

Emily Schearer
Lesson Plan for Ide@s

Lesson Title: A Historical Look at Agriculture and Sociology in the United States

Subjects: U.S. History, Rural Sociology, Agriculture, Economics

Standards: B.12.3 B.12.7 B.12.9 D.8.7 D.8.4 E.8.4 E.8.7

(<http://dpi.state.wi.us/standards/>)

Grade Levels: 10-12

Suggested time: 1-50 minute period

Costs: None

Resource Description/Summary:

This lesson draws upon a study conducted by Charles Galpin and Alonzo Cox titled *Rural, Social and Economic Problems of the United States*. The study appeared in a 1919 bulletin from the Office of the Secretary of the American Association for Agricultural Legislation. The conclusions that are drawn in this short article are mainly based upon letters collected from names appearing in the “Who’s Who” in Agriculture. The rural problems of the country are outlined in the study by geographic region (New England and Mid Atlantic States, Corn Belt States, Southern States, Lake States, Mountain and Pacific States).

Those surveyed cited marketing, land settlement, roads, race/immigration issues, and education reform as some of the main social and economic problems that rural communities were facing. A closer look at some of the study’s findings reveals some of the prevailing attitudes and conditions during this period in the 20th century. The following activity can be used as an introduction to concepts of rural sociology, a historical look at connections between agriculture and race/immigration, or agriculture and competition. The text is a rich source for analyzing the rural conditions of the period (as perceived through this opinion-based study) and can easily be connected to agricultural conditions and publications in the United States today.

Objectives:

1. Students will analyze the social and economic issues of rural communities, as presented in the study.
2. Students will compare and contrast the main opinions and agricultural problems cited in the study reflect the era in which they were created
3. Students will look for patterns emerging in social/economic problems in rural communities in the study and attitudes/policies/overall conditions in the United States during this period.

Resources/Suggested texts:

Galpin, Charles J.; Cox, Alonzo B., Editor

Rural, social and economic problems of the United States

Bulletin No. 3

Madison, Wisconsin: June 1919

nos. [1]-7, 1918-1920.; 7 v.; 23 cm.

<http://digital.library.wisc.edu/1711.dl/WI.AAALJune1919>

Setting: Computer lab/Classroom

Since this is a relatively short text, the pertinent pages can be printed off and given to students in the classroom to read in lieu of going to the computer lab.

Suggested Activity:

For this activity, students will use the text provided by their teacher and their history textbook to draw conclusions.

1. Students may be divided into groups of two or three to work on this activity
2. Assign each group one of the five regions to focus on
3. Each group will fill out the following table for their region:

Economic Problems	Marketing	Roads	Better Business
Main statement from text			

Social Problems	Race	Education	Religion
Main statement from text			

4. Come back together as a class and analyze the similarities and differences between the five regions. Do they all list these categories? Are there negative and positive views?
5. Using their social studies or history textbooks (or class notes), students can compare these agricultural issues to the issues occurring in the United States overall. Are the issues of race, religion, immigration, and education in urban communities similar or different than those cited in the agricultural study?

Concluding the lesson:

Conclude this lesson by discussing your findings as a class. This is also an excellent opportunity to lead into another lesson or talk in-depth with the class about early 20th century immigration, racism/segregation or any of the other topics discussed during the activity.