

Analyzing Technological Change Using Historical Photographs

General Overview

In many historical photographs there are signs of technology present. Identifying such technology and recognizing the changes in it over time is an important skill and one that may or may not be covered well in a textbook. Studying historical photographs can be an effective method of teaching such progressive changes.

Lesson Objectives

1. Analyze historical photographs to understand technological change over time
2. Explain technologies present in photographs
3. Become aware of the importance of archival collections

Preparation

Choose photographs to be used in the activities and provide copies in either printed or electronic format.

You can visit our Flickr site for a good source photographs.

<http://www.flickr.com/photos/north-carolina-state-archives/>

Provide copies of the photograph analysis sheet

Activities

- ✿ Interview a family or community member about how a technology changed their life.
- ✿ Write a story about a “eureka” moment that caused someone to advance a technology
- ✿ Take photographs of the technologies in one room of your home or create a collage with pictures from magazines or newspapers.
- ✿ List all of the technologies in a photograph.
- ✿ Think about a technology that you would like to change and draw a picture of your advancement.
- ✿ Look at the photograph and describe how technology improved people’s lives

Enrichment and Extension

- ✿ Create a pictorial timeline of the progression of a technology such as the automobile, airplane, refrigerator or streetlight.
- ✿ Pretending to be the inventor, write a letter explaining why you want to patent this invention.
- ✿ Research the differences in price of a certain technology when it first came on the market and now.



Sources

State Archives of North Carolina www.archives.ncdcr.gov
National Archives www.nara.gov
Library of Congress www.loc.gov
Southern Historical Collection <http://www2.lib.unc.edu/mss/shc/index.html>
North Carolina Collection www.lib.unc.edu/ncc/index.html
Local historical societies, colleges, universities
Books, such as pictorial and local histories