

Jacksonville State University

"The Great Depression"

A paper submitted to
Dr. Jackson

Department of History

by
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Jacksonville, Alabama
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More than half the people today living in the United States are too young to remember the Great Depression of the 1930's. Their parents-and certainly their grandparents-remember. Probably they never really talk about it because people like to talk about the good old days, definitely not the bad, especially when those days turned into weeks, months and years. It was the stock market crash of October 1929 that signaled the slide into the pit. At first it seemed to be only another depression-after all, America had already gone through seventeen or more depressions before. Some wondered if another one could be any worse. In this paper, the Great Depression of the 1930's will be shown through the eyes of people that were hurt the worst by the Depression: the common man that some felt soon became the forgotten man.¹

The depression that began in 1929 was very different than any other in American history. It came on harder and faster, engulfed a larger part of the population, lasted longer and did far much more damage than any before it. The Great Depression was a traumatic experience due to the fact that the years preceding it were quite comfortable ones on the whole and the American mood had been unusually optimistic. During the 1920's business and political leaders spoke of the New Era. Newspapers, when not heralding heroes such as Charles Lindbergh, who flew over the Atlantic Ocean, or Babe Ruth, who hit sixty home runs in one season, they were front paging the sex scandals of millionaires and movie stars.² An ever expanding economy, full employment, and the elimination of poverty were permanent features, many believed, of the New Era which soon would be named the Roaring Twenties.

Everyone could be rich in this decade. One had to only save his money and invest it in stocks of the industrial corporation that were transforming American society.³

Some segments of the population did not share in the prosperity of the 1920's. Most farmers had a difficult time after 1920, as did workers in some industries, such as coal and textiles. Many of the nations' intellectuals, who were generally prosperous enough in their Bohemian quarters in Greenwich Village, or the East Bank of Paris, criticized American civilization as shallow and commercial. But the farmers, the coal miners, the textile mill hands, and even the intellectuals failed to alter the general spirit of optimism, complacency, and comfort. The best people believed in the New Era.⁴

If ever one day was a watershed in America it was October 24, 1929, when the bottom dropped out of the stock market. That afternoon a group of New York bankers succeeded in temporarily halting the plunge, but five days later, on October 29, 1929, Wall Street was in a panic again. Thereafter the prices of stocks and bonds, ironically called securities, skidded downward almost steadily for three and a half years. The Wall Street debacle directly and immediately affected only a relatively small part of the American population, but a new and dismal era had begun. Despite the assurances of business and political leaders that the stock market crash did not reflect upon the health of the economy in general, it was not long before almost every indicator of the nation's economic welfare showed trouble. Unemployment among

workers dependent upon wages for their own and their families' livelihood began to increase alarmingly.⁵

Within two months, the crash of the stock market had thrown several million people out of work and the trouble spread quickly. Many businesses came to a dead halt; salespeople were fired from stores, factories cutdown on production, executives decided not to expand. Recently completed office buildings, apartment houses and hotels could find few tenants. Banks tightened up on credit, and businesses and industry ran dry of funds. Bertha Sharp, resident of Carrollton, Georgia, remembers the banks closing down. "We had some land and this man bought it from us. The guy did not get to the bank in Atlanta in time and it closed. We not only lost the money but we had to but back the land we just sold."⁶

Patience remained a cardinal virtue for many in the early years of the Depression. Things would get better if everyone would remain calm, some of the well-to-do implied to the crisis. Some government officials suggested to President Herbert Hoover that depressing statements about unemployment and hunger should not be broadcast. Although President Hoover could not keep depressing stories off the radio waves, he did his part to hide the bad news by refusing to allow official unemployment statistics to be collected. Even though Hoover did his best, it was not enough for the one person the American people blamed for the whole Depression.⁷

The economic downfall 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 because the Depression was biased against anybody. In the worst years of the Depression all of them considered themselves fortunate if they could sell their product for enough to meet their costs of production.⁸ It is difficult to say whether the unemployed urban worker or the farmer suffered more from the Depression. Both were poverty stricken, although the farmer continued to work hard and as long as he ever did. 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 than those in the rural areas. The farmer's depression lasted longer, since he did not enjoy the prosperity of the 1920's as did some in the urban areas. 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 in some way, shape, and form.⁹

To supplement their families income, Bertha Sharp and her husband Jim Sharp had a service station with gas pumps and a produce stand. "We would sell corn, eggs, meat and other things to people that would come by that needed something. Not too many city people would come by our store, just mainly people from the country. Ten cents for eggs, five cents for Brown Mule chewing

tobacco..."¹⁰

By 1932, it was clear that the next president would be a Democrat. Most people were ready for anyone who was not Hoover and the man the Democratic party nominated for Presidency was Franklin Delano Roosevelt. Roosevelt was not yet widely known, and he did not impress most people as a strong leader. He was conservative and this the people liked because they were fundamentally conservative also. "These unhappy times call for the building of plans...that put faith once more in the forgotten man at the bottom of the economic pyramid,"¹¹ he told a radio audience in April 1932, when he was campaigning for the nomination. The phrase won him millions of votes and by the time November rolled around, the Depression elected Franklin Delano Roosevelt the President of the United States.

Roosevelt had been elected because he sounded like he would do something. The people of America had to hold on the best they could because Roosevelt could not take the oath of office until March 1933. In December, country banks began to blink out faster and faster. During January, banks in key cities began to go. There were failures in Memphis, Cleveland, San Francisco. The crisis was now feeding on itself.¹² Hoover went out in the closest thing to a national breakdown the United States has ever experienced. Food supplies were falling and money was becoming scarce fast. The United States of America was technically bankrupt. An incredible 250 million dollars worth of gold had been withdrawn from its reserve during Hoover's last week. There was

not enough gold left in the Federal Reserve Bank to back the currency. Relief in the United States had ground to a halt. The morning of March 4, Inauguration Day, bank holidays were proclaimed in states where banks were still open. With every state out, Federal Reserves banks closed also. Everything shut down and when Roosevelt took over the Presidency, he had a clean slate to begin to work with.¹³

By the time Roosevelt took office, agricultural recovery ideas were ill-advised, such as taxing the middle man and achieving parity between agriculture and industry. Plantation owners were not the only farmers desperately in need of help in 1932 and 1933. Farmers realized that net farm income in 1932 was only one-third of the 1929 level and that, in turn, hardly reflected affluence; agriculture had never recovered from its slump after World War I.¹⁴ The idea which became the heart of the New Deal approach to the farm problem was even newer than those before: a domestic allotment plan advanced by Montana State College Professor Milburn L. Wilson and accepted by Secretary of Agriculture Henry Wallace. They believed that by providing payments high enough to induce farmers to accept a reduced allotment of crop acreage, limitation of output-or adjustment of output, could be achieved, with resulting salutary effects on the price level.¹⁵

In the case of the Agricultural Adjustment Administration (AAA) cotton program, the fastest, most drastic adjustment of all was needed: in the summer of 1933 a huge carry-over of 12.5 million bales of United States cotton hung over the world market,

more than the total consumption of American cotton had been during each of the previous three seasons; and with forty million acres planted, another bumper crop was in prospect. There seemed to be only one way to avoid rock-bottom and that would be bitter but unavoidable: plow the cotton under and create scarcity in order to raise the price.¹⁶

Few people defended the scarcity program in principle but there was one group that approved the government program joyously. As prices began to drive uphill, the planters became even more dedicated Democrats than before. Though the resulting rise in cotton prices was significant, about four cents a pound, the benefit payments were more directly a blessing from the government. For the acreage plowed up in 1933, from twenty-five to fifty percent of the planted crop, the planter received an amount usually equal to about six to eight cents a pound. From the landlord's viewpoint, there seemed to be only one difficulty with the plow-up terms: the payments for a tenant's plowed-up acreage were supposed to be split with him in proportion to his interest in the crop, fifty-fifty in the case of sharecroppers, seventy-five to twenty-five in favor of a third and fourth tenant.¹⁷

Not everyone in the South enjoyed the high cotton prices. Mrs. Sharp's family had to leave the cotton farming due to the low prices and the ever present bollweevil, a insect that destroys the cotton boll. "The cotton prices for a bale was about eight cents a pound...it was an o.k. type of income but the bollweevils were so bad that they wiped out our whole crop. That is why we opened up

the gas station.¹⁸

It soon became apparent to the AAA cotton reduction program involved an even greater problem than benefit sharing. A tenant merely cheated out of his money would at least be able to live on his income from cotton, but if his little plot was taken entirely out of production, he would have nothing. This personal disaster struck thousands, as plantations gradually shifted from the use of sharecroppers to the use of day labor.¹⁹ Mrs. Sharp's family did rent out some land to a sharecropper for a few years with them letting the borrow a mule from them and all of the accessories. "We had a tenant farmer family living on some of our property...we let them have a mule along with some other goods for a share of their crop...."²⁰

Rural and small town people in the 1930's were, of course steeped in American values of individualism, self-reliance, hard work and thrift. Although most rural Americans clung to their tradition and pride, the Depression forced many to set aside the former and swallow the latter. Requests for financial assistance were common because the American people saw the Roosevelts as a source of assistance.²¹ During Roosevelt's first year in office, he set up agencies for relief. On March 31, 1933, the Civilian Conservation Corps (CCC) authorized the Labor Department to choose unemployed men between the ages of eighteen to twenty-five, pay them wages and have them fight dust storms, saving forests, and restocking streams. On May 18, 1933, the Tennessee Valley Authority (TVA) started the Federal government developing power,

making fertilizer, damming streams, conserving natural resources, and relocating the marginal farmers of a seven-state pocket of poverty.²²

There was something for everybody. For farmers, price support. For the unemployed, Federal relief. For bank depositors, Federal insurance against bank failure. Debtors took heart because the President was given power to inflate the currency, and mortgages were extended. Creditors were reassured by the pay and pension cuts. Labor got protection for unions. All this was possible because in a crisis, mortgages could be stayed, gold impounded, banks closed, veterans deprived of their pensions. No one really worried about whether all this was constitutional. Lawyers knew the powers were far too vague and broad to stand up in court but no one had the heart to push the point. In 1935 however, the AAA was declared unconstitutional, but the principle of subsidizing farmers by paying them for what they did not produce was retained, under the guise of conservation, and has been the basis of Federal support for agriculture ever since.²³

The CCC was Roosevelt's pet project, and he cut red tape to get the boys into the woods and this project was extremely popular. The money sent home from the boy's pay saved thousands of families from relief. Their work literally saved several Plains States from blowing off the map in dusty years. They planted over a billion trees and they saved the forests from fire and flood, restocked streams and protected wildlife. In the nine years the CCC took 2.5 million boys, many of them from slums, and gave them experiences

that they would never have received from anywhere else.²⁴

The most urgent need was for relief. To get the Federal Emergency Relief Administration (FERA) aid to the unemployed in a hurry, Roosevelt appointed Harry Hopkins. Hopkins was one of the New Dealers who really knew something about the poor before the Depression drew attention to them. Hopkins used his granting powers to stimulate more work relief projects that gave families cash they could spend as they pleased. By fall it was clear that relief families were going to have to be carried over the 1934-1935 winter.²⁵ Congress set up the Civilian Works Administration (CWA) to put the unemployed to work on projects suggested by local authorities. CWA took men from relief rolls, but required no means tests and paid prevailing rates or National Recovery Administration minimums. Two weeks after the money was voted, CWA distributed 800,000 paychecks. In some depressed towns, newly paid workers cleared the shelves of retail stores. Hope and pride was revived in towns where only a few years ago despair was prevalent. Within two months, CWA was giving out paychecks to four million men. FERA and CWA made thousands of thrilling improvements, many of which are still in use today.²⁶

In the spring of 1934, Roosevelt hoped that work relief could be cut back but even though business revived, unemployment stayed high. On April 8, 1935, the Emergency Relief Appropriation Act authorized 4.8 billion dollars to continue the CCC and to launch the Work Progress Administration (WPA), the biggest and best known work relief project. Between 1933 and 1938, WPA put five million

individuals to work at prevailing wages doing a dazzling variety of jobs that neither private enterprise nor local taxpayers would tackle. WPA workers served hot school lunches to hungry youngsters, gave beauty treatments to hospital patients, took care of nursery-school children. Most WPA projects were public works that state and local governments would have undertaken if they had the money. A third of all the money WPA spent went for roads and bridges, ten percent more for public buildings, and another ten percent for parks and playgrounds. WPA did start the Rural Electrification Administration (REA), which lighted up farms the power companies had never a potential profit in serving.²⁷ "The best thing that happened was getting electric lights in our house." Mrs Sharp said about what was a major change that happened to her family during this time.²⁸

If confidence alone could have ended the Depression, then the Hundred Days would have done it. People were beginning to feel a little better than they did before due to the fact that they believed in what Roosevelt was trying to do. Manufacturers raced to build up their inventory ahead of NRA codes and the inflation that Roosevelt threatened. Prices rose and so did the stock market. AAA and NRA pushed food costs up faster and higher than wages could follow, leaving consumers and relief clients worse off than before. When roads were repaired by work crews, farmer who depended on road work for cash had to go on relief themselves. Farmers could not get pickers for their crops because relief workers were afraid that if they went off relief for a few days

they would never get back on.²⁹ Roosevelt had given the people what they wanted: action, but he did not attack the fundamental causes of the crisis. Instead of going off gold in such a way that the currency would be expanded, he took the power to create inflation into his own hands where he could control it. Instead of taking over the banks and the stock exchanges, he regulated them. He organized government support to help the debtors pay their debts instead of liquidating them. People felt as if they had been rescued and the emergency should have been over, yet by the end of the year, millions of people were dependent on Federal relief.³⁰

In 1935, one out of every six on relief was rated unemployable. Many more could do the WPA work but they were too old or too sick. In a loose labor market gray hair, skin color, foreign accents, difficult names, or visible handicaps made a candidate socially unemployable, even if he could do the job. During the first three years of the New Deal, Federal, State and local governments spent more than four billion dollars on relief of all kinds but the majority went to work projects supported by the Federal government. Harry Hopkins calculated that the 3.5 million he had on WPA rolls at their peak just about equalled the new workers growing up between 1929 to 1936.³¹

"We did not yell out that we were in poverty or that we were poor and needed help, not like they do today. People have forgotten what it was like." Mrs Sharp said when asked about the levels of poverty she saw since she owned and operated a gas station.³² By 1935 it was clear that unemployment was not an

accident that would not go away. One organization that's effects are still felt today is the Tennessee Valley Authority or TVA. The TVA attacked every aspect of poverty at once, developing new techniques of accounting, public administration, education, farm demonstrations and community support. The TVA not only supplied farmer with cheap fertilizer and cheap electricity but showed farmers how to use them. TVA attracted so much new industry that the Tennessee Valley is no longer predominantly agricultural. In 1965, per capita income was nearly ten times what it was in 1933. The return is beyond the wildest claims of what the stock promoters ever thought it could be. TVA contributes the equivalent of taxes to local and state government and is paying back all of the 1.4 billion dollars the Federal government invested in power production.³³

The Depression not only affected adults but the children were hurt also. Children are often able to see things more clearly than their elders, and they tend to not be as careful in expressing their thoughts and feelings. Like the old, children faced special problems during the Great Depression. The troubles of children and adults were rooted in basically the same causes, but unemployment and economic decline affected young and old in dissimilar ways. The children of the thirties lived through the same economic hardships as their parents did, but it meant different things to the new generation. Perhaps the most important difference between the effects of the Depression on adults and children was that the children were largely free from the self-blame and shame that were

so common, at least initially among their parents. Obviously, economic problems are not the fault of the child and he could be assured that he had not failed. Whether the blame was individual or collective, it fell on members of the older generation. Adults might have botched things up, or Dad might have failed, but few children felt any personal guilt while some did not realize that they were in an impoverished state because they were so used to not having anything but the bare necessities to begin with.³⁴

Many Americans seem to have seen children as a burden during the thirties. It was the first decade in the history of the United States in which the number of children under ten in the population declined. Indeed, the nation had fewer children under ten in 1940 than it had had twenty years earlier. The birth rate remained below its 1930 level until 1942. From 1932 through 1940, the rate of live births per thousand women aged fifteen to forty-four years was below twenty. Children were obliged to mature rapidly during the economic crisis. Some were expected to cut the school day short so they could help their families tend to the farm chores.³⁵ "No I didn't pull my children out of school because I didn't need to but there were some that did take their children out to help on their farms...."³⁶ Since a large part of the revenues of local government is spent for public education, it was perhaps inevitable that the tax crisis should produce cut backs in the schools. Many communities decreased their school spending severely and in effect, they passed the burden on the teachers, students, or both. No one will ever be able to calculate the cost to American civilization

that resulted from inadequate education of the nation's children during the Depression. The college's problems were somewhat different. Although the budgets of almost all colleges, public and private, were not what they should have been, a greater problem was that of students who were destitute. Thousands of college students in the 1930's made important sacrifices to stay in college as long as they could. Because the students of the Depression constituted, on the whole, a hungry campus generation they gave college life a new and earnest tone. The goldfish gulpers may have got the big headlines in the late thirties, but they were not the typical depression undergraduate.³⁷

Times were beginning to finally look better by 1939, except in Europe. Storm clouds of war were on the horizon and on September 1, 1939, the armed forces of Germany invaded Poland and World War II began. During 1940, the British spent 4.5 billion dollars on arms in the United States and unemployment dropped to fifteen percent. Roosevelt asked for millions for defense and Congress appropriated the money but neither the empty factories nor the idle men were equipped to make the war goods the armed forces needed. Ten years of standstill had rusted America's productive capacity. Since 1929 the American people had worn out houses, factories, and machines faster than they had replaced them. Enterprises had survived the Depression by gearing down to make a profit on low volume. Everyone thought the war would be a short one but after the surprise attack on Pearl Harbor by the Naval forces of Japan, the government took over direction of the nation's resources and

managed them for high production.³⁸

Under the spur of war, production in the factories rose almost vertically. For ten years there had not been enough jobs to employ all the skilled mechanics in the country, let alone train new ones. Now there were not enough shipyard workers to build the ships to carry the war gear to the fronts. The war proved that the United States could plan production, uneducated people would be taught but it also proved that it took a lot more spending than the New Deal had ever suggested to get the economy going. At war's end the United States was making guns to kill people along with food to feed people. The government alone was buying more goods and services than the entire economy had ever produced in any Depression year, and civilians were consuming ten percent more than they had ever been able to get during the Depression. For the United States to pull itself out of the Depression, it took many young American lives to get the nation back on its feet.³⁹

The Great Depression was a very devastating time in American history. People had gotten so used to having certain things, especially money, that when the panic and ensuing crisis that followed hit the people with all its might, they could not believe that it was happening in America. People of all classes, some more than others, had to learn to make do with what they had and to hope that they could make it through another day, month and year. Some people had a rougher time than did others but the American people stuck together and fought their way out of it by any means necessary. Mrs. Sharp said it best in describing the Great

Depression: "We tried not to remember the bad, because that is what it was, bad."⁴⁰

ENDNOTES

¹Milton Meltzer, Brother Can You Spare A Dime? The Great Depression 1929-1933(New York: Facts on File, 1991),1.

²David A. Shannon, The Great Depression(Englewood Cliff: Prentice-hall, Inc., 1960), ix.

³Ibid.

⁴Robert S. McElvaine, ed., Down and Out in the Great DEpression Letters from the Forgotten Man(Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1983), 10-11.

⁵Shannon, 1.

⁶Bertha Sharp, Interview by John F. Albright, 2 March, 1995, interview 1, transcript, History of the South Oral Project, Jacksonville, Al.

⁷McElvaine, 37.

⁸Shannon, 16.

⁹Ibid.

¹⁰Sharp.

¹¹Caroline Bird, The Invisible Scar(New York: David McKay Company, Inc., 1966), 92.

¹²Ibid, 98-99.

¹³Ibid, 108-110.

¹⁴Donald H. Grubbs, Cry from the Cotton(Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1971), 17.

¹⁵Ibid.

¹⁶Ibid, 17-18.

¹⁷Ibid, 19-20.

¹⁸Sharp.

¹⁹Grubbs, 20-22.

- ²⁰Sharp.
- ²¹McElvaine, 64.
- ²²Bird, 125.
- ²³Ibid, 126-127.
- ²⁴Ibid, 129.
- ²⁵Ibid, 129-131.
- ²⁶Ibid, 132-133.
- ²⁷Ibid, 133-134.
- ²⁸Sharp.
- ²⁹Shannon, 40-42.
- ³⁰Bird, 136-137.
- ³¹Ibid, 198.
- ³²Sharp.
- ³³Bird, 198-208.
- ³⁴McElvaine, 114.
- ³⁵Ibid.
- ³⁶Sharp.
- ³⁷Shannon, 98.
- ³⁸Bird, 300-303.
- ³⁹Ibid, 305-308.
- ⁴⁰Sharp.

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Gift and Release Agreement:

We BERTHA C SHARP and John Albright
(Interviewee, print) (Interviewer, print)

do hereby give and grant to Jacksonville State University, all literary and property rights, title, and interest which we may possess to the audio or video recording(s) and transcript(s) of the interview(s) conducted at Bertha Sharp's home on the date(s) of 3-2-95 for the oral history collection being compiled by the Jacksonville State University Library.

Bertha C Sharp
(Interviewee's signature)

Address 246 N HWY 113
CARROLLTON GA
Phone 404 832 7519

Date 3-2-95

[Signature]
(Interviewer's signature)

Address 80 W. Fairlawn DR.
Carrollton, GA. 30117
Phone (404) 832-2516

Date 3-2-95

Interviewee Background Information

Name: Bertha C. Sharp
Address: 240 N HWY 113 Carrollton, GA. 30117
Phone Number(s): (404) 832-7519
Approximate age or date of birth: 92, Born June 1903
Mother's name: _____
Father's name: _____
Places lived and when: Villa Rica, GA from 1903 - 1920 . (Carrollton for 75 years

Education: High school elementary thru high school.

Religion: Methodist
Business, political and social memberships (past and present): None

Present occupation: Housewife
Former occupation(s): Housewife, man, store owner.

Special skills: Play piano
Major Accomplishments: _____

Local events in which you have participated: _____

State and/or regional events in which you have participated: _____

National events in which you have participated: Great Depression, World War II

International events in which you have participated: _____

Natural born U.S. citizen? (Yes)/No
Naturalized Citizen: Yes/No Date: _____
Country from which you emigrated: _____
Documents, photographs, and artifacts which are in your possession: _____

Individuals you recommend who might be candidates for an oral history interview: _____

Additional information: _____

Berth Sharp
by John Albright
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- B. Tenant farmers on your land.

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- B. Taking the children out of the schools.

V. Changes

- A. Electricity on the farm and how did it work.
- B. Biggest change to affect your life.

QUESTIONS

Name-

When were you born and where-

Was your family big and what did your parents do-

Where did you live in your childhood and how far in school did you go-

When did you get married and when did you move to Carroll County-

What was the way you and your husband make a living-

If you had a farm, how big was it-

What kind of crops were grown and which was the biggest money maker-

What political party were you affiliated with-

When the Depression hit in 1929, how hard did it your farm-

When the banks closed how did it affect the economic dealings on the farm-

During the depression, were there a lot of migrant farmers working for you-

What were the prices like for your crops and what other ways were there to supplement your families income, like selling eggs, produce, etc-

Did your farm have any type of electricity to run the water and other farm utilities and how did they work-

When FDR's New Deal started, did you feel that it would work-

Were there any of his plans put in place in Carroll County-

Did you keep in touch with the tenants on your property-

What was some types of family entertainment were there for your family to do when it was a slow time, games, movies, sings at the church-

Even though a depression was going on, did you send your children to school. What were the schools like and how far were the schools from your farm, and how did your children get there, walk or ride the bus-

Did you ever have to take your children out of school so they could help with the crops-

What was one of the most rememberable experiences that happened during the depression-

What is the most important change that you have seen since you have been alive-

TIME CHART

1903-Bertha Sharp is born.

1929-Great Depression hits America.

1933-FDR is elected to the Presidency and institutes his New Deal.

1939-World War II starts in Europe.

1941-America enters into the war after the Japanese attack Pearl Harbor.

1945-War is over and the first Atomic bombs were dropped on Hiroshima and Nagasaki. The Cold War begins.

1950-The Korean War starts and McCarthyism begins.

1953-Eisenhower is President and Korea is over.

1954-Supreme Court case Brown v. Board of Education of Topeka is ruled upon and states that desegregation is needed with the most deliberately haste.

1960-JFK is elected to office

1962-Cuban Missile Crisis.

1963-JFK is shot in Dallas and LBJ takes over as President.

1965-Voting Rights Act is passed. Watts riots in Los Angeles.

1968-Malcolm X, Martin Luther King, Jr., Robert Kennedy are all shot and killed.

1969-Nixon is in office. U.S. astronauts land on the moon

1970-Kent State University students are shot and killed. Two students from Jackson State University are shot and killed by Mississippi State Troopers.

1972-Nixon meets with the Chinese Premier.

1974-Nixon resigns from office after he is implicated in the Water Gate scandal.

1976-Jimmy Carter takes over the office of President.

1979-American hostages are being held in Tehran by Iranians

1980-Americans boycott the Summer Olympics and Ronald Reagen is elected President.