

Name - _____
Mr. Meluson - _____

Date - _____
Political Cartoon – Great Depression

“Thawing Out the System”

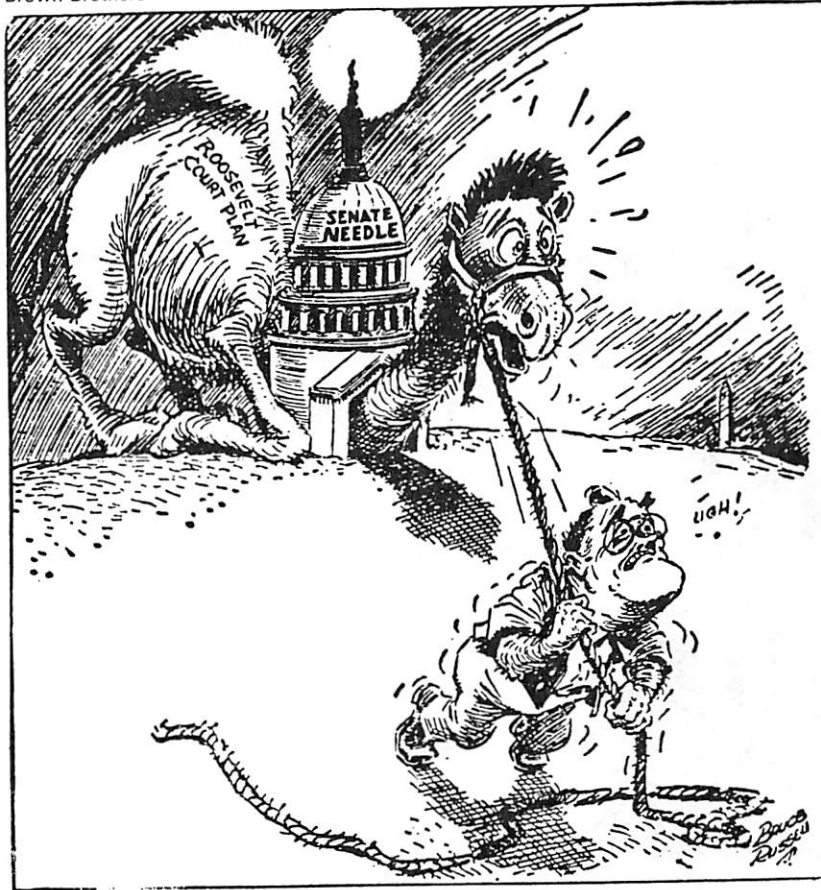


- 1) Who is the main character of the cartoon above?
- 2) What historical event occurred previous to this cartoon being printed?
- 3) What does the artist mean with the statement “Thawing Out the System?”
- 4) What economic stimulus theory did the main character use to try to “Thaw Out the System?”

Name - _____
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Political Cartoon – Great Depression

Brown Brothers



- 1) Who is the main character of this cartoon?
- 2) What is the political inspiration for this cartoon?
- 3) What are the artist's political views?

Name - _____
Mr. Meluson - _____

Date - _____
Political Cartoon – Great Depression



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- 1) Who is the man being tied down?
- 2) What are they using to tie him down with?
- 3) According to the artist, what are some of the negative aspects of the New Deal?
- 4) From what novel is the above cartoon based on?

Name - _____
Mr. Meluson - _____

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Political Cartoon – Great Depression

“New Deal Remedies”



Library of Congress

- 1) Who are the three main characters above? What are they dressed as? Why?
- 2) What do the bottles on the table represent?
- 3) What is the artist's view of FDR and the New Deal?

Name - _____
Mr. Meluson - _____

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Political Cartoon – Great Depression

“Old Reliable!”



- 1) Who is the main character, what is he dressed up as?
- 2) What does the artist mean with the statement “Old Reliable!”
- 3) Would the artist have supported or opposed FDR’s New Deal? Explain.

DOCUMENT BASED QUESTION

This question is based on the accompanying documents (1-7). Some of the documents have been edited for the purpose of the question. The question is designed to test your ability to work with historical documents. As you analyze the documents, take into account both the context of each document and any point of view that may be presented in the document.

Directions: This document-based question consists of two parts. Be sure to put the booklet number at the top of each page. Use black or dark ink to answer the question.

Historical Context: Following the prosperity of the 1920's was a period of panic, frustration, and despair in America. After the stock market crash on October 29, 1929, widespread unemployment and economic hardship trickled down through the economy. Upon being elected President in 1932, Franklin Delano Roosevelt took bold action in an attempt to restore confidence in the American economy and government.

Task: Using information from the documents and your knowledge of social studies, answer the questions that follow each document in Part A. Your answers to the questions will help you write the Part B essay in which you will be asked to:

- Describe the effect of the stock market crash on employment.
- Identify *two* effects of the Great Depression on American families.
- Explain how Franklin D. Roosevelt attempted to ease the problems faced by Americans during the 1930's.
- Discuss *one* drawback and *one* benefit of Roosevelt's policies.

AUCTION SALE

THURSDAY, JULY 30

Sale commences at 1:00 p. m. sharp

I will sell by public auction at my farm, 10 miles west of Charlson, 31 miles north-east of Watford City, on SE quarter, Sec. 9-153-96, the following personal property:



Nine Head Horses

- 3—Good broke work horses (2 mares, 3 geldings)
- 2—Saddle horses—mares
- 2—Mare colts, 2 years old

Five tons hay. Four sets harness.
17 horse collars. One saddle.

FARM MACHINERY

- | | |
|--------------------------------------|---|
| 1—10-20 McCormick-Deering tractor | 1—Tractor plow |
| 1—McCormick-Deering d.d. grain drill | 1—McCormick-Deering 8-ft. binder |
| —Disc harrow | 1—McCormick-Deering mower, good as new. |
| 1—McCormick-Deering 22-in. separator | 1—John Deere hay rake, new |
| 1—Single row corn cultivator | 1—Boss harrow, 5 sections |
| 1—Garden cultivator | 2—Gang plows |
| 5—Wagons, 2 hay racks, wagon boxes | 1—Ford 1-ton truck |
| 1—Sulky plow | 1—Harrow cart |
| 1—Bob sled | |

Other articles and equipment too numerous to mention.

TERMS--CASH. LUNCH AT NOON

No goods to be removed from premises till settled for.

GUY WILBER, OWNER

M. S. STENEHJEM, Auctioneer

First International Bank, Clerk.

Jackdaw No. 411 The Depression Exhibit 6 Auction sale poster

1. What did some farmers need to do during the Depression? Why?

Document 2

March 12, 1930

Dear Mom and Dad,

I haven't written in some time because I didn't want to burden you with my problems. But matters have reached the point at which Dan and I may need to ask for your help.

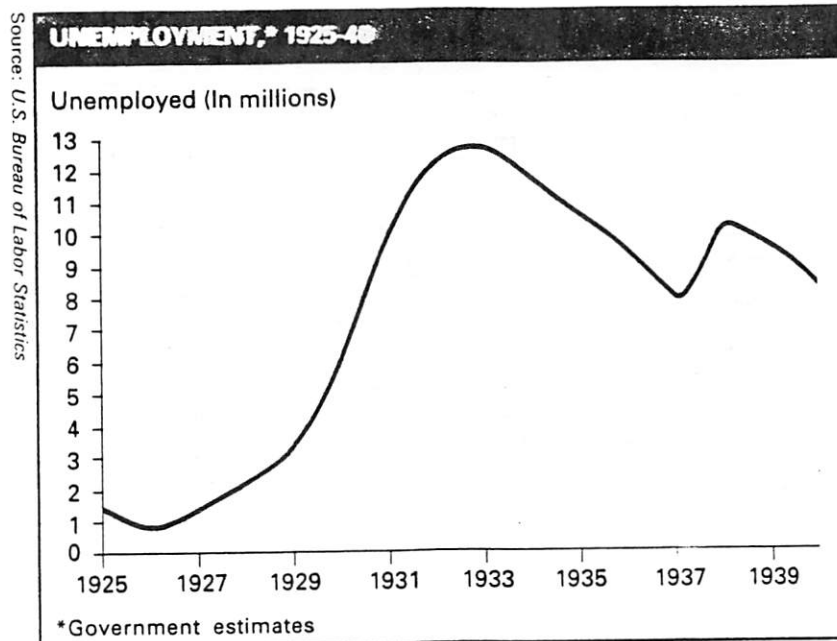
Things seem to get worse everyday. First, the appliance store took away our refrigerator. Then that new furniture we bought on time last year was repossessed. I don't blame the men who carried it off last week; they were just doing their job. But it really hurt to see our beautiful sofa and chairs walking out the front door.

After we lost a bundle in the stock market and Dan was laid off at the mill, we needed money desperately. The first thing to go was the '28 Plymouth. I loved that car, and it broke my heart to watch some scoundrel drive it away for almost nothing. Dan had placed a sign on the windshield telling someone to make an offer, and we jumped at the \$75. After all, we have two kids to feed . . .

Love,
Louise

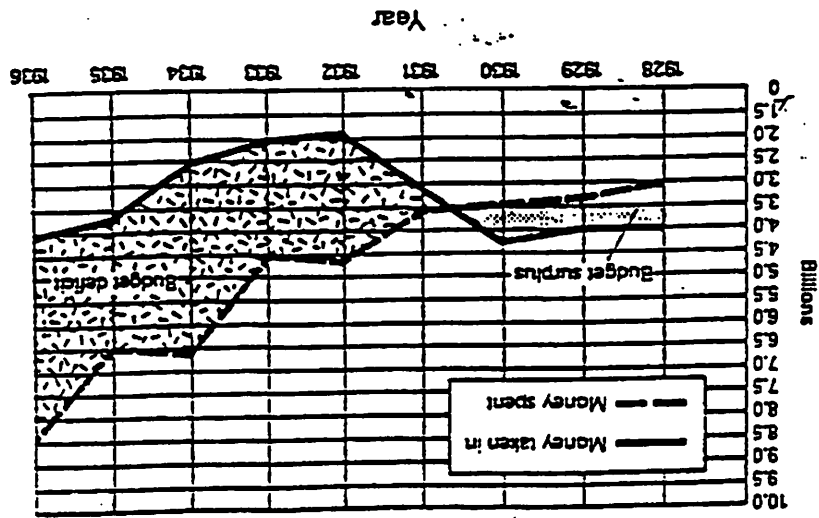
2. **What effects did the Depression have on this suburban family?**

Document 3



3. What effect did the great depression have on unemployment?

Federal Income and Spending, 1928-1936



Source: June 1995, *New York State History Pilots*

4. Why did the United States government have a budget deficit beginning in 1931?

Document 5

President Roosevelt's First Inaugural Address

This is . . . the time to speak the truth, the whole truth, frankly and boldly. . . This great nation will endure as it has endured, will revive and will prosper. So, first of all, let me assert my firm belief that the only thing we have to fear is fear itself-- . . .

Values have shrunk to fantastic levels; taxes have risen, our ability to pay has fallen;. . . farmers find no markets for their produce; the savings of many years. . . are gone."

5. What were President Roosevelt's concerns about the early years of the Depression?

Document 6



6. What do the bottles on the table represent?
- 6a. How does Roosevelt's comment to Congress reflect his attitude toward the Great Depression?

Document 7



7. What potential problem is shown in the cartoon above?
- 7a. What is the opinion of the cartoonist?

Radio Report

New York City
November 1929

Rumors of investors jumping in droves from the windows of tall buildings on Wall Street have proven to be a myth. Some suicides have occurred, but nothing of the magnitude invented by the foreign press. It seems that a few of these tabloids would have the world believe that New Yorkers waiting along sidewalks must literally step over the dead bodies of fallen brokers. That simply is not true.

New York police became quite concerned, however, when the market crashed on October 24 and rumors began to spread that 11 leading brokers had jumped to their deaths on Wall Street. While police headquarters was kept busy dispatching officers to confirm or disprove such reports, at least one humorous incident arose that showed just how frantic the situation had become.

On the afternoon alluded to, several police officers came upon a man standing on a ledge outside a window on the upper floor of a Wall Street building. One cautious officer approached the window and pleaded with the man not to jump. He assumed the poor fellow that things were not as bad as they seemed; that life was indeed worth living.

"What's jumping?" retorted the man on the ledge. "I'm just washing windows!"

The magnificent bubble of the 1920s burst on October 24, 1929. It was not a sudden occurrence, for the stock market had been fluctuating for months. But on that date, known as Black Thursday, almost 13 million shares changed hands on the New York Stock Exchange. A sudden panic had caused people to sell at whatever price they could get for their holdings. A total economic collapse was prevented when the nation's five leading bankers bought thousands of shares in various companies and temporarily shored up the market.

But the recovery was short-lived. Five days later, on October 29, investors once again panicked and more than 16 million shares were put up for sale on the New York exchange. Prices dropped sharply and many shares were soon found to be worthless. Americans who had speculated on the stock exchange soon discovered

Discuss...

- the advantages and disadvantages of investing in stocks.
- how the collapse of the stock market could lead to widespread unemployment.
- whether you would ever borrow money or use savings to buy stock.
- how higher interest rates help curb spending and overspeculation.

they had lost everything. Many had spent their life savings or borrowed money to buy stock, and now that stock was worthless. Those who suddenly found themselves left with nothing were not limited to the big brokers and investors. Quite the contrary. Everyone from housewives to waiters and taxi drivers had invested in the market. They too quickly realized they had lost everything.

The crash that occurred in October 1929 eventually affected all Americans and caused the worst depression in our nation's history. Factories and businesses closed, and unemployment soared. The depression spread worldwide and wrecked the economies of other nations. It lasted more than ten years and did not really end until the beginning of World War II, when the demand for war materials revitalized industry and put people back to work.

Spending and Speculation

March 12, 1930

Dear Mom and Dad,

I haven't written in some time because I didn't want to burden you with my problems. But matters have reached the point at which Dan and I may need to ask for your help.

Things seem to get worse everyday. First, the appliance store took away our refrigerator. Then that new furniture we bought on time last year was repossessed. I don't blame the men who carried it off last week; they were just doing their job. But it really hurt to see our beautiful sofa and chairs walking out the front door.

After we lost a bundle in the stock market and Dan was laid off at the mill, we needed money desperately. The first thing to go was the '28 Plymouth. I loved that car, and it broke my heart to watch some scoundrel drive it away for almost nothing. Dan had placed a sign on the windshield telling someone to make an offer, and we jumped at the \$75. After all, we have two kids to feed.

You and Dad are lucky in some ways. You own your home and other things, and you never got trapped into this installment-buying thing. Who would have thought a depression could totally wipe out everything a person has?

My worst fear is that the bank will foreclose on the mortgage. If that happens, I don't know what we'll do. I guess we'll find ourselves out in the street.

I'll write more later. As I said, we may need a little help in the months ahead. I'll keep you posted.

*Love,
Louise*

The crash of the stock market was closely related to an overexpansion of credit. People not only borrowed money to buy stock but also began to purchase expensive items on the installment plan. Although installment buying on a small scale dates back to ancient times, it did not come into wide use until after World War I. Consumers availed themselves of this new innovation by buying furniture, appliances, automobiles, houses, and other necessities on credit. A little down, a little each month. No problem. It was so easy—until the bottom fell out of the economy in 1929. People lost their jobs and could no longer

make the payments on the items they had purchased. Almost overnight, they lost everything. Installment buying declined, adding further to the depression.

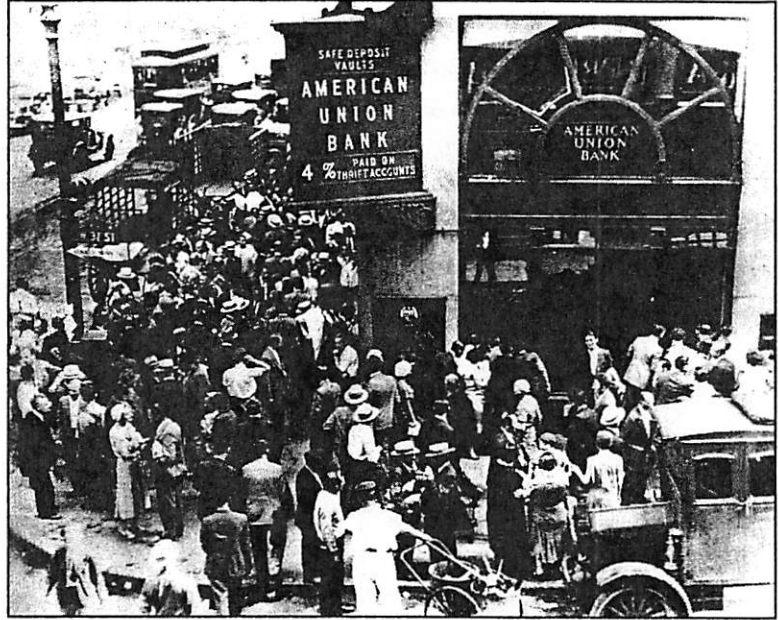
Americans had also overspeculated in real estate in the years before the depression. Many who sought to get rich quickly borrowed money or used their savings to invest in the "Florida bubble." Land promoters convinced these unwary speculators that Florida was the place to amass a quick fortune by buying land cheaply and later selling it at a handsome profit. Even worthless

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Spending and Speculation

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land could be sold at two or three times the amount paid for it because Florida—so it was advertised—was destined to become a year-round playground for the wealthy and a haven for citizens tired of the much colder climate of the North. And what worthless land much of it was! Some buyers who bought at a distance later discovered that their lots consisted of nothing but swamps and mangroves. Others purchased land miles from any settlement in areas where basics such as electricity and running water would not become commonplace until years later. To add to the problem, two severe hurricanes in 1926 made Florida less attractive in the eyes of some would-be land purchasers. In short, the Florida bubble burst, and many Americans who had subscribed to get-rich schemes lost everything they had.



The failure of banks was another cause of the depression. Americans had borrowed huge sums of money during the good years of the 1920s. When they lost their jobs and were unable to repay their loans, banks lost their sources of funds and had to close. In 1929, 642 banks failed. This number increased to 1,345 in 1930 and 2,298 in 1931. Americans with deposits in these banks were unable to reclaim their money. Many lost their life savings.

Finally, the failure of the federal government to act immediately after the stock market crashed heightened the effect of the depression. President Herbert Hoover believed the slump would be short-lived and chose not to interfere in the economy. He also believed that the hungry and the unemployed should receive aid at the local and state levels. By the time he realized that strong action on the part of the federal government was needed, the depression had worsened.

Discuss...

- which types of investments you consider the most secure (stocks, certificates of deposits, mutual funds, etc.)
- whether greater action on the part of President Hoover could have prevented the Great Depression.

For Debate

Resolved: That the disadvantages of buying on the installment plan far outweigh the advantages.

Conduct an Interview

Pretend you are a reporter working for a large Florida newspaper in 1924. You have just interviewed a man who discovered that the land he purchased sight unseen is located on swampland 65 miles from the nearest city. Write a one-page newspaper article telling about his experience.

Bread Lines and Soup Kitchens

Chicago

March 16, 1930

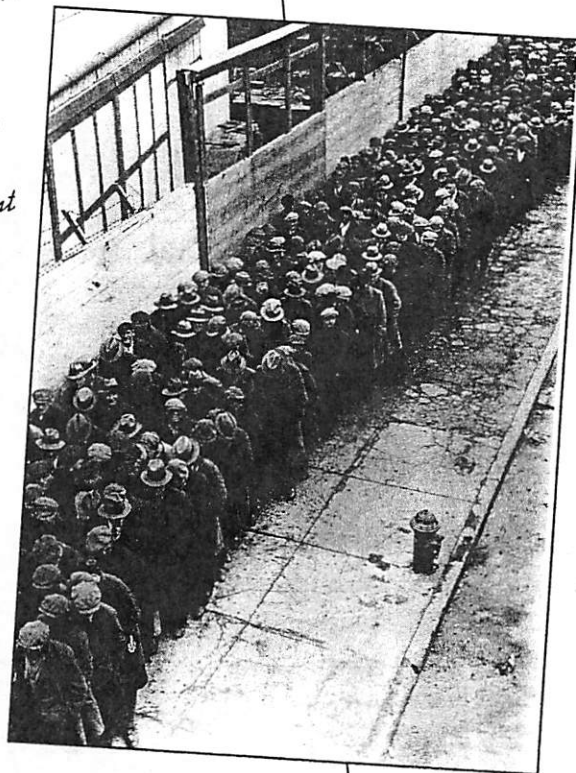
Today I came home and cried. I came home to my snug, warm apartment and completely broke down.

Why am I so miserable? This afternoon, for the first time, I stood outside a soup kitchen and watched people lined up for a free meal. I watched their faces and their demeanor. I sensed their shame and their embarrassment at being reduced to such straits.

"Oh, I'm not here for a free meal," one woman assured me. "My friend Irma is helping to serve soup inside. I just thought I'd drop by and chat with her for awhile."

"No, I'm not looking for a handout," a shabbily dressed young man said. "I just want to go inside and warm up a bit."

It is apparent that many of these unfortunate people are going through a period of denial. Just a few months ago, they had homes and apartments and automobiles. Now they can't afford a decent meal. My heart goes out to them. I can imagine their embarrassment—and possibly even their feelings of guilt—as they queue up for their daily dole.



In the latter part of 1929, unemployment in America stood at 1.5 million. Five months after the crash of the stock market, that number had grown to 3.2 million. By 1931, it mushroomed to 4.5 million, and one year later, topped out at more than 13 million. The latter figure represented almost 12 percent of the nation's population and one-fourth of the labor force.

One result of such massive unemployment was the huge increase in bread lines and soup kitchens to feed the jobless. Soup kitchens operated out of missions, gymnasiums, and church basements. Even notorious gangster Al Capone established a soup kitchen in Chicago. The

hungry and the unemployed could not be choosy about where they got a free meal. Often it was their only meal of the day.

Sometimes the needy waited in lines that extended for blocks just to get a doughnut and a hot cup of coffee. Afterward, the more destitute returned to the only home they knew: a cardboard box under a bridge or on the street. Even college students were not exempt from privation. Those on scholarships often had nothing to eat, while others were reduced to sleeping under bridges on campus.

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Many men divided their days looking for work and scrounging for food. Some even resorted to retrieving scraps from garbage dumps. One literary critic in Chicago recalled seeing hundreds of people assembled at a dump awaiting the arrival of the garbage trucks. When the trucks dutifully arrived and dumped their contents in a heap, the hungry men literally dived into the mess and began searching for something edible. Neither the flies nor the stench deterred them from their mission.

No one knows how many Americans spurned the struggle for life in the cities and took to the road. Estimates run as high as two million. And perhaps as many as 200,000 were boys and girls. Hopping railroad freight cars, they roamed the country, looking for any kind of work they could find. At first, railroad employees threw them bodily from the trains, girls included. In 1932 alone, more than 683,000 train-jumpers were thrown from Southern Pacific boxcars. Finally, the railroads realized they were fighting a losing battle and began adding empty cars to accommodate the increasing number of drifters.

Those who rode the railroads fared little better than their city counterparts. Roaming from town to town, they ate at city missions and begged at back doors. Sometimes, in desperation, they stole to satisfy their hunger.



They were often beaten and thrown into jail. Sometimes they were abused or assaulted.

The 1930s were like no other time in the history of our nation. They were years that truly taxed the character and the resolve of the American people. Few were ever the same when the terrible period finally ended.

Discuss...

- how you would have felt having to accept a free meal at a soup kitchen.
- what effect the depression may have had on children and young people.
- what circumstances might have led some boys and girls to join the millions of hoboes who traveled the country on trains.

For Debate

Resolved: That it is the responsibility of the government to take care of its citizens during economic hard times.

A Cardboard Roof

July 10, 1931

I am so hungry that I often sit for fear of fainting. But I must wait until tomorrow, when it is my turn to eat. Today, my little sister Claire gets whatever Daddy is able to bring home. Sometimes it's a few scraps from one of the soup kitchens; at other times it's something Daddy retrieved from the dump or from a garbage can at the back of a restaurant.

Our shack is one of many near the garbage dump. Daddy managed to scrounge together enough wood and tin to put it together. I helped as best I could. Our door and window are made of sacks, as is our floor. We have no stove. What will happen to us when winter comes?

I take comfort in my diary; it is my friend and constant companion. I am 14 years old, and I can't believe my world has turned completely upside down.

Just a few months ago, I had a nice room in a comfortable little house.

Daddy had a good job and Mama was still alive. Why is all of this happening?



Other symbols of the depression were shantytowns called "Hoovervilles." Named after President Herbert Hoover, who many thought did not fully grasp the seriousness of the economic situation, Hoovervilles sprang up near the downtown areas of large cities. They appeared in vacant lots, around garbage dumps, and in city parks. New York's famed Central Park even housed a Hooverville in the early 1930s. Hooverville shacks were built from every imaginable material: cardboard, tin, tarpaper, wood scraps, old signs, and fence posts. Sometimes, automobile parts were used in their construction. Photographs from the period show tin roofs held down by stones and other materials.

Deplorable as they were, Hooverville shanties were preferable to living in the open as many did.

Discuss...

- how being jobless and homeless might affect a person's mental state.
- what agencies and charitable organizations offer assistance today to the poor and homeless.

Write a Letter

Pretend you are a student living in the early 1930s. Write a letter to President Hoover demanding that the government do more to help the homeless.

Homeless persons could be found sleeping on sidewalks, under bridges, and on park benches. Those reduced to spending their nights on benches sought warmth under a "Hoover blanket," the depression term for a newspaper.

The poor who had a few pennies in their pockets might spend a night in a lodging facility run by a mission, the Salvation Army, or some other organization. For 10 or 15 cents, they could purchase the privilege of sleeping on a dirty blanket or mattress on a crowded floor. Some of these facilities were little more than flophouses infested with lice and rats.

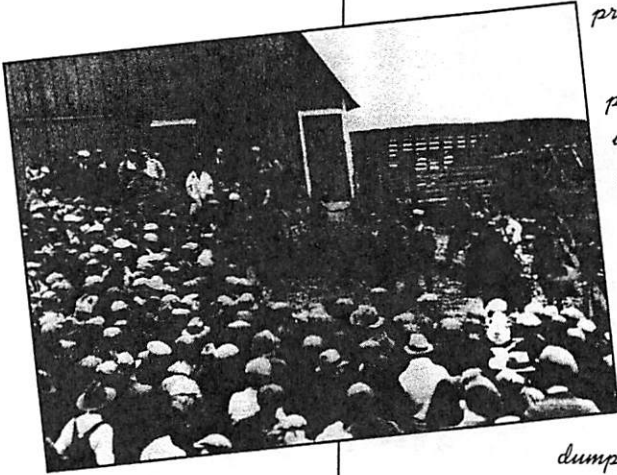
Hoovervilles and the like were testimony to the worst years of the depression: 1929 to 1932. After 1932, with the election of Franklin Roosevelt, conditions slowly began to improve.

The Plight of the Farmer

Journal Entry

December 29, 1932

It's not easy being a sheriff these days. Sometimes you must do your duty even when that duty goes against your conscience. That's what happened yesterday when a group of farmers tried to prevent the foreclosure of Fritz Kapp's dairy farm.



Old Fritz, like so many farmers in the country, had fallen behind on his payments to the bank and was scheduled to be evicted. Just as the papers were about to be served, some 75 farmers showed up on Fritz's behalf and tried to prevent his eviction. Heated words were exchanged and I thought, for a few moments, that a nasty fight was going to break out. My deputies, however, kept their heads and talked the group into leaving after 30 minutes.

I have mixed feelings about the farmers in this state. It breaks my heart to see so many of them literally being kicked off their lands. But it angers me to see the more radical of the farmers destroy their crops or dump their milk on the ground to try to force up prices. It's hard to believe this occurs when I read about kids in Appalachia so hungry that they are chewing on their own hands!

No industry suffered more during the depression than agriculture. Agriculture, in fact, had been on the decline since the end of World War I. Its problems only magnified when the bottom fell out of the economy in 1929.

Unlike other industries, agriculture did not share in the economic boom of the 1920s. While many Americans were enjoying the good life, farmers were suffering from high costs and low prices and, in many cases, the loss of their farms. Many struggled just to put food on the table.

The farmers' dilemma sprang from a decreased demand for farm products following World War I. During the war, farmers had been encouraged by the government to grow more food. Food was needed to fight the war and to supply America's allies. Thousands of farmers complied by borrowing money to buy more land and machinery. When the war ended and demand fell off sharply, there was a huge surplus of

wheat, cotton, and other products. Farm prices fell accordingly, and farmers were unable to make the payments for the land and machinery they had purchased. Foreclosures on farms increased dramatically, and more and more farmers lost their means of livelihood. Some became tenants on land they had previously owned.

While most farmers during the depression coped as best they could within the law, a small percentage expressed their bitterness through acts of violence. Most of the violence occurred in Iowa, Wisconsin, and Minnesota, where angry farmers stopped trucks bound for market and destroyed their loads of fruit, vegetables, and eggs. They also dumped untold gallons of milk into ditches.

Farming conditions remained depressed until the Agricultural Adjustment Act of 1933, reduced surpluses by paying farmers a subsidy to limit production.

Discuss...

- to what extent the federal government was responsible for the farmers' plight during the 1930s.
- whether farmers were justified in destroying their produce to keep it off the market.
- the relationship between supply and demand and prices.

August 1, 1932

Dear Thelma,

My Timmy is dead. The army killed him, and he was only 11 weeks old. Who could have imagined that American soldiers would turn against their own people?

I wanted to leave Washington in June when most of the veterans and their families left. I wanted to go home to Oregon as fast as these two legs could carry me. But Billy wanted to stay. What choice did I have? Now my baby is dead because of it.

I'm sure you have read what happened last week at Anacostia Flats. The army came in and burned us out. Billy, the kids, and I ran inside a house on a road near the river. When the soldiers came by, one threw a tear-gas bomb near the door. Almost immediately our eyes began to burn, and Timmy started to vomit. I ran outside with him, where he continued to vomit. When he started to turn blue, we took him to the hospital. He died the next morning.

You're lucky you stayed in Oregon. I wish we had. We're in Johnstown, Pennsylvania, but we hope to be on the road home in a few days. Maybe I'll see you in a couple of weeks. Until then, pray for us.

Lottie

Farmers were not the only Americans calling the government's attention to their problems in the early 1930s. In the summer of 1932, thousands of veterans of World War I marched on Washington, D.C., demanding early payment on bonuses they were due to receive in 1945. Their march resulted in a clash with police and army troops that discredited the Hoover administration and helped elect Franklin Roosevelt a few months later.

The march of the Bonus Expeditionary Force, as the veterans called themselves, began innocently enough in May. Almost 20,000 veterans and their families from around the country descended on the nation's capital. They came by train, by truck, by car, and even on foot. They came asking Congress to grant their \$1,000 bonuses 13 years early. They were hungry and

jobless and insisted they needed the money to feed their families.

Most of the veterans took up residence in hastily constructed shantytowns that sprang up almost overnight. The largest of these was on land directly across the Anacostia River from the Capitol. It was here that most of the 20,000 demonstrators camped out during their stay in Washington.

The veterans waited patiently until the middle of June, when Congress deliberated on whether to honor their request. The House of Representatives voted to give the veterans their bonuses early, but the Senate rejected the proposal. Angry and disappointed, the vast majority of veterans nonetheless accepted Congress' decision and packed up and left the capital. Some 2,000

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A Bold Request and a Federal Fiasco

Continued from page 15.

hardliners stayed, however, and it was this group that shortly came into conflict with the authorities.

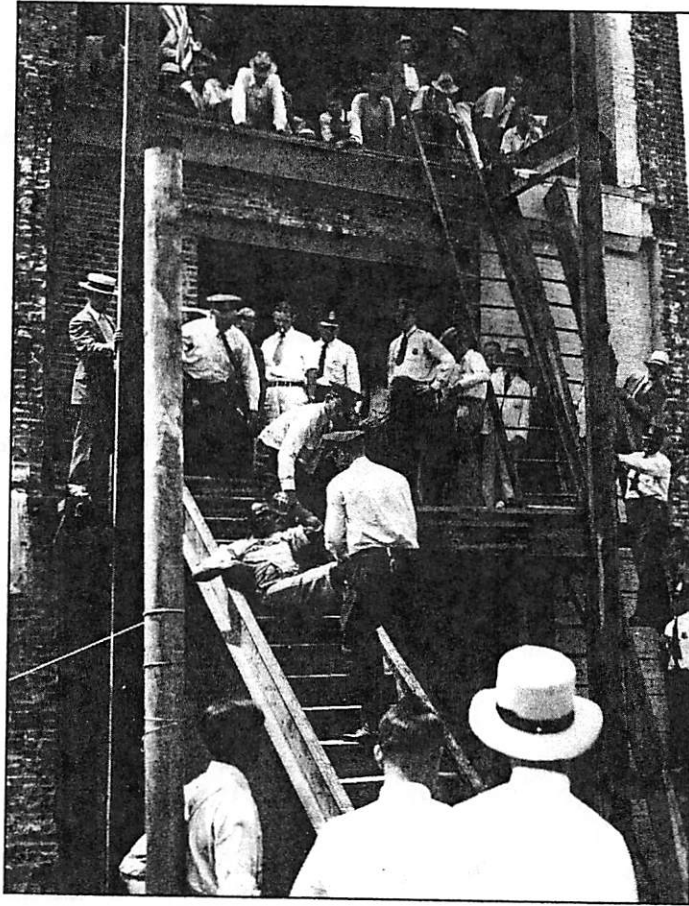
The showdown came on the morning of July 28. It began when workmen came to tear down an abandoned government building that had provided shelter for some of the veterans. A fight ensued, and the police were called in. Soon veterans were hurling rocks and bricks, and a number of police officers were injured, including the chief of police. The battle raged throughout the day, prompting President Hoover at 3:00 P.M. to call a detachment of cavalry from nearby Fort Myer. Placed under the command of General Douglas MacArthur,

the army's chief of staff, soldiers armed with guns and tanks soon confronted the veterans. Firearms, sabers, and tear gas were un-

leashed against the demonstrators. The soldiers marched to the Hooverville established at Anacostia Flats and set fire to all of the shanties. In the course of the action, several people were killed, including an 11-week-old baby. Scores of people were injured, some of them women and children.

By the following morning, the battered veterans began to retreat into Maryland and Pennsylvania. The "revolution," as some Americans, including General

MacArthur, viewed it, had been put down. Its climax marked an inglorious end to the White House term of Herbert Hoover.



Discuss...

- whether the government acted correctly in denying World War I veterans their bonuses early.
- how the individual soldier must feel when forced to carry out an unpopular order.
- if violence is ever justified as a means to gain an end.

For Debate

Resolved: That the United States Army was justified in using force against the veterans at Anacostia Flats.

Resolved: That persons who serve in the armed forces are entitled to special privileges.

September 10, 1934

Tonight we're camped with several other families just west of Flagstaff, Arizona. It's our third day on the road, and it's been the worst. The baby is sick and crying all the time. The twins have been nothing but trouble. Lloyd says we should cross the California line by tomorrow afternoon. I hope so. I hope the old jalopy holds together one more day.

We left Oklahoma with just enough money for gas and food, and precious little food at that. Other than a couple of old mattresses and bedsprings and pots and pans stacked on the car, that's all we have. Even this journal I'm keeping is now being written on old paper bags.

We had no choice but to leave. It hadn't rained in 18 months. When all the crops died, the winds started blowing the soil away. There were days when the sky was as dark as night from the black dust. The house and the barn were half buried in sand most of the time. If you went out, you had to cover your face with a handkerchief to keep the dirt out of your eyes and your mouth. Even then, when you came back inside, your mouth was full of the stuff. And the cow! If I live forever, I will never forget her pitiful cries from the barn for water. It was a relief when the poor thing finally died.

They say there's plenty of work in California. Well, we'll find out soon enough, I suppose. Anything has to be better than what we left behind.

By 1934, the worst part of the Great Depression was over, and the nation had started on the slow road to recovery. But there was one section of the country where the programs of the New Deal had had little or no effect on economic conditions. That area was a part of the Great Plains that came to be called the Dust Bowl.

You will recall that farmers during World War I had been encouraged to produce surpluses to meet the needs of wartime. Farmers on the Great Plains, like those everywhere, overplanted their fields to take advantage of this increased demand. But whereas surpluses resulted in falling prices and bank foreclosures in most parts of the country, the farmers of the Plains had to cope with an added problem: they saw winds literally blow their farms away.

For many years, the Great Plains had been overgrazed and overfarmed. Livestock were allowed to slowly destroy the precious vegetation necessary to hold the soil in place, and farmers

employed unwise farming methods in their drive to increase production. Land was never allowed to lie fallow to maintain its fertility, and careless plowing left fields open to erosion. Added to this was the scarcity of rain. Average annual rainfall on the Plains is from 10 to 20 inches, compared to 40 or more in other farming regions. When rain did come in the 1930s, it often came in torrents, washing away the abused soil. When there was little or no rain, as was often the case, winds simply picked up the topsoil and blew it away. As much as 300 million tons of topsoil could be carried away in a two-day storm. (Farmers on the Plains quipped that they could stand by their windows and count their neighbors' farms as they blew past.) Dust from the Plains, carried by the jet stream, darkened skies all the way to the East Coast. It was so bad that streetlights in such eastern cities as New York and Boston often burned during the middle of the day.

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Dust and Desperation

Continued from page 23.

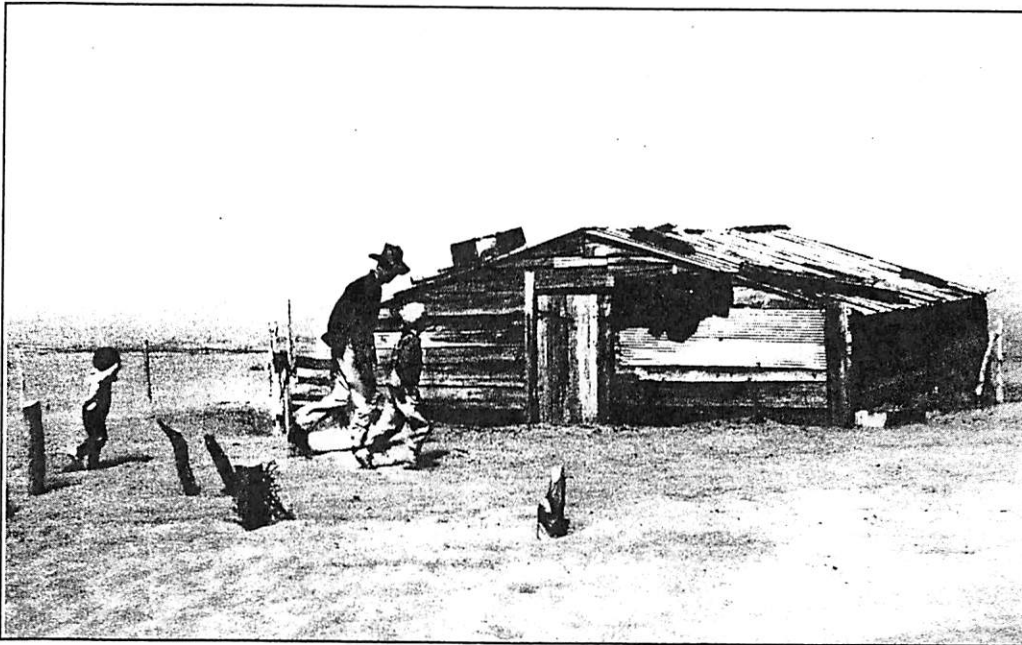
From 1933 to 1936, dust storms ravaged parts of Kansas, Nebraska, New Mexico, Colorado, Texas, and Oklahoma. It is not surprising that thousands of farmers gave up and moved west to California, hoping to find a better life. Because so many of those who jammed the highways out of the Dust Bowl were from Oklahoma, the name "Okies" came to be applied to all of them.

Few Okies found the good life in California. Most became migrant workers laboring for

pennies a day in the fields and living in shacks and shanties that often sprang up near dirty irrigation ditches. Since water from these ditches was used for cooking, serious health problems soon arose. Children of migrant workers suffered from cramps, diarrhea, dysentery, pellagra, hookworm, and rickets. Many died.

From 1933 to 1936, more than 300,000 farm families migrated to California. Competition for work was keen. When a grower advertised for help, sometimes three times as many pickers showed up than were needed. Such an excess of labor allowed growers to pay desperate migrants as little as 45 cents on some days.

Low wages and sordid living conditions were the plight of migrant workers through the Great Depression years. Their tragic story is described by John Steinbeck in his Pulitzer prize-winning novel, *The Grapes of Wrath*.



Discuss...

- what conservation practices might have prevented the Dust Bowl.
- why migrant workers are sometimes the subject of scorn and even abuse by others.

Create a Dialogue

Create a dialogue between an Oklahoma farmer and his wife contemplating abandoning their farm in the 1930s and moving to California.

For Further Study

Look up hookworm, dysentery, pellegra, and rickets in an encyclopedia. List their causes and symptoms, and explain how they can be prevented and/or cured.

GREAT DEPRESSION

Vocabulary

“Buying on Margin”

Installment buying

Economic Depression

Economic Boom

Unemployment

Hooverilles

Bank Run

Public Works

Welfare State

Federal Deficit

Dust Bowl

Main Ideas and Themes

Causes of the Great Depression

Stock Market Crash

Buying on Margin

Too much credit & Installment Buying

Characteristics of Great Depression

Bank Runs

Soup Kitchens & Bread Lines

Hooverilles

High Unemployment

FDR's New Deal

Social Security (SSA)

FDIC

WPA

Fireside Chats

Welfare State

Negative Parts of the New Deal

Federal Deficit

Supreme Court Packing

Too much power to the Federal Government

Was it effective?

• Dust Bowl

“The Okies”

Grapes of Wrath