Have your students listen to our episode “Aunt Jemima: American Racism on Your Grocery Shelf.” Then, let them choose between the episodes, “Slavery & Soul Food: African Crops and Enslaved Cooks in the History of Southern Cuisine” or “The Birth of a Nation: Everyday Racism in 20th century America.” Using these podcasts, have them analyze the images below. You can have them focus on just one image or on multiple.

Consider the following questions for prompts:

- How do these images reflect the social, cultural, political, and economic history of early 20th century United States? Please include examples.
- How does this image reflect the “Old South” and “Lost Cause” mythology?
- What do the figures shown (and even not shown) in these advertisements potentially symbolize in early 20th century America?
- Why are these images considered problematic or offensive today? Why were they considered less so when they were produced? Please include historical examples.
Figure 1: 1910 “I’se In Town Honey!” Aunt Jemima Pancake Flour Advertisement | Courtesy of The New York Public Library Digital Collections
Over this coffee the North and South pledged the new brotherhood years ago

“We greet you, not with bayonets but with blessings, not with cold steel but with hot biscuits and Southern hospitality,” so the Governor of Tennessee long ago welcomed the veterans of the North to the battlefield of Nashville.

Nearly thirty years ago the distinguished generals of the South and North were brought together by the Tennessee Centennial at the old Maxwell House. Here the South could most fittingly do them honor. Here at the Maxwell House, they could offer the marvellous dishes and the coffee that were celebrated throughout old Dixie.

“We gathered at the Maxwell House,” says one noted Confederate general, “and for the first time clasped in friendship the hands of our former enemies.”

We can picture them there together in the stately old dining room, wearing their faded uniforms of gray and blue. Together they lived again through the old campaigns and skirmishes. Together they drank the cups of that rare coffee which has brought the Maxwell House the most lasting fame of all.

A gift to the nation from the old South
Always it was the coffee at the Maxwell House that its visitors praised most highly. A special blend was served there, full-flavored and mellow like no other kind.

The many distinguished guests of the Maxwell House carried the news of this coffee to their homes in all the cities of the South. Returning from the great balls and banquets, they remembered its rich flavor and wanted it for their own use.

Gradually in all parts of the country, North and South, East and West, the families who most enjoy good living have heard of Maxwell House Coffee and have taken steps to secure it. Today it is on sale in sealed tins at all better grocery stores throughout the United States. And the same firm of coffee merchants who perfected this blend years ago down in Nashville, still blend and roast it today.

The alluring goodness of this coffee is a gift to America from the old South. It has pleased more people than any other coffee ever offered for sale. It is the most popular blend in New York City, in Washington, in Atlanta and Cincinnati—in a long list of the country’s leading cities.

When you pour your first cup of this coffee, when its rich aroma first reaches you, you will understand why it delighted the guests of the old Maxwell House. See what new pleasure it will bring your family at breakfast and dinner. Plan now to serve Maxwell House Coffee tomorrow. Your grocer has it on hand in the famous blue tin. Check Neal Coffee Company, Nashville, Houston, Jackson, Richmond, New York, Los Angeles.

Maxwell House Coffee
Today—America’s largest selling high grade coffee

Figure 2: 1926 “Over this coffee the North and South pledged the new brotherhood year ago” Maxwell House Coffee Advertisement | Courtesy of Ladies Home Journal, January 1926
Figure 3: 1920 "First Aid To The Injured" Cream of Wheat Ad | Courtesy of The New York Public Library Digital Collections
He gave the South its favorite delicacy

Coconut, fresh from the shores of the West Indies

In the famous Lexington market of Baltimore “Your Old Reliable Coconut Man” has shredded coconuts fresh from the West Indies for more than a generation.

You’ll find him too in Washington, Charleston and New Orleans—in every Southern seaport town.

That’s why the South learned to eat coconut, quite different from ordinary dried coconut, or that in the shell at holiday time so often old and flavorless.

Now homes everywhere can have this delicacy. Now you can get coconut, not dried, but tender, juicy, full-flavored, put up—untouched by human hands—in its own juices in air-tight tins like fine fruits.

Baker’s Coconut—and only Baker’s—is as tender, as juicy, as rich in flavor as the fresh, grated coconut that the Old Coconut Man gave to the South. It keeps always its sweetness, its freshness, its glistening whiteness. And it’s always ready to use.

All the coconut desserts become a new thing when made with Baker’s Coconut. Southern Style—moist, but without any milk. Order a can and see how it gives to pies and puddings a new richness of flavor. Cakes made with it keep fresh and moist for several days. It makes plain Jell-O or iced or iced fruit desserts seem like rich, expensive desserts.

Now you can have it as fresh grated by the “coconut man” in the market.

For the first time, put it up in its own juices—air tight—like fine fruit.

Baker’s Coconut comes in three different sizes:

Baker’s Yellow Can, not coconut, Southern Style, nuts not fried or simmered, 3/4 cup grated coconut in can. Also, Baker’s Coconut, grated in paper bags, 1/2 cup grated coconut in can.

Baker’s Blue Can—grates fresh from the coconut shell and ends up in its own natural oil.

Baker’s Coconut goes as the most of selected coconuts, prepared for those who like the dry shredded form.


Figure 4: 1923 “He gave the South its favorite delicacy” Baker’s Coconut Advertisement | Courtesy of Ladies Home Journal, March 1923
Figure 5: 1885 "Lawn Tennis at Darktown. A Scientific Stroke." (3463) Currier & Ives print | Courtesy of David Brass Rare Books
Figure 6: 1884 “A Literary Debate in the Darktown Club. The Question Settled.” (3659) Currier & Ives print | Courtesy of David Brass Rare Books