

custom American wage earners from
 rds of living than they had enjoyed from
 between 1890 and 1930 when living
 moralized like they were between 1931
 6. It will be pointed out that standards
 f families, were higher than were stand-
 n 1893 and 1896. That is true. The na-
 between 1890 and 1930, and not all of
 can standard of living were eliminated,
 he depression of the 'thirties. But the
 ing standards were serious.

6 • SELLING APPLES AND SHINING SHOES

*The next five readings indicate the changed values of the
 American people and the "new look" the early depression put
 upon the face of America. Selection 6 describes some of the new
 ways the unemployed earned a living—or tried to. From The
 New York Times, June 5, 1932.*

DARWIN'S THEORY THAT MAN can adapt himself to almost any new en-
 vironment is being illustrated, in this day of economic change, by thou-
 sands of New Yorkers who have discovered new ways to live and new
 ways to earn a living since their formerly placid lives were thrown into
 chaos by unemployment or kindred exigencies. Occupations and duties
 which once were scorned have suddenly attained unprecedented popularity.
 Two years ago citizens shied at jury duty. John Doe and Richard Roe,
 summoned to serve on a jury, thought of all sorts of excuses. . . . They
 called upon their ward leaders and their lawyers for aid in getting exemp-
 tion and when their efforts were rewarded they sighed with relief. But now
 things are different.

The Hall of Jurors in the Criminal Courts Building is jammed and
 packed on court days. Absences of talesmen are infrequent. Why? Jurors
 get \$4 for every day they serve. . . .

Once the average New Yorker got his shine in an established bootblack
 "parlor" paying 10 cents, with a nickel tip. But now, in the Times Square
 and Grand Central zones, the sidewalks are lined with neophyte "shine
 boys," drawn from almost all walks of life. They charge a nickel, and
 although a nickel tip is welcomed it is not expected.

In one block, on West Forty-third Street, a recent count showed nine-
 teen shoe-shiners. They ranged in age from a 16-year-old, who should
 have been in school, to a man of more than 70, who said he had been
 employed in a fruit store until six months ago. Some sit quietly on their
 little wooden boxes and wait patiently for the infrequent customers. Others
 show true initiative and ballyhoo their trade, pointing accusingly at every
 pair of unshined shoes that passes. . . .

Shining shoes, said one, is more profitable than selling apples—and he's
 tried them both.

"You see, when you get a shine kit it's a permanent investment," he
 said, "and it doesn't cost as much as a box of apples anyway. . . ."

According to the Police Department, there are approximately 7,000 of
 these "shine boys" making a living on New York streets at present. Three
 years ago they were so rare as to be almost non-existent, and were almost
 entirely boys under 17.

To the streets, too, has turned an army of new salesmen, peddling
 everything from large rubber balls to cheap neckties. Within the past two
 years the number of these hawkers has doubled. . . . Fourteenth Street
 is still the Mecca of this type of salesmen; thirty-eight were recently
 counted between Sixth Avenue and Union Square and at one point there
 was a cluster of five.

Unemployment has brought back the newsboy in increasing numbers.
 He avoids the busy corners, where news stands are frequent, and hawks
 his papers in the side streets with surprising success. His best client is the
 man who is "too tired to walk down to the corner for a paper."

Selling Sunday papers has become a science. Youngsters have found
 that it is extremely profitable to invade apartment houses between 11 and
 12 o'clock Sunday morning, knock on each apartment door, and offer the
 Sunday editions. Their profits are usually between \$1.50 and \$2.

The condition of business, with the resulting necessity of watching the
 market-basket expenditures, has proved a boon for the small New Jersey
 truck farmer. Between 5 and 6 o'clock in the morning the ferries are
 clogged with horses and carts and vegetables. And while he is not yet
 shouting his wares on Park Avenue, he has invaded many a neighborhood
 in which a vegetable hawker had not been seen in years. His goods may
 or may not be cheaper than the corner grocer's, but there is some psychol-
 ogy about buying vegetables from a cart that is dear to the thrifty house-
 wife. The number of vegetable hawkers has increased by 40 per cent
 within the last two years, according to the estimate of the City Licensing
 Bureau. . . .

7 • AMERICANS SEEK RUSSIAN JOBS

From Business Week, October 7, 1931, pp. 32-33.

AMTORG GETS 100,000 BIDS FOR RUSSIA'S 6,000 SKILLED JOBS

NEW YORKERS DOMINATE the flow of Americans who have decided, at least for the time being, to cast their lot with the Russians. Pennsylvania, New Jersey, and Illinois show heavy quotas of recruits under the new call for "6,000 skilled workers," and Michigan, Ohio, California, and Massachusetts are well represented.

More than 100,000 applications have been received at the Amtorg's New York office for the 6,000 jobs. One morning's grist of applications last week totaled 280. All but 10 states were represented. Both Alaska and Panama furnished an applicant, and 18 Canadians wanted to "try their luck in Russia."

Industrial states naturally supply the largest number of applicants, but others are represented. Iowa, Texas, and Idaho each offered some kind of skilled worker.

Because of the general knowledge that Russia is "industrializing," applicants usually are skilled workers at machine construction, on the railroads, in steel mills, automobile factories, or the building industries. A glance at the qualifications of some of the 280 applicants on this "typical" morning showed that experts in all lines were after work, even if it meant going to Russia and accepting pay in roubles. There were 2 barbers, 1 funeral director, 2 plumbers, 5 painters, 2 cooks, 36 "clerical" workers, 1 service station operator, 9 carpenters, 1 aviator, 58 engineers, 14 electricians, 5 salesmen, 2 printers, 2 chemists, 1 shoemaker, 1 librarian, 2 teachers, 1 cleaner & dyer, 11 automobile mechanics, 1 dentist.

About 85% of the applicants are citizens of the United States, though only 40% are native born. The 60% foreign born are largely from Eastern Europe. A few negroes have applied but the number is small because the majority are unskilled laborers.

Women form only a small percentage of the applicants, though many wives have decided to accompany their husbands on the new venture. The majority of workers who apply are married and have children.

Three principal reasons are advanced for wanting the position: (1) Unemployment; (2) disgust with conditions here; (3) interest in the Soviet experiment. Foreign-born workers practically all state that they intend to remain in the U.S.S.R. Of the engineers, only 10% to 20% plan to stay.

8 • JAILS ARE BETTER THAN SUBWAYS

From The New York Times, October 7, 1932.

FIFTY-FOUR MEN WERE ARRESTED yesterday morning for sleeping or idling in the arcade connecting with the subway through 45 West Forty-second Street, but most of them considered their unexpected meeting with a raiding party of ten policemen as a stroke of luck because it brought them free meals yesterday and shelter last night from the sudden change in the weather.

All the prisoners, among whom was one who said that he had waiting for him in England an inheritance of £6,000, or about \$20,000 at the present rate of exchange, sat patiently in the West Side Court yesterday afternoon, waiting for the official fingerprint men to determine whether they were professional vagrants or unemployed men who were down on their luck.

The work of fingerprinting and making necessary comparisons with police records required so much time that Magistrate Renaud postponed the men's trials on charges of disorderly conduct until this afternoon. This insured them sleeping quarters for the night and more free meals today.

The prisoner who told of his fortune in England said he was Adolph Richard Hugo, 42 years old, an electrical overseer, who came to the country in 1923. He said that for four years he has been trying to get money enough to go to England to claim an inheritance that was provided by an uncle, John Pike, manager of a diamond mine in South Africa. He produced a letter which ostensibly came from an English barrister, Henry Vincombe of Mutley, Devon, notifying him of the legacy. Hugo said his wife and two daughters are in needy circumstances in England and the British Consul here has been unable to help him return to them because he has taken out first citizenship papers.

9 • THE PRESIDENT'S MONUMENTS

From The New York Times, September 22, 1932.

ACTING CAPTAIN GEORGE BURNELL of the Arsenal station and a squad of patrolmen staged a polite raid last night on the residents of a new suburban development. The policemen, with apologies and good feelings on both sides, arrested for vagrancy twenty-five inhabitants of Hoover Valley, the shantytown that sprang up in the bed of the old lower reservoir of Central Park near the Obelisk.

11 • FROM OWNER-OPERATOR TO RENTER

This article by Bernhard Ostrolenk, "The Farmer's Plight: A Far-Reaching Crisis," from The New York Times, Sept. 25, 1932, describes in easily understood language the economic handicaps under which the farm owner worked and how he frequently became a renter on the land he had once owned. Reprinted by permission of the publishers.

THE MOST SUPERFICIAL STUDY of the statistics reveals that while industry reached a new peak of prosperity between 1920 and 1929, the farmer met with one financial setback after another; that he was becoming poorer and poorer; that the disaster of 1920 was followed by an even greater financial catastrophe in 1930. That story can be told simply and graphically by considering the case of Ole Swanson—a case that is not unlike that of hundreds of thousands of other farmers.

By 1912, Ole, then 35 years old and a renter, had accumulated some \$2,000 in cash, two teams of horses, a reasonable supply of implements, a few brood sows and some cattle. He decided to buy his deceased father's farm of 160 acres in Southern Minnesota for \$20,000. He paid \$2,000 in cash, gave an \$8,000 second mortgage to the estate and a \$10,000 first mortgage to an insurance company.

Between 1912 and 1920, because of exceptional thrift and competence, Ole was able to pay off the entire second mortgage of \$8,000, besides improving his barns, adding more cattle to his herd, increasing his equipment, building a porch to his home and making other improvements, as well as buying furniture, rugs and books, and giving his children an adequate education.

But between 1920 and 1928 Ole found that his expenses, because of the industrial prosperity, were increasing. He had to pay more and more for labor and for goods. On the other hand, because of the drop in agricultural prices, his income was constantly falling. So, in those years, he was unable to amortize his remaining \$10,000 mortgage, and, moreover, found that his standard of living was rapidly declining. By 1925 his net income for his labor had fallen to less than \$400 annually. His 18-year-old daughter, who had become employed in town as a typist, with no experience whatever and without invested capital, was earning \$15 a week, or nearly \$800 a year, almost twice what Ole was earning for his labor during that period.

II

The Farmer

Farmer in the Depression

THE ECONOMIC DRY ROT of the 1930's afflicted the countryside as well as the cities. Farm owner-operators, renters, and sharecroppers all suffered from the miserably low prices they received for their products, and it made little difference whether one were an Alabama cotton grower, an Iowa corn and hog farmer, a Wisconsin dairy producer, or a California citrus rancher. In the worst years of the Great Depression all of them considered themselves fortunate if they could sell their product for enough to meet their costs of production.

It is difficult to say whether the unemployed urban worker or the farmer suffered the more from the depression. Both were poverty stricken, although the farmer continued to work as hard and as long as he ever did. The farmer typically lost much or all of his capital, which the urban worker usually had never had. The farmer could usually raise some food for his own family's needs and the city man could not, but the relief facilities of urban governments were generally superior to those in rural areas. The farmer's depression lasted longer, since he had not shared in the prosperity of the 1920's. During the lean years families in both groups thought it could improve itself by moving into the other; some down-and-out farmers abandoned the country in a search for industrial jobs, and many unemployed city dwellers went back to the land in an attempt to eke out a living. Certainly, to make a judgment about which group was the harder hit involves a bitter arithmetic.

The following selections help toward an understanding of the farmer's economic difficulties.

In 1929 Ole was unable to meet a total interest of \$600 and taxes of \$300 and was compelled to give the insurance company, holding his mortgage, a chattel mortgage for the interest debt. In 1930 he was compelled to give an even larger chattel mortgage.

In 1931 his gross income was insufficient to meet either taxes or interest, and the insurance company, now having failed to get interest for three years, foreclosed the mortgage in the Spring of 1932. Ole, at the age of 55, was again a renter on his father's farm—the farm upon which he had been born and on which he had labored for a quarter of a century; having lost his entire equity of \$10,000, he was left carrying a burdensome chattel mortgage.

Ole's career exemplifies the trend of American agriculture today. Not all the farmers have been foreclosed, but all are carrying heavy burdens. A mortgage of \$10,000 on a 160-acre farm means that the farmer must pay \$3.60 interest per acre. His taxes amount to about \$1.90 per acre, making a total funded debt of \$5.50 per acre. But with oats selling at 10 cents a bushel, the forty bushels he may be able to raise per acre, if lucky, will give him less gross return than he needs for those purposes alone. Certainly there is nothing left for out-of-pocket expenses, such as binder twine and tool repair, labor, seed and interest on the equity which he himself has in the farm. . . .

Ole, now a renter, has estimated that his gross income at present price levels will be about \$800 for 1932. Instead of paying interest and taxes of \$900, as he was expected to do last year before his foreclosure, he will now pay as rent to the insurance company that held his mortgage only one-third of his sales, or about \$265.

Yet the average farmer is reluctant to surrender his status of independent farm owner even under such conditions. Though he becomes progressively poorer, he clings to the land as long as he can.

And just as he is unwilling to relinquish his farm, so the mortgage holders become unwilling owners. They bought the mortgages to receive interest, not to go into farming directly or indirectly. In fact, the transfer from mortgage holders to farm owners is involving them in heavy losses. The insurance company that will collect \$265 from Ole Swanson will have to pay the taxes of \$300 on the farm it has taken over from him, and, of course, will receive nothing for its \$10,000 mortgage investment. . . .

[Yet] Farmers are rapidly changing now from owner-operators to renters. . . . In our greatest agricultural regions the independent owner-operator had always been represented as the typical farmer. It is in these regions—in Minnesota, the Dakotas, Iowa, Nebraska—the regions known throughout the world as having the most fertile soil and the most progressive methods—that farm tenancy has increased most sharply in recent years. These regions of corn and grain and alfalfa, of hogs and beef and cheese and butter, are joining the cotton regions of the South in being farmed by renters and owned by absentee landlords. . . .

12 • SHIRT SLEEVES TO SHIRT SLEEVES IN THE CORN BELT

This article by a conservative lawyer from Mason City, Iowa, describes the impact of the Great Depression upon a rich agricultural community and the decline of farm fortunes. Remley J. Glass, "Gentlemen, the Corn Belt!" Harper's, CLXVII (July, 1933), pp. 200-206. Reprinted by permission.

MY HOME COUNTY may well be considered a fair example of Iowa and the Corn Belt. It is one of the ninety-nine counties of Iowa and similar to those throughout the Middle West. Its condition and problems are typical of the entire Corn Belt. Organized before the Civil War, its early citizenry was purely American pioneer stock which successfully withstood the attacks of Indians and the vicissitudes of border existence. To this nucleus have been added a considerable group of Irish immigrants who are centered in two or three southern townships, and a larger proportion of Scandinavians who constitute the majority in five or six northern townships. The manufacturing industries in our county seat have brought groups of laborers from the south of Europe, while Mexico likewise has furnished its full quota. Two railroads first came through this county in the late sixties, and other lines were built to tap its agricultural and manufacturing resources as late as the beginning of the present century.

The wheat and corn of pioneer farming gave place in part to hogs, beef cattle, and dairy herds, and the development of sugar beets added to its prosperity. The county seat, with the establishment of large manufacturing industries, assumed an almost metropolitan air with comfortable homes and a contented people. Railroads radiating from the town made it the trading and jobbing center of a considerable area. A conservative prosperity was ours.

In the early days of the century Iowa, along with the rest of the Middle West, enjoyed a gradual, conservative increase in the values of farm products and farm real estate. Men who had homesteaded their farms from the government, paying \$2.50 or \$3.00 per acre, saw the price of land gradually increase to around \$100 per acre, and thereby built up comfortable fortunes. Early investors at \$7 to \$15 per acre profited by that same increase. Even though sales of farm lands were rare in those days, the new values seemed definitely established.

This increase in values, though Henry George would have condemned it as "unearned increment," did not come like the Biblical manna in the

interesting spectacle of farmers losing their farms by foreclosure and mortgage companies losing their recouped holdings by tax sales.

The farmers are being pauperized by the poverty of industrial populations and the industrial populations are being pauperized by the poverty of the farmers. Neither has the money to buy the product of the other, hence we have overproduction and underconsumption at the same time and in the same country.

14 • SOUTHERN SHARECROPPERS: THE AGRICULTURAL DEPTHS

Sharecroppers in the cotton belt, never a prosperous group, suffered from economic want during the 1930's as perhaps did no other group in America. On January 5, 1932, Congressman George Huddleston of Alabama told the so-called LaFollette-Costigan committee of the Senate of some of the conditions in his district. Federal Aid for Unemployment Relief, Hearings before a Subcommittee of the Committee on Manufactures, United States Senate, 72nd Cong., 1 sess., on S. 174 and S. 262 (Washington: Government Printing Office, 1932), pp. 244-245.

MR. HUDDLESTON. We have a great many tenant farmers there. We have a great many negro farmers, and practically all of them are tenants. Their ability to survive, to eat, to have a shelter, depends upon the ability of the landlord to supply them with the necessaries of life. They have a system under which they make a contract with the landlord to cultivate his land for the next year and in the meantime he feeds them through the winter, and at the end of the year they gather their crops and pay for their supplies and rent, if they are able to do so. Conditions in agriculture have been such for several years that the landlords have been gradually impoverished and their farms are mortgaged to the farm-loan system and to the mortgage companies in a multitude of instances.

In a very large percentage [of cases] the landlord is now unable to finance these tenants for another year. He is unable to get the supplies. He has no security and no money with which to feed and clothe his tenants until they can make another crop. They came to the end of the season—their chief crop is cotton which they sold at from 5 to 6 cents, and very few of them were able to pay for the supplies that it required for them to make the crop. They owe the landlord. Many landlords have said to them, generously, "Keep what you have made and go your way. I can not feed you another year. You will have to do the best you can, but keep whatever

you have made." A great many of these landlords, no matter how well intentioned, are incapable of financing these tenants another year. The landlord is in almost as bad shape as the tenant. He owed for the supplies. He had to take what he received at the end of the season and turn it over to the merchant, or to the bank to pay them what he owed. He has been unable to pay in full, so that he can not advance them another year. Many of these people, especially the negro tenants, are now in the middle of a winter, practically without food and without clothes, and without anything else, and how are they going to live? Many of these local counties have no charitable organizations. They are poor people and impoverished. They have no county funds. There is no place to turn, nobody that has any money that they can turn to and ask for help.

Many white people are in the same kind of a situation. They beg around among their neighbors. The neighbors are poor and they have no means of helping them. They stray here and there.

Any thought that there has been no starvation, that no man has starved, and no man will starve, is the rankest nonsense. Men are actually starving by the thousands to-day, not merely in the general sections that I refer to, but throughout this country as a whole, and in my own district. I do not mean to say that they are sitting down and not getting a bite of food until they actually die, but they are living such a scrambling, precarious existence, with suffering from lack of clothing, fuel, and nourishment, until they are subject to be swept away at any time, and many are now being swept away.

The situation has possibilities of epidemics of various kinds. Its consequences will be felt many years. The children are being stunted by lack of food. Old people are having their lives cut short. The physical effects of the privations that they are forced to endure will not pass away within 50 years and when the social and civic effects will pass away, only God knows. That is something that no man can estimate.

15 • FARMERS ON RELIEF

This selection indicates the dimensions of the problem of rural poverty in 1935, even after two years of the New Deal's agricultural policies. Berta Asch and A. R. Magnus, Farmers on Relief and Rehabilitation [WPA Research Monograph VIII] (Washington: Government Printing Office, 1937), pp. 6-12.

THE 593,612 FARM OPERATORS receiving relief grants or rehabilitation advances in June 1935 constituted 9 percent of all farmers in the United States as reported by the 1935 Census of Agriculture. This proportion

In 1932, the committee in their report stated that \$24,000,000. This goal for 1933 is *Relief and Children* at the burden on public relief funds.

18 • LOCAL RELIEF: THE GENERAL SITUATION

The following selection, the testimony of a professional social worker to the LaFollette-Costigan committee in January 1933, describes the inadequacy of local relief in 44 American cities. Ibid., pp. 64-67.

THE CHAIRMAN. Mr. Lurie, please state your full name, address, and present position.

MR. LURIE. My name is H. L. Lurie, and I am director of the Bureau of Jewish Social Research in New York City.

I have been asked by a committee of the American Association of Social Workers to present a report which summarizes material recently obtained from social workers throughout the country describing present conditions of relief and perhaps something about the future uncertainties in the present relief situation.

This report summarizes information which has been received in the last week from this group of consultants and applies to 44 cities and adjacent areas in 25 States and the District of Columbia. Since few professional social workers serve the smaller communities and the industrial and mining areas not incorporated in large cities, we were able to obtain this information, therefore, primarily from populous communities which possess relatively well organized programs of relief and social service.

This report attempts to present a summary of present conditions with respect to unemployment relief in large industrial centers and the areas contiguous to large cities. The experience with unemployment relief has brought out strikingly the lack of organization for welfare in many parts of the country. There exists a great variation in organization, resources, policies, and standards of relief. Much of the recent organization is of an emergency and haphazard character and reflects the lack of a national program and the absence of minimum standards of administration.

Information which would bear upon conditions in entire States has not been available except in a few instances due to the fact that few States possess adequate organization for the gathering of information concerning general conditions of unemployment and relief within their boundaries.

It is safe to assume, perhaps, that in these areas which are not covered by the larger cities, conditions of need are at least equally serious. It is generally known that organized efforts for relief are less well established and effective in the smaller communities than in the area covered in this report. Even in the larger cities considered in this report there is a great diversity of standards, policies, and adequacy of resources.

It is believed that the depression has reversed the trend of several decades and has resulted in a shift of population from the larger urban centers to the areas of rural population. Prof. P. K. Whelpton, of the Scripps Foundation, Miami University, Ohio, has estimated that during 1932 urban centers have lost and rural areas have gained approximately 400,000 in population. He reports the use of farm houses formerly abandoned for human habitation, the erection of makeshift dwellings and doubling up of families in rural homes due to this return of an industrial population to the country. This additional population is creating a serious problem to the resources of relief and human welfare to the already overburdened rural sections. This drift to the more sparsely settled regions has to some extent been brought about by the inadequacy of relief available in the larger centers of population. Although the outlook for obtaining food and shelter may be thought to be somewhat better in the rural sections, this drift to the farms is intensifying the problem of maintaining essential standards of living for the rural population.

In the cities and counties specifically covered in this report, there has been a tremendous increase in the number of families and individuals receiving relief during the past year. This increase in number of families aided has been greater than the increase in the amount of relief expended, indicating a continuation of the conditions reported to this committee in May, 1932, when a tendency to stretch meager relief funds over an increasingly large number of applicants was already generally prevalent. With the beginning of this winter a number of cities report large increases in the number of applicants for relief and increasing relief loans. One city reports for the year an increase of 300 per cent in the number of families aided, with an increase of only 30 per cent in available funds.

There is a general expectancy that the number of families in need of relief will continue to increase during the winter months, although a few cities are anticipating a corresponding increase in relief funds to cover this expansion in relief responsibility.

In general it may be said that the cities included in this report present a relief experience corresponding to the more comprehensive statistics which are regularly obtained by the agencies mentioned. The 43 cities and counties in this group are giving relief at this time to approximately 3,000,000 persons, consisting of 650,000 families and 100,000 unattached and homeless individuals and are expending approximately \$17,500,000 a month on relief.

The committee attempted to obtain estimates of the proportion of those totally unemployed who were receiving relief from an organized source during December, 1932. Statistics on the number of families assisted are reasonably accurate, but information on the number of unemployed is frequently a crude estimate.

Discarding extreme cases at both ends of the table, the data submitted show a range from 18 to 58 per cent of the unemployed group receiving relief in December. The average city aided approximately 32 per cent of the totally jobless and in the 30 cities combined for which we have estimates of the number of unemployed, 25 per cent were receiving relief. Lower percentages in the large cities of Chicago and Philadelphia account for the difference.

Lawrence, Mass., Detroit, St. Louis, Philadelphia, Cleveland, Washington, and Chicago reported lower ratios of the unemployed on relief, while Seattle, Toledo, Akron, Syracuse, Hartford, and Milwaukee were among the highest percentages of relief cases to total estimated unemployed. Ratios for individual cities, however, must be considered as having less probability than the total which may to some extent balance errors due to under or over estimate of unemployed.

In these cities which have organized relief agencies an attempt is being made to supply at least food to all applicants who are found to be entirely destitute. In reply to the question as to the estimated number of families and individuals who were in need but not receiving relief, one informant replied that it was impossible to estimate the number since this would differ according to the standards of eligibility which might be applied. He indicated, however, that in his city, which is considered as having a more adequate organization than is usually to be found, families are forced into a position of extreme dependency before applications for relief are considered.

Homes are lost, insurance policies canceled, aid from relatives and friends has been terminated, families are forced to exhaust and destroy indefinitely their credit before relief is granted to them. This statement on the degree of destitution reached before relief is granted is applicable in practically all communities. A number of cities report that no work or home relief is being made available to adult families—that is, to childless couples or families without young children. No relief or very inadequate forms of relief are being given to the unattached men and women without family connections.

19 • LOCAL RELIEF: YOUNGSTOWN, OHIO

The next five selections describe the relief situation and its consequences in five representative industrial cities. The first of these selections is excerpted from Joseph L. Heffernan, "The Hungry City: A Mayor's Experience with Unemployment," The Atlantic Monthly, CXLIX (May, 1932), pp. 538-540, 546. Reprinted by permission of the publisher.

IN DECEMBER 1929, when I was mayor of Youngstown, I attended a conference on unemployment at Cleveland, called at the request of President Hoover. It was held at the Chamber of Commerce, under the chairmanship of Mr. Elroy J. Kulas, president of the Otis Steel Company, and was attended by public officials of northern Ohio.

Speaker after speaker told what his community would do to end the depression, and how quickly it would be done. The unemployed were to be set marching gayly back to work without an instant's delay, and the two-car garage was to be made ready for further enlargement.

When it came my turn to speak, I said rather brutally: "This is all plain bunk. We know that our cities and counties are in debt and have bond limitations imposed by the state. If all of us were to start this minute drawing up a programme of public improvements, it would require months to get the legislation through. Why not tell the people the truth?"

After the meeting many of the officials said to me: "Mayor, you are right. There isn't much we can do. But we have to go along, don't we?"

Five months later I went to Germany and visited a number of cities. Everywhere I saw that the German people were in a bad way. On returning home, I made a public statement that Germany was on the verge of economic collapse, and predicted that the depression would take five years to run its course. Thereupon I asked for a bond issue of \$1,000,000 for unemployment relief. Many leading business men went out of their way to show their disapproval. One of them voiced the opinion of the majority when he said to me: "You make a bad mistake in talking about the unemployed. *Don't* emphasize hard times and everything will be all right." An influential newspaper chastised me for "borrowing trouble"; the depression would be over, the editor maintained, before relief would be needed!

Discussion dragged on for several months, and the gravity of the situation was so deliberately misrepresented by the entire business community

Patrolman Palmay looked down on the tired old face, the slight figure outlined beneath the worn but clean-looking blankets, at the socks and spotless shirt fluttering in the breeze on the short clothes-line overhead. He had his orders, but—

An hour later, doubling back on his post, Palmay saw Louis Bringmann leaving his cardboard shelter. He watched him as he dipped into the rain barrel he had fixed under the copper leader, to make his morning ablutions. Then he walked over.

"You'll have to move, old man." He hated the job.

"I can't stay? I'm not bothering any one. And they don't use the theatre in the Summer time. I keep everything clean. I—"

"They gave me orders," replied Palmay. "It's against the fire laws."

The snow-white head nodded. Louis Bringmann was too patient a man to vent his bitterness in vain argument.

He rolled his blankets carefully and dressed. He took his little sea chest under one thin arm. The other meager chattels dangled from his white fingers. He started to move.

Palmay thrust a half dollar into the free hand and walked away. . . . The white-haired Bringmann plodded up the avenue, immaculate in his worn brown trousers and blue jacket, heading toward the river.

He had known of Tin Mountain before, but he was proud. In Tin Mountain, a sprawling village of tin huts and makeshift dugouts at the foot of Henry Street, are all types of men—brawny Scandinavian seamen, husky Irish longshoremen—good men, but a bit rough. One of its streets has the bitter legend on a placard, "Prosperity Boulevard."

Late in the afternoon he was still sitting on the little chest that contains the meager souvenirs of better days—a few faded menus he had made up when he was head chef of one of the big Manhattan hotels. He wouldn't tell which one.

"The past," said Louis Bringmann, "is a turned-over page. When I read it I read alone. They tell me now that I'm even too old for dish-washing—that's the whole story. I have no friends and my money is gone."

24 • HUNGRY CHILDREN

Growing children, who certainly had no responsibility for the dismal world their elders created for them, were the most tragic figures of the Great Depression. In this account, Grace Abbott, Chief of the Children's Bureau, Department of Labor, describes in general terms malnutrition among the nation's children. "Children and the Depression: A National Study and a Warning," The New York Times, December 18, 1932. Reprinted by permission of the publisher.

. . . EVEN THOSE WITH LITTLE IMAGINATION know how no employment or underemployment, the failure of banks and building and loan associations have affected many children whose parents faced the future self-reliant and unafraid a few years ago. In the millions of homes which have escaped the abyss of destitution fear of what may still happen is destroying the sense of security which is considered necessary for the happiness and well-being of children.

Great effort has been made to prevent suffering. Last year probably more than a billion dollars was expended by public and private agencies for the relief of the unemployed. Although this is probably some eight times as much as was spent for relief in normal times, no one who has been going in and out of the homes of the unemployed in large urban centres or in the single-industry towns and mining communities has reported that it has been adequate to insure shelter, clothes and reasonably adequate diet for all needy children. . . .

Although the death rate [of infants and children] is low, there is much evidence that the health of many children is being adversely affected by the prolonged depression. For example, hospitals and clinics report an increase in rickets among children; in New York City, where relief for the unemployed has probably been more nearly adequate than in any other of the largest cities, the city Health Department reports that 20.5 per cent of the school children examined were suffering from malnutrition in 1932. . . .

Undernourishment is even more widespread in areas of extreme depression, where the available relief has been quite inadequate, such as the coal-mining communities and "one-industry towns," where there has been little or no work for several years, or in districts where the depression has been added to the economic losses brought by flood and drought.

In a recent report of the Surgeon General of the Public Health Service on the rural health work in the drought-stricken areas in 1931, the reports of the health officers as to health conditions in the counties are summarized. Here one finds the health officers of Alabama and Arkansas, for example, reporting for county after county an increase in pellagra due to inability to purchase the necessary food; and "dietary diseases" and widespread undernourishment were frequently referred to in the reports for these and other States. The bulletin, "Health Briefs," of the Tennessee Health Department for August of this year says that "the increase in deaths from pellagra that has been forecast since the beginning of the reduced economic conditions is now beginning to show on the tally sheets of vital statistics." . . .

Recently the director of the Child Hygiene Division of the Children's Bureau was called into a conference to discuss how the reduced relief budgets should be expended so as to insure the health of the children. Protective foods for children include milk, fruits, some fresh vegetables and eggs, and the problem was how to purchase these as well as the foods

that supply energy for a family of five when the total income is \$11 a month. Some families are managing to exist on a smaller per capita than \$2 a month, but at the cost of greatly lowered vital capacity and resistance to disease.

It is the future effects of undernourishment among children that are to be feared. As Dr. William H. Welch has put it, "The ground lost by undernourishment in childhood may never be regained." That many children have suffered such losses during the past three years is certain. . . .

25 • CHICAGO'S UNDERNOURISHED SCHOOL CHILDREN

Of the nation's major cities, Chicago was one of the hardest hit by the depression and had one of the worst records for relief. The city of the World's Fair of 1933, the Century of Progress Exposition, allowed its unpaid teachers to supplement the inadequate diets of its children from their own pocket. These two accounts are from The New York Times, April 12 and June 19, 1931.

CHICAGO, April 8.—A group of University of Chicago faculty members warns against the ravages of undernourishment among children in the public schools. It appears that principals and teachers in many schools have for several months been contributing from their salaries in order to provide free lunches for hungry children. Allowances have been made to the schools from the fund raised by the Governor's Commission on Unemployment, but the money has been insufficient to meet the need.

Meantime, the Board of Education announces that it has exhausted its fund for the payment of teachers and other educational purposes. This fact, however, has not prevented it issuing an elaborate report on the schools at a cost of \$13,000, which is generally regarded as a campaign document contributed to the cause of Mayor [William H.] Thompson.

CHICAGO, June 18.—Shortly after a check-up of the city schools revealed today that 11,000 hungry children were being fed by teachers, Superintendent William J. Bogan dispatched a plea to Frank Loomis, secretary of Governor Emmerson's Relief Committee, pleading "for God's sake, help us feed these children during the Summer."

Mr. Bogan originally appealed to the Governor's committee for \$100,000 to feed hungry school children. Today his letter asked for "at least

\$10,000." The Governor's committee sent a group of social investigators to study the situation.

In the meantime teachers are seriously handicapped by the failure of the Board of Education to pay them. Collections taken up among the more fortunate children have also aided in feeding those not so fortunate.

26 • CHILDREN IN THE COAL MINING TOWNS

The bituminous coal industry was sick even in the 1920's. The Great Depression brought appalling conditions among the soft coal miners. In this selection Clarence E. Pickett, secretary of the American Friends Service Committee, describes the work of the Quakers in relieving the hardship of miners' children. Federal Aid for Unemployment Relief, Hearings before a Subcommittee of the Committee on Manufactures, United States Senate, 72nd Cong., 1 sess., on S. 174 and S. 262 (Washington: Government Printing Office, 1932), pp. 58-60.

MR. PICKETT. We are now doing relief work in the bituminous coal fields. THE CHAIRMAN [Sen. LaFollette]. What areas are being covered?

MR. PICKETT. We are actually feeding in West Virginia and Kentucky, two counties in Illinois, with prospects of expanding into western Pennsylvania and eastern Ohio within the next couple of weeks. . . .

You might be interested to know something of the form of organization that we have followed. We feed through the public schools. We go only to schools where the mine is operating two days a week or less, feeling that the worst cases of need are not likely to appear in large number where the mines are operating three days or more.

THE CHAIRMAN. How much would a miner make in this bituminous field if he got three days' work a week? Do you know?

MR. PICKETT. He gets on an average about 30 cents a ton, and a good day's work will be 10 tons in these mines where we are operating. That is about \$3 a day, with perhaps \$2.50 or \$2.40 left after his equipment is paid for. That means, say, \$7.50 or \$8 a week. That is very low.

THE CHAIRMAN. Do you think a man can support a family on \$8 a week in that area?

MR. PICKETT. No; he can not do it. We are not holding a brief for this situation.

THE CHAIRMAN. I am not implying any criticism, but I gathered from the unqualified statement you made that you had some in the conviction that where a man was going **NOMADS** was not the distress word; not be great.

MR. PICKETT. Well, let me put it in this way. That the area of need is so great that we are facing a situation that we can not handle in the present spots first. Now we are making a tentative study to reach at these spots and that is spreading out into some of these highly mobile groups and communities. Of course, within a short period of time you may have a mine that is operating for day or two and another that is operating three days. Now, we are studying such communities as they are presently will have to include a good many more. We are not yet ready to feed on the basis of the results of the study. We are not yet ready to discover what a good number of these people are doing. We are doing is to weigh all the factors that are involved in the situation and on the list to be fed all the factors that are involved in the situation.

THE CHAIRMAN. In these school children did you find that the weight of the children in the school of 100 children that 99 were underweight. That is the worst we have found. We have found a good many that were 85 and 90 per cent, and then ranging down to as low as 20.

THE CHAIRMAN. Did you make any other tests of health aside from weight?

MR. PICKETT. We have not yet been able to make anything like an adequate study of health statistics. There isn't any doubt, from what we have found out, that over the past three years there has been a steady decline in the health conditions in these areas. We know that to be true, although we are not satisfied yet to quote data, because we have not finished our studies.

SENATOR COSTIGAN. Are the children retarded in their physical development?

MR. PICKETT. I do not think you would find many cases of seriously retarded physical development. We find drowsiness, lethargy, and sleepiness.

SENATOR COSTIGAN. A mental retardation?

MR. PICKETT. A mental retardation, but not often physical retardation.

IV

Nomads of the Depression

AMERICANS HAVE ALWAYS BEEN a footloose people, but the Great Depression created a new kind of wanderer, the poverty-stricken nomad seeking escape from an intolerable life at home. Optimism had been a characteristic of earlier wanderers, the colonist, the immigrant, the westward-trekking farmer, the gold seeker; there was little optimism among the boy and girl tramps or the "Okies," uprooted from the land by drought, dust storms, and tractors that landlords had purchased with their Agricultural Adjustment Administration checks. Desperation, rather than optimism, was the main characteristic of the nomads of the 1930's.

Many of the wanderers were homeless youngsters, only recently out of school, who in normal times would have been beginning workers, living with their parents. Many were families forced off the land. Many were men without families, living out a futile life by going from one poor and temporary job to another. None of them lived what most Americans consider a normal life, within a family, with an established community and a regular routine to give stability to their lives.

27 • ANXIETY
ABOUT THE VAGRANTS

In this article Newton D. Baker, former mayor of Cleveland, Secretary of War during World War I, and a contender for the Democratic presidential nomination, reveals concern for what the nomads may mean for America. "Homeless Wanderers Create a New Problem for America," The New York Times, December 11, 1932. Reprinted by permission of the publisher.

A CURIOUS SOCIAL PHENOMENON has developed out of the present depression. All over the country hordes of young people and entire families are found wending their way along the highways and byways. They are the people whom our postoffices label "address unknown," and whom we call transients, lacking a more adequate term by which to describe them. Every group in society is represented in their ranks, from the college graduate to the child who has never seen the inside of a schoolhouse. Expectant mothers, sick babies, young childless couples, grim-faced middle-aged dislodged from lifetime jobs—on they go, an index of insecurity, in a country used to the unexpected. We think of the nomads of the desert—now we have the nomads of the depression.

At least 25,000 families in our country and more than 200,000 boys and young men are reported by the United States Children's Bureau and the National Association of Travelers' Aid Societies as recruits in the present transient army. Because of the difficulties which lie in the way of a "head-to-head" census, these figures are generally conceded as telling only a part of the story. The actual count, beyond doubt, is several times the reported figures. One thing we know positively: that is, this army is gaining rapidly in numerical strength.

One-quarter of the present transient army, we are told, is made up of boys ranging between 16 and 21 years of age. Girls flock to the city in numbers, but the desire to travel long miles across country has not as yet proved as contagious to them as it has to their brothers.

Russia's experience with her vagabond youth should prove a warning to us. The shelterless, or bezprizorni, as they were called, came into being after the overthrow of the Russian monarchy in 1917 and increased so rapidly that they were estimated in a few years' time to number from 2,000,000 to 3,000,000 boys and girls. This army of children, many of them as young as 10 years, terrorized whole villages and cities and became known for their murders, robberies and other acts of violence. The "wild children of Russia" the press termed them.

The reasons which have made our transient youth take to the road seem mild in comparison with those which caused the Russian children's exodus. The quest for jobs, the lure of adventure, escape from broken, unhappy or poverty-stricken homes or personality difficulties are the causes behind most youthful flights in America. The average young American transient of today, we are told by social workers and others who come into daily contact with him, is a normal boy from a substantial family. He differs from the hobo of yesterday in that his goal is apt to be a "chance to work" not an escape from it. In contrast to the bezprizorni, a considerable proportion of our boys have had high school educations, while most of the wild children of Russia, we are told, were unable to read or write.

Of the 7,512 transients served by the Salvation Army in Washington, D.C., during the first quarter of 1932, it was found that 1,866 had had

an eighth-grade education, 260 had been in high school and 258 were college trained.

Reports submitted on the transient seem to agree that he is on the whole an honest, self-respecting person. Railroads record few thefts as a result of recent transient migrations. Communities through which they pass connect them with only occasional misdemeanors or crimes.

America's vagabonds, however, share this quality in common with Russia's wild children: having tasted the poison of a wandering life they find it difficult to give it up. In all probability the bezprizorni, when they first started out, were a harmless group of young people also, but finding it impossible to secure food and shelter by honest means, they resorted to other methods. No doubt they were helped in their activities by criminals and degenerates of their country just as the social workers report our transients are being contaminated today.

It is impossible to travel across any country, to live in box cars or "jungles," as the camp sites near the railroad yards are called, or even in municipal shelters, without meeting men whose influence is destructive. All too easily impressionable young people thrown into these environments without home guidance or direction pick up the vices and crimes of the underworld—gambling, stealing, drug addiction, prostitution and sexual perversion.

The health hazards of the road are also many for the transient. Often he arrives in town sick from exposure or lack of food. Last winter in one Western city thirty-five men and boys were removed from box cars seriously ill, some in advanced stages of pneumonia. One railroad alone reported fifty men and boys killed and more than 100 crippled along its route. Hospitals treat the transient only if he is seriously ill. The demands for free care on these institutions are so great and their resources so limited that, unless it is a case of absolute necessity, they feel that their first obligation lies to the needy sick of their own community.

The drifting family in our country about whom we hear so much less than the transient youth has but one reason generally for its vagabondage, and that is the loss of a job by its breadwinner. Unable to find work or to continue the rent or payments on the home, the family piles itself into the old car and takes to the highway. Its philosophy, if any exists, probably runs like this: "We know what to expect if we stay at home, but who knows what our luck may be further on?"

Human nature is such that almost anyone will give a handout once with some little grace, but continuous handouts day after day are often not so generously bestowed. So we have the family making its way as best it can, looking for the elusive job, the unexpected stroke of luck or the pot of gold at the end of the rainbow, and as a rule ending its pilgrimage in some remote spot miles away from the starting place, miserable and destitute.

The children of these families perhaps suffer most of all. They are dazed

bewildered bits of humanity driven from town to town by a strange force called a "depression," which has upset the stability of their past and is dangerously threatening the safety of their future.

So suddenly has the seriousness of the transient problem thrust itself upon us and so rapidly has it increased in size that it may be said to have taken the average American community completely by storm. Busily coping with welfare and relief problems of their own and pondering how the multitude can be fed on the loaves purchasable with their limited resources, communities have been inclined to consider the transient as some other city's problem. And so, what is one city's problem today, by a system of "passing on," becomes another city's difficulty tomorrow. . . .

We are all interested in reducing budgets—personal, municipal, State and national—but it is well to remember that ruthlessly slashing essential services is both a costly and hazardous undertaking. If there is any doubt in our mind of the seriousness of the present transient problem brings with it, we have only to turn to Russia for a somewhat similar tragedy for which that government paid dearly.

The question which every American community faces today and which demands an immediate answer is, can we afford to permit permanent injury to the character of this generation of youth? . . .

28 • THE DANGERS OF THE ROAD

Freight cars were not designed for passenger travel, and the dangers such travel presented young depression nomads concerned the railroad detective whose testimony is reprinted here. Relief for Unemployed Transients, Hearings before a Subcommittee of the Committee on Manufactures, United States Senate, 72nd Cong., 2 sess., on S. 5121 (Washington: Government Printing Office, 1933), pp. 35-38.

SENATOR COSTIGAN. Please give your name and address.

MR. MITCHELL. R. S. Mitchell, chief special agent, Missouri Pacific Railroad, resident, St. Louis.

SENATOR COSTIGAN. Mr. Mitchell, you are particularly familiar with certain phases of the transient problem?

MR. MITCHELL. Yes, sir.

SENATOR COSTIGAN. Will you tell the committee what you have observed and give us the benefit of any conclusions to which you have been led?

MR. MITCHELL. On the Missouri Pacific Railroad we have been trying to pay some attention to what we at one time called migratory labor; that

is, the transient movement, and I have some figures here that my department has gathered from 1928 through 1932.

We took official notice, in 1928, of 13,745 transients, trespassers that we found on our trains and property.

In 1929 that figure was 13,875.

In 1930 we took a record of 23,892.

In 1931 that volume jumped to 186,028.

In 1932 it receded a little bit to 149,773, or a total, for the five years, of 387,313 persons that we found trespassing upon our trains and property.

I would like to call your attention to one serious result of this trespass. In 1928 we unfortunately killed 102 trespassers and injured 172.

SENATOR COSTIGAN. Are you referring now to railroad accidents?

MR. MITCHELL. Railroad accidents to trespassers. . . . In 1929 there were 103 killed and 156 injured, or a total of 259.

In 1930 there were 114 killed and 221 injured, making a total of 335 killed and injured.

SENATOR COSTIGAN. Is there a typical accident among transients?

MR. MITCHELL. Too often it is an attempt to catch a train—get on a moving train—and the person not being an expert at that sort of thing, will miss his step and lose his leg. . . .

SENATOR COSTIGAN. There is not so much riding of rods, as formerly?

MR. MITCHELL. No, sir; the steel underframe car has decreased the rod riding possibility, probably 50 per cent.

In 1930 we killed 114 and injured 221, a total of 335.

The largest year was 1931. There were 125 killed and 247 injured, or a total of 372.

In 1932 there were 91 killed and 214 injured, or a total of 305.

SENATOR COSTIGAN. What has been the attitude of your company toward transients and has that attitude changed from time to time? I have in mind, more particularly, trespassers on railroad property.

MR. MITCHELL. A few years ago—to be exact, prior to the depression or prior to 1929—it was the policy of our railroad, and it was the policy of most railroads in the West, to rid certain classes of trains of trespassers and in some instances to arrest them for trespass. The volume became so large in 1929 and since then, that the railroads did not feel that these men should be arrested, and they were not arrested in the sense that they were turned over to officers and fined. They were arrested in the sense, Senator, that they were asked to get off our trains and were conducted from the property, but never was there any curtailment of liberty. . . . That continues to the present time.

SENATOR COSTIGAN. In many parts of the country men do not seem to be ordered from trains. Is that practice general?

31 • THE "OKIES"

The best known nomads of the Great Depression were the "Okies," made famous by the novelist John Steinbeck. Reprinted here is Chapter 12 of The Grapes of Wrath (The Viking Press, 1939). Reprinted by permission of the publisher.

HIGHWAY 66 is the main migrant road. 66—the long concrete path across the country, waving gently up and down on the map, from the Mississippi to Bakersfield—over the red lands and the gray lands, twisting up into the mountains, crossing the Divide and down into the bright and terrible desert, and across the desert to the mountains again, and into the rich California valleys.

66 is the path of a people in flight, refugees from dust and shrinking land, from the thunder of tractors and shrinking ownership, from the desert's slow northward invasion from the twisting winds that howl up out of Texas, from the floods that bring no richness to the land and steal what little richness is there. From all of these the people are in flight, and they come into 66 from the tributary side roads, from the wagon tracks and the rutted country roads. 66 is the mother road, the road of flight.

Clarksville and Ozark and Van Buren and Fort Smith on 64, and there's an end of Arkansas. And all the roads into Oklahoma City, 66 down from Tulsa, 270 up from McAlester. 81 from Wichita Falls south, from Enid north. Edmond, McLoud, Purcell. 66 out of Oklahoma City; El Reno and Clinton, going west on 66. Hydro, Elk City, and Texola; and there's an end to Oklahoma. 66 across the Panhandle of Texas. Shamrock and McLean, Conway and Amarillo, the yellow. Wildorado and Vega and Boise, and there's an end of Texas. Tucumcari and Santa Rosa and into the New Mexican mountains to Albuquerque, where the road comes down from Santa Fe. Then down the gorged Rio Grande to Los Lunas and west again on 66 to Gallup, and there's the border of New Mexico.

And now the high mountains. Holbrook and Winslow and Flagstaff in the high mountains of Arizona. Then the great plateau rolling like a ground swell. Ashfork and Kingman and stone mountains again, where water must be hauled and sold. Then out of the broken sun-rotted mountains of Arizona to the Colorado, with green reeds on its banks, and that's the end of Arizona. There's California just over the river, and a pretty town to start it. Needles, on the river. But the river is a stranger in this place. Up from Needles and over a burned range, and there's the desert. And 66 goes on over the terrible desert, where the distance shimmers and the black center mountains hang unbearably in the distance. At last there's

Barstow, and more desert until at last the mountains rise up again, the good mountains, and 66 winds through them. Then suddenly a pass, and below the beautiful valley, below orchards and vineyards and little houses, and in the distance a city. And, oh, my God, it's over.

The people in flight stream out on 66, sometimes a single car, sometimes a little caravan. All day they rolled slowly along the road, and at night they stopped near water. In the day ancient leaky radiators sent up columns of steam, loose connecting rods hammered and pounded. And the men driving the trucks and the overloaded cars listened apprehensively. How far between towns? It is a terror between towns. If something breaks—well, if something breaks we camp right here while Jim walks to town and gets a part and walks back and—how much food we got?

Listen to the motor: Listen to the wheels. Listen with your ears and with your hands on the steering wheel; listen with the palm of your hand on the gear-shift lever; listen with your feet on the floor boards. Listen to the pounding old jalopy with all your senses: for a change of tone, a variation of rhythm may mean—a week here? That rattle—that's tappets. Don't hurt a bit. Tappets can rattle till Jesus comes again without no harm. But that thudding as the car moves along—can't hear that—just kind of feel it. Maybe oil isn't gettin' someplace. Maybe a bearing's startin' to go.

Jesus, if it's a bearing, what'll we do? Money's goin' fast. And why's the son-of-a-bitch heat up so hot today? This ain't no climb. Let's look. God Almighty, the fan belt's gone! Here, make a belt outa this little piece a rope. Let's see how long—there. I'll splice the ends. Now make her slow—slow, till we can get to a town. That rope belt won't last long.

If we can on'y get to California where the oranges grow before this here ol' jug blows up. If we on'y can.

And the tires—two layers of fabric worn through. On'y a four-ply tire. Might get a hundred miles more outa her if we don't hit a rock an' blow her. Which'll we take—a hunderd, maybe, miles, or maybe spoil the tubes? Which? A hunderd miles. Well, that's somepin you got to think about. We got tube patches. Maybe when she goes she'll only spring a leak. How about makin' a boot? Might get five hundred more miles. Let's go on till she blows.

We got to get a tire, but Jesus, they want a lot for a ol' tire. They look a fella over. They know he got to go on. They know he can't wait. And the price goes up.

Take it or leave it. I ain't in business for my health. I'm here a-sellin' tires. I ain't givin' 'em away. I can't help what happens to you. I got to think what happens to me.

How far's the nex' town?

I seen forty-two cars a you fellas go by yesterday. Where you all come from? Where all of you goin'?

Well, California's a big State.

It ain't that big. The whole United States ain't that big. It ain't that big. It ain't big enough. There ain't room enough for you an' me, for your kind an' my kind, for rich and poor together all in one country, for thieves and honest men. For hunger and fat. Whyn't you go back where you come from?

This is a free country. Fella can go where he wants.

That's what *you* think! Ever hear of the border patrol on the California line? Police from Los Angeles—stopped you bastards, turned you back. Says, if you can't buy no real estate we don't want you. Says, got a driver's license? Le's see it. Tore it up. Says you can't come in without no driver's license.

It's a free country.

Well, try to get some freedom to do. Fella says you're jus' as free as you got jack to pay for it.

In California they got high wages. I got a han'bill here tells about it.

Baloney! I seen folks comin' back. Somebody's kiddin' you. You want that tire or don't ya?

Got to take it, but Jesus, mister, it cuts into our money! We ain't got much left.

Well, I ain't no charity. Take her along.

Got to, I guess. Let's look her over. Open her up, look a' the casing—you son-of-a-bitch, you said the casing was good. She's broke damn near through.

The hell she is. Well—by George! How come I didn't see that?

You did see it, you son-of-a-bitch. You wanta charge us four bucks for a busted casing. I'd like to take a sock at you.

Now keep your shirt on. I didn' see it, I tell you. Here—tell ya what I'll do. I'll give ya this one for three-fifty.

You'll take a flying jump at the moon! We'll try to make the nex' town. Think we can make it on that tire?

Got to. I'll go on the rim before I'd give that son-of-a-bitch a dime.

What do ya think a guy in business is? Like he says, he ain't in it for his health. That's what business is. What'd you think it was? Fella's got—See that sign 'longside the road there? Service Club. Luncheon Tuesday, Colmado Hotel? Welcome, brother. That's a Service Club. Fella had a story. Went to one of them meetings an' told the story to all them business men. Says, when I was a kid my ol' man give me a haltered heifer an' says take her down an' git her serviced. An' the fella says, I done it, an' ever time since then when I hear a business man talkin' about service, I wonder who's gettin' screwed. Fella in business got to lie an' cheat, but he calls it somepin else. That's what's important. You go steal that tire an' you're a thief, but he tried to steal your four dollars for a busted tire. They call that sound business.

Danny in the back seat wants a cup of water.

Have to wait. Got no water here.

Listen—that the rear end?

Can't tell.

Sound telegraphs through the frame.

There goes a gasket. Got to go on. Listen to her whistle. Find a nice place to camp an' I'll jerk the head off. But, God Almighty, the food's gettin' low, the money's gettin' low. When we can't buy no more gas—what then?

Danny in the back seat wants a cup a water. Little fella's thirsty.

Listen to that gasket whistle.

Chee-ris! There she went. Blowed tube an' casing all to hell. Have to fix her. Save that casing to make boots; cut 'em out an' stick 'em inside a weak place.

Cars pulled up beside the road, engine heads off, tires mended.

Cars limping along 66 like wounded things, panting and struggling. Too hot, loose connections, loose bearings, rattling bodies.

Danny wants a cup a water.

People in flight along 66. And the concrete road shone like a mirror under the sun, and in the distance the heat made it seem that there were pools of water in the road.

Danny wants a cup a water.

He'll have to wait, poor little fella. He's hot. Nex' service station. Service station, like the fella says.

Two hundred and fifty thousand people over the road. Fifty thousand old cars—wounded, steaming. Wrecks along the road, abandoned. Well, what happened to them? What happened to the folks in that car? Did they walk? Where are they? Where does the courage come from? Where does the terrible faith come from?

And here's a story you can hardly believe, but it's true, and it's funny and it's beautiful. There was a family of twelve and they were forced off the land. They had no car. They built a trailer out of junk and loaded it with their possessions. They pulled it to the side of 66 and waited. And pretty soon a sedan picked them up. Five of them rode in the sedan and seven on the trailer, and a dog on the trailer. They got to California in two jumps. The man who pulled them fed them. And that's true. But how can such courage be, and such faith in their own species? Very few things would teach such faith.

The people in flight from the terror behind—strange things happen to them, some bitterly cruel and some so beautiful that the faith is refired forever.

fessed that he did not have five thousand dollars to put up. A woman who had always lived more than comfortably was found to have no securities of any value whatever.

But by four o'clock the next morning, Saturday, October 3rd, the seemingly impossible task had been accomplished. Half a million dollars had been put up by the people in the town; Mr. Shriver had driven back over the mountains with the money. The suitcases beside him; and the amount of the loan was a million dollars. The bank had added a sting to its offer, and the money if they still wanted it. The money was almost all taken up by the banks of Beckettstown.

And so the town was not so badly off as it seemed. The first town pulled in by the crash, and once more set about its business. The bank failures and the money market were all over. It is a depression.

Eight months after the crash, the town known to the world as Beckettstown, in the people.

Let the form of getting back to normal, and without a promotion, and this time he is going to deal with those whom he knows and trusts, and put his money where he can keep his eye on it.

34 • MAIN STREET REVISITED

The Melrose of this selection was a Middlewestern Beckers-town. The author, the newspaper columnist Marquis Childs, emphasizes the changing social attitudes of the community. "Main Street Ten Years After," The New Republic, LXXIII (January 18, 1933), pp. 263-265. Reprinted by permission of the publisher.

THE CASUAL VISITOR viewing Melrose for the first time in four years would observe few changes. There are the current phenomena of the depression, empty stores, For Rent signs, smokeless factories, closing-out sales. But on a fine summer evening, an endless procession of cars, and many of

them are new, passes out along Washington Boulevard to the Spring Valley Highway. And on any Saturday afternoon, the group waiting to drive off from the first tee at the country club is apparently as large as ever, as jovial, as well fed, as carefree. There is, however, a startling disparity between this familiar surface and what is really happening as a result of the depression.

This town of nineteen thousand, located in a rich farming community, might be anywhere in the Middle West, Minnesota, Ohio, Iowa, Illinois. Along with the other Main Streets, it had its boom, a whole series of booms. There was the War, with fat contracts for the steel-castings company and the wire-cloth factory. It was in 1924 that Main Street was made Main Avenue, paved drives were put through Sunset Park, the new half-million-dollar high school was finished and the Kiwanis public golf links and swimming pool were opened. Then came the stock-market boom.

The majority in Melrose were not lured away from rock-ribbed safety—savings banks and real-estate bonds. The collapse of the banks and the bonds the bankers sold was the immediate cause of the deflation in Melrose. School teachers, insurance salesmen, small wage earners, dentists, retired farmers, saw life savings disappear, security vanish. An entire generation, with striking exceptions, has been stripped; and not by some remote force a thousand miles away but, so the reasoning is, by the man who used to live in the big house on the corner of South Main Avenue and Washington Boulevard.

What is surprising is the passive resignation with which the blow has been accepted; this awful pretense that seeks to conceal the mortal wound, to carry on as though it were still the best possible of all worlds. Before the depression, one of the principal pleasures was to discover how much one's neighbor was spending; now the game is to find out how much he has lost and how he is standing his losses. This curiosity is almost a form of psychopathology; sympathy is all too often an ill concealed form of triumph, a kind of "Thank God, someone is worse off than we are."

The First National Bank of Melrose was the first to go. There was no warning; in the middle of the banking day the doors were closed by the examiners. It was one of the oldest banks in the state, regarded as a branch of the United States Treasury. Within two or three hours everyone knew of the disaster. Depositors, stunned and disbelieving, gathered in small groups to read the notice on the door. There were wild rumors. It was said that Mr. Johnson, the new president, had fled to Canada with his blonde secretary. Someone brought a report that the closing was only temporary, someone else spread word that there would be nothing left for the depositors. The other three banks, forewarned, withstood heavy runs.

There was little public lamentation. The most shocking example was old Mrs. Gearman. She beat with her fists upon the closed plate-glass doors and screamed and sobbed without restraint. She had in a savings account the \$2,000 from her husband's insurance and \$963 she had saved over

period of twenty-five years from making rag rugs. Nothing was left but charity. For a week neighbors did not see her. A policeman found her sitting in the middle of the kitchen of her small, scrubbed house. They took her to the insane asylum a few days afterward.

Others were more successful in concealing the tragic extent of their losses. For fifty-two years Amy Blanshard taught the fourth grade. Her sister kept house for her. They lived in the upper half of the old Blanshard home, renting the lower half. Amy had more than \$11,000 in a savings account in the First National Bank. On a salary which was never more than a thousand dollars a year, it is plain what heroic economies this must have required. As a direct result of the closing, twelve families, most of them elderly couples, were forced onto the county. School children had on deposit about \$25,000 in small accounts; these were repaid in full before any other claims "to retain the faith of the youngest generation in our banks."

There were charges and counter-charges. It was said that all the directors withdrew their deposits before the bank failed and that more important business men were warned, too. In the first bitter reaction there was talk of criminal prosecution against one director, Davis, who, according to rumor, succeeded in tapping the bank before it collapsed, for a sum greater than the amount of his stock. There was a public meeting in the armory which ended on a note of reassurance from President Johnson. There would be sufficient assets to cover virtually the entire amount on deposit at the time of the bank's closing. Gradually the whispered rumors were forgotten.

"Do you see any of the bankers themselves ruined?" Jeffery Fagan demands, with fire in his eye. (He dropped \$17,000.) "They're still riding around in their big cars. I can remember the day when it was the banker that went to the poorhouse and the depositors got their money. It takes about as much brains and honesty to run a bank now as it used to take to run a peanut stand." This last is a concise expression of opinion in Melrose. The spectacle of the Davises whizzing about in their expensive car is not one to cheer the losers. Reason has no part in this reaction; the fact that the capitalization of the bank was absurdly low and Davis' share of the stock only a small percentage of the total of deposits is not considered. What no one can forget is that only 31 per cent of the deposits were paid after a delay of eight months. The prospect for a further dividend is slight.

The collapse of the Merchants' Bank and Trust Company was less spectacular. It had long been weak, and when a plan to merge it with the Melrose National Bank failed, it wilted away. There were other calamities to take public attention. One was the failure of the Ryder Furniture and Carpet Company. Like the First National Bank, it had been regarded as a Gibraltar of stability. Edward Ryder represented the third generation in the business; the Ryder store occupied one of the four principal corners at Main and Washington. After the grand closing-out sale, people were not slow to discover that the Ryders had nothing left. The bank got the prop-

erty, tore down the old building and put up a new one that is occupied by a chain clothing store.

The Ryders themselves offered a more complex problem which no one undertook to solve. The envious said they had long lived beyond their means and it served them right. Mrs. Ryder sold Chevrolets until she exhausted the roster of her friends. The town watched them slip from one subterfuge to another, recalling with little charity the days when the Ryders went on Mediterranean cruises and Bermudan holidays. They lost their home on South Main Avenue. For a time, an aged aunt sent money for apartment rent. When this failed, the Ryders took refuge in a friend's third floor. There were stories. People said that while she ate at the Busy Bee Cafe, he waited outside in the car and she brought out what she could in a paper napkin; that for three days he lived on peanuts from a penny slot machine. He grows thinner and grayer; she tries to maintain the surface pretense.

Perhaps the most appalling blow of all was reserved for early in 1932. R. William McSwirtle was in more ways than one the town's leading citizen. The Melrose National Bank was long known as McSwirtle's bank. He was the personification of the small-town Middle Western banker, gray, respectable, shiny, with cold, fish-colored eyes concealed behind pince-nez, and a pompous smile. The very sight of this pious man was for a long time enough to reassure depositors. He was the chief angel of the Episcopal Church. Not a young boy in the past thirty years has escaped hearing R. William's famous lecture, "Banks and the Churches."

But there were rumors about his bank all through the fall and winter of 1931. The women of the town drew most assurance from the fact that the McSwirtle household was maintained on the same scale as before. R. William certainly tried. He even fought off another threatening run. But the end was close at hand. Early in March of this year The Melrose Advocate announced he had resigned as president of the bank, because of ill health, but would continue in an advisory capacity. Two days later the bank failed and R. William left for parts unknown.

It developed that he had looted the bank of some \$300,000. In addition he had extracted about \$100,000 from various personal accounts. He had managed the finances of a number of persons of comparatively large income: Dr. Maxwell, the leading surgeon; a half-dozen of the more prominent professors at Cremona College; old Mrs. Tompkins. Shock followed upon shock until it seemed that God himself had fallen from his throne. Mrs. McSwirtle, Dorothy and young Ted had signed for R. William a number of mysterious papers which proved to be promissory notes. The neo-Georgian home on South Main Avenue, Dorothy's undyed seal-skin coat, the new Packard convertible coupe, everything melted away and the McSwirtles sought shelter with relatives in Decatur.

It is impossible to convey the blasting effect this had upon Melrose. The City National, the only remaining bank, promptly called a thirty-day

list of accounts due a debtor. The Court barked him down, but in general the personification of the Law appeared to be every inch a gentleman performing with swift precision the most merciful of all legal activities.

When the last case was called, I left hurriedly, to avoid embarrassing a friend, a gentlewoman of the old school, who was about to appear for her final hearing. No doubt the Court placed her case last on the docket so that there would be few observers of the last act in her financial tragedy. She sat, a forlorn, huddled figure, by the only exit, as I hurried past, our eyes not meeting.

Mrs. Clare, after her husband's death, took to speculating. An extremely thrifty person in all respects, her initial successes convinced this delicate, quiet woman that she was a second Hetty Green. She pyramided her winnings with what might be considered the coolness of a professional gambler, except that events showed it to be merely the courage of ignorance. At the peak of stock prices she might have sold out for close to a million, but she could not let go. She never spent any profits, never grew extravagant, never had any fun out of her money. Her bank wisely sandbagged her out of the market at a point where she still had a choice home and enough income left to finance a standard of living well above her desires or needs. But she would not stay out. Presently she was back in the market on broker's margins, and in the end lost everything, even her home. With her fortune wiped out, she still owed money; and there, under the pioneer scene her forefathers knew so well, she waited for the final hearing that would establish her as a bankrupt.

Nothing new, I grant you, in her case; merely the old story of the widow grown mighty in her new freedom. She was in the grasp of the spirit of a mad time, when even men deemed wise talked of a New Era, when foolish youngsters actually believed in the stocks they were selling, when everyone with an axe to grind tried to make us believe that his cutlery was responsible for Prosperity. But, having known more than one generation of Clares I see in the rise and fall of Mrs. Clare something more than merely the downfall of an individual.

Mrs. Clare's grandparents entered this state while it was still a territory. They took up land from the government in goodly quantities, tilled the best acres, sold the rest, acquired the position of good farmers in a day when a good farmer stood as high as a village merchant. They sent their sons to college, where they became doctors, lawyers, teachers, engineers. Mrs. Clare's father was a doctor and she married a doctor's son. Both her father and her father-in-law were substantial men, looked up to as learned in the county seat where they settled. Though neither pursued the main chance too hotly, being healers first and business men second, some excellent real estate came their way and settled in their laps. One of the two died well off, and stores now grace the corner where he lived; but they are not, at this writing, Mrs. Clare's stores. In other words, a vast amount of

risk, labor, and thrift, persevered in by their ancestors to improve the lot of present and coming Clares, has gone for naught, and the Clares of 1932 will be poorer, both actually and by contrast with their neighbors, than were the Clares of 1832.

In her dizzy climb with the boom, Mrs. Clare passed from the middle to the upper economic class, and then dropped clear through the middle bracket into the proletariat, from which it is unlikely that either she or her descendants will emerge for some time, if ever. Of the other cases under review that day, three were those of merchants gone bankrupt, sliding from the middle class into the lower level. Two represented the defeat of efforts to climb from the cellar to the ground floor, while three revealed merely the misfortunes of toilers caught in the wash when the cellar flooded.

36 • VAGRANT CIVIL ENGINEER

The next four selections have to do with unemployment among people trained for professional careers. The first one appeared in The New York Times, May 4, 1932.

HEAVILY BEARDED MAN in a faded brown suit, who said he was a graduate of the University of Colorado and had held responsible positions as a civil engineer in this country, China, Panama and the jungles of Venezuela, was arraigned yesterday on a charge of vagrancy in Flatbush Court, where he told such a dramatic and straightforward story of his experiences that he held the attention of the crowded courtroom for nearly an hour. Magistrate Hilperin adjourned the case until Friday so that a thorough investigation could be made.

The defendant said he was Langlan Heinz, 44 years old. He was arrested at 4 A.M. by a policeman who found him sleeping on an improvised cot at a vacant lot near Flatbush Avenue, between Fillmore Avenue and Avenue R, Brooklyn. Heinz said he had made this lot his home for forty days.

In a well-modulated voice, Heinz began the recital of his experiences saying that he was born in Dodge City, Kan., had received his early schooling there and then had entered the University of Colorado from which he was graduated with a Bachelor of Science degree in 1911. He worked in various parts of the country as a civil engineer until 1921, when he came to New York City and worked for the city for seven years as a technical draftsman.

In 1929, Heinz said, he went to Shanghai where he worked as a draftsman for ten months at \$450 a month. Most of his earnings he sent to his

mother, who is living . . . [in] Los Angeles, Cal. When the Shanghai job was finished, Heinz continued, he went to Panama, where he got occasional employment, and then worked for an oil company in Maturin, Venezuela. While at Maturin Heinz was sent into the jungle territory but contracted fever after a few months and was idle for a long period. When he recovered he went back to Trinidad and then, his money almost depleted, worked his way by ship back to Los Angeles and to his mother's home. After several months in California he sailed for Cairo, Egypt, in December, 1930, but lost his passport en route and was not allowed to land.

He next went to Naples where he worked for ten months in a wine factory and learned the Italian language. On New Year's Day, 1932, he landed in this country at Jersey City. He said he remembered that he had left about \$1,000 worth of tools in the office in which he had worked for the city and stayed at a hotel in Manhattan during his attempts to find them. He was unsuccessful, however, and when his savings were used up he left the hotel and started walking the streets.

A month and a half ago he made the Brooklyn lot his home. Firemen at a firehouse near by gave him occasional shower baths, he said, and housewives and school children in the neighborhood gave him food. Each day he went to the Brooklyn waterfront in an effort to obtain employment on some outgoing ship.

Heinz, who substantiated his story from time to time with names and dates, said he had two brothers and two sisters living in different parts of the country. One brother, he said, was a member of the Board of Education in Los Angeles.

37 • COMMITTEE ON UNEMPLOYMENT AND RELIEF FOR CHEMISTS AND CHEMICAL ENGINEERS

Since World War II America has been troubled by the problem of how to educate a larger number of qualified scientists. America's concern for scientists in the early 1930's was somewhat different. The New York Times, May 22, 1932.

MORE THAN ONE-FOURTH of the 455 qualified chemists who have applied for jobs to the Committee on Unemployment and Relief for Chemists and Chemical Engineers, 300 Madison Avenue, have been placed, it was announced, yesterday. The committee said that it has funds for only five more weeks and estimates that \$20,000 is needed to carry the work through the Summer.

An appeal for \$5 contributions from members of the profession has brought \$3,000 so far.

Approximately 109 of those registered with the committee are said to be destitute, about 130 others are in need and 158 have funds for a short time. Jobs obtained for applicants average in salary from \$35 to \$50 a week. Four have been obtained at \$100 or more a week and one at \$60. Forty-seven of the positions are permanent and 74 temporary.

Among the applicants, it was said, are men who have never before had to look for positions. Yet some have been sleeping in the subway for nights. One of these was a chemist who had worked for nine or ten years with the biggest companies in the country. . . .

38 • UNEMPLOYED COLLEGE GRADUATES

These two selections give some idea of the extent of unemployment among college alumni and the kinds of colleges from which the unemployed came. The first item is from The New York Times, July 27, 1932. The second, "A Survey of Unemployed Alumni," is from School and Society, a professional educational journal, XXXIX (March 10, 1934), p. 307. Reprinted by permission.

ORGANIZATION OF THE ASSOCIATION OF Unemployed College Alumni was announced yesterday after a meeting of graduates of nine Eastern colleges at the offices of the League for Industrial Democracy. Estimating the number of unemployed alumni in this city alone at more than 10,000, the association made public a plan of action designed to enlist members throughout the country.

In a statement prepared at the meeting the group pointed out that since June, 1929, it had become increasingly difficult for university graduates to obtain positions. Distress consequent upon unemployment was more acute among college-trained men and women, according to the announcement, because of their relatively high standards of living and education.

Colleges represented at the meeting included Columbia, Harvard, New York University, Vassar, Hunter, City College, Swarthmore, Columbia School and New York Dental School.

TENS OF THOUSANDS OF COLLEGE GRADUATES, many with high-grade professional training, are among the ranks of the unemployed, as disclosed in a recent

39 • CHEAPER AND CHEAPENED PUBLIC SCHOOLS

This article by a Kansas woman describes the national public school crisis. Avis D. Carlson, "Deflating the Schools," Harper's, CLXVII (November, 1933), pp. 705-713. Reprinted by permission.

DURING THE FIRST TWO YEARS of the depression the schools did business about as usual. By September, 1931, the strain was beginning to tell. Salary cuts were appearing even in large towns, and the number of pupils per teacher had definitely increased. Building programs had been postponed. In a few communities school terms had been considerably shortened, and in others some of the departments and services were being lopped off. But, on the whole, the school world waggled on pretty much as usual.

During the 1932-33 term the deflation gathered momentum so rapidly that many communities had to close their schools. By the end of last March nearly a third of a million children were out of school for that reason. But the number of children affected, shocking as it is, does not tell the story so vividly as does the distribution of the schools. Georgia had 1,318 closed schools with an enrollment of 170,790, and in Alabama 81 per cent of all the children enrolled in white rural schools were on an enforced vacation. In Arkansas, to cite the case of another sorely pressed State, over 300 schools were open for *sixty days or less during the entire year*. By the last of February more than 8,000 school children were running loose in sparsely settled New Mexico. And over a thousand West Virginia schools had quietly given up the struggle.

These are, of course, States which for one reason or another have always lagged educationally. But consider the case of Ohio, which formerly was near the other end of the procession. According to authentic information, some of it compiled by the Cleveland *Plain Dealer* and some by the State Director of Education, practically every school in the State had to shorten its term. Numbers of county schools shut down at the end of seven months. Findlay and Cuyahoga Falls, towns of 20,000 population, closed after seven months. Akron worried on a little longer, to the first week in May, owing its teachers \$330,000. During the first part of the year the Dayton schools were open only three days a week. Youngstown closed three weeks earlier than usual, with a half million dollars in overdue salaries on its books. Every school in Carroll County clipped a month from its term.

In various other American communities where the schools continued open to the end of their 1932-33 term, it was only because teachers went stoutly on with their work even when they knew their salaries would not be forthcoming at the end of the month. The Chicago situation is so well known that there is no need to discuss it. But the average citizen who read of it somehow got the notion that it was unique. It was unique only in the size of the town and the length of time the drama had dragged on. Scattered throughout the nation last year were hundreds of school districts in which the Chicago plan of issuing tax-anticipation warrants which finally became uncollectible worked out to its bitter end. In Oklahoma scores of teachers cashed only one or two warrants all year. In the whole of Apache County, Arizona, not a single warrant was cashed. In Mississippi, Northern Minnesota, Idaho, South Dakota, Alabama, Ohio, and probably other States that I do not know about, some of the rural teachers managed to exist by "boarding around" at the homes of their patrons, much as in the days of *The Hoosier Schoolmaster*. If the schools had been on a pay-as-you-go basis there is no estimating how many of them would have been closed during a greater part of the year. . . .

Some governmental expenditures are more essential than others, of course, and some are less wastefully made than others. But the average taxpayer is never disposed to investigate and make discriminations. Recently he has been in such straits that he is less than ever inclined to pause for discrimination. He may suspect or know that certain branches of his local government are shot with waste and graft of the most flagrant sort and that others are outworn and useless; but in that field he is either indifferent or convinced of his helplessness. He surely knows that an enormous bonded indebtedness is involving a staggering annual bill for "fixed charges"—but the capitalistic system being what it is, he supposes that such charges must remain fixed and sacrosanct. So far as he can see, there is only one thing he can do. He can kick and kick hard about all these governmental trimmings like county nurses and school gymnasiums which have been growing up under his eyes in the last twenty years. Use the axe, legislator, send it deep!

Thus adjured, the legislator has responded nobly. Take the case of Iowa. In that home of fat cornfields and distraught farm growers, 95 per cent of the cost of the public schools came from the property tax. As farm prices have dropped, banks closed, and delinquent taxes mounted, the strain has become unbearable. If any State in the nation should have been interested in modernizing its tax system, that State was Iowa. The 1933 legislature brought forth much legislation. But an analysis of the 32 new laws that affect the schools shows that all but one were concerned solely with economy. The millage levies were limited to 30 per cent of the 1930 level. Agriculture, home economics, and manual training were taken from the list of required subjects, and kindergartens made optional instead of mandatory. The appropriations for the

State department of public instruction were reduced by 30 per cent. Permission was given for the discontinuance of junior colleges, and regulations were laid down for the disestablishment of county high schools. A flat minimum salary of \$40 a month was fixed for teachers, regardless of their training or experience—which, interestingly enough, is just about half the annual minimum income the government has assigned to industrial workers. Every conceivable kind of budget whittling was done, but nothing whatever was accomplished in the way of correcting the basic tax trouble.

Kansas, true to her genius for engaging in reforms on a heroic scale, had an economy legislature that really did things. None of the Iowan attention to small details in economy sullied their record. In spite of words of caution from the governor, they kept their eyes on the main job. They made a four-million-dollar cut in State appropriations, a large share of which must be borne by the State schools. They ordered the tax commission to reduce real property values 20 per cent, and they sternly limited school levies. And, to make all things doubly sure, they required every governmental agency to tot up its indebtedness, issue bonds to cover it, and forthwith go on a strict "cash basis." Having started from scratch, it must stay absolutely within its income. No more tax-anticipation warrants for Kansas.

Naturally such a legislative job is received in various ways. The taxpayers' associations that forced it are jubilant. School boards are bewildered. No one knows what to count upon, because the amount of delinquent taxes is nowadays unpredictable.

In smaller communities over the State the situation is still [August] uncertain. The "cash basis" system comes particularly hard just at this moment, for Kansas is going through one of the worst drouths in her drouth-ridden history. Two years of twenty-five cent wheat followed by a year of drouth make a sad combination for Kansas. Out through the wheat country great level fields are being foreclosed by the thousands. In the eastern part of the State, where diversified farming is practiced, the condition is no better. Naturally, then, taxes dribble into the courthouses in slow, thin streams. In the face of all this some rural school boards have decided that it is not worth while trying to open their schools. More than one rural teacher has contracted to teach for \$35 a month, which in an eight months' school year means an annual income of \$280. How many books and magazines these teachers, who are supposed to form the cultural leadership of rural Kansas, can afford to buy during the next year is open to any one's estimate. Their teaching will consist of a plodding sort of routine drill—when they are not worrying about the problem of how to replace the shoes which have just sprung leaks.

In general, the urban districts have the choice between cutting down to the Three R's, putting the teachers on a subsistence level, or shortening the term. At Horton, a town of about 4,000, the superintendent and teachers were hired at the rate of \$50 a month. In a typical county seat town of

\$500 the plan is to eliminate the kindergarten, school nurse, and one grade school, cut salaries sharply again, then run along until near the holidays, when the officials will say to the teachers, "We have only so much money on hand. If you want to prorrate it among yourselves, well and good. If not, you'll have to go." The assumption back of this plan is that on the present crowded teacher market it will always be possible to get teachers no matter what salary is offered.

In other States the school legislation may not have been so extreme, but much of it was to the same point. In Idaho the appropriations for all educational institutions were reduced from 20 to 39 per cent of the 1931 level. In Oregon the teachers' minimum salary law was invalidated for two years. In Wyoming the legislature provided for the distribution of the government royalty fund (derived from mineral leases on federal lands) for a six months' term instead of eight months. In Michigan a severe taxation law was passed. In Delaware there was proposed a measure which would make it unlawful to employ any person to teach art, music, or athletics.

In Arkansas, where the school situation was last year so bad that in late November a tourist driving across the State saw few rural schools open, the legislature set itself to the task of relieving the schools. The line of reasoning was apparently thus: "In the good old days when the schools were in politics we did not have such messes as this. Therefore, we will return them to the politicians, and incidentally save some money on them." Accordingly, the offices of County Board of Education and County Superintendent were abolished. The powers and duties of the former were vested in that picturesque institution, the County Court, and the powers and duties of the latter in a county examiner appointed by the county judge. This county examiner is required to remain in active teaching service, and for his extra-professional chore is to be paid a fee of \$650 a year! Another backward step of the same sort was taken in the abolition of the State Board of Education and throwing of the office of State Superintendent back into State politics.

In Oklahoma an economy measure requires the adoption of text books for a period of ten years. On a mad-hatter arrangement like that a whole generation of children would have grown up without knowing that the language of Poland exists or that the form of government in Russia has changed! Another interesting new law establishes a schedule of *maximum* salaries for schools which are to have State aid. According to this schedule teachers with the lowest permissible training and experience are to be paid to \$40 a month, while the upper limit for an experienced, college graduate, elementary teacher is \$85, or an annual income of \$680, if State funds can hold out for eight months. An inexperienced high school teacher in A.M. is entitled to \$90. The most any such teacher can ever get no matter how many years of experience is exactly \$100. . . . In general, there are four points at which a Board of Education sitting

down to work out its annual budget may apply the knife: in building and repairs, in text books and classroom equipment, in salaries, and in services and curricula.

The first need not detain us long. It is no longer available at all as a method of economy. At the onset of the depression building programs were abandoned and repairs reduced to a minimum that in many a town will prove a costly economy in the long run, if not an actual danger to life and limb. The results of this three-year stretch of thrift are beginning to be apparent. Since the average school district had spent heavily for building during the decade before 1930 (to compensate for the war years when no construction went on and to accord with the general spirit of "bigger and better") probably no great harm has yet been done by this halt in building. But depression or no depression, the school population continues to increase by more than 200,000 a year. Present building equipment will not long continue to house a family that grows so rapidly. In many city systems room-shortage is already an acute problem. In fact the 1932-33 term saw about 250,000 children attending school on a part-time basis for lack of school rooms and approximately 150,000 others housed in temporary or portable shacks. To enjoy the Century of Progress one must forget that the eccentric metropolis which stages the show used seven hundred tin shacks in housing its school-children last year and has just junked its entire junior high school system in order to gain classroom space for the senior high schools.

The next items to be considered by our hypothetical Board in desperate search for something to reduce are text books and classroom equipment. Here, too, economy was early in the game carried as far as it could be without serious injury to the quality of instruction offered. It is safe to say that whatever further reduction is being made for the 1933-34 term does offer that injury. With a million more pupils than in 1930, the sale of textbooks had dropped off 30 per cent by the beginning of 1933. Such a contrast in figures can only mean that youngsters are using dog-eared, dirty books, crudely defaced and probably with missing pages. A fine chance they have to learn to respect books! It can also only mean that many schools are already seriously crippled by the lack of books. Supplementary readers and reference books fall to pieces after a while, and if they are not replaced, instruction in the courses which depend upon them must cease.

And now the Board comes to salaries. Three courses are open. Salaries may be cut all round, teachers may be released, or at the worst both devices may be resorted to. The first method was the one most often chosen in 1932-33. According to a study made last spring by the United States Office of Education, teachers' salaries had already dropped from 12 to 43 per cent—besides, of course, the discount levied by bankers who cashed the warrants. This fall salaries fell sharply again. In many regions the teachers are now literally on a subsistence level. Throughout the country as a whole the classroom teachers who still have jobs, who are paid in cash and with some degree of regularity, and who have an annual income

of as much as \$1200 may count themselves among the plutocrats of the profession. The rise of commodity prices, which the administration is so assiduously fostering, will materially add to the troubles of the pedagogues. . . .

In preceding depression years new teachers were not hired, but this year has seen a wave of actual releases. Chicago has trimmed her teaching force by more than a thousand. With the \$2,200,000 cut Boston is making from last year's budget many teachers will surely have to be eliminated. So small a city as Tulsa has had to let 60 go. In villages and cities everywhere the teaching force is smaller this year than in 1930, when the school population was about a million less than this year. To the cynic who asks, "What of it?" one has to reply that Mark Hopkins on the end of a log may be only a romantic ideal, but Susan Smith facing 50 or 60 pupils in a room designed to seat 35 or 40 comfortably is so far at the other extreme that it is nonsense to think she can do much teaching.

And finally, the Board approaches the items most loaded with emotional dynamite: services and curricula. Here enter for attention the celebrated "fads and frills" about which every critic of the public schools is so deeply exercised. Now a fad or a frill seems to be anything in the school system which was not there thirty years ago. Last year the schools began reluctantly to relinquish them, in other words, to retreat to the educational customs of 1900. This year a veritable axe has descended upon them. Night schools and special schools for physically and mentally handicapped children have been eliminated or drastically curtailed. At the present rate of mortality, kindergartens will soon be a thing of the past. Supervisors are being blown out like chaff in the wind. Health services are being abandoned and visiting teachers becoming a luxury few cities can afford. Many towns have eliminated music entirely and others have greatly reduced their offerings. Art, home economics, manual training, physical education, trade and vocational classes, and even foreign languages are all being eliminated or curtailed.

40 • TEACHERS

FOOT THE EDUCATIONAL BILL

The following testimony summarizes the financial plight of the teachers of Chicago, who had several "payless paydays" in the yearly 1930's. It was nearly a decade before the Chicago teachers received all their back pay. Federal Cooperation in Employment Relief, Hearing before a Subcommittee of the Committee on Manufactures, United States Senate, 72nd Cong., S.S., on S. 4592, May 9, 1932 (Washington: Government Printing Office, 1932), pp. 48-51.

41 • COLLEGE STUDENTS OF THE DEPRESSION

Many students during the 1930's devised ingenious ways to make or save a dollar. This article describes some of the students' practices during the school year 1932-1933. Gilbert Love, "College Students Are Beating the Depression," School and Society, XXXVII (June 10, 1933), pp. 749-751. Reprinted by permission of the editor.

ACROSS THE CAMPUS of Oklahoma A. and M. College moved a weird procession. At the front was an ancient open flivver, sufficiently battered to be termed "collegiate." In its front seat were two boys; in its back seat a bale of hay. There followed another car, differing from the first only in the number and kind of dents in its fenders and body. It was also manned by two boys. Its back seat was occupied by a large crate of protesting poultry. Then came a fifth boy leading a Jersey cow. The cow refused to be influenced by the obvious impatience of the motorized portion of the procession, so it was hours later when the strange group finally arrived in front of a house on the outskirts of the college town. The poultry was given a back yard coop in which to live and, presumably, to lay eggs. The cow was tethered in an adjoining field. Then from some recesses in the battered hulls of the flivvers the boys pulled out some 200 quarts of canned fruits and vegetables and a dozen cured hams. With meat and vegetables in the cellar and prospective eggs and milk in the back yard, the five were ready for higher education.

College students have probably developed more ingenious ways of beating the depression than any other group in America. Using their wits to earn money or cooking their own meals and living in shacks to save it, Joe College and Betty Co-ed are getting educated in spite of technological unemployment, bank moratoria, impoverishment of agriculture and a general scarcity of cash. For instance:

Two male students at Ohio State University have started a "dog laundry." They call for Fido, Bruno or Towser, take him to their "plant" and return him all nicely bathed, combed and manicured. . . .

A Notre Dame student who found that all the regular "hashing," janitorial and secretarial jobs were taken when he arrived in South Bend, created a business for himself by becoming a campus guide. He spends his Sundays at the entrance to the university, picking up groups of visitors and taking them to points of interest around the famous school.

A student at Western Reserve University, Cleveland, has been able to hold a comparatively lucrative position right through the depression because he is becoming accustomed to hold-ups. The large gasoline station at which he is night attendant has been robbed three times by gunmen.

A couple of husky freshmen at West Virginia University who probably didn't know the difference between a casserole and a wash tub when they left home, have been going to school on less than \$1.60 a week apiece by renting a back bedroom with a small stove in it and cooking cheap but nourishing foods.

Eight boys at the University of Washington are getting their meals at very small cost by cooking them in a basement and "taking in" several other students as boarders.

An examination of a single small school reveals the wide variety of occupations that students have taken up to support themselves. In Duquesne University, Pittsburgh, one student is an undertaker's helper, one a railroad fireman, one a laborer in a steel mill, one cuts granite tombstones and another sells newspapers. A student who has become an expert on glass works a regular eight-hour shift in a glass factory 40 miles from Pittsburgh and "commutes" to take a full-time course at Duquesne. A pharmacist who has changed his mind about professions is keeping his corner drug store to pay his way through a law course. An enterprising student buys old text-books from sophomores and sells them to freshmen. An athletic young man is serving as first aid instructor for a coal company. One Duquesne student is reputed to hold 27 odd jobs on the campus and in the city. Among other things he is editor-in-chief of the school newspaper and official announcer at the major league baseball games at Forbes Field.

The student wage-earners at Duquesne are mostly male. But, throughout the country, girls are showing as much initiative and courage as their masculine fellow-students in making their own way. Take Northwestern students, for example. One girl living in a Northwestern cooperative dormitory earns her expense money by remodeling hats and dresses, washing and waving hair and doing any odd mending wanted. Two girls have become so well known for their adeptness at catering that they can not take one of all the calls they receive from hostesses in Evanston and near-by sections of Chicago. Another girl is housekeeper—"home manager" would be more accurate—in a household in which there is a grandmother who is seriously ill that she must have two nurses, a father and mother who must be away on business most of the time, and three small children who are left in Evanston to attend school. An exclusive apartment hotel employs a co-ed as hostess in its tea room. For working about four hours a day the girl is given a luxurious apartment, maid service and meals. Another makes several hundred dollars a year by tinting photographs for an out-of-town company.

Student occupations at the University of Pennsylvania, Philadelphia,

range all the way from historical research to handling boats. A recent survey disclosed the fact that students were engaged in 84 kinds of gainful activity. Dish washing, furniture moving, painting, tutoring, pantry work, scraping floors and soda dispensing seem to be favorites, if numbers are any indication. To take care of some of the students who could not find work in Philadelphia, the student placement service started an automobile washing and polishing establishment on the campus.

The University of Pennsylvania took action at the start of the present school year to turn over as many campus jobs as possible to students. As a result, collegians are now acting as night watchmen, janitors, secretaries, mail carriers, switchboard operators, locker room attendants, technicians and clerks. Students have also been appointed to act as gate men and ushers at athletic contests and to handle all parking on university grounds. They handle trunks in the dormitories at the beginning and end of each academic year and have been authorized to sell certain articles at service stands placed in university buildings.

As a matter of fact, schools everywhere are taking heroic measures to help their students through the period of economic difficulty.

Costs at the University Commons, University of Kentucky, have been reduced to such an extent that students can now live there for \$3.50 a week. Through the intervention of the dean of men at West Virginia University, the standard rate of board charged in private homes near the university has been reduced from \$7 to \$4 a week.

At the University of Pittsburgh a number of boys are being allowed to live rent-free in unused garages and other buildings near the campus. And, although it was not officially sanctioned by the university, a group of athletes lived for several months last winter in a drafty campus building used for dressing room purposes.

Officials of Carthage College, in Illinois, let a miner pay his daughter's tuition in coal this past winter. At Notre Dame 300 students are earning their board by waiting on tables in the dormitory dining halls. They are so numerous that they serve a meal to their 2,000 fellow students in 20 minutes.

Statistics compiled last fall indicate that fully half the men and one fourth of the women attending the nation's 48 land-grant colleges are working for at least part of their funds. More than 13,000 men and 3,000 girls in these colleges are earning all their expenses. Their total earnings are \$7,000,000 a year.

At the University of Wisconsin, three fifths of the students earned part of their expenses during the last school year, and 23 per cent were wholly self-supporting. At Yale, during the last school year, students earned \$553,701. The institution contributed another \$683,378 in scholarships and loans.

When the economic depression is finally over and commendations for valor are being passed around, some sort of special recognition should be

given the student who, with only enough money to last until June if he spent but 35 cents a day for food, quit a \$100 a month job because it was keeping him from his studies.

42 • A NEW DEMOCRACY IN COLLEGE EDUCATION

The New Deal's aid to poverty-stricken college students helped enable college enrollments to climb back to normal and when surpass the numbers of the 1920's. The Roosevelt administration's FERA and NYA did more than any national measure undertaken before to make a college education possible for young people from poor families. Excerpted from Betty and Ernest K. Lindley, A New Deal for Youth: The Story of the National Youth Administration (New York: The Viking Press, 1938), pp. 156-163. Reprinted by permission of the publisher.

THE AMERICAN DREAM of equal educational opportunity has never fully materialized—not even in the elementary schools. The gap between aspiration and fact has been the widest at the college level. Even at the elite institutions, laboratory fees, books, and incidentals are more costly than in the high schools, and most students must meet the additional expense of board and lodging away from home. A bridge of scholarships and loan funds has carried a few promising but poor young people across the gap. A wider bridge has been built by the energetic and ambitious youths who have worked their way through college. Entirely or partly self-supporting students have been respected members of undergraduate communities. They have not been unknown even at the high-tuition private colleges catering chiefly to the children of families in the upper-income brackets.

For a decade before the great depression the difficulty of working one's way through college had been increasing somewhat. Between 1920 and 1930 college attendance more than doubled. Many colleges are situated in small communities where the number of part-time jobs did not increase in proportion to the number of students seeking them. Nor, on the average, was there a decrease in the cost of a college education to the individual student.

With the advent of the depression, the number of students partly or wholly dependent on their own earning capacities sharply increased, and the number of jobs open to them sharply decreased. Most institutions

made all the concessions that their own often dwindling resources permitted to promising students with little or no money. Some of the State universities were able to provide living quarters in limited quantity at extremely low cost. Some university cafeterias sold balanced dinners to needy students at ten or twelve cents. Yet this scale of living was beyond the means of many youth. At one State university, the authorities found that one young man had been trying to feed himself on fifty cents a week and that another was sleeping during a cold winter in an old automobile parked on the edge of the town. Yet these ambitious young people hung on grimly. Many of them would have been no better off anywhere else. At the colleges they could suffer undernourishment in attractive surroundings; and in the classrooms and college libraries they could at least find warmth. Thousands of other capable young people remained in idleness at home because they could not scrape together even enough money for incidental fees at the least expensive colleges.

In spite of all that was done, the enrollment in colleges and universities dropped about 10 per cent between 1932 and 1934, and would have dropped further if the Federal Government had not begun to supply aid to needy students in February 1934. If this drop had meant a weeding out of the least fit, perhaps it could have been considered as not undesirable. But it was not. It meant only the loss of some of those who lacked financial means and could not find the jobs with which to pay for their own education.

With the creation of the Civilian Conservation Corps various educators began to suggest that a small amount of money be made available to help young people to go to college. Until the unused capacity of the colleges was filled, it obviously was less expensive to keep youths in college than to put them in CCC camps. Indeed, there was no cheaper way to keep a large number of people of college age off the labor market and usefully occupied. And for those capable of benefiting from a higher education, this way probably held the greatest promise of gain for society as a whole. These considerations led President Roosevelt to approve the use of enough Federal relief money to help approximately 75,000 young people to attend college during the second half of the college year 1933-34. With a slight expansion this aid was continued by FERA during the next college year and since then has been provided through NYA.

The principal terms of the college aid program have remained unchanged since the program was instituted in February 1934. In return for work, the Federal Government pays to a needy student a maximum of \$20 a month during the college year. The average of payments within any institution may not exceed \$15 a month. Every bona fide non-profit-making and tax-exempt institution which requires a high school diploma or the equivalent as the minimum for entrance is eligible to participate. Each is given as a quota a percentage of its enrollment of regular students.

Unlike the work program for out-of-school youth, NYA college students

aid has never been restricted to youth from relief families. The colleges and universities themselves select the students to be aided. The Federal Government requires that these students possess the ability to do good scholastic work, that they be regular students carrying at least three-fourths of the normal academic schedule, and that they be unable to enter or remain in college without Federal assistance. The institutions themselves also arrange and supervise the work which these youths do to earn their Federal wage checks. The pay is at the hourly rates for comparable work in the college or community. The chief Federal requirements are that this work be useful and that it be work not formerly done by regular employees of which could be done out of regular budgets.

Under NYA the college aid program has been expanded to include graduate students under the age of 25. The graduate students are permitted to earn a maximum of \$40 a month each. For two years, graduate aid was segregated, and the graduate students assisted in any one institution were allowed to earn up to an average of \$30 a month. During 1937-38, graduate aid was lumped with college aid. While an individual graduate student may still earn up to \$40 a month, the funds allotted to any institution are sufficient to permit average earnings for college and graduate students combined of only \$15 a month. A small special fund has been created for Negro graduate students.

Approximately 98 per cent of the eligible institutions, including junior colleges and normal schools, have participated in the student aid program. Most of the handful of exceptions are privately controlled colleges with limited enrollments and high tuition. A few institutions in this class accepted Federal aid for a year or two but have now dropped it. Others continue to take advantage of it, but in many cases not to the full extent of their quotas.

For a limited number of students, NYA aid pays all, or substantially all, expenses during the college year. Before Federal aid was established, the University of Iowa had provided dormitory space in a field house, where 100 students were sheltered for \$1.00 a week each. Subsequently the university assisted in the organization of 10 co-operative houses for a total of 300 young men and women. During 1935-36, these co-operative houses charged \$15 a month for board and room, and at the end of the year were able to refund approximately one month's board to each participating student. Several State institutions have assisted in making similar provision for a few students with little money. At the University of Idaho two years ago, more than 200 students paid for all their living expenses, and necessary incidentals with \$18 a month each.

NYA students who live at home while going to college, as many do in the cities, often are able to pay most or all of their fees and incidental expenses from NYA earnings. For the great majority, however, NYA earnings will pay only from 50 per cent to as little as 10 per cent of their expenses. At the tax-supported institutions the NYA assistance usually

meets from 25 to 60 per cent of the total expenses of students who do not live at home. At the privately controlled colleges the percentage is lower.

In some cases, NYA aid is used to supplement scholarships. At the privately controlled institutions most scholarships are only rebates, in part or in whole, of tuition fees. Where scholarships exist at tax-supported institutions, they are usually only of small sums. In the whole country, the number of scholarships that pay all the essential expenses of a college student is negligible. Without assistance from NYA or other sources, many students would be unable to avail themselves of scholarships.

In many cases, NYA aid is combined with money from home, or another job, or a scholarship, or all three. A brilliant Negro student at the University of Illinois won a small scholarship. He also found a job which gave him his meals. His father, a railroad laborer earning \$90 a month, sent him \$6 a month. Yet, without aid from still another source, he would not have had enough to pay his expenses. The difference was made up by an NYA job as a laboratory assistant in the Department of Natural History. A student at Vanderbilt University was able to pay for his education by the combination of a scholarship, summer work, \$300 in loans from the student loan fund, and an NYA job. These illustrations could be multiplied many times. In most institutions, NYA assistance is under the direction of the same officials who handle other student aid funds, including the parceling out of part-time jobs. In many cases the fitting and joining and penny-by-penny calculation which college personnel officials put into the allocation of aid to needy students would excite the admiration of an efficiency engineer.

Almost one-third of the students receiving NYA college aid are from families with annual incomes of \$999 or less. Three-fourths are from families having annual incomes of \$1999 or less. About 16 per cent are from families whose incomes are \$2000 or more, and for 8.2 per cent the size of the family income is unknown. More than 55 per cent are from families containing five or more persons, and more than 34 per cent are from families of six or more. Three out of five are boys. Negroes and other racial minorities make up 5.8 per cent.

VII

Will There Be a Revolution?

THIS WAS A QUESTION that weighed heavily on many Americans' minds and hearts in 1931 and 1932. Most people hoped the desperation of Great Depression victims would not trigger a revolution; a relative few hoped the whole social mess would end in revolt. But neither side would have been surprised had there been concerted and national violence to achieve a revolutionary purpose.

Fear of a revolution was very widespread during the last several months of President Hoover's administration, and much of the politics of the period can be understood fully only by viewing political events against the background of anxiety about violent revolt. The vigor with which the army dispersed the Bonus Expeditionary Force from Washington in the summer of 1932, for example, had its roots in revolutionary fear.

Despite extensive and intensive social discontent and despite the general belief in the possibility, even the expectancy, of revolution, there was no serious revolt. At least, there was no revolution if by revolution we mean an armed seizure of power, strife at the barricades, blood in the streets.

The selections here reprinted illustrate the fear of revolution, the kind of thinking that characterized both those who wanted and those who dreaded revolution, some aspects of the class violence that actually developed, and the nature of the post mortem explanations of revolutionary

"It is too late to bargain with us," the leaders shouted, as they stripped the shelves.

The police hastily assembled emergency squads and dispersed the crowd numbering 500, with tear gas. Only those who were trapped in the wrecked store were arrested. Five women among them were released. The windows of the store were smashed as the raiders attempted to flee.

John Simmons was held on a charge of assault after he had leaped on the back of Lee Mullenix, a policeman, when the officer attempted to enter the crowded store.

Floyd Phillips was charged with inciting a riot. The police said he was one of the speakers who harangued the crowd at the City Hall before they began a parade that ended at the store.

MINNEAPOLIS, Feb. 25 (AP).—Several hundred men and women in an unemployed demonstration late today stormed a grocery and meat market in the Gateway district, smashed plate glass windows and helped themselves to bacon and ham, fruit and canned goods.

One of the store owners suffered a broken arm when he was attacked as he drew a revolver and attempted to keep out the first to enter.

One hundred policemen were sent to the district and seven persons were arrested as the leaders.

ST. PAUL, MINN., Feb. 25 (AP).—A crowd, after attending a meeting to protest against unemployment, forced its way late today into a small store owned by George Baglio, near the downtown section, and took more than \$50 worth of merchandise, mostly cigars, cigarettes, candy and apples. Police arrested three men and held them without charge.

46 • AN AGRARIAN RADICAL DISCUSSES THE COMMUNISTS

This selection is excerpted from the newsletter Congressman Thomas Amlie of Wisconsin, a LaFollette Progressive, sent to his constituents. The Elkhorn (Wisconsin) Independent, December 15, 1932.

ON THE OPENING DAY OF CONGRESS there arrived in Washington about 3,000 hunger marchers. They came principally from the large industrial centers where economic conditions have become highly acute. Upon their arrival in the city they were congregated on New York Ave., which was shut off from traffic and which was surrounded by capital police on all

sides. The marchers were kept there for approximately three days, and compelled to sleep in the open.

This group was led by communists and at least half of the members were communists. I spent three hours talking to them on the last night that they were here in town. They were extremely bitter because of the treatment that they had been accorded in Washington. When I was out at this camp, I saw a great many things done on the part of the police to provoke these people. The treatment that they received did more to make communists of these hunger marchers than all the talking that was ever done by communist agitators. Some of the leaders of this march were complaining to me very bitterly about the rough treatment that the members had received from the police. I asked them if this was not precisely what the leaders had hoped for when they got these people to come on the march. They only smiled. . . .

During the latter part of last week we had approximately 250 farmers here from the various agricultural states in the union. These farmers were demanding legislation even more radical than that demanded by the hunger marchers.

On the whole, 90 per cent of these 250 men were real dirt farmers. Most of them were men in the twenties or early thirties. . . . There was almost as much bitterness on the part of these farmers against the government and constituted authority as there was on the part of the hunger marchers from the industrial sections. . . . A number of these farmers announced that in several midwestern states there would be no further convictions through mortgage foreclosures.

47 • AN ANGRY RANCHER'S REVOLUTIONARY IDEAS

As Congressman Amlie noted, the nation's farmers, certainly Communist or even Marxist, were in a belligerently ugly mood. This testimony is by Oscar Ameringer, whose comments on agricultural waste while people went hungry were reprinted in section 13. Unemployment in the United States, Hearings before a Subcommittee of the Committee on Labor, House of Representatives, 72nd Cong., 1 sess., on H.R. 206, H.R. 6011, H.R. 8088 (Washington: Government Printing Office, 1932), pp. 700-101.

THE TIME AGO A COWMAN came into my office in Oklahoma City. He was one of these double-fisted gentlemen, with the gallon hat and all the

said, "You do not know me from Adam's ox." I said, "No, I do not believe I know you." . . . He said, "I came to this country without a cent, but, knowing my onions, and by tending strictly to business, I finally accumulated two sections of land and a fine herd of white-faced Hereford cattle. I was independent." I remarked that anybody could do that if he worked hard and did not gamble and used good management. He said, "After the war cattle began to drop, and I was feeding them corn, and by the time I got them to Chicago the price of cattle, considering the price of corn I had fed them, was not enough to even pay my expenses. I could not pay anything."

Continuing, he said, "I mortgaged my two sections of land, and to-day I am cleaned out; by God, I am not going to stand for it." I asked him what he was going to do about it, and he said, "We have got to have a revolution here like they had in Russia and clean them up." I finally asked him, "Who is going to make the revolution?" He said, "I just want to tell you that I am going to be one of them, and I am going to do my share in it." I asked what his share was and he said, "I will capture a certain fort. I know I can get in with 20 of my boys," meaning his cowboys, "because I know the inside and outside of it, and I capture that with my men." I rejoined, "Then what?" He said, "We will have 400 machine guns, so many batteries of artillery, tractors, and munitions and rifles, and everything else needed to supply a pretty good army." Then I asked, "What then?" He said, "If there are enough fellows with guts in this country to do like us, we will march eastward and we will cut the East off. We will cut the East off from the West. We have got the granaries; we have the hogs, the cattle, the corn, and East has nothing but mortgages on our places. We will show them what we can do."

That man may be very foolish, and I think he is, but he is in dead earnest, he is a hard-shelled Baptist and a hard-shelled Democrat, not a Socialist or a Communist, but just a plain American cattleman whose ancestors went from Carolina to Tennessee, then to Arkansas, and then to Oklahoma. I have heard much of this talk from serious-minded prosperous men of other days.

As you know, talk is always a mental preparation for action. Nothing is done until people talk and talk it, and they finally get the notion that they will do it.

I do not say we are going to have a revolution on hand within the next year or two, perhaps never. I hope we may not have such; but the danger is here. That is the feeling of our people—as reflected in the letters I have read. I have met these people virtually every day all over the country. There is a feeling among the masses generally that something is radically wrong. They are despairing of political action. They say the only thing you do in Washington is to take money from the pockets of the poor and put it into the pockets of the rich. They say that this Government is a con-

spiracy against the common people to enrich the already rich. I hear such remarks every day.

I never pass a hitch hiker without inviting him in and talking to him. Bankers even are talking about that. They are talking in irrational tones. You have more Bolshevism among the bankers to-day than the hod carriers, I think. It is a terrible situation, and I think something should be done and done immediately.

48 • THE REBELLION OF THE PRAIRIE FARMERS

The most serious display of class violence in the early depression came from the farmers of the Upper Midwest rather than from the unemployed industrial workers. This article describes the activities and ideas of farmers in the National Farm Holiday Association, which in the summer of 1932 tried to raise farm prices by stopping the shipment of food into cities until prices went up. Mary Heaton Vorse, "Rebellion in the Cornbelt: American Farmers Beat Their Plowshares into Swords," Harper's, CLXVI (December, 1932), pp. 3-7. Used by permission of the author.

SOONLY THE PAPERS were filled with accounts of highway picketing by farmers around Sioux City. A Farmers' Holiday Association had been organized by one Milo Reno, and the farmers were to refuse to bring food to market for thirty days or "until the cost of production had been obtained."

We have issued an ultimatum to the other groups of society," they proclaimed. "If you continue to confiscate our property and demand that we feed your stomachs and clothe your bodies we will refuse to function. We don't ask people to make implements, cloth, or houses at the price of degradation, bankruptcy, dissolution, and despair."

Reno, their first leader, was crying to them, "Agriculture as we know it has come to the parting of the ways. We will soon have no individually owned and operated farms. We have come to the place where you must practice what every other group does—strike! Or else you are not going to possess your homes."

This is literally true. In no group of farmers can you find anyone who is secure, and this is what has brought the farmers out to the roads and to action. They are not interested in a back-to-the-land movement. What they are interested in is a keep-on-the-land movement. They discovered

once that this had brought them more notice from press and legislature than all their desperate years of peaceful organization.

The strike around Sioux City soon ceased to be a local matter. It jumped the Missouri River and crossed the Big Sioux. Roads were picketed in South Dakota and Nebraska as well as in Iowa. Soon Minnesota followed suit, and her farmers picketed her roads. North Dakota organized. Down in Georgia farmers dumped milk on the highway. For a few days the milk supply of New York City was menaced. Farmers in Bucks County, Pennsylvania, organized, and potato farmers in Long Island raised the price of potatoes by a "holiday." This banding together of farmers for mutual protection is going on everywhere, but the center of this disturbance is still Iowa and the neighboring States.

The Milk Producers' Association joined forces with the Farmers' Holiday. All the roads leading to Sioux City were picketed. Trucks by hundreds were turned back. Farmers by hundreds lined the roads. They blockaded the roads with spiked telegraph poles and logs. They took away a sheriff's badge and his gun and threw them in a cornfield. Gallons of milk ran down roadway ditches. Gallons of confiscated milk were distributed free on the streets of Sioux City.

Omaha, Council Bluffs, and Des Moines were blockaded as well as Sioux City. In all these cities numerous deputies were sworn in to help the respective sheriffs. The Governor of Iowa ordered the roads cleared. Trucks attempted to rush through the lines of picketing farmers. A few trucks were escorted through the farmers' lines by armed deputies.

The armed deputies at James, ten miles out of Sioux City, started to convoy a fleet of thirty trucks through the lines. Guns were pointed. The farmers stood fast. Before an audience of bystanders the trucks were turned back. No shots were fired.

On another highway, farmers bared their breasts, daring the armed deputies to shoot. The deputies did not take the dare.

At Council Bluffs there were sixty arrests. A thousand farmers marched on the jail. The prisoners were hastily released on nominal bail. In the East there were rumors that the pickets were not bona fide farmers, but a disorderly element from the cities and groups of unemployed or "reds." One of the local papers took a canvass of the men in the Woodbury county jail in Sioux City, where ninety pickets were confined with this result: five were farm owners; twenty had owned farms and were now renters; twenty-five had always been renters; fifteen were farm boys living with their parents; seventeen were farm laborers long living in the community, and there were eight packing house employees and workers in other industries living in Sioux City.

Yet in spite of this inquiry, city officials in Sioux City and prominent business men gave interviews to the effect that the picketers were paid by the Democratic party or "instigated by Milo Reno." Naturally this block-

ading the roads was unpopular with the business men. High city officials went to the Governor to ask for State troops. Sheriff Davenport of Sioux City made a similar request of the Governor. But Governor Dan Turner had brought the troops out during the so-called "cow-serum war" last year with disastrous political effects.

Leaders of the movement ran round to the picket lines and begged the farmers to stop picketing. There was an organization meeting of the executive committees of the Farmers' Holiday Association of ten States. What threat of troops, or jailings, or arrests could not do, the Executive Committee did. By the twenty-first of September the roads around Sioux City were cleared for the first time in six weeks.

But the farmers had learned the lesson that direct action pays.

The picketing had not been stopped when we arrived in Sioux City. . . . Highway No. 20, leading to Sioux City, has been the scene of some of the sharpest clashes between deputies and farmers. It has won itself the proud name of "Bunker Hill 20." On the night we visited No. 20 a score of men were sitting round a campfire. A boy was sprawled out on an automobile cushion asleep. Everyone was in overalls. Their sunburned faces shone red in the firelight.

A lamp in a smaller tent glowed in the darkness. A trestle table stood near at hand. The Ladies' Aid bring substantial meals to the picketers. The irregular circle round the fire, the high moonlit poplar trees, the lighted tent were like a stage set for a play. There was an air of immense earnestness about the farmers. They had been swung completely out of their usual orbit, but they are absolutely sure of the righteousness of their cause. An old man with white mustache said:

"They say blockading the highway's illegal. I says, 'Seems to me there was a Tea-party in Boston that was illegal too. What about destroying property in Boston Harbor when our country was started?' He sets the note of the evening.

"If we farmers go down bankrupt," says one of the younger men, "everything in this country goes down. If we get enough to live on, everybody's going to go to work again."

"When we can't buy," says another, "there can't be any prosperity. We ain't been buying nothing, not for four years."

"My binder's fallen apart so, don't know how I'm going to get through this year." The conversation moves slowly from one man to another with quiet deliberation. There is a cry: "Truck!"

They hurry out in the roadway. All of them carry heavy stakes, some made from axe handles. None of them is armed, though a young fellow pointed to a little mound of quarter bricks.

"Plenty of Irish confetti," he said cheerily. Beside the road, handy to use, are heavy spiked logs and planks bristling with spikes to throw in front

of trucks. This truck is empty. There is a short conference. The truck passes on its way.

"Good-night, boys," calls the driver. "Good luck!" He is one of them, part of the movement that is just beginning to realize its power. We go back to the fire.

"There are not so many picketers on the roads as there were," we suggest.

"There don't need to be," says the man next to me. He is an older man with heavy grooves in his face. His big hands rest on his club. Next him sits Davidson, a "committee man." He is a young giant towering over the others. He wears a clean shirt with a knitted sweater over it, and he has had a fresh haircut. Davidson takes up the tale.

"We've got so organized," he says quietly, "the farmers ain't coming over No. 20 any more. The Holiday Association bought some time on the radio—KSCJ—and we radioed the farmers to stay home, and they're doing it."

"We don't need but a few fellows now," said Ben Grey, another committee man. He is a young fellow with a felt hat on the back of his head, a little shorter than Davidson, in blue shirt and overalls and high boots. "We know an hour before a truck is on the road," explained the old farmer. "One of our folks will see it way off and telephone down to us. The telephone operators are all with us. We can get a hundred farmers here in a few minutes if we need 'em. So we don't need to have so many picketers on the roads now we're organized."

"I heard about how there was a fellow bootlegging milk through here. Heard about how he was laughing at us on No. 20. Said we was a lot of scabs, didn't know what we was doing."

"Say, if he comes through, we ought to learn him something." This from the older farmer with the white mustache. "We certainly should turn him back on a dirt road and learn him a lesson."

Again there is a cry of, "Truck!"

The farmers run forward, the sleeping boy awakes. This time it is the bootlegging milk truck. A long intricate dialogue follows. Everyone takes his turn. The milk bootlegger is a plausible fellow with a high whining voice.

"Now, friends," he entreats, "you wouldn't want to put me out of business, would you, like them big fellows would like to put out of business all of us little fellows?"

"We wouldn't want no hardship visited on him that we wouldn't want visited on ourselves," says one.

They put it to the vote. The specious bootlegger has won them over, to the disgust of the committee men.

The next evening the farmers had a meeting at the Golden Slipper dance hall on Highway 141 to vote whether road picketing should continue. Long before the time for the meeting, farmers' cars choked the roadways.

There are a thousand people in the hall—double that outside. Newcomers could only wriggle eelwise through the crowds. Farmers in store clothes, farmers in overalls, farmers in old hats and caps, dirt farmers of Iowa coming to vote about picketing. They have come from South Dakota and Nebraska as well as from miles back in Iowa. They have come from Cherokee, and there are pickets from Council Bluffs and Clinton.

The dance hall has pseudo-modernistic decorations, silver triangles against green and black. Black silhouettes decorate the hall—an odd "arty" decoration for this page of history to be played against.

There is a shout of, "Everybody outside!"

The hall is cleared, a double file of men stands at the door. Each picket passes through the gauntlet of two lines of men. He must be recognized and accredited in order to vote. Only pickets can vote.

"Anybody know this fellow? John, have you seen him?"

"He says he's been at 141."

"Yes, I know him. He's been there." The man passes through.

"Seventy-seven. Who's on 77? This fellow says he comes from 77."

No one on 77 knows him. The man is turned back. The hall begins to fill. No one is allowed to go out again for fear that he might return and vote again.

Outside, on a cattle truck, speeches are being made, one of them by a communist. Any mention of a debt moratorium is sure to be welcomed with applause. Inside the hall the ballot has been taken.

They vote two to one to close the roads.

As we went from picket line to picket line the talk harked back continually to 1776 when other farmers blockaded the highways. Up in James they had a "battle" with deputies last Wednesday. They liken it to a revolutionary battle. Over in Stevens in South Dakota, across the Missouri to Nebraska, we find similar groups of farmers who talk of "revolution." These farmers feel that they have a historic mission. The word "revolution" occurs often among them, but what they mean is a farmers' revolt. They do not understand revolution in the communist sense. They think of themselves as fighting the banking interests of the East or the "international bankers" about whom they are perpetually talking.

They have sat still for years and seen prices of food and animals which they raised slide down the hill to ruin. The bread lines in the cities grew, and the number of unemployed swelled to millions while their fruit rotted on the ground because there was no market for it. Now they are out to do something about it.

To them the solution of this evil situation seems simplicity and sense itself. In the slow shift of their talk there are no threats, there is no brag-gadocio.

These farmers who sat around campfires picketing highways, who came miles to meetings, have the serenity of faith. They feel the certainty and power of a young, vital movement, American and militant.