

3 THE LOUISIANA DELTA: LAND OF RIVERS

Common Core State Standards

CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RH.6-8.2

Determine the central ideas or information of a primary or secondary source; provide an accurate summary of the source distinct from prior knowledge or opinions.

CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RH.6-8.7

Integrate visual information (e.g., in charts, graphs, photographs, videos, or maps) with other information in print and digital texts.

The Mississippi River is millions of years old. For the last 10,000 years, it has rambled like a snake undulating back and forth through the Gulf Coast region spilling nutrient rich soil wherever it went. The river and the abundance of food sources attracted Native Americans to the area over 6,000 years ago. Living along the natural levees and bayous, they harvested the area's abundance of fish, reptiles, birds, deer and other small animals. Hundreds of prehistoric sites and thousands of Native American artifacts populate the Delta. Among the historic sites are mounds, some of the largest Native American mounds in the North America. They remain today as a tribute to their builders, who probably used them for burial places or temple sites. Today Native Americans especially from the Tunica, Biloxi, and Choctaw tribes still live in the area.

The free flowing river that brought so many resources to the area also brought challenges. The Mississippi often overflowed its banks, wreaking havoc with the residents. In 1927, a historic flood affected everyone living in the area. The worst recorded Mississippi River flood saw the levees break in 145 places and caused over 700,000 people to be displaced from their homes.

It is difficult to describe to students how overwhelming the flood was, so the student activity asks the students to look analyze photographs from the period and see what they can discover about the event. Answers to the activity will vary.



DELTA PIECES ESSAYS

- The Flood of 1927 and the Great Depression: Two Delta Disasters
http://www.louisianafolklife.org/LT/Articles_Essays/DeltaDepression.html
- Delta Folks - Oren Russell Mississippi River Boat Pilot
http://www.louisianafolklife.org/LT/Articles_Essays/DeltaRussell.html

LOUISIANA VOICES LINK

- Louisiana Voices Educator's Guide Unit IV Lesson 2: Geography, Ecology, and Folklife
http://www.louisianavoices.org/Unit4/edu_unit4_lesson2.html

OTHER RESOURCES

- Louisiana Digital Library photos from the Flood of 1927
<http://cdm16313.contentdm.oclc.org/cdm/search/collection/LHP/searchterm/flood%201927/order/nosort>
- Excellent PBS source for primary sources on the Flood
<http://www.pbs.org/wgbh/americanexperience/features/primary-resources/flood-moton-second-report/>

Name _____

Date _____

DELTA PIECES PHOTO ACTIVITY

***A picture is worth
1,000 words.***



The Mississippi River has flooded its banks many times. The Flood of 1927 though, was the most destructive Mississippi flood in the history of the United States. It started with heavy rains in 1926 in the northern tributaries of the River. By the time the water flowed into the Mississippi River and down to the Delta region, it was so powerful that it caused the levee to break in 145 places and flooded 27,000 square miles of land. Some areas were flooded up to 30 feet. Because of the flooding, over 700,000 people were displaced and a new levee system was built.

In this activity, you will act as a historian, examining photographs from the past and trying to determine the circumstances. First, you will want to read Oren Russell's personal experiences about the Flood at http://www.louisianafolklife.org/LT/Articles_Essays/DeltaRussell.html.

Betty Jo Harris writes about the Flood in her essay at http://www.louisianafolklife.org/LT/Articles_Essays/DeltaDepression.html. After reading the essay, look at the flood pictures and complete the tables below. In this article, you can also listen to Miles Smith tell about his personal experience.

Instructions: Study 3 photographs from the site for 2 minutes each. Form an overall impression, and then fill in the following tables:

Photograph #1

Caption:

List 2 things can you tell from the picture.

<i>I can tell ...</i>	<i>because ...</i>
1.	
2.	

Photograph #2

Caption:

List 2 things can you tell from the picture.

<i>I can tell ...</i>	<i>because ...</i>
1.	
2.	

Photograph #3

Caption:

List 2 things can you tell from the picture.

<i>I can tell ...</i>	<i>because ...</i>
1.	
2.	

List 3 things you learned from this activity.

1. _____

2. _____

3. _____

After looking at the photographs, what new questions do you have?

How could you find out the answers to your questions?
