

Name:

Date:



# St. Louis Business



Images: Row 1 - Gerhard Sisters, Annie Turnbo Malone. Row 2- William H. Danforth, Charles L. Griggs (Images courtesy of the public domain)

**Grade Level:** Elementary

**Estimated Time:** 1 -2 Hours

## Show-Me Standards:

- Communication Arts:
  - 3. Reading and evaluating nonfiction works and material (such as biographies, newspapers, technical manuals)
  - 6. Participating in formal and informal presentations and discussions of issues and ideas
- Social Studies:
  - 2. Continuity and change in the history of Missouri, the United States and the world
  - 6. Relationships of the individual and groups to institutions and cultural traditions

## Lesson Objectives:

1. To educate students in the history of St. Louis and Missouri.
2. To improve student's comprehensive reading abilities.
3. To educate students on business and industry started in St. Louis.

Name:

Date:



### Important Points:

- St. Louis was once a large economic center of development.
- Annie Malone was the first Black female millionaire.
- The Gerhard sisters were able to run a successful photography studio on their own while married with children.
- There can be similar products on the market, but how it is sold and marketed can make a big difference.

### Vocabulary Words:

- **Ethnographic:** Relating to the scientific description of individual people and culture(s) noting customs, habits, and differences.
- **Mechanical:** Something that is worked by or produced by machines.
- **Photography:** The art of taking a picture with a camera.
- **Distribution:** The act of sharing something over a small or large group.
- **Philanthropist:** A person who seeks to promote the welfare of others, often with gifts of money and donations of time.
- **Developed:** Past tense of develop, meaning to cause something to grow, or to cause something to start.
- **Salesperson:** A person who sells goods and other services on behalf of a company.
- **Great Depression:** The worst economic downturn in the United States lasting from 1929 to about 1939. It began after the stock market crash of October 1929 and affected the world economy.
- **Pitch:** A slogan, saying, or idea that is in support of something or someone.

### Image Sources:

Gerhard Sisters courtesy of the Library of Congress

Annie Turnbo Malone courtesy of the State Historic Society of Missouri

William H. Danforth courtesy of the University of Missouri - St. Louis

Charles L. Griggs courtesy of Missouri Legends

Name:

Date:



## St. Louis Buisness

### Gerhard Sisters: Photography

Before cell phones, digital cameras, and even Polaroids, taking a photograph was a task that only a professional could do and the wealthiest could afford. At the turn of the 20th century, the field of photography was one made up of mostly men, so when the Gerhard sisters opened their own **photography** studio in St. Louis in 1903, it was a big step forward for women.

The Gerhard sisters, Emme Gerhard (1872-1946) and Mayme Gerhard (1876-1955) were both married and ran their own studio, later with the help of their children. In 1904, the sisters were part of a team created by Charles Carpenter, of the Chicago Field Museum, to take **ethnographic** pictures of the various cultures represented at the 1904 World's Fair.

The Gerhards became best known for taking photographs of the Native American, Oceanic, and Asian cultures. In 2009, upon closer inspection of the Gerhard's well-known photograph portrait of Geronimo, leader and medicine man of the Bedonkohe band of the Apache tribe, a reflection of the photographer dressed in a white blouse and dark skirt can be seen within Geronimo's eye.

The Gerhards felt that photography was more than a mechanical process, but also an artistic one. They pushed for photography to be displayed in the St. Louis Museum that refused to display their work because photographs were not considered art.

### Annie Turnbo Malone: Hair Care

Annie Turnbo Malone (1869-1957) was a pioneer in Black hair care, a **philanthropist**, and the first African American female millionaire. Born in 1869, Annie attended high school in Peoria, Illinois, and was raised by her sister after their parents died. Ill health got in the way of her education, forcing her to drop out of school and move to St. Louis in 1902.

Name:

Date:



## St. Louis Buisness

At the beginning of the 20th century, hair products and tools for Black women were often harsh and very damaging. Seeing a need for something new, Malone **developed** and marketed an entire line of hair care and beauty products. Part of the line included her “Wonderful Hair Grower.”

One of Malone’s biggest challenges was that she was denied access to sell her products in stores, unlike her white counterparts. To overcome this challenge, Malone and her assistant went door to door selling and demonstrating her products. She even displayed them at the 1904 World’s Fair, gaining her the popularity to distribute her products nationwide by 1910. In 1918, Annie Malone established Poro College. The college was a beauty school and training center that offered Black women (and even some men) the opportunity to advance themselves. The training taught students how to use and sell the products.

The success of her business made Annie Turbo Malone the first ever Black female millionaire. Although she moved to Chicago in 1930 and opened another Poro College, Malone kept ties to St. Louis. Shortly after her death in 1957, the college(s) closed, but much of her money was donated to continue her philanthropic efforts to support African American education, buisnesses, and communities within St. Louis, Chicago, and nation.

Today, the Annie Malone Children’s Home and Family Services Center (formerly the St. Louis Colored Orphans Home) continues to help service St. Louis families in need. Each May, the Annie Malone May Day Parade is a event within St. Louis that many look forward to.

### William H. Danforth: Animal Health

William H. Danforth (1870-1955) was born in 1870 in southeast Missouri and attended Washington University in 1892. When working as a brick layer did not work out, Danforth took a chance and invested in producing horse and mule feed. In 1894, the Robinson-

Name:

Date:



## St. Louis Business

Danforth Commission Company was formed; Danforth was the bookkeeper and a **salesperson** for the company.

With an interest beyond nutrition for horses and mules, Danforth created a hot whole wheat cereal as a healthy breakfast food. The product began selling in 1898 under the name Purina, and was later changed to Ralston Wheat Cereal. By 1902, the Robinson-Danforth Commission Company had changed its name to Ralston Purina.

What is now known as Purina Farms, located 45 miles southwest of St. Louis, opened as the Purina Pet Care Center in 1926. The Center conducts feed and nutritional studies for the many varieties of pet food sold by Purina. The company William H. Danforth created still operates today under the name Nestlé Purina Pet Company and is a world leader in pet food.

The Danforth Foundation, created by William H. Danforth and his wife, continues to operate as a national educational philanthropy that assists teachers and students. Danforth was the 13th Chancellor of Washington University and the main university campus was officially dedicated in his and his family's honor in 2006.

### Charles Leiper Grigg: Inventor

Charles L. Grigg (1868-1940) has had a lasting impact on the food and beverage industry. He is the inventor of many different flavors of soft drinks, most famous of these is 7-UP. When Griggs arrived in St. Louis he started working for Whistle, a soft drink company owned by Sylvester "Vess" Jones. While working for Whistle, Griggs invented an orange-flavored soft drink named after the company. The Whistle Company would later become known as Vess Soda.

Eventually, Griggs left his job with Whistle, losing the rights to his orange soda drink when he left. After working for another soft drink company for a short time, Griggs set out to start

Name:

Date:



## St. Louis Business

his own business, Howdy. In 1929, Griggs debuted Bib-Label Lithiated Lemon-Lime Soda, which would eventually become 7-UP. There were already many different kinds of lemon-lime sodas on the market with which it had to compete. Soon after its release, the stock market crashed leading to the **Great Depression**, making a rocky start for the new drink. To increase sales, Griggs made the claim that 7-UP would boost your mood and had many health benefits. The **pitch** worked and by the 1940s, the drink was the third best selling soft drink in the world. 7-UP was so popular that the Howdy Corporation changed their name to the 7-UP Company. While Charles Grigg died in 1940, his soft drink remains just as popular today.

Name:

Date:



## St. Louis Business: Questions

For what were the Gerhard sisters known? Why is this important?

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What did Annie Malone do? Why is this important?

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Name:

Date:



## St. Louis Business: Questions

What did William H. Danforth invent? Is this still important today?

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What did Charles Griggs invent? How was his invention different from others?

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Name:

Date:



## St. Louis Business: Activity

Further research one of the people mentioned in this packet and create a display on their life. The final project can be a PowerPoint, comic book, drawing, painting, or song. Use the space below for your notes.

**Name of Person:**

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**Date Birth:**

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**Date of Death:**

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**Business:**

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**Invention(s):**

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**Notable Achievements:**

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