

The Mississippi Delta is a land of stark contrasts: great wealth and immense poverty; fertile, wealth-producing farm land and food deserts; a few manufacturing and skilled-labor jobs and a plethora of service-industry jobs. It is a region with a complicated history in terms of race relations. It is also the birthplace of the Blues and the Koolickle.

As a teacher in the Delta, I want my students to develop a sense of pride about where they live. I want them to know all of the good things that Mississippi, the Delta in particular, have contributed to the world. As a transplant to this region, I have an outsider's view and can explain just how truly special some of these things are.

My plan is to give my students a short (5-10 minute) lesson about someone or something in the Delta. Each day I will highlight a person or thing that comes from Mississippi and then show a short video clip or picture to illustrate the idea. At various points throughout the year, my students will also get to experience a different aspect of Delta culture in the form of a food tasting or class visitor. Here is a link to the PowerPoint that I have started, and I will continue to add to the presentation as the school year goes on.

<https://docs.google.com/presentation/d/11FaQOUOSdSVo3J-AHkFyZEFrpMkm5aHCbse38G4iJsU/edit?usp=sharing>

Below is a list of possible topics to highlight, a few are annotated, most are not.

Music and the Blues

- Mose Allison
- Charlie Pride
- Jerry "The Iceman" Butler
- Sam Cooke
- Ike Turner
- Mary Wilson
- C.L. Franklin
- Charley Patton
- Tommy Johnson
- Willie Brown
- Chester Burnett aka Howlin' Wolf
- McKinley Morganfield aka Muddy Waters
- Robert Johnson
- B.B. King

Music Heard Around the World

- “Rocket 88” by Ike Turner (Clarksdale, MS) was the first rock and roll song ever recorded.
- Kingfish is an 18 year old blues musician from Clarksdale who has traveled around the world playing modern blues.
- Fannie Lou Hamer was an inspirational singer as well as a leader in the Voting Rights Movement in Mississippi in the 1960s. American Folkways has a CD of her singing that includes voiced introductions by Hamer. Free on Folkways website is “Keep Your Lamp Trimmed and Burning.”
- Dust to Digital has collected early recordings of American folk music (including blues). The boxed set called *Goodbye, Babylon* has 135 recordings and 25 sermons. Some of the recordings are available via streaming on the bandcamp website.
<https://dusttodigital.bandcamp.com/album/goodbye-babylon-2>
- Charlie Patton is noted as the “Father” of the blues. He was born on Dockery Plantation.

Dockery Plantation is located about 8 miles east of Cleveland. At one point in time, Dockery was 28,000 acres or about 40 square miles. Charlie Patton played blues there on Saturday night after people got paid. He played on the other side of the bridge and people called “Takers” took 25 cents per person who had to cross the bridge.

Jim Henson is the creator of the Muppets. He is from Leland Mississippi. He named Kermit the frog after his childhood friend who he used to play within the creek that ran through Leland.

Food – fusion of ethnic traditions

- African slaves and freedmen – okra, black eyed peas, watermelon, sorghum
- Chinese – rice, soybeans, bananas
- Indigenous Americans – corn, peppers, peanuts, sweet potatoes, tomatoes, and squash
- Italian and Lebanese - pasta, collard greens
- Mexicans – tamales
- Mississippi River – catfish
- Authentic Delta cuisine: cornbread, yams, fried fish and chicken, okra and tomatoes, rice and banana pudding, biscuits, barbecue, slaw, memento cheese, chicken spaghetti, sweat tea, fried dill pickles, and kool-aid pickles
- Craig Claiborne – b. Indianola, Food Editor of NYTimes
- Gayden Metcalfe author *Being Dead is NoExcuse*
- Delta Hot Tamale Heritage Trail

People / Heroes

- Mary Hamilton, settler
- Will Dockery, businessman
- Leroy Percy, businessman
- David Cohn, journalist
- Hodding Carter, Jr., journalist
- Richard Wright, writer

- Aaron Henry, activist
- Fannie Lou Hamer, activist
- Archie Manning, football player, father of Eli and Peyton
- Archie Moore, boxer
- Margaret Wade, college women's basketball coach at DSU
- Jerry Rice, football player
- David "Boo" Ferriss, baseball player and coach
- Charley Pride, baseball player and country music star, 1st African American to become a member of the Grand Ole Opry
- Lusia Harris-Stewart, basketball player, 1st and only woman to be drafted by a men's basketball team, 1st woman inducted into Naismith Memorial Basketball Hall of Fame
- Sank Powe, baseball coach and scout
- Chuckin Charlie Conerly, football player
- Floyd "Porkchop" Womack, football player
- Dorsett Davis, football player
- Ken Lucas, football player
- Kent Hull, football player
- Robert "Gentle Ben" Williams, football, 1st black "Colonel Reb"
- George "Boomer" Scott, baseball
- Eddie Tucker, baseball
- Bob Aylward, baseball

Political Leadership and Civil Rights Activism

- Senator James O. Eastland, ?
- Fannie Lou Hamer
- Nathan Bedford Forrest, founder of KKK
- Leroy Percey, senator, leader of "Delta Society"
- Robert "Tut" Patterson, founder of White Citizens Council, Indianola
- Aaron Henry, Clarksdale
- Amzie Moore, Cleveland
- Charles McLaurin, Ruleville
- Sam Block, Cleveland and Greenwood
- Marion Barry, b. Itta Bena, 4-term mayor of Washington DC
- Blanch Kelso Bruce, 1st African American US Senator
- Isaiah Tecumspa or Thornton Montgomery, founder of Mound Bayou
- Walter Sillers, Sr., segregation advocate
- Walter Sillers, Jr., served in MS House of Representatives 1916-1966, Speaker for last 22 years of tenure
- Charles (Charlie) Capps, Jr., served in MS House of Representatives 1971-2005
- Bennie G. Thompson, US Congressman, chair of Homeland Security Committee
- Mike Espy, 1st African American to represent Second District, 1st black Secretary of Agriculture
- Haley Barbour, MS governor, est. MS CR Museum and CR Heritage Trail

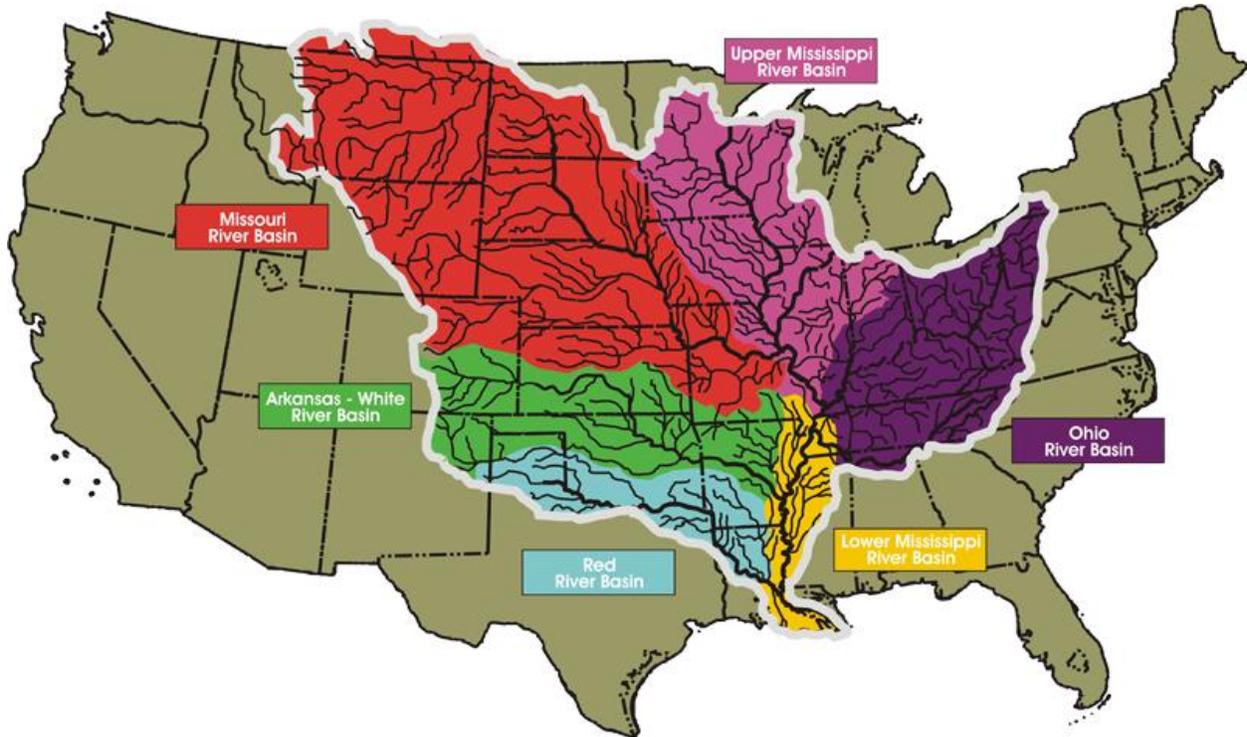
Arts

- Delta State University Art Department
- Malcolm Norwood
- Alluvian Hotel, Greenwood
- Pat Brown
- Marioin Brown
- Langdon Clay
- Taylor Bowen Ricketts
- Barbara Baine
- Jane Rule Burdine
- Mary Rose Carter
- Maude Schuyler Clay
- Jeff Cole
- Gerald DeLoach
- Jerry Lee “Duff” Dorrough
- Bill Dunlap
- Amy Evans
- Deborah Fagan
- Aubrey Falls
- Sheila Gourlay
- Pryor Buford Graeber
- Alice Hammell
- Stephanie Harrover
- Will Jacks
- Delores Justus
- Richard Kelso
- Bill Lester
- James Lindsey
- Pam Matthews
- Gloria Norris
- Collier Parker
- Chesley Pearman
- Kathleen Robbins
- Mary Ann Ross
- Kim Rushing
- Susan Ryssell
- Nan Sanders
- Jim Seale
- Mickie Turner
- Shawn Whittington
- Steven Yee

- McCarty's Pottery
- Peter's Pottery

The River

- MS river drainage system



- Watered and fertilized the land, Delta has some of the most fertile farm land in the world
- Frequent flooding necessitated the levee system