



# New Deal Programs and Race, Class, and Ethnicity: A Resource Guide

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## Introduction

Historically, the state of the American economy during a presidential term has played a crucial role in whether or not a standing president wins re-election. As a result, economic crises that are not quickly and effectively dealt with can catastrophically impact the popularity of the sitting President. Such was the case with President Herbert Hoover whose lackluster response to the economic devastation of the Great Depression resulted in a devastating loss to the Democratic candidate, Franklin D. Roosevelt. During the presidential campaign of 1932, Roosevelt pledged a “new deal” for the American people in order to deal with the widespread economic problems caused by the Great Depression. After winning the presidential election of 1932, President Roosevelt quickly introduced a wide range of New Deal programs in 1933.

The Roosevelt administration designed these programs to address three main aspects of the Great Depression. First, these programs were meant to provide relief to unemployed and poverty-stricken Americans. Second, the New Deal programs aimed to reinvigorate the economy. Finally, these programs were meant to reform banking practices in the hopes of preventing another devastating stock market crash in the future. This tripartite approach proved to be both popular and modestly successful. However, the administration struggled to provide equal access to these opportunities across racial, ethnic, and gendered lines and many New Deal initiatives were disposed of or had funding revoked upon the United States’ entry into World War II as priorities shifted away from relief programs and toward a focus on mobilization.

This resource guide examines five New Deal programs introduced to address issues of employment and infrastructure during the Great Depression. The guide will provide students an overview of these programs as well as highlighting resources on race and ethnicity that they can use in their own research. ProQuest has a vast repository of New Deal documentation from the Roosevelt administration that follows New Deal agencies from their conception to their retirement. In addition, ProQuest’s archive of Congressional hearings gives students a unique window into the changing political attitudes toward these programs as they are continuously put up for renewal votes in Congress. These resources highlight the racial and gendered tensions surrounding New Deal program implementation and problems concerning equitable access to land ownership, access to relief programs, and educating the public about who was eligible for relief and how to apply. These resources also demonstrate the ways that New Deal programs were integrated into American society and reflect the larger cultural contextual changes that occurred from the Great Depression through World War II. Through these resources, students will be introduced to the consequences of the sharecropping system and the disadvantages Black farmers faced in their attempts to



make use of New Deal programs. Students will also learn about the Farm Security Administration's role in Japanese American internment and property re-distribution. This exploration of progressive policymaking and the New Deal era reveals important trends in American history that can benefit students interested in the history of race, ethnicity, gender, and Great Depression and World War II era America. Additionally, students can utilize the resources in this guide to examine the United States government's history of responding to economic crises. How popular or effective have indirect relief programs been in the United States? What kinds of equity problems have historically existed in relief programs in the United States? How do economic crises continue to shape the relationship between the federal government and its citizens long after the crisis has passed?

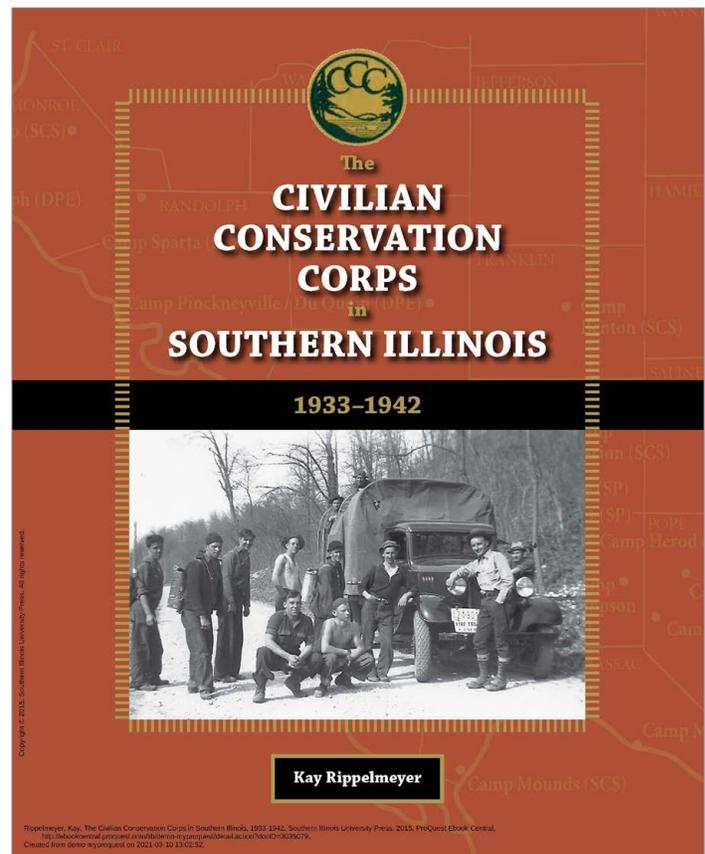
## Topic 1: Civilian Conservation Corps (CCC)

The CCC was created by the Roosevelt administration in 1933 to address the rampant unemployment in the United States during the Great Depression. CCC workers were contracted to perform manual labor directed toward the conservation of natural resources on state and federal properties. Many communities across the United States benefited from the program and the improvements made to state and federal parks and recreation areas are still evident today, especially in southern and western United States. These camps enrolled Black men, but often housed them in segregated camps. The CCC provided workers room and board as well as a monthly salary of roughly \$30, a portion of which was sent home to family. This program was intended for young men (18-25) and around 3 million young men had participated by 1942. The CCC was disbanded in 1942 when opponents worried that the CCC might inhibit enlistment for World War II.

### Secondary Sources:

#### Books:

- Rippelmeyer, Kay. *The Civilian Conservation Corps in Southern Illinois, 1933-1942*. Carbondale: Southern Illinois University Press, 2015. <https://www.proquest.com/legacydocview/EBC/3035079?accountid=131239>
  - This book uses oral interviews in addition to written sources to link the CCC to the Midwest and forestry. The author also details the land prior to CCC 'improvements' as a method of showing CCC changes to the land.
- Allen, Holly. *Forgotten Men and Fallen Women: The Cultural Politics of New Deal Narratives*. Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 2015. <https://www.proquest.com/legacydocview/EBC/3138740?accountid=131239>



- This is a general history of the New Deal, but it does an interesting job of discussing what the larger narratives of the New Deal were. Chapter 3 "Builder of Men": Homosociality and the Nationalist Accents of the Civilian Conservation Corps" discusses the gendered approach of the CCC to projects and the ways that barrack living impacted male relationships.
- Pasquill, Robert. *The Civilian Conservation Corps in Alabama, 1933-1942: A Great and Lasting Good*. Tuscaloosa: University of Alabama Press, 2008. <https://www.proquest.com/legacydocview/EBC/454578?accountid=131239>
  - The New Deal program can easily be traced from region to region in the US. This book addresses the work the CCC did in Alabama and includes a chapter on the WPA project, the Tennessee Valley Authority.

### Primary Sources:

#### Magazine and Newspaper Articles:

- "WHAT'S TO BECOME OF THE CCC?" By C.A. Edison in *Forum and Century* (1930-1940), 04, 1935. <https://www.proquest.com/magazines/whats-become-ccc/docview/90898999/se-2?accountid=131239>
  - This is a news article published in 1935 that spells out the future of the CCC, given that it was set to expire in April. The emphasis on the CCC as a youth organization is high and the author positively compares the CCC to youth organizations in Russia, Germany, and Italy.

Harrison County E. C. W. Camp S-86  
Corydon, Ind.

Jan. 22, 1935

Mr. Lawrence A. Oxley, Chief  
Division of Negro Labor,  
U.S. Labor Department,  
Washington, D.C.

Dear Mr. Oxley:

I, William Weir Stuart (Jr.) of Indianapolis, Ind. am writing you concerning a matter which I feel might mean possible employment for me.

Graduating from Butler University of Indianapolis last June in the midst of this ages' depression I could not expect immediate employment. So I enrolled in the Civilian Conservation Corps and am now 'clerk' and 'assistant' to the Superintendent of this camp. Since being here I have learned of the appointment of 'negro' Educational Advisers in 'negro' camps. As I am very anxious to further my education I would appreciate infinitely receiving such a position.

Incidentally I have met you in that I am a fellow 'Omegan', being a member of Zeta Phi chapter of Indianapolis. I am personally acquainted with our Vice-grand Basileus, (Prof.) Wm. E. Baugh of Zeta Phi. I intend to have Prof. Baugh write you a recommendation for myself, which might strengthen my personage with you.

May I give you a brief summary of my background:

In June, 1934 I received the degree of 'Bachelor of Arts' from Butler University of Indianapolis, Ind. with a state license (first grade high school) to teach Science (Zoology, Physiology, Hygiene, Health, Biology, General Science - Chemistry) and German. Included in my college courses were many studies in the field of Sociology & Psychology.

I have also studied music for the past 10 years with the best teachers afforded by the state of Indiana, including extended work at the 'Arthur Jordan Conservatory' of Indianapolis (with the violin as my major instrument). Along this line I have also taught music for the past five years.

I have had quite a bit of experience in the field of 'dramatics' (having had the longest part in three Shakespearean plays given at Attucks High of Indpls.

May I also mention my work & interest in the Y.M.C.A. movement (Indpls.) in connection with this work I have also been connected with the 'Youth Movement', the N.A.A.C.P. work and 'scouting'.

If you think me desirable, I would greatly appreciate a recommendation from yourself to: Dr. C.S. Marsh, Educational Director, Civilian Conservation Corps, Washington, D.C. (Dep't. of Interior)

Sincerely,

*William Weir Stuart*  
William Weir Stuart (Jr.)

June 27, 1933

Mr. W. Frank Persons  
Department of Labor  
Washington, D. C.

My dear Mr. Persons:

This has to do with the enlistment of Negroes in the Civilian Conservation Corps. It seems that despite the efforts of the Department of Labor to make known to recruiting officers that there should not be any discrimination in this enlistment, instances are cropping up of absolute refusal of colored people.

We have a letter from our branch at Albany, Georgia, dated June 20, 1933, which says in part:

"This comes to say that the Albany Branch of the N.A.A.C.P. takes this method to inform the home office that the Negroes of this section are being discriminated against to the extent that thus far none of our group has been accepted; notwithstanding that they have presented themselves for registration and were told that the call was not for Negroes but that there would be another call later on. We feel that this unjust discrimination is in violation of the original aim and object of the bill as passed."

We hope you will take up this matter with the enlistment officials at Albany, Georgia.

Very sincerely yours,

Assistant Secretary

RW/ID

- "CCC Players 'Strike' as Rivals Start Reds-Head Girl on Mound: First Serious Attempt to Introduce Feminine Pitcher on Local Sandlots." By Al Hailey, *The Washington Post* (1923-1954), Jul 23, 1939. <https://www.proquest.com/historical-newspapers/ccc-players-strike-as-rivals-start-reds-head-girl/docview/151166497/se-2?accountid=14667>

- "What the Civilian Conservation Corps is Doing for Negro Youth." *New Journal and Guide* (1916-2003), Jun 20, 1936. <https://www.proquest.com/historical-newspapers/what-civilian-conservation-corps-is-doing-negro/docview/567251101/se-2?accountid=14667>
  - This article is a kind of advertisement targeting Black youth to apply to the CCC. It specifically mentions that prior Black CCC members gained weight and received special job training.
- "Forest Corps Strike Called due to 'Reds'." *The Christian Science Monitor* (1908-Current File), May 06, 1933. <https://www.proquest.com/historical-newspapers/forest-corps-strike-called-due-reds/docview/513368831/se-2?accountid=131239>
  - This article makes the assertion that the CCC strike in New Jersey, which began as backlash against poor camp conditions, was funded by 'external sources' in the form of money orders. The article supposes that communist 'Reds' were to blame and states that the agitators have been removed from camp.
  - In addition to work projects, the CCC often had voluntary recreational activities for participants. Oftentimes, these leagues meant playing against local ball clubs and organizations and thereby integrating the CCC with the community it served. This article details one such game where CCC members refused to play against a woman pitcher. New Deal programs were fraught with gendered conceptions of respectability and sex divisions were taken very seriously.
- "Wants Youth Work Dropped." *The Globe and Mail* (1936-2017), Mar 24, 1942. <https://www.proquest.com/historical-newspapers/wants-youth-work-dropped/docview/1353820824/se-2?accountid=14667>
  - This is a Canadian newspaper snippet about the hearing in the United States Congress over whether to continue the CCC beyond its original allotment. Senator Kenneth McKellar worries that the CCC is "making mollycoddles" out of young men and helping them avoid war work.

## Hearings in ProQuest Congressional:

- To Establish a Civilian Conservation Corps, April 9, 13, 1937. Committee on Education and Labor. Senate. HRG-1937-EDS-0018. Y4.Ed8/3:C49. <https://congressional.proquest.com/congressional/docview/t29.d30.hrg-1937-lah-0001?accountid=131239>
  - This Senate hearing considers the question of whether or not to make the CCC a permanent institution. The hearing includes information on enrollment numbers in the CCC.
- To Provide Compensation for Enrollees in the Civilian Conservation Corps Suffering Disability or Death Resulting from Injury While in the Performance of Duty, February 23, 1937. Committee on the Judiciary, Senate. HRG-1937-HJH-0063. <https://congressional.proquest.com/congressional/docview/t29.d30.hrg-1937-hjh-0063?accountid=14667>
  - CCC work was often very difficult and could be dangerous. Because of this, enrollees were often injured. This hearing addressed how to compensate these injuries and deaths because this loss was felt not only in grief, but in the pocketbook of already impoverished American families.
- Termination of Civilian Conservation Corps and National Youth Administration, March 23-24, 26-27, 30th and April 2, 14-15, 17, 1942. Committee on Education and Labor, Senate. HRG-1942-EDS-0001. Y4.Ed8/3:C49/2. <https://congressional.proquest.com/congressional/docview/t29.d30.hrg-1942-eds-0001?accountid=14667>
  - This hearing focused on concerns that young men should be doing war work and not CCC/NYA projects. The CCC was discontinued in 1942 to divert funds and manpower back to war effort.

## Primary Source Collections in ProQuest History Vault:

- Civilian Conservation Corps press releases, Jun 02, 1939 - Jul 26, 1939. <https://congressional.proquest.com/histvault?q=103369-005-0622&accountid=131239>
  - This folder of CCC press releases includes a release from June 29, 1939 that summarizes the CCC's work accomplishments during its first six years through April 1, 1939. In the release, CCC Director Robert Fechner noted these rather impressive statistics: "Included among the many projects completed by the Corps were the planting of 1,741,000,000 trees, the construction of 104,000 miles of truck trails or minor roads, the erection of 71,692 miles of telephone lines, the construction of 40,000 bridges, the construction of more than 45,000 buildings, the reduction of fire hazards over about 2,000,000 acres, the building of 4,700,000 check dams in gullies, the construction of approximately 16,000,000

rods of fence, the improvement of 3,312,498 acres of forest lands, the construction of 5,390 impounding and large diversion dams, the development of 20,084 springs, wells, waterholes, and reservoirs, and the expenditure of about 9,000,000 man days fighting forest fires and on fire prevention and fire suppression activities."

- Civilian Conservation Corps correspondence with Black Americans interested in securing jobs as educational advisers at the organization's camps. April 1934-July 1936. <https://congressional.proquest.com/histvault?q=001398-014-0699&accountid=14667>
  - There are examples of Black individuals seeking job appointments in the CCC camps. This is interesting because it gets at race amidst job insecurity issues. Specifically, there is an attempt to find a doctor for the Black parts of segregated CCC camps. From the collection, New Deal Agencies and Black America.
- NAACP Peonage, Labor, and New Deal Files: Civilian Conservation Corps. January-December 1933. <https://congressional.proquest.com/histvault?q=001418-001-0084&accountid=14667>
  - These NAACP records that show an effort on the organization's part to check up on CCC enlistment of Black workers and ensure that discrimination was minimized. One document from Cleveland, Ohio, dated April 21 discussed the suspicion of some Black youth that this program was a way to send them back south. Related files in History Vault can be found by searching on the Civilian Conservation Corps and NAACP.

Houston, Texas.  
July 8, 1933,  
415 Milam Street.

To The National Association for the Advancement of Colored People,  
New York City, N.Y.  
For the Secretary.

Dear Sir:

I had an occasion to visit my brother and a number of friends from Houston who is stationed at Camp Bullis, Fort Sam Houston Texas in the unemployed Army, and I want to tell the association of the conditions I found while visiting the Camp.

The men say that conditions continue to grow steadily worse, for instance they are not fed as well as the white exsoldiers, and are jim crowed in every respect. I found that the Colored boys are assigned to do the distric work, and compeled to wait until the white men have had their fill of every thing before the Colored men are considered.

The Brown and Williamson Tobacco Company donated several hundred packages of smoking Tobacco to all members of the Civilian Conservation Corp; the said tobacco was passed out to the white men first and when about one half of the Colored men had their tobacco the rest were told there "aint no more", the writer saw that there were at least 200 sacks of tobacco left.

The writer visited the dining room while the soldiers were being served apples which had been worm eaten and rat bitten, the very cheapest apples and the white men were served delicious apples while the Colored men looked on.

I am asking that you use the influence of the N.A.A.C.P. to bring this fact before members of the war dept, or to whom you think would help the cause.

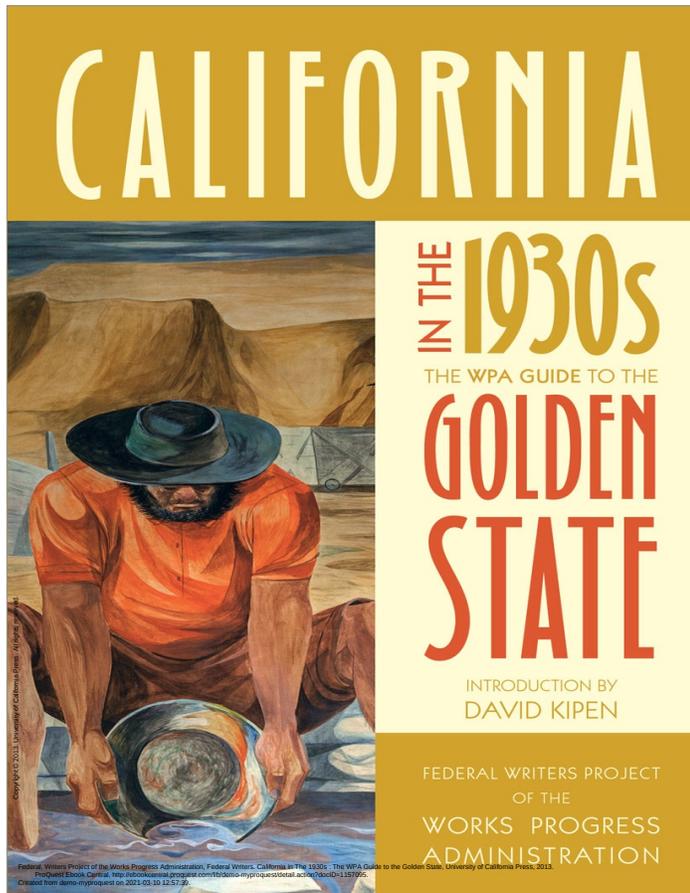
Thanking you in advance for what ever you may do, I remain  
Respectfully yours,

*George A. Duncan*

## Topic 2:

### Works Progress Administration (WPA)

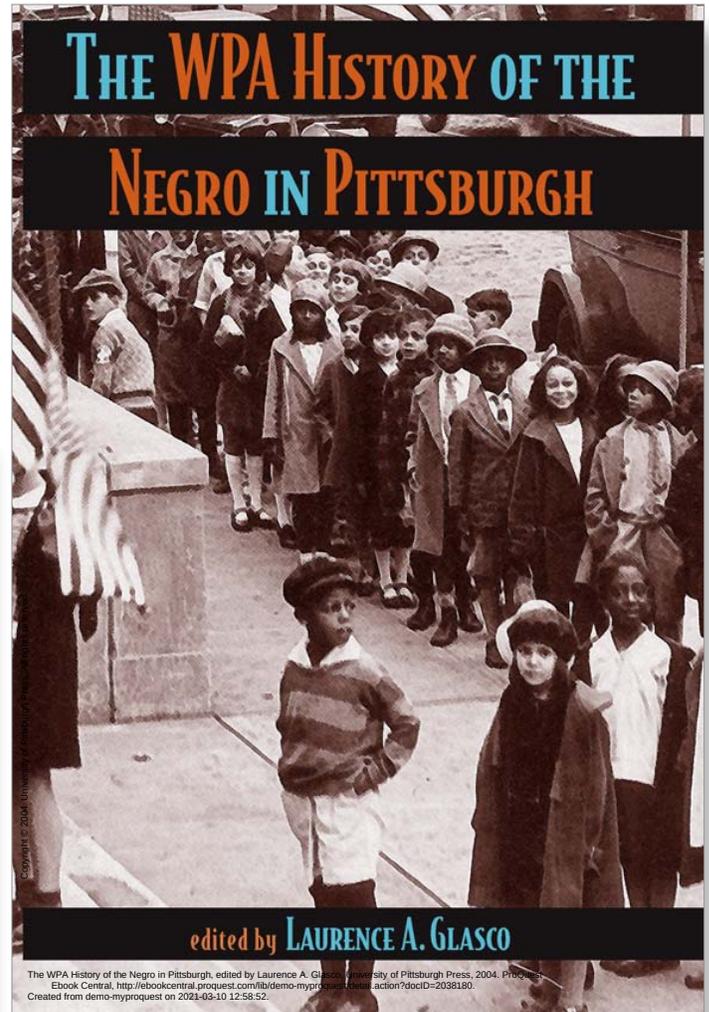
Introduced in 1935, the WPA was another program targeted at reducing the number of unemployed men. This agency employed both men and women and grew to include the National Youth Administration. Unlike the CCC, the WPA improved and constructed infrastructure all across the United States. The WPA constructed schools, hospitals, sewage lines, bridges and paved roads before its dissolution in 1943. Perhaps the most well-known WPA project is the Tennessee Valley Authority.



#### Primary Sources:

##### WPA Guide Books:

- Federal Writers Project of the Works Progress Administration, Federal Writers. *California in The 1930s: The WPA Guide to the Golden State*. Berkeley: University of California Press, 2013. ProQuest Ebook Central. <https://www.proquest.com/legacydocview/EBC/1157095?accountid=131239>
  - This book contains road maps to Depression era California along with personal accounts and writings to draw from.



- Glasco, Laurence A., ed. *The WPA History of the Negro in Pittsburgh*. Pittsburgh PA: University of Pittsburgh Press, 2004. ProQuest Ebook Central. <https://www.proquest.com/legacydocview/EBC/2038180?accountid=131239>
  - This guide is one of the many guides to states written by workers in the WPA.
- Rebolledo, Tey Diana, and Márquez, María Teresa, eds. *Women's Tales from the New Mexico WPA: La Diabla a Pie*. Houston: Arte Público Press, 1999. ProQuest Ebook Central.
  - This details the stories of women in the WPA files.

##### Magazine Articles:

- "MY Career on the WPA." *Forum and Century (1930-1940)*, 04, 1940, 182. <https://www.proquest.com/magazines/my-career-on-wpa/docview/90833439/se-2?accountid=14667>
  - This published anonymous account of WPA work discusses the ways that the WPA strips choice away in terms of career in a way that feels counter to the American way of life-according to the author. This is an interesting piece on gender because he discusses his marriage and his wife in the context of WPA work

# My Career on the WPA

ANONYMOUS

TIME WAS when Mr. Webster's definition of the word "career" as "conspicuous progress in a chosen calling" was a simple enough explanation. Mark that qualifying word *chosen*, for the language has changed, and today over 2,250,000 of us are in the midst of our careers without choice or alternative of any kind.

Tradition has it that our fathers selected a vocation with great care and after much paternal advice. In true American fashion, they began at the bottom of the ladder and rose, rung by rung, to positions of financial success, social eminence, and worldly respect. That was the custom; the rewards were assured. If some fell off the ladder, the exception, as always, proved the rule.

This trite pattern for success, when applied to a WPA job, is obsolete from beginning to end. From the first step of conscious selection to the last intangible reward, the system is passé. Looked at with the sad eye of experience, the pattern is seen to have gone to pot; "careerists" become such unconsciously, and the rewards resemble a basket of fish heads.

I really should know by now. For the better part of three years I have been employed by the former Works Progress Administration, renamed Works Projects Administration. (Perhaps the deletion of the word *progress* is symbolic.) I have become a careerist without design, traveling a tangent with millions of others and

harvesting rewards unknown to preceding generations of workers. The process has a pattern all its own.

## HAND TO MOUTH

WEDDING BELLS in October, 1932! Both of us twenty, both without resources, both registered at every big employment agency in Chicago. Our friends assured us that it was not a jubilant pealing of bells we heard but a macabre tolling.

Despite our bland disregard of economic facts, doubtless explained by our age and emotions, we could count as assets a common middle-class cultural heritage and a combination of Indiana tenacity and Kansas individualism. The last two characteristics no

doubt accounted for our weathering four years of depression by enabling us to canvass hundreds of housewives, clerk in dozens of stores, find scores of temporary jobs, and in general devise a hundred methods of surviving. But our social background became more impractical as the years crawled by.

Among middle-class parents, taught in the precollapse school, from which my wife and I came, the word "charity" usually reminded one of little old ladies carrying Christmas baskets to the indigent — who, while they might be pitied, were still viewed with suspicion. The poor were considered to be poor through some



Chief Division of Negro Labor. The documents in this folder are from the collection entitled New Deal Agencies and Black America in ProQuest History Vault. New Deal Agencies and Black America consists of documents from federal agencies and departments that either participated in New Deal programs or were created as a result of them. Correspondence of "The Black Cabinet," a network of Black advisors and administrators, figures prominently in the collection.

- Press Excerpts on Black Americans and the Works Progress Administration. January 1938- December 1938. <https://congressional.proquest.com/histvault?q=001398-022-0418&accountid=14667>
- Another item from the collection New Deal Agencies and Black America, this folder contains Negro Press Association clippings detailing poor working conditions for Black individuals enrolled in the WPA.

## Topic 3:

### National Youth Administration (NYA)

The NYA was a New Deal Program beginning in 1935 intended to address continued unemployment among America's youth (16-25) and prevent students from dropping out of high school or college. This program was notable because, unlike the CCC, it allowed women to participate. The NYA paid participants to engage in work study projects in their communities, generally in education systems, which would allow them to continue their studies despite the economic downturn.

### Secondary Sources:

- Hanson, Joyce A. *Mary McLeod Bethune and Black Women's Political Activism*. Columbia: University of Missouri Press, 2003. ProQuest Ebook Central.
- This book details the work and impact of Mary McLeod Bethune including her role in New Deal programs. She was the head of "negro affairs" in the NYA.

### Primary Sources:

#### Trade Journals:

- "NYA Trains Shipyard Workers." *Marine Engineering and Shipping Review* (1935-1952) 47, no. 2 (Feb 01, 1942): 104. <https://www.proquest.com/trade-journals/nya-trains-shipyard-workers/docview/858252719/se-2?accountid=14667>
- The NYA helped youth receive training or continue training in specialized trades despite the dramatic economic downturn. This article in a trade journal discusses the NYA's key role in training shipyard workers. The article states that "Young people from all parts of the south who had previously been stranded on

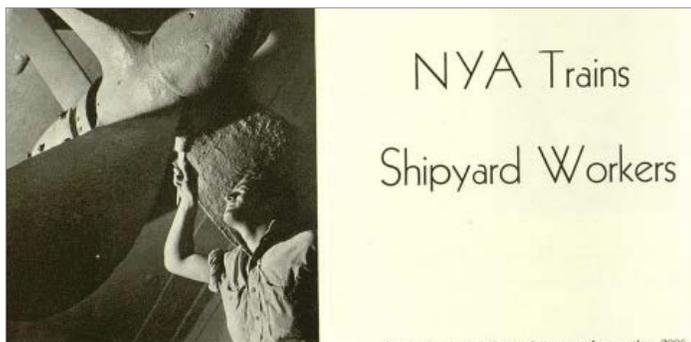
and the Great Depression's impact on middle class individuals. This is an interesting resource for students interested in issues of economic class.

### Hearings in ProQuest Congressional:

- Investigation and Study of the Works Progress Administration, April 11, 17-18, May 1-2, 8-11, 15-16, 18-20, 22 June 5-8, 13, 1939. HRG-1939-HAP-0015. Y4.Ap6/1:W89/pt.1. <https://congressional.proquest.com/congressional/docview/t29.d30.hrg-1939-hap-0015?accountid=14667>
- This hearing deals with concerns that some enrollees of the WPA are not in enough need of relief to be profiting from the program amongst other concerns about funds and usage.

### Primary Sources Collections in ProQuest History Vault:

- Unemployment Relief for and Discrimination Against Black Americans. January 1934-October 1938. <https://congressional.proquest.com/histvault?q=001398-012-0090&accountid=14667>
- This item documents accusations of discrimination within local relief organizations by Lawrence A. Oxley,



## NYA Trains Shipyard Workers

IN TRAINING FOR SHIPYARD WORK

The National Youth Administration is one of the important but little known sources of trained and experienced workers on which the shipbuilding industry soon will draw to help construct the gargantuan fleet of ships needed to fight for and supply the United Nations of the world. From several thousand workshop training projects located throughout the country the NYA sends a steady stream of trained and experienced workers to help fight the battle of production in the nation's war industries. During 1942 alone more than 400,000 NYA youths went into private jobs, many of them into shipyards.

When the 8000-ton cargo vessel, the *Zebulon Vance* was recently launched at Wilmington, N. C., she carried in her hull the workmanship of more than 200 NYA-trained youth. Young people from all parts of the south who had been stranded previously on the farms and in the villages, unneeded by industry are now getting the opportunity to acquire practical experience and training in the NYA shops which are located close to port cities from Wilmington, N. C., to Houston, Tex.

The National Youth Administration which is now synchronized to the labor needs of war industries was established by Executive Order of the President in 1935. Since that date NYA has provided more than 2,000,000 youth with basic skills, work experience, and training to fit them for jobs in private industry.

Two years ago the NYA work experience and training program for out-of-school youth was accelerated to meet the defense demands for trained workers and it consequently converted a specific number of shops to the needs of shipyards on the Atlantic, Gulf and Pacific coasts. In the past year alone approximately 2000 of the 400,000 NYA trained youth hired by industry have gone directly into shipbuilding and ship repairing jobs. Of related industries, 15,000 obtained jobs in the ferrous and non-ferrous metal industries, and 6000 in machinery and equipment plants.

From a work experience shop, one of more than 2000 similar mechanical training centers operated by the NYA throughout the country, 159 youth have left in the past six months to take jobs in the nearby Navy Yard. They had been given an intensive training period of welding, forge and foundry work.

The innovation of the NYA training system is that it is patterned after the production methods of the war industries. The shops have been commissioned by military establishments to produce "nuisance items," small hand tools, gun and machine parts, furnishings for ships and the army, etc., items which would be unprofitable for already overburdened factories to undertake to make but which give the young people in the work experience shops added incentive in working. By undertaking such



GAINING WELDING EXPERIENCE

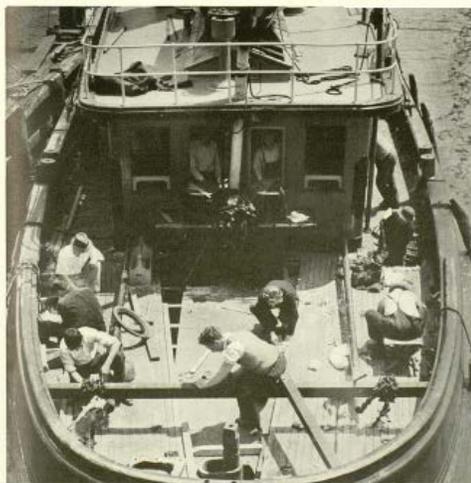
practical jobs the youth acquire dexterity in the handling of tools and machines, become familiar with trade terms and mechanical processes, good work habits and learn general shop and safety practices.

Welding, which is one of the key skills in the building of steel fighting ships and merchantmen is among the basic types of on-the-job work experience provided for young people on the NYA program. At present this program is equipped to train 40,800 youth a year in welding operations. Numerous other skills needed to produce war materials and directly related to shipbuilding are available to youth enrolled in NYA—these are sheet metal operations, joinery, lathe and drill press operations, foundry, forge and blacksmith work and a wide variety of specialized mechanical types of work.

An excellent illustration of NYA shop practice and as it affects the needed labor supply in shipbuilding is the activity at the South Charleston resident training project in West Virginia. At the request of the Norfolk Ship Yards, 25 boys leave every month from the 350 average monthly enrollment on this project and go directly to work in building ships. The South Charleston project is one of the several resident training projects within the NYA program. The youth here live in nearby dormitories and report to work at the shops. Over a three month period the youth put in 160 hours a month of practical and related training. The 160 hours include on-the-job work in a variety of machine shops, the several welding booths, forge and blacksmith shops and electrical work. Related academic work is conducted by



WELDING IN NEW CONSTRUCTION AND IN REPAIR OPERATIONS IS ONE OF THE FUNDAMENTAL TRADES IN WHICH THE NYA GIVES INSTRUCTION



AT SCHOOLS AND IN SHIPYARDS IN VARIOUS PARTS OF THE COUNTRY THOUSANDS OF THE NATION'S YOUTH ARE LEARNING THE CRAFTS THAT ARE REQUIRED IN SHIPBUILDING

the farms and villages, unneeded by industry are now getting the opportunity to acquire practical experience and training." This explores the urbanization epidemic and connects to issues of poverty amongst Blacks in the segregated south.

### Hearings in ProQuest Congressional:

- "Department of Labor- Federal Security Appropriation Bill for 1941. Part 2: Federal Security Agency, National Youth Administration" March 14, 16th, 1940. Subcommittee on Labor Department and Federal Security Agency Appropriations. House; Committee on Appropriations. HRG-1940-HAP-0012. Y4.Ap6/1:L11/941/pt.2/supp. <https://congressional.proquest.com/congressional/docview/t29.d30.hrg-1940-hap-0012?accountid=14667>
  - This hearing addresses the sums appropriated for the NYA. It also includes evidence and testimony about the kinds of programs that youth apply to the NYA, including the arts and entertainment.

### Primary Source Collections in ProQuest History Vault:

- Mary McLeod Bethune Scrapbook 11, 1937-1941. <https://congressional.proquest.com/histvault?q=001387-008-0209&accountid=14667>
  - Mary McLeod Bethune was the daughter of former enslaved persons and went on to become an education and civil rights leader. Her friendship with the Roosevelt's led her to become the leader of his unofficial "Black cabinet." Her scrapbook contains articles written about the NYA and her role in guiding the organization.
- National Conference on Problems of the Negro and Negro Youth, 1939, letters of appreciation by African American college presidents, journalists, political leaders, and educators. <https://congressional.proquest.com/histvault?q=001387-012-0356&accountid=14667>
  - This folder, also from the Mary McLeod Bethune Papers, reveals how individuals in the Black Americans community felt that the NYA and New Deal Programs benefitted them.
- NYA of Georgia Reports on Work Projects, Activities, Employment of Black Youth. December 1938-1939. <https://congressional.proquest.com/histvault?q=001398-006-0332&accountid=14667>
  - This item, from the collection New Deal Agencies and Black America, includes correspondence with Mary McLeod Bethune regarding Alva Tabor's desire to expand NYA training programs to include things that benefit rural youth ("farm youths"). The documents contain information about the direction relief programs in the NYA took for Black youth and how people sought to help Black youth through these New Deal programs.

### Mrs. Bethune Here Thurs.

Mrs. Mary McLeod Bethune, director of the Division of Negro Affairs, National Youth Administration, who is to appear in San Antonio on a speaking engagement next Thursday, July 22, will not, according to information received here this week, arrive in the city as early in the afternoon as had originally been anticipated. This information was conveyed to Miss Artemesia Bowles, president of St. Philip's Junior College, in a letter from J. C. Hester, 1st of the committee, Mr. Hester said that Mrs. Bethune's arrival in the city will be delayed until about 8:30 p.m. because of the late departure of the train from New York.

The train originally planned to arrive at the Metropolitan Hotel at 6:30 p.m., but because of the late departure of the train from New York, it will arrive at 8:30 p.m. Mrs. Bethune will be met at the station by Miss Artemesia Bowles, president of St. Philip's Junior College, and will stay at the Metropolitan Hotel.

### NYA Director to Speak in Lawrence on Friday Night; Governor Also on Program

#### Delegates from All Parts of Sunflower State To Attend Three-Day Session of Parents and Teachers

LAWRENCE, Kan.—Mrs. Mary McLeod Bethune, director of Negro affairs in the National Youth Administration, will be one of the principal speakers on the program which will be held at the Lawrence Y. M. C. A. on Friday night, July 22. The program will be held at the Lawrence Y. M. C. A. and will feature a three-day session of the Parents and Teachers Association of the Sunflower State. The program will be held at the Lawrence Y. M. C. A. and will feature a three-day session of the Parents and Teachers Association of the Sunflower State.



### Mrs. Bethune Here May 9th

Mrs. Mary McLeod Bethune, national chairman and at present the national director of the National Youth Administration program for Negro youth, will visit Lawrence, Kan., on May 9th, to make two addresses.

The Bethune-Cookman Club, composed of graduates and former students of the Bethune-Cookman Institute at Daytona, Fla., and of which Mrs. Bethune is president, will meet at 8 p.m. on May 9th in the club's parlors, in presenting the distinguished woman leader and educator to the Lawrence, Kan., community.

She will be accompanied by Mrs. J. H. Hester, president of the National Youth Administration, and by Mrs. J. H. Hester, president of the National Youth Administration, and by Mrs. J. H. Hester, president of the National Youth Administration.

# SET REA FREE!

The Bi-Partisan Committee of the U. S. Senate Investigating the Rural Electrification Administration Unanimously Reports "Disintegration and Demoralization" within the Agency, which is an "Indictment of the Administration of REA under the Secretary of Agriculture". A Bill Has Been Introduced to Meet an "Emergency Situation" by Restoring Independence "At the Earliest Possible Date".

BY JUDSON KING  
Director, National Popular Government League

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THE NATIONAL POPULAR GOVERNMENT LEAGUE  
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Takoma Park, Washington 12, D. C.  
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Price 20 Cents

### Primary Sources:

### Trade Journals:

- "Are Utilities Socialistic? Electric Power Companies are Able Defenders of Capitalism in their Business—but what about Socialism in Transportation? THE ACTION PAGE." *Railway Age (1918-1988)* 154, no. 23 (Jun 17, 1963): 58. <https://www.proquest.com/trade-journals/are-utilities-socialistic/docview/886838950/se-2?accountid=14667>
  - This is a later discussion of utilities in general in the United States, but its main contention is a fear of socialized resources. It's reference to the REA reveals the fear that New Deal Programs promoted communism/socialism.

### Primary Source Collections in ProQuest History Vault:

- Bulletin by the National Popular Government League Regarding Senate Oversight of REA, August 1944. <https://congressional.proquest.com/histvault?q=002166-046-0571&accountid=14667>
  - This item, from the Documentary History of the Roosevelt Presidency, discusses the unhappiness of those involved with REA since its merging with the Department of Agriculture in 1940. The article mentions the resignation of one REA director over fears of the REA becoming a "political machine." Lots of interesting research routes connected to labor and fair practices.

- Black Leader Conference to Discuss Problems Impacting Black Youth and Plans to Expand Employment Opportunities. August 1938-July 1939. <https://congressional.proquest.com/histvault?q=001398-003-0102&accountid=14667>
  - Another document from New Deal Agencies and Black America, this item addresses the ways that Black youth were disproportionately impacted by the Great Depression because there were very few training opportunities for them to acquire skills. It details the ways that leaders in the "negro affairs" department of the NYA saw these and addressed them through these programs.

Topic 4:  
**Rural Electrification Administration (REA)**  
President Roosevelt signed the REA into existence in 1935. The REA and the Rural Electrification Act (1936) were meant to improve or create access to electricity in rural areas especially in the southern and western United States. This infrastructure project specifically aimed to increase the number of American farms with access to electricity in order to improve quality of life and production capabilities. This was one of the most successful New Deal Programs and lasted until 1994 when it was absorbed into the Rural Utilities Service (RUS).

IMMEDIATE RELEASE

August 7, 1935

FOR THE PRESS

An Executive Order signed today by the President prescribes new rules and regulations relating to approved projects administered and supervised by the Rural Electrification Administration.

Loans to public and private agencies for rural electrification projects are permitted under the rules and regulations prescribed.

The Order also sets forth regulations affecting wages, hours, employment of persons from relief rolls and the terms of loan and construction contracts.

If further detailed data is desired, it may be obtained at the office of the Rural Electrification Administration.

The Executive Order follows:

**EXECUTIVE ORDER**

-----  
PRESCRIBING RULES AND REGULATIONS RELATIVE TO APPROVED  
PROJECTS ADMINISTERED AND SUPERVISED BY THE  
RURAL ELECTRIFICATION ADMINISTRATION UNDER THE  
EMERGENCY RELIEF APPROPRIATION ACT OF 1935

## Topic 5: Farm Security Administration (FSA)

The FSA was created in 1937 in an effort to reduce rural poverty. FSA initiatives included photographing rural America and resettlement programs to remove farmers on substandard land and resettle them in groups to farm better land in communities. The FSA was often scrutinized for its actions involving Black enrollees attempting to improve land in order to one day own it through FSA programs. Inquiries about discrimination and racial enrollee disparities were not uncommon. The FSA also participated in the removal and reallocation of land owned by Japanese-Americans during World War II.

### Secondary Sources:

- Vachon, John. *John Vachon's America: Photographs and Letters from the Depression to World War II*. Berkeley: University of California Press, 2003. ProQuest Ebook Central.
  - This book contains some of the photographs and personal reflections of John Vachon, a photographer involved with the FSA.
- Trotter, Joe William, and Trotter, Joe William, Jr. *From a Raw Deal to a New Deal: African Americans 1929-1945*. Cary: Oxford University Press, Incorporated, 1996. ProQuest Ebook Central.
  - This book discusses the ways that Black Americans were doubly impacted by the economic consequences of the Great Depression and the trials and successes they had in connection to New Deal Programs.
- Foulkes, Julia L. *To the City: Urban Photographs of the New Deal*. Philadelphia: Temple University Press, 2010.
  - This book contains photographs taken for the FSA as well as the WPA. The photographs tell a story of urbanization and the reaction against it as these photos were meant to capture and preserve an essence of rural America.

### Primary Sources:

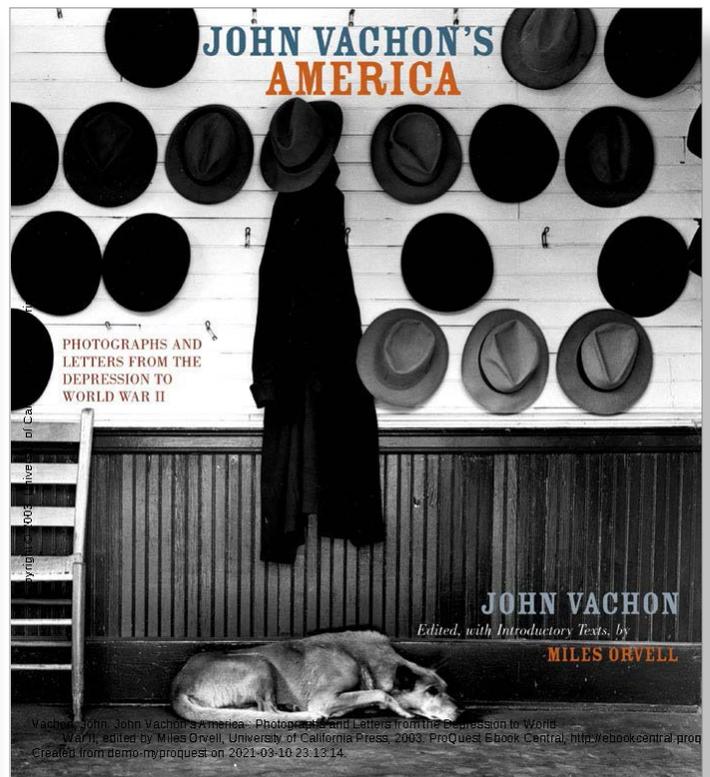
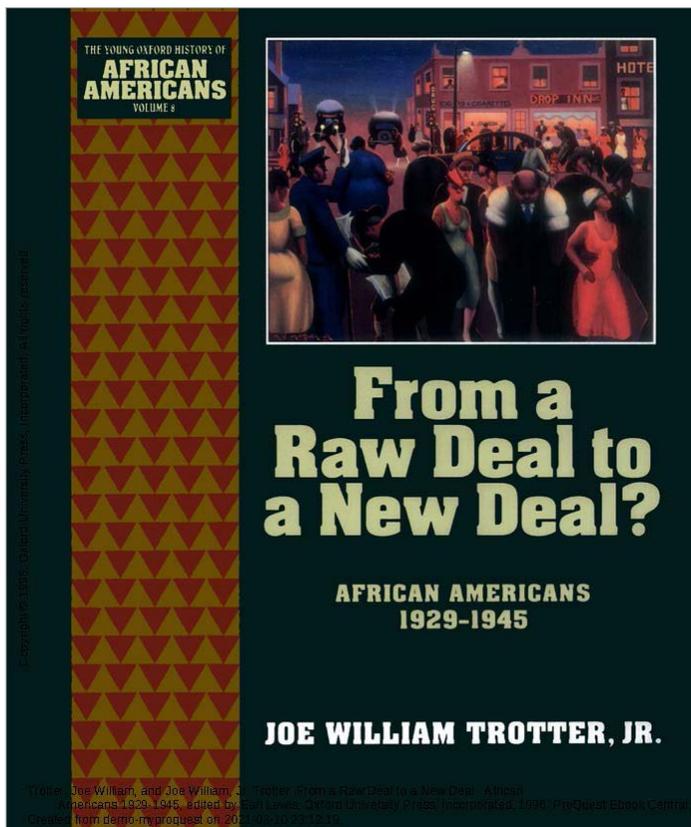
#### Primary Source Collections in ProQuest History Vault:

- NAACP Peonage, Labor, and New Deal Files, October -November 1938. <https://congressional.proquest.com/histvault?q=001418-021-0185&accountid=14667>
  - This is a series of letters from the NAACP discussing the FSA 'Transylvania' project and removal of Black families from that program with no clear reason for removal.
- Farm Security Administration Correspondence and memoranda, January 1940-December 1983. <https://congressional.proquest.com/histvault?q=001730-005-0236&accountid=14667>

- "Rural Electrification Administration, Rural Electric Cooperatives, and Black Farmers." January 1936-December 1962. <https://congressional.proquest.com/histvault?q=001587-008-0431&accountid=14667>
  - These documents discuss the disparity in access to REA and other New Deals Programs for Black citizens from the Great Depression through Civil Rights Era. An important series of letters discusses the need for education (to let Black farmers know what they were eligible for). There is correspondence with the Associated Negro Press.
- Roosevelt Executive Order Prescribing new Rules for REA Projects. August 1935. <https://congressional.proquest.com/histvault?q=002166-046-0035&accountid=14667>
  - This Executive Order allows loans to public and private agencies for rural electrification projects and also governs wages, hours, employment of persons from relief rolls, and the term of loan and construction contracts. This document comes from the Documentary History of the Franklin D. Roosevelt Presidency. This title provides an in-depth, behind-the-scenes look at the Roosevelt administration from 1933 to 1945. The documents are organized into fifty separate series, each one dealing with a major issue regarding the presidency of Franklin D. Roosevelt.

### Hearings in ProQuest Congressional:

- Rural Electrification Hearing, March 12-14, 1936. Committee on Interstate and Foreign Commerce, House. HRG-1936-FCH-0009. Y4.In8/4:R88/2. [https://congressional.proquest.com/congressional/docview/t29\\_d30.hrg-1936-fch-0009?accountid=131239](https://congressional.proquest.com/congressional/docview/t29_d30.hrg-1936-fch-0009?accountid=131239)
  - This hearing discusses the success of REA while deciding whether or not to extend the program.



- Once the war began, the FSA was given authority to redistribute lands taken from 'Japanese Enemy Aliens' by the American government. These files outline this authority and the plans for continued agricultural use. 'Confiscated' lands were rarely returned after release from internment.
- "Final Report of the Participation of the Farm Security Administration in the Evacuation Program." August 1942. <https://congressional.proquest.com/histvault?q=001730-004-0275&accountid=14667>
  - Final report on Japanese American relocation detailing the role the FSA played in these relocations and what happened to land 'forfeited' by enemy aliens.

**Hearings in ProQuest Congressional:**

- Committee to Investigate Farm Security Administration. House Select, Committee on Agriculture. June 7-11, 14-17, 29 to July 2, 1943. HRG-1943-HAG-0008. Y4.Ag8/1:F22/23/pt.2. <https://congressional.proquest.com/congressional/docview/t29.d30.hrg-1943-hag-0008?accountid=14667>
  - This is a congressional hearing covering the FSA in 1943. This hearing questions why families who improved the land in Norfolk VA moved after having done significant work. Apparently, these families moved because they were told that they would have to become sharecroppers for the land rather than cash renters. This was not the deal they felt they had taken when

- beginning the process and so moved. Overall, this sharecropping was exploitative and made it incredibly hard for farmers to make enough to apply for a tenant loan to buy the land. This is the key controversy at play with access and Black farmers and the FSA.
- "Relating to the Development of Farm Units on Public Lands Under Federal Reclamation projects with Funds Furnished by the Farm Security Administration." House Committee on Public Lands. July 19, 1939. HRG-1939-PLH-0008. <https://congressional.proquest.com/congressional/docview/t29.d30.hrg-1939-plh-0008?accountid=14667>
  - This is the bill in 1939 that was passed to allow federal land to be leased and improved (using FSA funds). The first statement is that this is one of 5 "non-controversial" bills to come before the Congress for that day. This implies that this was popular and unlikely to arouse debate. It's an interesting contrast to how people respond to spending and New Deal programs once World War II begins.
- "Committee to Investigate Activities of Farm Security Administration. House Select Committee, Committee on Agriculture. Published in 1944. HRG-1944-HAG-0003. Y4.Ag8/1:F22/23/pt.3. <https://congressional.proquest.com/congressional/docview/t29.d30.hrg-1944-hag-0003?accountid=14667>
  - This is part 3 (Jan 1944) of the FSA hearings and inquiries into the fairness of the FSA policies.

## Conclusion

As with many economic recovery plans, the New Deal has a mixed legacy of successes and failures. The FSA aided in the implementation of a racist internment scheme that traumatized and impoverished Asian-American citizens. Many New Deal programs struggled to provide equal assistance to Americans of all races, ethnicities, and classes. But pioneers like Mary Bethune made great strides in advocating for involvement of Black Americans and control over New Deal programs in ways that substantially improved many Black American lives. In the wake of absolute economic devastation, the New Deal provided desperately needed relief for some citizens and unfortunately failed to meet the varied and diverse needs of all equally. An examination of these documents and the successes and failures they represent will help researchers of all stripes to play a role in advocating for a more just relief scheme when the next economic crisis strikes.

The books and primary source documents referenced in this resource guide are a small sampling of the materials available in ProQuest databases on the topic of New Deal programs. Searching the databases covered in this resource guide on the names of the New Deal agencies will lead to a wide range of other materials that will allow professors, researchers, and students to study how the federal government responded to one of the greatest economic crises in American History.

## Databases covered:

- American Periodicals
- ProQuest Congressional
- ProQuest Ebook Central
- ProQuest Central
- ProQuest History Vault
  - Black Freedom Struggle in the 20th Century: Federal Government Records
  - Black Freedom Struggle in the 20th Century: Organizational Records and Personal Papers, Part 1
  - NAACP Papers
  - New Deal and World War II: President Franklin D. Roosevelt's Office Files and Records of Federal Agencies
  - World War II: U.S. Documents on Planning, Operations, Intelligence, Axis War Crimes, and Refugees

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