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Lenoir City, TN

Lesson Title: The Cotton Industry in Tennessee

Grade Level: 7th

Era: 6-The Development of the Industrial United States (1870-1900)

Group Size: fifteen to thirty students

Lesson Time: two 50 minute class periods

Objectives/Purpose:

The student will:

- 1.) develop a basic understanding of the technological, social, cultural, and economic results of the cotton industry in Tennessee.
- 2.) locate the West Tennessee Plain, and understand its importance to agriculture in the state of Tennessee.
- 3.) analyze photographs of the Bemis Cotton Mill.
- 4.) pin jigsaw activity with their document

Curriculum Standards:

- 7.1.01 Identify and describe the location of major cultural attributes such as language, religion, political systems, economic systems and population centers locally, regionally and globally.
- 7.1.03 Evaluate the effect of technology on various cultures
- 7.1.04 Understand how information and experiences may be interpreted differently from people of diverse cultural perspectives and frames of reference
Describe how language, art, music, belief systems and other cultural elements facilitate global understanding or cause misunderstanding
- 7.2.01 Define various types of economies and their methods of production and consumption (e.g., market economy, free enterprise, capitalism, communism, and socialism)
List the major resources and industrial and agricultural products, locally, regionally and globally.
Apply basic economic concepts in studying the various regions of the world such as export, import, tariffs, closed and emerging markets.
Explain the interactions between domestic and global economic systems.
- 7.2.02 Recognize that resources, goods, and services are exchanged worldwide
Explain the interactions between domestic and global economic systems

Appraise the relationship among scarcity of resources, economic development and international conflict

- 7.3.06 Examine the consequences of a specific physical process operating on Earth's surface
- 7.4.02 Understand how cooperation and conflict among people influence the division and control of resources, rights and privileges
- 7.5.01 Identify reasons why people choose to settle in different places.
Explain how and why the location of settlements changes over space and time locally, regionally and globally.
Explain factors leading to areas of dense human settlement.
Describe factors involved in the growth and development of cities
- 7.6.03 Identify the effects of physical and human geographic factors on current policies and issues such as land use, urban planning, and conservation issues.
Describe the impact of contemporary patterns of consumption, production and population growth on the future spatial organization of Earth.

Background Information:

The West Tennessee Plain, which was bought from the Chickasaw in 1818, includes the area between the Tennessee and Mississippi rivers. Known as the agricultural heart of Tennessee, the fertile land of the West Tennessee Plain has made cotton producing a major industry for many years. The region's rivers flow west into the Mississippi. Memphis, the region's largest city, is one of the most important inland shipping ports in the nation. Due to its fertile soil West Tennessee became an ideal location for cotton plantations. African slaves were purchased in Memphis and Nashville to work the plantations throughout the West Tennessee Plain. After the Civil War and the abolition of slavery, sharecropping became the norm throughout Tennessee. The plight of the free slaves didn't improve as most became indebted to the some landowners that owned them prior to the Civil War.

The community of Bemis and the Jackson Fiber Company which was later to be called "Bemis Cotton Mill" were born of the efforts of Judson Moss Bemis and the company he had founded in 1858, now known as Bemis Bro. Bag Company. Realizing that his company's bag factories must have a dependable supply of high-quality cotton, Mr. Bemis decided to build a cotton mill near the cotton fields. Built on the original 300-acre site donated by the forward-thinking citizens of Jackson and Madison County through county appropriation, the first mill of 21,000 spindle capacity was erected in 1900. The cotton industry has always meant hard work and long hours for the people in the fields and in the mills.

Materials:

- Transparencies/Overhead
- Photographs of the Bemis cotton Mill, www.volunteervoices.org
Volunteer Voices references: (Union University Collection)
Workers at **Bemis Cotton Mill**
URL: <http://idserver.utk.edu/?id=200700000001314>
File name: 0038_000050_000226_0000
Boys and girls at **Bemis Cotton Mill**
URL: <http://idserver.utk.edu/?id=200700000001316>
File name: 0038_000050_000228_0000
Families at the **Bemis Cotton Mill**
URL: <http://idserver.utk.edu/?id=200700000001313>
File name: 0038_000050_000225_0000
- Background resources (Boehm, Armstrong, and Hunkins, *Geography: The World and Its People*, Glencoe McGraw-Hill, 2002. lecture notes, etc..),
www.bemishistory.org/bemis_story.htm
- Map of Tennessee
- Pencil, paper

Strategies/Procedures:

- 1.) Ask students the pros and cons of living in a rural and urban area today. After recording responses on the board, ask students which of the list would be similar during the early twentieth century.
- 2.) Lecture/discussion/questioning use transparencies
- 3.) Divide class into groups for a jigsaw activity. Distribute a copy of the same photograph to all members in each group along with photograph analysis worksheet. Explain to the students that the task of becoming “experts” in their group’s particular photograph using the worksheet, and supplementary resources.
- 4.) Summarize details and answer questions that arise from the photograph.
- 5.) After 10 minutes count-off students to redistribute them into new groups with one “expert” on each photograph represented in each new group. Each student report on the significance citing specific details of their particular photograph for two minutes.
- 6.) Debrief the activity with a class discussion.

Evaluation/Assessment:

- Teacher will ask questions randomly during lecture.
- Students will participate in the group activity.
- Grade the photograph analysis worksheets.
- Students will write down a 3-4 sentence response on what it would be like to work in the Bemis Cotton Mill at the turn of the century twentieth century. Ask for volunteers to share their responses with the class

Author's Evaluation:

Any time that I can get students to look at visuals especially of everyday life I feel it makes history personal for them. My students seemed to really enjoy this activity. Many of my students could relate to their parents or grandparents working long hours at low paying jobs, which these photographs also depict.

Photograph Analysis Worksheet

1. Observation

- Study the photograph for 2 minutes. Form an overall impression of the photograph and then examine individual items. Next, divide the photo into quadrants and study each section to see what new details become visible.
- Use the chart below to list people, objects, and activities in the photograph.

People	Objects	Activities

2. Inference

Based on what you have observed above, list three things you might infer from this photograph.

- _____
- _____
- _____

3. Questions

- What questions does this photograph raise in your mind?

- Where could you find answers to them?
