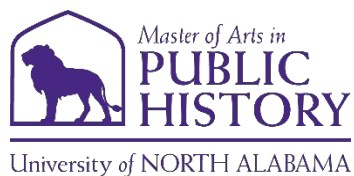
## Educator Resource Packet

Muscle Shoals National Heritage Area

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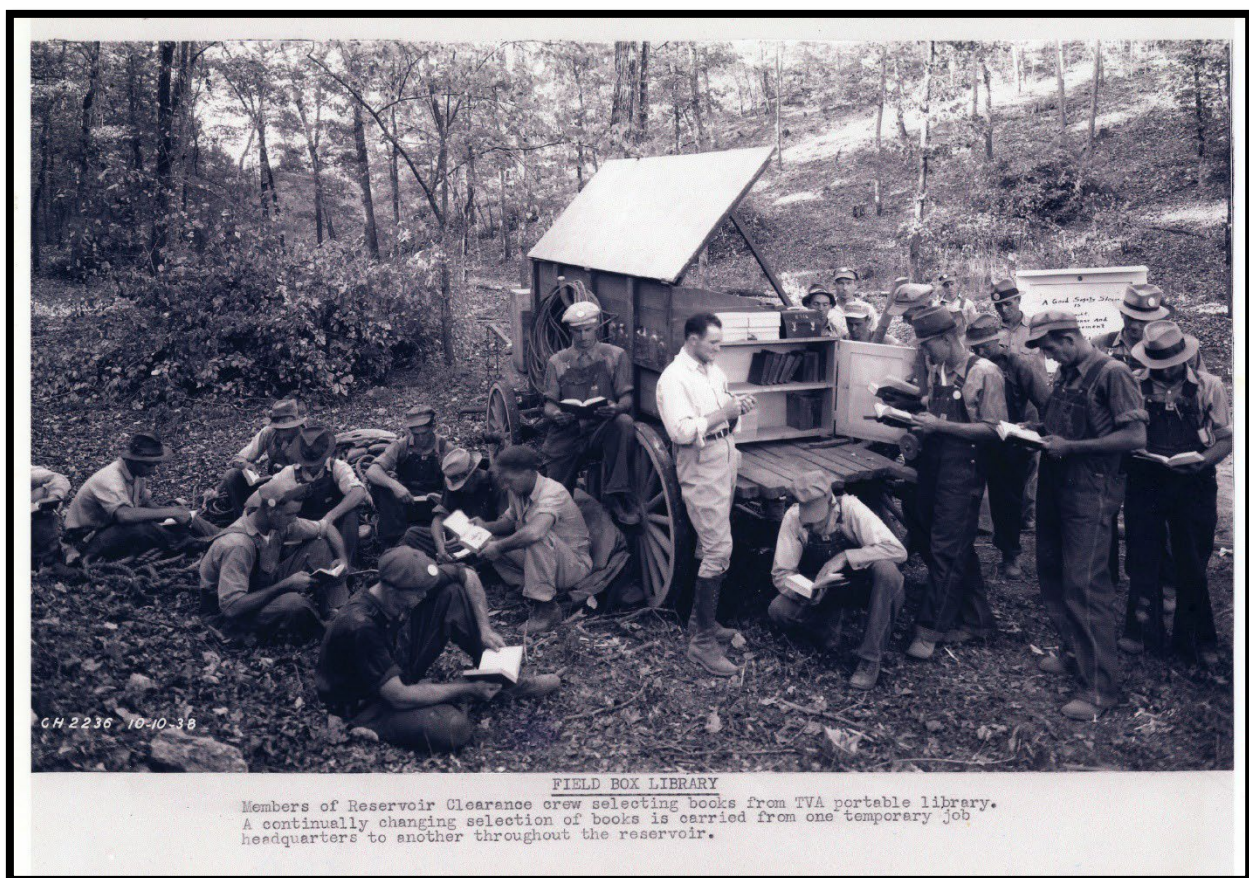
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## Introduction

This curriculum packet is designed to provide resources and suggest activities for fourth-grade classes studying the history of the Tennessee River and its impact on the north Alabama counties of Lauderdale, Limestone, Colbert, Lawrence, Franklin and Morgan. Many of the activities may be adapted for use with students at higher or lower grade levels or for use with individual students. Teachers should feel free to select from those parts of the packet that best suit their classroom needs.



TVA Portable Library, UNA Collier Library Archives and Special Collections.



## Background Information

The Tennessee River was an important resource for Native Americans long before the arrival of the first European-American settlers in the Tennessee Valley. The earliest known culture to inhabit the region was the nomadic Paleo culture, which existed from about 10,000 B.C. to 8,000 B.C. The rocky shoals of northwestern Alabama, with their abundance of mussels and other shellfish, provided a particularly valuable source of food for the later Archaic culture of hunter-gatherers, which developed around 5,000 B.C. Archaic peoples discarded mussel shells along the banks of the Tennessee over time, resulting in the formation of large shell mounds. Mounds were also a defining feature of the agricultural Mississippi culture, which emerged around 1,000 A.D. Commonly known as “mound builders,” the people of the Mississippi period constructed the largest earthen structures in North America at that time.



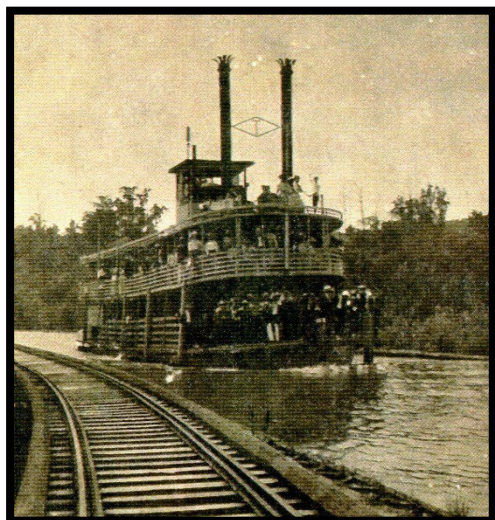
Tennessee River

During the late eighteenth century, when the first European-American settlers arrived in northwest Alabama, the Tennessee River Valley was populated primarily by the Cherokee and Chickasaw tribes. The two tribes had united in 1714 to drive the rival Shawnee tribe out of the region, establishing a boundary between their respective territories at what would later be called the Muscle Shoals. This eighty-mile-long section of the Tennessee River was known for its jagged, surface-level rocks and extensive rapids, which made it very difficult for boats to navigate.

Native resistance to white encroachment was initially spearheaded by Dragging Canoe, who led the Chickamauga Cherokee faction in raiding white settlements. Their cause was ultimately lost, however: the Cherokee tribe ceded its lands to the U.S. government in 1816, and the Chickasaw followed suit a year later, paving the way for permanent white settlement of the region.



Dragging Canoe



Steamboat  
on the Tennessee River near  
Florence, Alabama

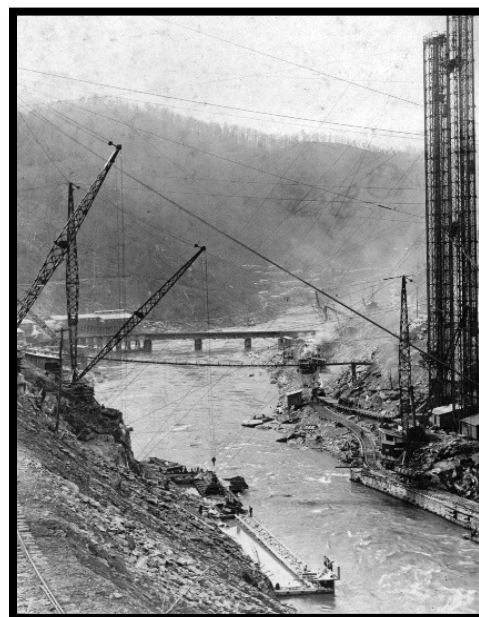
Many of the earliest European-American settlers of the Tennessee Valley were cotton farmers from Virginia and the Carolinas, attracted to the region by its fertile soil. Their crops were shipped by boat along the Tennessee River to markets in other parts of the country, but navigating the rocky Muscle Shoals remained difficult and hazardous. In 1828, a survey of the Muscle Shoals commissioned by Secretary of War John C. Calhoun recommended building a canal to facilitate navigation around the shoals. Construction of the 15-mile-long Muscle Shoals Canal began in 1831. Unfortunately, no culverts were built to divert tributary streams away from the canal, and it quickly filled with sediment, which rendered the canal unnavigable when water levels were low. The project was declared a failure and abandoned in 1837.

The transportation of crops grown in the Tennessee Valley was made easier during the 1830s by the establishment of the Tuscumbia, Courtland and Decatur Railroad, the first railroad west of the Allegheny Mountains. By 1855, railroads connected Tuscumbia to Nashville by way of Decatur. This resulted in Decatur becoming a major transportation center and experiencing rapid growth. Decatur's status as a rail center gave it a strategic importance during the Civil War, and it was occupied at various times by both Union and Confederate forces. The city first fell to Union troops in 1862. Union forces abandoned Decatur later that year, destroying its railroad bridge and much of the railroad itself. When Union troops occupied Decatur again, in 1864, General Grenville Dodge ordered residents to leave and destroyed all but four of the city's buildings.



Union Station  
in Decatur, Alabama

Meanwhile, traversing the Muscle Shoals by boat remained a treacherous business, even when water levels were high. During the 1870s, construction resumed on the abandoned Muscle Shoals Canal project of the 1830s with the goal of opening the Tennessee River to steam navigation between Knoxville, Tennessee and Paducah, Kentucky. Construction of the canal was completed in 1890. The resulting improvements in river navigation combined with the growth of railroads to create an unprecedented transportation network for the region's natural resources. As a result, cotton production rebounded quickly following the Civil War and the regional economy began to diversify. Meanwhile, cities such as Florence and Tusculumbia experienced rapid growth, evidenced by the construction of schools, churches and homes as well as municipal and commercial buildings.



Construction of the  
Muscle Shoals Canal

A hydroelectric dam at Muscle Shoals was first proposed in the U.S. Congress in 1898 by former Confederate general Joseph Wheeler. Two decades later, during World War I, the federal government began construction of Wilson Dam with the goal of regulating water levels and supplying

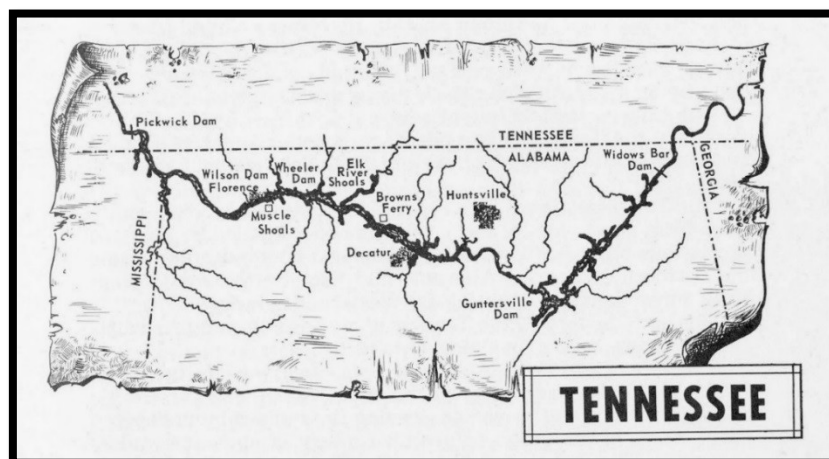


Village One

hydroelectric power for two nitrate plants near the Muscle Shoals. The nitrate produced by these plants was intended for use in manufacturing explosives for the war effort, but the war ended before the plants became operational. At the same time, the government built Village One in Sheffield to house workers from nearby Nitrate Plant #1. The planned community, which includes eighty-five family homes and a schoolhouse, is notable for the stucco exteriors and red tile roofs of its buildings, and for its Liberty Bell-shaped street plan.

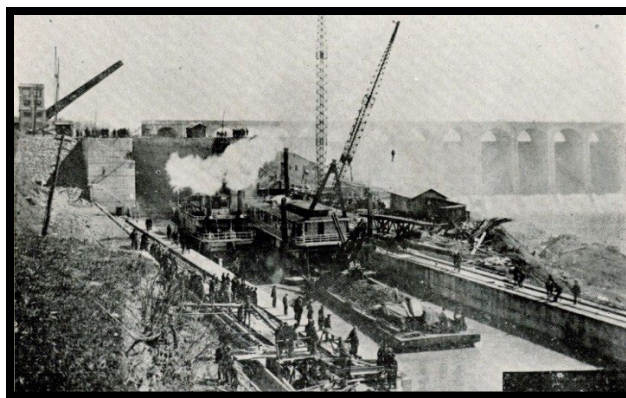
The Tennessee Valley Authority (TVA), established in 1933, was one of the most significant programs of President Franklin D. Roosevelt's New Deal. The primary goals of TVA were to control flooding on the Tennessee River, to harness its waters for the production of hydroelectric power, and to improve the overall quality of life in the region through progressive management of natural resources. Additional goals of TVA included fertilizer production, improvement of river navigation and educating farmers in modern agricultural practices. By 1946, TVA power plants were providing electricity to 668,000 local households.





Tennessee Valley Authority  
Dams along the Tennessee River

Thanks to the improvements in river navigation and cheap, abundant electrical power provided by TVA, north Alabama gradually shifted from an agricultural economy to a manufacturing-based industrial economy. By 1940, there were forty-one industrial plants and six wholesale warehouses in Decatur alone, manufacturing textiles, fertilizer, brick, boats, steel, and a host of other products. During World War II, two of the city's biggest industrial employers, Decatur Iron and Steel Company and the Ingalls Ship Building Company, built boats, barges and ferries for use by the Allied armed forces.



Wilson Dam

The Tennessee River continues to have a major impact on the lives of north Alabamians. Abundant hydroelectricity has attracted dozens of industries to the region since World War II, and many companies still use the river to transport goods and materials.

Sources:

Carolyn Barske Crawford and Brian Murphy, *The Tennessee River in Northwest Alabama*

Muscle Shoals National Heritage Area, "MSNHA Management Plan: Background Report"

Harry Wallace, "History of the Shoals," *Times Daily*, February 25, 1999

Encyclopedia of Alabama: <http://www.encyclopediaofalabama.org>



## Significant Places

Courtland is a town in Lawrence County and part of the Decatur Metropolitan Area. Reportedly built on the site of a former Native American village, the town was incorporated in 1819 and initially settled by wealthy cotton planters from Virginia, Tennessee, Georgia, and the Carolinas. The cotton farmers of Courtland were instrumental in raising funds for the construction in 1832 of the Tuscumbia, Courtland and Decatur Railroad, which allowed them to bypass the treacherous Muscle Shoals in shipping their crops to outside markets. Several of Courtland's earliest buildings survive to this day, and the Federal-style architecture of these structures reflects the town's formative links with Virginia and other states of the upper South.



Rocky Hill  
in Courtland, Alabama

Decatur, popularly known as "The River City", is the county seat of Morgan County. Incorporated in 1826, the city is named for Stephen Decatur, a military hero during the War of 1812. Decatur's location along the Tennessee River, together with its historic position as a railroad hub, helped



"Steamboat Bill"  
Hudson Memorial  
Bridge  
in Decatur, Alabama

make it one of Alabama's fastest growing cities during the nineteenth century and gave it a special strategic significance during the Civil War. By the end of the war, Union troops had destroyed Decatur's railroad bridge and all but four of its buildings, and the city suffered a major outbreak of yellow fever in 1877. Decatur began to recover during the late 1880s, however, and became a major center of economic activity following the creation of TVA in 1933. By 1940, there were forty-one industrial plants and six wholesale warehouses in Decatur manufacturing textiles, fertilizer, brick, boats, steel and other products. During World War II, two of the city's biggest industrial employers, Decatur Iron and Steel Company and the Ingalls Ship Building Company, built boats, barges and ferries for use by the Allied armed forces.

Florence is the county seat of Lauderdale County and the largest of the four cities that together make up the Shoals area. Situated along the Tennessee River at the foot of the once-hazardous Muscle Shoals, Florence was surveyed for the Cypress Land Company in 1818 by Italian surveyor Ferdinand Sannoner, who named it after Florence, Italy. Incorporated in 1826, Florence is considered northwestern Alabama's primary economic hub and hosts a number of annual cultural events, including the W.C. Handy Music Festival and the Alabama Renaissance Faire. Important landmarks in Florence include the childhood home of musician and composer W.C. Handy and the Rosenbaum House, designed by the renowned architect Frank Lloyd Wright.



Court Street  
in Florence, Alabama

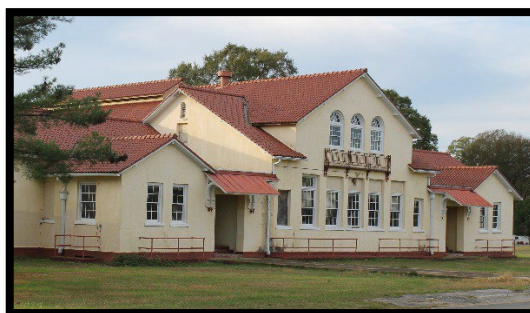
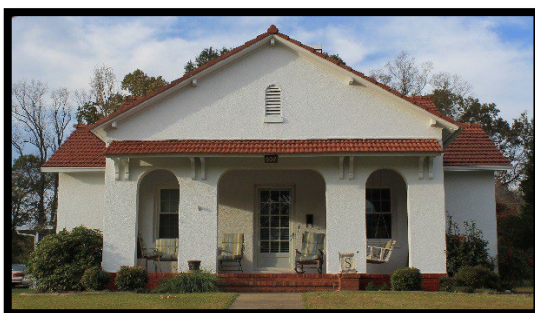
Muscle Shoals is the largest city in Colbert County and the second largest city in the Shoals area. The site of what would become the city of Muscle Shoals consisted primarily of farmland when, prior to World War I, the U.S. government began construction of Wilson Dam to power a pair of nitrate plants for munitions production. However, these plants were not completed in time to contribute to the war effort as intended. Henry Ford subsequently announced plans to buy the unfinished dam and use it to establish an automobile manufacturing center. Although Congress would ultimately reject Ford's proposal, his announcement generated much excitement and led to rapid population growth, resulting in the incorporation of the city of Muscle Shoals in 1923. Growth continued following the creation of TVA in 1933, and today TVA remains one of the city's largest employers. Since the 1960s, the city has been known for its role in developing the "Muscle Shoals Sound," with Rick Hall's FAME Recording Studios producing hundreds of hit records that shaped the history of popular music.



FAME Recording Studios  
in Muscle Shoals, Alabama

Sheffield is another city on the Tennessee River in Colbert County and is also part of the Shoals area. The city is situated along the route used by General Andrew Jackson during the Creek War of 1813-1814. The discovery of iron ore and limestone in the aftermath of the Civil War led to the establishment of the Sheffield Land, Iron & Coal Company in 1883 and the incorporation of the city of Sheffield two years later. Prior to World War I, President Woodrow Wilson selected Sheffield as the site for one of two proposed ammonium nitrate facilities in the area.

A housing community known as Village One was subsequently built in Sheffield to accommodate workers. Comprised of eighty-five family homes and a schoolhouse, Village One is notable for its Liberty Bell-shaped street plan, and for the stucco exteriors and red tile roofs of its buildings.



Village One  
in Sheffield, Alabama

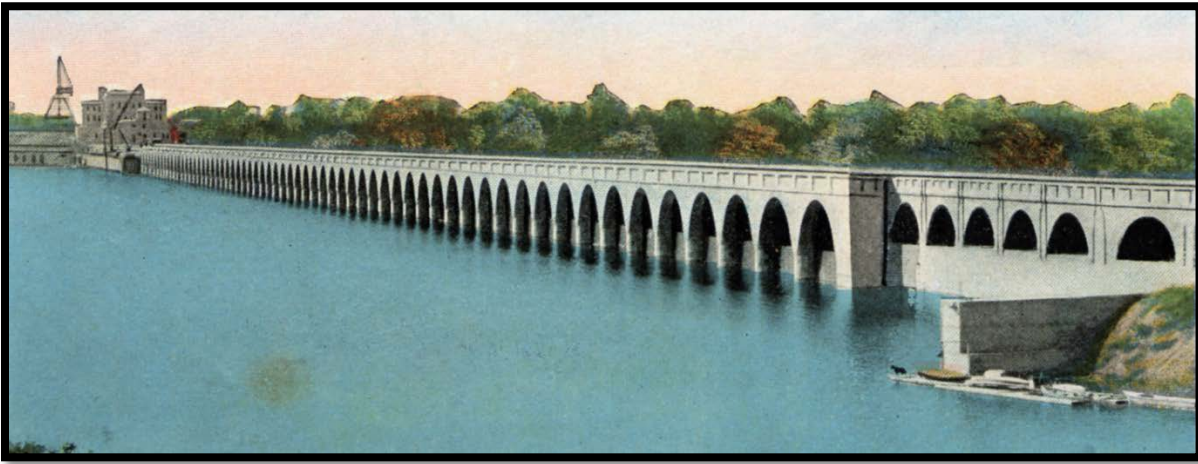
Tuscumbia is the county seat of Colbert County and the smallest of the four cities that make up the Shoals area. It is perhaps best known for being the birthplace of Helen Keller, and today it is also the home of the Alabama Music Hall of Fame. One of Alabama's oldest towns, Tuscumbia was established in 1816 as Big Spring and incorporated as Ocoposa in 1820. Two years later, the town was renamed Tuscumbia after the Chief Rainmaker of the Chickasaw tribe. Like Decatur, it served as a railroad hub during the mid-nineteenth century and was occupied by the Union Army during the Civil War. The twenty-two buildings which comprise the Colbert County Courthouse Square Historic District in downtown Tuscumbia reflect a broad range of architectural styles. The most distinctive example is the courthouse itself, a Greek Revival structure built in 1881.



Colbert County Courthouse  
in Tuscumbia, Alabama



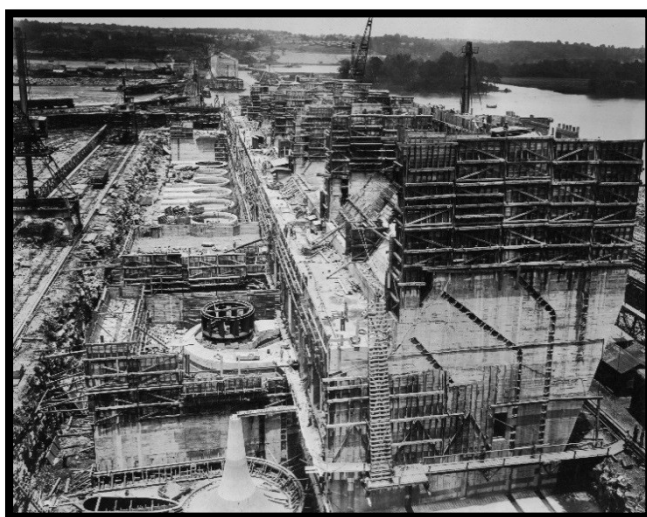
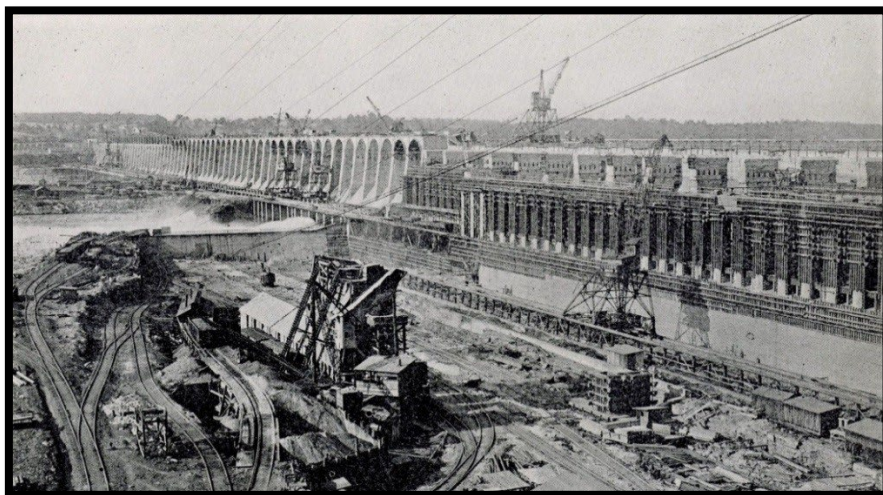
Wilson Dam is a concrete gravity dam spanning the Tennessee River between Florence in Lauderdale County and Muscle Shoals in Colbert County. Named for President Woodrow Wilson, the dam was built between 1918 and 1924 by the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers under the supervision of the U.S. War Department. Congress commissioned the construction of the dam as part of the National Defense Act of 1916 to supply hydroelectric power for the production of nitrate which would, in turn, be used to produce explosives for World War I. However, construction was not completed until after the war's end. Construction of the dam cost a total of \$130 million and employed more than 18,000 workers.



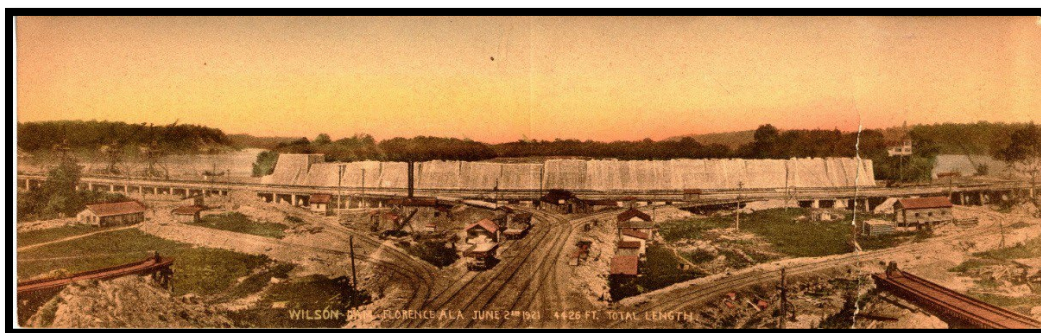
After the war, automobile manufacturer Henry Ford offered to buy Wilson Dam from the government for \$5 million, vowing he would use it to transform Muscle Shoals into the “Detroit of the South.” Ultimately, however, Ford withdrew his offer in the face of congressional opposition led by Nebraska Senator George W. Norris. Finally, in 1933, at the height of the Great Depression, President Franklin D. Roosevelt signed a bill creating TVA and made Wilson Dam the cornerstone of its plan for resource development along the Tennessee River.







Today, Wilson Dam is one of nine TVA dams on the Tennessee River and the largest conventional hydroelectric facility in the TVA system. It stands 137 feet high and stretches 4,541 feet across the river. More than 3,700 vessels pass through its locks each year, and its main lock is the highest single-lift lock east of the Rocky Mountains. The dam was declared a National Historic Landmark on November 13, 1966.



Wheeler Dam is another hydroelectric dam on the Tennessee River, located in Town Creek, Alabama, between Lauderdale and Lawrence counties. Completed in 1936, it was the second dam constructed by TVA following its establishment in 1933. The dam is named for Joseph "Joe" Wheeler, a Confederate general who also served with the United States Army during the Spanish-American War and became an early advocate for federal development of the Muscle Shoals area during his tenure as a U.S. congressman.

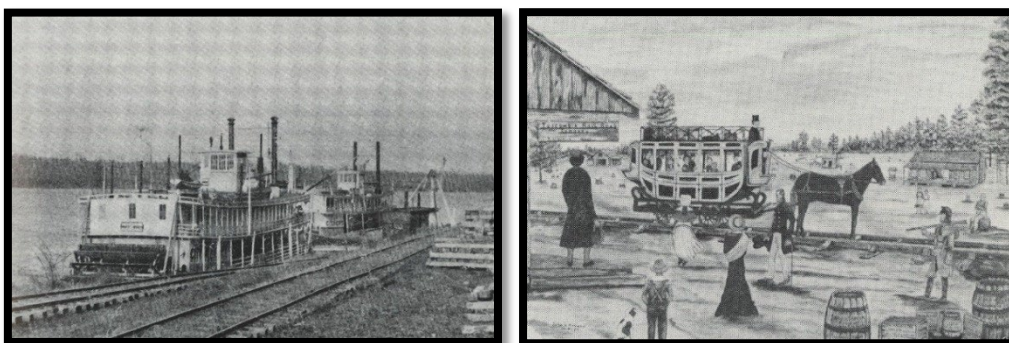


Wheeler Dam stands 72 feet high, stretches 6,342 feet across the Tennessee River, and generates a net dependable capacity of 361 megawatts. Wheeler Reservoir, meanwhile, is a major recreation center and tourist attraction, covering 67,070 acres of water surface and encompassing 1,027 miles of shoreline.





Tuscumbia Landing, a historic port at the mouth of Spring Creek on the Tennessee River, played an important role in several different periods of Tennessee River history. It was established in 1824 as a steamboat landing and was initially connected by a wagon road to the city of Tuscumbia. By 1830, the landing was connected to Tuscumbia by a horse-drawn railroad, which was the first railroad west of the Allegheny Mountains. In 1832, the horse-drawn railroad (*below right*) joined with the newly built Tuscumbia, Courtland, and Decatur Railroad, allowing shipments of regionally grown crops to bypass the hazardous Muscle Shoals. A railroad depot, warehouses and other buildings were subsequently constructed at the landing site.



Tuscumbia Landing is arguably most significant for the role it played in Indian Removal. Between 1835 and 1836, nearly 3,000 members of the Creek tribe departed from Tuscumbia Landing by order of the Indian Removal Act. Over the next two years, more than 2,000 members of the Cherokee nation also passed through Tuscumbia Landing on their way to Indian Territory. Members of the Creek and Cherokee tribes were transported to the landing by wagon and railroad after being forcibly removed from their homelands and departed the landing by steamboat. Four grave sites recently discovered at Tuscumbia Landing are believed to be those of Native American children who died there while on their way to Indian Territory.



During the Civil War, Tuscumbia Landing's position as a link between steamboat and rail traffic made it strategically important, and the landing was occupied at various times by both Union and Confederate troops. Some historians believe that the landing's rail depot and warehouses were destroyed by Union forces during their occupation. The ruins of some of these structures can still be seen at the site today, along with the remains of later ammonium nitrate facilities associated with Nitrate Plant #1.

Sources:

Gail King, Southeastern Anthropological Institute, *Historic Document Research, Geophysical Survey, Mapping, and Archaeological Inventory at Tusculumbia Landing, A Trail of Tears National Historic Trail Site in Colbert County, Alabama* (August 2011)

Tennessee Valley Authority, "Wheeler Reservoir": <https://www.tva.gov/Energy/Our-Power-System/Hydroelectric/Wheeler-Reservoir>

Michael Williams, "Wilson Dam": <https://omeka.lib.auburn.edu/items/show/343>

Encyclopedia of Alabama: <http://www.encyclopediaofalabama.org>



# Timeline

10000-8000 B.C. The Paleo culture becomes the earliest known culture to inhabit the Tennessee Valley.

8000-1000 B.C. Archaic peoples inhabiting the Tennessee Valley discard mussel shells along the banks of the river, resulting in the formation of large shell mounds.

1000 B.C.-1000 Woodland peoples build large burial mounds throughout the Tennessee Valley, including those at Florence and Oakville.

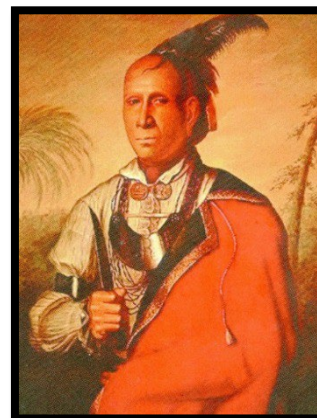


Florence Indian Mound

1000-1550 The agricultural Mississippian culture emerges in the Tennessee Valley.

Early 1700s The first historic tribe to occupy the Tennessee Valley, the Shawnee, are driven out by the rival Chickasaw tribe, which claims the former Shawnee lands as its own.

1700s The Chickasaw and Cherokee tribes establish a boundary between their respective territories at what would come to be known as the Muscle Shoals.



Standing Turkey  
Chickamauga Cherokee  
Leader and brother of  
Doublehead

1702 A French expedition led by Elie Simonville records the existence of two Native American settlements, Tongaria and Caskinampo, upstream from the Muscle Shoals.

1708 Indian agent Thomas Nairne of South Carolina proposes building a strategic fort at the Muscle Shoals, but the plan never materializes.

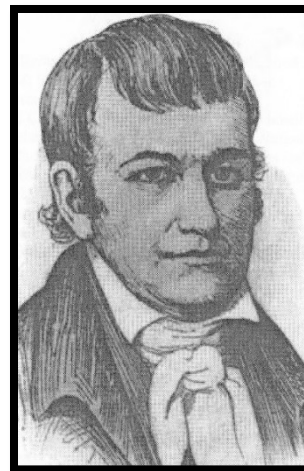
1769 Lieutenant Thomas Hutchins maps and conducts the first scientific survey of the Tennessee River.

1780s Cherokee, Creek, and French settlers establish the village of Coldwater on land which is now part of the city of Tusculum. The settlement serves as an important supply depot for a renegade tribal faction known as the Chickamauga Cherokee.

1780 Chickamauga Cherokee warriors attack a party of settlers led by Colonel John Donelson near the Muscle Shoals.

1786 Chickasaw tribal leaders sign the Treaty of Hopewell, ceding a five-mile-long tract of land at the mouth of Bear Creek to the United States government for use as a trading post.

1787 General James Robertson and Chickasaw braves lead 130 men in an attack on Coldwater, burning and plundering the settlement, and killing many of its inhabitants.



General James Robertson

1790 Chickamauga Cherokees led by Chief Doublehead establish a settlement at the mouth of Bluewater Creek.

1798-1800 Cherokee tribal leader George Colbert establishes Colbert's Ferry, an important early Tennessee River crossing.

1804 Keelboats replace flatboats as the preferred mode of transportation along the Tennessee River and begin delivering goods upstream from New Orleans.

1808 2,545 white settlers are reported to be living in the territory between the Tennessee River and the state of Tennessee's southern boundary.

1813 The South Port settlement is established on the south bank of the Tennessee River.

1817-1818 Florence Ferry begins operation, connecting Florence to South Port.

1819 The U.S. government begins routing mail through Florence, bypassing Colbert's Ferry and effectively putting George Colbert out of business.



George Colbert

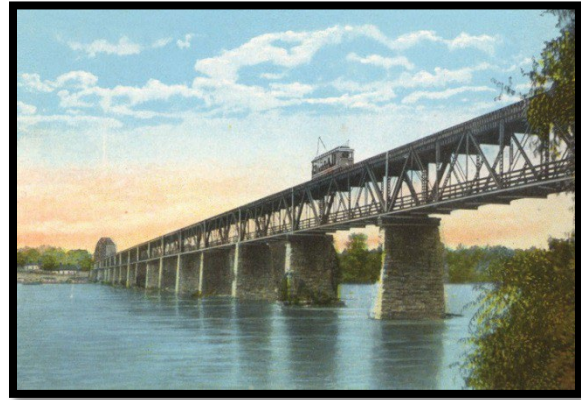
- 1819 Waterloo, a major early port on the north side of the Tennessee River, is established.
- 1820 The City of Tuscumbia (then known as Ococoposa) is incorporated.
- 1821 *Osage* becomes the first steamboat to reach the foot of the Muscle Shoals.
- 1826 The City of Florence is incorporated.
- 1824 Secretary of War John C. Calhoun calls for a survey of the Muscle Shoals, citing their military significance.
- 1826 The City of Decatur is incorporated.
- 1827 The Muscle Shoals Canal Company is incorporated by the state of Alabama, with the goal of “opening and constructing a canal... around or through the Muscle Shoals.”
- 1828 William Tell Poussin completes the first survey of the Muscle Shoals, concluding with the recommendation that a canal be constructed.
- 1828 The U.S. government gives the state of Alabama 400,000 acres of federal land to sell and thereby finance canal construction at Muscle Shoals.
- 1830 The first Tennessee River bridge at Muscle Shoals is built and is quickly destroyed by flooding.
- 1831 Construction begins on the first Muscle Shoals canal project.
- 1832 The Tuscumbia, Courtland and Decatur Railroad is incorporated.
- 1835-1836 Nearly 3,000 members of the Creek tribe leave Tuscumbia Landing by boat as part of Indian Removal.
- 1837-1838 More than 2,000 members of the Cherokee tribe leave Tuscumbia Landing by boat on their way to Indian Territory.
- 1837 The first Muscle Shoals canal project is abandoned.



U.S.S. Colbert  
on the Tennessee River

1840 The first Tennessee River bridge at Florence opens to foot and wagon traffic.

1855 The Memphis and Charleston Railroad purchases the Florence bridge and begins operating a steam-powered ferry.



Tennessee River Bridge  
Florence, Alabama

1862 Confederate forces destroy the Florence bridge.

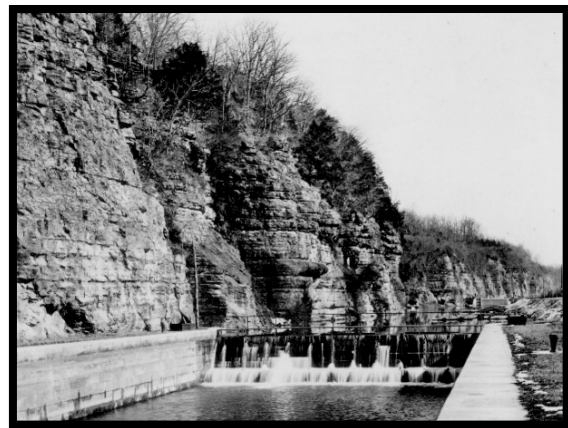
1870 Florence bridge rebuilt by Memphis and Charleston Railroad.

1873 The Muscle Shoals Canal project is revived.

1890 Construction of the Muscle Shoals Canal is completed.

1898 Former Confederate general Joseph Wheeler proposes a hydroelectric dam at Muscle Shoals before the U.S. Congress.

1918-1924 Construction of Wilson Dam.



Muscle Shoals Canal

1923 The City of Muscle Shoals is incorporated.

1933 Tennessee Valley Authority (TVA) established.

1933-1936 Construction of Wheeler Dam.



Sources:

Carolyn Barske and Brian Murphy, *The Tennessee River in Northwest Alabama* (draft)

“Chronology of Muscle Shoals 1824-1929,” *Congressional Digest* 9, no. 5

Gail King, Southeastern Anthropological Institute, *Historic Document Research, Geophysical Survey, Mapping, and Archaeological Inventory at Tusculumbia Landing, A Trail of Tears National Historic Trail Site in Colbert County, Alabama* (August 2011)

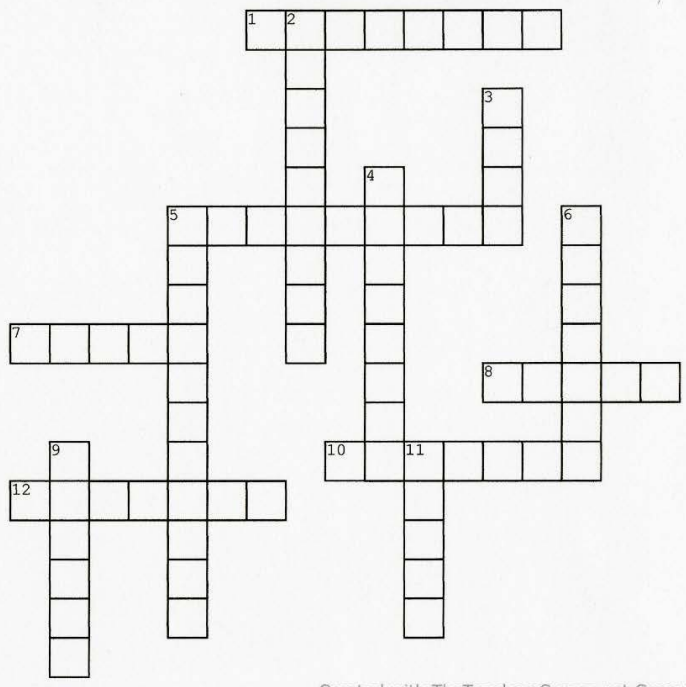
Harry Wallace, “History of the Shoals,” *Times Daily* (February 25, 1999)

Encyclopedia of Alabama: <http://www.encyclopediaofalabama.org>

Name: \_\_\_\_\_

# Tennessee River Crossword

Complete the puzzle below



Created with TheTeachersCorner.net [Crossword Puzzle Generator](#)

**Across**

- 1. Tuscumbia Landing had the first \_\_\_\_\_ west of the Appalachian Mountains.
- 5. Town in Lawrence County known for its Federal style architecture.
- 7. Today, the city of Muscle Shoals is most famous for its \_\_\_\_\_.
- 8. The earliest people to live in the Tennessee Valley.
- 10. \_\_\_\_\_ is popularly known as 'The River City.'
- 12. Wilson Dam was built to supply power for two \_\_\_\_\_ manufacturing plants.

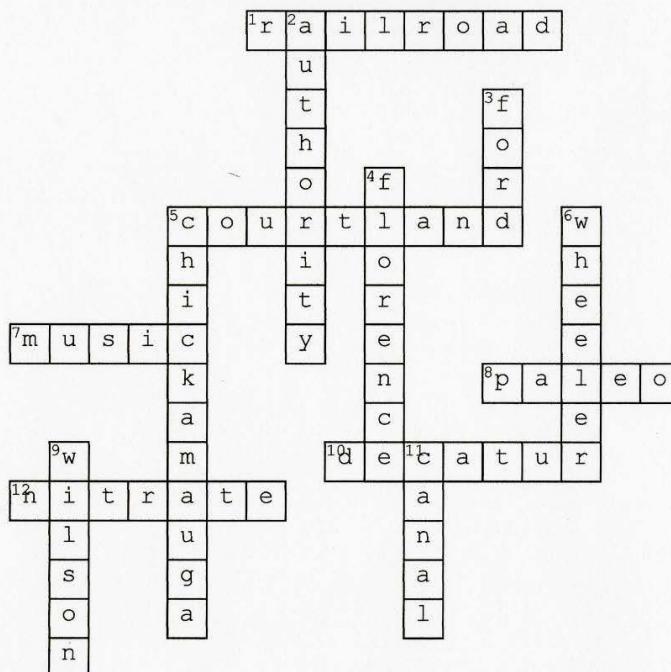
**Down**

- 2. The Tennessee Valley \_\_\_\_\_ (TVA) was part of President Roosevelt's New Deal.
- 3. Henry \_\_\_\_\_ offered to buy Wilson Dam from the government after World War I.
- 4. The largest of the four cities that make up the Shoals area.
- 5. The \_\_\_\_\_ faction of the Cherokee tribe conducted raids against white settlers.
- 6. \_\_\_\_\_ Dam was named after a Confederate general and later U.S. congressman.
- 9. \_\_\_\_\_ Dam was named after a U.S. president.
- 11. Construction of the first Muscle Shoals \_\_\_\_\_ began in 1831.

Name: \_\_\_\_\_

## Tennessee River Crossword

Complete the puzzle below

Created with TheTeachersCorner.net [Crossword Puzzle Generator](http://www.theteacherscorner.net)

### Across

1. Tuscumbia Landing had the first \_\_\_\_\_ west of the Appalachian Mountains. (**railroad**)
5. Town in Lawrence County known for its Federal style architecture. (**courtland**)
7. Today, the city of Muscle Shoals is most famous for its \_\_\_\_\_. (**music**)
8. The earliest people to live in the Tennessee Valley. (**paleo**)
10. \_\_\_\_\_ is popularly known as 'The River City.' (**decatur**)
12. Wilson Dam was built to supply power for two \_\_\_\_\_ manufacturing plants. (**nitrate**)

### Down

2. The Tennessee Valley \_\_\_\_\_ (TVA) was part of President Roosevelt's New Deal. (**authority**)
3. Henry \_\_\_\_\_ offered to buy Wilson Dam from the government after World War I. (**ford**)
4. The largest of the four cities that make up the Shoals area. (**florence**)
5. The \_\_\_\_\_ faction of the Cherokee tribe conducted raids against white settlers. (**chickamauga**)
6. \_\_\_\_\_ Dam was named after a Confederate general and later U.S. congressman. (**wheeler**)
9. \_\_\_\_\_ Dam was named after a U.S. president. (**wilson**)
11. Construction of the first Muscle Shoals \_\_\_\_\_ began in 1831. (**canal**)

Name: \_\_\_\_\_

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 U N M Y H Y S K N R M H I Z M B R E H L  
 X A B N X K Y A E B A W M L F T E W D S  
 P V N O S Q N H O W U T I A R L A M N F  
 A E A M M M C A N F D Q S A E O S H G U  
 F M F O A N T E V C U G F R R K A T H W  
 Y H Y D R O E L E C T R I C F Z T D P B  
 T G M C E S S W R L W J C N I T R A T E  
 Z Z Q Q H L C R Z A H C O W H V C L W G  
 P Y K I M I V W U U L L R A R J L N L O  
 B F B B E W Q G U D N T E E W I H W E K  
 V S Y J G O W E A T K H R U E R N E B Z  
 V G C M F K R R T K H U W L I K B X F Q

FLORENCE  
 RAILROAD  
 WILSON  
 WHEELER  
 SHAWNEE

TUSCUMBIA  
 CHEROKEE  
 STEAMBOAT  
 HYDROELECTRIC  
 COURTLAND

SHOALS  
 CREEK  
 NITRATE  
 PALEO



Name: \_\_\_\_\_  
Created with [TheTeachersCorner.net](http://TheTeachersCorner.net) [Word Search Maker](#)

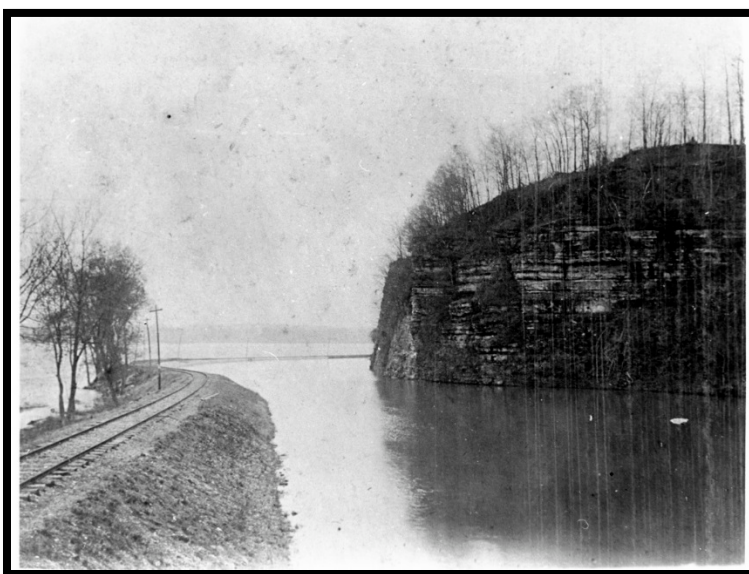
A T A D J M F T L S J Z E S O H P M E A  
M L I M D K I K P M L D F K V E X L M L  
Y L K B J U N H I F L O R E N C E D B E  
P A L E O A I B M U C S U T E I V W X J  
H J A E H X W C F W D L X E S U M U V J  
F D N A L T R U O C P R E T H L C G S P  
T O K W J N L S U K R K E E V Z A U T W  
V O E E F V G V U Y O A S I M H R O H V  
U N M Y H Y S K N R M H I Z M B R E H L  
X A B N X K Y A E B A W M L F T E W D S  
P V N O S Q N H O W U T I A R L A M N F  
A E A M M M C A N F D Q S A E O S H G U  
F M F O A N T E V C U G F R R K A T H W  
Y H Y D R O E L E C T R I C F Z T D P B  
T G M C E S S W R L W J C N I T R A T E  
Z Z Q Q H L C R Z A H C O W H V C L W G  
P Y K I M I V W U U L L R A R J L N L O  
B F B B E W Q G U D N T E E W I H W E K  
V S Y J G O W E A T K H R U E R N E B Z  
V G C M F K R R T K H U W L I K B X F Q

- |          |               |         |
|----------|---------------|---------|
| FLORENCE | TUSCUMBIA     | SHOALS  |
| RAILROAD | CHEROKEE      | CREEK   |
| WILSON   | STEAMBOAT     | NITRATE |
| WHEELER  | HYDROELECTRIC | PALEO   |
| SHAWNEE  | COURTLAND     |         |

# Tennessee River Bingo

## Instructions:

1. Make a template for the Bingo card by using a ruler to divide a sheet of paper into 25 squares (five squares across by five squares down). Write "Free Space" in the center square.
2. Make one copy of the template for each student in your class.
3. Write one place/person name, vocabulary word, or date in each square (except for the "Free Space" center square). See the Word Search and Crossword activities in this resource packet for suggested terms. The terms should be ordered differently on each Bingo card so that no two students have identical cards.
4. Write a definition or clue for each term on an index card, with one definition or clue per card. Fold the index cards in half so that the definitions/clues cannot be seen.
5. Choose an index card, unfold it, and read the definition/clue aloud. Have each student mark the square on his/her Bingo card where the corresponding term appears. The first student to correctly mark five squares in a row and yell "Bingo!" is the winner.



Muscle Shoals Canal

# Poster Project

Objective: Students will select a topic of interest from the list below and research that topic using two internet resources approved by the teacher (see “Additional Resources” for a list of suggestions). They will then create posters illustrating what they have learned and share these with the class.

## Materials:

- Poster board
- Scissors
- Glue
- Images (e.g. photographs, drawings, maps)
- Internet resources

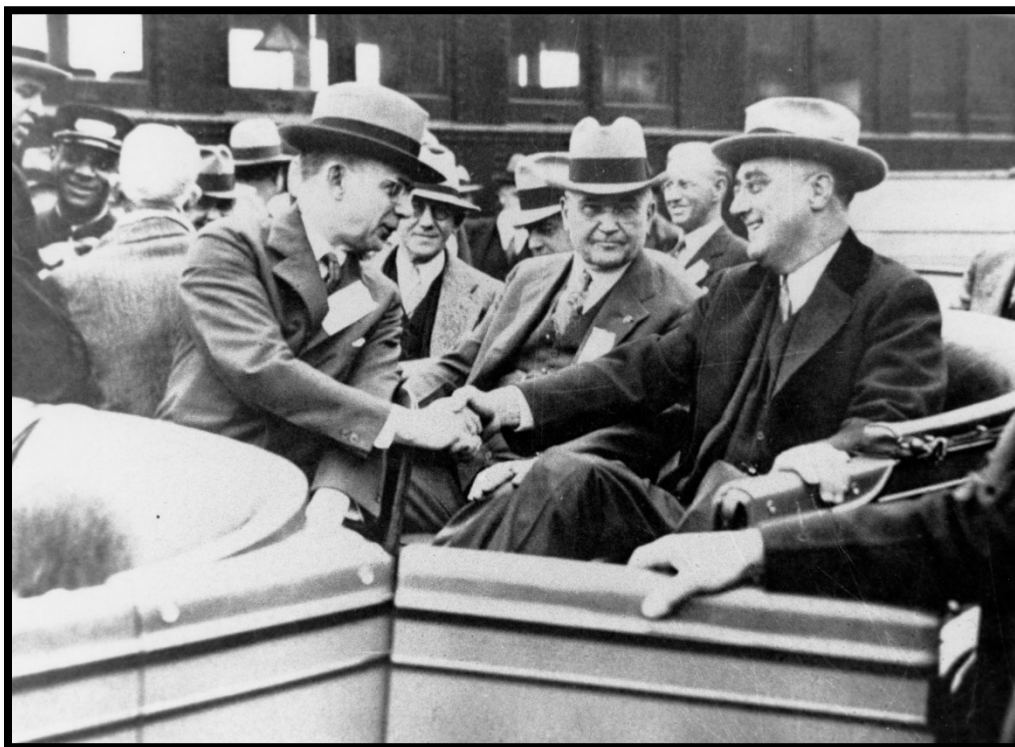
## Topics:

- Colbert’s Ferry
- Tuscumbia, Courtland and Decatur Railroad
- Nitrate Plant #1
- Nitrate Plant #2
- Village One
- Tennessee Valley Authority (TVA)
- Wilson Dam
- Wheeler Dam
- Muscle Shoals Canal
- Tuscumbia Landing
- Florence Railroad Bridge
- O’Neal Bridge
- Wheeler Lake
- Florence
- Decatur
- Courtland
- Chickamauga Cherokee
- Shawnee
- “Muscle Shoals Sound”
- Henry Ford
- Florence Indian Mound
- Oakville Indian Mound
- Chief Doublehead
- FAME Studios
- Muscle Shoals Rhythm Section
- Sheffield

Posters should include a pictorial representation of the topic along with the following information:

- Biographical or geographical information
- Connection to the Tennessee River and its history
- Historical significance

## Primary Source Analysis: FDR and TVA



President Franklin D. Roosevelt  
at Wilson Dam, January 21, 1933

EXCERPT FROM PRESIDENT FRANKLIN D. ROOSEVELT'S MESSAGE TO CONGRESS REGARDING THE TENNESSEE VALLEY AUTHORITY, APRIL 10, 1933

The continued idleness of a great national investment in the Tennessee Valley leads me to ask the Congress for legislation necessary to enlist this project in the service of the people.

It is clear that the Muscle Shoals development is but a small part of the potential public usefulness of the entire Tennessee River. Such use, if envisioned in its entirety, transcends mere power development; it enters the wide fields of flood control, soil erosion, afforestation, elimination from agricultural use of marginal lands, and distribution and diversification of industry. In short, this power development of war days leads logically to national planning for a complete river watershed involving many States and the future lives and welfare of millions. It touches and gives life to all forms of human concerns.



I, therefore, suggest to the Congress legislation to create a Tennessee Valley Authority, a corporation clothed with the power of Government but possessed of the flexibility and initiative of a private enterprise. It should be charged with the broadest duty of planning for the proper use, conservation and development of the natural resources of the Tennessee River drainage basin and its adjoining territory for the general social and economic welfare of the Nation. This Authority should also be clothed with the necessary power to carry these plans into effect. Its duty should be the rehabilitation of the Muscle Shoals development and the coordination of it with the wider plan.

Many hard lessons have taught us the human waste that results from lack of planning. Here and there a few wise cities and counties have looked ahead and planned. But our Nation has "just grown." It is time to extend planning to a wider field, in this instance comprehending in one great project many States directly concerned with the basin of one of our greatest rivers.

This in a true sense is a return to the spirit and vision of the pioneer. If we are successful here we can march on, step by step; in a like development of other great natural territorial units within our borders.



Discussion Questions:

1. Why did President Roosevelt ask Congress to approve TVA?
2. What were Roosevelt's goals for establishing TVA? What positive outcomes did he envision for the Tennessee Valley region and for the country as a whole?
3. What was the primary duty of TVA, according to Roosevelt?
4. How does Roosevelt suggest that the nation follow the example of various cities and counties?
5. Why did Roosevelt think planning was so important? How is planning different from growth and how might they work together to achieve positive outcomes?

# Test Questions

## Multiple Choice

The first European-American settlers of the Tennessee Valley were farmers who primarily grew which crop?

- A. corn
- B. cotton
- C. sugar
- D. grapes

Which former Confederate general first proposed building a hydroelectric dam near Muscle Shoals?

- A. George Colbert
- B. Nathan B. Forrest
- C. Grenville Dodge
- D. Joseph Wheeler

\_\_\_\_\_ was an important rail center and was occupied during the Civil War by both Union and Confederate armies.

- A. Leighton
- B. Decatur
- C. Florence
- D. Hartselle

Which of the following was *not* a goal of the Tennessee Valley Authority?

- A. Producing hydroelectric power
- B. Building boats, barges, and ferries
- C. Improving river navigation
- D. Flood control

The U.S. government operated two nitrate manufacturing plants near Muscle Shoals during which major conflict?

- A. Revolutionary War
- B. Civil War
- C. World War I
- D. World War II

Thousands of displaced Native Americans passed through \_\_\_\_\_ during Indian Removal.

- A. Tuscumbia Landing
- B. Town Creek
- C. Muscle Shoals
- D. Cherokee

### Matching

Match the city name on the left with its description on the right.

- |                      |   |
|----------------------|---|
| ___ 1. Florence      | a. Known for its Victorian and Federal-style architecture |
| ___ 2. Decatur       | b. The largest city in The Shoals                         |
| ___ 3. Muscle Shoals | c. Named for a Cherokee rainmaker                         |
| ___ 4. Courtland     | d. Home of FAME Recording Studios                         |
| ___ 5. Tuscumbia     | e. Popularly known as "The River City"                    |

Match each native tribe/culture on the left with its description on the right.

- |                    |  |
|--------------------|--|
| ___ 1. Paleo       | a. Earliest known culture in the Tennessee Valley    |
| ___ 2. Shawnee     | b. Created large mounds from discarded mussel shells |
| ___ 3. Cherokee    | c. Ceded its lands to the U.S. government in 1816    |
| ___ 4. Mississippi | d. Driven out of the Tennessee Valley in 1714        |
| ___ 5. Archaic     | e. Introduced agriculture to the Tennessee Valley    |

# Test Questions

## Multiple Choice

The first European-American settlers of the Tennessee Valley were farmers who primarily grew which crop?

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- D. Joseph Wheeler

\_\_\_\_\_ was an important rail center and was occupied during the Civil War by both Union and Confederate armies.

- E. Leighton
- F. Decatur
- G. Florence
- H. Hartselle

Which of the following was *not* a goal of the Tennessee Valley Authority?

- E. Producing hydroelectric power
- F. Building boats, barges, and ferries
- G. Improving river navigation
- H. Flood control

The U.S. government operated two nitrate manufacturing plants near Muscle Shoals during which major conflict?

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| ___ 4. Courtland     | d. Home of FAME Recording Studios                         |
| ___ 5. Tuscumbia     | e. Popularly known as "The River City"                    |

*Answers: 1-b, 2-e, 3-d, 4-a, 5-c*

Match each native tribe/culture on the left with its description on the right.

- |                    |  |
|--------------------|--|
| ___ 1. Paleo       | a. Earliest known culture in the Tennessee Valley    |
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| ___ 4. Mississippi | d. Driven out of the Tennessee Valley in 1714        |
| ___ 5. Archaic     | e. Introduced agriculture to the Tennessee Valley    |

*Answers: 1-a, 2-d, 3-c, 4-e, 5-b*

## Additional Resources

Muscle Shoals National Heritage Area

<http://msnha.una.edu/>

Tennessee Valley Authority: Our History

<https://www.tva.com/About-TVA/Our-History/>

TVA Kids

<https://www.tvakids.com>

Library of Congress

<http://www.loc.gov/>

Encyclopedia of Alabama

<http://www.encyclopediaofalabama.org/>

Alabama State Archives

<http://archives.state.al.us/>

# Curriculum Standards

Alabama Course of Study: Social Studies Standard (2010)

4th Grade: Alabama Studies

4.) Relate the relationship of the five geographic regions of Alabama to the movement of Alabama settlers during the early nineteenth century.

- Identifying natural resources of Alabama during the early nineteenth century
- Describing human environments of Alabama as they relate to settlement during the early nineteenth century, including housing, roads, and place names

6.) Describe cultural, economic, and political aspects of the lifestyles of early nineteenth-century farmers, plantation owners, slaves, and townspeople.

11.) Describe the impact of World War I on Alabamians, including the entry of women into the workforce, increase in job opportunities, rationing, utilization of Alabama's military installations and training facilities, and increased production of goods for the war effort.

16.) Determine the impact of population growth on cities, major road systems, demographics, natural resources, and the natural environment of Alabama during the late twentieth and early twenty-first centuries.

# Photo Credits

All images were provided by Archives and Special Collections at the University of North Alabama except those listed below.

## Background Information

Tennessee River:

[https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Tennessee\\_River](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Tennessee_River)

Dragging Canoe:

Rickey Butch Walker, *Chickasaw Chief George Colbert: His Family and His Country* (Killen: Bluewater Publications, 2012)

Union Station:

[http://www.al.com/news/huntsville/index.ssf/2015/01/decatour\\_historic\\_train\\_depot\\_r.html](http://www.al.com/news/huntsville/index.ssf/2015/01/decatour_historic_train_depot_r.html)

## Significant Places

Rocky Hill:

<http://www.loc.gov/pictures/item/al0273.photos.003183p/resource/>

“Steamboat Bill” Hudson Memorial Bridge:

[https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Captain\\_William\\_J.\\_Hudson\\_%22Steamboat\\_Bill%22\\_Memorial\\_Bridges](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Captain_William_J._Hudson_%22Steamboat_Bill%22_Memorial_Bridges)

FAME Recording Studios:

<https://www.loc.gov/item/2010640534/>

Village One:

Brian Corrigan

Colbert County Courthouse:

Brian Corrigan

Wheeler Dam:

Lawrence County Archives

[https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Wheeler\\_Dam](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Wheeler_Dam)



Tuscumbia Landing:

John L. McWilliams, *Tuscumbia* (Charleston: Arcadia Publishing, 2012)

<https://omeka.lib.auburn.edu/items/show/1616>

### Timeline

Standing Turkey:

Rickey Butch Walker, *Doublehead: Last Chickamauga Cherokee Chief* (Killen: Bluewater Publications, 2012)

General James Robertson:

Rickey Butch Walker, *Chickasaw Chief George Colbert: His Family and His Country* (Killen: Bluewater Publications, 2012)

George Colbert:

William Lindsay McDonald, *Lore of the River... the Shoals of Long Ago* (Florence: Bluewater Publications, 2007)

## Special Thanks

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Muscle Shoals National Heritage Area

Cathy Wood  
Muscle Shoals National Heritage Area

Brian Murphy  
Florence City Museums

Louise Huddleston  
UNA Archives and Special Collections