**Chapter 22, Section 2: Life During the Depression**

**I. The Depression Worsens** *(pages 661–663)*

**A.** By 1933 thousands of banks had closed and millions of American workers were unemployed. Unemployed workers often stood at **bread lines** to receive free food or at **soup** **kitchens** where private charities gave a free meal to the poor.

**B.** Americans unable to pay their mortgage or rent lost their homes. Those unable or unwilling to move had a court-ordered eviction notice delivered by a court officer or **bailiff** who forced nonpaying tenants out onto the street.

**C.** Many of the homeless built shacks in **shantytowns,** which they referred to as **“Hoovervilles”** because they blamed the president for their financial trouble. **Hobos,** or homeless Americans who wandered around hitching rides on railroad cars, searched for work and a better life.

**D.** As crop prices dropped in the 1920s, many American farmers left their fields uncultivated. A terrible drought in the Great Plains, beginning in 1932, caused the region to become a **“Dust Bowl.”**

**E.** Many Midwestern farmers and Great Plains farmers lost their farms. Many families moved west to California hoping to find a better life, but most still faced poverty and homelessness.

**Discussion Question**

What happened to unemployed workers and Midwestern and Great Plains farmers during the Depression? *(Unemployed workers often went to bread lines or soup kitchens to receive* *free food. Americans unable to pay their mortgage or rent lost their homes. Many of the homeless* *built shacks in shantytowns. Hobos wandered around hitching rides on railroad cars, searching* *for work and a better life. As crop prices dropped in the 1920s, many American farmers left their* *fields uncultivated. A terrible drought in the Great Plains, beginning in 1932, caused the region* *to become a “Dust Bowl.” Many Midwestern farmers and Great Plains farmers lost their farms.* *Many families moved west to California hoping to find a better life, but most of them still faced* *poverty and homelessness.)*

**II. Escaping the Depression** *(pages 663–664)*

**A.** Americans escaped the hardships of the Depression by going to the movies and listening to radio broadcasts. Stories tended to be about overcoming hardships and achieving success.

**B. Walt Disney** produced the first feature-length animated film, *Snow White and the Seven Dwarfs*, in 1937. Other films, like *The Wizard of Oz*, *Mr*. *Smith Goes to Washington*,and *Gone with the Wind*, contained stories of triumph over adversity and visions of abetter life.

**C.** Families gathered around the radio daily to hear news or listen to comedy shows like George Burns or a dramatic series like the Lone Ranger. Melodramas, called **soap** **operas,** became very popular with housewives. Soap operas received their name because makers of laundry soaps often sponsored them.

**Discussion Question**

Why were movies and radio programs important during the Depression? *(Movies and radio programs allowed Americans to escape their own lives and use their imagination.)*

**III. The Depression in Art** *(pages 664–665)*

**A.** Homeless and unemployed Americans were the subjects of art and literature during the 1930s. Artists and writers tried to capture the real life drama of the Depression. **Thomas Hart Benton** and **Grant Wood** emphasized traditional American values in their art.

**B. John Steinbeck’s** 1939 novel *The Grapes of Wrath* told the story of an Oklahoma family fleeing the Dust Bowl to find a new life in California. Steinbeck, like many writers of this time, wrote of poverty, misfortune, and social injustice.

**C.** Novelist **William Faulkner’s** literary technique, stream of consciousness, revealed characters’ thoughts and feelings before they spoke—thoughts they dared not reveal. In his novels, he exposed hidden attitudes of Southern whites and African Americans in a fictional Mississippi county.

**Discussion Question**

What was emphasized in the work of Thomas Hart Benton and Grant Wood? *(The two artists were a part of the regionalist school, which focused on traditional American values, particularly those of the rural Midwest and South.)*