

Questionnaire for the Great Depression and the 1930s

1. To what extent did the Depression change your habits, way of life, school, plans? Did you "feel" the Depression? Did you observe a difference in the way the Depression affected people living in cities and people living in the country or small towns?
2. Did the family move during this decade? Why? How frequently? Where? What household conveniences did you have or lack: electricity, telephone, indoor plumbing, others?
3. Which family members had jobs? Doing what? Were they paid in cash, goods, or scrip? How much was rent? Was it difficult for the family to find housing or jobs?
4. At the time, what did you or the family think of Presidents Hoover and Franklin Roosevelt? Have you changed your opinion since then? Whom did the family support for president in 1928 (Hoover or Smith), 1932 (Hoover or Roosevelt), 1936 (Roosevelt or Landon)? Why? How effective were Hoover and Roosevelt as presidents?
5. Did any family member work for one of the New Deal agencies, such as the CCC, the WPA (Works Progress Administration), or the PWA (Public Works Administration)? If so, who? Which agency? Doing what? How long? Where?
6. Did the family raise, hunt, can, or preserve any of its own food? If so, what? What food items did you find to be scarce or plentiful? Did you live on a farm, in a small town, or in a city? Did you observe or experience any difference in the availability of food in rural and urban areas?
7. Did you experience the "Dust Bowl" that damaged so much of the middle of our country?
8. What sacrifices did you or your parents make during the Depression? Why?
9. Did the family have a car? What make or model? How much did it cost? How much did gasoline cost? Did you or the family limit driving? Did you or the family have to give up the car during the Depression? If you did not have a car, on what kind of transportation did you rely?
10. Did you or the family have money in a bank before or during the Depression? If so, did you lose any of it because of the Depression? Did you or the family lose money in the stock market crash?
11. Did the family make any of its clothes during the Depression? If so, what?
12. Did you hear Orson Welles's "War of the Worlds" on radio on 30 October 1938? What did you think of it at the time? Did you fall for it? Why or why not? How did other family members react?
13. What was it like to go to silent movies? What was your reaction to your first talkie or your first color movie? Explain.
14. How have your experiences during the Depression affected your attitudes of the present?
15. What further recollections and stories can you share about your experiences during the 1930s?