

# TEACHER'S GUIDE

## Document-Based Activity

### Part 3: Riding the Rails

#### MISSION 5: "Up from the Dust"

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##### A NOTE TO THE EDUCATOR

During the 1930s, homeless people built hundreds of shanty towns across the United States. These temporary settlements became known as "Hoovervilles" as a criticism of how President Herbert Hoover was handling the economic crises. In the activity, students will analyze photographs taken in different Hoovervilles. A Photograph Analysis Guide helps students be thorough in their examination of a picture.

##### Activity Components

- Photograph Analysis Guide: Questions students can use to analyze each image.
- Six Primary Sources
  - Photograph 1: Homeless shantytown known as Hooverville, foot of S. Atlantic St, ca. 1933  
Seattle, Washington.
  - Photograph 2: A man hammers scavenged wood as the floor of a Hooverville home under construction in late December 1931. St. Louis, Missouri.
  - Photograph 3: The Mississippi River rises into some of the shacks of the city's biggest Hooverville in St. Louis, Missouri. November 1931.
  - Photograph 4: Hooverville residents eat meals provided by a charity on Dec. 4, 1932. St. Louis, Missouri.
  - Photograph 5: Women prepare food for canning. St. Louis, Missouri. September 1931.
  - Photograph 6: Women clean jars in preparation for canning food. St. Louis, Missouri. September 1931.
- Captions and Sources: The original captions have been included on a separate page so that students can concentrate on the images first.

##### Steps to Complete:

The following procedure is recommended for this activity and can be adapted based on your curricular goals and timing constraints.

1. Distribute photograph(s) and the "Photograph Analysis Guide" to students. You may choose to share as many or as few of the photographs as you wish. Distribute one "Photograph Analysis Guide" with each photograph.
  2. Have students work independently or in small groups to analyze the photograph(s) using the guide. Have them answer questions 1-4 before you give them the captions.
  3. Distribute the captions and the source information. Have students complete questions 5-6 of the "Photograph Analysis Guide."
  4. Ask students to use the information they uncovered from the photographs and captions and their playing of Part 3 to write a newspaper account describing living conditions in Hoovervilles. You may want to have students include at least one detail for each photograph they analyze.
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Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Class: \_\_\_\_\_

Date: \_\_\_\_\_

**Photograph Analysis Guide**

Photograph Number: \_\_\_\_\_

1. Describe what you see.	2. What do you learn about Hoovervilles by viewing the image?
3. What do you know is true? What assumptions might you make while viewing this image?	4. What is the mood or feeling of the image? How is that communicated?
5. How does reading the caption change how you view the image?	6. What questions do you have about what is shown in the image?

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Photograph 1

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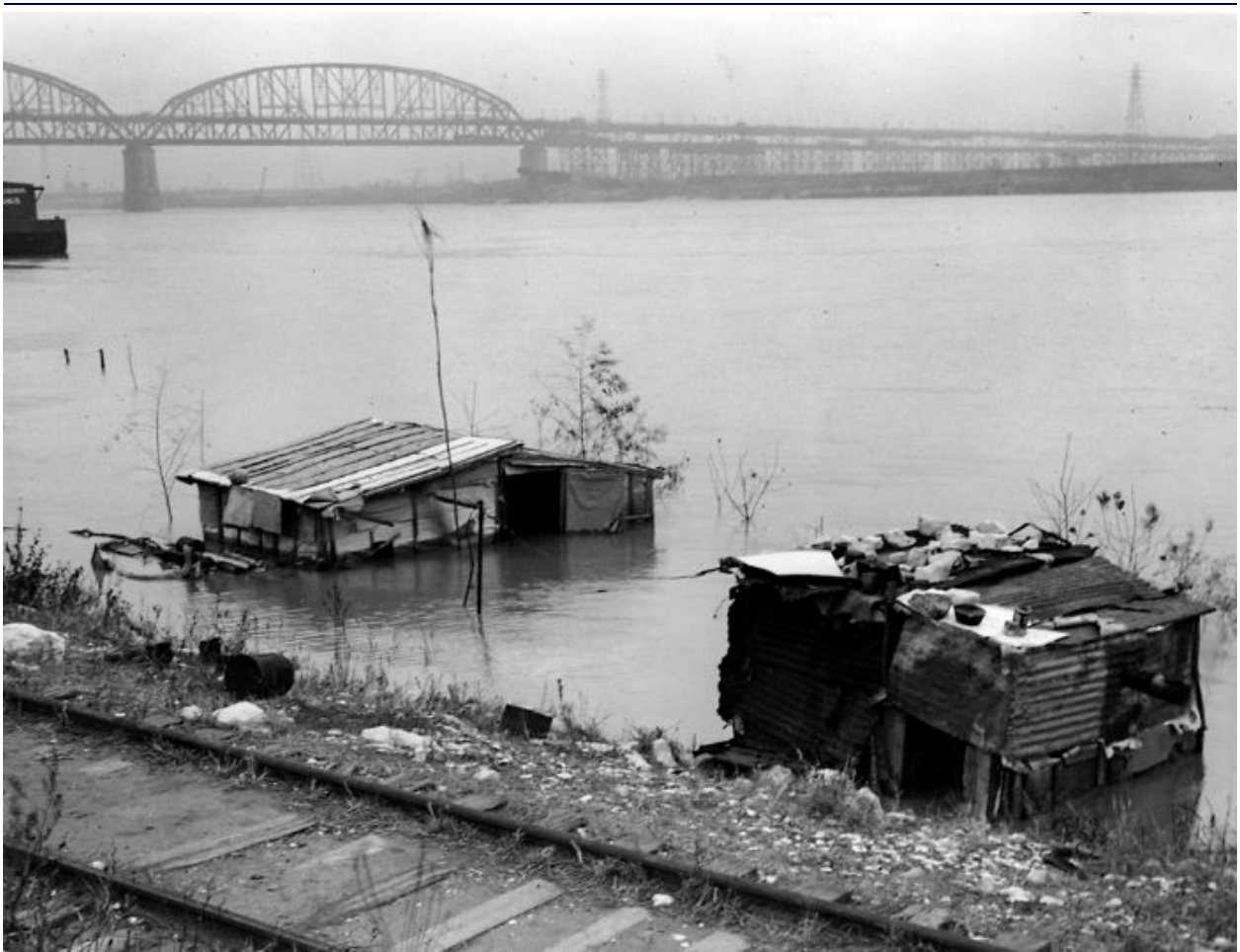
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Photograph 2

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Photograph 3



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Photograph 4

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Photograph 5

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Photograph 6



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#### Captions and Sources

##### Photograph 1

Homeless shantytown known as Hooverville, foot of S. Atlantic St, ca. 1933  
Seattle, Washington.

University of Washington Libraries. Special Collections Division. Seattle Photograph Collection.  
<http://digitalcollections.lib.washington.edu/cdm/singleitem/collection/seattle/id/1167/rec/14>

##### Photograph 2

Caption: A man hammers scavenged wood as the floor of a Hooverville home under construction in late December 1931. Hooverville residents built their own homes with old wood, crates, scraps of metal, canvas -- even flattened cans.

St. Louis, Missouri.

Photo by Post-Dispatch staff photographers

<http://stltoday.mycapture.com/mycapture/enlarge.asp?image=27374108&event=918017&CategoryID=23105>

##### Photograph 3

Caption: The Mississippi River rises into some of the shacks of the city's biggest Hooverville in November 1931. The Municipal Bridge upriver is in the background. Press reports estimated that more than 3,000 people lived in the big Hooverville, and another 2,000 lived in smaller clusters along the city's 16-mile riverfront. Residents who were chased by floods kept returning until the federal Works Progress Administration cleared out Hooverville in 1936. But some residents came back and rebuilt after that, and clusters of squatter shacks could be seen along the river into the 1960s.

St. Louis, Missouri.

November 1931.

Photo by Post-Dispatch staff photographers.

<http://stltoday.mycapture.com/mycapture/enlarge.asp?image=27374107&event=918017&CategoryID=23105>

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##### Photograph 4

Caption: Hooverville residents eat meals provided by a charity on Dec. 4, 1932. Fortunately for the 1,500 dinners, it was a balmy 52 degrees that day.

St. Louis, Missouri.

Photo by Post-Dispatch staff photographers.

<http://stltoday.mycapture.com/mycapture/enlarge.asp?image=27374113&event=918017&CategoryID=23105>

##### Photograph 5

Caption: Women from destitute families prepare peaches and string beans for canning just outside the Welcome Inn, a food-distribution charity that was built beneath the Municipal (later MacArthur) Bridge, just east of Fourth Street. The picture was published Sept. 11, 1931. Ralph Hirsch, who owned a nearby bunkhouse for workingmen, organized the Welcome Inn in April 1930 to help jobless and homeless families that had been building shacks along the Mississippi River. Those squatter communities became known as Hoovervilles, a bitter reference to President Herbert Hoover. The biggest such community in St. Louis formed along the river from the Municipal Bridge south for more than a mile. The Welcome Inn was only three blocks to its west. In November 1930, charity-minded philanthropists from the city's wealthy Central West End took over the Welcome Inn and expanded its offerings. They hired women, such as those seen here, to can donated produce for winter distribution. The women were paid in food. (Post-Dispatch)

St. Louis, Missouri.

September 1931

Photo by Post-Dispatch staff photographers.

<http://stltoday.mycapture.com/mycapture/enlarge.asp?image=27374113&event=918017&CategoryID=23105>

##### Photograph 6

Women at the Welcome Inn clean jars in preparation for canning. Wholesale grocers, bakeries and other local businesses donated produce and day-old bread to the Welcome Inn, which distributed it to residents of Hooverville and other poor families. (Post-Dispatch)

St. Louis, Missouri.

September 1931

Photo by Post-Dispatch staff photographers.

<http://stltoday.mycapture.com/mycapture/enlarge.asp?image=27374113&event=918017&CategoryID=23105>