HOOVERVILLES



0. HOOVERVILLES - Story Preface

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As Americans lost their jobs, during the Great Depression, they could not make the mortgage payments on their homes. When they lost their homes, families were forced to live in shacks in shanty towns known as Hoovervilles. This image depicts such a home in Ohio. Click on the image for a full-page view. Online via the Library of Congress.

The free-wheeling, money-earning, flagrant-spending decade known as "The Roaring Twenties" ended with a stock market crash. (The link depicts the floor of the stock exchange just after the crash.)

Americans who had plenty suddenly had little, or nothing. <u>Out of work</u>, out of food, out of their <u>homes</u>, people were scared of the future.

Herbert Hoover, while <u>wrapping up</u> his presidency and searching for ways to explain the country's continuing economic <u>woes</u>, had a point when <u>he wrote</u>:

The courage and enterprise of the people still exist and only await release from fears and apprehension.

But those "fears and apprehension" continued. Franklin Roosevelt, <u>taking over</u> as President in 1933, struck a nerve when he said in his first inaugural address:

The only thing we have to fear is - fear itself.

For anyone born after World War II, it is inconceivable that such a time ever existed. The ongoing <u>personal tragedy</u>, fear and utter <u>despair</u>, which crippled the country, are nearly unimaginable today. But for those who experienced the reality of constant unemployment, insufficient food, <u>homelessness</u> and lost family wealth, the memories are still vivid and painful.

Photographs from the National Archives, which document the struggle, open a window - at least to some extent - into those difficult years.

<u>Uprooted</u>, out-of-work families packed up everything they owned and moved to California. <u>Travel</u> wasn't easy since Interstates did not yet connect the country. <u>Destitute mothers</u> had few, if any, options to provide for their children.

<u>Fathers</u> left their families "at home" while they went to the industrial north to find work. Their "bachelor cabins" were nothing more than shanty towns. But there was also "<u>No Work</u>" for people in the north. The once-bustling docks of New York City were mostly quiet.

By 1932, the <u>worst year</u> of the depression (follow the link to see the dramatic downturn in U.S. rates of production), nearly 25% of the American work force was <u>unemployed</u>. Without means of transportation, people had to <u>walk miles</u> just to see their families.

Living in <u>squatters' camps</u> (called "<u>Hoovervilles</u>"), <u>dislocated families</u> tried to stay together. Even Central Park, in New York City, was <u>turned into</u> a Hooverville.

Before the days of the FDR along the East River, and the Westside Parkway along the Hudson, an artist (like Russian emigre Raphael Soyer) could draw <u>images</u>, along the water's edge, of human hopelessness. Employment agencies in New York City were inundated with applications from well-dressed, <u>out-of-work</u> people.

The "land of plenty" had become the land of hard times.

See Alignments to State and Common Core standards for this story online at:

http://www.awesomestories.com/asset/AcademicAlignment/HOOVERVILLES-Cinderella-Man

See Learning Tasks for this story online at:

http://www.awesomestories.com/asset/AcademicActivities/HOOVERVILLES-Cinderella-Man

Media Stream





Hooverville Home During the Great Depression

Ben Shahn, photographer, took this photo during the summer of 1938. It likely depicts a Hooverville home in Ohio and is part of the Farm Security Administration/Office of War Collection at the Library of Congress. Public Domain.

View this asset at:

http://www.awesomestories.com/asset/view/Hooverville-Home-During-the-Great-Depression



Stock Market Crash

Image online, courtesy the pbs.org website.

View this asset at: http://www.awesomestories.com/asset/view/Stock-Market-Crash



Out of Work During Great Depression

National Archives, image 27/7/27-0621a.

View this asset at:

http://www.awesomestories.com/asset/view/Out-of-Work-During-Great-Depression



Shelter Used During Depression

Image online, courtesy the U.S. National Archives. Photo 27/7/27-0675a. View this asset at:

http://www.awesomestories.com/asset/view/Shelter-Used-During-Depression



Life in Despair

Image online, courtesy the U.S. National Archives. Photo /27/7/27-0674a. View this asset at: http://www.awesomestories.com/asset/view/Life-in-Despair



Homelessness

Image online, courtesy the U.S. National Archive. Photo 27/7/27-0622a. View this asset at: http://www.awesomestories.com/asset/view/Homelessness



Uprooted Families

Image online, courtesy the U.S. National Archives. Photo 27/7/27-0682a. View this asset at: http://www.awesomestories.com/asset/view/Uprooted-Families0



Travel in the Depression Era

Image online, courtesy the U.S. National Archives. Photo 27/7/27-0678a. PD

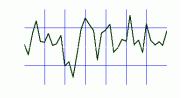
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Men of the Depression

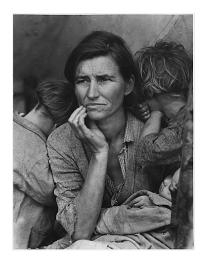
Image online, courtesy the U.S. National Archives. Photo 27/7/27-0695a. View this asset at: http://www.awesomestories.com/asset/view/Men-of-the-Depression



1932 The Depression's Worst Year

Image online, courtesy the U.S. National Archives and Records Administration. View this asset at:

 $\underline{\text{http://www.awesomestories.com/asset/view/1932-The-Depression-s-Worst-Year}$



Destitute Mothers

Image online, courtesy the U.S. National Archives. Photo 27/8/27-0701a

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Dislocated Families

Image online, courtesy the U.S. National Archives and Records Administration. View this asset at: http://www.awesomestories.com/asset/view/Dislocated-Families



Hooverville in Central Park

Image online, courtesy Wikimedia Commons.

View this asset at: http://www.awesomestories.com/asset/view/Hooverville-in-Central-Park



Illustration of Life During the Depression

Image online, courtesy the United States National Archives.

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Looking For Work

Image online, courtesy the U.S. National Archives. Photo 27/7/27-0624a.

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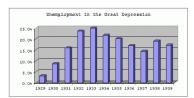
No Work Illustration

Image online, courtesy the U.S. Library of Congress, Washington, D.C. View this asset at: http://www.awesomestories.com/asset/view/No-Work-Illustration



Squatter's Camps

Image online, courtesy the U.S. National Archives. Photo 27/9/27-0816a. View this asset at: http://www.awesomestories.com/asset/view/Squatter-s-Camps



<u>Unemployment During the Depression</u>

Image online, courtesy Wikimedia Commons.

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Walk Miles

Image online, courtesy the U.S. National Archives. Photo 27/8/27-0767a. View this asset at: http://www.awesomestories.com/asset/view/Walk-Miles