

Digital Snapshot Classroom Activity: Mississippi State Department of Health Photographs

Students will

- Explore the responsibilities of the government to provide health services
- Examine methods used to communicate health department services to the public
- Create informational advertisement brochures for a historic epidemic

Materials

- Computer/tablet with internet access
- Paper and writing utensils
- Coloring utensils
- Sample brochures (optional)

Preparation

- National Archives Photograph Analysis Worksheet, one copy per student (optional)

Required Links

- [Digital Snapshot exhibits page](#)

Curricular Connections

Mississippi College- and Career-Readiness Standards for the Social Studies

U.S. Government

- USG.5 Analyze of [*sic*] the role of federalism in addressing the distribution of power between the national, state, and local governments.
 - USG.5.1 - Explain the relationship and powers shared between state governments and the national government.
 - USG.5.2 - Trace the extent to which power is shared by all levels of government.
 - USG.5.3 - Examine the powers denied to state governments and national government.
 - USG.5.4 - Evaluate the balance of power between state governments and national government related to funding.

Introduction

To understand the past and see its impact on the present, students should engage with primary sources from past events. For students to truly understand the photographs and have the correct context, teachers must first lay the groundwork for this connection. The teacher should begin this lesson with a brief introduction about the Mississippi Department of Health and their work surrounding large-scale health issues in Mississippi. A short introduction to this collection and a list of additional resources is [available here](#).

The selected images from the Mississippi State Department of Health Photograph collection spotlights medical conditions across the state in the first half of the twentieth century. The 63 photographs capture Mississippi leaders' efforts to combat major health concerns, such as tuberculosis and malaria, to professionalize the practice of medicine, and to launch early education through home health programs.

Students will analyze one collection of photographs from the album, using either questions provided below or the National Archives Photograph Analysis Worksheet. Students will then create a tri-fold brochure to educate citizens about the health department's work on a chosen historic health crisis.

Educators and students can also use other documents suggested by scholars on this website or search the [full Mississippi Department of Health Photograph Album online](#).

Discussion Questions

Assign students one category from the MSDH Photograph Collection to analyze with the option of using the questions below or the National Archives Photograph Analysis Worksheet. After students have analyzed their photographs, redirect the class to a classroom discussion to share their thoughts.

1. What similarities do you see among the photographs in the category you were assigned?
2. What role did the health department play in this situation?
3. How would have things been different without the health department's support?
4. What does the MSDH's work tell us about a state providing services for its citizens?
5. From what you can tell in the photographs, is everyone being treated equally by the staff of the health department?

Activity

One of the key roles of the Mississippi State Department of Health was to advertise the work of the department so they could keep Mississippians healthy.

1. Students will select a historic health-related event* and create a tri-fold brochure about the health department's attempt to aid the citizens they serve.
2. Explain the purpose of a brochure to students to ensure that they understand the concept. Provide samples from local businesses or from existing health campaigns.
3. Brochures should include the following:
 - a. Name of cause or campaign being advertised
 - b. Attention-grabbing headline

- c. Short, easy to read blocks of text
- d. Images to make the brochure visually appealing/informative
- e. Call to action (what you want the reader to do because of this information)

*Students can select one event or effort featured on this website or another from history. Some samples are:

- 1909 Typhoid Fever epidemic
- 1918 Flu pandemic
- Polio epidemic
- 2009 Swine Flu

At the teacher's discretion, students can also select existing health campaigns. This may include:

- Anti-Smoking
- Anti-Drinking and Driving