

US History

The Great Depression & The New Deal

Learning Target:

The students will be to compare and contrast the hardships that urban and rural Americans faced during the depression

4. Life During The Great Depression

Life in the City –

- Life in American cities very difficult during the depression
- Not uncommon to see men fight over garbage scraps for food

Urban Problems –

1. Hunger –

- Many could not find food (1 out of 5 children malnourished in 1932)
- Many waited in breadlines for soup and pieces of bread
- Poor nutrition caused many American to suffer long-term health problems, especially with their teeth and eyes

2. Homelessness –

- Facing unemployment many could not pay rent or mortgages
- Many urban residents were evicted from their homes
- Homeless often gathered in shantytowns nicknamed “Hooverilles” to mock an unresponsive president

Aid to the Poor –

- During the early 1930s the federal government did little to assist the urban poor
- Charitable organizations such as the Salvation Army and Red Cross provided most of the assistance to the poor; neighbors often helped each other
- Ethnic groups like Mexican, Chinese, and African Americans helped each other

Life on the Farm –

Price Reduction –

- Urban residents being unable to purchase farm food caused demand to decrease
- Decreased demand led to price drops on farm products
- Farmers found themselves with more crops than they could sell
- Farmers forced to let crops rot in the field and kill livestock

Farm Foreclosures –

- As prices fell many farmers could not pay the mortgage on their farm
- Banks held foreclosure sales
- Communities often banded together and bought everything cheap and gave it back to the original owners

Tenant Farmers –

- Tenant farmers in the south and southwest hit very hard
- Many forced off their land when they couldn't pay the rent