



Discovering Alabama

Teacher's Guide

State Archives

Suggested Curriculum Areas

History
Social Studies
Environmental Studies

Suggested Grade Levels

K-12

Key Concepts

History
Cultural Change
Bicentennial

Key Skills

Research
Historical Reflection
Future Forecasting

Synopsis

The Alabama Department of Archives and History (ADAH), founded in 1901, was the nation's first publicly funded, independent state archives agency. For more than a century, the Department has served the important role of preserving the state's historical resources and promoting education regarding Alabama's history. *Discovering Alabama* "State Archives" visits ADAH to explore its wealth of historical materials while highlighting significant aspects of Alabama history and reflecting upon the relevance of history to our lives today. The video also features the Museum of Alabama, a new addition to ADAH that includes a series of impressive exhibit galleries presenting Alabama history, era to era, from prehistory to modern times. Interviews with several noted historians help amplify historical perspective as part of the challenge in navigating the future.



Discovering Alabama is a production of the **Alabama Museum of Natural History** in cooperation with **Alabama Public Television** and **The University of Alabama College of Continuing Studies**. For a complete list of titles in the *Discovering Alabama* series, as well as information about ordering videos and accompanying Teacher's Guides, contact us at either: *Discovering Alabama*, Box 870340, Tuscaloosa AL 35487-0340; phone: 205-348-2039; fax: 205-348-4219; or email: orders@discoveringalabama.org. Also visit our website: www.discoveringalabama.org.

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The Solon and Martha

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Alabama
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Federation



THE UNIVERSITY OF ALABAMA*



Alabama Tourism
Department

Before Viewing

1 Bring to class a number of vintage items (dial telephone, typewriter, black/white TV, straw broom, etc.) that were in common use decades ago, probably during your parents' lifetime and perhaps even during your early life. Have the class peruse and discuss (and joke and giggle as they may be inclined to do). Invite the class to identify and discuss a number of conveniences/technologies (cell phones, computers, modern floor vacuums, etc.) in common use today that contrast with the vintage items. Discuss the pros and cons of the old ways compared with the new ways.

While Viewing

Have students note the number and variety of historical items, artifacts, and relics that are among the archival collections of the Alabama Department of Archives and History.

Video Mystery Question:

In the beginning of the video the host encounters a small relic dated many decades ago. What is this relic? (Answer: As the host approaches the wall of an old barn, he peers behind the encroaching kudzu to find an old car tag that reads HAZEL GREEN 2A 1967 STATE CHAMPS.)

After Viewing

1 Identify and discuss the kinds of changes (technological, social, economic, environmental, etc.) that have occurred in Alabama during the 200 years since statehood. Invite the class to have some fun predicting the kinds of changes they think could occur in the next 200 years.

Extensions

1 Well, of course, a fitting extension is to take a field-trip visit to the Alabama Department of Archives and History. But be sure to maximize this learning experience by having students investigate each exhibit of ADAH's Museum of Alabama to find answers to a list of "scavenger hunt" questions you provide them in advance.

2 View other *Discovering Alabama* videos that highlight significant Alabama history. Examples include "Geological History," "Forest History," "Wildlife History," "Alabama Rivers," "Village Creek," and many more.



Philosophical Reflections

An interesting observation once was made about the evolving relationship between human sensibilities and the progress of modern inventions. The observation, paraphrased, goes something like this: There was a time when people traveled mainly by horse and were afraid of the newly introduced smoking railroad train. Then came the time when people liked to travel by train but were afraid of the new contraption called the automobile. Then came the time when people preferred to travel by automobile but were afraid of the odd new invention called the airplane. Then came the time when people sought to travel by airplane but now were afraid to get near a horse. How might such changing human sensibilities be affecting our relationship to the natural world and the ecological fundamentals of life on earth?

Nature in Art

Art is often represented in architecture. For example, the old barn featured in the video is a classic example of vintage artistic architecture sometimes exhibited in barn construction on large farms of prominent agricultural landowners. Have students search for any examples of local architecture (old or new) that strike them as being artistically impressive.

Community Connections

Assign group research projects (via library, resident interviews, or other means) to explore how your local area has changed in the course of 200 years of statehood. Have the class compile a presentation (written report, photo exhibit, interview recordings, PowerPoint or other presentation format) highlighting local history and forecasting possible community change (good or bad) that might be in store for the future.



Additional References & Resources

The entire set of *Discovering Alabama* documentaries, now numbering almost 100 programs, is an unmatched educational resource featuring countless revelations of Alabama history, from the geological history of how Alabama came to be, to the history of Alabama settlement and development, to the history of a changing Alabama across the periods of modern memory. The Emmy-winning *Discovering Alabama* series, in its own right a unique archive of Alabama history, today celebrates more than 30 years of continuous production and is now among the longest-running TV programs in television history. Most *Discovering Alabama* programs are accompanied by supplementary Teacher Guides that list many "additional references & resources" for teacher use.

Parting Thoughts

The observation recounted under "Philosophical Reflections" was made in regard to the general trend of an urbanizing society. It does not accurately reflect the sensibilities of many Alabamians who, of course, are not afraid to get near a horse. On the other hand, we all probably can offer personal observations about our changing world that concern us deeply. For example, a colleague is particularly concerned about what he believes to be a worrisome increase in obesity among today's youth. Another example, a teacher friend reports frustrating difficulty getting students to forgo constant cell-phone texting during class. Indeed, as society continues to change at an accelerating pace, I would suggest that we try not to lose our sensibilities for many valuable aspects of earlier times. Sitting peacefully on an open-air porch, as opposed to sitting painfully in stifling traffic congestion. Quiet moments, as opposed to endless noise and clatter. Tantalizing old wooden barns amidst fields of glorious natural bounty, as opposed to ever-burgeoning sprawl amidst expanding landscapes of concrete and asphalt. Thus this video purposely contrasts the countryside setting of an old wooden barn with the city setting of the State Archives to serve as a motif for reflecting on earlier times. Too often such an old barn is considered merely a "quaint" vestige of yesteryear. But maybe it can also remind us that there are some things from our past that we might wish to retain, including the values of farm life, physical work, and closeness to our natural surroundings.

Oh yeah, I almost forgot. The old wooden barn is also a reminder of those special country moments relaxing in the barn loft under a tin roof on a rainy day.

Happy outings,

Dr. Doug





Discovering
Alabama

Activity/Information Sheet

State Archives



Experience 300 Years of Alabama's Story

About the Alabama Department of Archives and History*

The Alabama Department of Archives and History (ADAH) is located in Downtown Montgomery just across the street from the State Capitol Building. ADAH is the principal repository of historic state newspapers, as well as microfilmed county records from across the state. As part of its outreach efforts, the Department maintains an extensive website that provides users with access to records and information relating to Alabama's history. The site offers finding aids and other useful databases online and includes digitized images of some of its collections, including photographs. ADAH has also used this medium to provide resources for teachers' use. Significant to the Department's collections today are Native American artifacts, and Civil War and other military objects, especially Civil War flags. Of note, its private records contain antebellum and Civil War letters and diaries, and some collections that focus on Alabama political history. ADAH is also the official repository for all the papers of Alabama governors from 1819 to the present, with an extensive collection of public and private records and artifacts relating to George C. Wallace.

A major new addition to ADAH is the Museum of Alabama. Permanent exhibitions at the Museum of Alabama include "The Land of Alabama," introducing the geology and natural resources that helped shape the state's history, and "The First Alabamians," featuring artifacts, murals, and a diorama that tell the inspiring story of fourteen thousand years of Native American culture. An

entire new centerpiece exhibition called "Alabama Voices" opened in February 2014. This exhibition covers the dramatic unfolding of Alabama history from the dawn of the 1700s to the beginning of the 21st century. More than 800 artifacts, hundreds of images and documents, and 22 audiovisual programs tell the story of struggles over the land, the rise of a cotton economy, the Civil War, industrialization, world wars, civil rights, the race to the moon, and more. Voices taken from diaries, letters, speeches, songs, and other sources convey the experiences of Alabamians who lived through and shaped the history of these periods. The Museum of Alabama provides interactive educational resources for children and families in "Hands-On-Gallery" and "Grandma's Attic." Here families and children can dress in period costumes, play with toys from bygone eras, make their own crafts, listen to stories, and much more.

Inspired by the exhibits to learn more about your family's contributions to Alabama history? Visit the ADAH research room (<http://www.archives.alabama.gov/research.html>) to get expert guidance, work with original records and online resources, and start building your family tree. Open Tuesday through Friday and the second Saturday of each month. Come find your story!

* Portions excerpted from: <http://www.archives.alabama.gov/> and <http://www.encyclopediaofalabama.org/article/h-2014>