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Interviewee Background Information

Name: Arby Talley
Address: 301 Hughes Ave. Attalla, Ala. 35954
Phone Number(s): 205-538-7190
Approximate age or date of birth: 30 Aug 1922
Mother's name: Ola M. Moore
Father's name: J. Howell Talley
Places lived and when: Etowah county all my life

Education: Curtiston Elementary School, Etowah High School, University of Ala. Center, Gadsden, Jacksonville State U., Univ. Ala. Graduate Sch.

Religion: Baptist

Business, political and social memberships (past and present): Moulders Union, Labourers Union, Democratic Exec. Committee, Gadsden ^{Civic} Theater Library Board of Attalla, Frinds of Library of Gadsden, Museum Board

Present occupation: Education (Retired)

Former occupation(s): Farmer, soldier, moulder (iron), salesman, manufacturing supervisor, teacher, counselor

Special skills: Journeyman moulder, teaching, counseling

Major Accomplishments: I built things for making life more enjoyable for people. I helped young people to get prepared for life

Local events in which you have participated: I performed on stage many times. Other times I helped with production of shows. I helped in many political campaigns

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

National events in which you have participated: Political campaigns

International events in which you have participated: none

Natural born U.S. citizen? (Yes/No)

Naturalized Citizen: Yes (No) Date: _____

Country from which you emigrated: N/A.

Documents, photographs, and artifacts which are in your possession: _____

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

Additional information: _____

THE GREAT DEPRESSION
AS IT HAPPENED IN ALABAMA
ACCORDING TO ARBY TALLEY

ALABAMA HISTORY
DR. JACKSON

LEIGH GOLDEN
APRIL 1, 1996

Alabama (Map)

TENNESSEE

N.C.



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HISTORICAL CHRONOLOGY

1920

February 28 - The Esch-Cummins Act was passed.

August 26 - The Nineteenth Amendment was ratified.

1921

Warren Harding is elected President of the United States.

1922

February 18 - The Capper-Volstead Act is passed.

1923

August 2 - President Harding dies.

August 3 - Calvin Coolidge takes oath as President.

1928

November 6 - Herbert C. Hoover is elected President.

1929

April 15 - At President Hoover's request a special session of Congress meets to consider agricultural problems and other matters.

June 15 - Congress adopts the Agricultural Marketing Act, which sets up the Federal Farm Board to help sell surplus agricultural products at stable prices.

October 24 - "Black Thursday" - The New York Stock Market collapsed.

October 29 - "Black Tuesday" - This is the first phase of the Great Depression of the 1930's. Sixteen million shares are sold in a market collapse.

November 13 - Losses since the beginning of the stock market crisis are estimated at \$30 billion; many speculators are ruined, and a few commit suicide.

November 21 - Meeting with industry leaders and representatives of labor unions at the White House, Hoover asks that they not make the economic crisis worse by layoffs or strikes.

December 2 - In a message to Congress, Hoover states that confidence in the economy has been restored and that business will soon pick up.

1930

January - Four million are unemployed. Hoover asks Congress to finance a public works program.

February 3 - President Hoover names Charles Evans Hughes Chief Justice of the United States.

March - Congress approves a law on public works and budgets \$230 million for its implementation.

April - Congress approves a credit of \$300 million to permit the states to build roads.

October - The number of unemployed is estimated at 4.5 million, and President Hoover appoints the President's Committee for Unemployment Relief.

December 11 - The Bank of the United States in New York, with more than 400,000 depositors, closed its doors. By March 1933, more than 9,000 banks throughout the country fail.

December 20 - Congress authorizes the expenditure of \$45 million for drought relief.

1931

January - The report of the Wickersham Commission on Prohibition recommends a revision to, rather than a repeal of, the Eighteenth Amendment.

January - Hoover's Committee on the unemployed reports that nearly 5 million are out of work.

March 3 - Hoover vetoes a congressional resolution that would have privatized a government hydroelectric plant at Muscle Shoals, Alabama.

In Scottsboro, Alabama, nine young blacks are arrested, charged with the rape of a white woman, and found guilty. The convictions will be overturned by the Supreme Court in 1935.

December 8 - President Hoover suggests to Congress that it establish a federal lending agency to extend loans to banks, insurance companies and other organs. To finance these loans the agency would be empowered to issue bonds.

1932

January 15 - As requested by President Hoover on December 8, 1931, Congress adopts an act creating the Reconstruction Finance Corporation, which is to lend funds to revitalize the economy.

March - The Norris-La Guardia Act prohibits federal injunctions against strikers under certain circumstances.

July 21 - President Hoover signs the Relief and Construction Act, which enhances the ability of the RFC to aid industry and agricultural and finance public works.

July 22 - Congress adopts the Federal Home Loan Bank Act, which authorizes the creation of regional banks to help financial institutions lend money to homeowners.

December - Thirteen million are unemployed.

1933

February 6 - The Twentieth Amendment to the Constitution is adopted. This amendment sets January 20 rather than March 4 as the date when the president will take office.

March 9 - Congress convenes and adopts the Emergency Banking Relief Act.

March 20 - The President signs the Economy Act, which reduces salaries of employees of the federal government.

March 31 - Congress adopts the Reforestation Relief Act, which creates the Civilian Conservation Corps to provide jobs for young men.

April 19 - The United States ceases to base its currency on the gold standard.

May 12 - Congress adopts the Federal Emergency Act, which grants funds to the states for relief purposes. Unemployment reaches 14 million.

May 12 - President Roosevelt signs the Agricultural Adjustment Act, which subsidizes farmers who decrease the number of acres devoted to surplus crops and establishes parity prices for certain farm products.

May 18 - The Tennessee Valley Authority is established by act of Congress to carry out a vast development program.

June 6 - Congress adopts the National Employment System Act creating the United States Employment Service.

June 16 - Congress adopts the Glass-Steagall Act, which creates the Federal Deposit Insurance Corporation to protect individual bank deposits of \$5,000 or less.

June 16 - Congress adopts the Farm Credit Act, which is designed to help farmers obtain mortgage and other financing.

June 16 - President Roosevelt signs the National Industrial Recovery Act, which establishes two new agencies, the Public Works Administration and the National Recovery Administration.

October 18 - The Commodity Credit Corporation is established for the purpose of making crop loans to farmers.

December 5 - The Twenty-first Amendment to the Constitution is adopted: repeal of Prohibition.

1934

January 30 - The Gold Reserve Act is adopted. Under its provisions the President is authorized to fix the value of the dollar in terms of gold at 50 to 60 cents. The gold of the Federal Reserve banks is to be transferred to the Treasury, and the government is to benefit from any increase in its value.

January 31 - President Roosevelt issues a proclamation establishing the value of the dollar at 59.06 cents, or that of an ounce of gold at \$35.

April 7 - The Jones-Connally Farm Relief Act is adopted. It places several additional commodities under the jurisdiction of the Agricultural Adjustment Administration.

April 21 - Congress passes the Bankhead Act, designed to control the production of cotton on a mandatory rather than a voluntary basis.

May 9 - The Jones-Costigan Act is adopted. It authorizes crop controls for cane and beet sugar and sugar import quotas.

1935

May 1 - Acting under the Emergency Relief Appropriation Act, the President sets up the Resettlement Administration to help poor farming families move to better land and urban workers to so-called Greenbelt towns.

1936

February 29 - Congress passes the Soil Conservation and Domestic Allotment Act as a substitute for the Agricultural Adjustment Act. Farmers are to be paid for withdrawing acreage from crops that deplete the soil.

November 3 - In the presidential election Roosevelt is reelected.

1937

July 22 - The Bankhead-Jones Farm Tenant Act is adopted. It supersedes the Resettlement Administration with the Farm Security Administration and establishes a loan program to enable tenants and others to acquire farms.

1938

February 16 - President Roosevelt signs the Agricultural Adjustment Act of 1938, which provides for restrictions on acreage, quotas for crops, storage of surpluses, and payments to assure parity.

June 21 - President Roosevelt signs the Emergency Relief Appropriation Act, which includes a variety of measures designed to deal with a persistent economic recession.

1939

June 7-12 - King George VI and Queen Elizabeth visit the United States on a goodwill trip.

1940

September 16 - The President signs the Selective Training and Service Act, which requires men from twenty-one to thirty-five to register for military training.

November 5 - In the presidential election Roosevelt is elected to an unprecedented third term.

1941

April 11 - The Office of Price Administration is set up to control prices.

December 19 - An act of Congress makes men aged twenty to forty-four subject to military service.

1944

November 7 - President Roosevelt is reelected.

1945

April 12 - Roosevelt dies. Truman succeeds as President.

1948

November 2 - Truman is reelected.

1949

September 17 - NATO is formed.

1951

February 26 - The twenty-second Amendment to the Constitution is adopted.

1952

November 4 - Eisenhower is elected.

1953

September 30 - Earl Warren is appointed Chief Justice of the United States.

1954

May 17 - The Supreme Court in the historic case of Brown v. Board of Education of Topeka, rules that segregation in education is unconstitutional.

1955

December - Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr., leads a Negro boycott of the Montgomery, Alabama, bus system.

1956

November 6 - Eisenhower is reelected.

November 13 - The Supreme Court rules that an Alabama law and a Montgomery, Alabama, ordinance requiring racial segregation in intrastate buses are invalid.

1957

August 29 - Civil Rights Act of 1957 is adopted by Congress.

1960

May 6 - President Eisenhower signs the Civil Rights Act of 1960.

November 8 - Kennedy is elected President.

1961

March 29 - The Twenty-third Amendment is adopted.

1963

March-September - The Civil Rights actions take place in many localities. In Alabama, Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr., is arrested (April 12), Negro properties are bombed, and 4 Negro girls are killed when a church is bombed (September 15).

August 28 - About 200,000 people converge on Washington to demonstrate peacefully for civil rights.

November 22 - Kennedy is assassinated. Lyndon B. Johnson becomes President.

1964

January 23 - The Twenty-fourth Amendment is adopted.

July 2 - President Johnson Signs the Civil Rights Act of 1964.

1965

February 1 - Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr., and 770 other Negroes are arrested in Selma, Alabama, during demonstrations against voter registration rules.

March 20 - President Johnson federalizes the Alabama National Guard and mobilizes Army units to protect a freedom march from Selma to Montgomery, which takes place from March 21 to 25. A participant in the march, Mrs. Viola Liuzzo of Detroit, is killed on March 25. Trials of the men accused of her murder result, first, in a hung jury and then in an acquittal. On December 3, however, three members of the Ku Klux Klan, including the acquitted man, are convicted of a conspiracy in the murder.

April 11 - The President signs the Elementary and Secondary Education Act, providing funds to school districts with needy pupils.

August 6 - President Johnson signs the Voting Rights Act of 1965, ensuring Negro voting rights.

November 8 - The President signs the Higher Education Act of 1965, providing scholarship aid.

1967

February 10 - The Twenty-fifth Amendment to the Constitution is adopted. It provides for filling a vacancy in the office of Vice President and for steps to be taken in the event of the inability of the President to fulfill his responsibilities.

1968

June 8 - James Earl Ray, charged with murdering Dr. King, is arrested in London.

November 5 - New York Democrat Shirley Chisholm becomes the first black congresswoman.

1970

January 14 - The Supreme Court issues an order for the integration of all schools in Alabama, Florida, Georgia, Louisiana, Mississippi, and Texas by February 1.

1971

March 23 - Congress proposes the adoption of the Twenty-sixth Amendment to the Constitution, granting eighteen-year-old citizens the right to vote in all elections.

April 20 - The Supreme Court rules that busing may be used to achieve integrated education.

INTERVIEWEE CHRONOLOGY

1922

August 30 - Arby Talley was born.

1929

Started school

October - Great Depression started

1940's

Finished High School

Entered World War II

Started College

Was Married

1950's

Started Teaching at Duck Springs Elementary

1990's

Retired from teaching at Etowah High School

His wife died

PREPARED QUESTIONS

1. When were you born?
2. What was your life like as a child in the early 1900's?
3. How old were you during the Great Depression?
4. What was school like growing up in the Great Depression?
5. What did your dad do for a living?
6. What did your mom do?
7. Did you have to work during the Great Depression?
8. What was the basic mode of transportation during the Great Depression?
9. Do you remember how old you were when you got your first car?
10. What was the most significant invention in your lifetime?
11. How, over the years, has life changed from agricultural to industrial?
12. What county did you grow up in?
13. What events impacted your life the most? Which are the most memorable?
14. What was every day life like growing up in the early 1900's?
15. What was social life like as a teenager in the early 1900's?
16. What was your family life like?
17. How many brothers and sisters did you have?

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- XII. Changes in Attalla Throughout the Years

The Great Depression of 1929 was a very devastating time for adults, as well as for children. I interviewed Arby Talley, born August 30, 1922, on the Great Depression from a child's view. He was only seven when the Depression started, but said he could still remember the times clearly.

The Great Depression began with the stock market crash of October 1929 and did not end until December 1941, when the United States entered World War II. The U.S. stock market crash that occurred in October 1929, with huge losses, was not the fundamental cause of the Great Depression, although the crash sparked, and certainly marked the beginning of, the most traumatic economic period of modern times. The stock market crash and the resulting depression caught Americans by surprise. At this time banks and businesses failed by the thousands. Agricultural production plummeted, unemployment skyrocketed. At the depths of the Depression, in 1933, one out of every four American workers was out of a job. Inflation was so high that money was sometimes more useful to burn than to spend.¹

The initial reactions to the Depression on the part of many of its victims were bewilderment, defeat and self-blame. Glad to believe themselves responsible for whatever success they had enjoyed in the twenties, many 'ordinary' people found themselves during the early Depression in a position similar to that of businessmen and Republicans. Having taken credit for the good, they had little choice but to accept responsibility for the bad. As they groped for some way to understand the calamity that had befallen them, however, some of the unemployed began to work toward values quite different from the egoism that had dominated the twenties.²

¹The 1995 Grolier Multimedia Encyclopedia Version 7.0.4 (Novato, C.A. : Mindscape).

²Robert S. McElvaine, The Great Depression: America, 1929 - 1941, (New York: The

The depression affected all aspects of American lives. The economy, farming, transportation, education, as well as the church, were all affected in one way or another. The United States was greatly affected, with the state of Alabama being no exception. Many Alabamians became unemployed. Arby Talley, who lived as a child, in the country, in Miller's Hollow (located in Etowah County) can still remember the affect the Great Depression had on his family. He was seven years old and had just started school when the depression hit. Before the depression hit, his dad had a good job. Some weeks he would even bring home \$2 1/2 ounces of gold. This was on a really good week. Today that would be considered \$50. They had just gotten a new car, and things seemed to be going well. His family seemed to be doing good for average working class people in those days. They had a small house with none of the extra conveniences, which was common among his class of people in those days.³

When the depression hit, many people were laid off, plants started closing down, and businesses started going out of business. This was a terrible time economically. His dad was one of the many Americans who were laid off. At this time, his dad was working at Walworth Company, in Attalla. Due to the depression, the company was forced to shut down. They offered the skilled men a job in St. Louis, Missouri, but his dad chose not to go there. They had no income at that time. They were able to make do by raising vegetables for their family to eat. He said, "We did okay for a while, then it got worse, and worse, and worse." His parents had money in the bank at the time the depression hit, but after that they didn't have much of anything.⁴

New York Times Book Co., Inc., 1984), 82.

³Mr. Arby Talley, interview by Leigh Golden, Tape recording, Attalla, Alabama, 27 January 1996.

⁴Ibid.

There were many other Americans also affected greatly by unemployment. Employment rates declined for both races in Alabama between 1930 and 1940. White employment declined 5.6 percent while black employment fell by 13.6 percent.⁵ Total unemployment reached about 7,000,000 heads of families.⁶ Uncounted millions more had to work so hard, so poorly paid that only desperate people would do it. Others preferred to survive by raising a family on a part-time job.⁷ The growth of unemployment led some department stores to pay their clerks between five and ten dollars weekly. Joblessness and poverty had come to be chronic social problems in the United States. Many people had to depend on the government or charity for food.⁸

Unemployment was also very high among the blacks. The Depression brought about a number of mass-action movements among blacks. Jobs-for-Negroes was the best known movement. It was organized nationally, but practiced locally. It tried to force creation of jobs for black workers, but it failed. Educated blacks were not even able to get jobs with so many unemployed white workers.⁹

One reason the unemployment rate was so high was that as demand fell corporate leaders saw no alternative but to cut production. Rather than lowering wages, they reduced the payroll. The wages for those who had jobs remained stable for the meantime, but that number was decreasing.¹⁰

⁵William Warren Rogers, Robert David Ward, Leah Rawls Atkins, Wayne Flynt, Alabama: The History of a Deep South State, (Tuscaloosa and London: University of Alabama Press, 1994), 465.

⁶Robert H. Ferrell, American Diplomacy In the Great Depression, (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1957), 16.

⁷Geoffrey Perrett, Days of Sadness, Years of Triumph, (New York: Coward, McCann, and Geoghegan Inc., 1973), 15.

⁸Dixon Wecter, The Age of the Great Depression 1929-1941, (New York: The Macmillan Company, 1948), 8.

⁹Perrett, 145.

¹⁰McElvaine, 73.

In Alabama, the decline of nonfarm employment was higher than any other Southern state. There was a decline of 15 percent between 1930 and 1940. Industrial workers suffered more than some of the farmers, because many of them could not even grow their own food.¹¹ By 1932, industrial labor in the South earned sixteen cents an hour less than the national average. The nation's farmers were virtually bankrupt. Farm prices declined 61 percent from 1929 to 1933. Total farm income plunged from \$13 billion to \$5.5 billion.¹²

The economy was in serious trouble when the depression hit. The year after the depression hit Arby Talley's father decided to try to farm. He got a one-horse plow and tried to raise cotton on the little hill on which they lived. This did not help them much because the price of cotton fell to about three cents a pound where it had been between twenty-five and fifty cents a pound. Right before the depression hit, the price of cotton had been at forty cents a pound, then it fell to five cents and then down to an all time low of three cents a pound. At this time, nobody could make anything off of cotton.¹³

The Depression was now entering its worst phase. Many Americans did not feel it until 1931-32, when after months of increasing uncertainty liquidation gathered momentum, reaching almost rock bottom by the middle of 1932 when industry was operating at less than half its 1929 maximum. National income dwindled from \$81,000,000,000 in 1929 to \$41,000,000,000. Cotton was below five cents, wheat below fifty, corn at thirty-one.¹⁴

From the top of prosperity in 1929 to the bottom of the depression in 1933, GNP (gross national product) dropped by a total of 29 percent, consumption expenditures by 18 percent, construction by 78 percent, and investment by an incredible 98 percent. By almost any standard, the United States was in its worst crisis since the Civil War.¹⁵

¹¹Rogers, 465-466.

¹²John F. Bauman, Thomas H. Coode, In the Eye of the Great Depression, (Dekald: Northern Illinois University Press, 1938), 3-4.

¹³Mr. Arby Talley, interview by Leigh Golden, Tape recording, Attalla, Alabama, 27 January 1996.

¹⁴Ferrell, 16.

¹⁵McElvaine, 75.

Declining consumption and investment were the keys to the worsening Depression.¹⁶

Transportation was also affected by the Great Depression. Arby Talley can still remember having to walk two miles just to get to school. When he was a child, the roads up in the ridges where he lived were not even paved. He can remember that in order to go to church when he was young, one of his dad's friends used to come pick them up in his car. Then this friend got a new car and sold them this car for practically nothing. He can also remember having a horse and buggy at sometime throughout the years.¹⁷

Through the years of the Depression until now, transportation has continued to improve. Many people felt that bus travel offered substantial savings over rail fares. The number of passengers, including children in school buses, rose from fewer than one and three-quarter billion fares in 1933 to more than four and three-quarter billion in 1941. Trying to make rail travel more desirable, the railroads began to adopt air conditioning. Diesel engines were another improvement. Then came aviation. The majority of the three and a half Americans who flew in 1929 went up for the thrill.¹⁸

Education was another aspect of life that was greatly affected by the Great Depression. Mr. Talley started school at age seven. When he was eight or nine, his dad had to start farming in order for them to get by. At age 12, he was expected to help his dad plow the fields. He was expected to work all day in the fields, but his dad made provisions for him to go to school. As he became a teenager, things got better. His dad was still trying to farm, but now he was able to hire people to help him work the crops, until Arby got out of school in the spring. He was very fortunate at this time to be able to do this. He now says, "Maybe I haven't been as appreciative of that as I should have."¹⁹

¹⁶Ibid., 73.

¹⁷Mr. Arby Talley, Interview by Leigh Golden, Tape recording, Attalla, Alabama, 27 January 1996.

¹⁸Wecter, 226-227.

¹⁹Mr. Arby Talley, Interview by Leigh Golden, Tape recording, Attalla, Alabama, 27 January 1996.

When he was in school they wrote on tablets. They had to buy their own books. Back then the state didn't furnish the books they used. The early books weren't that expensive, but the older you got, the more the books cost. In the early years, most everyone had to buy new books. By the time you got in high school, you were able to find secondhand books at a cheaper price.²⁰

At school, they had no air conditioning. They had heat, but it was not always good heat. He said he could remember walking to school one day in the freezing cold. It was so cold that day, they had all the children in one room, huddled around a stove singing, and trying to keep warm. He was late and the door was locked. When he knocked on the door the teacher didn't hear him and some of the boys, out of pure meanness, wouldn't let him in. He stood outside in the freezing cold knocking, until he couldn't stand it any longer. Finally, he just turned around and walked back home.²¹

Education suffered greatly from the Depression. At one point during the Great Depression, five out of six of Alabama's schools were closed. The plight of public schools early in the Depression was often desperate. Education was picked as the initial victim of a municiple-economy drive, which was backed by citizens' committees and chambers of commerce. School expenditures per pupil were lower throughout the New Deal than they had been in 1930. The salaries of the teachers were barely enough to get by on. Low salaries meant low educational requirements or none at all. The local government was unable to meet its obligations to the children. "A 1940 White House Conference on Children counted the cost: of 36,000,000 children under the age of sixteen, 22,000,000 were going without the food they needed, living in substandard housing and denied a proper education; 8,000,000 were in families on relief; and more than 1,000,000 had absolutely no schooling at all."²² Education was being hurt beyond

²⁰Ibid.

²¹Ibid.

²²Perrett, 104.

measure by the Great Depression. If the people were uneducated, how would the United States survive?

During the Depression, religious attitudes varied.

Fundamentalists of the Moody Bible Institute and their affiliates - millenarianists who had hailed the First World War as the beginning of the end - now saw the catastrophe of world-wide unemployment as a similar portent. Catholic teaching ran less to the apocalyptic than the purgatorial, stressing the theme of present suffering to be rewarded in the life to come. Sterner preceptors of Rome saw depression as a healthy astringent to the lush pagan materialism of American life. In general, however, acceptance of the Depression as a punishment for sins, national and personal, arose from the Protestant pulpit. Host of preachers, editors of evangelical periodicals and pious business men like Roger Babson avowed that depressions came because men forsook Christ to follow selfish ends.²³

It was freely predicted that hardship would lead Americans back to the faith of their fathers, but in fact no wave of revivalism, wholesale conversion or even increased church attendance occurred outside the pale of certain new and eccentric cults. Lack of decent clothes to wear and of money to drop into the collection plate - though many churches discontinued 'free-will offerings' - discouraged even normal habits of church going.²⁴

Even in the village and small town, where lay the core of evangelical strength, institutional religion seemed on the wane, with falling attendance and donations and among the leaders a planless bewilderment in the vortex of social forces.²⁵

Between 1930 and 1940 the nation's churches had a total deficit of almost three million, which meant the churches lost twenty-seven members per thousand of population. In 1939, a Gallup poll stated half the people attended worship less often than their parents and less than a fifth exceeded their parents.²⁶

The youth, who had little schooling in the old-time gospel, were probably the least devout group. While a majority still clung to nominal church membership, scarcely more than a third were actively interested or considered religion a helpful or vital part of

²³Wecter, 212-213.

²⁴Ibid., 213.

²⁵Ibid., 213.

²⁶Ibid., 213.

their lives. Religion, or the lack of religion, made a very large impact on the Great Depression.²⁷

Politics also played a heavy role in the Great Depression. Many people held President Hoover responsible for the Depression. "Hoover took great annoyance from the 'constant parrot-call' of the Democrats that he was the sole creator of the world depression, a call which rose to a deafening roar when in December 1931 the new and hostile Congress assembled and began campaigning irresponsibly for the next presidential election." ²⁸

President Roosevelt defeated Hoover, because the people at the time held Hoover responsible for the Great Depression. They also liked the New Deal that Roosevelt was proclaiming. Roosevelt gave an address in Madison Square Garden, saying "The next Administration must represent not a fraction of the United States, but all of the United States. No resource of mind or heart or organization can be excluded in the fight against what is, after all, our real enemy. Our real enemies are hunger, want, insecurity, poverty and fear." With these words, Roosevelt would soon become the next U.S. President. The people were depending on the New Deal to get them through the Depression.²⁹

With the depression affecting all of these many aspects, the best measure of what the Depression had done to a great nation was what it had done to the people's bodies.

There was no more dramatic index than the health of the millions of young men now being examined for selective service. Their general level of health was so bad that it was an undeniable disgrace. General Hershey might insist that these young men were no worse in mind and body than their doughboy fathers had been, but what comfort was that to a nation that set its heart on progress from one generation to the next? Even Hershey was forced to concede that these young men should have been healthier. The standards of induction had been raised since the last draft, but the health of draftees had not.³⁰

²⁷Ibid., 213-214.

²⁸Ferrell, 15.

²⁹Wecter, 54.

³⁰Perrett, 136.

One study of health in eight cities found that families with a fully employed member had 66 percent less illness than those of the unemployed. Desperate people took desperate steps to feed themselves. In rural areas hungry people sometimes turned to eating weeds. Less appetizing were the urban scenes of men digging through garbage cans and city dumps. A Chicago widow followed the practice of removing her glasses before using rotting meat; in this way she avoided seeing the maggots she was eating.³¹

Instead of the improvement of health, it was staying about the same through the generations or maybe even decreasing at the time of the Depression. This was not much comfort to our world of improvement.³²

Mr. Talley has definitely lived through some very trying years, and has never given up. He is an example for the youth today, that you can live through anything that comes your way. I had the opportunity to know Mr. Talley, because he was a counselor, as well as a teacher, at Etowah Middle School, where I attended. He is presently retired, but he couldn't give up education all together. He tutors people for the GED. He is still trying to help people reach their goals. This shows dedication and caring.

The economy, farming, education, church, and transportation were all affected by the Great Depression. These are things that today we take for granted, but older people, like Arby Talley, probably appreciate them more having lived through the trying times of the Great Depression. We are fortunate for how well we have it today, and we need to appreciate it.

In the end, the world of the Great Depression, molded by fear, uncertainty, determination, and a wondrous bravery, gave us the world of our present hope - and if we shape our world half as well as did the men and women of the 1930s, we will have gone a long way toward honoring our own obligation to the future.³³

³¹McElvaine, 80.

³²Perrett, 136.

³³Tom H. Watkins, The Great Depression: America in the 1930s, (Toronto: Little, Brown, and Company, 1993), 349.

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