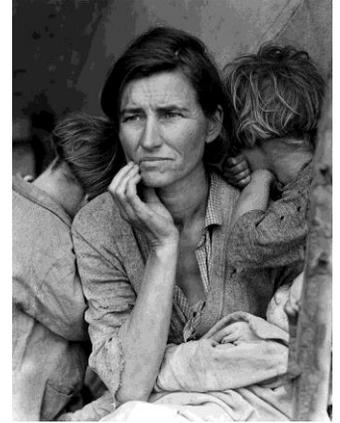


Name: _____

Date: _____

Farmers During the Great Depression

What do you think of when you think about the Great Depression? You may think of the stock market crash, unemployment, Hoovervilles, the Dust Bowl, and many other instances of financial devastation. While this was the sad reality for many Americans at the time, not all Americans experienced these types of ruin. Many had their lives unaltered, and, some, had their lives improved. One of these fortunate groups were farmers in Wood County, Ohio.



To understand how many farmers were able to survive during the Great Depression, it is important to look back to the Agricultural Recession of the 1920s. The First World War was a time of great progress and innovation for farmers. America, due to the war not being fought in the country, became the “bread basket” of the world, producing food for war torn countries. Once these countries began to rebuild, they no longer needed American crops. Farmers in the United States soon had a surplus of goods they were unable to sell. Along with this, many had taken out loans to purchase equipment to farm these large quantities of crops. Inability to sell goods soon led to an inability to pay back loans. Tariffs and rising prices on seeds further added to the devastation. This was the Agricultural Recession of the 1920s, a depression that occurred a decade before the Great Depression of the 1930s. Many farmers struggled and some lost their farms.



To prevent a crisis like this from happening in the future, County Extension Offices stepped in to help. County Extension Offices were important for farmers in the early 20th century. These offices presented the newest discoveries and innovations in agriculture to farmers in their area. These offices offered classes as well to educate the rural population in the ways of farming techniques, technological advancements, and housekeeping. One of these services that proved to be the most beneficial to farmers were classes on account management and bookkeeping. Bookkeeping helped farmers, and their wives, budget their farming and family expenses so they could keep afloat during times of hardship.

Once the Great Depression hit, many farmers were able to survive and even thrive. They purchased reliable and affordable equipment, budgeted their spending, and, aside from those in the Dust Bowl states, were able to continue producing crops. Even if they were not able to sell their crops, they were still able to use them to feed their families and community.

Answer the questions on the back →

Questions:

1.) Why was America called the “bread basket” of the world?

2.) List 4 reasons why some farmers struggled during the Agricultural recession of 1920:

3.) How were farmers able to survive the Great Depression? What technique or tool did they use?

Teacher Answer Sheet:

- 1.) American farmers produced food for war torn countries
- 2.) Any of these: countries began to rebuild and they no longer needed American crops, surplus of goods farmers were unable to sell, inability to pay loans, tariffs, and rising prices on seeds.
- 3.) County extension office classes (bookkeeping/account keeping specifically).