Fields to Cities

Work and culture in Alabama after World War II

SS24.5.11 "Describe how the United States' economy grew and American culture changed after World War II. 11a Identify Alabamians who contributed to the growth of American culture post-World War II into the 1970s..."

NAME _____ DATE _____

1 READ AND MARK

Read it twice

YOUR JOB Underline one reason the U.S. economy grew, circle why Alabamians left farms and where some moved, and number the two Alabamians who shaped American culture. Your marks will help you trace changes in jobs and culture.

A Changing Alabama

1. After World War II ended in 1945, many Americans wanted cars, houses, and other goods they could not easily buy during the war. Factories hired workers to make these goods, and new businesses opened. Veterans used a federal program called the GI Bill to help pay for college or buy homes. More jobs and spending helped the United States economy grow, while new neighborhoods spread outside cities.

2. Alabama changed as machines did more farm work. Tractors and cotton-picking machines let farmers grow crops with fewer workers. With fewer farm jobs available, many families left the countryside. Some moved to Birmingham for factory work. Others went to Huntsville, where space and rocket work expanded in the 1950s and 1960s. As people moved closer to these jobs, Alabama's cities and nearby neighborhoods grew.

3. Changes reached music and sports, too. Nat King Cole, born in Montgomery, became a famous singer and hosted a national television show in the 1950s. His performances brought his voice into homes across the country. Willie Mays grew up near Birmingham and became a baseball star during the 1950s and 1960s. Fans across America watched his exciting catches and hits. These Alabamians helped shape what Americans heard and watched.

2 ANSWER WITH EVIDENCE

Use the passage

1. How did Americans' demand for goods help the U.S. economy grow after the war?

2. Why did some Alabama families leave farms after the war?

3. How did new kinds of work help Alabama's urban areas grow? Name one city from the passage.

4. How did Nat King Cole and Willie Mays each reach people beyond Alabama?

3 YOUR TURN

Your own words

Write four diary sentences as a child whose family moves from an Alabama farm to Birmingham or Huntsville in the 1950s. Explain why your family moves, describe a change in work or home life, mention one Alabamian who shaped American culture, and invent one detail from your day.

ANSWER KEY

Fields to Cities

GRADE 5 · SS24.5.11

PART 1 · READ AND MARK

Underline one reason the U.S. economy grew, circle why Alabamians left farms and where some moved, and number the two Alabamians who shaped American culture. Your marks will help you trace changes in jobs and culture. Accept any marking that follows this job and points at the right text.

PART 2 · ANSWERS

#	QUESTION	ANSWER
1	How did Americans' demand for goods help the U.S. economy grow after the war?	**Factories hired workers to make goods people wanted, and new businesses opened. More jobs and spending helped the economy grow.**
2	Why did some Alabama families leave farms after the war?	**Tractors and cotton-picking machines let farmers grow crops with fewer workers, so fewer farm jobs were available.**
3	How did new kinds of work help Alabama's urban areas grow? Name one city from the passage.	**Families moved closer to jobs, such as factory work in Birmingham or space and rocket work in Huntsville. Cities and nearby neighborhoods grew.**
4	How did Nat King Cole and Willie Mays each reach people beyond Alabama?	**Cole's singing and national television show reached homes across the country. Mays's baseball catches and hits drew fans across America.**

PART 3 · YOUR TURN (SAMPLE ANSWER)

Today we left our farm because cotton-picking machines meant fewer workers were needed. Dad found factory work in Birmingham, so we now live near the city instead of in the countryside. This morning, I counted three buses rumbling past our new street. Tonight we watched Alabama-born Nat King Cole on television, and I thought about how his music reached homes across America.

Accept either Birmingham factory work or Huntsville space and rocket work as a reason for moving. Diary details may be invented, but the historical changes and the Alabamian's contribution should match the passage.