

Using History to Create A Brighter Future:

Lawrence County



Project funded by the Alabama Community Capacity Network



Packet developed by Gabel Duke and Ryleigh Hillard, University of North Alabama in partnership with the Muscle Shoals National Heritage Area

Using History to Create A Brighter Future: Lawrence County

Objective: Students will learn about Lawrence County history through a variety of in-class activities. They will then create a pop-up card about a person, place, or event in Lawrence County history with images and text describing how this history can be used to help shape their community's future.

Assessment: Completion of final popup activity. Students will demonstrate an understanding of Lawrence County history and apply critical thinking to the question of how this history can help residents today.

Relevant 4th Grade Alabama Curriculum Standards

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

Examples: cultural—housing, education, religion, recreation
economic transportation, means of support
political inequity of legal codes

- Describing major areas of agricultural production in Alabama, including the Black Belt and fertile river valleys

9) Analyze political and economic issues facing Alabama during Reconstruction for their impact on various social groups.

Examples: political—military rule, presence of Freedmen's Bureau, Alabama's readmittance to the Union

economic—sharecropping, tenant farming, scarcity of goods and money

- Interpreting the Thirteenth, Fourteenth, and Fifteenth Amendments to the Constitution of the United States
- Identifying African Americans who had an impact on Alabama during Reconstruction in Alabama
- Identifying major political parties in Alabama during Reconstruction

11) Describe the impact of World War I on Alabamians, including the migration of African Americans from Alabama to the North and West, utilization of Alabama's military installations and training facilities, and increased production of goods for the war effort.

- Recognizing Alabama participants in World War I, including Alabama's 167th Regiment of the Rainbow Division
- Identifying World War, I technologies, including airplanes, machine guns, and chemical warfare

12) Explain the impact the 1920s and Great Depression had on different socioeconomic groups in Alabama.

Examples: 1920s—increase in availability of electricity, employment opportunities, wages, products, consumption of goods and services; overproduction of goods; stock market crash
Great Depression—over cropping of land, unemployment, poverty, establishment of new federal programs

- Explaining how supply and demand impacted economies of Alabama and the United States during the 1920s and the Great Depression

13) Describe the economic and social impact of World War II on Alabamians, including entry of women into the workforce, increase in job opportunities, rationing, utilization of Alabama's military installations, military recruitment, the draft, and a rise in racial consciousness.

- Recognizing Alabama participants in World War II, including the Tuskegee Airmen and women in the military
- Justifying the strategic placement of military bases in Alabama, including Redstone Arsenal, Fort Rucker, Fort McClellan, and Craig Air Force Base

Historical Overview:

Before the arrival of the Europeans, native peoples occupied the Americas. The Europeans, when colonizing the Eastern seaboard, pushed Native Americans westward. This forced movement continued as available land along the coast became scarce and white Europeans expanded their reach further into the interior. In 1776 the United States became an independent nation and the newly formed government continued the mission of westward expansion.

Lawrence County was created in 1818, one year before Alabama became a state. Native Americans once called the land that became Lawrence County their home. However, Native American control of land across Alabama was quickly eroded in the early nineteenth century. In the wake of the Creek War, the Creeks signed the **Treaty** of Fort Jackson in 1814 and **ceded** twenty-three million acres of land in Alabama and Georgia. While the Creek land in Alabama was south of Lawrence County, the cessation set off a chain reaction of treaties between the U.S. government and Native Americans. In 1816, the Turkey Town Treaty resulted in the cessation of much of the Cherokee's land in Alabama and Tennessee to the United States. The county was named after Captain James Lawrence, a naval war hero who fought in the War of 1812. Some of the earliest settlements included Town Creek (later becoming part of Colbert County), Moulton, and Melton's Bluff.

In 1828, nine years after Alabama became a state, Andrew Jackson was elected seventeenth president of the United States. Even after the treaties signed in the 1810s, during this time many Native Americans remained in the southeastern states among the ever-growing population of white settlers and the enslaved people the whites settlers brought with them to farm the rich lands of Alabama. In 1830, President Jackson signed the Indian Removal Act. This act

promised Native Americans living east of the Mississippi River land across the river mostly in what today is Oklahoma. While some tribes self-removed, others resisted removal. In the end, approximately sixty thousand Native Americans were forced out of their homelands and carried across the Mississippi River, most ending up in present-day Oklahoma. Thousands of people died of hunger, illness, and the cold temperatures on their forced journey westward. Some removal routes went through Lawrence County. The Tuscumbia, Courtland, & Decatur Railroad (TC&D Railroad), located in Lawrence County, was the only railroad in the United States used during removal. Constructions of railroads in the United States had just begun by the time the Indian Removal Act was signed and the TC&D Railroad was the first railroad west of the Appalachian Mountains.

When Alabama became a state in 1819, it entered the United States as a slave state. The economy of Alabama was centered on the production of cotton, a labor-intensive crop. On some plantations in Lawrence County, hundreds of men, women, and children were enslaved. Enslaved men, women, and children did other work in addition to growing cotton. They worked as domestic servants, carpenters, brick and stone masons; harvested crops; raised animals; and cooked. President Abraham Lincoln's Emancipation Proclamation ended slavery in Alabama in 1863, though it would not be until after the war and the passage of the Thirteenth Amendment that the institution of slavery actually ended.

After the Emancipation Proclamation and the Thirteenth Amendment were set in place, landowners in Lawrence County turned to **sharecropping** and **tenant farming** so they could continue to grow cotton on the landowner's land while still making a profit. Many former slaves were trapped by debt in these systems, meaning they could not leave the landowner's farms and faced a life similar in some ways to slavery. However, some formerly enslaved African

Americans did become landowners in Lawrence County. Even after the Civil War, the economy of Lawrence County remained focused on the production of cotton and other agricultural products. In the hill country toward the southern part of Lawrence County, farms were smaller and did not produce as much cotton, if any at all. Farmers also raised cattle, hogs, and sheep.

Farming began to change in the early twentieth century as large landowners were able to buy tractors and other mechanical farming equipment. Consequently, even when the economy was bad, landowners did not need as many sharecroppers or tenant farmers. This development plus a lack of opportunities for African Americans led to the Great Migration when millions of African Americans headed north and west for find new opportunities. For example, Olympian Jesse Owen's family left Lawrence County, where they had been sharecroppers, and moved to Cleveland, Ohio in 1922 so that Jesse's father could find a better job.

When the Great Depression started in 1929, people in Lawrence County struggled to make ends meet and hold on to their land. To help the Tennessee River Valley, President Franklin D. Roosevelt signed the Tennessee Valley Authority Act in 1933, which resulted in the formation of TVA. TVA constructed dams to generate electricity, helped solve **soil erosion** problems, planted trees, improved public health, and made fertilizer for farmers. TVA needed land along the river to accomplish their goals and some people in Lawrence County had to leave their homes. TVA paid landowners for their land but the sharecroppers and tenant farmers who worked on a lot of the land sold most often did not receive any money and had to find somewhere else to live and work on their own. Many Lawrence County residents found work with TVA. Some even helped build Wheeler Dam.

As the twentieth century progressed, changes came to the region. Although Lawrence County's economy remained agriculture-based, the availability of TVA power brought industry

to the area. International Paper opened in 1970 and employed around 2000 people at any given time until it closed in 2014. The creation of the Bankhead National Forest helped preserve the natural wonders of the southern portion of Lawrence County and created recreational opportunities for residents and visitors. Museums, including the Oakville Indian Mounds Museum and Educational Center, Pond Spring: The General Joe Wheeler Home and the Jesse Owens Museum, opened to tell Lawrence County's history. Today, Lawrence County has a population of around 33,433. Of that number, 80 percent identified as white, 11 percent as African American, and 5 percent as Native American, which is the largest concentration of Native Americans in any Alabama county.

People, Places, and Events in Lawrence County History

Anne Royall (1769-1854): Anne Royall was born on June 11, 1769, in Baltimore, Maryland. She married William Royall in 1797. When her husband died in 1812, a jury nullified his will. The nullification left Royall completely bankrupt. Royall turned to writing to make a living. She wrote a nine-volume work, “Letters from Alabama on Various Subjects,” as well as numerous newspaper articles. The book documents the time she spent in Alabama. Each of the letters is addressed to Matthew Dunbar, her friend and lawyer. Royall rented homes in both Melton’s Bluff and Moulton, where she wrote many of her letters. During her time in Alabama in 1818, Royall wrote about Brown’s Ferry and interviewed Cherokees She is buried in the Congressional Cemetery in Washington, D.C.

Annie Wheeler (1868-1955): Annie Wheeler, daughter of Joseph Wheeler, was born on the Pond Spring plantation, in 1868. When her father was stationed in Cuba during the Spanish-American War, in 1898, Wheeler followed him to serve as a nurse. Her patients often referred to her as “Miss Sunshine.” Wheeler served as home secretary of the Red Cross during the war, as well. Now owned by the Alabama Historical Commission, Pond Spring is maintained as Annie Wheeler left it – a memorial to her father.

Bankhead National Forest: President Woodrow Wilson established the Alabama National Forest in 1918. President Roosevelt renamed it in 1942 for Alabamian Willian B. Bankhead, forty-second speaker of the U.S. House of Representatives. Bankhead National Forest is one of Alabama’s four national forests. It is also home to Alabama’s only National Wildlife and Scenic River, the Sipsey Fork. The Sipsey Wilderness, which is a protected wilderness area, is also included in the Bankhead National Forest. The forest’s waters and land have high levels of

biodiversity. Many subspecies of boar, snakes, amphibians, insects, and birds live there. The streams and rivers of Bankhead are especially important as they are home to countless species of animals that thrive in freshwater habitats. Endangered freshwater mussels are found in Bankhead, as well as the Black Warrior Waterdog, a salamander native to Bankhead that cannot be found anywhere else in the world. In many places, freshwater mussels are endangered as humans continue to impose on the rivers and streams, control water flow, pollute the waters, and add invasive species. Particularly harmful to these creatures is the Zebra Mussel which thrives, reproduces, and overtakes locations by eating freshwater mussels. The streams and rivers of Bankhead are protected and are among the few bodies of water untouched by these harmful activities, allowing some endangered species to flourish. The waterdog, an endangered aquatic salamander, continues to fascinate scientists. It only lives in the streams and rivers of the Black Warrior basin in Bankhead, hence the name Black Warrior Waterdog. Due to the extremely limited numbers of this animal, not much is known about it, but biologists are continually researching this creature.



Courtland Airfield: The Courtland Army Airfield was active from December 1942 to 1946. It was the base of a flying school. School attendees practiced marksmanship and gas-attack drills

during WWII. One hundred thousand pilots trained at the Courtland Airfield during its four years of operation. Hundreds of buildings were constructed on the base, including libraries, social clubs, dentist and doctor offices, mess halls, and barracks. Additional airfields were constructed in Muscle Shoals and Leighton. Today, the Wings over Courtland festival celebrates this history.

Courtland Witness Structures: Witness structures are buildings that stood during the Trail of Tears and “witnessed” the removal of Native Americans. The Tuscumbia, Courtland & Decatur Railroad, which runs through Courtland, was part of the removal route. A few of the structures near the rail line in the 1830s remain standing in Courtland today, including the John McMahon House, Popen/Wells House, Shackelford House, and Tweedy House. These structures serve as physical reminders of the Native American Removal and that the land we now live on once belonged to another people.

Elk River Canal: The Elk River Canal was part of the second Muscle Shoals canal system, which is now under water. The Elk River Shoals is part of an underwater formation that consists also of the Little Muscle Shoals and the Big Muscle Shoals. Together, they are all called The Muscle Shoals. The shoals included waterfalls, rapids, sandbars, and sinks. Between Decatur and Florence, the river fell around 137 feet. This made shipping goods along the river difficult as most boats could not navigate this dangerous stretch of the river. To avoid the hazard, a canal with seventeen **locks** on the north side of the river opened in 1836. Due to problems with construction, it was abandoned in 1838. In 1875, construction began on a new canal, which widened the original one and cut down the locks from seventeen to nine. To navigate around the Elk River Shoals, another canal was built on the south side of the Tennessee River across from the mouth of the Elk River. It had two locks, A and B, that could raise the water twenty-three

feet. The second canal officially opened in 1890. When TVA constructed the Wheeler Dam, the canal was no longer needed.

Frank Davis Home, North Courtland: The African American community of Lawrence County used the Frank Davis Home in North Courtland as a school from c.1929-1945. A fire destroyed part of the North Alabama Baptist Academy campus next door in 1928. Soon after, a prominent African American farmer in the community, Frank Davis, offered his home for the school. As the school grew, classes were held in Davis' home, in local churches, and in the Masonic hall. Following World War II, school principal R.A. Hubbard raised funds to purchase land and decommissioned army barracks from the Courtland Airbase for classrooms. The Lawrence County School Board said it would pay teachers' salaries only if the community secured the land and a building. At this time, the Frank Davis home reverted to residential use by the Davis family. The family continued to board teachers, who Hubbard recruited from historically black colleges and universities throughout the state to teach the African American school until the early 1970s, when area schools were integrated.

International Paper: International Paper was, at one time, Lawrence County's largest employer. Located in Courtland, it was part of the printing and communications paper business section of Champion International Paper. From 1970 to 2014, the mill employed more than two thousand workers at any given time and was the "lifeline" of Courtland. The closing of the mill in 2014 devastated the town and the employment of Lawrence County. Many people were forced to move from Lawrence County in order to find work again. In 2019, five years after the mill closed, it was demolished.

Jesse Owens: J.C. Owens was born on September 12, 1913, in Oakville. He was the ninth of ten children in a **sharecropping** family. After WWI, the Great Migration of African Americans out

of the South began. The Owens family moved to Cleveland as part of the more than six million African Americans going west and north to find better employment opportunities. The story goes that one of J.C.'s teachers misheard the pronunciation of his name and called him "Jesse" from then on. The name stuck and almost everybody called him "Jesse" after that. His love of track and field began at East Technical High School, where he broke many records. He won four gold medals at the 1936 Olympic Games, in Berlin, defying the image of what people thought a black man was capable of at that time. Despite Owens' achievements at the Olympics, Hitler refused to shake his hand in congratulations. Within six months of the Olympics, Owens turned professional to try to make a living, and was quickly disqualified from competing under rules of the Amateur Athletics Union. He spent much of the rest of his life working with young schoolchildren. He also became a bandleader, served as a US goodwill ambassador around the world, and even had his own baseball team.

John McMahon House: Built in 1828, the John McMahon house is a two-story brick house in Courtland. McMahon moved from Virginia to Lawrence County in order to run the Courtland branch of the Huntsville mercantile firm Bierne and McMahon. He married Harriet Shackelford, the daughter of Dr. John Shackelford (See the Shackelford section for more information) in August of 1835. During the Civil War, the John McMahon House was used several times as a temporary headquarters for both Union and Confederate forces (but at different times!). It still has the remnants of bullet holes around the front door, as well as in the ceiling, leftover from one evening when the troops decided to practice their shooting into the roof of the home.

General Joseph Wheeler: General Wheeler is a significant figure in both Alabama and U.S. history. His story is one that symbolizes reconciliation and healing between the North and the South after the Civil War. Wheeler was born in Augusta, Georgia, on September 10, 1836.

During the Civil War, he was a Confederate general. After the war, he was elected to the U.S. House of Representatives. When the Spanish-American War began, Wheeler became one of only two former Confederate Generals to keep his rank in the U.S. Army. What many people do not know is that Wheeler was the man who commanded the Rough Riders and future president Theodore Roosevelt at the Battle of San Juan Hill. Because of his service to the state of Alabama and his country, there is a statue of Wheeler in the U.S. Capitol, along with fellow north Alabamian Helen Keller.

Lawrence County Courthouse, Moulton: The city of Moulton is named after Michael Moulton, one of Andrew Jackson's generals who was killed during the 1813-1814 Creek War, which was part of the War of 1812. Construction of the city of Moulton, including the Courthouse Square Historic District, began in 1820. The first courthouse was a log building. A fire destroyed the building in 1859. A two-story brick building replaced it. This building was also used as a hospital during the Civil War. In 1936, this structure was torn down in order to build the courthouse that is standing today.

Melton's Bluff: Melton's Bluff was founded by Irishman John Melton, who abandoned white settlers and joined the local Cherokee tribe in the late 1700s. The community was located on the south bank of the Tennessee River across from where the river meets the Elk River. Melton's Bluff was a large Cherokee Indian-controlled cotton plantation with African American enslaved people. The community was an excellent site for raiding boats and ambushing settlers, which earned John Melton a small fortune. Aside from Mobile Bay's Spanish forts, Melton's Bluff was the first European settlement in Alabama. Andrew Jackson leased/rented Melton's plantation and enslaved people after the Cherokee signed the Turkey Town Treaty, in 1816. One of the routes of the Trail of Tears went past Melton's Bluff.

Mountain-Dwelling People: Not long after Lawrence County was settled, many families moved into the southern mountains at the edge of the county. This portion of Alabama was developed into a national forest in 1918 and was named the William B. Bankhead National Forest. During that time, many of the families who dwelt in the mountains were removed from their homes to make way for the national forest. One of the first settlers in the area was Jonathan Wallace. He and his family moved from Kentucky and lived near Flanagin Creek.

Oakville Mounds: Today, this site is a collection of two mounds, the Oakville Ceremonial Mound and the Oakville Copena Mound, which date back to the Woodland Era (1,000 B.C. to 1,000 AD). When Smithsonian archaeologists surveyed the mound complex in 1924, they identified three other mounds, which are not intact today. The ceremonial mound is the largest mound in the state from this era and the mound complex is believed to have been a major cultural center of north Alabama. The Copena mound is twenty feet high and one of the largest remaining burial mounds in north Alabama.

Pond Spring: The General Joe Wheeler Home: This site was originally occupied by Native Americans. Many artifacts have been found through the years that validate this claim. In 1818, the Hickman family became the first non-natives to settle the land and the dogtrot cabin they built can still be seen at the site today. In 1827, Colonel Benjamin Sherrod purchased the property and in 1859, his grandson married Daniella Jones. Daniella lost her husband just two years later to disease. She married Joseph Wheeler after the conclusion of the Civil War. Wheeler and his new wife moved to Pond Spring, where he would build the Wheeler home in 1869-1870. The house is now a historic site operated by the Alabama Historical Commission.

President Franklin D. Roosevelt: The biggest impact President Roosevelt had on north Alabama was through his New Deal programs. **The New Deal** was an attempt to help the United

States recover from the effects of the Great Depression by stimulating the national economy.

One of the New Deal programs was the **Tennessee Valley Authority**. In 1933, TVA began helping to provide jobs and electricity to the Tennessee River Valley. TVA constructed Wheeler Dam in Lawrence County and took over management of Wilson Dam further west along the river.

Shackleford Family: Rev. Josephus Shackleford was born in Richmond, Virginia, and moved around north Alabama before becoming a Baptist minister in Moulton. He wrote the *History of the Muscle Shoals Association*, which outlines the history of the Baptist Church in the region. At the age of 16, he fought with his brother in the Mexican American war against the wishes of his father. He went on to fight as a general under the Confederacy in the Civil War. His brothers also fought in the conflicts. His daughter, Harriet, married John McMahon (see the section of the John McMahon House for more information). In 1835, Dr. Jack Shackleford, a relative from Courtland, organized a militia to travel to Texas to help Texans in their fight for independence. Jack Shackleford also helped finance the Tuscumbia, Courtland & Decatur Railroad.

Speake Family: James Speake, born in 1803 in Kentucky, was a long-time educator in Lawrence County and lived on a plantation in Oakville. He also served as the Lawrence County superintendent for many years. His son, Henry Speake, born in 1834, was raised on a farm and educated in Lawrence County. At age 20, Henry taught school himself to earn enough money for law school at Cumberland University. He graduated in 1857 and moved to Decatur, where he spent most of his time until the Civil War. Henry joined the Confederate Army in 1862 and became the quartermaster of Company D, Fourth Alabama Cavalry Regiment. In 1864, he was captured with a part of General Nathan Bedford Forrest's regiment near Columbus, Georgia.

After the war, he settled in Moulton and was elected as chancellor of the Northern Division of Alabama and judge of the Eighth Judicial Circuit.

Tuscumbia, Courtland, & Decatur Railroad: The Tuscumbia, Courtland, & Decatur Railroad was a necessity at the time of its completion in 1834. Prior to its construction, supplies had to be put on keelboats and floated down the Tennessee River because of the Muscle Shoals, the notoriously dangerous forty-mile stretch of rolling rapids and rocky shoals. In 1838, the railroad transported Cherokees from the area during Indian Removal. The railroad went on to make towns in Lawrence County, such as Courtland, thrive. In 1847, the Memphis & Charleston Railroad bought the bankrupt TC&D Railroad. During the Civil War, the railroad earned the nickname “the vertebrate of the Confederacy.” Because the railroad was vital for moving supplies and men through the South, both Union and Confederate forces fought throughout the war to control it. When the war concluded in April of 1865, one hundred and forty miles of Memphis and Charleston line had been destroyed. By November of 1865, most of the track was repaired, though the bridge over the Tennessee River in Decatur was not.

Wheeler Dam: Wheeler Dam is a hydroelectric dam in Town Creek on the border of Lauderdale and Lawrence counties. It is one of nine dams TVA built along the Tennessee River, from Knoxville, Tennessee, to Paducah, Kentucky, to help prevent flooding and maintain water flow for easy navigation. Dam construction began in 1933 and was completed in 1936. Wheeler Dam is named after General Joseph Wheeler.

Glossary:

Biodiversity – “The variety of life in the world or in a particular habitat or ecosystem”.¹

Cede - To grant ownership to something, usually done by treaty.

Locks - A device that creates a chamber where water levels can be raised or lowered. This allows boats to travel safely through canals and waterways with different water levels.

Muscle Shoals - The largest city located within Colbert County; it is at the northern part of the state along the Tennessee River. It gets its name from a shallow area on the Tennessee River that was once rich with mussels, a type of shellfish.

Sharecropping / Tenant Farming - Sharecropping is a form of agriculture where the landowner rents out the land to farmers. Those tenant farmers are then required to give back a portion of the crops they harvest to the landowner.

Soil Erosion - The wearing away of the topsoil or uppermost layer of soil. The topsoil is also the most fertile layer of the soil.

The New Deal - Composed of many different programs, reforms, and regulations put into place by President Franklin D. Roosevelt between 1933 and 1939 in response to the devastating Great Depression. TVA was one such program.

Tennessee Valley Authority - Part of the New Deal and officially set in place on May 18, 1933. TVA has provided such things as electricity, flood control, and economic development to the Tennessee Valley region it was created.

Treaty - An official agreement, usually in writing, made between two groups of people.

¹ “Biodiversity: Definition of Biodiversity by Lexico.” Lexico Dictionaries | English. Lexico Dictionaries. Accessed April 23, 2020. <https://www.lexico.com/en/definition/biodiversity>.

In-class Activity: Lawrence County Timeline

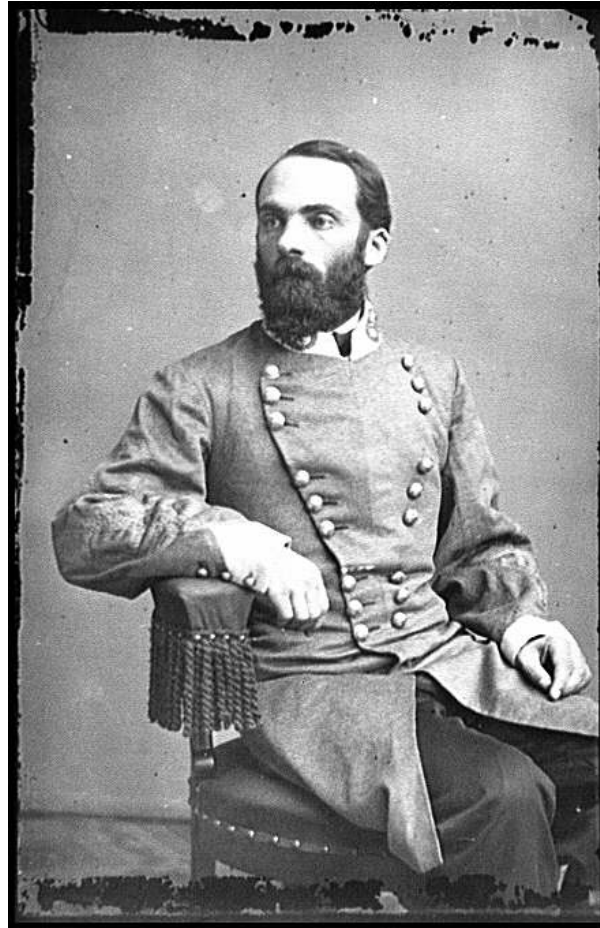
Supplies:

1. Piece of butcher paper or bulletin paper for the timeline. Draw a line down the middle with a marker
2. Print off the timeline sheets included in this packet
3. Glue
4. Markers/crayons

Activity:

1. Roll out the timeline paper in the classroom or in the hallway.
2. Hand out the timeline sheets - one per student or have students form into groups of two.
3. Have students cut the top portion of the sheet off so they have two pieces - one with the title and the picture and one with the facts and important date.
4. Have students order themselves by the important date - or date range. To do so have them talk with one another to figure out where they are on the timeline.
5. Once the students are in the proper order, have them glue their picture on to the timeline. Have them write the important date/dates and have them choose one of the facts to write down on the timelines.
6. Once everyone has finished, have each student share the name of their person/place/event and read the facts that they did not include on the timeline from the sheet, as well as the information about why the date is important.
7. Display the timeline in your classroom or somewhere else in the school.

General Joe Wheeler



Facts:

1. Joe Wheeler was born in 1836 near Augusta, Georgia.
2. Joe Wheeler attended West Point Academy in New York and graduated in 1859.
3. He served as a general in the Confederate Army during the Civil War.
4. In 1880 he was elected to Congress.
5. He served as a major general of volunteers in the United States Army during the Spanish American War.

Important date: 1898

Why? This was the year General Joe Wheeler volunteered to serve in the United States Army during the Spanish American war. Many former Confederate officers would not serve in the United States Army, but Joe believed in supporting his country.

Jesse (J.C.) Owens



Facts:

1. J.C. Owens was born in Oakville, Alabama in 1913.
2. He had nine brothers and sisters.
3. When the family moved to Ohio, one of J.C.'s teachers thought his name was Jesse and the name stuck.
4. In 1935, in a period of 45 minutes, Jesse set three world records and tied a fourth.
5. Jesse won four gold medals in the 1936 Olympics.

Important date: 1936

Why? This is the year Jesse won four gold medals at the Olympics. In 1936, the Nazis controlled Germany. They believed white people were superior to all other races, including African Americans. Jesse wanted to show them that he was an incredible athlete to prove them wrong.

Annie Wheeler



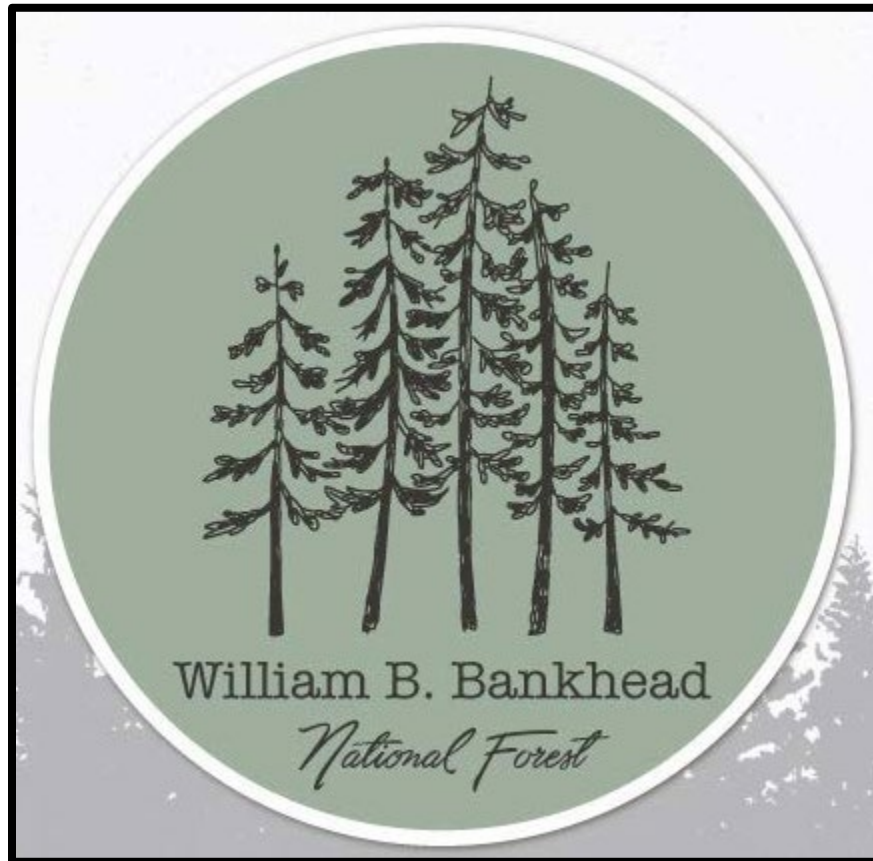
Facts:

1. Annie was the daughter of General Joe Wheeler and she was born in 1868.
2. Annie served as a nurse during the Spanish American War.
3. Annie's patients nicknamed her "Miss Sunshine"
4. Annie also worked with the American Red Cross during World War 1.

Important date: 1898, 1899, 1918

Why? All three of these dates were times when Annie served as a nurse in a foreign country. Not many single women traveled as nurses to Cuba, the Philippines and France. Annie wanted to serve her country as her father had done.

William B. Bankhead National Forest



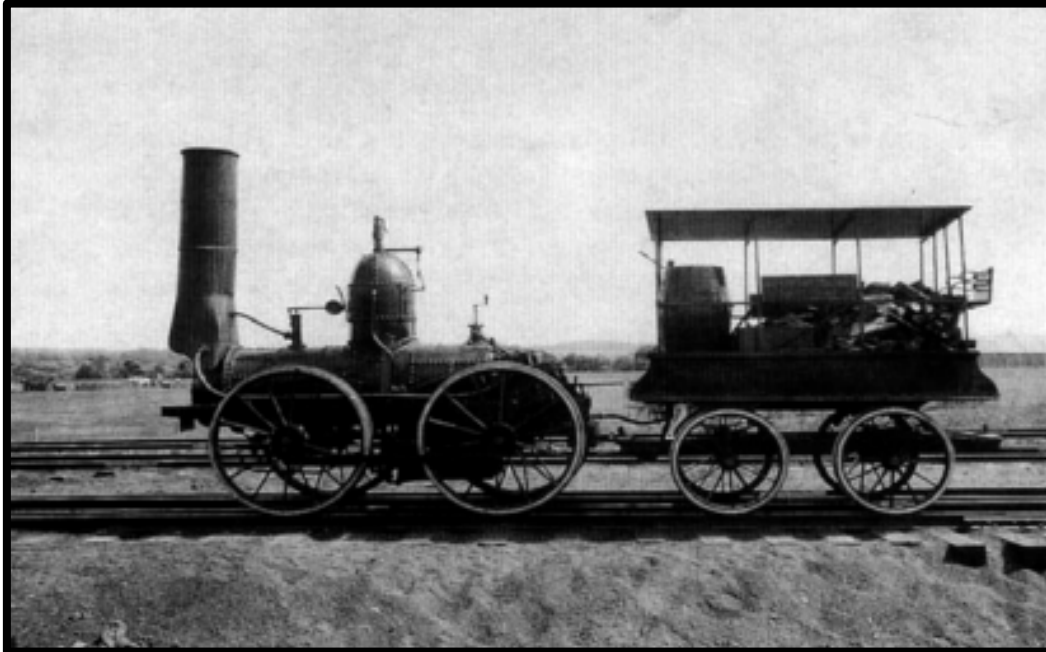
Facts:

1. Originally the forest was named the Alabama National Forest when it was formed in 1918.
2. Today, the forest covers 181,230 acres of land.
3. It is named after William B. Bankhead, who was a congressman from Alabama.
4. The forest includes the Sipsey Fork, Alabama's only National Wild and Scenic River.
5. The forest is also home to the Black Warrior Waterdog – an endangered salamander who is native to the Black Warrior River basin

Important date: 1918

Why? The formation of Bankhead National Forest in 1918 helped to protect natural resources, wildlife, and Native American archeological sites.

Tuscumbia, Courtland and Decatur Railroad



Facts:

1. The railroad was built between 1832 and 1834.
2. The railroad was the first railroad west of the Appalachian Mountains.
3. It was built to go around the Muscle Shoals stretch of the Tennessee River, which made river travel between Florence and Decatur very difficult, if not impossible, for much of the year.
4. It was the only railroad used during Indian Removal.

Important date: 1832

Why? This is the year construction started. Railroads were new in the United States. The Baltimore and Ohio Railroad, the oldest railroad in the United States, opened in 1830. To build a railroad in Alabama just two years later was a big accomplishment.

Trail of Tears



Facts:

1. Congress passed the Indian Removal Act in 1830.
2. Removal in the southeastern United States involved the Chickasaw, Choctaw, Cherokee, Seminole, and Creek tribes.
3. Over 60,000 Native Americans were removed to lands west of the Mississippi.
4. Two routes of the Trail of Tears passed through Lawrence County near Courtland.

Important date: 1830

Why? Congress passed the Indian Removal Act so American settlers would have access to 25 million acres of Native American land in the southeast. The Trail of Tears devastated many Native American communities and many people died on their way to the Indian Territory. The act was unfair to Native Americans.

Oakville Indian Mounds



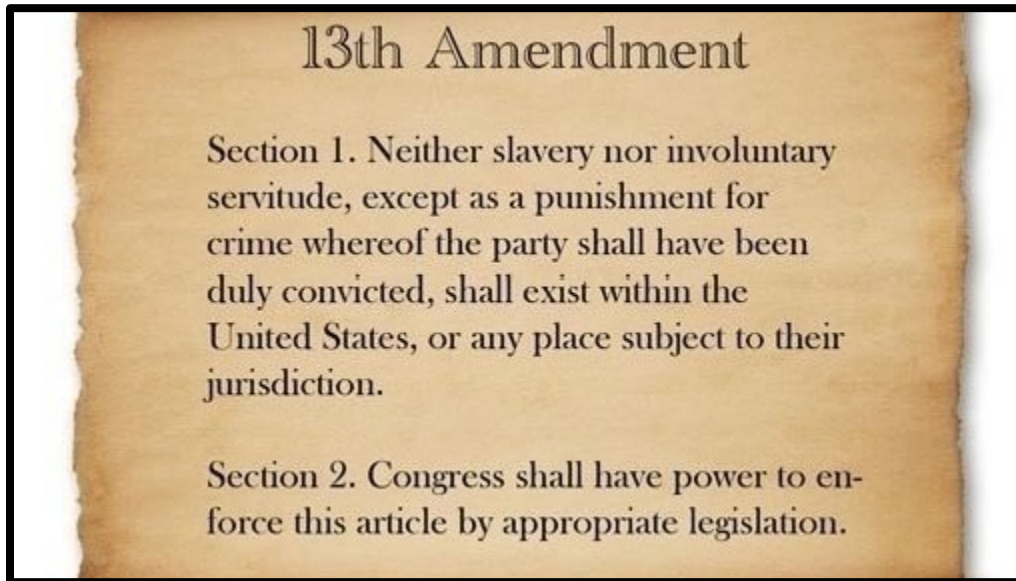
Facts:

1. The mounds were constructed by Native Americans during the Woodland period, around 2,000 years ago.
2. There are two mounds today, a ceremonial mound and a burial mound.
3. The ceremonial mound is the largest mound in Alabama from the Woodland period. It is 1.8 acres at its base and 1 acre on the top of the mound.
4. The museum has a large collection of Native American artifacts and a 5K track.

Important date: 1924

Why? This is when the Smithsonian first documented the mounds.

Slavery in Lawrence County



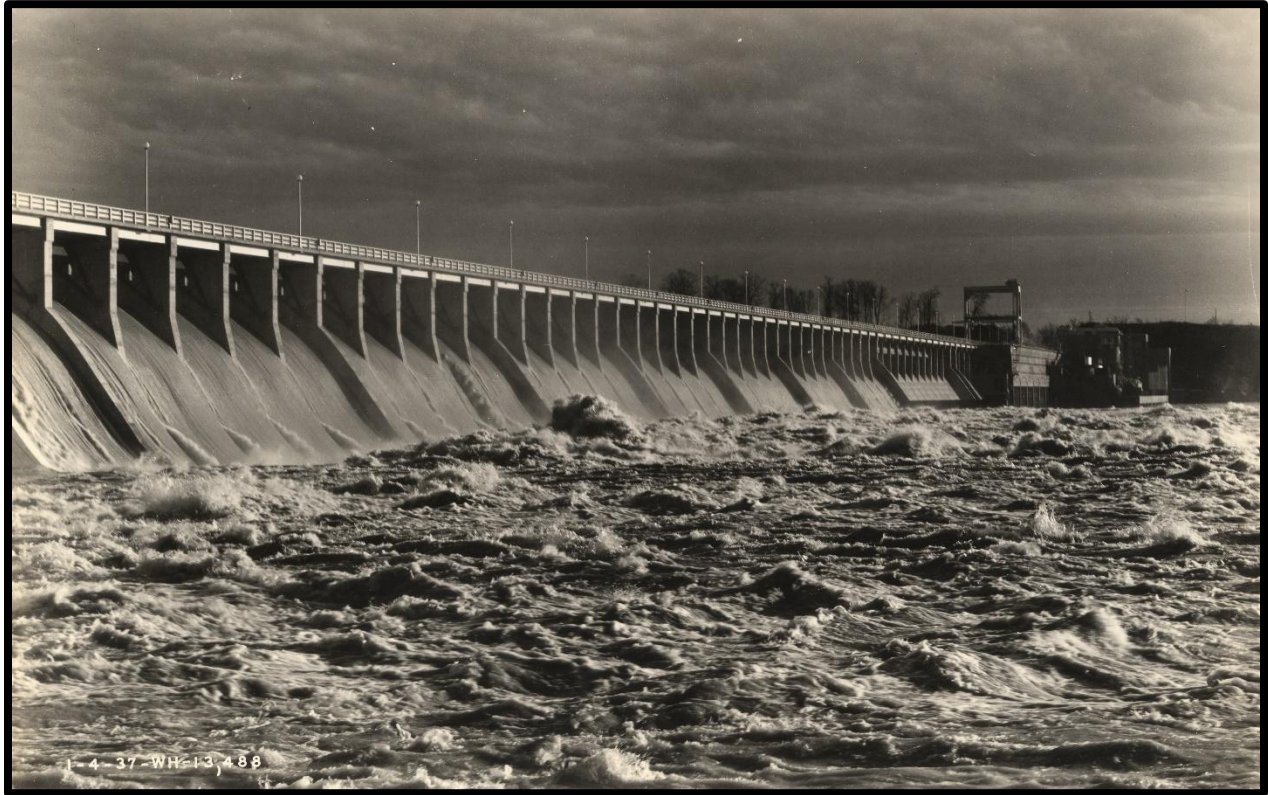
Facts:

1. Slavery officially existed in Lawrence County between 1818 and 1863.
2. Enslaved men, women, and children grew cotton and worked as carpenters, brick masons, domestic servants, cooks, and in other roles.
3. Some plantation owners in Lawrence County owned hundreds of enslaved people.
4. President Lincoln issued the Emancipation Proclamation in 1863, which outlawed enslavement in the Confederacy.
5. The Thirteenth Amendment to the Constitution, ratified in 1865, abolished slavery in the entire United States.

Important date: 1865

Why? While the Emancipation Proclamation freed enslaved people in the South, it was hard to enforce when the Civil War was ongoing. The Thirteenth Amendment, which was passed after the war's end really ended the institution of slavery.

Tennessee Valley Authority, Wheeler Dam



Facts:

1. President Franklin Delano Roosevelt formed the TVA in 1933.
2. Construction of Wheeler Dam began in 1933 and was completed in 1936.
3. 840 families had to move for the construction of the dam.
4. The construction employed around 4700 people at its peak, many of whom were Lawrence County residents.

Important dates: 1936

Why? The completion of the construction of Wheeler Dam changed life in Lawrence County. It helped to bring electricity to the county and provided jobs during the Great Depression.

Image courtesy of the Lawrence County Archives

International Paper



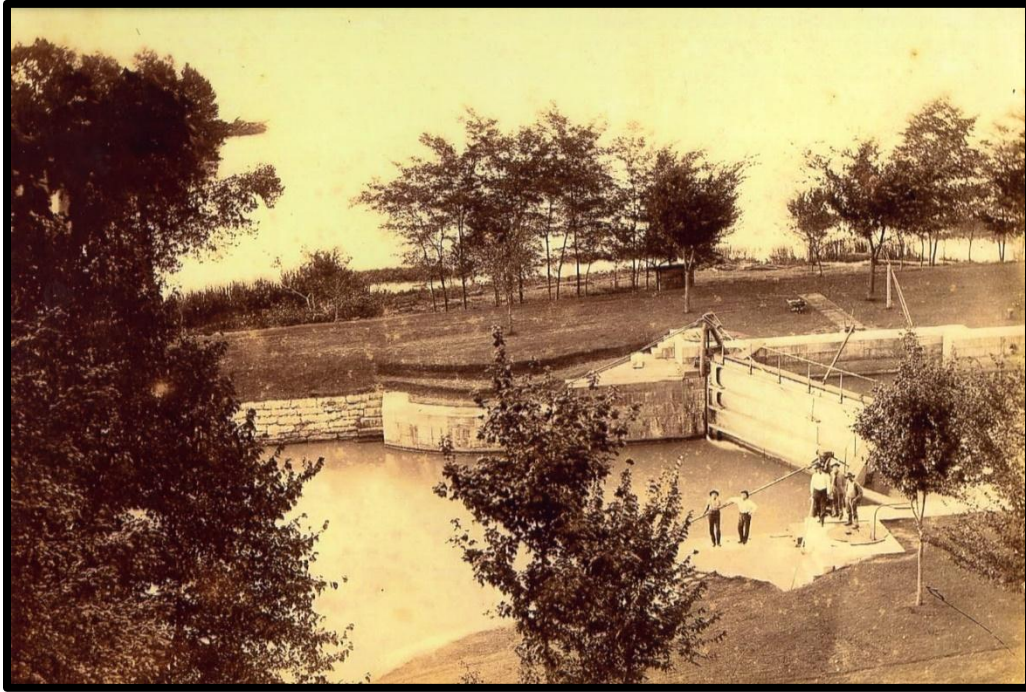
Facts:

1. International Paper operated from 1970 to 2014.
2. Around 2,000 people worked in the mill.
3. The mill was located near Courtland.
4. When the mill closed in 2014, the economy of Lawrence County was devastated.

Important date: 2014

Why? The closure of the mill resulted in over 1,000 people losing their jobs and lots of people left Lawrence County to find work elsewhere. This impacted schools, city governments, and communities.

Elk River Canal



Facts:

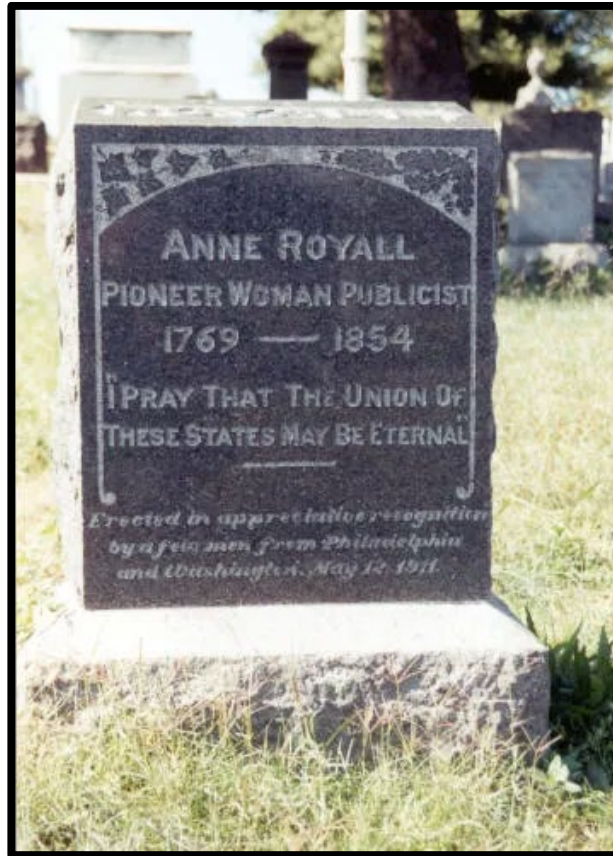
1. Between Florence and Decatur, the Tennessee River used to be shallow, rocky, and difficult to navigate.
2. The first canal project began in the 1830s, but the canal was not big enough for most boats.
3. The second canal project, which included the Elk River Canal, made it possible for boats to successfully navigate the shoals.
4. The Elk River Canal had two locks. A lock creates a chamber where water levels can be raised or lowered. This allows boats to travel safely through areas with different water levels.

Important date: 1890

Why? In 1890, the Muscle Shoals Canal opened. The Elk River Canal was part of this canal system. When it opened, the Muscle Shoals Canal was the longest steamboat canal in the world!

Image Courtesy of the Lawrence County Archives

Anne Royall



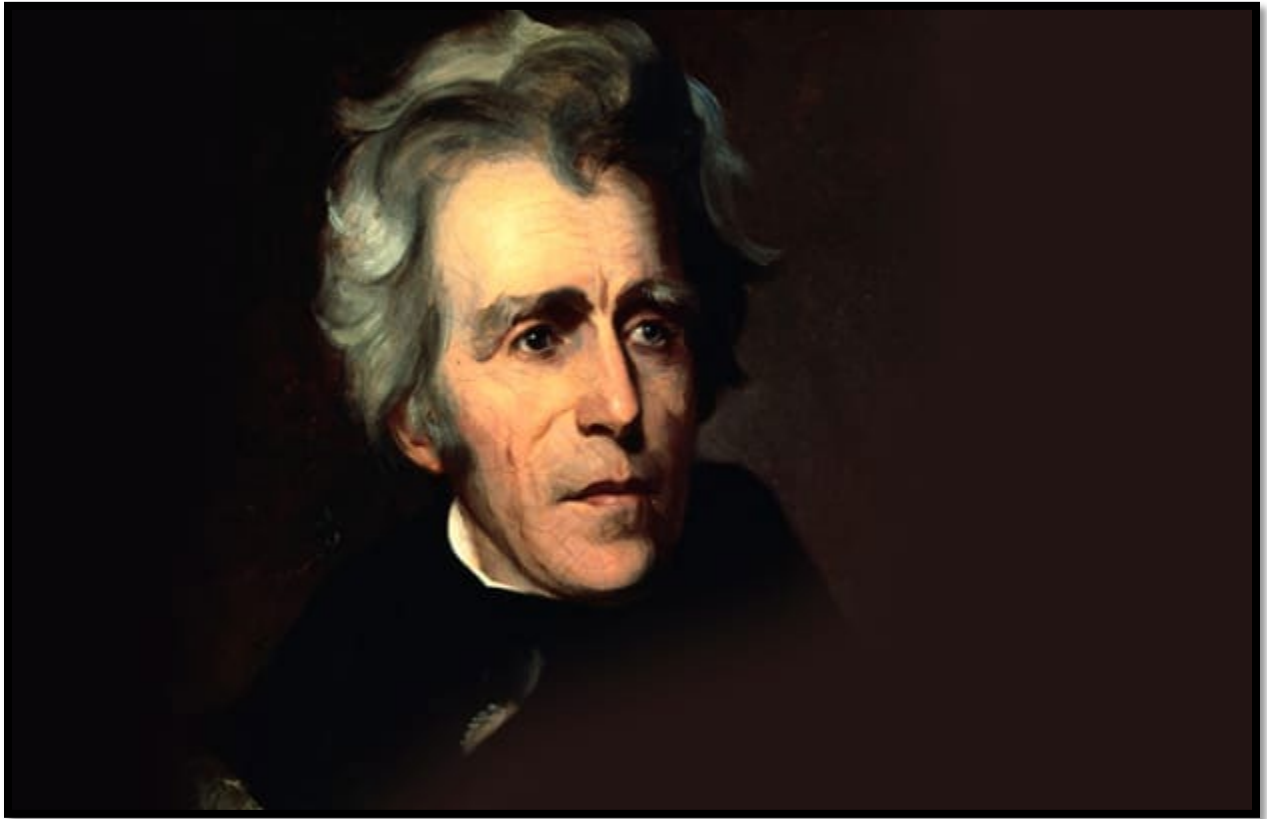
Facts:

1. Anne Royall was born in Baltimore in 1769.
2. She was one of the first female American journalists.
3. During her travels in the South between 1817 and 1823, Royall frequently stayed in Melton's Bluff, located in Lawrence County.
4. Royall published a book called "Letters from Alabama on Various Subjects" about her travels.
5. In her letters she describes Andrew Jackson, Brown's Ferry, and Cherokee Native Americans.

Important Date: 1817

Why? This is the year Anne Royall first traveled to Alabama.

Melton's Bluff



Facts:

1. John Melton settled Melton's Bluff in the 1780s. It became a large plantation with enslaved men and women growing cotton.
2. Melton was an Irishman who married a Cherokee woman.
3. Melton robbed and ambushed travelers on the river and became wealthy.
4. When the Cherokee signed the Treaty of Turkey Town in 1816, they gave up the land around Melton's Bluff.
5. Andrew Jackson – future president of the United States – leased the plantation and the enslaved workers after the treaty was signed in 1816.

Important date: 1816

Why? A series of treaties resulted in Native Americans losing their land. The Turkey Town Treaty was one of these. Andrew Jackson helped negotiate many of these treaties and profited from the Native American's loss of land.

Courtland Witness Structures



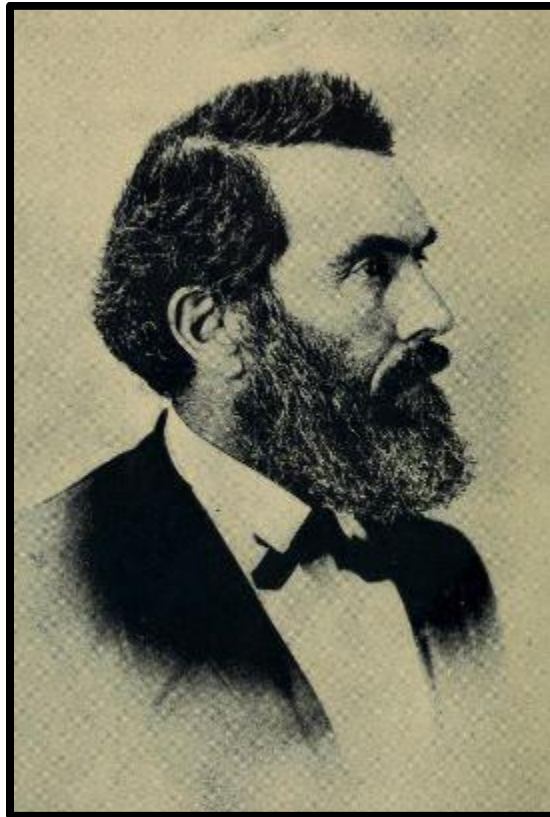
Facts:

1. Witness structures are buildings that stood along the route of the Trail of Tears.
2. The Tuscumbia, Courtland, and Decatur Railroad ran through the center of Courtland.
3. A few buildings in Courtland that were standing when the Cherokee were removed by railroad in 1838 remain intact.
4. This house is the Shackelford House – it was constructed between 1820 and 1830, meaning it witnessed the Cherokee removal in 1838.

Important Date: 1838

Why? During 1838, over 4000 Cherokee traveled through Courtland on the railroad. They were unloaded in Tuscumbia and put on barges heading west.

Shackelford Family



Rev. Josephus Shackelford

Facts:

1. Rev. Josephus Shackelford was a Baptist minister in Moulton.
2. He wrote the *History of the Muscle Shoals Association*, which was published in 1891.
3. Like many Alabamians, he fought in the Mexican American War (1846-1848). He also fought in the Civil War.
4. Another Shackelford, Dr. Jack Shackelford, from Courtland, organized a militia during Texas' war for independence from Mexico (1835-1836)

Important Date: 1891

Why? Rev. Shackelford's book, *History of the Muscle Shoals Association*, documents the origins and history of the Baptist church in north Alabama. He documented all the Baptist churches and included biographies of many Baptist ministers from the area.

Pond Spring: The General Joe Wheeler Home



Facts:

1. Native Americans inhabited the site where Pond Spring stands today for thousands of years.
2. In 1818, John P. Hickman purchased the land. Hickman owned fifty-six enslaved African Americans. One of the cabins they built still stands today.
3. In 1827, Benjamin Sherrod bought the land and improved one of the cabins into a two-story home. His grandson married Daniella Jones. After her husband died in 1861, Jones married General Joe Wheeler in 1866.
4. The Wheelers added another house to the property, Pond Spring.
5. Pond Spring was a large plantation, with cotton being the main crop.

Important date: 1818

Why? When the Hickmans bought the land in 1818, they were part of a large group of people migrating to Alabama to take advantage of land in the new territory. People like the Hickmans were said to have “Alabama Fever,” meaning they were rushing to the state, bringing with them large numbers of enslaved people to grow cotton.

The Speake Family



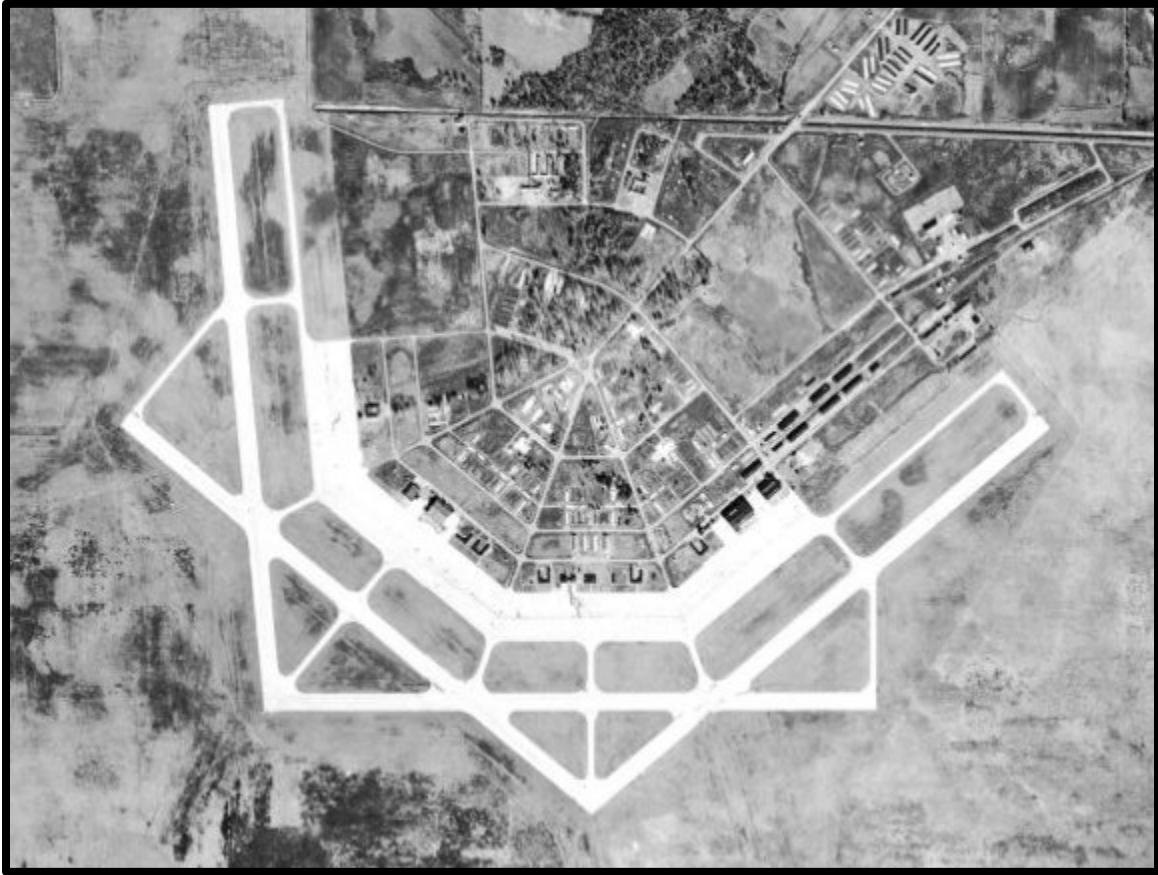
Facts:

1. James Speake was born in Kentucky in 1803 and migrated to Lawrence County in 1832. He was a schoolteacher in Lawrence County.
2. His son, Henry Clay Speake, was born in 1834.
3. Henry attended law school and eventually became a judge.
4. He also served in the Confederate Army and was captured during the Civil War.
5. David Speake, another son of James, was also an attorney.

Important date: 1832

Why? This is the year the Speake family moved to Lawrence County. They would become one of the most important families in Lawrence County. Your school's name may be connected to the family!

Courtland Airfield



Facts:

1. During World War 2, the US Army constructed an airfield and base in Courtland.
2. The airfield operated between 1942 and 1946.
3. Over 100,000 pilots trained at the airfield.
4. The airfield had its own libraries, doctor and dentist offices and stores.

Important date: 1942

Why? The construction of the airfield brought thousands of people to Lawrence County and represents a major contribution of north Alabama to the war effort.

Lawrence County and the City of Moulton



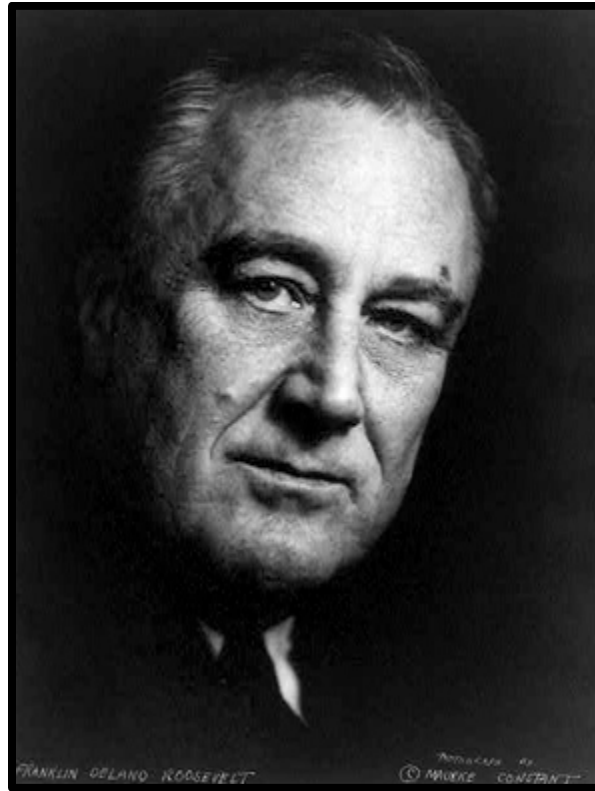
Facts:

1. Melton's Bluff served as county seat until 1820.
2. Construction of the city of Moulton, which became the new county seat because it was more centrally located, began in 1820.
3. The first courthouse was a log building. It burned in 1859.
4. The second courthouse was a two-story brick building and was used as a hospital during the Civil War.
5. It was torn down in 1936 and the current courthouse was built to replace it.

Important date: 1820

Why? In 1820, construction of the city of Moulton began and it replaced Melton's Bluff as the county seat.

President Franklin D. Roosevelt



Facts:

1. President Roosevelt took office during the Great Depression.
2. The entire United States was impacted by the Great Depression, but the Tennessee River Valley region was hit especially hard.
3. To help the people of Alabama and the rest of the river valley, Roosevelt formed the Tennessee Valley Authority.
4. The TVA built Wheeler Dam, which helped to bring electricity to rural communities and helped make the Tennessee River easier to travel on.

Important date: 1933

Why? This is year President Roosevelt took office and formed the TVA.

John McMahon House



Facts:

1. The house is in Courtland.
2. It was constructed in 1828.
3. John McMahon moved from Virginia to Lawrence County. This is a normal migration path. Many people came to Lawrence County from Virginia, North Carolina, and Maryland.
4. The house still has bullet holes from the Civil War. It was used as a temporary headquarters for both the Union and Confederate Army.
5. It is a witness structure, meaning the building “witnessed” the removal of Native Americans during the Trail of Tears.

Important Date: 1828

Why? This is the date of the construction of the home. It was a period of growth for Courtland as lots of people moved to the town.

Frank Davis Home



Facts:

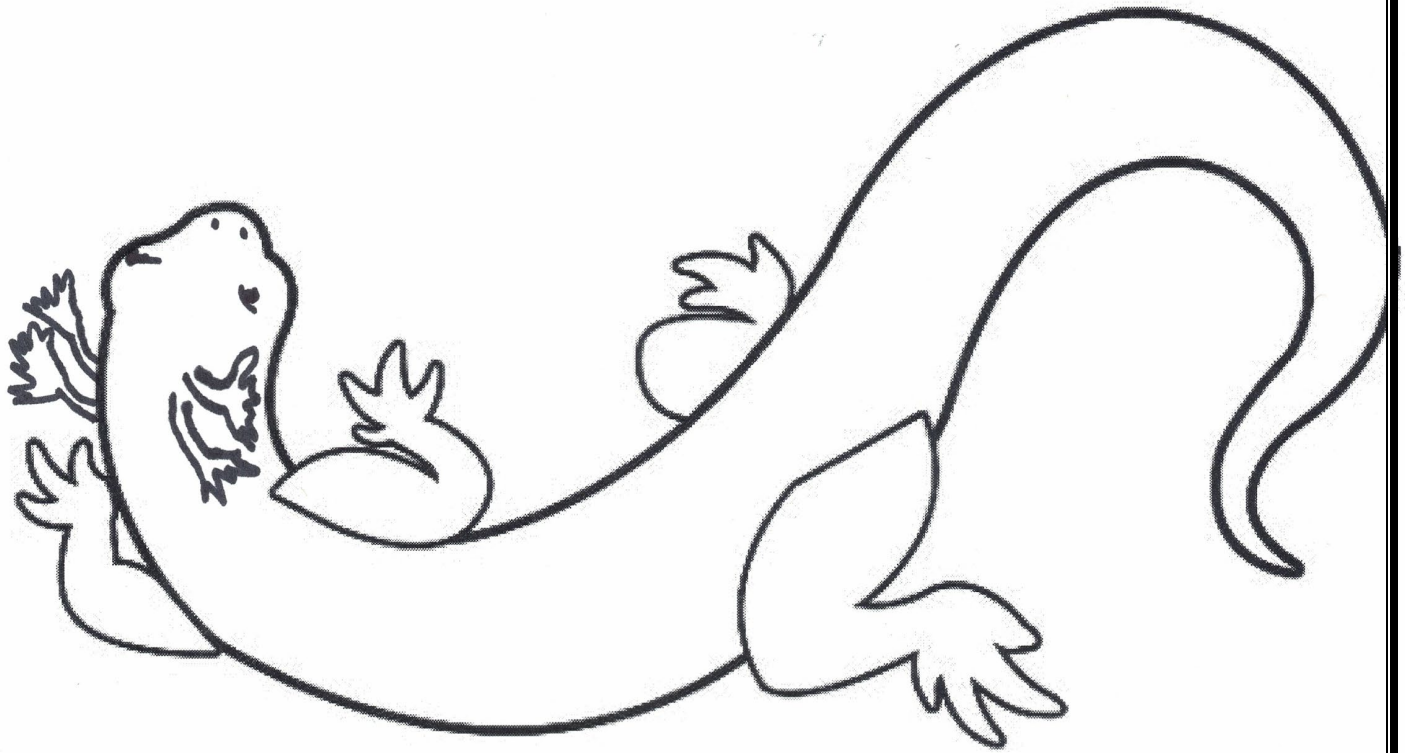
1. The house is in North Courtland.
2. After a fire at the North Alabama Baptist Academy, Frank Davis offered the use of his home for the school, which served the African American community.
3. The house was a school from 1929 to 1945.
4. After a new school opened, teachers continued to board in the house.

Important Date: 1929

Why? In 1929, African American children did not attend the same schools as white children. When the African American community's school burned, they had to find another location because students could not go to the white school in Courtland.

In-class activity: Black Warrior Waterdog

The Black Warrior Waterdog is an endangered salamander who lives in Bankhead National Forest. It has external gills, meaning it breathes underwater. Adults may reach a maximum of 9½ inches total length. Adults are usually brown, may be spotted or unspotted, and have a dark stripe extending from the nostril through the eye to their gills.



What do you think the Black Warrior Waterdog looks like??

In-class activity: Pop Up Book

Materials and Supplies:

1. Cardstock and pop-up template, with dotted lines for cutting
2. Previously written paragraphs about Lawrence County people, places or events and how this history can be used to help the community
3. Copy paper or drawing paper
4. Images of historical Alabama figures, places, and or events - students can also draw their own images to use
5. Pencils and erasers
6. Scissors
7. Glue sticks
8. Colored and patterned paper, printed newspapers, magazines, poems, Alabama maps
9. Markers
10. Colored pencils

Prerequisite knowledge - arts:

1. Understand the concept of foreground, middle ground and background
2. Understand the concept of size variation to create the illusion of depth
3. Understand that a collage is made from cutting and assembling different images to create a new whole.
4. Understand that an illustration may be expressed in symbols and words, as well as by drawing and coloring

Prerequisite knowledge - non-arts:

1. Introduce people, places, events in Lawrence County.
2. Choose a person of interest, place, or event and talk about how the story of the person, place or event can help your community today.
3. List important ideas, information, attributes, and symbolic associations related to the person, place or event chosen for the story creation and illustration.
4. Write a paragraph about the person/place/event and how the story of the person/place/event can help Lawrence County.

Sequence of Activities:

1. Have your students complete the timeline activity to learn about people/places/events in Lawrence County history.
2. Have them choose one of the people/places/events they learned about to depict for the pop-up illustration.
3. Have the students write a paragraph about the person/place/event and have them explain how the history of this person/place/event can help their community.
4. Hold the printed template horizontally, so that the dotted lines are in a horizontal direction. Fold the paper in half so that the printed lines are visible on the outside.
5. Starting at the folded edge, cut along the six dotted lines, being careful to stop cutting at the vertical mark.
6. Pull each of the three cut rectangles forward and then fold each one down, so that a crease is formed at the vertical mark. Repeat this process, folding each one in the other direction, creating a more defined crease line.
7. Unfold the paper and push out each of the three cut rectangles so they “pop” out.
8. Create three different-sized images, associated with the chosen person/place/event. The images need to fit the three different sized pop-out rectangles. Images can be created by drawing and coloring, and/or collaging cut out images from magazines, newspapers, Alabama maps and travel guides and other sources.
9. Glue the three images on the pop-up rectangles so that the larger image is nearest the foreground of the folded card, the smallest image is near the background, and the other image is positioned on the remaining rectangle. Make sure that each image rests flat on the bottom of the card so that the images stand upright when the card is folded open.
10. Cut out and glue down other shapes to create design elements (flowers, grass, clouds, windows, other design elements) on the foreground and background of the card. If desired, glue some of the added elements on tabs to make them more dimensional.
11. On a 5 ½ x 8 ½ sheet of cardstock, write a paragraph about the person/place/event illustrated on the 3-D card and include ideas about how the history of this person/place/event can help your community.

Follow-up activity:

Once your students have completed the timeline and the pop-up project, reach out to local leaders, other teachers, people who run museums/historical sites, members of historical societies, and other community members and schedule a time, either at your school or at another site, for the students to share their work and ideas with their community.

This activity is based on the Alabama Arts Alliance Arts Integrated lesson plan developed during the Alabama 200 bicentennial celebration. Funding for the development and associated workshops came from the Alabama State Department of Education, the National Endowment for the Arts, the Alabama State Council on the Arts and The Daniel Foundation.

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For more information about Lawrence County History, visit:

Muscle Shoals National Heritage Area: <http://msnha.una.edu/>

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

Oakville Indian Mounds Museum and Education Center: <http://oakvilleindianmounds.com/>

Pond Spring: The General Joe Wheeler Home:

<https://ahc.alabama.gov/properties/pondspring/pondspring.aspx>

The Jesse Owens Museum: <http://jesseowensmemorialpark.com/wordpress1/>

Lawrence County Archives: <http://lawrencecoarchives.com/>

Bankhead National Forest: https://www.fs.usda.gov/detail/alabama/about-forest/districts/?cid=fsbdev3_002553

Thank you to the Lawrence County Archives, Oakville Indian Mound Museum and Education Center, the Speake School, the Alabama Community Capacity Network and the Appalachian Regional Commission.