# Americans Suffer



#### As a Young Historian, I will be able to...

- Examine the spread of unemployment in America's cities.
- Analyze the effects of the Great Depression on farmers.
- Analyze the impact of human and geographical factors that created the Dust Bowl.
- Describe how the Great Depression affected family life and the lives of African Americans and Mexican Americans.

# **Economic Hardship Shakes the Cities**

While Americans didn't understand the economic problems of the era, they did see the results

The unemployment rate went from 3.7% between 1921-1929...

...to 25% in 1933!!

Some Americans were able to keep jobs, but at drastic pay cuts or hours shortened

People became desperate & turned to bread lines

#### **Poverty**

People soon moved from being "unemployed" to "unemployable" facing hunger & homelessness

People began to sell household belongings just to pay rent or put food on the table

Many homeless people settled in little communes called Hoovervilles- little makeshift shantytowns of tents & shacks on public land

People tried to help one another staging protests to stop evictions or sharing supplies

## **Rural Poverty**

Farmers, who were suffering before the Great Depression, struggle to keep their farms & lives

Crop prices fell, & commodity price levels drop.

For example a bushel of wheat in 1932 could sell for \$2.16....

...after the Depression started it sold for 32 cents

### **Farming Problems**

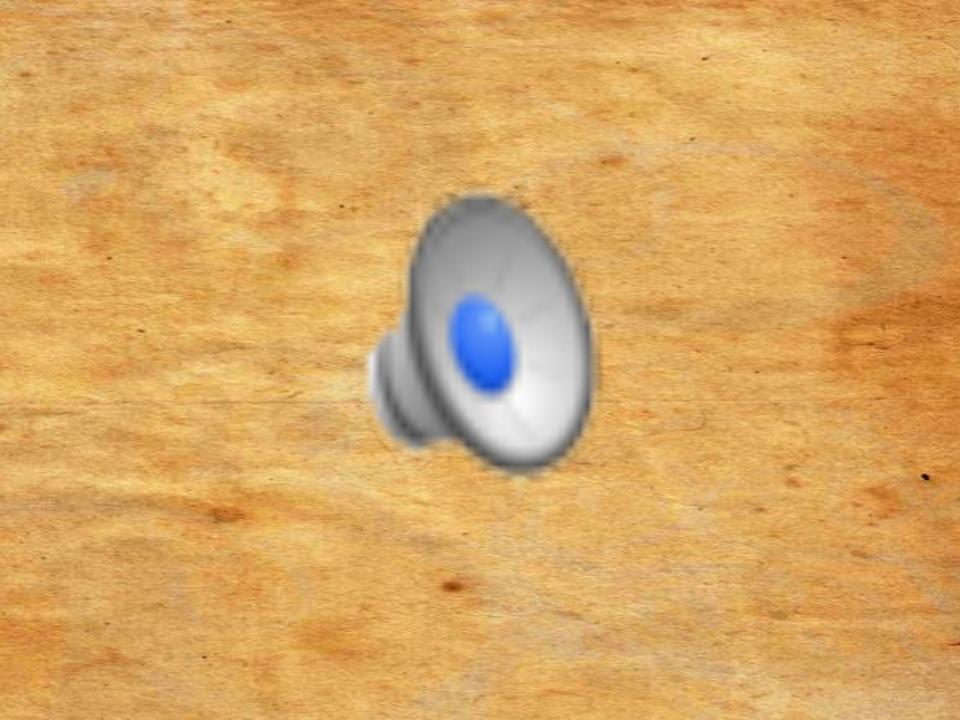
Homes, land, and equipment were lost. Some became tenant farmers...

...Farmers working for bigger landowners rather than for themselves

Through the mid 1930s, problems were amplified due to a drought in the Midwest

Farming methods such as over plowing, overgrazing, overgrowing, & lack of irrigation caused topsoil damage

# The Dust Bowl Gigantic wind storms would collect the topsoil & blow giant dust storms across the plains Time period became known as "The Dirty Thirties" Dust storms would blind humans & animals & choke & kill all living things There was more dirt moved during this time than the construction of the Panama Canal



### **Moving For Work**

People who lost their farms packed up all they owned & traveled the nation in search of work

Okies- Named given to refugees of the Dust Bowl because some came from Oklahoma

Almost 2.5 million people moved out of the Midwest Region in search for jobs

Those who stayed & survived the Depression were able to build LARGE commercial farms

#### **Hard Times for Americans**

The Great Depression affected the economy & the minds of all Americans

Families struggle with basic needs & stress tested family units

Minority groups would get kicked out of jobs & faced racism due to hard times

Repatriation- Government encouraging people to immigrate back to countries of origin