

Document A: Fireside Chat (Modified)

President Roosevelt gave this speech over the radio on May 7, 1933, two months after he became president. He called these radio addresses "fireside chats," and this was his second one as president.

Tonight, I come for the second time to tell you about what we have been doing and what we are planning to do. . . .
First, we are giving opportunity of employment to one-quarter of a million of the unemployed, especially the young men, to go into forestry and flood prevention work. . . .
Next, the Congress is about to pass legislation that will greatly ease the mortgage distress among the farmers and the home owners of the nation, by easing the burden of debt now bearing so heavily upon millions of our people. . . .
I know that the people of this country will understand this and will also understand the spirit in which we are undertaking this policy. . . .
All of us, the Members of the Congress and the members of this Administration owe you, the people of this country, a profound debt of gratitude.

Source: President Roosevelt's "Fireside Chat," May 7, 1933.

Vocabulary

legislation: laws
mortgage distress: many farmers and homeowners were unable to pay off the loans on their houses and so their property was taken away
gratitude: thanks

Document B: African Americans and the New Deal

Most New Deal programs discriminated against blacks. The National Recovery Administration, for example, not only offered whites the first crack at jobs, but authorized separate and lower pay scales for blacks. The Federal Housing Authority (FHA) refused to guarantee mortgages for blacks who tried to buy in white neighborhoods, and the Civilian Conservation Corps maintained segregated camps. Furthermore, the Social Security Act excluded those job categories blacks traditionally filled.

The story in agriculture was particularly grim. Since 40 percent of all black workers made their living as sharecroppers and tenant farmers, the Agricultural Adjustment Administration (AAA) acreage reduction hit blacks hard. White landlords could make more money by leaving land untilled than by putting land back into production. As a result, the AAA's policies forced more than 100,000 blacks off the land in 1933 and 1934. Even more galling to black leaders, the president failed to support an anti-lynching bill and a bill to abolish the poll tax. Roosevelt feared that conservative southern Democrats, who had seniority in Congress and controlled many committee chairmanships, would block his bills if he tried to fight them on the race question.

Source: This excerpt is from the Digital History online textbook.

Vocabulary

mortgage: a loan to buy a house
grim: worrisome, severe
galling: irritating

Document C: Interview with Cotton Mill Worker

George Dobbins was a 67-year-old cotton mill worker when he was interviewed for the book *These Are Our Lives*, a book put together by the Federal Writers' Project in 1939.

I do think that Roosevelt is the biggest-hearted man we ever had in the White House. . . . It's the first time in my recollection that a President ever got up and said, "I'm interested in and aim to do somethin' for the workin' man." Just knowin' that for once there was a man to stand up and speak for him, a man that could make what he felt so plain nobody could doubt he meant it, has made a lot of us feel a lot better even when there wasn't much to eat in our homes.

Source: George Dobbins in *These Are Our Lives*, Federal Writers' Project, 1939.

Vocabulary

recollection: memory

Document D: Hot Lunches for a Million School Children (Modified)

One million undernourished children have benefited by the Works Progress Administration's school lunch program. In the past year and a half 80,000,000 hot well-balanced meals have been served at the rate of 500,000 daily in 10,000 schools throughout the country. . . .

For many children, who are required to leave home early in the morning and travel long distances after school hours to reach their homes, the WPA lunch constitutes the only hot meal of the day. . . .

Through the daily service of warm, nourishing food, prepared by qualified, needy women workers, the WPA is making it possible for many underprivileged children of the present to grow into useful, healthy citizens of the future.

Source: Speech by Ellen S. Woodward, Assistant Administrator, Works Progress Administration.

Vocabulary

constitutes: equals

Document E: Unemployment Statistics

YEAR	Unemployment (% of labor force)
1929	3.2
1930	8.7
1931	15.3
1932	22.5
1933	20.6
1934	16.0
1935	14.2
1936	9.9
1937	9.1
1938	12.5
1939	11.3
1940	9.5
1941	6.0

Source: Gene Smiley, "Recent Unemployment Rate Estimates for the 1920s and 1930s," *Journal of Economic History*, June 1983.

Document G: Whither the American Indian? (Modified)

Roosevelt appointed John Collier, a leading social reformer, as Commissioner of Indian Affairs in 1933. Collier pushed Congress to create the Indian Emergency Conservation Program (IECP), a program that employed more than 85,000 Indians. Collier also made sure that the WPA, WPA, CCC, and NYA hired Native Americans.

In 1934 Collier convinced Congress to pass the Indian Reorganization Act, which provided money for tribes to purchase new land. That same year, the government provided federal grants to local school districts, hospitals, and social welfare agencies to assist Native Americans.

Congress is authorized to appropriate \$10 million from which loans may be made for the purpose of promoting the economic development of the tribes. . . .

About seventy-five of the tribal corporations are now functioning, with varying degrees of success, and the number continues to grow. The Jicarillas have bought their trading post and are running it; the Chippewas run a tourist camp; the Northern Cheyennes have a very successful livestock cooperative; the Swinomish of Washington have a tribal fishing business. There are plenty of others to prove these corporations can be made to work. . . .

The truth is that the New Deal Indian administration is neither as successful as its publicity says it is, nor as black and vicious a failure as the severest critics would have us believe. Many Indian problems remain unsolved, but every one has been addressed.

Source: Alden Stevens, "Whither the American Indian?" *Survey Magazine of Social Interpretation*, March 1, 1940.

Vocabulary

appropriate: give