OBJECTIVE: TO UNDERSTAND WHAT LIFE WAS LIKE DURING THE GREAT DEPRESSION.
THE DEPRESSION WORSENS

• By 1933, more than 9,000 banks had failed.
• In 1932, around 30,000 companies went out of business.
• By 1933, more than 12 million workers were unemployed, about 1/4th of the workforce.
People without jobs joined bread lines or lined up outside soup kitchens, which private charities set up to give poor people a meal.
LIVING IN MAKESHIFT VILLAGES

- Families or individuals who couldn’t pay rent were evicted.

- They moved to *shantytowns* (where homeless people put up shacks on unused or public lands) or *Hoovervilles*, named after the president.

- Many homeless Americans called *hobos* began wandering the around the country.
THE DUST BOWL

• When crop prices dropped in the 1920s, Midwestern farmers left many of their fields uncultivated.

• Beginning in 1932, a terrible drought struck the Great Plains.

• With neither grass nor wheat to hold the scarce rainfall, the soil dried to dust. The area from the Dakotas to Texas became known as the “Dust Bowl”.

• Many farmers had to mortgage their fields to the banks and leave for California or else where.
DUST BOWL
ESCAPING THE DEPRESSION

• Most people could scrape together money to go to the movies or listen to a radio program to escape the hard times.

• Walt Disney produced the first feature-length animated film, Snow White and the Seven Dwarfs, in 1937.

• Marlene Dietrich was a film superstar who fled to Hollywood to escape hardship in Europe.

• Gone with the Wind, who featured Vivien Leigh playing the main character Scarlett O’Hara, was about Scarlett’s struggle to maintain her life in the South during the Civil War.
ON THE AIR

• One popular radio show hero was the Lone Ranger, who fought injustice in the Old West with the help of his friend Tonto.

• Daytime radio dramas that carried their stories over from day to day became known as soap operas, because the sponsors were often makers of laundry soaps.
The homeless and unemployed became the subject of pictures and stories as artists and writers tried to portray life around them.

Thomas Hart Benton and Grant Wood were two important depression artists, who emphasized traditional American values.

Novelist John Steinbeck wrote The Grapes of Wrath, where an Oklahoma family has to flee the Dust Bowl to find a new life in California.
DEPRESSION ART