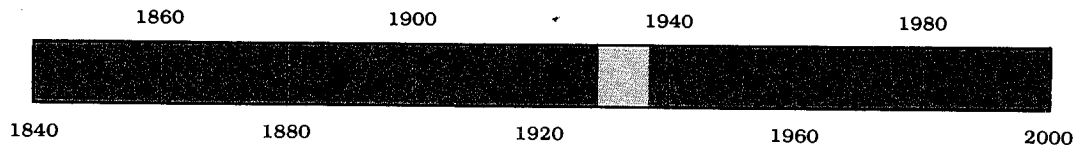


Part **6**

*The Great Depression*



# Looking Ahead



Tuesday, September 3, 1929, was uncomfortably hot in most of the northeastern U.S. It was the day after Labor Day, but the heat made it feel like July. Even so the crowds on Wall Street in New York City seemed especially happy. Wall Street was the home of the New York Stock Exchange. The exchange was the leading market for the buying and selling of stocks, or shares, in various U.S. businesses. On September 3, prices on the exchange had hit a new high.

The "Big Bull Market," people called it. It seemed as if everyone with money in stocks was getting rich. But in the next few weeks the market started to do strange things. Sharp nosedives in stock prices were followed by equally sharp recoveries.

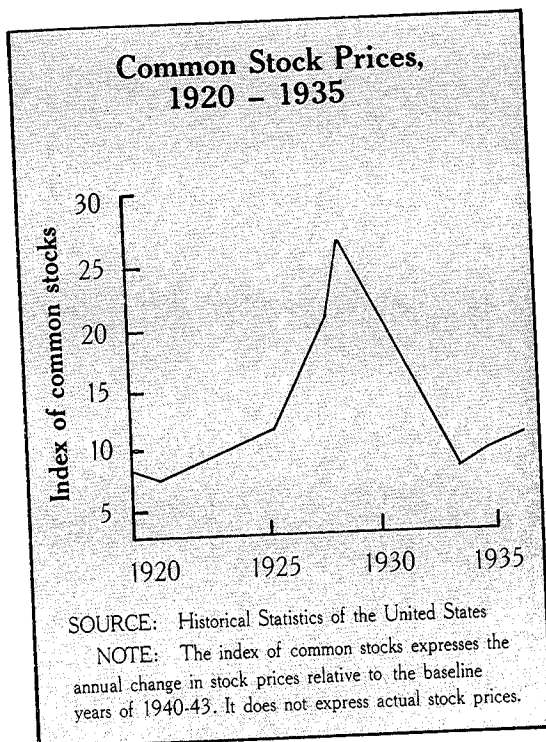
*When rains stopped coming, the rich topsoil of the Midwest simply blew away. This Alexandre Hogue painting catches the spirit of the lean years when dreams had a way of turning into dust.*

Then in October the market began to decline rapidly. There were more sellers than buyers. Quickly the mood changed from uneasiness to doubt.

When the market opened on Tuesday, October 29, 1929, the dam broke. Doubt gave way to panic. Nearly everyone wanted to sell his or her stocks. But there were few buyers. In one day, billions of dollars worth of stocks were wiped out. One newspaper headline said: "Wall Street Lays an Egg."

The stock market crash set off a chain reaction. It led to the Great Depression, the worst economic crisis in U.S. history. In the next four years, business came almost to a standstill. Many businesses could not sell their products because people had less money to buy them. Factories closed, and some businesses failed. By 1932 more than 12 million people—nearly one out of every four U.S. workers—were out of jobs.

**Hunger and heartache.** The Depression was a disaster for most Ameri-



cans. Many people were so poor that they went hungry. It was not uncommon to find people going through garbage to find a few scraps of food. Many people lost their homes because they couldn't pay for them. Thousands drifted around the country looking for jobs that did not exist. The mood was summed up in a popular song of the period. It was called "Brother, Can You Spare a Dime?"

In the Midwest farmers faced disaster. Low farm prices during the 1920's had left many of them near ruin. Then in the 1930's a severe drought hit the Midwest. Good farm and grazing land turned into a desert of dust. The "Dust Bowl," as it was called, was the final blow for many small farmers. They ran out of money and lost their farms.

When the Depression began, Republican Herbert Hoover was President. Many people blamed Hoover for the hard times. Hoover had little control over the events that had caused the Depression. But Hoover did not manage to end the hard times once they had begun.

The year 1932 was the worst of the Depression. It was also an election year. The Republicans chose Hoover to run again. The Democrats chose Franklin D. Roosevelt, governor of New York. Roosevelt promised the American people a **New Deal**. He was not sure what he would do if elected. But he knew something different had to be done.

**New Deal.** Roosevelt won the election easily. He took office in the darkest hour of the Depression. In his first 100 days as President, Roosevelt sent 15 major bills to Congress. These bills laid the basis for the New Deal he had promised.

The New Deal was an effort to rescue the American economy. Unlike Hoover, Roosevelt believed that only the federal government could get America back to work again. At first he tried to provide relief from the worst hardships of the Depression. Not all of his plans were successful. But they gave the American people hope.

Roosevelt was a strong President who excited strong feelings. Some Americans said he was destroying the business system he was trying to save. But millions of Americans loved him and his wife, Eleanor. Mrs. Roosevelt emerged as a public figure in her own right.

The New Deal did not bring an end to the Depression overnight. Roose-



Dance marathons were popular in the 1930's. In these cruel events, spectators paid to watch couples dance until they dropped. Those who danced longest won a few dollars.

velt sent Congress a new set of plans in 1935. His first plans had mainly been *relief* efforts. These new plans were primarily for *reform*. One of them—Social Security—would provide most workers with money when they retired after the age of 65. Another extended labor's right to form unions and bargain with employers as a group.

Roosevelt ran for the Presidency again in 1936—and won. In fact, he was re-elected by the greatest landslide of votes ever given a candidate for President to that date. By the time he started his second term in 1937, business had begun to pick up. A marked recovery had taken place.

**Victory for labor.** The business upturn brought labor unions onto the attack. Earlier, unions had watched helplessly while wages were slashed to the bone. Now the New Deal had given unions the right to **collective bargaining**. This is the right to bar-

gain for employees as a group. Union membership soared. In Michigan, auto workers staged a new kind of strike, known as a *sit-down*. It lasted several weeks, but it worked. A large auto company, General Motors, agreed to bargain with labor leaders.

The business upswing continued until the fall of 1937. Then business activity took another slide. Many business people said that the New Deal had been a flop. But Franklin Roosevelt shrugged off such complaints. He carried on with his reforms.

Some of the New Deal reforms worked. Some of them did not. When they didn't work, new ideas were brought forth to replace the old ones that had failed. Above all, the New Deal was proof that the U.S. was alive and growing. In the years ahead, the nation would grow stronger than it had ever been before.

## CHAPTER 33

# Dust Bowl

“**O**kies.” The name was hissed at them at the California border. It sounded like a dirty word, and the newcomers were surprised.

They had come to California to find work. They had heard that the state was covered with grape vines, vegetable farms, and fruit trees. They had heard that the growers needed pickers to pick their crops. Pickers were needed for oranges, for strawberries, for grapes, for almost anything you could name. And picking meant pay. Not very much pay, but at least enough to live on. Without it they would starve.

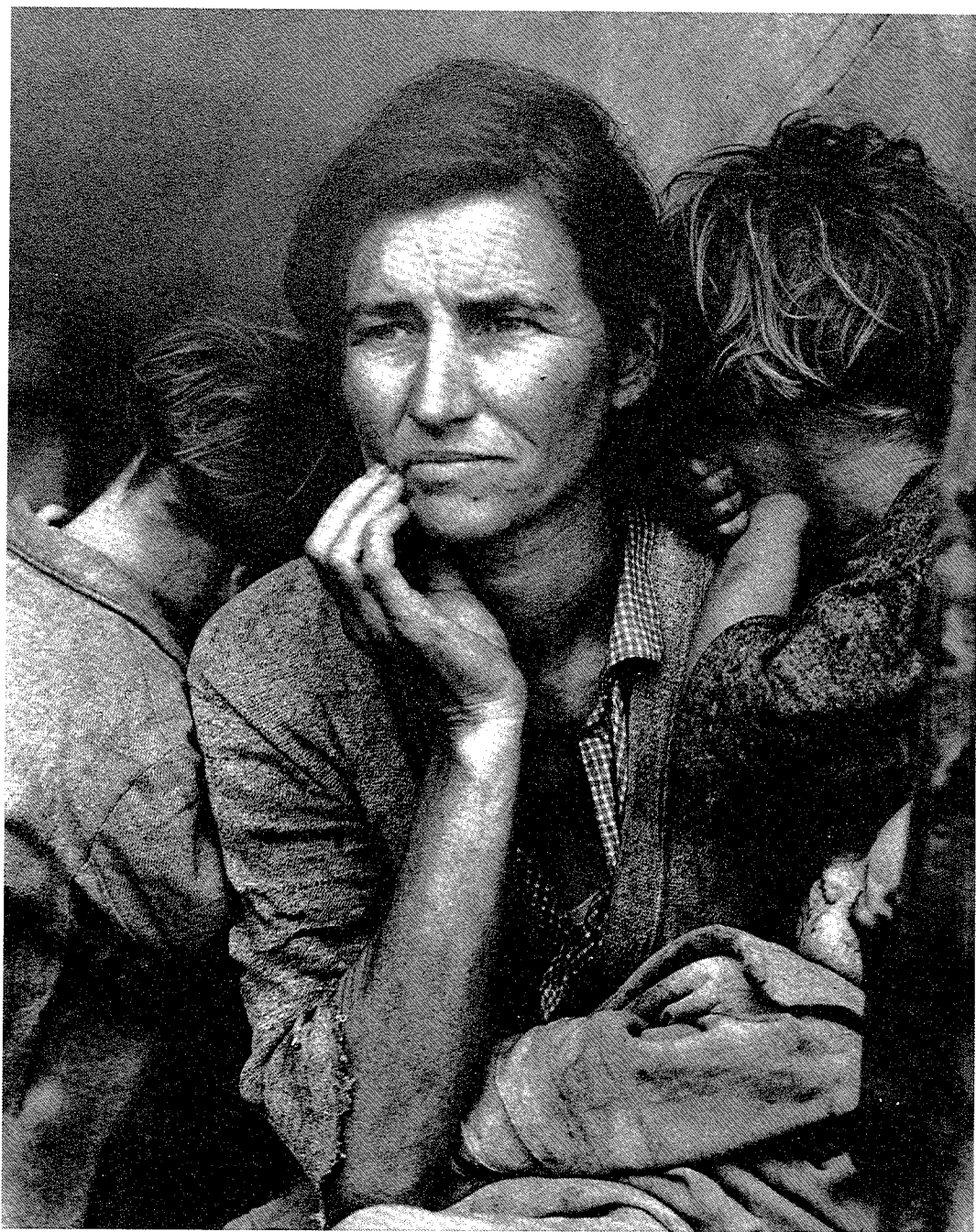
They had driven their old trucks and Tin Lizzies more than 1,000 miles (1,600 kilometers) to escape the dust storms and their dried-out farms. They needed these jobs in California that they had come so far to get. But now some of them were told, “Okie, go back where you came from.”

The Okies were mainly families from Oklahoma in the mid-1930's. Many came from the other states of

the Great Plains, but all were called Okies. The Great Plains stretch down from the Dakotas in the north to Texas in the south. Only 10 years before, these states had been major producers of the nation's grain. What had gone wrong?

During World War I, food prices shot up. To take advantage of the high prices, farmers planted on lands that usually didn't get much rain. Ranchers let their cattle and sheep graze over more and more acres. As luck would have it, rainfall was a little heavier than usual. More and more grain grew, and so more and more cattle grazed. Prices stayed pretty high even after the war was over.

But the plowing and the grazing ripped off the sod (the top layer of grass that protects the soil). The farmers and ranchers never bothered to plant new grass on the places they had used. This kind of thing had been going on for years. During the “good times” of high prices, it got much worse.



*Dorothea Lange photographed this 32-year-old woman in California's fields. Lange described her subject: "She said they had been living on frozen vegetables . . . and birds that the children killed."*

**Dry wells.** Then around 1921 prices began to go down again. In the early 1930's, rainfall went down too. By the time FDR took office, there had been little or no rain on the Great Plains for a year-and-a-half. The wells and water holes were drying up. The grain and grass were turning brown. As the winds blew over the dry land, they picked up the soil in giant clouds of dust. There was no sod to hold it down.

Crops were ruined. The farmers couldn't pay off the banks for the money they had borrowed for new equipment and more land during the good years. So banks began taking over the farms.

People kept saying that if they could hold out for a while, things would get better again. The rains

would come back. But the rain didn't come back. The drought went on. It continued, year after year, all through the thirties. The land was becoming powdery.

Dust storms were common in this dry area without trees. Usually a dust storm lasted a few hours. But the dust storms of the 1930's were something else. They lasted for days. Farmers and ranchers had to go inside to get away from blowing dust and sand. They had to stuff rags into the openings and cracks of their houses.

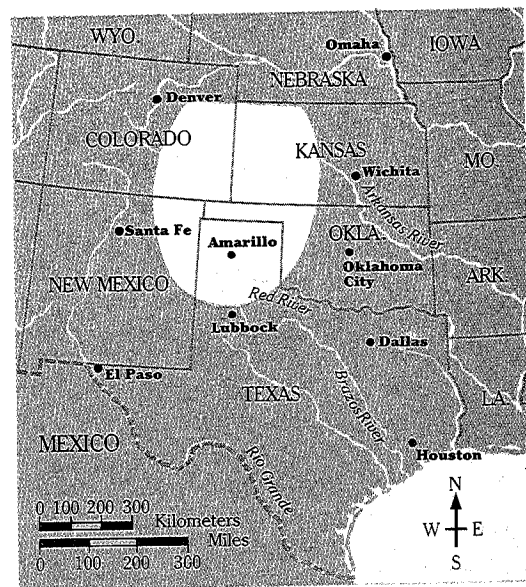
Some days the dust got so bad it blotted out the sun, turning day into night. Dust and sand from the Great Plains were blown all the way to the Eastern states. Once, the dust of Kansas partly blocked the sun in Massachusetts.

Sometimes farmers found dust and sand piled up to their windows like snowdrifts. Farmers couldn't plant in this dust. And if they did there was no rain to water their crops.

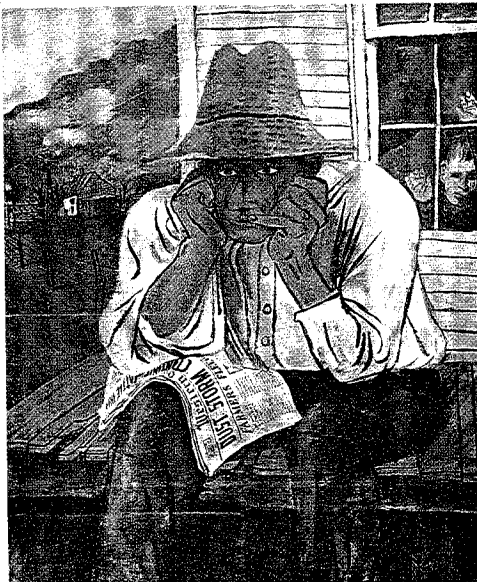
More and more farmers went broke and began leaving their homes. Between 1934 and 1939, some 400,000 people left their farms. They headed west in strange, sad lines of old, battered cars and trucks, mattresses on top, pots and pans clanging on the sides, suitcases strapped to the back. To many of these **migrants** (travelers), California seemed like a promised land.

**Cardboard houses.** For most, California turned out to be something less than that. It was a place where the whole family went into the fields—if there was work. If not too many pickers showed up, they might make 45 cents an hour. Many of

## Center of Dust Bowl



# YEARS OF DUST



## RESETTLEMENT ADMINISTRATION Rescues Victims Restores Land to Proper Use

*Artist Ben Shahn painted this scene in 1936 for the U.S. Resettlement Administration. It later became part of the New Deal's Farm Security Agency.*

these families lived in the fields. Their houses were made of tin sheets or cardboard boxes. Water for cooking and drinking came from a nearby ditch.

When the picking of one crop was done, the Okie families would move on to the next. They traveled in their old trucks or cars. Or else they walked to the next job, if they could find one.

In 1937 the U.S. government took action. The Farm Security Agency—called “FSA” for short—was set up.

The FSA tried to help the migrant workers and also the small farmers who had not left the Dust Bowl area. FSA money built new, cleaner, and healthier migrant-worker camps. The FSA also bought up empty land in the Dust Bowl and turned it into forests and pasture. FSA agents taught farmers to plant grass to hold down the soil, and trees and shrubs to hold back the wind.

The FSA did much to help the victims of the Dust Bowl. But the Depression was still on. The problems of the people who had lost their lands were never fully solved in the fields. In 1940 war production opened thousands of new jobs. Soon the migrants were leaving the fields and going to the cities for work.

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## Chapter Check

1. Who were the Okies? Why did they travel to California?
2. Did California turn out to be the promised land the Okies had hoped it would be? What was their life like in California?
3. In the 1920's, the Great Plains states were major producers of grain. What caused them to become a Dust Bowl only 10 years later?
4. Was the Dust Bowl a natural disaster, or were the farmers and ranchers partly to blame? Explain your answer.
5. How did the U.S. government try to help the people who had been affected by the Dust Bowl? Why did many farmers leave the fields and go to the cities for work?



## CHAPTER 34

# Wall Street Lays an Egg

**T**he year was 1928, an election year. It was a year of great prosperity for most people. The Republican candidate for President was Herbert Hoover. In his speeches, Hoover promised good times for the country. Most Americans thought he was right. Business was booming, and everybody wanted to keep it that way. Hoover and the Republicans won the election easily.

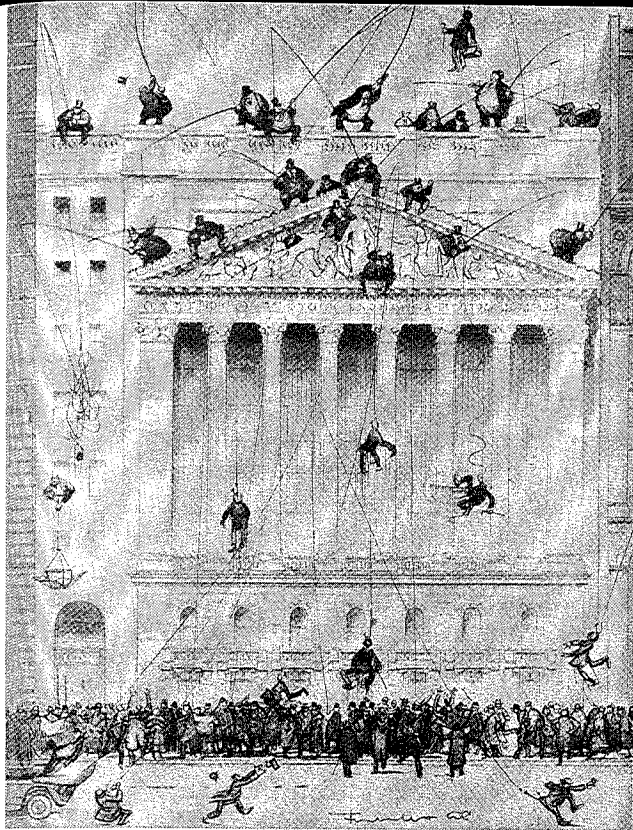
Many people were making money by buying and selling stocks. A person who buys a share of stock in a company owns part of the business. When a company makes money, this stockholder stands a good chance of making money too. When business is very good, many people want shares in the companies that make money. So the prices of these shares go up. Anyone who buys shares before the price goes up can sell them later at a profit.

**High road to riches?** In the late 1920's, it seemed as if anybody could get rich by buying and selling stocks. Some of America's richest people said

so. But there were some dark clouds in this rosy picture. Not everyone in America was doing well. Many farmers were deeply in debt. Farm prices had been going down since the booming days of World War I. And many farmers were losing their farms.

A number of industries were also ailing. Coal mines and textile mills were laying off workers. Some industries were producing too many goods, that is, more than the public could buy. And many of these goods were being bought on credit (time payments) instead of with cash. Even banks were having problems. More than 1,000 banks were forced to close their doors in the late 1920's.

**Signs of trouble.** The **stock market** itself showed signs of trouble. (The stock market is where shares of stock are bought and sold.) Stock prices were often pushed up by the great demand for stock. The high prices were not based on the increased value of the corporation. And many people speculated. **Speculation**



*During the 1920's, many people were persuaded to buy stocks. As early as 1921, a cartoonist for Life magazine showed stockbrokers as anglers fishing for victims. Such criticism was mostly ignored though—until 1929.*

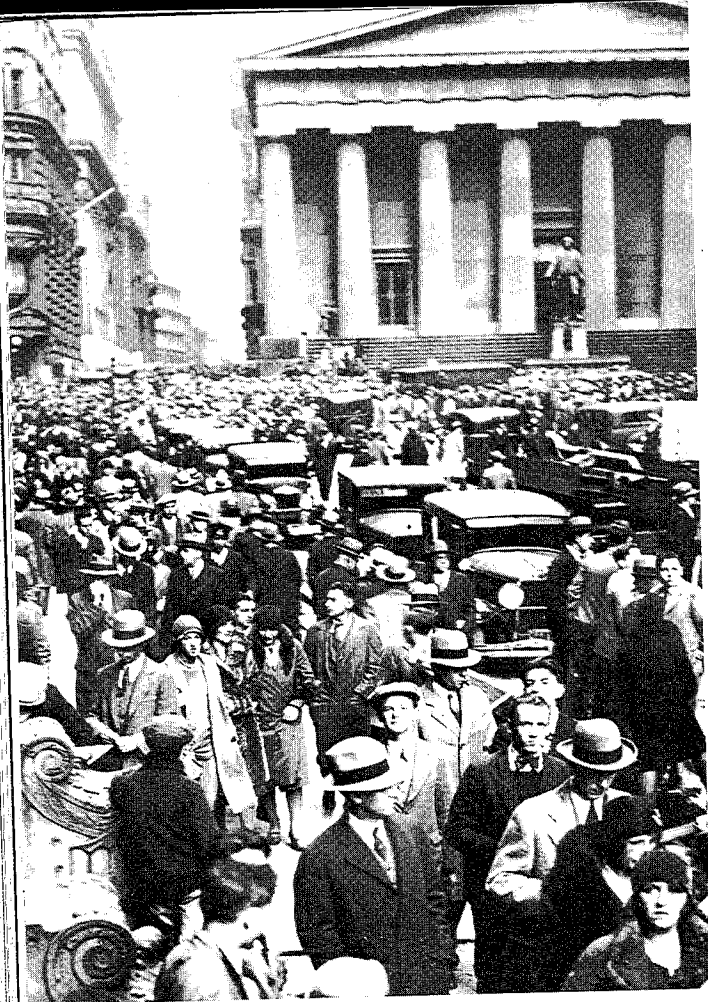
is like gambling. It means taking financial risks in the hope of making a large profit. You didn't need much cash in the late 1920's to speculate. You could buy stocks "on margin" with a small down payment. Of course, the big risk in buying stocks is that their value can go down as well as up. And until you sell a stock and get some real money for it, you aren't really rich—except on paper. During the 1920's, people who bought "on margin" could be wiped out if prices dropped.

Some people thought the stock

market would go on booming forever. There were stories about the local barber who made \$50,000 on General Motors stock and about the beauty-parlor operator who watched her \$100 grow into a fortune on Wall Street. Of course, most Americans did not have money in stocks. Not many of those who did made a "killing" in the market. And most of the people who did make a "killing" did not see their gains in real dollars. The gains were all tied up in stocks.

**Panic on Wall Street.** In September 1929, the stock market began to fail. The first great break came on Thursday, October 24. That morning, 13 million shares of stock were put up for sale. But few people wanted to buy at the prices that were asked. So the prices went down. Finally, the stocks sold, but at low prices. This was a bad sign. Panic swept over the stock market. Everyone wanted to sell stocks at once, before prices went down farther. But no one wanted to buy. This sent prices tumbling even lower. People went wild. They ran, shouted, cursed, and pushed, trying to sell their stocks. Extra policemen were rushed to the stock market to keep order. Within three hours, stocks lost more than 11 billion dollars of their value. But then a group of bankers pooled their money and began to *buy* stocks. This stopped the fall in prices. Some people thought the worst was over. But it was yet to come.

**Low road to despair.** Tuesday, October 29, 1929, was "Black Tuesday"—the day of the big crash. Millions of shares of stock were put on sale for whatever they could bring. But there were no buyers! Prices fell, fell, fell,



*When the stock market crashed, stockbrokers and stock buyers milled about on Wall Street. The news got worse and worse.*

wiping out millionaires and barbers alike. Stocks that once sold for \$48 a share were now offered for one dollar. Even the best stocks dropped as much as \$60 a share.

By mid-November, all stocks lost 30 billion dollars of their value. Nothing like it had ever happened before. No one could understand it. People were in a daze. One thing that made the stock market crash so bad was

that the people who had bought shares "on margin" now had to pay up in cash. But most did not have the cash. They had thought their down payment was safe, but now it was lost too.

October 29 was like a nightmare. One man who had been worth 85 million dollars in stocks was now completely broke. One company lost the 100 million dollars it had invested in the stock market. Grocery clerks, window cleaners, and others who had bought stocks on credit now lost all their savings. A few people couldn't take it. They jumped from skyscraper windows. A few others went home, put their heads in their ovens, and turned on the gas.

By November the stock market had fallen even farther. Millions of Americans had gone from riches to rags. It was good-bye to everything, the end of the dream of riches. The Great Depression was beginning to set in. America would suffer terribly in the years to come.

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## Chapter Check

1. The Republican campaign slogan of 1928 was "A chicken in every pot, a car in every garage." What was the meaning of this slogan? Why wasn't it a realistic slogan?
2. What is meant by buying stock "on margin"? Why did this practice make the stock market crash so bad?
3. Why do you think people suddenly stopped buying stocks? Why didn't more people buy stocks again when the prices were lower on "Black Tuesday"?

## CHAPTER 35

# Breadlines and Debts

**I**n millions of U.S. homes, frightened people were asking:  
How will we pay the rent?  
Where will we get money for food?  
How will we buy shoes for the children?

What will become of us?

It was 1932—the worst year of the Depression. There was misery almost everywhere. It had started with the stock market crash of October 1929. Then factories, mines, steel mills, and banks had begun shutting down. Many people had lost their savings overnight. By 1932 almost 13 million workers—one out of every four—were jobless.

What had caused the Depression? Some experts thought it had come about because too many Americans had borrowed too much money. Others said it had taken place because wealth was not spread evenly enough. There were many other ways of explaining the crisis. But explaining the crisis did not solve it.

**Looking for work.** People stood in line all night hoping to get jobs. Usu-

ally it was the same story—no jobs. A Depression joke went like this:

One high school graduate asks another, “What are you going to do now that you have a diploma?”

The other answers, “Join the army.”

“The army?” asks the first.

“Yeah—the army of the unemployed.”

Both skilled and unskilled workers lost their jobs. They lived on their savings while they looked for work. Then they borrowed—from friends, family, or banks. Some men stood on street corners selling apples for pennies. Others stood in “breadlines” waiting for a free handout of bread and soup. Lawyers took jobs as salespeople at \$15 a week. Teachers took jobs as taxi drivers. Pay was very low. Some factory workers made less than 10 cents an hour.

“We owe the landlord, the grocer—everybody,” one jobless steelworker said. “My kids can’t go to school. They don’t have shoes.”

The suffering was terrible. In one

school, a teacher asked a little girl, "What's wrong with you?"

"I'm just hungry," the girl said.

"You may go home and eat," the teacher said.

"I can't," the child answered. "Today it's my sister's turn to eat."

Tens of thousands of people lost their homes. One-third of the country's farmers lost their farms. This happened because home-owners and farmers could not pay the banks the money they had borrowed to pay for their property. In towns and cities, storekeepers went out of business. Many people weren't buying anything. They had no money.

**Living on hope.** Many farmers became tenant farmers, paying rent for the farms they had once owned. Some farmers and their families packed up their things in old trucks and cars and headed for California. They hoped to find work picking

fruit there. These families were called "Okies," because many of them came from Oklahoma. Some had lost their farms to banks. Some lost them to the terrible dust storms that hit the Midwest in the 1930's.

Other farmers struggled to keep their farms. But it was an uphill battle. Farm prices dropped so low that farmers lost money on the food they produced. In some areas they destroyed crops and killed livestock rather than sell them at a loss. They were trying to decrease supplies. By doing so, they hoped to bring prices up to a fair level.

Another group badly hurt by the Depression were black Americans. Black workers had often found it hard to join labor unions. Now joining became even harder. Jobs were limited. White workers wanted these jobs for themselves. In many cases they kept black people out of their

*This Margaret Bourke-White photo of flood victims in Louisville, Kentucky, became a symbol of the Depression. Amid the "World's Highest Standard of Living," one out of every four adults couldn't find work.*



unions to keep them from competing for jobs. Without jobs, black workers had no money. In the larger U.S. cities, vast numbers of them had to go on relief.

About two million men and boys roamed the country looking for work. They lives in shack towns called "Hoovervilles" after President Herbert Hoover. These shantytowns were usually on the edges of large cities. The towns had no streets, lights, or sewers. The shanties were made of boxes, pieces of tin, wood, and cardboard. They had no furniture, water, or heat. Men burned scraps of wood to keep warm. They dug into garbage cans for bits of food.

**Asking for help.** In 1932, 15,000 veterans of World War I marched on Washington, D.C. They wanted to be paid a bonus that was promised them for 1945. This "**Bonus Army**" brought their wives and children with them. They camped in tents and huts on empty lots. The veterans were ordered out. Many wouldn't go.

President Herbert Hoover then called out troops. The troops drove the veterans out with tanks and tear-gas bombs. Then they set fire to the veterans' huts and tents. Many people were angry with President Hoover for what happened.

President Hoover believed business would come out of the Depression by itself. He was against most forms of U.S. government relief—money or jobs—for the unemployed. He believed that such programs should be left to the states or local communities. Hoover did approve a program of federal loans to local governments to provide jobs for the jobless. He also gave federal help to farmers and



*In 1933, some dairy owners dumped milk rather than sell it at a loss. They hoped to lower the milk supply and bring prices to a higher level.*

some businesses. But he thought the Depression would soon end by itself.

Instead conditions grew worse. Many people blamed President Hoover for the Depression, or for not doing enough about it. And they began to look to another man, Franklin D. Roosevelt, for help.

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## Chapter Check

1. What was meant by the term *Depression*? What effects did it have on people?
2. What special problems did farmers have during the Depression?
3. What special problems did black Americans have during the Depression?
4. Why did banks take over many homes and farms during the Depression?

## CHAPTER 36

# The New Deal

**H**e promised the American people a "New Deal." He said he would help the "forgotten man"—the jobless worker, the poor farmer. He gave hope to the frightened, hungry Americans of the Great Depression. People believed that Franklin Delano Roosevelt was the friend of the common man. In November 1932 they elected him President over Herbert Hoover. Soon Roosevelt was being called "FDR."

On March 4, 1933, FDR was sworn in as President. It was a cold, raw day. Sleet fell on the watching crowds. But FDR's voice was full of hope and courage. He said he had a "firm belief" that "the only thing we have to fear is fear itself."

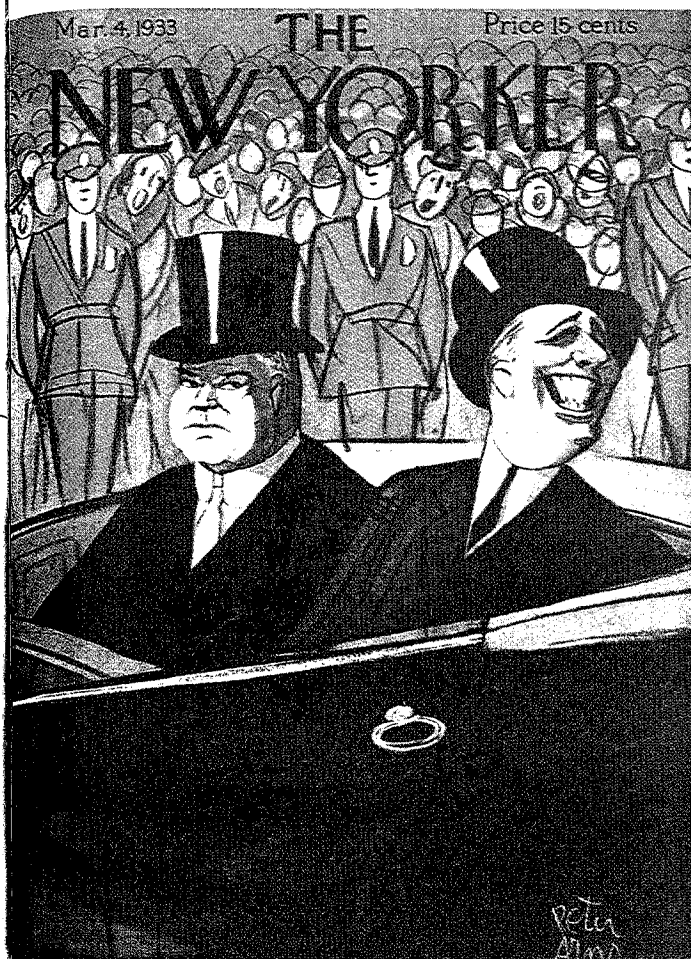
Did he mean it? Was he really as sure as he sounded? Many people wondered about the new President. The Depression was so widespread that there was talk of revolution in the air.

In the four months since FDR's election, hundreds of banks had

closed. People who had money in these banks had lost all their savings. In some cities cash was disappearing. Paper money called *scrip* was issued in place of it. Some people even turned to the barter system. That is, they swapped one thing for another—say, potatoes for corn meal—since the supply of money was so short.

The bank crisis only made the Depression worse. In March 1933 one out of every four workers still remained jobless. Certainly, many people said, there was more to fear than fear itself. The very foundations of the American system seemed to be collapsing.

FDR promised quick action—and he gave it. He began by bringing new people into government—college professors and bright young lawyers. Newspaper reporters quickly named them FDR's "**Brain Trust**." After the election, Roosevelt and his Brain Trust sat down to plan the New Deal. **Great experiment.** The New Deal



*Hoover and Roosevelt did not think much of each other. Peter Arno, a cartoonist for The New Yorker, drew them on the way to Roosevelt's swearing-in—Roosevelt all smiles, Hoover full of distrust. The magazine did not use the drawing. It chose not to focus on FDR because of threats made on his life.*

was more of an experiment than a plan. "Take a method and try it," FDR said. "If it fails, admit it frankly

and try another. But above all, try something." The first task of the New Deal, as FDR saw it, was to get America back to work again. The vicious cycle of depression and unemployment had to be broken. If people had jobs that paid them enough money, they would buy things. This would produce more jobs. Factories and mills would reopen to meet the increased demand for more goods.

FDR realized that aid to business alone would not help enough. Only the federal government could get people back to work. Therefore it was up to the government to create as many jobs as possible.

FDR explained his ideas to the American people in radio speeches he called "fireside chats." He spelled his ideas out to Congress in special messages. Most of the major laws of the New Deal were passed in two spurts. Each spurt was about 100 days long. The first, in 1933, was the most dramatic. FDR called Congress into special session. The Brain Trust worked around the clock preparing bills for Congress. And just as fast as they prepared the bills, Congress passed them into law.

Fifteen major laws were passed in the first 100 days. They included:

**The Emergency Banking Act.** This was the first New Deal bill sent to Congress. It pledged government support to banks and helped them get their affairs in order. Soon after the law was passed, people were putting their money back in banks. A later law insured bank savings up to \$10,000.

**The Civilian Conservation Corps Act.** Congress took only eight days to





*Editorial writers and cartoonists had a field day with Roosevelt's programs. Some said that there were so many New Deal programs that the government could not juggle them all.*

create this act. The corps, known as the CCC, gave unemployed young men healthy outdoor work. They planted trees, built dams and bridges, and helped prevent forest fires and floods. The corps gave many of its members their only chance to eat three meals a day.

**The Agricultural Adjustment Act.** This law gave help to farmers. It paid them *not* to plant crops on part of their land. This cut down farm output. As the supply of farm products dwindled, farm prices rose.

**The National Industrial Recovery Act.** This was the most sweeping law passed in the first 100 days of the New Deal. It set up the National Recovery Administration (NRA). The NRA was to bring businesses together in one great effort to provide jobs and raise wages. One part of

this program helped each industry to draw up a "code of fair practices." The act also guaranteed labor's right to form unions. And it set up the Public Works Administration to give people jobs.

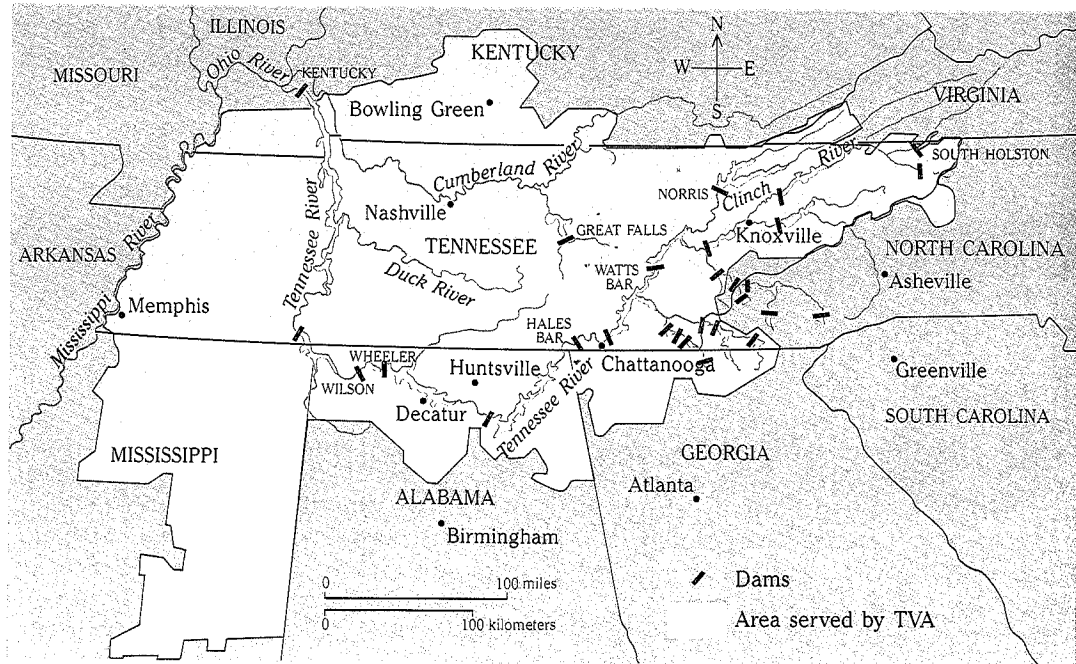
The U.S. Supreme Court later declared the NRA to be against the Constitution. Among other things, the Court said that the President had no authority to approve business codes. But FDR saved parts of the NRA in the second 100 days in 1935. The Works Progress Administration (WPA) extended the public works program. Hundreds of schools, hospitals, and post offices were built around the country. Writers, artists, actors, and teachers were also given jobs with the WPA.

Two other major laws came out of the second 100 days. One was the **Wagner Act**. This act extended labor's right to form unions. It also set up the National Labor Relations Board to rule on union questions. The other law was the Social Security Act. **Social Security** gave workers an income when they retired at the age of 65. It also paid unemployed workers while they looked for jobs.

The New Deal had many critics. Some of them said that FDR's programs were against the Constitution. Others said these programs interfered too much with private business. Still others said that the New Deal simply did not put an end to the Depression. As an experiment, these people claimed, it had failed.

Just how successful was the New Deal? There is no doubt that it did help to ease the worst suffering of the Depression between 1933 and 1937. Then, in 1938, many busi-

## The Tennessee Valley Authority



In 1933, the Tennessee Valley Authority was established to build dams and power plants along the Tennessee River and to bring electricity to the surrounding rural areas.

nesses went into another slump. They did not pull out of it completely until World War II in the 1940's.

Even so, the New Deal brought hope to millions. People slowly got used to the idea of government's doing some jobs private businesses had once done. The New Deal helped America survive one of its worst periods in history. And it helped Americans adapt to changing times.

### Chapter Check

1. In his Inaugural Address, Franklin D. Roosevelt told the nation that "the only thing we have to fear is fear itself." What do you

think he meant by this? Do you think everyone else shared his belief? Explain your answer.

2. What was President Roosevelt's "Brain Trust"? What did it do?
3. In his first 100 days in office, FDR took a number of steps to break the cycle of depression and unemployment. What were these measures?
4. What steps did Roosevelt take later in his administration? What lasting effects have these measures had upon the U.S.?
5. Why did some Americans disapprove of Roosevelt and the New Deal? How was the New Deal different from earlier government programs?

## CHAPTER 37

# First Lady

**O**n a train late at night, a group of reporters sat talking with Eleanor Roosevelt. The reporters had spent the whole day with the new First Lady. They had arisen at six in the morning. They had traveled 300 miles (480 kilometers) and watched Mrs. Roosevelt make 14 speeches along the way. Then, at the end of the day, they had boarded the train for a trip back to Washington. Now some of them were bone-weary.

At 11 P.M. Mrs. Roosevelt stood up as if to say that the session was ended for the night. One reporter said, "Thank you very much, Mrs. Roosevelt, for such a good story. I'm not surprised, though, that you should want to get some rest at last."

Mrs. Roosevelt smiled. "Oh," she responded quickly, "I'm not going to bed yet. I think I'll do a magazine piece before I turn in. I'm not really tired."

Eleanor Roosevelt was a woman of great energy. When she became First Lady, people did not know at first what to make of her. Presidents'

wives had usually been expected to be hostesses. They were supposed to take care of social life at the White House—and very little else. Many people still thought women belonged at home with their children. They disapproved of women being involved in public life.

But Eleanor Roosevelt was different. She had been forced into public life long before her husband became President. In 1921 FDR had been paralyzed by polio. For a time, he could no longer go to most political meetings himself. Mrs. Roosevelt had always been shy and nervous with large groups. But she overcame her fears. She went to the meetings in place of her husband. She acted as his eyes and ears.

She continued doing so as First Lady. She traveled around the country. She talked to people and heard their problems. She also wrote magazine articles and a daily newspaper column. She gave radio talks that were very popular. The country had never seen anything like her.

### Remembering the forgotten.

Eleanor Roosevelt took on many projects as First Lady. But her special interest seemed to be people who had been forgotten: poor people, old people, black people, and others. The 1930's were not a time of improving race relations. Still, Eleanor Roosevelt wanted to help all the people she could. She invited blacks to the White House. She spoke out forcefully for equal rights. Many people criticized her for this. But others praised her, and she became a friend to black people.

In 1933 unemployed veterans of World War I returned to Washington. They set up a camp as the Bonus Army of 1932 had done (see Chapter 35). The veterans were angry. They said they would not leave until the government gave them help. Presi-

*Eleanor Roosevelt was a very public First Lady. Her tours, speeches, and articles made her as well known as the President himself.*



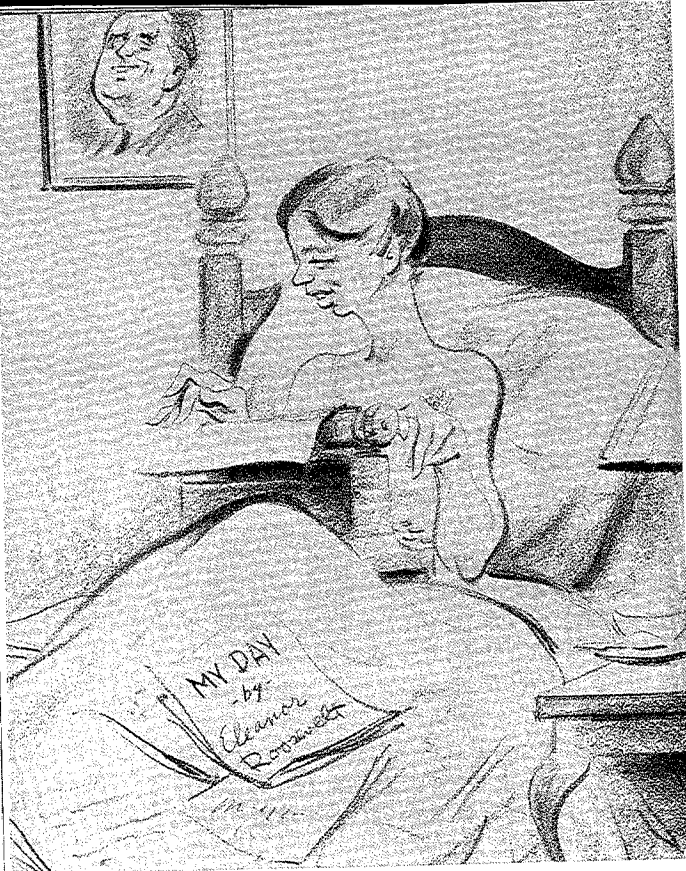
dent Roosevelt did not want to use force against them as President Hoover had.

One day Mrs. Roosevelt visited the veterans' camp alone. The muddy camp was made up of rough huts and tents. Mrs. Roosevelt ate with the veterans and listened to their stories. She sang World War I songs with them, and they cheered her. Then they agreed to go home peacefully, knowing that President Roosevelt would do his best for them.

Mrs. Roosevelt also took great interest in young people. She was worried over the effect the Depression was having on them. High school graduates couldn't find jobs or afford college. Mrs. Roosevelt thought they should be given part-time work so that they could stay in school. She worked closely with FDR's advisers to develop such a program. Millions of students were helped.

**Working for women's equality.** Mrs. Roosevelt wanted women to be treated as the equals of men. It upset her that the government hired women only as clerks and typists. She urged FDR to name women to more important jobs—and he did. He asked Frances Perkins to serve as Secretary of Labor. She was the first woman to hold a Cabinet post.

Eleanor Roosevelt never seemed to rest. She was usually traveling and meeting with people. She visited poor farmers in the Great Plains. She went to the mines and met with coal miners. She visited prisons, factories, orphan homes, schools, and hospitals. In World War II, she visited thousands of American soldiers overseas. As a joke, a Washington newspaper once ran a headline that read:



"But it would make such a nice scoop if you'd only tell me, Franklin," says Mrs. Roosevelt in this cartoon. Her newspaper column, "My Day," was read from coast to coast. Here she wonders if her husband will seek a third term.

"Mrs. Roosevelt Spends Night at the White House."

After President Roosevelt died in 1945, his wife continued her career of speaking and writing. President Harry Truman named her as a U.S. delegate to the United Nations. There she chaired a group interested in human rights. She worked hard for peace and the freedom of all peoples. She died in 1962.

Throughout her travels, Eleanor Roosevelt brought concern and

understanding to the people she visited. She tried to show the importance of human dignity everywhere she went. She had some critics. She was a woman in what was then a man's world. Her pioneering role was resented by some. But even many of her critics respected her. Some of her friends called her "First Lady of the World."

## Chapter Check

1. In what ways did Eleanor Roosevelt differ from earlier First Ladies?
2. Can you name an event that influenced Eleanor Roosevelt's thinking about her role in public life? Explain your answer.
3. In 1933, unemployed veterans of World War I returned to Washington, D.C., to seek help. How did Eleanor Roosevelt treat them? How did this treatment compare with the way the Bonus Army had been treated in 1932? Which treatment do you think was more effective? Why?
4. One of the causes that Eleanor Roosevelt supported was equal rights for women. How did she work for that cause? In what ways was she successful?
5. Eleanor Roosevelt was called the "First Lady of the World." She inspired millions of people. But some critics disliked the idea of a woman having so much influence on national affairs. If Mrs. Roosevelt were still the First Lady, do you think she would be criticized the same way now? Why or why not?

## CHAPTER 38

# Hollywood's Dream Factory

**N**ot all the people who crossed the border into California in the 1930's were farm-workers. Some were people looking for work in a growing industry. The industry was film-making. It had taken root between 1910 and 1920 along the dusty streets of a California town called Hollywood. Now, in the gloom of the Depression, Hollywood and its movies seemed to shine.

Hundreds of films were being turned out each year by the big studios. These films were being sent to theaters all over the nation. In the 1930's, movies cost 25 cents for adults, and 10 cents for children. More than 100 million Americans were going to the movies every week.

The lines before ticket booths were nearly as much a sign of the Depression as breadlines. In a world filled with hardships, movies meant a holiday from care. They were a chance to escape, to forget the hard times. They were also a chance to have some fun.

**Movie palaces.** The first giant

movie theater had been built in New York City in 1915. More of these theaters soon went up in other big cities across the land. Such theaters were almost as great an attraction as the films they showed. Some were like palaces. Others looked like temples of a religious sort. They had plush seats and walls lined with imitation gold. Ceilings were two or three stories high.

In front of these palaces stood doormen in frock coats and white gloves. They opened car doors, greeted people, and showed them to ticket booths. Once inside the theaters, people were met by ushers in uniforms with brass buttons and gold braid. The ushers led the way to vacant seats with their flashlights.

These sorts of theaters once inspired a magazine cartoon. It showed a child in a picture-palace lobby, asking, "Mama, does God live here?"

Audiences sat in the big, dark theaters and looked up at a world of make-believe on the silver screen. They saw movies about people who

seemed larger than life. Rich people. Beautiful people. Charming people. Brave people. People no one in the audience had ever met. People one would hardly meet in real life.

The movies of the 1930's had child stars, monster stars, musical stars, and romantic stars. They also had "tough-guy" stars who acted in gangster movies. Most gangster movies were set during Prohibition. All were meant to show that "crime does not pay." In the early 1930's, audiences were held spellbound by these films. They loved to listen to the colorful "tough-guy" talk.

The first and most popular gangster film was *Little Caesar*. Its main character, Little Caesar, was boss of a big-city gang. In one scene from this film, the gang is talking about one of its members.

"Eddie's turned yellow. He's goin' to rat on us."

"He can't get away with that."

"I just seen Eddie goin' into the church."

"Get Eddie," says Little Caesar.

The scene cuts suddenly to the outside of a church with Eddie coming down the steps. A long, black car

swings into view. There is a burst of machine-gun fire. Eddie lies sprawling on the steps. The next scene is Eddie's funeral.

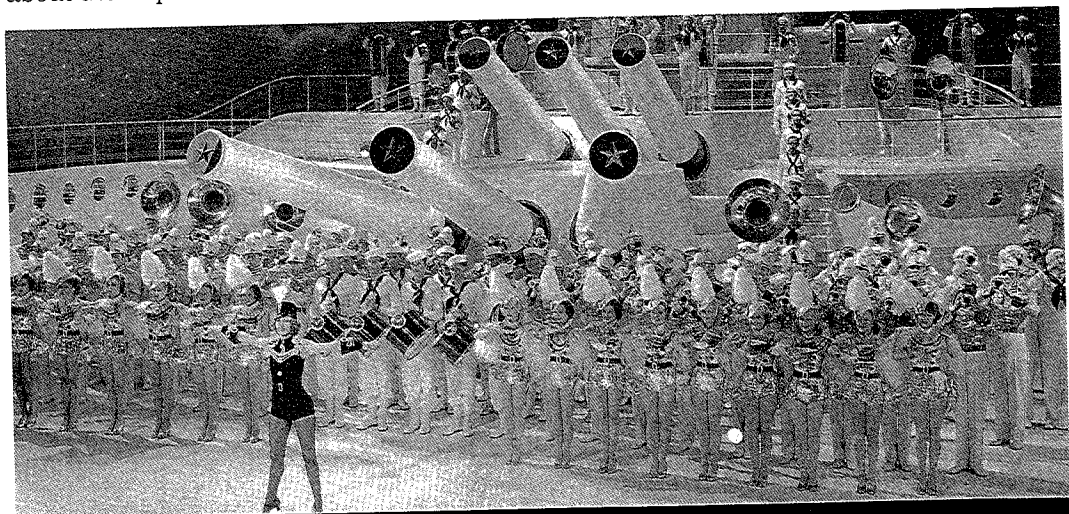
**Full-length "talkies."** *Little Caesar* was made in 1930. It was one of the first feature films to make use of a new effect—sound. Feature films made before 1927 were silent. The actors and actresses "talked" through printed titles between scenes. Then came a film called *The Jazz Singer*, the first full-length "talkie" in motion-picture history. Other film-makers rushed to turn out movies with sound.

The "talkies" added a new element to the movies. Voices and sound effects made the stories seem more real. But the talkies also caused problems in the industry. It was very expensive for movie studios to convert to sound.

Some popular silent film stars were a failure in the talkies. In silent films all an actor or actress had to do was act, not talk. In the talkies, voices became much more important. New stars rose to fame overnight.

**Star system.** Some of these stars were "tough guys" such as James

*Movie musicals created a dazzling fantasy world that helped 1930's audiences forget about the Depression. This 1936 film, Born to Dance, starred Eleanor Powell.*

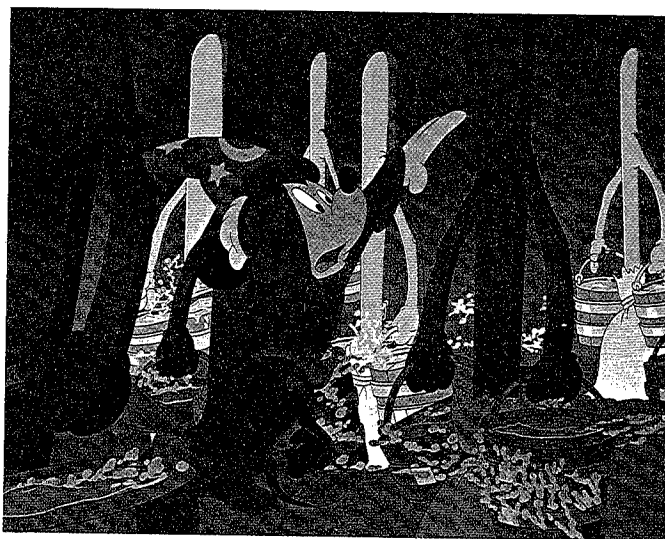


Cagney and Edward G. Robinson. Some were song-and-dance people such as Ruby Keeler and Dick Powell. A few had also been successful in silent films. The comedian Charlie Chaplin was an example. Two of the new stars weren't people at all. One was King Kong, a mechanical ape. Another was Mickey Mouse, a cartoon creation of Walt Disney.

Movie producers found out that a popular star could insure a film's success. The "star system" led to a new industry of fan magazines and gossip writers. Movie-goers were eager to know more about their favorite stars. The stars' fantastic wealth and glamorous lives seemed too good to be true.

Hollywood did open new doors to millions. The movies taught Americans about faraway places, about manners and morals, about how and how not to behave. But in the dark days of the Depression, Hollywood was mostly the nation's dream factory. Just as the Midwest grew wheat, and the South produced tobacco, so Hollywood supplied the U.S.—and the world—with dreams.

*Audiences loved Edward G. Robinson's portrayal of a gangland thug.*



*Cartoon characters were the stars of Fantasia.*

## Chapter Check

1. During the Depression, more than 100 million Americans went to the movies each week. What did they gain from watching these movies? Do you think people should have spent money on movies when the nation's economy was in such trouble? Explain your answer.
2. Who were some of the well-known movie stars?
3. What problems did the talkies create in the movie industry? Do you think it was worth the trouble and expense to produce talkies rather than silent pictures? Why or why not?
4. What was the star system? What were the effects of the star system on the studios, the stars, the audiences, and the economy?



## CHAPTER 39

# Sit-Down Strikers

**T**housands of workers were singing this song in 1937.

*When they tie the can to a union man,*

*Sit down! Sit down!*

*When the speed-up comes, just twiddle your thumbs,*

*Sit down! Sit down!*

*When the bosses won't talk, don't take a walk,*

*Sit down! Sit down!*

They were taking part in a new kind of strike—the sit-down. Usually workers walked out of a factory to go on strike. But these workers would *not* leave the factories when they went on strike. Instead they just sat down at their work benches. They stayed inside the factories until the strikes were settled. This way strike-breakers could not be brought in to take their jobs.

**Sit-down strikes** made big headlines in the 1930's. Here is the story of one of the largest and most famous sit-down strikes in the history

of the American labor movement:

Workers at the General Motors factories in Flint, Michigan, were angry. They earned only about \$1,000 a year. And there was a speed-up on the assembly line. Workers had to do their jobs very quickly. It put them under a great strain. This line takes your guts out, some workers said.

**Union strength.** Soon the workers began to join a new union, the United Automobile Workers. But officers of General Motors would not meet with the union. In January 1937 the union called a strike. This strike was something new. The workers just put away their tools and sat down where they worked.

At night they slept on the floors of new cars. Food was passed to them through the factory windows. The workers kept good order. They had their own "policemen" inside. These men carefully guarded the company's property. No drinking was allowed. Even smoking was cut down.

General Motors officers said the workers had no right to stay on com-



*In 1937, workers at a General Motors plant in Michigan pioneered a new tactic—the sit-down strike.*

pany property. The union officers said: "What more sacred right is there than the right of a man to his job? This means the right to support his family and to feed his children."

General Motors shut off the heat in its factories. It was winter, and the men were cold. But they wouldn't leave. Police tried to rush into one factory. Workers drove them back with flying soda bottles, coffee mugs, iron bolts, and door hinges. The police came back with tear-gas bombs. The workers drove them back again with fire hoses.

**Court order.** The strike dragged on for weeks. Finally a court ordered the strikers to leave the factories. They

had to get out by three o'clock on February 3. The National Guard was called in to back up the court order. But the workers said they would not leave. Then Michigan's Governor Frank Murphy ordered General Motors and the union to hold peace talks. Meanwhile the workers expected another attack. Outside the factories, thousands of union workers and relatives were ready to help fight it off. There were many women among them.

Three o'clock—zero hour—came on February 3. But there was no battle. Governor Murphy would not order the National Guard to attack. He did not want any blood spilled. Presi-



Not all labor disputes were peaceful. In 1937, steel leaders fought CIO attempts to organize workers. The result was a "Memorial Day Massacre" that took the lives of 10 workers in South Chicago.

dent Roosevelt also asked for a peaceful end to the strike. A week later the end came. General Motors agreed to bargain with the leaders of the United Automobile Workers. The company also agreed in advance to

make changes in the assembly line. This was a great victory for the auto union.

*The most common labor tactic of the 1930's was "taking a walk"—going out on strike. These picketers are from the Congress of Industrial Organizations (CIO).*



## Chapter Check

1. Why did workers at the General Motors factories join the United Automobile Workers Union and go on strike in 1937?
2. Why did these strikers call a sit-down strike in the factories instead of walking out of them?
3. Why did the General Motors workers believe they had the right to have a sit-down strike? What did they do to keep their strike fair?
4. Why do you think General Motors officers felt that the workers did not have the right to call a sit-down strike?
5. The governor of Michigan would not order the National Guard to attack the strikers. He said that he did not want any blood spilled. Can you think of any other reasons why the governor wanted a peaceful solution to the strike?

# Looking Back: The Great Depression

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## MAIN EVENTS

1. Herbert Hoover was elected President in 1928 when the country was enjoying an era of prosperity.
2. On October 29, 1929, the stock market crashed. It was the beginning of the Great Depression. By 1932, 13 million people were unemployed.
3. President Hoover believed that business would come out of the Depression by itself. He believed relief programs should be left to states and local communities.
4. Franklin Delano Roosevelt was elected President in 1932. He promised a "New Deal" to rebuild the economy. In his first 100 days, the new President put 15 major bills through Congress.
5. Frances Perkins, the Secretary of Labor, was the first woman Cabinet member in U.S. history.
6. A terrible drought turned the fertile Midwest into a Dust Bowl. More and more farmers went broke and left their homes.
7. People went to the movies to escape the gloom of the Depression.
8. In 1936, FDR was re-elected President by a landslide.
9. The Farm Security Agency (FSA) brought relief to migrant workers and farmers affected by the drought.
10. Eleanor Roosevelt worked tirelessly for human rights and social justice in America.

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## WORDS TO KNOW

Below is a list of vocabulary terms from Part 6. Decide which term best completes the sentences that follow. Number your paper from 1 to 10. Write the correct term next to each number.

New Deal

collective bargaining

migrant

stock market

speculation

Bonus Army

Brain Trust

Wagner Act

Social Security

sit-down strikes

1. FDR brought college professors and young lawyers into the government to help plan the New Deal. These people were sometimes called the \_\_\_\_\_.
2. The \_\_\_\_\_ extended labor's right to form unions.
3. \_\_\_\_\_ gives workers an income when they retire. It also pays unemployed workers while they look for jobs.
4. The New Deal gave unions the right to \_\_\_\_\_. This means that unions can act for employees as a group.
5. During \_\_\_\_\_, the workers stayed in the factories but refused to work.
6. In his Presidential campaign, Franklin Delano Roosevelt promised a \_\_\_\_\_ to rescue the American economy from the Depression.
7. During the Depression, many Midwest farmers became \_\_\_\_\_ workers, moving from place to place picking crops.
8. Shares of a business are bought and sold in the \_\_\_\_\_.
9. Taking financial risks in the hope of making a large profit is called \_\_\_\_\_.
10. In 1932, the \_\_\_\_\_ marched on Washington, D.C. These World War I veterans wanted money that had been promised them for 1945.

## THINKING AND WRITING

### A. Identifying the Cause

Below are eight statements taken from the text of Part 6. Your job is to identify the *cause* of each situation. For each statement, give some background information to explain *how* or *why* this situation occurred. Use the text to find this information.

1. Now, in the gloom of the Depression, Hollywood . . . seemed to shine . . . . More than 100 million Americans were going to the movies every week. (Chapter 38)
2. They [the Okies] headed west in strange, sad lines of old, battered cars and trucks, mattresses on top, pots and pans clanging on the sides, suitcases strapped to the back. (Chapter 33)
3. During World War I, . . . farmers planted on lands that usually didn't get much rain. (Chapter 33)
4. By 1932 almost 13 million workers—one out of every four—were jobless. (Chapter 35)
5. In some areas they [farmers] destroyed crops and killed livestock rather than sell them at a loss. (Chapter 35)
6. Paper money called *scrip* was issued . . . . Some people even turned to the barter system. (Chapter 36)
7. This way strikebreakers could not be brought in to take their [the workers] jobs. (Chapter 39)
8. General Motors agreed to bargain with the leaders of the United Automobile Workers. (Chapter 39)

### B. *Introducing the First Lady*

Imagine that you have organized a rally for equal rights for all Americans. You have invited Eleanor Roosevelt to speak at the rally, and she has accepted.

Reread Chapter 37. Make a list of the things that you admire about Eleanor Roosevelt. Include points about her character and things that she has done. Then, write a speech that you can use to introduce Mrs. Roosevelt at the rally. Try to include all the points on your list.

### C. *Writing for Different Audiences*

In Chapter 39, you read about a fa-

mous sit-down strike. Sit-down strikes caused quite a stir when they were first held in the 1930's. Workers and employers had very different views about the right to strike and the right to stop production.

In this exercise, you will write two newspaper articles about the United Automobile Workers' sit-down strike of 1937. First, write an article for the union's newspaper. This article will be read by strikers and by members of other unions. Second, write an article for a newspaper that is read by factory-owners and other business people.

## SHARPENING YOUR SKILLS

During the Great Depression, millions of workers lost their jobs. This graph shows the percentage of the U.S. labor force that was out of work. Study the graph carefully. Then answer the questions.

1. About what percent of the total U.S. labor force was out of work in 1930?
2. About what percent of this force was out of work in 1932?
3. About what percent of the U.S. labor force was out of work in 1937?
4. To judge from this chart, what was the worst year of the Depression?
5. After reading this chart, do you think the New Deal was successful in getting people back to work? Give reasons for your answer.

