
Life During the Great Depression

USH Honors

Chapter 9 Lesson 2

The Depression Worsens



The Depression grew during President Hoover's administration.

- 1930: 1,352 banks had suspended operations
- 1932: 30,000 companies went out of business
- 1933: $\frac{1}{4}$ of the workforce was unemployed

How did the depression impact the average citizen?

- The jobless often had no food
- People could not pay rent or mortgages and were evicted
- Shantytowns appeared on unused public lands (***Hoovervilles***)

Soup Kitchens

Soup Kitchens

- Bread Lines and/or Soup Kitchens emerged as the Depression worsened
- These were started by private charities
- Served unemployed workers & the poor
- People could receive free food



Hoboes Riding the Rails

Struggling to get by

- Some searched for work and a better life – many were homeless and unemployed
- Americans would walk, hitchhike, and “ride the rails” to search for work and food
- Those who wandered from place to place were called hoboes
- Hoboes would attempt to ride in boxcars from place to place
- Police would arrest those caught.



Immigration in the Depression

What about immigrants?

- Many would return to their native country
- Often this return was voluntary – not always forced like in the 1920s
- Federal government did launch drives to return immigrants
- Immigrants who broke the law – returned rather quickly
- Mexican immigrants were part of the repatriation process



The Farm Crisis Part II: The Dust Bowl

What had encouraged farmers to settle the Great Plains?

- Homestead Act! Population boomed because of the promise of land and a healthy existence

Great Plains farmers struggled:

- Overproduction led to a lack of income – no good crops to sell
- Farmers saw crop prices drop in the 1920s
- A drought begins in 1932 – everything is dry – no crops growing.
- Dust storms developed: covering EVERYTHING in dry topsoil – then sand ☹️

Many Midwestern farmers and Great Plains farmers lost their farms.

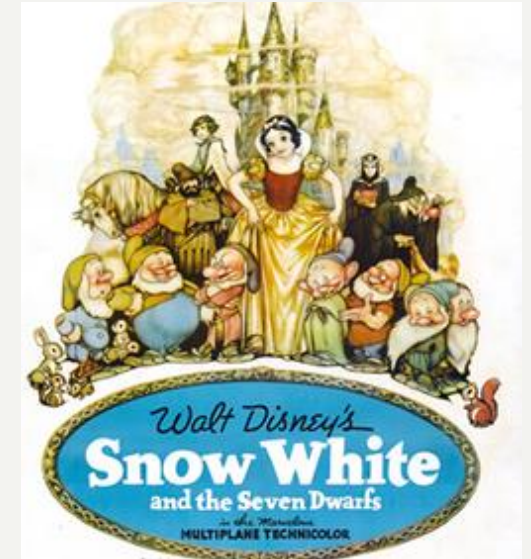
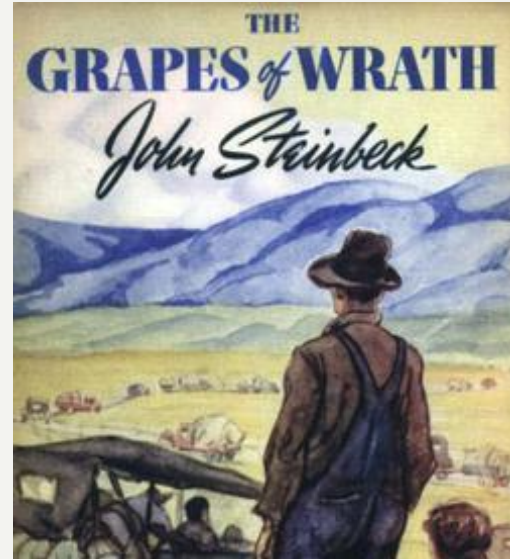
Many families moved west to the west coast hoping to find a better life, but most still faced poverty and homelessness.



Arts and Entertainment

How did Americans “escape” the reality of the depression?

- **Movies!** Many people could gather money to go to the movies for the day!
~60 million Americans went to movies each week!
Shirley Temple – child star (favorite)
The Marx Brothers, Jack Benny, and Bob Hope: Comedians
Walt Disney – cartoons *Snow White and the Seven Dwarfs*, 1937
Mr. Smith Goes to Washington – serious film
1939 Films: *The Wizard of Oz* - *Gone With the Wind* – *Grapes of Wrath*
- **Radio!** Many families who could not gather enough for movies would listen to favorite programs like the Green Hornet.



Movie Stars of the 1930s



Veronica Lake and Joel McCrea in Sullivan's Travels – a film about hobo experiences.

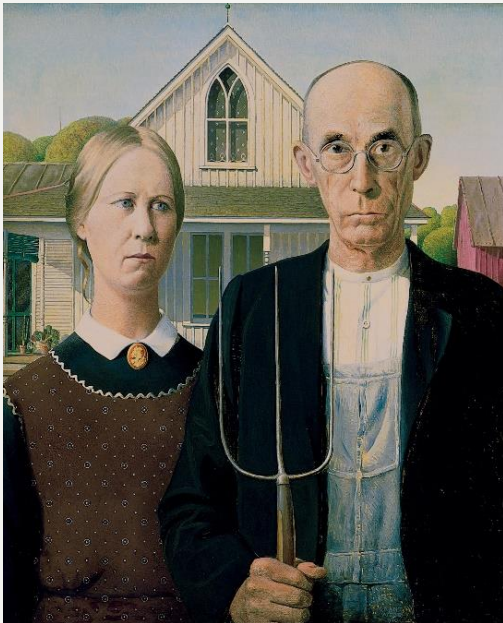
Jack Benny a movie and radio favorite

Jerry Colonna and Bob Hope movie and radio favorites



Arts in the 1930s

American Gothic, 1930
By
Grant Wood



Fort Peck Dam, Montana, 1936 by
Margaret Bourke-White



Migrant Mother, 1935
by
Dorothea Lange

