In March-April, 2009, the Ohio Department of Aging solicited stories about the Great Depression from Ohioans who lived through it. More than 300 individuals sent in their stories of life, adversity and triumph during the 1920s, 1930s and 1940s. The average age of those submitting stories was 85. The oldest subject was 103, the youngest 64. The submissions presented a diverse range of topics from food and clothing, to employment, home life and differences between then and today. The following pages contain excerpts from those stories.
Acknowledgements

Our sincere thanks to the 313 people who submitted their stories to this project from all over the state and nation, as well as their families, for allowing us to tell Ohio’s story of life during the Great Depression. Our hope was to gather recollections and lessons learned that people of all ages could use for perspective on our modern era, as well as some advice for surviving adversity. Ohio’s greatest generation did not disappoint. We hope you enjoy their thoughts and recollections.

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Food, Cooking and Eating During the Great Depression

"We grew all our own vegetables. We had our own orchard. We had our own cows, had milk, made our own butter, did a lot of canning. My mother at one time had over 800 jars in the basement of jams, jellies, meat, fruits, vegetables, all these different things. We ate very comfortably because we ate from our own supplies. Many of my classmates did not have families that were well prepared for the difficulties of acquiring food as our family was. Many of them had small gardens or none at all. There were things that we could share, but there was not much more we could do for them."
- Dean Bailey, age 82, Lordstown

"Eating was different in those days, too. We didn't come to a table and complain because the food wasn't what we liked. There were not many choices. We ate or went without. Some days bread and gravy tasted very good."
- Maxine Bartelt, age 85, Columbus

"Popsicles would have 'free' stamped on some of the sticks and what a thrill is was to find one! I would hoard mine until I could not resist it. The free ones were always better somehow... Isaly's Klondikes came only in vanilla but some of them had pink centers and that meant a free one! One Saturday afternoon, I was given a dime, enough for two Klondikes. Dad took my friend and me to Isaly's. The first one had a pink center, the second had a pink center, and this went on until we had enough for the whole family - we were so proud and HAPPY!"
- Minnie Blose, age 83, Niles

"One day in the 1930's, when I was about 6 or 7, I went with my father to the produce market where he purchased the fruits and vegetables that he sold door-to-door from his truck. While at market this day, one of the merchants approached and asked if I wanted to earn some money. My father nodded his approval, and I was taken by truck to a nearby railroad yard where fruits and vegetables were being unloaded from freight cars. I was lifted into one of the cars and a man in the car began handing me large watermelons. My small knees buckled as I turned and handed the melons to a man standing below, who put them into a nearby truck. In the distance, I noticed a group of about 25 people, standing patiently and watching, with baskets over their arms. Pretty soon, by accident, I dropped a watermelon and it split into numerous pieces. Four or five of the people rushed over and began to fill their baskets with the watermelon pieces. This happened three or four more times... I watched this and thought to myself, 'these people must be really be hungry.' When the unloading was done, I looked around and saw other freight cars holding various kinds of fresh produce, and groups of people near each one waiting for the 'accident' that would help them put food on their tables. 'Daddy, we're not poor,' I said. 'Now I know what poor really is: all those people pushing to get to the spilled beans and watermelons.' 'Yes,' he replied, 'there are a lot of hungry people with no jobs who have to get food any way they can. We're in a Depression and times are hard.'"
- Stanley L. Blum, age 79, Dayton
"I lived through The Great Depression and can remember eating beans for breakfast, lunch, and dinner when I was four years old but at least we had something to eat. Others didn't."
- Marty Bryan, age 82, Columbus

"When the Great Depression hit, like so many other families in our small town of East Palestine, Ohio, we had no food left in the house to feed our family. My mother told my father: 'Tomorrow, you must go to the relief office (welfare) and see if we can get some food to feed the family' (of nine children). Dad, with so much pride, said he could not go. So, the next morning my mother went and applied for food. With the last $2, my father started out early the next morning on foot to one of the surrounding farms. He found a farmer that sold him 10 bushels of potatoes. The farmer had an old truck. Dad said it was a deal, but the farmer would have to bring him and the potatoes home. He put them in the cellar and my mother would make potato soup. The welfare gave us corned beef in cans and corn meal, and sometimes oranges. My mother made polenta and put tomato sauce on the polenta. When she could, if we had a dime, we bought 10 cents worth of ground meat to put in the potato soup. We were lucky to have potato soup! A dish I have never made to this day."
- Eleanor Ungaro Carpenter, age 89, East Palestine

"Starting in the spring, a farmer came through the neighborhood in the afternoon of one day of each week with his horse drawn wagon. He had a scale on the back of the wagon with a tray in which he weighed the in-season produce from his farm. The price of his wares was much lower than the prices charged in the neighborhood stores. No super markets in those days. Housewives from all the houses would go out to his wagon when they heard the sound of his cowbell that he rang, as he entered the neighborhood. They would bring with them paper sacks, pots and pans to hold their purchases. They knew the produce was fresh because it had been picked the day before, or even the same morning. If a lady wished a large quantity to can, which most women did at that time, they would order a bushel basket of what they desired. This included all vegetables and fruit. At a later visit, He would bring them their order."
- Don Conrad, age 81, Lewis Center

"Grandma made her own bread and baked it in an open hearth oven that my Grandfather had built in their backyard. I have never tasted anything as good as that since. If there were any loaves left over by her next baking day, Grandma would make an Italian dish called 'minestra' - made with the cut up left over bread, beans, ham hocks and dandelion greens. This was a poor man's meal, but very nourishing. Mom and Grandma would walk to Interlake field to pick the dandelions used in this dish."
- Mary Rose DeMaria, age 83, Oregon

"After working in the mill all day my dad came home to a supper of baked beans on toast - one Campbell's regular size can divided among the three of us; two slices of toast for dad, two for mom and one for me. My mother in later years said she never wanted to see another bean."
- Mildred Redman Dieter, age 81, Youngstown
"It was a great thing to be living on a farm, where we had most of our own food. Dad raised pigs, chickens and we always had a cow or two for our own milk, cream and butter. Mom sold our eggs to Mr. Leatherman who in exchange brought flour, sugar and other staples to the house in a black panel truck or a big car of some kind. He had a grocery store and Mom would have her list of groceries ready every week to exchange for the eggs. Sometimes she had to pay extra because the egg price would be down that week. She counted her pennies very carefully as money was very scarce. We ate a lot of pork and I still love it. Dad smoked the hams and bacon in the smokehouse."

- Donna Jean Donovan, age 83, Massillon

"One day Dad and I took the dime and walked several miles to the store; bought pancake mix and walked home. Dad showed me how to wind a clean cloth around the tines of a fork, wipe it in the almost-empty lard pail, then grease the skillet. We enjoyed the pancakes! Sometimes a dime bought a pound of bacon, flavor for several meals. We usually took corn muffins or biscuits for school lunches, maybe with peanut butter, but never with jelly, too."

- Margaret B. Edwards, age 89, Gibsonburg

"My grandmother bought day old bread and each night at dinnertime she would prompt us to 'eat bread, eat plenty bread.' I would need no coaching. I loved that bread... We loved it when our great-aunts and uncles (the ones who had money) came because they always brought wonderful food like salami, corned beef, roast beef, fresh rye bread and rolls, with all the trimmings."

- Adele Federman, Toledo

"We would have potatoes for one meal and beans for another. I remember eating so many potatoes and beans during those years that when I got married I told my wife to never cook potatoes again and she rarely did!"

- Earl Gorsuch, age 88, Lebanon

"One day when it was time for supper, Mom was worried about not having anything to eat up for supper. She was sitting in our apartment window upstairs over a barber shop. She told us we had nothing to eat but flour and water and lard. She said if we would go next door to our building and ask the lady who lives there if you could have some apples off her tree. We, my sister was almost 6 and I was 5 years old. We were so hungry we went with a cloth laundry bag and ask the lady. She said we could pick up the ones on the ground and if our bag wasn't full we could have the ladder to get some from the tree. When we got the bag full we drug it home to Mom, who was waiting at the bottom of the steps. She carried them upstairs. She had already made the dough and we helped her cut up the apples she peeled. She put tem in the dough that mom had rolled out on the table. She rolled up this long roll of dough with the apples and some Karo syrup. We all ate till we were full and Mom said to save some for breakfast and we would be able to eat 2 days."

- Lois Hayhurst-Walke, age 78, Whitehall
"Everyone who owned a home had a vegetable garden and canned vegetables. For rich chicken soup, we bought backs and necks of chickens. For rich stew, or stuffed cabbage, we used ham hocks. Everyone ate oatmeal - no cold cereals. Apples were desert. Potato pancakes too, were great. Grape jelly and peanut butter with soup, was our lunch at school very often."
- Mildred Kontz, age 80, Berea

"Food lines were long. Daddy bought day-old bread for 10 cents and gallon skim milk for 20 cents, and we made 'bread soup' for supper - sometimes not enough for everyone and we went to bed hungry. Many days, I begged bones for my dog at the grocery store, only to take them home for mother to make soup. Fallen apples made the most delicious sugarless applesauce."
- Dorothy Lauman, age 89, Wilmington

"One day while pushing me in the baby carriage from South Euclid to East Cleveland for a visit to my paternal Grandparents Lewis they passed a hot dog stand. Mother said, they could smell the aroma from a distance: 'The closer we got the more hungry we were!' She longed to try one or split one with my dad. They searched their pockets for the required 10 cents to no avail. Passing the stand they could only continue their walk with their baby hoping for a snack upon arrival at grandma's house. Many years later my mother recalled that day saying, 'Now I can eat in any restaurant I choose and order anything I wish for, but when the memories of that hot dog stand revisit my mind, I must say, I wish I could be as enthusiastic now as I was then.'
- Marilyn Markle, age 79, North Royalton

"Most of the food at home was canned or jelly made of fruits in season. The meat came from chickens, geese, ducks and rabbits caught by men in the fields. I discovered peanut butter at a friend's house. My mother never bought peanut butter. Seeing a jar on my friend's table, the parents were away - I asked what it was. I was offered a taste on a piece of bread, I loved it."
- Olga Morrison, age 91, Youngstown

"Our parents always had a big garden and we all helped (mother) can jars and jars of fruit and vegetables. A pig was butchered in the fall and we had homemade sausage and smoked hams. Fat was rendered into lard in a big iron kettle over an open fire. Mother dried corn on a dryer on her coal cook stove. Old used fat was made into home-made soap."
- Helen Oliver, age 83, Poland

"We didn't have store bought bread, my mom baked bread once or twice a week and if we ran out she would stir up a batch of biscuits. We didn't buy cottage cheese. Mom made it with sour milk by putting it into cheesecloth and hanging it on the clothes line."
- Evelyn Peloquin, age 89, Genoa

"Later, a friend I worked with said in the Depression he rode the rails and stopped to eat vegetables out of a garden. The owner said he would shoot him if he didn't stop. My friend said 'go ahead,' as he was that hungry."
- James Randolph, Columbus
"Coffee and breakfast food just was real hard to have, so Mom cleaned wheat from the grindery and boiled it till it swelled and got tender. Then she drained it and put milk and sugar on it for breakfast. The coffee she would brown it till it got real dark and then grind it up and use it for coffee. Now and then we would have bread and coffee on a plate with sugar. It was good. Bread and gravy was great too. We always seemed to have just about enough to eat."

- Carl Reed, age 76, Malvern

"One of the rental homes that Dad's family was in was in the back of a store in the Fleet Ave./Slavic Village area. He told of fiercely guarding their 'secret place' where they gathered cookies. At that time, breads and pastries were only on the shelf one, possibly two days. Maybe because they were made with the absence of preservatives or plaster as we have today. He said that National Biscuit would dump mounds of cookies somewhere off of Harvard Ave. by the car barns. They would gather as much as they could carry home. They knew the exact time that they were going to be dumped and waited. If you got there the next day or too late, the dew or the rats got at them. He never ate another gingersnap or vanilla wafer in his adult life."

- David Rizzo, age 66, Sagamore Hills

"My favorite Depression story concerns grits. They were cheap but my Mother hated them. I grew up in Miami, Florida and my father was a stone cutter and a carpenter, but was frequently out of work. My Mother had a bag of grits in the pantry and whenever he was out of work and things looked dim, my Mother would say, 'well I guess it's grits tonight.' Then my Father would always seem to come home with a job. The grits never got eaten and we never had to stand in food lines."

- Nell Rudolph, Elyria

"(Mother) would also scrimp and save so she'd have a dollar when the local farmers, desperate to get rid of their milk because people just weren't buying it as fast as their cows were producing it, would go door-to-door, offering five gallons for a buck... She also crafted a variety of cheeses, even aging some for grating. That was my favorite, because it reminded me of our native home in southern Italy, which we had just left the year before."

- Anna Marie Slezak, age 88, Middletown

"I was 94 on Jan. 8, 2009. My son took 11 of our family to a local restaurant for lunch. I told him what that lunch cost would have bought seven or eight months of groceries in the 1930s. Food was a serious item. Plain and filling. White navy soup beans was a favorite. We had a neighbor that liked to hunt, but he couldn't afford the shells for his gun. My mother paid for his shells and he gave her the rabbits and squirrels he got - sometimes a raccoon. There were no deer or wild turkeys then. Everyone planted a garden. Some public land was made into garden plots - the Victory gardens were born. Along the road were elderberry, black and red raspberries and walnut - paw-paw - chestnut trees. We gathered greens - dandelion, polk, water crest. We had a cookbook '100 Ways to Stretch One Pound of Hamburger.' Depression Cake - flour - sugar - cocoa - baking powder - water - 9 x 12 pan - a heavy chocolate cake. When you ate a piece, it stayed with you. Home-made root beer - It was all very hard work and time consuming. But not
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too many were overweight. Mostly very healthy."
- Margaret Smith, age 94, Barnesville

"We grew corn, popcorn, potatoes, tomatoes on one acre garden. We ate a lot of popcorn for dinner the first few years"
- Don Trietsch, age 89, Centerville

"Food, or lack of it, seemed to be the major problem. Mother baked all the bread, fixed vegetables, made meals with such staples as canned corned beef and canned salmon. One time we were given a pork roast and I thought I had never tasted anything so delicious but such occasions were rare. For years we had no fresh milk or butter and I remember being embarrassed at a friend's place when someone commented that I didn't butter my bread. I remember a period of about a week when there was no money for flour and we had no bread at all. Mother made mashed potatoes and flour gravy to fill us up. I might mention that there was never a hint of obesity in our family."
- Margaret Vail, age 86, Mansfield

"I saw some of the kids (at school) eat banana rinds that other kids had thrown away. Mom would pack my lunch with bread and apple butter and sometimes I had a fried egg sandwich and that was better than a lot of them had. Thank God."
- Charles Warrick, age 81, Barnesville

"I never remember being hungry-grandma was a magical cook and could make a marvelous meal out of whatever was in the ice box. I used to watch her make cottage cheese by putting curdled milk in a cloth and hanging it over the sink to drain. We had a lot of beans and cornbread too. Grandma used to make huge kettles of vegetable or bean soup. We had a backyard garden that kept us in vegetables and we splurged and got the meat at the store. No matter how little we had, grandma used to feed people with this soup. They would come to the door begging and she would send them to the back porch and give them soup. She was a Saint!!"
- Dolores L. Younger, age 79, Westerville

"Mom could make everything taste good - or maybe we were hungry. Our meals were mostly cornmeal mush, dandelions, sybutcel (another weed), puff balls, wheat from the grainery (with permission), wild rabbit, groundhog and turtle. Vegetables, if we had a garden, were cooked in salt water - no flavorings. We used a lot of tallow in place of lard."
- Wilma Blasiman, age 88, Lake Milton

"Our menu for the week was always the same: pasta, vegetables, beans and on occasion some fish. Sundays were always homemade spaghetti and meatballs. So, when we had 'Wonder' bread and bologna, it was a real treat. That did not happen very often."
- Madge Contin Browning, age 92, Columbus
"My mother and my husband's mother both canned a lot of vegetables and we would pick berries in the summer to can and make jelly. My father used to raise his own vegetable plants in a large hot bed, and after he planted all he wanted he gave away the rest of the plants to our neighbors. We also raised chickens (mostly for eggs) and rabbits. Once in a while, my mother would roast one of the chickens for a Sunday dinner. We had homemade beef noodle soup and vegetables nearly every day for our supper. If we didn't like what was put on the table, we just had to do without."

- Irene Burkhart, age 83, Shadyside

"Almost all of the food we ate came from Mom's huge garden. We also had plenty of fresh milk and eggs. Mom would exchange eggs for a few items from the peddler wagon twice a week. On rare occasions, there would be a few pennies left over and the peddler would bring down the little box of penny candy from the top shelf... In the fall, to provide for her five sons and two daughters, Mom would begin canning. She would fill mason jars with vegetables, meat or fruit, then store the pretty glass jars on the shelves in the dirt cellar underneath our home. There was also two large bins, one for potatoes we had dug and one filled with apples from our orchard. In the city, men formed long lines waiting to buy what they called day-old bread. We grew up with homemade bread and the aroma of freshly baked bread would drift up the open stairway at night."

- Ruth Maloney Cowgill, Marion

"(Mom) became friendly with the grocery store owner, so she would go to the store when he closed and bought any meat that would not keep - there was no freezer. Unsold vegetables that would not keep, he gave to her. So, we had lots of vegetable soup. She would can what she could for later."

- Carolyn Davison, age 86, Columbus

"My husband and I, with our baby daughter, Ruthie, worked for a family in Gustavus. It was a three-generation farm owned by the Waters family. There was a grandfather, son and grandson living in the household. I was the family housekeeper doing all the cleaning, laundry, cooking, baking and canning. I baked bread twice a week. We had no freezer, so everything had to be canned. All veggies and fruits were canned. Meats that were not smoked in the smokehouse were canned also. Meals were always ready at 7 a.m., noon and 6 p.m."

- Josephine DiBell, age 103, Cortland

"My father and several other friends made maple syrup back in the woods by the creek in the sugar bush shed that housed the special equipment needed to keep a fire going under the vats holding the sap collected from the maple trees. We kids were runners with food, etc. for the maple workers. The men put metal tubes in the trees and hung a bucket from them. When they were quite full, they dumped the sap into a large tub on a large sled pulled by the horses. They took the sap to the sugar bush and placed it in vats over the fire to be cooked down several hours before it became wonderful maple syrup. My mother made large fry-pan sized pancakes
for us with yummy maple syrup for breakfasts."
- E. Marie Dornbrook, age 87, Parma Heights

"Everyone farmed and raised vegetables to can and eat. If your garden was in a sunny spot and you harvested early, your family shared with others who planted in a cooler spot and harvested later in the season (when they shared with you). Potatoes were buried. Meats were smoked for the winter. We didn't have a freezer and had to preserve food for leaner times."
- Laverne Hillyer Fifer, age 92, Northwood

"No matter where we lived, my father had a huge garden. He also had rabbits and goats. We became vegetarians long before it was in fashion. My brothers worked the garden with my dad."
- Theresa Giallombardo, age 80, Maple Heights

"Food was always a problem, or should I say the lack of food. The kids were always looking for a bit of something. If one kid had an apple to eat, they would surround that one child yelling 'core, core!' Then, one person would get the core of the apple to suck out the final bits of apple and juices that were left. The rest of us just stared and hoped that someday we could have an apple or a core to eat."
- Edna Hanson, age 76, Toledo

"My contribution to the family table was turtle. Coming home from school when I was quite small, I would look for turtle tails along the river or creek bank. I would pull the turtles out of the bank, being very careful not to get my fingers snapped off. I'd take the turtles home and turn them over to my father, and the next night we'd have a delicious supper of turtle meat. Later on, we'd have turtle soup."
- Elizabeth Helber, age 87, Logan

"Our Victory Diner customers varied from young to old. But one woman's plight and desperation stayed with me for life. This little old woman came daily into our diner for months, sat in what we called one of our small (2-seater) front booths, ordered only a cup of hot water. Then she drew out a single tea bag from her satchel-purse, put it into the cup. Finally she emptied our sugar bowl into the cup. She drank that. I suspect that's all she had to eat or drink for most of the day. Her plight and desperation haunts me to this day."
- Alice J. Hornbaker, age 82, Cincinnati

"Mom would walk to the East Market on Mt. Vernon Ave., basket in hand, to seek the best bargains at the vegetable and meat counters within. As she approached the meat counter, she would eye the row of calf heads very critically. These were the cheapest items at the butchers' stand. The way she would prepare it was to embed it in a shallow pan of rice and pop it in the oven. (In leaner times, we had our share of lard sandwiches.) Other meals she cooked were pots of sauerkraut and wieners, lima beans and neck bones, and hamburger patties smothered in a deep pan of thick brown gravy."
- Alex James, age 91, Columbus
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"We never bought bread. My mother and grandmother always baked homemade rye bread, so we always had food on the table and extra to help feed our help, and they truly appreciated it in that time and era. We also made our own butter. I recall how many times I had to turn the churn. We also made ice cream in the old fashioned hand-turned ice cream maker."
- Carl Krob, age 82, Bridgeport

"The owner of our farm was Bob Pickens, who had a grocery retail store in Mt. Vernon. From the store, Bob gave us a fifty-pound sack of corn flakes that had gone stale. Mom put them in the oven and warmed them up. This was a good, cheap mix with the acre of soup beans we had planted."
- Wendell Litt, New Concord

"When I look back, I'm sure the big vegetable garden Dad planted (and we all weeded) kept us from ever being hungry and allowed us to share with friends and relatives. We had many meatless meals, but never went hungry. I helped my mom 'put up' several hundred quart jars of beans, beets and corn. We did three or four kinds of pickles and usually a five-gallon crock of sauerkraut every year. These we also shared with others. Potatoes, cabbage and winter squash were stored in a 'cold cellar' and lasted just about all winter. A cold cellar was a sort of cave made of earth in the side of a hill with a heavy wood door. Vegetables stayed cold, but did not freeze. Believe me, nothing was wasted."
- Martha McMahon, age 85, Medina

"Fortunately for us, we lived in the country and had cows for milk and butter, chickens for eggs and meat, a large garden and small orchard. So produce was eaten fresh in the summer and canned for winter. Game was plentiful and the men hunted rabbit and pheasants. My father helped with butchering beef or hogs, taking meat for pay. Since our area had few wealthy people, we survived simply because we had lived without so much, we just carried on. We were made stronger by adversity, and knew if we survived that we could survive anything."
- Margaret Obenour, age 91, Marion

"I could have easily been a vegetarian, as we could only afford meat on Sunday. Wonderful meals of cooked cabbage, boiled Brussels sprouts, potato soup, noodle soup (with only salt and pepper and margarine for seasoning, rice soup, bean soup, etc. Our Sunday dinner was meat loaf that was mostly made with bread soaked in water and added to the small amount of meat so that it was a loaf of speckled meat and a lot of bread. As I recall, it was good. No chicken, except maybe on Christmas. Pnly a ham slice, fried, for Easter. Pork pieces scattered in the sauerkraut for New Year's Day. Homemade fudge was our only candy (my Grandmother's treat). Syrup made from white sugar and water. Sugar pie (just pie crust coated with sugar and water and baked)."
- Doris Portmann, age 76, Navarre

"There was no mechanized farming; we plowed with horses, milked cows by hand, gathered eggs, and raised pigs. There was always food on the table, helped by the periodic butchering of
pigs. My home-packed lunch for school often consisted of sandwiches with lard or head cheese (that is, as the dictionary says, 'meat from a pig's or calf's head that is cooked and pressed into a loaf, usually with aspic'). My mother told my sister and me to clean our plates; to this day, when I eat, I normally clean my plate, even though, at times (only recently) I ask for a doggie box at restaurants. The little money spent and the food eaten was based on frugal living, which included consideration of others. For example, I recall my mother preparing food for an itinerant to eat on the porch."
- Wallace L. Pretzer, age 78, Bowling Green

"There were many fruit trees on the property. We had many kinds of fruit. We ate many coblers and canned many jars of fruit. We planted a large garden and raised all our vegetables. Because of all the fruit, many ground hogs came also. Now, we had meat for the table."
- Neva Rees, age 87, Marietta

"Most of our food came from the farm. Pork and poultry were the main meat supply. We butchered one 250-pound hog for each member of the family. The hams, shoulders and bacon were salt cured and smoked. They were then placed in a large paper bag, along with a little borax to keep the bugs out. The sack was then tied tightly and hung from a nail in the outbuilding. The cured pork supply usually lasted till late summer and we had very little spoilage. Sausage and garden products were canned in quart jars. Corn meal was a part of our diet - it was used as mush and milk, fried mush, corn pone and corn cakes. My Dad also used corn meal to make dog feed. He would build an outside fire and use a kettle ring and a 20 gallon kettle. When the water in the kettle started to boil, he would add the corn meal and all the leftover parts from the butchering. It was great dog feed. The milk cows provided us with milk, cream, butter, cottage cheese and some cream to sell to the cream station."
- William M. Shaw, age 87, Sarahsville

"My mother speaks fondly of her two favorite sandwiches, which she still eats today: radish sandwiches and onion sandwiches. These were, of course, made with bread, butter and sliced vegetables. She also speaks fondly of her mother's peach desserts. The family protein usually consisted of liver, which butchers gave away for free, and wild game, such as muskrat and squirrel. Ugh! Naturally, mother is still a big fan of liver and onions today."
- Amy Adler, about her mother, Ferne Smith, age 89, Elyria

"Among the memories I have is that everyone had a vegetable garden. Mom canned everything she could. She and Dad needed to provide for themselves and their three children. In the cellar, there was a large vegetable bin filled with potatoes and rutabagas. Mom's aim was to provide enough food to last us through the harsh New York winters. Mrs. McManus, next door, was a big help to the whole neighborhood. Her contribution was homemade bread - and it was delicious!"
- Gladys Case Stent, age 84, Columbus
"We were lucky because my father always had a job, but there was little money for extras. We considered going to a restaurant once or twice a year a real treat. I can remember eating beef heart and beef tongue often and liking it. We made our own root beer with yeast, sugar and root beer extract."
- Julia K. Swan, age 76, Cambridge

"Her mother was a single working mom supporting 3 daughters. One winter, a neighbor gave the family a bushel of turnips, which the mother cooked almost daily in one fashion or another. After a winter of turnips, my mother couldn't stand them and never ate them again."
- Karen G. Thimmes, age 64, Columbus, about her mother, Louise Von Endt

"We always had food because Daddy (a Methodist minister) and Mother always planted a garden. Parishioners shared their garden produce, as well as chickens for the eggs and cooking. Mother and Daddy would always can produce from our garden, or any that was given us, so we'd have food during the winter months. I remember when we lived in Washington Court House, Ohio (1936 to 1939), Daddy had bee hives, so we had honey to eat. When we lived in Johnston (1946-1951), we had a small pig pen behind our garage. Daddy got the garbage from the school cafeteria down the road from the parsonage. The garbage from the school helped feed the pig. When it got the right size, we'd have it butchered and we'd rent space in a freezer locker to keep the frozen meat in."
- Urith Ellen Linard Thompson, age 74, Middletown

"My folks had a big old four- or five-bedroom house and plenty of food that they raised: -- potatoes, chickens, fruit and vegetables, so we didn't go hungry. The fellows planted a lot of potatoes, even borrowed a neighbors small unused field to plant them. 'At least we would have potatoes to eat.' Interestingly they planted a lot of cucumbers and sold the little cukes to the pickle factory in Norwalk to make jerkins. That was a hard job, but there were several of us to do it."
- Ernestine Van Asdale, age 86, Columbus

"There was no money for the necessities of life. We had a garden and some chickens, and butchered our own meat. The sandwiches that we carried in our lunches to school did not have lard on them, but mustard, and that was it! It's a wonder I like mustard now, but I do."
- Margaret Willford, age 87, Plymouth

"Eggs were 10 cents a dozen. No one ever charged to babysit - unheard of - that's what neighbors did for nothing. Mom and dad made our own bread. I never tasted store-bought bread until I was 16; I never tasted bacon until I was 18. My mother never tasted bacon at all."
- Gladys Saba Wright, age 89, Richmond Heights

"I never tasted ice cream until I was eight years old; it was in a soda and I didn't like it (imagine that). We never took second helpings at dinner time to make sure the hardest workers had their fill. In fact, the younger kids ate last."
- Marge Bacon, age 86, Montpelier
"We had very little to eat with no variety. My mother worked very hard trying to come up with healthy meals. In the summer, Dad grew things in our garden, which helped. I never tasted steak until I went into the Air Force in 1943, at age 18. One thing that sticks in my mind is eating at the 'soup kitchen' every Wednesday at noon. It was on South Main Street and run by the Salvation Army. Before we ate, everyone sang 'Oh Buelah Land.' I still sing this song."
- Robert Bohyer, age 84, Lima

"My mom could go to a 'bare' cupboard and make a meal. It may not have been much, but it held body and soul together. We had milk from the cows, eggs from the chickens and fruits and vegetables from the garden and orchards. We would let the milk get sour, Mom would skim the cream and we would churn great tasting butter. Then, we would have the best buttermilk. She would strain the rest of the milk curds and cream them for delicious cottage cheese, and we would feed the whey to the pigs, which they loved. When we needed meat, my dad butchered a cow or a pig. We ate chicken quite often... My mom had us pick apples and she would peel them and make apple butter or spiced apples, then she would cook the peelings and cores, strain it and make apple jelly. To this day, I DO NOT like apple jelly."
- Bonnie Brunner, age 75, Lorain

"We lived on a farm and had an abundance of food. We had beef, pork, chickens, milk and eggs. We churned butter and baked our bread. We raised a large vegetable garden and canned fruits and vegetables. We had a cave for storing potatoes, apples, squash, pumpkins, cabbages, gooseberries, canned blackberries, raspberries and carrots. We made many jams and jellies also. We had plenty to eat, but very little money."
- Mary Cole, age 91, Cadiz

"I remember so well in the summertime my mother would send me or my sister to Behrendt's grocery store down at the corner of our block to purchase 10 cents worth of bologna to give us a delicious sandwich with a slice of fresh tomato and mayonnaise. Still today, it is among my favorite sandwiches."
- William Cox, age 85, Sylvania

"For food, we lived off of the land: large garden, fruit trees, strawberries and grape vines, also wild berries for eating and jelly. We had chickens, ducks, goats for meat and milk and hogs we butchered. We cut hay with a scythe for livestock food. Our food was a large pot filled with home cooked meals. Bread was made from flour received from a relief program. Water was from a well with a hand pump. Food was cooked on a wood burning stove. Heat was from a wood and coal furnace. Coal was gathered from a 3-mile hike along a railroad track."
- Helen De Gifis, age 83, Warren

"There was no store nearby, so biscuits were baked in the morning, cornbread for dinner and all leftovers were used at suppertime. Everything left after that was mixed with the dishwater and fed to the hogs. Grandmother made all her own buttermilk, skim milk (we called it clabber) and
butter."
- Bernice Dixon, age 80, Galloway

"My dad worked on the railroad. We had pigs, chickens and a cow. We had our own butter, milk, eggs and, about once a year, my dad and friends butchered a hog to keep us in meat. We also had a very large garden, which supplied us with a lot of food. Then, my mother canned everything she could. During this time, we supplied some of our relatives with food from the garden. I can remember how people stood in lines downtown to get the rations they were handing out. I remember them getting prunes, bread and other edibles."
- Evelyn Eckert, age 90, Crestline

"Our fried bread is now called French toast, our fried mush is now called palenta and our cracklings from the hog butchering are now called pork rinds. We butchered hogs, cured the hams, made and fried sausage patties and put them down in crocks of lard. We rendered the pig fat and made lard from it (sure made delicious pie crusts!)"
- Mary Alice foster, age 89, Reynoldsburg

"Mom was a whiz in the kitchen. No food was wasted. In the morning, she made a large pot of oatmeal, and for each of us, a bowl of that was our breakfast. At Thanksgiving, we had roast chicken and all the trimmings. Then, she boiled the carcass, getting every bit of good from that chicken. To the broth, she added homemade noodles, and that was a meal. Our lunch for school was mainly made with a thin layer of peanut butter, an apple or a pear, because we had trees for them."
- Mary Elizabeth Stillwagon Glass, age 88, Cambridge

"Mother canned everything she could in season and made a lot of sauerkraut. We had a large potato garden planted in what now is the Zoar Garden. Since we had only a few chickens, it was a real treat when we got to eat eggs. I remember getting a soft-boiled egg to eat when we were ill. My mother also baked our own bread and rolls."
- Irene Class Haueter, age 94, Bolivar

"I grew up in southern Ohio during the Depression. There were five of us children at home. We went barefoot in the summer to save our shoes. Mom grew two patches of strawberries for jam, which she made by the huge kettle. The house smelled so good when she made the jam. We kids washed fruit jars by the dozen for canning. Usually, Mom canned 400 quarts or more each summer. That was so needed for the winter months. Nothing went to waste. She canned deer meat, and the watermelon rinds were saved, washed and made into preserves. We grew huge amounts of potatoes, and they were stored in a hole dug out of a hill, which preserved them and gave them a slightly sweet taste. They were so good fried. We couldn't afford store-bought light bread for our school lunches, so Mom made loves of yeast bread or biscuits for our school sandwiches."
- Iona Hervey, age 77, Spencer
"Food was always on the table, as we raised a large garden. Mom canned vegetables, fruits, etc., for winter. We raised all our potatoes and meat with very little bought from a store. Being on a dairy farm, we were up early seven days a week. Early in the morning, we would pick strawberries and deliver them door-to-door in Prospect for 10 cents a quart or 3 for a quarter. We walked to town and back on Sunday to purchase a paper for 10 cents."

- **Louis Hughes, age 85, Marion**

"We would butcher pigs and a cow. We would cure the hams and mother would can the beef and sausage so that we had meat in the summer. We would also have chicken to eat. Mother would boil maple syrup and make it into sugar to sweeten food. She baked our bread, cakes, pies and cookies. We had our own flour and lard. Mother would brown wheat in an iron skillet and grind it and use it for Postum to drink. We could afford coffee sometimes. Many times we would not have any eggs or money and we would just have to put more water in that coffee pot and boil it one more time. The coffee would be pretty weak, but it was still hot. My sisters would think that because we did not have Corn Flakes, bologna and hot dogs, we were poor - not realizing that we had more than most."

- **Phyllis Spohn Johnson, age 81, Butler**

"With very limited funds and time, Mother was a very inventive cook, creating delicious dishes for us! One was 'tepeters' (our name for it), a tasty concoction of sautéed onions, tomato bits and peppers. Another we called 'CPOs' (corn, potatoes and onions). The only meat we could afford was flanken (soup meat), and we kids hated it! But every Friday night, we did have roast chicken for dinner."

- **Mina Kulber, age 86, Lyndhurst**

"During the Depression times, George remembers his mom making big bowls of 'mush.' They ate warm mush as soon as it was done, then his mom would pour the remainders into cake tins to let cool and get hard. They would eat mush all week for breakfast. His mom would slice the mush and then fry it so they'd have something to eat each morning. They didn't have any snacks during that time, but always had a supply of bread in the house. Whatever they found to put between the bread was what they ate, ranging from just mayonnaise, mustard, sugar, jam, and even mashed potatoes from the garden. They would get excited when it snowed, because they'd gather it up and call it ice cream. They raised chickens for meat, about 200 at a time."

- **Rick Prentice about George Hibbs, age 75, Grand Rapids**

"During this time, my dad worked at a meat market on Saturday and he worked in his little room downstairs grinding hamburger. Then it was three pounds for five dollars. At the end of the day, I came up there and cleaned his room, his utensils and swept the floor. Then, I took a bag of meat home on the bus. My mom would salt the meat, put it in a big pan and we would store it under the front porch. It was cold there and we had no refrigerator then."

- **Edward Machuga, age 86, Canton**
"There were nine of us children, my mom, dad and grandpa living in a small house in Woodville, Ohio. In the spring, my mom would plant a big garden expecting the children to help her take care of it. From the garden, we would have fresh vegetables to eat, plus she canned vegetables from the garden for winter use. Mom made homemade ketchup that we would eat on bread and call it a sandwich, I can still remember how good it tasted. When the wild strawberries would appear, mom and some of us young ones would pick them so Mom could make them into jam for winter. As other wild fruits became ripe, we would pick them so mom could make jam and jelly. Pears and apples would be eaten fresh, and also canned for the winter. All the full jars would be placed under our beds, and by the next spring all the jars would be under the beds empty to be refilled for the next winter."

- Thomas J. Miller, age 90, Elmore

"My brother, sister and I attended grade school... and when we came home for lunch at noon, my mother would give me some money to buy groceries at the M and K store. I would buy a loaf of bread for 10 cents, a pound of bologna or spiced ham or spanish loaf for 20 cents and three nickel candy bars for a dime. I usually got a Power House bar because it was huge and almost a meal in itself. Sometimes, instead of candy, I would buy two pounds of bananas at five cents a pound. All of this for forty cents, enough to fill our bellies."

- Irvin Pfalzgraf, age 85, Massillon

"In the fall, when cooler weather came, a hog or two was butchered. The hams and shoulders were smoked and sacked so that the flies would not get to them. Sausage was hung and then fried down. After it was put in jars, a small amount of grease was added, sealed and turned over. Usually a beef was butchered also."

- Deskey Posey, age 82, Chillicothe

"Fortunately my mother was a thrifty person who could serve for us three girls. My brothers would go on the hill and clear a place, and the rest of us kids would put in a garden. We didn't have any water up there, so we had to carry water for our plants. When fall came, we would take a wagon and bring down potatoes, tomatoes and whatever we raised. My mother would can whatever she had. In our yard we had apples and pears, which she canned."

- Rosemary Rausch, age 83, Plain City

"Everyone planted a garden and, as the produce became available, our Mothers did their best to can everything available. The saying was, 'We eat what we can and what we can't we can.'"

- Bob Reichard, age 86, Willoughby

"On Saturday evenings, I would help my dad get soft crawls from the creek as well as help him hold the seine to get minnows. With this bait and dough balls, he would trudge up the Scioto River at 4:30 on Sunday mornings to fish. He would come back at the same time we kids would be walking a mile to Sunday school, with usually two large 20-pound carp. My mom would fry the brains and all. It took my many years to learn to like fish. He also caught turtles, my mom..."
would fry and make turtle soup."
- Betty Shay, age 83, Delaware

"The scariest memory I have is when Mom was crying because we had no meat for our Sunday dinner. Dad left the house with two friends and returned later carrying a gun and two dead furry animals. I had never seen my Dad carrying a gun. I couldn't understand why he had a dead squirrel and rabbit. Later that day we were called to supper. My sisters were fighting over who could have rabbit instead of the squirrel. I was horrified that my Mother would cook a little bunny and the silly little squirrel who played in our garden. I decided my parents were horrible people and I didn't like them any more. I left the table but came back for the biscuits and gravy."
- Betty Jo Spaulding, age 74, Pickerington

"I was six years old on Jan. 4, 1916, and on January 22, my Father died. My mom could not keep six kids together. My youngest brother was four and was sent to live with an Aunt. The rest went to live with whoever would take us. I lived with four different families before I settled with a family in Louisville, OH. I stayed there until I was eleven years old. I remember the lady of the house sending me to the garden to pick pumpkin blossoms. She would dip them in whipped milk and egg and fry them to eat. Times were tough back then and we mostly ate pork, chicken, rabbit and other game."
- Melvin Stermer, age 93, Hartville

"Many meals of biscuits and gravy that today at Bob Evan's is high on the menu. You made your own bread for the week. (Due to) my mother's Austrian background, we had food that our friends never heard of: gnocchi, pizza, white homemade noodles, spaghetti. Today, even Polenta is on the Food Network. My mom could make a meal out of nothing. She made sure we were't hungry, and we had the cleanest house in town. She worked in the kitchen for friends that had a bar and food. She didn't take money, we got food and they were more relative than our blood relatives."
- Geraldine Vincenzo Szymialis, age 81, Flushing

"A loaf of bread cost 12 cents and that old, oak table held a big aluminum kettle of macaroni, milk and butter every nite! We drained the pan and never complained. Every once in a while, Dad would shoot a rabbit, squirrel or pheasant and we feasted. I once traded my Christmas fountain pen for an orange. Dad was lucky to be the butter-maker at Isaly's Dairy for 25 cents an hour. He brought home cottage cheese that Mom flavored with coffee grounds and we carried it to school for sandwiches wrapped in newspapers. (I don't eat cottage cheese today!)"
- Joy Thomas, age 80, Canfield

"We raised chickens and rabbits in our back yard for eggs and meat. We also had red raspberry bushes. One summer, my dad, mom and I went to (I think) Ben Blinn farm and picked a bushel or two of peas. By the time we ate all the peas, we were getting tired of them. My mom canned a lot of fruit and vegetables. We had a Sun Ray gas stove with space under the burners. In early
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spring, we raised baby chickens and ducks under the stove."
- William Thompson, age 80, Columbus

"My mother planted a big garden every year and canned vegetables and fruit from the orchard. Dad butchered a young steer and a hog every fall and salted down hams, bacon, ground sausage and hamburger. My mother canned beef. We had milk from our four cows, eggs and chickens. We churned our own butter which, with no refrigeration, would soon become rancid. Mom also made bread, which would become sour after a few days, but we ate it anyway."
- Carol Vincent, age 86, Centerville

"The next evening, as we were eating supper of home-grown green beans and potatoes, a man stopped in, look at us and said: 'For heaven's sake, don't you even have a dime for oleo?' I had been with mother at the grocery store when it was purchased. The 'oleo' was a white substance, wrapped in a sheet of heavy paper, and stuck in it was a capsule of 'yellow' food coloring, which was to be worked into it. I did this many times. We enjoyed the 'oleo' and soon it was gone."
- Mary Jane Willis, age 89, Wadsworth

"Six of us children were born during the Depression years. We had no electricity or running water. Making use of everything we had, we canned our garden vegetables and apples or pears picked from feral trees. We found blackberry patches by their bright white flowers in spring, going back for the fruit in July. We picked wild strawberries along the railroad tracks in June, making jelly and putting up preserves, sealing the jars with paraffin. We went down the road in the fall, looking for walnut and hickory trees by the roadside, gathering nuts from ditches, and taking them home to dry and store for winter. We stored root vegetables in the cellar.

Mommy made our bread. She used two cups flour, three teaspoons baking powder, salt, a spoonful of lard the size of a goose egg, and milk (or water if the cow was dry). Daddy said he never got filled up on light bread anyway. We had fried potatoes noon and night, bread and milk or coffee for breakfast, soup beans every Thursday, cooked on an iron cook stove in the kitchen. We kept a bucket of well water and a dipper on the back of the stove, right above the bread bin."
- Beverly Zeimer, age 60, Harrisburg

"We flourished on lots of soups - navy bean, lima bean, noodle, potato, split pea, vegetable, tomato and anything else that would make soup. The only time my brother and I complained was that we had a lot of hot vegetable soup in the summer. We never heard of broccoli, asparagus or cauliflower, as they were too expensive. I never had a piece of steak, except round steak, until I was married. Mom made the round steak into 'Swiss steak' which was delicious to us."
- Pauline Bandzk, age 91, Hubbard

"My earliest memories of the Great Depression go back to people coming to our door, selling big red delicious apples for five cents each. My father was a minister and five cents was hard to
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come by. Once in a great while, there would be a spare five cents to purchase one of those
delectable apples. It was carefully cut into five pieces and distributed. As a seven-year-old, I
wondered if the time would come when I could have a whole apple to myself."
- Elinor M. Brown, age 85, Napoleon

"When my husband was about eight or nine years old, his mother sent him to the store to get
some soup beans to cook for their supper. He had to walk down a hill that was a little over a
mile long. On his way home, the bag in which the beans were broke and the beans spilled onto
the ground. When he got home and told his mother what happened, she gave him another
container and told him to go back and pick up the beans, so he went back and picked up every
bean. Another time, he sat down at the table to eat breakfast and his mother said to him 'I
don't know what you are going to eat because we only have some homemade bread and milk.'
So she broke up some bread in a bowl with some milk, and that was his breakfast."
- Irene Burkhart, about her husband, Lawrence, age 86, Shadyside

"(My dad) always used to tell me that during the Depression, his family raised pigeons in their
backyard to supplement the food that they did have. And when the time came, he would say,
he would go out and break the pigeons' necks so they could eat them. He said they tasted
pretty good. When he told me this, all I could think of was how could they do that? To me, that
would be like eating a pet!"
- Marty Comes, about her father, Thomas J. Comes, deceased, Toledo

"Our meals consisted mostly of fresh vegetables, soups, bread and macaroni. Rarely was any
meat served and cookies were Easter and Christmas treats."
- Frances Daubert, age 80, Centerville

"On a normal weekday, they would eat vegetable soup that included pretty much whatever
they could scrounge up from the leftover food. They grew their own garden in their back yard,
full of green beans, carrots, peas, sweet potatoes and regular potatoes. If they were lucky, they
would eat chicken as a specialty on Sundays. Their family owned their own chickens and
rabbits. The local grocery would call Grandma's house when the meat came in; that way they
could get to the store before it was all gone. Everyone used stamps as the form of money, due
to the fact that food and gas were rationed. These stamps bought most of their food for the
month. They never went out to eat. Every night, when the boys arrived back home, they would
eat with each other at the dinner table."
- Meg Denman, sophomore at Madison Comprehensive High School, about her grandmother,
Marcella Denman, age 92, Mansfield

"I really don't recall feeling deprived, since we always had food and my mother canned fruits
and vegetables, and sometimes corned beef and eggs in water glass. We had fudge making,
popcorn and taffy pulls. My mother was an excellent baker, so we always had fresh bread,
kuchen, cakes and cookies."
- E. Marie Dornbrook, age 87, Parma Heights
"Mom and my grandmother cooked everything from scratch. The piece of beef or chicken (bought sometimes on credit) was for Sunday dinner, then stretched to serve the next day as stew or over biscuits with lots of gravy. Vegetables and fruit were brought home (sometimes for free) by my grandfather who worked part time at the near-by farmers' market. My grandmother canned them and even made our own catsup. We never bought junk food. We did make popcorn. And, a slice of bread and butter sprinkled with brown sugar was a satisfying snack."

- Manila Fellows, age 84, Youngstown

"I was born in 1927 and I always wondered if I was a very welcome baby, since there were already three siblings, and it was about the start of the great Depression. One good thing, we lived on an 80 acre farm, so we always had milk, eggs and meat. Then, of course, Mom always had a big garden, so she canned lots of fruits and vegetables."

- Dorothy Orthwein Fundum, age 82, Malinta

"We could not have ice cream, except in the winter. My mom and dad made a special treat of ice cream made in a wooden hand-cranked ice cream maker. Ice and snow was packed around the metal part of the ice cream maker. Ice cream was made only on special occasions or when company came to visit. Then it was usually eaten up before the cold weather was gone."

- Ruth Hahn-Shrayer, age 78, Holland

"My Mom made what she called 'sweeting gravy.' She would fry bread in an iron skillet and we would put the sweet gravy on it. She would melt lard in the skillet and put sugar in that. It would brown and it tasted like butterscotch pudding."

- Patarica LeMay Hauger, age 81, Meigs County

"In earlier days, Dad prepared studadina (pigs feet) in a jelly-like substance. He set bowls of it on the large, round table in the dining room - it was cooler there. Dad was upset because I wouldn't eat it. 'It's good for you,' he said. No way did I want to eat it."

- Eve Holden, age 84, Newton Falls

"Our Depression days involved the whole family planting a garden (my mother called it a truck patch). The garden provided food much of the summer. In the fall, we canned garden produce and a bushel of bought peaches. We made sauerkraut and root beer. My parents made home-made ice cream for get-togethers with other church families. Often, Dad and the other men would count the church money after dinner while the women cleaned up. Ice cream was made in the afternoon while we kids played. Yummy!"

- Ruth Marilyn Isaacson, age 83, Germantown Md (formerly of Bowling Green)

"We never had much meat, but lots of potatoes - usually mashed, sometimes with sauerkraut on top. I remember rutabaga, and disliked it so much that I have never eaten it as an adult. We NEVER had soft drinks or many expensive snacks, but I don't remember being hungry. We were filled up on potatoes and basic bread pudding made with meat juices (that's something else I..."
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never eat as an adult)."
- Ruth Mueller Jones, age 88, Cincinnati

"Besides living on a small farm, my father had the Home Service Bakery in Richmond, IN, with seven routes running every day. Selling baked goods door-to-door was only profitable if you could sell sweet rolls, cakes, donuts, etc., that were more profitable than bread. We sold 1½-pound loaves of bread, two for 15 cents. Omar Bakery, in Indianapolis, and White Bakery, in Dayton and Columbus, were doing this also and had used the idea of going to the door with a big basket of baked goods - and of course the most profitable goods were on top. But, as money got harder to get and more were out of work, people could only afford to buy bread, if that. So, it became harder to keep going."
- John Lamb, via e-mail

"Dad had built a Fruit Cellar in our basement and it was all concrete. This is where the jelly and canned goods were stored. There was always a large sack of flour and a bucket of lard, and my mother would make wonderful bread and rolls, and pies from the apple orchard and the berries we picked. Her pies would have won prizes. Because of my parents ingenuity I don't recall going hungry. Mother was a great cook, and what ever she made was delicious. Bacon was bought in a slab that you would slice off. Somehow, we always had real butter, but it was about 19 cents a pound. Mother made very good salad dressing with a bit of bacon grease, vinegar and a dash of sugar and salt in a skillet. This was poured over leaf lettuce from the garden or dandelions. Lots of people came to our home and ask for apples from our orchard. Mom would always give them some."
- Martha Rosella McCabe, age 88, Saint Clairsville

"Our food was the local livestock that we raised. We had pork from our little piggies, chicken from the chickens we raised, and eggs were plentiful. My father and brothers hunted, so we had wild turkey, rabbit, ground hog, squirrel, possum, turtle and, of course, frog legs. My father had been ill for several years suffering from TB, so they made ends meet by farming."
- Norma 'Beni' Nolen, age 77, Columbus

"My father turned half of our back yard into a vegetable garden. This, plus our fruit trees, gave us fresh food all summer and fall. Any excess was canned in Mason jars during the season and placed neatly on cupboard shelves in the cool basement for winter dinners. Eating in restaurants was reserved for very special occasions, probably not more than four times a year. We had three full meals at home every day, frequently left-overs, and considered ourselves very fortunate."
- Mary Lou Pollak, age 78, Fairview Park

"We had the privilege of using as much ground as we could cultivate for garden. This, plus our fruit trees, gave us fresh food all summer and fall. Any excess was canned in Mason jars during the season and placed neatly on cupboard shelves in the cool basement for winter dinners. Eating in restaurants was reserved for very special occasions, probably not more than four times a year. We had three full meals at home every day, frequently left-overs, and considered ourselves very fortunate."
- John Lamb, via e-mail
had a cow and some chickens, so we always had milk and eggs. We raised a couple hogs every year and butchered them in the fall for meat and lard. We made sausage and head cheese. We made sauerkraut and apple butter. We made our own bread and churned our own butter. We made our own soap.

"Our grocery order would consist of flour, salt, sugar and, once in a while, a box of raisins, some brown sugar or cocoa. We kept bees, so we used honey for most sweetening. We ate mush and milk or fried mush. We put noodles and dumplings in everything. We had pancakes often. We always ran trap lines in the winter and my father could sell the pelts from the skunks, possums or raccoons we caught. If rabbits or quails got in our traps, it meant more meat for the table. Pop hunted rabbits and squirrels in season, and turtles when the ore dump pools were getting dried up."
- Delcie Pound, age 92, Medina

"Our biggest blessings were fruit orchards and gardens. We could have a lot of our own food. The women would can food as it became available for use later. The house had a nice basement for storage of jars, potatoes and fruit. There was no heat and it stayed cool. The small home had some water flowing through the basement and had troughs to put containers of food in so they would keep a little longer."
- Carl Reed, age 76, Malvern

"Some people had cows, chickens and room for a vegetable garden. If they had these, they had it pretty good. Cows furnished milk and butter. Chickens laid eggs. When the hen got too old or sat on eggs to hatch the baby chicks, they made good chicken and dumplings with garden fresh vegetables in the summer and were canned to preserve for winter. Some people had hogs that were butchered in the fall of the year. Hams and shoulders were salted or cured. Sausage was ground, fried and canned. After chilling, the sausage and put in jars and the jars were turned upside down while the fat solidified to seal. Side meat was salted. Every part was used - head, feet. Lard was rendered from fat."
- Edith Ann Richardson, age 88, Middletown

"We bought skim milk for five cents a gallon at the little neighborhood store. We often asked the butcher for a 15-cent soup bone. He was always kind enough to include a little meat on the bone. My allowance was five cents a week and I always bought a whole jelly roll on Sunday afternoon with the whole five cents. We lived in the city, but our garden ran the length of the lot. Mom would bake bread and we would run out to the garden and pick huge sweet tomatoes to put on that warm bread. The bread was first slathered with a mix of half oleo and half butter. I believe there also was a little packet of yellow coloring that people added. Another treat: thick warm slices of crusty bread sprinkled with sugar and spritzed lightly with a little water. Heels of bread were wonderful in bean soup, soaking up the broth, with onion 'spoons' scooping up beans that had been splashed with olive oil."
- Ann Shook, age 85, Akron
"Although farm folk have been poked fun at, called hicks, et al, the farm blessed us all in many ways. We all had to pitch in. Thanks to our planting, sowing, weeding, cultivating (no tractor - horse power only), canning, drying, butchering, hens laying eggs, and cows giving milk and butter, our bellies were satisfied year-round. In summer, we picked and shelled and canned and made jellies and jams, preparing for the winter months. Our meat came from hogs raised. Game appeared on our table during hunting season. We may have looked 'hickish' at times, but there were no soup lines in our barnyard, no men and women waiting for pails to be filled."
- Willa B. Stanforth, age 93, Hillsboro

"Mom canned as many things as she could, such as tomatoes, green beans and fruits of various kinds. But the mainstay of our diet during the lean years was a combination of dried beans, cornbread, onions and potatoes of one kind or another. Mom would cut dandelion greens for some added nutrition and cook them in bacon fat with a little vinegar on them."
- Wanda Stubbart, age 78, Columbus, Vic Thomas, age 83, Middletown and Kathleen Lambert, age 80, Middletown

"To make certain that we never went hungry, our mom was constantly baking homemade bread, and working with (sister) Rita, during grape season. They made enough grape jelly to last throughout the winter and following spring. To make the jelly 'jell,' an ingredient called pectin had to be added to the jelly. The jelly was great until the following spring, when the vineyard began to blossom for the upcoming season. All of the grape jelly on the shelf started to crystallize. From then on, the grape jelly from the prior season tasted like ground glass. Some of us have not eaten grape jelly since."
- Larry Taddie, age 82, Parma

"My father was raised on a farm in Bay Township and had always hunted Bay marshes. During the dreadful Depression years, he and other hunters 'shot for the pot' - often out of season - simply to put meat on the table. My mother canned wild duck and, to this day, I do not relish wild duck. I ate too much of it - at times it was our only meat. My mother planted a big garden. Our house lot was 50x200 feet. We grew potatoes, lettuce, carrots, radishes, peas and string beans. We had two sour cherry trees, both red and black raspberries, elderberries and rhubarb. Peaches and pears and plums were purchased from the farmers who grew the fruit at Catowba. My mother canned fruit, made pickles, and also pickled pears and peaches."
- Thelma Thomas, age 87, Port Clinton

"Pa was an expert with gardens. He grew all the vegetables needed to make a meal, and also the meat, chickens, rabbits, goats and pigs. We made our own sausage. Every month, Ma would order a 100-pound sack of flour for making pizza, all kinds of pastas, calzones and elephant ears. She would can all the vegetables and shelve them in the cool cellar. Homemade jelly - elderberry, blackberry and raspberry also. She would make homemade macaroni, pasta and beans, greens, beans, wedding soup, stew without meat, homemade hot sausage and wild mushrooms, salad, garden fresh tomatoes and peppers, garlic in oil or vinegar, and dandelions with homemade bread. Ma said 'put on your plate what you can eat - no leftovers or you will
have the same next meal.' We did not throw leftover food away."
- Joe Trollo, age 83, Hubbard

"Starch, as in macaroni, was a main staple of our diet. Mom could not afford to buy meat. To
flavor macaroni, she used to fry it in bacon grease. Mom said milk was about 10 cents a quart
and bread was about 10 cents a loaf. 'But, no one had ten cents,' she would add."
- Mary Ann Wasserman, age 78, Toledo

"They would bring a big truck full of groceries once a week and pass them out to everyone in
town: flour, sugar, potatoes and other produce. I would go the A&P every day and go to the
back door and ask if they had any surplus produce. I could get all sorts of fruits and vegetables
with marks on them. Every once in a while, I could get a soup bone. We had coffee soup for
breakfast every day - Just take a slice of bread and break it up in a bowl, add coffee, milk and
sugar, and, presto, coffee soup."
- Mildred Wilson, age 83, Niles

"Shopping at the Farmers market was always a lot of fun. My parents bought the fresh fruits
that were canned for the winter months. The fruit cellar was a very busy place during the
autumn months with the canning of fruits vegetables, meats, sour kraut and even a barrel of
wine brewing for the winter and, yes, root beer for us kids. The only bad part was we had to
pitch in and wash all the lids, and believe me they were well inspected by mom. Rabbit stew
was not my favorite, as we kept rabbits to enhance our meat diets"
- William L. Zurkey, age 84, Boardman

Schools and Education During the Great Depression

"Mother stressed education to all of us - when one of us received academic recognition, it
made the rest work harder. I was the only one who won a scholarship and went to college
straight from high school. The others worked one or two years, saved money, then went to
college. Five of us attained degrees from The Ohio State University and one from Kent State.
My older sister had her two-year teaching degree, taught in a one-room school - paid for
plumbing into the kitchen (our teenage brother dug the ditch) and finished her four-year
degree during the summers."
- Rita Anderson, age 87, Reynoldsburg

"What I remember most is my high school days 1932-1936. We never received new books
issued to us. At the end of the school term, we would all get a book, scotch tape and eraser. It
was our job to mend the book, erase any marks and make the book presentable so that the
next class could use them without trouble."
- Pauline Bandzk, age 91, Hubbard
"Pencils were one cent and tablets 5 cents. Sometimes our teacher would hand out paper and pencils and when classes ended for the day, the teacher would collect the pencils for another day."

- Wilma Blasiman, age 88, Lake Milton

"I was 10 years old and I had to go with my parents to McKinley High School to help them learn for the test to be a citizen of the US. They never had an education in Italy. I was so proud of them. The teacher also had me help some of the others in the class. It was a full class and I also studied with them at home. We had a party for (my parents) when they received the privilege of becoming citizens of the United States of America."

- Rachel Clara Patrone Boyd, age 78, Niles

"We had a school bus for transportation. No matter what the weather was - we went to school. We may have been late but we got there. I cannot remember of ever missing school because of weather. We carried a lunch of a jelly sandwich, fruit and cookie - wrapped in yesterday's newspaper."

- Robert Brown, age 86, Youngstown

"When I started school there were no yellow school buses. We walked to a one room school for eight years. The teacher had about twenty-five pupils, and she taught all the subjects in all eight grade levels. She received eight hundred dollars for eight months of teaching plus five dollars a month for being her own janitor. We would go to a neighbor's house near the school and get a bucket of water each day. We all used a communal dipper for a drink."

- Mary Cole, age 91, Cadiz

"Times were such that families wishing to send their children to parochial schools were unable to do so because religious schools charged for the paper used by the students, which parents were unable to afford."

- Frances Daubert, age 80, Centerville

"I went to high school. Those days you had to buy your books. We bought used books, math books 10 cents, English book 20 cents, literature book 25 cents - no free books. School lunch soup was 5 cents, eight ounces of milk 4 cents, and sliced bread 1 cent, so, for about 10 cents you could buy lunch. But without the dime you would skip lunch and eat when you got home - no free lunch."

- Charles Green, age 87, Columbus

"In 1933, the heart of the Great Depression, my father, a Youngstown city fireman, was paid in scrip. I was the oldest of four children. My father had dropped out of elementary school. My mother, before marriage, had been a cashier at a local dry goods store. Against this backdrop, my mother was determined that her children would have a college education. I finished high school in January 1933 as the class valedictorian, and stayed in school taking typing as a postgraduate student. That spring I went to Cleveland on a bus to interview for a scholarship at Flora Stone Mather College, the women's school of Western Reserve University. I did not win a
scholarship, but I was offered a way to earn my room and board. I could have gone to the local college, but I wanted a degree from a leading university.

"My freshman year, I worked for my room and board in a home in Cleveland Heights. The mother was a retired piano teacher, a tall, heavy-set woman, who wore eye glasses that magnified her eyes to the on-looker. The stepfather was a diminutive, retired Episcopal rector. The daughters were retired school teachers; one had been in music in charge of several elementary schools in Cleveland; the other, in history at Cleveland Heights High School. During my sophomore year I worked in the home of a Reserve professor, his wife and a very young daughter. His wife enjoyed entertaining, but was not a great housekeeper. On the days she had scheduled a dinner party, we hustled things into closets, ironed napkins, and later waited table. I served my own professor more than once. At Mather, I pioneered a minor in physical education. In keeping with that kind of minor, for my junior and senior years I ran a physical education program at a settlement house on 31St Street in the heart of Cleveland. What a range of experiences and people I encountered in that situation!"

- Dorothy Jones Honey, age 93, Poland

"School was very hard. We lacked clothing, school supplies, we used dip pens to do our school work and it was hard to be neat... For theme paper, I sometimes had to take paper out of a wastebasket and erase to use... Once I had to stay home because we did not have 25 cents for a workbook. I had to try out for the basketball team in stocking feet as I had no tennis shoes... An Uncle's old suit coat and my turtleneck shirt from an Aunt made up my basic wardrobe, making me look like Ichabod Crane. It was demoralizing and created a severe inferiority complex for me."

- Bernard L. Kasten, age 90, Lucas

"Going to the Temple on Ansel Road was a must, as it was very important to my parents that we get a religious education. We took three streetcars to get there; carfare for kids was two cents. But larger outlays of cash were hard to come by. I know it pained my father dreadfully to write to the secretary, Harry Levy, that he had absolutely no money to pay Temple dues. He never received another bill, and the day finally came (thanks to the New Deal) when my father was able to pay all the dues he owed. Meanwhile, sitting in that magnificent Temple building and hearing the inspiring words of Rabbi Abba Hillel Silver gave us courage to live through the Depression."

- Mina Kulber, age 86, Lyndhurst

"In the third grade, I remember that just before lunch on Friday it was spelling test time. On Monday, there would be a new list of words on the black board, and we would practice them all week. Friday was test time. We would clean off our desks, and the teacher, Miss Montgomery, would pass everyone a sheet of tablet paper. She would then give out the words for us to write. This was panic time for those who did not even own a pencil. There would be out stretched hands to neighbors with a whispered plea, "Can I borrow your pencil?" If you loaned your pencil, there was a good chance it would keep on moving and never return in time for the next
Great Depression Story Project

word. We would use a pencil until it was too small to go into the sharpeners."
- Donna Lehman, age 86, Eaton

"As a student nurse, I received a stipend of $10 a month. The medical interns earned $30 a month. After graduation, I married my husband who had his B.A. degree from Ohio Northern University and had completed his first year of dentistry at Western Reserve University. When the banks crashed, he lost money and could no longer attend classes. There were no student loans at that time that could be repaid after graduation. Things progressively got worse. We lived in a $14 rent on Aiken Ave., which abutted the "City Hospital" (now Metro General). My husband had gotten a job at JandL Steel, worked a day or two a week. My $2 a day at nursing wasn't sufficient for the household necessities after our baby was born.

"My husband's fraternity brother came one day looking for help. He thought that my husband could help him with some contacts. He was a baby milk salesman. When he saw what dire straits we were in, he left us with two cases of S.M.A. and Similac for our baby. My doctor provided us with baby food samples.

"My insurance agent was upset when I turned my books over to him because I couldn't pay the premiums. A half year later, he returned them fully paid by his father, whom I didn't know. He was Jewish, I was Catholic!"
- Mary Grace Lukacevic, age 98, Seven Hills

"After 8 years in a one-room school, I now faced high school as the Great Depression took over. Instead of Latin, I chose four years of Agriculture and enjoyed it. During my Senior year, the Kroger Company issued 20 scholarships to The Ohio State University College of Agriculture to winners of a written contest. Becoming a winner was the surprise of my life - but what about expenses? Although we observed that old saying, 'Use it up, wear it out, make it do or do without,' our monthly milk check didn't include college. Luckily, a neighbor boy was going to Ohio State, and with my small savings I found a cheap room with bed and cook stove - building my own great Depression!"
- Myron W. Martin, age 95, Orrville

"At age six I was enrolled in the kindergarten part of Nathan Hale Grade School. There were no school buses, so I had to walk. Depending on where we lived, we were assigned to walk out of one of four doors of the school. There was no one to guide us to go out the 'right' door for us. I, of course, got confused and went out the wrong door and GOT LOST! It was very late in the day when a nurse drove by and saw me crying sitting on top of a stones and flower display on Upton Avenue. She stopped and soon stopped a police car to take me home. I had been reported 'missing' to the police who were looking for me. The next several days my father walked me to school: and I never got 'lost' again." 
- Doris E. Meek, age 82, Columbus

"Mom and her siblings, except for (her brother) Paul, only made it to sixth grade, and then it was only part-time. They had to share books and clothes, so each kid could go to school one
day a week, maybe even two weeks. Only Paul went back years later and got his GED... Mom was an avid reader until she died at age 80. She read everything she could get her hands on. She even kept a small dictionary with her to look up words she didn't know or understand. Her two favorite books were her dictionary and her bible."

- Joyce M. Pack, age 69, Toledo

"We always walked to school and home for lunch, then back to school. (We had) no umbrella, no raincoat, and shoes with holes that we tried to cover with a piece of cardboard. (We had) no Kleenex; we carried folded toilet paper to use for those nasty colds."

- Doris Portmann, age 76, Navarre

"In 1924, the elementary school building was torn down and a new one built. I was in the fourth grade that year. We went to school for only a half day, with country students going in the morning and city students in the afternoon. Classes were in the custodian's houses across the street from the school property. I graduated from McClain High School in 1932, with graduation the first week of May that year instead of the end of May because there was not enough money to operate the schools the usual 9 months. The graduation took place in the high school auditorium for 45 students. A few students dropped out of school before graduation to get jobs and help support their families. Few students were able to go on to college because their parents did not have money for it or they had lost what they had saved for it.

"In 1933 the school offered Post Graduate classes for anyone who wanted to continue their education. I recall that six or seven of the 1932 class chose to do that, including me. We took whatever classes we wanted and attended only when we had a class. Business classes were popular. I took typing, shorthand, business English, journalism and public speaking, subjects I was interested in but did not have time for earlier. I enjoyed all of it and received a post-graduate certificate. In the following years, these classes were helpful in many ways. I don't recall that this was ever repeated."

- Helen Cook Railer, age 95, Burlington, IN (formerly of Greenfield)

"My biggest challenge (as a teacher) was supervising a study hall with several seventh and senior students, trying to catch the culprits who were rolling BBs up and down the floor. Finally I had enough of their fun! I slapped one of the mischievous seventh graders. That brought order and respect back to the room and there was no lawsuit by the parents."

- Hazel Schroeder, age 97, Wauseon

"My school years began with grade one. Walking was the mode of getting there. We bundled up in winter-long underwear, scarves up to our eyes, plus boots. We had little homework as we completed our work at school. We weren't involved in so much other stuff. In Junior High School and part of High School, every morning they'd play the song "Happy Days Are Here Again" on the loudspeaker."

- Marian Seilheimer, age 89, Tiffin
"For us girls to attend High School, we were on our own transportation-wise. There were no yellow school buses picking up and delivering kids. After much female persuasion, my dad grudgingly permitted us the use of the family car, a 1922 Model T Sedan. My older sisters both had mastered the art of wheeling around the countryside. I recall that every Friday on our way to New Market and home, we pulled into a gas station and had $1.00 worth of fuel poured into the Sedan's tank. This amount would carry us to and fro for an entire week. Furthering our education had become just another sacrifice for our parents to bear. Money was very tight with no relief in sight, and there was always the farm loan payments hanging over our heads. Fortunately, we were all pretty healthy and all were reminded of that when we grumbled. We all four graduated from Hillsboro High School and, due to penny-pinching and doing without, the farm was not lost."
- Willa B. Stanforth, age 93, Hillsboro

"I had been accepted to go in Nurses training at the local hospital. We had all the articles such as uniforms etc., but not a watch. I could not go, we couldn’t afford a watch. At last a relative came up with an Ingersol watch. I was accepted as a student nurse. Our hospital operated with 9 graduate nurses and a staff of student nurses. Students worked 12 hour shifts, with a 2 hour rest period. Our class was the last class to receive a stipend of $10.00 a month. We had room and board. I was very careful with my stipend, and well-dressed too."
- Mildred Swab, age 96, Saint Clairsville

"There were times we did not have shoes to wear to go to school. One time I did not have anything for lunch to take - the teacher shared her lunch with me."
- Opal Toneff, age 82, Toledo

"When I was in the first grade my school bus was horse driven. When I was a little older the W.P.A. (Works Progress Administration) replaced a bridge about a mile from our home, so the bus couldn't come to our house. We walked to the bridge to catch the bus."
- Marie Vaughan, age 85, Bucyrus

"We had no money to buy school notebook paper or pencils so I had to borrow. By the time we had the money, I bought a pack, but paid everybody back until the next month when it started all over again."
- Gladys Saba Wright, age 89, Richmond Heights

"As the Depression continued thru the 30s, I recall my 3rd grade teacher, (Miss Andrews), Scottish by heritage, teaching those Scottish songs and poems. I vowed then that my wife would be Scottish and she is a beautiful Lassie yet, today, 59 years later. I also recall a terrible time in class, when they delivered 1/2 pints of milk for anyone who could afford 3 cents and I could not, but had to watch the other kids sip it up. that used to just about kill me."
- William L. Zurkey, age 84, Boardman

"I remember taking my lunch to school. There were no hot lunches. Everybody took their lunch. We had no money to buy lunch meat, so I don't even know if they had it back then. I took cold
fried egg sandwiches and cold bacon or sausage that we had at home for sandwiches. I was lucky enough to have a thermos bottle, which Mother would put milk or drinks in, or sometimes hot homemade soup."

- Marjorie Angst, age 84, Hamilton

"My grandpa became a hard worker who was willing to make sacrifices. He would have to do hard work on the farm every day, such as milk the cows, feed the animals, and tend to the garden. At the end of the day, the family just barely got by. Having to do chores all the time meant he had to make a lot of sacrifices. My grandpa begged his father to let him go to school. He ended up going, and he was the only one from his family to graduate from high school. Having to do all these chores as a child and working diligently to get through school made him the hard worker he is today."

- Nicole Boggs, 10th Grader at Madison Comprehensive H.S., about her grandfather, Linus Bishop, age 86, Mansfield

"I did not reach college age until 1937, but none of my five older siblings could afford to even consider a higher education. In fact all but one of them had to leave high school before graduating and seek work."

- Emmet Bongar, age 89, Niles

"School was another experience. There was no such thing as a 'free lunch'. I carried my piece of homemade bread wrapped in the newspaper. Sometime it even had jelly or oleo on it! I leaned down to eat close to the newspaper so no one could see what I had. How I envied those with white store bread, and the smell of baloney made my head spin. Sometimes I had nothing and leaned close to the desk and pretended to be eating. There was a program where if you brought in a dime on Friday, you got a small glass half-pint of milk each morning the next week. I never had a dime. Occasionally when someone was absent the teacher would put a bottle on my desk. I was in Heaven! Emptying it, I would suck the end of the straw and lick the cardboard cap."

- Edward R. Brienz, age 85, Farmdale

"My folks sacrificed many times in many ways to make ends meet. For example, in 1937 (yes the Depression was still going on), an excursion was planned by the schools of Logan County. The train would leave Bellefontaine early in the morning, go to Greenfield Village, Dearborn, Michigan, to the Henry Ford Museum, and return to Bellefontaine late in the evening. The trip included everything and cost each student $4. I remember Dad and Mother discussing how they would do without this or that in order to come up with $8 for the two of us boys to make that trip."

- George Clapsaddle, age 85, East Liberty

"It is 1930 and I entered first grade; kindergarten is not offered. I was a first-generation Italian kid living in a WASP neighborhood. We lived with the stigma of 'hunky, dago and wop,' and we ate garlic - a no-no at that time. My teacher, Ms. Rose, was caring but I never had 25 cents to
pay for my work book. Our class room was disciplined and with regimentation."

- Helen De Gifis, age 83, Warren

"Going to school, we started walking down the hill to where my mother and grandmother went seven grades, Webster School. Our teacher would always have oatmeal on the woodburning stove for us. We would be in combination classes. After seventh grade, my father went to Carpenter, IN, and bought a school bus. He drove us to Columbiana High School and picked up anyone that was interested in furthering their education. Laws on the bus were no chewing gum. Every Saturday, we would hose the bus down. The State came along and bought his bus. He became a state employee and superintendent of the Bus Department. It was so wonderful my parents received a check."

- Charlotte Oesch Greene, Chagrin Falls

"We were attending Coy School, which was quite a distance away. Each of my brothers would grasp my hands tightly. My feet barely touched the ground and I would arrive at school with the legs of my black bloomers falling halfway down my legs, much to my dismay."

- Ruth Jacquillard, age 83, Millbury

"I remember those four years I attended the University of Cincinnati traveling from Park Hills, KY, riding the Green Line streetcar for a nickel and then taking a streetcar to the school's Clifton campus, paying with a nine cent discount coupon. Tuition was $125 a semester for an out-of-city student, as was I. Resident tuition was $45."

- Jack Klumpe, age 88, Monroe

"I was lucky enough to graduate with a high average and get into Earlham College in Richmond the next fall. I had no money but went on a scholarship and worked at the college. I swept the floors and washed the blackboards on the second floor of Carpenter Hall each evening but all the wages went into my account for books and food. I went through the entire school year without having a nickel to buy a Coke. I was hoping to find a job to get a little money for the next school year, but this was June, 1935 and there was no work anywhere. Even most of the college graduates that year could not find work."

- John Lamb, via e-mail

"A recent snow storm permitted my mind to drift back to a storm in 1937. It was the first storm I remember that caused school to let out early. But the main reason for remembering was that it did not dismiss early enough. By the time the old GMC high-wheeled bus got out of town, the snow was drifting. Not far out of town, a milk truck had stalled and a highway truck, attempting a rescue, was also marooned. Our driver turned around and headed back to town. By the time we were back in town, school officials knew there would be a lot of guests in town that night. So, they directed us to the janitor's house. His wife had the table set for ten people. They fed us and put us up for the night. Country folk in those days had no telephones, so our parents spent the night not knowing where their children were. By next morning, the snow had stopped, the road was open, but school was called off. The bus started home with us and met my dad near
town coming to find his kids. He was a welcome sight to this third grader who probably had never before spent a night away from home. He was driving our team (Mike and Ike, a white team of horses) pulling a bobsled. I only remember one other bobsled ride on the farm, and it was for pleasure."

- Wendell Litt, New Concord

"In 1931, DeVilbiss High School was opened and I went there as an eighth grader. Many of the students came from Westmorland, which consisted mostly of professional families. I was quite aware of my social status. There was no way I could compete with the wardrobes of some of my fellow students or other aspects of their lifestyles. I was a good student and managed to join some school clubs and then get a post on the school newspaper (The Prism). I made friends with many students who lived in Westmorland and, even though we didn't have much of a social rapport, we were on the same playing level at school. I graduated in the top 20 percent of my class, but never went on to College."

- Mildred Malare, age 91, Toledo

"I think the generation of my and my husband's parents hungered for education and learning. They wanted their children to have what was out of reach for them. As I look back on those years, I now realize how hard my parents worked and sacrificed to make it possible for all four of us children to have a college education. As a college employee, Dad was eligible to send us on half-tuition. Since we lived in Bluffton, we were spared board and room costs. In the summers, Mother and we girls helped with the annual cleaning of the college buildings."

- Alma Mast, age 94, Walnut Creek

"My school days were great, in grade school I loved and enjoyed doing the outdoor exercises and looked forward to the Maypole Dances in May. Most of all, U wanted to learn all I could. I liked my teachers and never had any problems. In Jr. High School, I went out for track, at which I excelled. I wanted to be a nurse, but my folks disapproved, so down went my dream. In Lincoln Jr. High, I had typing and bookkeeping in the ninth grade, and passed with the highest grade in bookkeeping and was awarded a pin for typing. I could have gone to work immediately, but was needed at home, as Mother was very ill. But, what I learned resulted in later years in my becoming a Legal Secretary for 26 years."

- Madelyn L. Naples, deceased, Youngstown

"We had to pack our lunches, so we had no warm lunches. The teacher had to carry wood and coal in and build a fire to get the school warm. All of the eight classes were in two rooms, and we got drinks from a pump outside."

- Evelyn Peloquin, age 89, Genoa

"We always carried our lunch to school. It would consist of a ham, egg or peanut butter sandwich. Peanut butter was not homogenized in those days, so it stuck to the roof of your mouth. We always had apples, but I envied the kids who had an orange or banana. Our school pencils were a disaster; they were made of unfinished wood with the lead in one end and the
eraser in the other, and could be sharpened at both ends. They were scratchy and unpleasant to use. They cost a penny. Every time we needed a new tablet, we had to go through the third degree. Our parents just had to be sure we weren't wasting paper."
- Delcie Pound, age 92, Medina

"To get to school, we walked. Most of the time, we went to school hungry. We had a cafeteria, but we didn't have the money to pay for lunch."
- Elizabeth Rollins, age 72, Columbus

"I graduated from Bellaire High School in 1934. At that time, my class ring was $7.50, a year book was $1 and a new suit was $17. My parents did not have the money to purchase these things for me, so they cashed in a life insurance policy. Being immigrants to this country, I was the first child to graduate from high school. They were very proud of my accomplishment."
- Matthew Sabatina, age 94, Akron

"We kids were outdoors much of the time, even in inclement weather. We rode bikes or walked to our destinations. The first day of school, which always started after Labor Day, we had a new Goldenrod tablet, two cents; a box of eight Crayola crayons, five cents; and a pencil. All books and other supplies were provided by the school system."
- Esther G. Schwartz, age 77, Columbus

"The school was a typical one-room building heated by a pot-bellied stove located near the center of the room. The girl's desks were on the right side of the room and the boys on the left. The usual attire for boys was bib overalls, and for the girls, feed sack dresses. There were shelves at the rear of the room for our lunch pails and the water bucket. Our library was a small wall cabinet located near the front of the room. I would guess it contained thirty or forty books. I remember two of them: 'Tom Sawyer' and 'Moby Dick.' There was no artificial light, just the windows. The school site also included two outhouses and a coal house. The playground was on the east side of the building and a small stream was on the west side. The public road was in front of the school and railroad track was just past the road. Drinking water came from a spring on the east side of the school or the well at the country store. When a fresh bucket of water was needed either two girls or two boys were selected to get it. A common tin dipper was used to remove water from the bucket. Some students drank from the dipper and others poured it into personal collapsible tin cups and drank from the cups... I think the one-room school provided an opportunity for a good education, because each of us not only participated in our own learning experience but had the opportunity to observe other classes recite many times. If one started in the first grade they would have the opportunity to observe eighth graders recite seven times before they were an eighth grader."
- William M. Shaw, age 87, Sarahsville

"My siblings and I attended a one-room school, the teacher having eight grades to teach. We did not have snow days. We all waded the snow drifts. School was only 8 months... I started high school in Indiana, PA, High School, which was a consolidated school. No school bus was
available, so I walked the four miles for a time. Our school principal had a program that we girls could stay with a family in town, doing household chores to give us a place to stay. Occasionally, I was given $1 for spending money."

- Beva Stonebreaker, age 89, Cadiz

"As a child, I attended a yellow brick school with two rooms on the first floor, two rooms on the second floor and eight grades altogether. Every other year, I shared a classroom with my older, well behaved sister. Those years were a strain on me because I often got into mischief. Needless to say, my miss-steps were reported at home by Norma Dean. On the outside of the school were big black metal fire escapes leading up to each room (I have a picture I painted of this school hanging in my dining room). A hard, fast rule forbade students from ever climbing the fire escapes. The neighborhood kids often went back to play on the school ground after hours. I don't remember that even the orneriest kids ever considered climbing the fire escapes. In those days, we learned to respect the rules set down by adults. We knew there would be consequences if we did not."

- Julia K. Swan, age 76, Cambridge

"School books were used year after year, and we signed the brown jackets to tell that we had used (and not abused) them. We carried our lunches in lunch pails and the bathrooms were three holers in the back yard of the school (one for the boys and one for the girls). There was also a big ball diamond and a pump at the well for water."

- Ernestine Van Asdale, age 86, Columbus

"I still don't know how my parents did everything with so small amount of money. My father had become disabled from a hunting accident, so when I graduated from high school in 1934, I didn't expect any gift, but there was an Elgin wrist watch I still have today. It brought tears to my eyes, as I was old enough to understand our financial situation."

- Robert Vensel, age 92, Canton

"I can't remember a 'snow day' at school. We all walked to school, only the farm students had transportation to school. One January, the flu closed school for several days because both teachers and students were sick. There were no antibiotics. Students that stayed well enjoyed an unusual vacation. School always started the day after Labor Day in September. We had one week for Christmas vacation. Memorial Day in May was the last of the school year. The farm children needed early dismissal. They were needed to work on the farms."

- June A. Young, age 84, Worthington

**Self-Sufficiency, Resourcefulness and Frugality During the Great Depression**

"For a refrigerator we used an empty gallon can with a rope tied to it, which we lowered down a dug well to sit on the top of the water. That would cool a pound of bologna... For a while before we had electricity, we heated the irons that we used to do the ironing on the cook stove.
We bathed in a large wash tub that was also used to wash our laundry... Naturally, this was before air conditioning. So, during a very hot summer in, I believe, 1936 or '37 we slept on the front lawn. It was just too uncomfortable to sleep upstairs... Also, when our car or truck tires got a hole in the tread, we inserted a 'boot' which consisted of a piece of an old tire to cover the hole. That was before tubeless tires.

- Lester Baiman, age 82, Colton, CA (formerly of Hamilton)

"In a family of five children, being the fourth girl, Mom remade a lot of my clothes. She would take a garment, rip out all the seams and make me some very pretty dresses. Mom was a miracle worker for many things. When I got old enough I did my own sewing."

- Minnie Blose, age 83, Niles

"My father had a shoe repair shop on Locust St. We didn't have electricity in the house, so they ran an electric line from the shoe shop into our kitchen. Then, my mother would have lights and could use the electric iron in that corner of the house. Another thing I remembered was that (my father) would fix shoes for some people who had less money than we did, and he did that for them without charging them. I guess he thought we were in better condition (money-wise) than they were."

- Eleanor Calkins, age 87, Lancaster

"Money was tight and we couldn't afford many things but it is surprising what you can do without. There were times when there was not enough money to even pay the shoe repair man to fix a hole in my shoes, but if you could find some heavy cardboard, you could stick that in the bottom of your shoes and that helped until your parents could afford to buy you another pair. Besides, it was fun to run around barefooted in the summer. My feet got so calloused in the summer that I could walk through the back parking lot of Albers Grocery on pea-sized gravel and not break the skin. The next-door neighbor taught me how to darn holes in socks so I could save some of my 25 cent allowance to buy comic books and ice cream."

- Doris V. Cumode, age 78, Columbus

"During the Depression we had many door-to-door salesman. One singer sewing machine salesman, after a negative response to his sales pitch, offered to leave the sewing machine for a trial period. My mother sewed from morning till night all that week, turning my dad's frayed shirt collars and cutting her cloths down to fit me. When the salesman came back, she said she hadn't changed her mind, she still didn't want the machine. Little did he know how much it had been used."

- Mildred Redman Dieter, age 81, Youngstown

"My dad and older brothers would set larger traps in the banks of the ditch that ran along the 1 acre of property in the fall and winter, every morning and evening. They would check the traps to see if they caught any muskrats or rabbits. They would bring any animals like that home and carefully skin the animals and turn the skins inside out and put them on wooden or metal stretchers to dry. Then, when they had 15-20 skins dried, they sold them to furriers, men who
bought them to make fur collars or jackets to keep warmer. Back then, you'd be lucky to get from 50 cents to $1 each. Then, the meat was cleaned out and soaked in salt water and cooked, or there were people who would pay my dad 25¢ or 50¢ each for the meat."
- Ruth Hahn-Shrayer, age 78, Holland

"Father paid to get a tractor to plow a garden and the rest of the work was done by family. A chain with a six-foot limb through it on a garden plow was pulled by the three boys to make rows where crops were planted, and to cultivate between rows as crops grew. We picked tomatoes or dug two kinds of potatoes to go with corn and beans. We had two chicken houses for raising chickens. One for baby chicks and one for larger ones that we took to town live to sell among homes. These houses needed food and water for the animals and cleaning. Neighbors hired me to clean their chicken houses and mow their yard. I candled eggs for another person up the street. They collected eggs in the country and I checked them to be sure they were top grade for hotels. We raised a hog each year and fed it all the scraps and any garden items with ground feed in our dirty dish water to get them ready to butcher. Dad killed the animal and we scraped the hair off with hot water. Then Dad would cut it up and put it in the smoke house for smoking with corn cobs and hickory, before using morton salt (to cure it), as we had no refrigeration, just an ice box."
- Alvin Reece, age 83, Mansfield

"During the winter, we disconnected the refrigerator to save electricity and kept spoilable food in a window 'icebox.' You opened the window to put food in, and then closed the window to keep it cold. We didn’t have freezers then yet."
- Thomas Rosmarin, age 85, Columbus

"In the thirties, Mom and Dad had their hands full financially raising us five children. Dad only worked two days a week at Goodyear - these days they call it rotating. Mom was an excellent seamstress, but was short on funds for buying sewing material. A friend of Dad's worked at an auto wrecking yard. He volunteered to cut the headliner out of quality cars, so Mom had all the material she could use, thanks to Packards and Cadillacs."
- Robert Schwalbach, age 82, Akron

"And, my mother made soap. The hard soap I remember had an unpleasant smell and was tan in color. The soft soap was a gelatin-like goo. These were used in the washing machine. We did have 'store bought' soap for our bathing."
- Thelma Thomas, age 87, Port Clinton

"We had no cellar to store our canned food in and my dad would make a place in the garden where he would pile up straw or hay. He would put vegetables in a pile then he would put more hay or straw on them. Then, he would put burlap sacks and old coats on top of that. He would cover it all with some soil and in the winter he could dig in it and get vegetables to eat and they kept very well."
- Charles Warrick, age 81, Barnesville
"An EVICTION notice! With a family of four boys and after nineteen years of backbreaking work, Mom and Dad had a huge new problem - EVICTION. Dad asked a friend who sold real estate, 'Any farms you can't sell?' 'Lots,' the realtor replied. "Let's look them over." After a selection was made, Dad asked the realtor what his commission would be. The realtor responded. "5 percent." Dad had no money to pay either a down payment or a realtor's commission, but offered instead 'a note' as payment-in-full for the 5 percent. This was a 'first' for the realtor, but he knew that if Dad ever got the money, he'd be paid, and if Dad never paid it, they'd at least had a nice visit together.

"They went to a savings and loan where the realtor said that yes, he had been paid in full and that amount met the required 5 percent down payment. The loan was completed. We had a house to live in. Our family then moved to eighty-three acres that could barely grow thistles and with a shabby house that the wind blew through. All the household furnishings were moved on an open wagon along with what was left of the livestock, three weary horses and some heavily used farm machinery.

"Very quickly after settling in, Dad planned how to pay off his debts with no thought of declaring bankruptcy. First he went to the feed mill and asked how he could work off that bill. The owner was unsure; no one had ever made such an offer before. But, after months of Dad's hard work, we had a clean slate at the feed mill. Then, on to the lumber yard, where he received a definite 'no.' The owner didn't need help because he wasn't selling anything. Nonplussed, Dad asked, 'Do you have any paint you can't sell?' 'Sure,' the owner replied. 'Lots.' Then, Dad asked, "If I scrape and paint all your buildings, would you consider my bill paid in full?" They shook hands, and Dad started scraping and painting. He said he hadn't realized how many buildings were in a lumberyard, but finally another bill was paid and he had made another friend."

- George K. Weimer, Jr., age 77, Sebring

"My dear mother would cause us to laugh with tears when she would tell about the census taker who received a negative to every question: Do you have inside plumbing? Central heating? Running water? Refrigeration? Gas or electric stove? Telephone?" Finally, he asked 'well lady, what do you have?'"

- Clark Biddle, age 82, Hilliard

"My father worked for the Norfolk and Western Railroad. I remember his work days being cut to only three days per week. He was a carpenter by trade, so we were more fortunate than most. He found extra work in his trade whenever and wherever possible. We never experienced the 'soup and bread' lines. He farmed and tended to his large garden, raised chickens and pigeons. We always had food. My mother made bread and pasta, and canned fruits and vegetables, much of it for the winter months. She made our clothes from whatever fabric was available. My father would re-sole our shoes when necessary. We had home remedies for illnesses and made our own soap for washing. Every penny counted. Nothing was ever wasted."

- Madge Conti Browning, age 92, Columbus
"(My parents) unknowingly were being prepared for discovering what a dollar was worth, giving all of their wages to their families. They were taught gardening, skills in repairing anything because nothing was thrown away, cooking and baking skills... Of course, if nothing was ever thrown away, it all wound up in a shed or garage of some type. Gigantic gardens were dug and harvested. It was customary to give fresh vegetables and fruit when someone stopped by for a visit. Nothing was wasted, even the daily garbage that had accumulated in the kitchen sink was dug back into the garden the next day. Relatives and friends were asked to help with any project that became too big or difficult to complete."

- Joan Hovan, age 65, Brunswick

"We made our own lye soap, which we shaved to wash clothes in a wringer washer. We also used feed sacks to make clothes, sheets, pillowslips and even underwear. We would happily share hand-me-downs with other relatives. I accused my mother of purposely making my underwear three sizes too big just so they would last a long time. When I was in the third grade, I needed glasses. To pay for them, my father worked in a local grocery store and also worked for a 'threshing ring,' which was a small group of local farmers who would pay my father to help with his steam-powered thresher."

- Evelyn Brewer Neff Mitrione, age 86, Pickerington

"Our biggest blessings were fruit orchards and gardens... The women would can food as it became available, for use later. The house had a nice basement for storage of jars, potatoes, and fruit - There was no heat and it stayed cool. The small home had some water flowing through the basement and we had troughs to put containers of food in so it would keep a little longer."

- Carl Reed, age 76, Malvern

"We raised chickens (lots of chicken and eggs were on the menu), canned our garden vegetables along with apples, pears, grapes, cherry and plums. Dandelions were our first spring greens and we welcomed them after the long winter. Mom made many casseroles, pancakes, cookies, fried donuts and fritters. Sometimes we had ice for the ice box, but we often cooled many foods in a special place in the basement."

- Marian Seilheimer, age 89, Tiffin

"We heated and cooked with wood that my dad and I kept in goodly supply. We churned our butter. With a large iron kettle, we made apple butter over a fire in the backyard - an all-day job. In the out-house we had a catalog for our needs - toilet paper was a luxury we could not afford."

- William Turner, age 89, Cleveland

"Our house was small - three bedrooms - with no central heating and no plumbing. We had two wells, one at the barn and another from which we carried water to the kitchen. We sold eggs and whatever we could that we grew. We had a large garden and sweet corn fields where we grew beans in with the corn. Manure from the barn was spread on the garden and corn fields..."
every spring. We did not go hungry because we canned vegetables, fruit and meat. We killed the old chickens when they quit laying and butchered a couple of pigs in the fall. We had a large water-filled dryer for sweet corn on the large coal kitchen stove and dried peaches and apples on bed sheets in the attic in August. We made our own cottage cheese and butter."

- Rita Anderson, age 87, Reynoldsburg

"We raised chickens in the back yard. My mom got new chicks every spring. We kept them in a box in the dining room near the heater. When they grew a little and the weather was warmer they went to the coop out back. We also had a large garden. Mom grew and canned all she could. So with veggies, potatoes, eggs and chickens we had food. But our special Sunday meal was often HAMBURG, baked with elbow macaroni, tomatoes and onions. A one dish meal - a lot of our meals were one dish."

- Minnie Blose, age 83, Niles

"We learned to do so many things: wash, mend and sew our own clothes; grow and can food; plan ahead; stretch our money; keep warm; help each other. Other people helped us, too. Friends took us on errands when we needed to go where they were going (we usually had no car). Clothes were given to us, and sometimes food and garden surplus. And we tried to help others meet their needs, too."

- Margaret B. Edwards, age 89, Gibsonburg

"My mother had a treadle Singer sewing machine. She would transform hand-me-down clothes given to us into good, wearable garments. She was creative and never wasted anything. We were given a billy goat but we didn't have him very long. He broke through the screen door and chased my mother out of the kitchen. Shortly, Dad traded him for a wheelbarrow."

- Ruth Jacquillard, age 83, Millbury

"We lived on a farm, and were already in the habit of buying only the necessary staples, and clothing. My mother canned hundreds of cans of home grown vegetables. We butchered our own cattle, so had plenty to eat all through the depressed years. We were among the lucky ones, as there were seven of us kids, all good eaters. We all had our jobs. As teenagers we did a mans' work. That was the only way that we could exist."

- Harry G. Moll, age 92, Wauseon

"Perhaps 95 percent of citizens in the Township lived on farms and family members operated the farm. They raised grain crops, cattle, hogs, sheep. chickens, geese, ducks, turkeys and guineas. They raised a garden and milked cows. Grain went to the local mill to be ground into flour and oats ground for feed for livestock. Every farm had an orchard and many a berry patch. You could have a good variety of food if you were willing to work at it--most families did."

- Viola Reed, age 95, Barnesville

"We didn't have much money to spend, but on the other hand there wasn't much that we needed to spend our money on. Most every family had a garden. Fruit trees were plentiful, especially apples. Most were free for the picking. I remember an orchard on Libby Road where
we picked apples that my grandma peeled for use in pies and sauces. Chickens provided meat for Sunday dinner and eggs for breakfast. When a piece of meat was purchased at the butcher shop, the butcher would throw in a free soup bone and a piece of liver. Add some homemade noodles and a delicious meal was almost free. Many of the expensive things we find so necessary today were either not available or not yet in such widespread use as to be considered a necessity.

- John W. Straka, Jr., age 91, Maple Heights

"We felt so lucky. We didn't know we were poor. We grew everything on the farm and butchered our own meat and smoked it or canned it. We made our own apple butter, churned our butter. We made cottage cheese and maple syrup, and bottled root beer. We had our underclothes made out of bleached feed sacks. We worked in the garden and shelled corn until our hands had blisters."

- Maxine Vargo, age 80, Akron

"One day my older sister, Louise, and I were walking to our grandfather's house when I looked down and discovered a piece of paper folded up with a quarter in it. That was a huge find. But I was frugal even when I was little. With this money, I bought a dozen eggs for 12 cents and a school tablet."

- Betty Banta, age 80, Columbus

"We really didn't feel a lack of money in our young lives because we were raised to be satisfied with what we had. Recycling was a way of life for us. We could even make money by returning bottles to the store. My father used to sing, 'The Best Things in Life Are Free.' This was the philosophy that carried us through the Depression."

- Manila Fellows, age 84, Youngstown

"Nothing was wasted. The dishes were even washed in a dishpan in the sink and then the scant bit of water was dumped in a galvanized bucket on the floor along with potato peelings, scraps from the table, egg shells and soured milk. This bucket was emptied daily into a trough for the pigs. Everything raised had a use. What was not put on the table was canned and put in the basement for winter."

- Posey Deskey, age 82, Chillicothe

"There were no disposable diapers, no paper towels and no paid babysitters. Everything was used and re-used and repaired. Nothing was thrown away. You saved buttons, nails and screws in a Prince Albert tobacco can, 1# size. It was a great day when the feed company started to put feed in pretty, printed sacks. We'd tell the men to get 4 sacks alike. That would make a dress, curtains, shirts, tablecloths, etc."

- Margaret Smith, age 94, Barnesville

"My folks always paid cash for anything they bought. There were no credit cards or layaway back then. They saved up until they had enough to purchase what they needed. I remember riding the trolley to downtown Youngstown with my mother. She would purchase soiled percale
sheets that were on sale in the basement of McKelvey's Department Store. Up until a few years ago, I still had some of those sheets."

- **Elizabeth A. Bartholow, age 85, Columbiana**

"My brother and sister went to school and were instructed by mother to pick up any stick or piece of wood they saw, or any lumps of coal that fell from the trains on the tracks. It was vital for cooking and keeping warm. They were especially ordered to use any influence they had to get newspapers. This was a vital necessity - it was torn into strips to relight the fire when it went out for lack of fuel. And, it was used to wrap lunches for school and carefully refolded to come home and be used again. When it was too tattered, it was torn into squares and placed on a nail in the outside toilet for obvious reasons."

- **Edward R. Brienz, age 85, Farmdale**

"After the 1929 crash, the family savings account was empty. My parents were unable to pay the rent. I was sent to the store with the last dime in the house to buy a pound of ground meat. My mother was at home waiting for the insurance man to bring a check that borrowed the insurance savings. With the insurance money, my mother started to bake bread three days a week to sell to her friends. Saturday, she made delicious pecan rolls and currant tea rings and also the bread. I washed all the sticky, gooey pans. My brother made the deliveries. Also, I took care of a little neighbor girl, Gail, who my mother cared for during the week."

- **Margaret B. Carver, age 91, Cortland**

"We lived near the Nickel Plate Railroad at Front and Wheeling Streets, so Grandma would take off some mornings and head for the railroad tracks carrying a bushel basket. When there, she would pick up coal and fill her bushel. Then, when it was full, she would raise it to her head, hands on hips, and carry the coal home. She used this coal to stoke her kitchen stove so she could prepare meals for her family. One day, she came rushing to our house because she was being chased by a railroad detective who warned her this was illegal and she should not do it anymore. She was very frightened!"

- **Mary Rose DeMaria, age 83, Oregon**

"We moved to a big Victorian house because the rent was cheap. The tall windows were bare. A serious Depression was occurring and there was no money for curtains. One day, my mother had saved enough pennies to have curtains. She bought unbleached muslin for five cents a yard. At her treadle machine she made enough curtains for the windows to be draped and tied back in a classic, stately manner. One day there was a knock on the door. A woman stood there and wanted to know where my mother had acquired her most beautiful and unusual curtains."

- **Josephine Fell, age 81, Columbus**

"I know that every time I smell vanilla extract, it makes me think of my great grandfather Louis Forschner. He would walk from the bus stop down our long street and we could all smell him as he approached our home. You see, he would use the vanilla as cologne and really covered his
Great Depression Story Project

long graybeard with a handful of this liquid."

- Marilyn Markle, age 79, North Royalton

"(Dad) would take a small piece of wood, carve a two-blade propeller and mount this on another movable piece of wood on a long stick. This whirlygig would move in the wind and tell directions. They were painted red or blue, and he sold them for 25 cents to the neighborhood women to put in their gardens. He raised rabbits in small hutchs, gathering clover and alfalfa for food for them early before school. He sold the rabbits to the immigrants. During the summer months, he walked several miles to Brooklyn, to the vast acres of greenhouses, to cut celery and lettuce for 45 cents a day."

- David Rizzo, age 66, Sagamore Hills

"My husband's favorite story is that he and his brother had one pair of clamp-on skates between them, which they used to go to school, each wearing one skate. Their mother made sure they switched the skates from one foot to the other every day so they wore out their shoes evenly."

- Nell Rudolph, Elyria

"Dad was able to do almost anything he set his mind to. If something broke, he had it fixed as fast as he could get to it. He even repaired instruments for people from time to time. If he didn't know how to do something, he would study the situation until he figured out what to do. The older boys were inventive as well. They made their own toys when they were young. When Vic grew up a little, he made his own crystal sets so that he could have a radio by his bed."

- Wanda Stubbart, age 78, Columbus, Vic Thomas, age 83, Middletown and Kathleen Lambert, age 80, Middletown

"In the 1930's there were still a lot of coal furnaces (bring coal in and take out ashes). Dad bought an old dump truck and he and I would go to Southern Ohio and buy coal at the mine and sell it in Columbus. On one trip, I walked back into the hills and gathered a lot of bittersweet vines. Back in Columbus I sold the bittersweet door to door for 35 cents a bunch and cleared more money than my dad did on 7 tons of coal."

- William Thompson, age 80, Columbus

"Because there was no work for my father, my parents moved back to Defiance to his parents' farm. He helped my grandfather with a gas station. Gas was cheap, about $.05 or $.10 a gallon. Mom and Dad lived in the gas station. Dad made the place more liveable by installing a metal wash basin as a kitchen sink, He made other improvements by improvising. Electricity was cheaper than stove gas at that time. He saved cooking gas or cooking oil by wiring up several tomato cans, lined with salt water, to heat my bottle, One time, my Dad pulled a dime from his pocket, the only money he had, and told my mom, 'I never want to be this broke again.'"

- Mary Ann Wasserman, age 78, Toledo

"We butchered a hog nearly every November and that meat would last until late spring. We had vegetables from the garden and ate and sold potatoes. Usually, we raised a couple of
hundred bushels of the potatoes. We also raised hogs, chickens and milk cows. The money from selling the milk kept the wolf from the door, so to speak, because it helped put the food on the table that wasn't raised on the farm."

- Lester Baiman, age 82, Colton, CA (formerly from Hamilton)

"Our fathers took the street car to work. Our mothers stayed home and took care of things there. They mended our clothes and socks and soled our shoes to last longer. Food was canned from our gardens, jelly was made and even pickles were canned from cucumbers bought at the Farmers Market. Many of our toys were hand-made and we didn't have too many of those. Our fathers' hours at work were sometimes shortened, which meant less pay. We had no radio and sometimes no phone as we couldn't afford it. We would go to the neighbors to use their phone."

- Rita and Jack Brenner, Thornville

"We moved into a larger farm house as the family grew larger. We raised all our own fruits and vegetables. We raised chickens, cows and hogs. We butchered many for our own use, but had extra eggs and milk to sell. From the lard of the hogs, my mother made lye soap. We made our own butter. When friends from the city would visit they always went home with some type of food. My parents always were generous, knowing everyone was having a hard time. We cured maple sugar in our woods to sell by the pint or quart. We cut blocks of ice from our pond to use in the icebox. The ice was stored in the ice house with sawdust made from cutting wood."

- Violet Hardin, age 89, Wapakoneta

"To get off relief, my Dad took a job at $40 dollars a month as a janitor. We had no improvement in diet, but there were some perks. He could bring home used motor oil for heat and he found five pairs of discarded old shoes. With stick-on soles and heels, that was footwear for my Dad and me - although my feet were too big and I broke out the tops of the shoes and suffered ingrown toenails."

- Bernard L. Kasten, age 90, Lucas

"I was about twelve years old when the stock market crashed. We lived in the country on a farm. We always had food to eat because we always had a big garden, raised our own animals and chickens and eggs, had our own well, had our own fruit trees (plums, apples, pears, grapes and prune plums), our own milk and sold milk every day. I had to milk a cow every A.M. before I walked two miles one way to school every day (1/2 mile mud road). When it was too bad for us to get down, my father would hitch the horses up and the mud boat and take us as far as the stone road, then we would walk the rest of the way. There were no buses. On Wednesdays, Mr. Lowe from Williston would pick us up and take us home because my mom sold eggs to him and bought the necessities from him. He had a store on wheels and sold groceries. He would always give us a sucker of bubble gum, so we looked forward to Wednesdays."

- Evelyn Peoloquin, age 89, Genoa
"Toothpaste was baking soda; soap made by his mom from spent lard. Small kitchen utensils came from box top premiums from General Mills, Pillsbury, etc. Wooden floors were scrubbed every Saturday with newspaper laid on top to keep them clean for a day or two. Dishtowels were from bleached muslin flour sacks. Tea was Linden tree blossoms. Coffee was dried and ground roots of the chickery weed pulled from roadsides lots and fields. Thirty-five cents bought you a small birdhouse made from cigar boxes, begged from the corner druggist."
- David Rizzo, age 66, Sagamore Hills

"When the house was to be painted, walls to be washed or papered or any other work inside and out, my dad always had it done. He felt very strongly 'everyone has a job to do, and if you do it, you are taking a job away from someone else.'"
- Ferd Thoma, age 82, Newton Falls

"I was born the day the Stock Market crashed, October 29, 1929. Things got very dire soon after and a lot of People were jobless, penniless and hungry. Food lines dotted our street corners. My family was most fortunate as our father had a job and we were almost self sustaining from the land we lived on. We had very little money but life was good. We bought our little acre in Perrysburg Township on land contract. It had an orchard, a grape vineyard and room for a large garden. Behind the watershed was a well-constructed chicken coop. Dad tended to the land and mom canned all of our vegetables, fruits and made the most delicious jams and jellies. Her homemade bread and pies and cakes graced our table. Fresh eggs direct from the coop and chicken on Sunday were a regular mainstay. A bike trip down to a nearby farm provided us with fresh milk. We could count on a grape jelly sandwich in our school lunch boxes."
- Bill Williams, age 79, Perrysburg

"My dear mother would cause us to laugh with tears when she would tell about the census taker who would receive a negative to every question... 'Do you have?..inside plumbing, central heating, running water, refrigeration, gas or electric Stove, or perhaps a telephone?' He said: 'well lady, what do you have?'
- Clark Biddle, age 82, Hilliard

"My father worked for the Norfolk and Western Railroad. I remember his work days being cut to only 3 days per week. He was a carpenter by trade, so we were more fortunate than most. He found extra work in his trade whenever and wherever possible. We never experienced the 'soup and bread' lines. He farmed and tended to his large garden, raised chickens and pigeons. We always had food. My mother made bread, pasta, and canned fruits and vegetables, much of it for the winter months. She made our clothes from whatever fabric was available. My father would re-sole our shoes when necessary. We had home remedies for illnesses and made our own soap for washing. Every penny counted. Nothing was ever wasted."
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because nothing was thrown away, cooking and baking skills. Of course, if nothing was ever thrown away, it all wound up in a shed or garage of some type. Gigantic gardens were dug and harvested. It was customary to give fresh vegetables and fruit when someone stopped by for a visit. Nothing was wasted. Even the daily garbage that had accumulated in the kitchen sink was dug back into the garden the next day. Relatives and friends were asked to help with any project that became too big or difficult to complete."

- **Joan Hovan, age 65, Brunswick**

"Our family was self-sufficient in other ways. We made our own lye soap, which we shaved to wash clothes in a ringer washer. We also used feed sacks to make clothes, sheets, pillowslips and even underwear. And we would happily share hand-me-downs with other relatives. I accused my mother of purposely making my underwear three sizes too big just so they would last a long time. When I was in the third grade, I needed glasses. To pay for them, my father worked in a local grocery store and also worked for a 'threshing ring,' which was a small group of local farmers who would pay my father to help with his steam-powered thresher."

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- **Carl Reed, age 76, Malvern**

"In our way of life, we and our neighbors and family were self-sustaining. I gathered eggs daily - and got pecked regularly too. We did everything: raised chickens (lots of chicken and eggs were on the menu) and canned our garden vegetables along with apples, pears, grapes, cherry and plums. Dandelions were our first spring greens, and we welcomed them after the long winter. Mom made many casseroles, pancakes, cookies, fried donuts and fritters. Sometimes, we had ice for the ice box, but we often cooled many foods in a special place in the basement."

- **Marian Seilheimer, age 89, Tiffin**

"We heated and cooked with wood, which my dad and I kept in goodly supply. We churned our butter. With a large iron kettle, we made apple butter over a fire in the back yard - an all day job. In the outhouse, we had a catalog for our needs - toilet paper was a luxury we could ill afford."

- **William Turner, age 89, Cleveland**

"We only used electricity and the telephone when absolutely necessary. Grandmother used to say, 'Turn off the light, I'd rather buy a blouse."

- **Paula Deatrick Ashton, age 69, Toledo**

"My Grandmother Rose idolized me, I was her first grandchild. We lived nearby, so I stayed with her quite often. Since she couldn't speak English, when I was approximately six or seven years
old, I would accompany her on shopping trips. Money was very scarce, so she would want to go downtown on the Front Street bus to the Kurtz Meat Market (which was a Butcher training school). There, she was able to get free soup bones and scraps of meat at very affordable prices. She needed to scrimp and save all that she could in order to feed their family of seven plus a live-in boarder. Grandma would also like to shop at Tiedtke's Department Store on Summit Street. She had never seen anything like this in her native Italy - this store sold everything from groceries to clothes, furniture, etc."
- Mary Rose DeMaria, age 83, Oregon

"An older brother and I worked every Saturday during winter months, sifting the ashes removed from our coal burning furnace during the preceding week. We used a hand-propelled rotary sifter. This device would pass all the ash and retain partially burned and unburned coal. All reusable coal was placed in a large container near the coal bin."
- William McDonald, age 86, Centerville

"Like most American families during the Depression years, ours survived by making the most of what little we had. Often times, it took ingenuity and creativity to stretch things beyond their intended purpose. Today's 'green' people call it 'repurposing.' We called it survival. A prime example is the 100-pound bags of flour that my parents purchased on a regular basis. Yes. 100-pound bags. That's a lot of flour; but believe me, it went a long way for our family of four living in Middletown, Ohio. From my perspective of a 10-year-old, it seemed that Mom worked miracles with that flour, turning it into a variety of breads, pastas, noodles, dumplings, cakes, sweet rolls, donuts."
- Anna Marie Slezak, age 88, Middletown

"Most of our clothes were hand-made, and when sheets got worn in the middle, they were cut down the center and you slept on a seam. Towels would be cut so the ends became hand towels, and hand towel ends became wash cloths. I suppose the nice, worn centers were used for cleaning"
- Arleen Berger, age 92, Columbia Station

"We lived near the railroad. It was the responsibility of the older siblings to collect coal each day that fell from the coal cars traveling through Columbus. We used this in our coal stove for heating. We also would collect ice pieces that fell from the 'ice cars' for use in our ice box. Once in a while, the attendant at the ice house would be kind and give us a large block to take home."
- Madg Conti Browning, age 92, Columbus

"'You wasted nothing in those days,' said Csire. 'You weren't sure when or where you'd get your next meal.' The Hungarian immigrants were extremely thrifty. Every yard had a vegetable garden and nearly everything they had was used up or recycled. They made their own clothes and furniture. During the 1920s, many households kept chickens. 'Some of our friends sold their chickens instead of eating them,' said Csire. 'I remember sometimes we even paid doctors' bills
with produce. We canned fruit and even made our own toys. Christmas was always more special if we received a real toy instead of clothes.'"

- **Lynn M. Grayson, about Elizabeth Nagy Csire, age 93, Columbus**

"Worn out clothing was torn into strips and woven into rugs. Grandpa Waters carved me a special wooden needle to weave the rag rugs. Flour sacks were made into clothes and quilts. Nothing was wasted; everything had to have a purpose, for there was little money to be spent. We learned quickly the difference between our priorities and our wants."

- **Josephine DiBell, age 103, Cortland**

"My brother paid his tuition to The Ohio State University by growing and selling lima beans for 10 cents a quart and strawberries for 15 cents a quart. My folks bartered eggs, chickens, milk and cream for dental care and music lessons."

- **Mary Alice Foster, age 89, Reynoldsburg**

"How I made money during the Depression was by gathering up all the walnuts I could find. I would hook up the mule team to the sled with high boards on it. I would pick up walnuts by the bushel and bring them to the barn and hull them. I would use the old crank corn sheller to take the outside hull off. I put them in the barn loft to dry out. I would crack about a bushel at a time. Every night after supper, we would pick out the kernels. I have taken twenty-five-pound sugar sacks full of the kernels to the old country store to trade for sugar, coffee, tea, spices and other things that we needed. I got 15 cents a pound for the half pieces and 10 cents a pound for the small pieces."

- **Earl Miller, age 94, Chillicothe**

"People living in four suite apartments used to leave pop bottles outside their back doors (I think they did it on purpose), so we would 'steal' them and cash them in for two cents each. They kept doing it, so we kept stealing."

- **Joseph Rogers, age 81, Madison**

"Think of the throw-away world we have become. Can someone mend it, fix it or improve it so that it is useful again? What a great way to involve the family and encourage them to think, or even work and put the money for a replacement in a jar. Check the accumulated amount often. It will add up pretty fast the more you get into doing things and having fun doing it. Slow down and smell the roses. You don't have to be the Lone Ranger. Involve everyone. This is your time to teach so much to your children."

- **Grace M. Schuler, age 83, Napoleon**

"When our parents lost their Cleveland home to bank foreclosure, dad had to sell his car and cash in a life insurance policy as partial-payment toward the 100-year-old farmhouse that they bought in North Royalton. Because of the loss of the car, dad walked the country roads looking for work. He was a bricklayer, but could do any kind of construction, except electrical and plumbing. He was fortunate in finding odd jobs to keep the family afloat. Those days, his pay
came in money (sometimes), but mostly in fruits, vegetables or meat."

- Larry Taddie, age 82, Parma

"My best friend, Alice, lived on a farm around the corner. She had three sisters and two little brothers (and very little money, remember). When the rubbers on her shoes wore thin and stretched out, her mother held them on her feet with red can rubbers. That, to me, really summarized the Depression."

- Ernestine Van Asdale, age 86, Columbus

"Our house was small - three bedrooms, no central heating and no plumbing. We had two wells: one at the barn and we carried water to the kitchen from the other. We sold eggs and whatever we could that we grew. We had a large garden and sweet corn fields where we grew beans in with the corn. Manure from the barn was spread on the garden and corn fields every spring. We did not go hungry, for we canned vegetables, fruit and meat. We killed the old chickens when they quit laying and butchered a couple of pigs in the fall. We had a large water-filled dryer for sweet corn on the large coal kitchen stove and dried peaches and apples on bed sheets in the attic in August. We made our own cottage cheese and butter."

- Rita Anderson, age 87, Reynoldsburg

"We raised chickens in the back yard. My mom got new chicks every spring. We kept them in a box in the dining room near the heater. When they grew a little and the weather was warmer, they went to the coop out back. We also had a large garden. Mom grew and canned all she could. So with veggies, potatoes, eggs and chickens, we had food. But our special Sunday meal was often "hamburg," baked with elbow macaroni, tomatoes and onions - A one dish meal. A lot of our meals were one dish."

- Minnie Blose, age 83, Niles

"We learned to do so many things; wash, mend and sew our own clothes, grow and can food, plan ahead, stretch our money, keep warm, help each other. Other people helped us, too. Friends took us on errands when we needed to go where they were going (we usually had no car). Clothes were given to us; sometimes food and garden surplus. And we tried to help others meet their needs, too."

- Margaret B. Edwards, age 89, Gibsonburg

"My mother had a treadle Singer sewing machine. She would transform hand-me-down clothes given to us into good wearable garments. She was creative and never wasted anything. We were given a Billy goat, but we didn't have him very long. He broke through the screen door and chased my mother out of the kitchen. Shortly, Dad traded him for a wheelbarrow."

- Ruth Jacquillard, age 83, Millbury

"We lived on a farm, and were already in the habit of buying only the necessary staples, and clothing. My mother canned hundreds of cans of home-grown vegetables. We butchered our own cattle, so had plenty to eat all through the depressed years. We were among the lucky ones, as there were seven of us kids, all good eaters. We all had our jobs. As teenagers, we did
a man's work. That was the only way that we could exist."
- Harry G. Moll, age 92, Wauseon

"Perhaps 95 percent of citizens in the Township lived on farms, and family members operated the farm. They raised grain crops, cattle, hogs, sheep, chickens, geese, ducks, turkeys and guineas, raised a garden and milked cows. Grain went to the local mill to be ground into flour and oats ground for feed for livestock. Every farm had an orchard and many a berry patch. You could have a good variety of food if you were willing to work at it - most families did."
- Viola Reed, age 95, Barnesville

"We didn't have much money to spend, but on the other hand, there wasn't much that we needed to spend our money on. Most every family had a garden. Fruit trees were plentiful, especially apples. Most were free for the picking. I remember an orchard on Libby Road where we picked apples that my grandma peeled for use in pies and sauces. Chickens provided meat for Sunday dinner and eggs for breakfast. When a piece of meat was purchased at the butcher shop, the butcher would throw in a free soup bone and a piece of liver. Add some homemade noodles and a delicious meal was almost free. Many of the expensive things we find so necessary today were either not available or not yet in such widespread use as to be considered a necessity."
- John W. Straka, Jr., age 91, Maple Heights

"We felt so lucky. We didn't know we were poor. We grew everything on the farm and butchered our own meat and smoked it or canned it. We made our own apple butter and churned our butter. We made cottage cheese and maple syrup, and bottled root beer we made. We had our underclothes made out of bleached feed sacks. We worked in the garden and shelled corn until our hands had blisters."
- Maxine Vargo, age 80, Akron

"A family friend gave clothing to my mother. Some of it, she altered for me to wear to school. I felt embarrassed and ashamed to be wearing the hand-me-downs. In school, I had to take 'brown-bag' lunches when other kids were able to buy. As a result, in adulthood I've felt cautious about what I spend. On the other hand, my daughter points out that I've purchased multiple items to 'stockpile' - I enjoy the security of knowing I now 'have enough'."
- Margaret B. Carver, age 91, Cortland

"I saw very little difference with the start of the Depression in the 1929 Stock Market crash and my life before that. We were, what I would call, a frugal family. We were a strong and close family but, as far as our spending was concerned, my parents always had a plan, like the toys that were bought were always toys they expected us to share; the clothes were always what we needed, not what we wanted; our furniture was what we inherited from my grandparents and was well broken in. We didn't get the latest gadgets when they came out; we got an electric clothes washer when my mother took ill and it was a need; we never got an electric refrigerator; we didn't get a radio until someone gave us a cast-off battery set. We kids never
got an allowance because our parents thought they provided all the necessities: food, drinks and snacks. As for snacks, you never got a whole candy bar, you shared with your sibling. We also made our own root beer and ginger ale from a kit. None of that changed during the Depression."
- Louis J. Leibold, age 93, Centerville

"We were all in similar circumstances and didn't think too much about how bad off we were - we thought it was just normal. We were always careful to use up everything. Many of us have habits like using every scrap or bit of everything - scraping pans and dishes for the last bite, using scraps of clothing or food for a good use."
- Marian Seilheimer, age 89, Tiffin

The Comforts of Home During the Great Depression

"In the winter, members of our family would huddle together in the evenings around the pot belly stove trying to keep warm. Fuel was hard to afford. My father and other men would watch for coal trains that might stop on some nearby tracks. If one stopped, the men would climb on the cars and throw off coal until the train started to move. This kept us warm for a while."
- Robert Bohyer, age 84, Lima

"We lived a short distance away from the railroad tracks. As the coal cars came past, men took turns throwing the coal down to the men on the ground, anxiously waiting with their gunny sacks. Many times my dad brought coal home for our 'pot belly' stove."
- Mildred Redman Dieter, age 81, Youngstown

"My dad was a dairy farmer. We lived on an 88-acre farm in a very old, seven-room farm house. We had no electricity or running water. My dad tilled the land with a two-horse team and a plow. The winters were brutal. My mother stuffed rags around the windows to keep the wind out. We had a cook stove that burned wood in the kitchen and a Heatrola that burned coal in the front room. All the rooms in between and the upstairs bedrooms were freezing cold. Our hot water was in the reservoir attached to the cook stove. We, of course, had no bath room and the runs outside, in the winter, to the outside toilet (yes, we used the Sears catalog for paper) were awful. We took sponge baths in back of the kitchen cook stove, and you had to be careful how you turned; the space was very limited. Our pumps would freeze up in the winter time and it took a tea kettle of water to thaw them out. We had oil lamps and we carried them from room to room. Mom kept the wicks trimmed and the chimneys clean. We finally got an Aladdin lamp. It had a mantle and it gave out much more light."
- Mary Alice Foster, age 89, Reynoldsburg

"During the winter months we would often wake up with snow on our beds from cracks in the windows. We could not afford to buy new windows so we covered them with oil cloth. To keep our feet warm at night we would heat a brick on our coal stove, cover it with a small blanket,
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and take it to bed with us."
- Violet Hardin, age 89, Wapakoneta

"Until my junior year at school, we - father, brother and I - shared two rooms in the cellar of a duplex. There I learned to cook on a four burner coal stove that was a glutton for coal all year long. And I did indeed scrub clothes in a zink tub on a scrub board. (My brother) Mel and I wrung out the clothes by hand. The water was pumped from a community pump, if not frozen in the winter. And, oh yes, the outhouse! It was never too far away in the summer, and never close enough in the winter! And kerosene lamps lit the way."
- Louis Mamula, age 88, Lowellville

"We didn't have a radio or TV and had very few books to read. A Sears and Roebuck catalog sometimes. I remember Mother ordering some toilet paper from Sears. She didn't have the stock number or anything to go by. She got the toilet paper all right, and a letter telling her to use the catalog number and price the next time. I remember her writing them a letter also, saying if 'I had your catalog I would not have ordered the toilet paper.' Many of the out houses had a Sears catalog nailed to the wall, some pages were awful slick I remember. But they sure did beat the rough corn cobs... I tell you one thing, in the cold winter it didn't take very long to do your business and get back in the house."
- Earl Miller, age 94, Chillicothe

"My parents moved to a cottage in the Irish Hills of Michigan, I don't know what year (about 1929). The cottage was good sized and at the end of a narrow road through a swamp on the southwest end of the lake and had five plots of ground. The house had no inside plumbing and was unfinished upstairs. It had just a hand pump inside the kitchen area, which had to be primed each morning and produced icy cold water from an underground spring. No hot or cold running water, no inside toilet, just a pot with a lid upstairs that night where we slept. No electricity or central heating."
- Marian O'Shea, age 84, Toledo

"The cold nights we snuggled up to the register (heat from the coal furnace) or played the player piano to keep warm (the harder you pumped, the warmer you got, and of course singing along with the piano roll was so much fun!). Then we all had a cup of cocoa made with canned milk, cocoa and lots of water, all steaming warm (sorry no marshmallows then!)."
- Doris Portmann, age 76, Navarre

"Fortitude was a key concept of the family. For years, we made do with kerosene lamps. Through the Rural Electrification Act, however, farm homes began to get electricity in the 1930s; our family got its first refrigerator in 1942. We started to benefit from indoor plumbing, no longer having to use the outhouse, in which the old Sears and Roebuck catalogs had become standard toilet paper."
- Wallace L. Pretzer, age 78, Bowling Green
"We heated and cooked with mainly wood and, now and then, some coal. Water came from a spring nearby, but had to be carried in for cooking, bathing, cleaning and laundry. Thankfully we had a drain for used water. Our restroom was an outhouse. It was a hard life. All of the jobs were labor intensive. Money was not to be had. There was no social income. No work, no money, no eat."

- Carl Reed, age 76, Malvern

"We lived in a couple rooms at a private residence and I remember the single light bulb hanging in the combination living room/bedroom. Mother cooked on a hot plate and washed dishes in the bathroom, which we shared. No refrigerator, only a window box to use in the winter. We never had a thought in our mind that maybe we weren't rich. Mom and Dad always had a job and everybody laughed all the time."

- Vane S. Scott, Jr., age 85, Newcomerstown

"Our house had eight rooms and was built in the 1880s. It was heated by three fireplaces and a coal burning cook stove. The bedrooms were upstairs and were not heated, except on very cold nights we might put a hot water bottle, a sad iron wrapped in a towel or a half gallon fruit jar filled with hot water between the sheets to remove some of the chill. The bedding consisted of a set of springs, a straw tick, a feather tick, sheets and as many quilts as needed. There was a chamber pot in those bedrooms in winter time, and it did freeze. The pot had to be taken downstairs in the morning and placed by the fireplace to thaw so it could be emptied. The water supply for the house was a pitcher pump in the kitchen, which drew water from a 2,000 gallon cistern. This was a rather advanced water supply of the time, as most people had to carry water from a spring or well located some distance from the house. Baths were taken and clothing was changed once a week in wintertime, more often in the summer. The bath tub was a large galvanized laundry tub which was placed in front of the fireplace in the living room. Water was heated on the cook stove in the kitchen and then carried to the tub."

- William M. Shaw, age 87, Sarahsville

"I remember taking a shower in a 'bath' room that had no hot and cold running water. It didn't even have a bath tub. It did, however, have a galvanized iron (circular) tub in which I stood, and poured heated water from a metal bucket (using a metal dipper) over my body to wash, and then to rinse. It was some time later in my young life that I became acquainted with a more luxurious showering method.

"I also remember how I got coal to heat the water in a bucket over a coal stove. Freight trains carrying coal would stop from time to time along railroad tracks about three blocks from where I lived. I, along with kids from the neighborhood, would board the freight trains and throw off small lumps of coal that we gathered up in bushel baskets and carted away. As we ran, two of us - one on each side of the bushel, hanging on to the wire handles and running as best we could - were being chased by railroad "dicks" (police) who never caught us, because they never intended to. I remember those compassionate pretenders with a warm heart."

- Frank C. Sohaiby, age 87, Youngstown
"Surviving the worst, we finally installed indoor plumbing and facilities. After showering, I descended the stairs exclaiming, 'Gee, I feel good!' My brother responded, 'Now, you know how I feel all the time.' And the same brother: 'We'll get along. The flowers, the birds, the trees; they get along. We'll get along!'"
- Richard Prescott Stearns, age 79, Cleveland

"Our home was very simple, no electricity or indoor bathroom. Water was piped into the kitchen with a pitcher pump to draw the water. Hot water was a small tank on the side of our wood and coal cooking stove. We did have a telephone with all the neighbors on the party line. Sometimes it took a while to get a call through, as that was the morning news among the ladies. Everyone listened in on one's conversations."
- Beva Stonebreaker, age 89, Cadiz

"We were always moving to a different house. Once, we rented a two-bedroom bungalow. Dad 'fixed it up' and the land lord raised the rent! I remember one house with a big kitchen and round, oak table for eight. We gathered 'round this table every morning before bus time to hear the weather and news on our little, red Bakelite radio. The news one morning sadly told of the kidnapping and murder of the little Lindbergh baby. We all cried our hearts out at the round oak table and I cried all the way to school in my little red snow suit and black knee boots. We cared!"
- Joy Thomas, age 80, Canfield

"My father cut logs and built a 'temporary' cabin where we lived for nearly ten years. It was 14 feet by 28 feet, and by the time my youngest sister was born there, it contained two adults and eight children. Dad built hanging bunks from the four corners; the center great room was the cooking, eating, living and entertaining space. We managed. I remember the day we moved in, torrents of rain pointed out the unfinished holes in the roof. the windows were still only grain sacks, and Mother and I scrambled for all the pots and kettles to catch the dripping water. Things improved, of course, as we all pitched in, kids gathering moss to stuff in the cracks and Dad continuing to finish things. We all have wonderful memories of the cozy family times there."
- Margaret Vail, age 86, Mansfield

"My father harvested wood to use in the heating stove in the living room and the cook stove in the kitchen. The kitchen stove had a reservoir to heat the soft water from the outside cistern. We used the soft warm water for washing clothes, dishes, hands and hair. On Saturdays, we had our weekly baths in a big galvanized tub (in the kitchen). My mother would make home-made soap, one of the ingredients was lye. I can't remember ever boughten (sic) soap. We also had well water from a pump that contained hard water. We used the hard water for drinking and cooking vegetables. We had a large water tank in the barnyard. One of us children would pump water to fill the tank so the cows could drink the cool water."
- Marie Vaughan, age 85, Bucyrus
"We lived in old farmhouses, with no indoor plumbing, electricity or central heating. We had a well and a pump outside the back door where we got water to drink. All of us drank out of the water pail, using the same dipper. We took baths every Saturday in a large round galvanized tub behind the living room stove. Upstairs was always unheated, and freezing in the winter. We ate supper and did our homework by the light of a kerosene lamp that gave out very poor light. When I was in high school, we got an Alladin lamp that gave out a bright white light. We had a battery radio that my father charged with a gasoline engine, which also pumped water for the animals."

- Carol Vincent, age 86, Centerville

"Running water was me running to a pump. Electricity hadn't yet come to our road. (We had) no plugged-up toilet because we had an outhouse, so in the winter, you were either quick or constipated. But even with a lack of what we now call essentials, we didn't miss them much because we didn't know what they were. Well, at least we didn't know any neighbors who had them."

- George K. Weimer, Jr., age 77, Sebring

"The great drought and heat wave in the Midwest affected all of us. No one owned a home air-conditioner. We endured the dry hot days and sweltering nights. The local undertaker furnished our churches with hand-held cardboard fans, which we could take home. Night time, we dragged our sheets from the upstairs beds, placing them on the living room floor in order to catch the night air. Sleep came slowly, if at all, on hot nights and the hard floors... Saturdays were 'a hot time in the old town tonight.' It was a day to light the side-arm gas water heater. We could have a whole tub of warm water for our bath and to wash our hair. Other days we bathed by boiling our water in a large tea-kettle and carrying upstairs to the bathroom. We were always washed and cleaned. We had to work at it. Heating water was expensive. You saved where you could. You could tell by the body odor given off in study hall that others couldn't afford such luxuries."

- June A Young, age 84, Worthington

"Coal for the furnace, it was used very sparingly together with wood that we gathered for the winter months. This was another fall activity: sawing and collecting wood for the winter. We did not have refrigerators, but almost everyone had a homemade window one where most of the perishable things were kept. (The arrival of) the coal man and ice man were special moments, watching the coal slide down the coal shoot (every home had one) and putting a sign out for the iceman (25-50-75 pounds). And, running after the ice wagon to get that special piece of fallen ice was part of life as we lived it."

- William L. Zurkey, age 84, Boardman

"At five or six o'clock, every morning, milk was delivered to the front porch of the customers. White, chocolate, buttermilk and even butter (by some dairies), were delivered by a horse-drawn wagon. The glass bottles were capped with a paper disk pressed in to the top of the bottle. These bottles were washed when empty and placed on the porch for the milkman to
pick up when he deliver the next day. The milkman had a wire basket that held eight one-quart
glass bottles of milk. After filling the basket with eight bottles of milk, he would hop off the
wagon and carry the milk to one house after another, until he had no bottles of milk left in the
case, only empty bottles. He then went to the wagon, removed the empty bottles, refilled the
case with milk and went back delivering the milk. Occasionally, the resident of a house needed
something different. They would place a note in one of the empty bottles. If he did not have the
item in his case, he walked back to the wagon to get the item. During this whole process, the
horse, pulling the wagon, would move along the street, with no controls, keeping even with the
milkman. If the milkman stopped, the horse would wait, patiently until the milkman moved on."
- Don Conrad, age 81, Lewis Center

"I remember the ice man coming to fill the icebox, the paper rex man on horse and buggy and
vegetables being sold by a produce man coming down the street in a truck. I remember the
knife sharpening man coming down the street with his stone wheel to sharpen neighbors'
kitchen knives. These were the good times in my life."
- Daniel P. Gentile, Sr., age 70, Parma

"We cooled our food with ice that was delivered. We would chase after the ice man so we
could get the ice chips to suck on. The ice box had a pan underneath to catch the melting ice."
- Edna Hanson, age 76, Toledo

"My parents had a general store in Palestine, Ohio in the late 1920s. When I was 12 and 13, my
job was to sort eggs in the crates in a back room of the store. Saturday was the big day for
farmers to come to town. They brought a basket or pail of eggs and a container of cream to
trade for groceries. I crated the eggs and mother weighed and tested the cream. We put a slip
in their containers for how much money they had coming and for many of them that was how
many groceries they could buy for the week. If they had picked out more groceries than they
had money coming from the eggs and cream, I've seen many have to put something back as
they had no extra money to pay for it."
- John Lamb, via e-mail

"We were able to get a few baby chicks and raise them, now we had eggs. Sometimes, if we had
no money, we would walk the five mile to the store carrying a live chicken, tied by the feet, and
trade for the few basic items. We sometimes sold the eggs. I remember we got eight cents a
dozen for them. I remember walking with my sister, each of us carrying a live chicken. We
finally were able to get a mule and my father made a cart for him. Now we did not have to walk
the five miles."
- Neva Rees, age 87, Marietta

"My mother and I also had our share of itinerant peddlers coming to our home, ranging from
the Fuller brush man, to encyclopedia salesmen to nomadic photographers. Milk was delivered
by horse-drawn wagon, bread from a van, and our refrigerator was an ice box. A sign placed in
the window notified the ice man of the amount of ice we desired."
- Stan Shriver, age 79, Columbus

"The only room that generated heat was the kitchen, by a coal stove used for cooking, baking and heating a non-electric iron, with which mothers would press the clothing. Mothers would also use the iron to warm the sheets before the children went to bed."
- Frances Daubert, age 80, Centerville

"We had cozy feather beds in the winter. There was a large coal and wood burning stove in the kitchen with a side unit for heating water. There was a pot-belly stove in the living room with a register above it in the ceiling to help heat the bedroom above it."
- E. Marie Dornbrook, age 87, Parma Heights

"When the weather was cold, my dad cut wood and fired up the cook stove and pot-belly stove to keep the bedrooms and living room warm. Sometimes, they could afford to buy a few pails of coal to keep a fire going overnight in the stove."
- Ruth Hahn-Shrayer, age 78, Holland

"We used baking soda for deodorant, brushing teeth and cleaning silverware. We used vinegar and baking soda together for cleaning copperware. We used vinegar and water for cleaning windows, and dried them with newspapers."
- Era Harper, age 93, Bedford

"My grandparents had outside toilets and kerosene lamps. A cave carved into a hill in their yard with wooden shelves was for food that needed to be kept cold. Grandma had a small pump in her kitchen sink to supply cold water inside. We gathered eggs from the hen house."
- Jeannette Mellott, age 78, Plymouth

"Our log cabin home had no modern-day conveniences. We had dirt floors, our beds and tables were made from timber that my dad and grandpa had carved. Our bed mattresses were made of feed sacks filled with corn shucks. We also always had to fight the bed bugs. Our lighting was with kerosene lamps. Our washing machine was an old wooden wash board and rock. We hung the clothes up to dry."
- Norma 'Beni' Nolen, age 77, Columbus

"We had no electric or gas, only hanging kerosene lamps. We had no water heaters, but a copper boiler to fill and heat on the old coal and wood cookstove. We had no refrigerator or ice box. We had to carry our water from a well about 50 feet."
- Evelyn Peloquin, age 89, Genoa

"In the house built by my dad and brother-in-law in 1929-30 was a Delco light plant. Rural electrification came through later. 'The house was build when times were hard' they'd say. A hand-dug ditch to which a galvanized pipe was laid below the freeze line from the house to a hill almost a quarter of a mile away, led to a man-made reservoir. This supplied water to the upstairs bathroom without a pump. In the summer, a kerosene heater was installed to heat the
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water in the tall water tank. In the winter, the heater was replaced with galvanized pipe going through the bathroom floor to the Heatrola stove in the living room and back up to the water tank. What an ingenious idea!"
- Posey Deskey, age 82, Chillicothe

"After the strike, we moved back to Akron, Ohio. Our home did not have indoor plumbing or water. A pitcher pump outside the back door provided the water. A two-seater privy about fifty feet from the house was our toilet, with the Sears catalog. A small room beside the kitchen door had a round table where nine children and their parents ate our meals. Short-armed persons had it rough. Two rooms up a flight of stairs provided sleeping area for the three boys in one and six girls in the other. A burlap bag served as a curtain. Saturday night was chore for bathing, as water had to be heated in a tank on the kitchen stove. A galvanized washtub provided a place to bathe with smaller children going first, and older ones hoping the water lasted and was warm. Our parents had their bed in one end of the living room. The house and land was being bought by dad on land contract for $15 per month. The owner did not want father to pay any extra if work improved."
- Alvin Reece, age 83, Mansfield

"We had a gas cooking stove that you had to put 25 cents in to get gas, and it would invariably run out right in the middle of cooking supper. It had no gauge to show the amount of gas left. The hot water heater in the bathroom needed ten cents, and when put your dime in, you had sit in the bathroom and wait for the water to heat, or someone from another apartment would use your hot water; and we both tried to get showers for one dime."
- Nell Rudolph, Elyria

"People started to get indoor plumbing in their homes (ours around 1926); my what a nice improvement! We were glad we already had it before the Depression, because such things as plumbing and refrigeration supplies took a long time to get."
- Marian Seilheimer, age 89, Tiffin

"Our home had a hand pump in the kitchen. We had a four-room house with outside toilet. Our coal furnace in the basement was near where the car was parked under the house. My mother pumped water and heated it in a large broiler on the kerosene stove. When she baked, there was a large oven that was put on the burners."
- Ann Shilling, age 80, Canton

"Monday was cold and dark. Our house was cold and the little black heating stove in the living room was not very warm. Someone knocked on our door and told Daddy to get to the feed mill right away. We gathered up buckets, baskets and feed sacks, got in the car to go to the feed mill behind the store that sold hardware, animal feed and some groceries. All of a sudden someone yelled 'stand back, here it comes.' There were about 20 people there. I looked up and corn cobs stripped of corn came flying out of a big door in the side of the old noisy building. Daddy said, 'Pick up the corn cobs and fill up the sacks.' It was snowing and sleet. My little
hands were stiff and my nose was frozen. Everyone was working fast to get their share and back into their cars and trucks. I had no idea what it was all about until we got home. Dad was carefully arranging the corn cobs with the chunks of coal in the little black stove. Mother was busy hanging up our snow-covered coats and hats on the back of the kitchen chairs she brought into the room. Mother made ovaltine (like hot chocolate) for everyone while we put on our nightgowns and sat around the little black stove warming our feet and hands."

- Betty Jo Spaulding, age 74, Pickerington

"Our heat was from a coal furnace. We had a coal bin in the cellar where coal was stored for the entire winter. I loved to see the coal truck coming. I stood there and watched the coal going down the chute. 'Only the best,' said my Dad, 'New York anthracite'"

- Gladys Case Stent, age 84, Columbus

"With whatever money they could scrape up, our parents bought three acres of farmland with a small farmhouse (reputed to have been an old log cabin over 100 years old). This small farmhouse had to be moved about 400 feet, across the 100-year-old grape vineyard, to the basement and foundation, which our dad and his loyal friends hand dug, hauled away dirt and built. Our inspection of the 'new' home, introduced us to a living room, a kitchen and one room on the second floor, which became the bedroom for the entire family (no bathroom facilities, no toilet, no plumbing, no furnace and no water). Our family sure had loyalty and strong family love. Why we didn't run away at this time, I will never know."

- Larry Taddie, age 82, Parma

"We had to move nine times because of back rent. Most of the homes we rented had coal furnaces and wood or charcoal cooking stoves. Outdoor outhouses and potties indoors. At night, for lights in the home, we used kerosene lamps or gas, even candles."

- Joe Trollo, age 83, Hubbard

"For water, we had two kinds, which later confused our city sister-in-law. The 'soft' water was rain water that came off our big roof into a cistern in the wood house on the rear corner of the house. We used 'Old Settler' in it once in a while to settle the leaves, dirt, etc. into the bottom of the cistern. We cleaned that out periodically. We had two wells. One at the barnyard for the animals and one at the house. That was a deep, pure well used for drinking and cooking. It had a lot of minerals in it, and wouldn't make 'suds.' It curdled. It also covered the inside of the tea kettle with minerals."

- Ernestine Van Asdale, age 86, Columbus

"This farmhouse had all broken windows, no indoor plumbing, no central heat and no electricity. I can still picture my Mom getting water from a cistern, rain barrel, and a nearby pond using a hand pump. On some weekends, we would all go to the home of relatives in the city for a nice tub bath. My mom had to write to her cousin in Philadelphia to embarrassingly ask for enough money to buy a kerosene stove for cooking, and an oil burner for basic heat. She would heat bricks, wrap them in cloth and take them to the cold upstairs bedrooms to warm
our feet. Hot water bottles were also used. Kerosene lamps were used for lighting."
- **Elmer Viertel, age 78, Canton**

"I used to tell people that we had running water because Mom would say 'take this bucket and run down to the spring and get some water.'"
- **Charles Warrick, age 81, Barnesville**

"The farm was typical of the times, with no running water in the kitchen and no bath. There was a pump at the sink and an outhouse out back - I hated the dark, stinky place. Water was heated on a wood stove for bathing in a galvanized tub on Saturday night. Aunt Ida heated the water, washing the clothes on a scrub board, using handmade soap. Aunt baked her own bread, which was very good with the butter she churned herself. There was a pot-bellied stove for heat in the kitchen and a dumbwaiter she raised on ropes from the cool cellar, where she kept the fruits and vegetables she canned and the meats our uncle butchered for the table."
- **Ada Goss Weygandt, age 86, Grove City**

"Believe it or not, (and this is not pretty), we did not buy toilet tissue! We used old newspaper and crumpled it up to make it soft. No one complained one bit. I brushed my teeth with baking soda and a clean cloth. Grandma said the soda took the stains off my teeth better."
- **Dolores L. Younger, age 79, Westerville**

"Our food was kept cool in the 'ice box' by a cube of ice brought by the 'iceman' in a truck. We had a card that we hung on the front porch that told him the size of ice we needed. All the children in the neighborhood would chase the ice truck in hopes of getting a sliver of ice to eat."
- **Minnie Blose, age 83, Niles**

"About ten o'clock at night you could hear a newsboy singing out 'Journal Night Greener - read all bout it.' News junkies could buy a copy for the latest news. When fruit was in season, peddlers would come around with a crate on their shoulders singing out 'Straawberieees.' Once a week, a traveling grocer with a selection of fresh fruits and vegetables in racks on the bed of a Model-T truck came by. Housewives could step into the truck and buy. Other times, mother would go to the neighborhood grocer with a list of food items she wanted. The grocer stood behind the counter and got each item as she named it - very labor intensive by today's standards. The iceman came around twice a week to deliver 25, 50 or 75 pounds of ice, as housewives needed. Kids would 'steal' chips of ice on the truck bed while he was delivering."
- **Russell S. Fling, age 82, Columbus**

"My Dad worked less and less and things got so bad, we had to start charging everything. Even groceries. We always traded with Lloyd Yocum, manager at the IGA store on Queen Stein Middletown. Mr. Yocum was a life saver. He let us charge groceries and let my Dad pay so much when he got paid. When he did pay, Mr. Yocum would treat Alice and me to a big sack of candy! That was great. We called him our hero! Later on we called it the 'I Get It All' Store."
- **Mary Jane Grimes, age 87, Monroe**
"My father was one of the local ministers in a small Ohio town in 1930. He had two pastorates, one in town and one in the country. The country people had no money to pay him, but they had lovely meat after they butchered. So they gave us fine handmade sausage, fine beef roasts and steaks. We had no room in our ice box for all this meat, so we stored it in dishpans on the roof of our back porch and shared it with neighbors who were hard hit by the Depression."  
- Emilie Kirkwood, Hilliard

"Communications were radio, telephone, and newspaper. When I was twelve, I got a paper route. To get special news to the public, it was our job to get the papers around to the neighborhoods and sell extras. Sometimes this happened at 2 or 3 in the morning."
- Raymond J. Mock, age 85, Centerville

"Milk was delivered in a glass bottle with three to four inches of cream on top. You could see the dividing line. An old icebox in the dining room was replenished weekly by the burly man with the curved black tongs, balancing a huge block of ice on his shoulder. He emerged from a horse drawn wagon. We thought he was handsome, and we girls used to get very giggly and flirty when we saw him. The horses left huge mounds of droppings in the street, but I don't remember anyone worrying about sanitation. I suppose they were eventually hosed down."
- Ann Shook, age 85, Akron

"We had no running water, no paved roads, no electricity, only two fireplaces at grandmother's home for heat. She had to buy coal because wood was not available. The beds were made from feathers and, yes, even cornhusks! Yet, in the spring we papered the walls and painted the floors and everything was kept clean, even the picket fence around the yard got a new coat of whitewash."
- Bernice Dixon, age 80, Galloway

**Jobs, Schemes and Other Ways to Make Money During the Great Depression**

"I had an aunt younger than me, and one time when I was at their house, we went to the orchard and gathered a bushel of apples. We brought them to the house, washed them and polished them. She and I walked down the road and sold them to the W.P.A. guys that were working along the road. They enjoyed them very much and were glad to get them for a few cents each... I guess selling apples was my first job, but we didn't consider it work. We had fun doing it."
- Marjorie Angst, age 84, Hamilton

"My father had been a legit theater musician - he played piccolo and flute in theater orchestras for Ziegfeld and various shows that came to town. It was the era of the live, beautiful, romantic music of V. Herbert, Rudolf Friml and Sigmund Romberg, etc. My dad went from a tuxedo to overalls, as to change from music to printing. He retired from the Dispatch as a stereotyper. But
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as the Depression worsened, his work became scarce to none."
- Clark Biddle, age 82, Hilliard

"As the country started to get back on its feet, my father and two brothers were offered jobs on the W.P.A. working, fixing roads. I worked for the N.Y.A. (National Youth Administration). I worked at the Junior High School for one year. I graded papers for the teachers and sold school supplies in the principal's office. I took care of the library. I believe I was paid $33 a month. The job lasted one year."
- Eleanor Ungaro Carpenter, age 89, East Palestine

"When my father came home from having served with the US Army in Europe during World War I, he met and married my mom and found a job working as a clerk for the Wabash Railroad. It was not a great paying job, but during those Depression years, when so many men lost their jobs in factories and industries, my father never missed a day of work unless it was on the two weeks of paid vacation each year. The government apparently realized that the railroads must keep operating."
- William Cox, age 85, Sylvania

"Grandma has lived in Piqua, Ohio, her whole life. During the Great Depression, she lived with her parents, her husband (my great grandfather), her two children (my grandfather and great aunt) and her younger brother. Her husband worked in the W.P.A., which was a government-sponsored organization. He worked there his whole life and was paid $12 a month during the time of the Depression. She stayed home and took care of her two young children and her parents. Her brother sold newspapers downtown every day. He would stay out from 6 a.m. until around dark. Her family lived off what her brother and husband brought home in the form of money."
- Meg Denman, sophomore at Madison Comprehensive High School, about her grandmother, Marcella Denman, age 92, Mansfield

"While I was still in school, I worked on Saturdays. It's not that I didn't get enough, but I wanted some things that we couldn't buy. I did housework. I was getting 75 cents for half a day. I could make a down payment on a pair of shoes - $1.95 for the shoes - and they were good shoes, too! For a lot of women, the only job was to do housework. They lived in people's homes and did the housework, cooking, everything. I graduated from junior high school in 1934 and went to work at Queen City Laundry. I was a sorter... I worked at Fairdale Handbag Company for 17 years. There was no decent minimum wage in those days."
- Magnolia Fielder, age 93, Cincinnati

"As I grew up, I had a variety of jobs. My father had three jobs at times, in a steel mill, a screw factory and did side work, concrete sidewalks and driveways and other things. My mother, while we were small, was a housewife. I worked in a shoe shop, washed cars and worked in a bakery. I shined shoes on Madison Ave., from west 73rd St. to west 110th St. I would go to public square on weekends and shine shoes in front of the terminal tower. As I got older, I
delivered all three newspapers (Plain Dealer, News, Press) at old St. John Hospital before and after school. On Saturday and Sunday, I would shave old men patients at the hospital."
- Daniel P. Gentile, Sr., age 70, Parma

"Dad talked to a farmer who had a large field of strawberries. In the winter, he went to Florida where he had another strawberry farm. We were able to live in his house rent free and be caretakers in the winter when he was away (he kept one room for himself to live in,) We enjoyed the farm very much. Also, he paid us the great sum of one or two cents a quart. We had to pile the baskets as high as we could, and then he took berries off the top to make extra baskets. He then sold them for 10 cents a quart."
- Mary Elizabeth Stillwagon Glass, age 88, Cambridge

"We were a family of eight and my father was a carpenter. During the Depression there was almost no building going on. Because of this, my father had very little work. When he did work, the owner of the company was often unable to pay him. and my mother would go to him and have to beg for a couple dollars to buy necessities, like flour, to help her feed the family. My sister and I peddled papers in Zoar. We also had to clean the two-room school every day after school. My oldest brother had to go to school early every day and build a fire in the downstairs and upstairs stoves so the school was warm when it started. In the summer, we would sell bouquets of wild violets for a nickel to people visiting Zoar. Around 1930, the Zoar Dance Hall was built. At 15 and 16 years old, my sister and I got jobs working there selling tickets and making sandwiches. We would walk home alone at 2 or 3 in the morning. As with all our jobs, the money went to our parents. If we found a penny, we thought we really had something."
- Irene Class Haueter, age 94, Bolivar

"During the winter months, George remembers his dad leaving for Detroit for work. He was an auto metal finisher. His dad would get on a train and ride to Detroit, only to come home on the weekends. He still remembers his mom 'de-lousing' his dad every time he returned. He guesses the living conditions where his dad stayed were bad."
- Rick Prentice about George Hibbs, age 75, Grand Rapids

"When I was 7 years old - my mother and dad opened a grocery store and ice cream parlor. My father was the first taxidermist on the west side of Cleveland. Mom and Dad were in the business for years. The best thing was that they were generous to people who were poor. Mom put their names in a book and how much they bought. Some moved and never paid her back. Dad gave away deer meat, fish, rabbit and squirrel meat to anyone who came in his store and needed food."
- Marcella Huber, age 85, Medina

"Our father drove a city bus for $35 a week and, fortunately, had a job all through the bad times. Our mother took in washings, getting $3 from someone for a big basket of clean and pressed clothing, something that took about four hours to finish. She cleaned peoples’ homes for minimum amounts of money. Every Sunday, we each got a nickel to contribute to the
collection at Sunday School."
- **Ruth Mueller Jones, age 88, Cincinnati**

"We delivered milk to customers in the valley and many of them could not pay their bills, but we still delivered the milk to them because they had children that needed it. The W.P.A. had many people working on this county road. Where they cut the banks down and cleaned ditches all by hand with mattocks, picks and shovels, and loaded the dirt in trucks by hand with a shovel. I recollect carrying milk to them in carriers where I sold them for five cents a pint, 10 cents a quart. It was hard work, but we had to do it. We also had people come up to the farm looking for work, we hired what we needed and paid them 75 cents to $1.50 a day, plus meals, and they were very happy. They would walk 2 1/2 miles from Lansing to the farm. They hoed corn, harvested vegetables, picked fruit and hand-cut field corn, shocked it till harvest. The elder people would help in heavier work like loose hay shocking, oats and wheat, cutting down field corn for ensilage use and loading on a wagon to be taken to the silage cutter and blown into the silo. They also helped at threshing time, when the help and neighbors would converge. On the day of threshing, we always had a great meal for them. Then we would move to the next farm and did the same."
- **Carl Krob, age 82, Bridgeport**

"At about age 12, I obtained a Dayton Daily News paper route with about 40 customers, earning about two dollars a week. The price of the daily paper was two cents and seven cents for the Sunday edition. At 19 cents per week for the paper, it was often difficult to collect from some of the customers, making it necessary to go back two or three times to collect. Some of them would run the bill up for three or four weeks before they paid. I had to pay for the papers each week, resulting in holding the bag when one of them moved away. In my junior year I was hired by the owner of the neighborhood grocery store to work all day Saturday for $2, and after a few weeks he asked me to come in after school for two hours at 25 cents per hour. I was now earning about $4.50 per week and I quit my paper route. I spent most of my money buying my clothes, such as $2.99 for a pair of shoes at Thom McCann's, or trousers from the Metropolitan."
- **Richard E. Lee, age 90, Centerville**

"When President Roosevelt started the W.P.A. to give work to the poor it was a blessing. My Mother got a job cleaning the walls at City Hall. She made $3.45 a day, which was a fortune to us. I recently found the original weekly time book my Mother filled out for hours worked cleaning walls. She was put in charge of the crew that worked with her."
- **Louise Norling Maccioli, age 83, Louisville**

"The economy of all these events forced us to share homes for nearly 40 years for (my parents and grandparents) and 21 years for me. Grandma Eva became my surrogate mother because her job was that of 'homemaker'. My mother went back to her teenage job at Halle Brothers Department Store in downtown Cleveland. This time, she would learn the switchboard in the telephone office. My dad laid bricks when there was a job maybe two hopefully three days a
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week he was considered one of the lucky ones for this place in time. Eventually, he joined the W.P.A., (government backed jobs) initiated by F.D. Roosevelt. Dad supervised new roads built as well as road repair. This would lead him into his own business when times got better. Lewis Industrial Floors put asphalt floors into all the breweries in Cleveland, waterproofed bridges and provided us a good life."

- Marilyn Markle, age 79, North Royalton

"Dad was on the school board and when there wasn't enough money to pay the teachers, they were offered a small stipend plus room and board. The room and board was provided by the board members. I can remember being very proud about having a teacher stay at 'our house.'"

- Martha McMahon, age 85, Medina

"We raised about ten acres of tobacco every year. We set all of it by hand until 1932. It was a tough job to set out a row of two hundred plants without stopping. My dad dropped the plants spaced just right, my brother used a dibble to make a hole for the plants, my mother poured water in the hole and I put the plant in the wet hole and raked the dirt around very firm. We hardly ever had a plant die. We burnt the big tobacco bed until we had all the weeds killed out, then sowd tobacco seed in it. It was usually about nine feet wide and 75 feet long. You had to put thin muslin cloth over all of it to keep the tender plants from burning by the hot sun. About the first of May and June, the plants would be big enough to set out. In August, we would split the stalks with a tobacco knife and cut it off. Then we would put five or six stalks on a four foot tobacco stick and hang it in the big tin barn to cure. That was my job to do in the big barn. At the highest point in the barn in August I know the temperature was at 125 degrees or more. I stripped down to my shorts, yet the sweat still poured off me."

- Earl Miller, age 94, Chillicothe

"My next job was on a farm, where I worked six days a week and did chores on Sunday for $3 a week and board and room. That was about the time I decided to go back to school and graduate. The local situation was a dead end, so I went to Florida. There I got work that paid a bit better. I came home when the job finished and got a better one here. The Depression was fading, probably due to wartime production, even though we weren’t in it yet. It ended for me when I was drafted in 1941, and WW2 solved it for the whole country."

- Harry G. Moll, age 92, Wauseon

"When I was a lad, my father lived in Newton Falls, Ohio, and got a job at Newton Steel Mill. He was laid off from there and I had to quit school to help with the family. I would take produce from the garden and walk up and down streets in Newton Falls to sell my items. I would carry two baskets of berries or other produce and the money made from their sales helped keep my family together."

- Ed Persino, Niles

"When I was in fourth grade, I was in girl scouts and a neighbor fixed me up with a business of selling vegetables out of his garden, and he would grind horseradish and put in jars. After I
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would sell all that he put in baskets, I got a percentage, and this was how I would buy my girl scout things like a winter jacket, a hat, socks and other items. Once in a while, my mother would bake home made bread and buns and sell it to people in the neighborhood."

- Rosemary Rausch, age 83, Plain City

"We were probably poor - but didn't realize it. We always had plenty of food and enough clothes. My father was a funeral director and the nature of the business is Depression-proof. However, I remember people couldn't pay him, so he was paid in baskets of fruit, vegetables, etc., or some one would offer to do work for him. One woman did our laundry and ironing for a year to pay off her debt. It must have been for more than one funeral!"

- Pauline Robinson, age 84, Minerva

"The Great Depression certainly had an impact on me and my family. I was a teenager during the Depression, and even at that young age, given the bad economic situation, I felt I needed to get a job to help my family financially. I was just finishing high school and the courses I took in college were dictated by the depressed conditions at the time. My parents had dreamed of their son, Ted, becoming a doctor. In my own way, I responded to their dream by getting a degree in chemistry at the Illinois Institute of Technology (IIT). However, upon graduation from college, instead of going on to medical school, I felt that the best way to help my family was to get a job right away. What kinds of jobs were available during that time when so many people were out of work? Social workers were needed and so I applied for and received a job offer from the county welfare department in Cook County Illinois. My job gave me the opportunity to help unemployed people obtain the help they needed from the local government, including receiving welfare. So I got a job helping those who could not find work! I must say that the economic situation forced me to make a choice of jobs I never would have made otherwise."

- Theodore Ruhig, age 92, Boston Heights

"After graduation, I had a truck driving job, which paid $12.00 a week. I worked long hours with no extra pay, no overtime. I was lucky to have this job. President Roosevelt was elected president and passed the Social Security Act. My pay was cut 12 cents to $11.88. It doesn't sound like a big pay cut, but I missed that 12 cents in my paycheck."

- Matthew Sabatina, age 94, Akron

"My clearest memories are from the latter years of the Great Depression, around 1938, when my first cousin, Taylor-Floyd, after high school graduation, moved from his rural farm to stay with us in the city and seek his fortune. Among the vocations that he tried, was going door to door trying to convince families to purchase a Hawaiian guitar. Every evening when he returned, I asked him what success he had. I do not believe that he ever actually made a sale, but he always stated that he had 'prospects.'"

- Stan Shriver, age 79, Columbus

"There were not many jobs available. Factory work paid less than 50 cents per hour and sometimes as little as 15 cents. If one could get a job, it might be far enough from home to
make getting there difficult. After graduation from Maple Heights High school in 1935, my first job paid 28 3/4 cents per hour. Some of my classmates who were earning as much as 40 cents an hour were only working part time."
- John W. Straka, Jr., age 91, Maple Heights

"My Dad was chief inspector at a Ford Motor tool factory. It stayed in operation with a few men, but the pay was next to nothing. He worked anywhere he could. The shirt factory by where my two Aunts lived and worked closed and they came to live with us. Soon, an Uncle came. We had a small house, three bedrooms, no bathroom. My Mom was a good cook, she got a job at the hotel, from 6 a.m. to 6 p.m., six days a week, and was paid $5 a week. She brought leftovers for us home."
- Mildred Swab, age 96, Saint Clairsville

"I remember our fourth grade teacher and her husband both worked. Many people thought this was terrible that two people would be working in one family, where others had no job. At one time, a married woman in Youngstown could not teach because of this. I talked to a man who worked in the steel mills in Warren and he said he worked one day every other week."
- Ferd Thoma, age 82, Newton Falls

"To make a buck, we would sell newspapers for the Telegram News. We would sell old rags and scrap iron, bottles and aluminum to the scrap man. We would caddie for doctors, attorneys and their wives. In early spring, we would rake the leaves and trim the hedges, and in the winter, we would shovel snow. They would feed us and give us out-grown toys, such as bikes, skates, wagons and sleighs. They were good to us. Farmers would have work for some of us. They were cheap payers and we walked five miles to the farms. The little money we made, we gave to our parents to help out."
- Joe Trolio, age 83, Hubbard

"My father was a painter and paper hanger, so much of his pay when he worked for farmers came in the form of livestock. He always butchered in November and all the meat from pigs, except the backbone, went into sausage, which he sold three pounds for 25 cents. What didn't sell my mother canned. There were three small towns within a 15-mile radius, where we lived with oil refineries. Thank goodness there were no unions and little greed, so the owners divided up the work. Married men were allotted three days per month. Sometimes they were lucky and got called in a few more days depending on business. My dad was notified by postal card as we couldn't afford a telephone."
- Robert Vensel, age 92, Canton

"When the President declared a bank holiday, it affected the small local banks, and made it nearly impossible to get any kind of a loan. We were in the natural ice business and my dad always had to borrow money to pay for the harvest. I recall for several years during that period when he was unable to get a loan, although his credit had always been excellent, He found the men he needed from the many unemployed in the area. They agreed to work and be paid the
following summer, and they always got paid. My Dad found a way to adapt to a situation that appeared to be hopeless."

- Leon White, age 89, Columbiana

"This was a summer of hard work for the whole family. Any garden produce we had left over was sold. We kids were the ones who went house to house selling garden produce. One of our big getters was green beans. A strawberry basket piled high was one pound and this sold for 10 cents. I remember one lady produced scales to check my weight estimate. To her surprise the strawberry basket held a little over one pound, so I removed the overage. Everyone at our house thought that was pretty funny.

"We lived in Zanesville, Ohio at this time. There was a small dairy on one of the side streets, just off Brighton Boulevard. They made ice cream bars. They would make up boxes with dry ice and ice cream. We kids would take off then hollering "Ice Cream Bars, five cents!" We made 1½ cents on each ice cream bar. On a good hot day we could make about 25 cents. NOT REALLY BAD! In 1936, I was about nine years old and my sister about six at the time. Well sir, we found out that if we were all dressed up and she had a ribbon in her hair we could go where the W.P.A. was working and our sales would pick up. Some days, we could make 50 cents or so! You had to look sharp and take advantage of opportunity."

- N. D. Zimmerman, age 82, Cambridge

"My older brother, Earl, and I gathered blackberries and raspberries for our mother and she made jelly from them. We also sold some of the berries to make money. The blackberries were sold for 20 cents a gallon and the less-plentiful raspberries were sold for 30 cents a gallon. Earl and I split the money. We also made money by selling garden seeds, Cloverine Salve and Redbud Salve door-to-door. Earl also sold GRIT newspapers and I tagged along with him. We tried to save the money we made, but I was a little thriftier than my brother, who spent a lot of his money on cigarettes and Brilliantine to keep his hair looking good for the girls."

- Betty Banta, age 80, Columbus

"We were always a 'poor' family. My father, an insurance salesman, with a secure job, earned a base salary that was too low to support his family of six children. He was a good salesman and harder worker, so he earned enough commissions, before 1929, to house and feed his family. After the crash of 1929, most people stopped buying additional insurance. A lot of people found it necessary to cancel, cash-in or borrow funds on their policies. The resulting loss of commissions caused us to 'tighten our belts,' so tight that it hurt. We were able to buy nothing except the basic essentials and, in many cases, find ways to get along without things that most people think are essential."

- Emmet Bongar, age 89, Niles

"There were no jobs in Indiana, so dad drove us to Ohio seeking work. He only had a seventh grade education, but was very smart. My mother would clean houses and dad would take on anything people would need done, such as putting in concrete steps and driveways, building
porches, etc. He later got a job driving for a bakery, and had such a good reputation for honesty and good working, the owner permitted him to borrow the truck to go to Indiana to bring Mom's family to Ohio."

- Sally Carrico-Baum, age 75, Columbus

"I peddled newspapers first for the News Bee and then for the Toledo Blade. Walking each day to deliver those papers was quite a chore. Then one day a customer called me in and offered to sell me for twenty dollars an almost new bicycle that had belonged to her recently deceased son. With Mom and Dad's permission I purchased the bike with a dollar down and a dollar a week until the bike was mine. All mine! Hallelujah!"

- William Cox, age 85, Sylvania

"My father wasn’t making any money farming so he got a job as a truck driver for General Electric Company on Woodland Avenue. This was rather sad because my dad had to leave early and come home late because of the distance. It also meant my mom had a lot of responsibilities. A really big one was milking the cow. She never did it before and had to ask our neighbor to help her out."

- E. Marie Dornbrook, age 87, Parma Heights

"Everyone worked in some way to earn money. I picked bittersweet and took eggs to sell in town. With the money, I could buy books. My dad did carpentry, sharpened knives and did odd jobs."

- Laverne Hillyer Fifer, age 92, Northwood

"The kids in the neighborhood got picked up by Henry Rosbaugh, bean king, who had beans planted all over the west side: Stamp Rd., Smith Cellar over to the airport. I was 12. My two older brothers also worked. We got picked up at 7:30. Our pay was according to how many hampers we picked. Thirty pounds in each hamper. We worked all day. Everything we earned went to our parents. We got a small allowance."

- Theresa Giallombardo, age 80, Maple Heights

"My first job during these lean years was digging out apple tree stumps for a quarter a stump. But others had better jobs. My neighbor made $4.00 a day working at Armco and those working at the Franklin paper mills made $16.75 per week. These people could live like kings on that income until they lost their jobs. Then, many children who had been working and lost their jobs, went back to live with their parents. The population of some of the towns and farms around actually went up because so many children moved home with their children."

- Earl Gorsuch, age 88, Lebanon

"My Grandparents passed away a few months apart. They lived in Meigs Co. Ohio. My Grandmother left the 80+ acres to my Mother. We arrived in November and my Grandmother had what was left of a five-gallon jar of pickled Green beans and a small kettle of lard they had rendered from a pig. That was all there was to eat. My Dad walked to the store to see if he could get some flour and sugar. He asked if there was any work to be had. A man, who later
Great Depression Story Project

became our best friend, said he needed someone to shovel gravel from his truck bed onto the road. He told my Dad that it paid $5.00 a week. My Dad took the job and asked the man if he could get enough money to pay for flour and sugar.

- Patarica LeMay Hauger, age 81, Meigs County

"During the Depression many men tried to make a living as traveling salesmen. They offered products of all types, from farm supplies to patent medicines to insurance. For the most part, their intended customers considered them pests because they had little or no money to spend on anything but essentials. To illustrate this point, my father, Charles Jefferson Davis Johnson, used to tell this story:

"'One day,' he said, 'I was cutting corn with a long corn knife. It looked like a pretty wicked machete. I was wearing rubber boots and I had slid the knife down into my boot. About that time, a salesman walked up to me in the field and started off on a long sales spiel. I told him, 'You just stop right there and tell me what you're sellin'. ' That took him a-back for a minute, and he blurted, 'Fire extinguishers.' Then he started on another sales pitch. Well, I figured I could cut corn while he talked, so I reached down and pulled out my corn knife. When he saw it he thought I was going to attack him. He took off like a flash. I never saw anyone run so fast in my life! Why, I wouldn't have hurt him! But I wouldn't have bought any fire extinguishers, either!"

- Frances Johnson Hinshaw, age 80, Glouster

"Dad was working with the W.P.A., clearing the land which was to be Pearson Park on Navarre Avenue. Sometimes Mom and I would take his lunch to him. I enjoyed it. I would run around in the thicket chasing rabbits and swinging on the vines. The W.P.A. was working on projects all around Toledo, especially the Toledo Zoo. They are still standing. For a while, Dad was carrying and delivering huge blocks of ice to customers of the Citizens Ice Company. I have a picture of him with a very large block on his shoulders."

- Ruth Jacquillard, age 83, Millbury

"In college, a friend and I started the East Lansing Fleating Company to clean and repair coal furnaces. Sears Roebuck representatives liked my entrepreneurship and hired me as a management trainee upon graduation. I started my career with Sears in Cleveland, Ohio, in June of 1940. Including the time out for military service, I worked thirty-four years for Sears, retiring in 1974 with twenty five years as a store manager. My last store was in North Olmsted, Ohio."

- Bernard L. Kasten, age 90, Lucas

"The only time I ever heard my parents argue was when Mother said she'd been hired by the Cuyahoga County Relief Association as a social worker (one of her degrees from Flora Stone Mather College). 'No wife of mine works,' insisted my father. But Mother was concerned about (my sister's) health, and those were the days before medical insurance, so she took the job. Often, when Mother got off the bus after an exhausting day tramping the streets in the E. 55th St. and Broadway neighborhood to document which families were receiving government funds,
she would see me waiting at the bus stop. I'd walk behind her all the way home with my face buried in her old, patched fur coat, so grateful that she was OK."
- **Mina Kulber, age 86, Lindhurst**

"My father was a self-employed auto mechanic; that was all he knew. When the times started getting tough, people still brought their cars in to be repaired, but they would say 'thank you' and leave promising to come back on Saturday to pay their bill. Of course, they never did. My mother had to go to work in the local mitten factory, sewing work gloves - not mittens. She would bring home about $10 a week. That kept food on the table and bought an occasional pair of shoes. Sometimes she would get tired, and run her thumb into the sewing machine needle, and then she would come home with her hand wrapped in a bloody rag. She was always last on the shoe list."
- **Donna Lehman, age 86, Eaton**

"While I was in grade school (in the 30's) I had a paper route and I had 100 customers. I made $5.00 per week. I thought I was in heaven. I could buy my lunch, ride the bus to school and even bought my 'Western Flyer' bicycle. I had insurance on it, good thing because it was stolen at McKinley High School. The cops found it in a field in the southeast section of Canton."
- **Edward Machuga, age 86, Canton**

"In the 1920s, the family moved from the Pandora-Bluffton Swiss community to Dover, where my father worked as a carpenter during the building boom of that decade. When the crash came in 1929, my father was out of work. He sold the nice new house he had built - much of it with his own hands - and bought into a Pandora business with one of his brothers. That business, as many others, failed too. Finally, he got work at our church college in Bluffton, earning $1,000 a year as a maintenance supervisor. Father had some education beyond eighth grade and was qualified to teach country school. Mother finished eighth grade, but, as the oldest child in a large family, was expected to stay at home and help with the work."
- **Alma Mast, age 94, Walnut Creek**

"My parents lost their 'new' brick house over near Willys Park because my father had lost his job as a tool and die maker. In desperation, they answered an ad in the Toledo News Bee 'Seeking a man able to do handyman's work, drive a car, lawn maintenance and with a wife able to clean and cook.' I, an only child, was five years old. My parents were quickly hired and paid $10 per week. And where did we live in this upscale home? Up in the attic with just one window that opened, no insulation, and on two lumpy mattresses on floors with only a few layers of blankets. There was no bathroom for us, so we ended up in the basement to take a shower. etc. Although my parents were assured 'they were doing a wonderful job'. father decided to look for another job and found one working at the Lion Store in the Glass Wares Dept. He was to be paid $10 per week."
- **Doris E. Meek, age 82, Columbus**
"My brothers and I used to go to Ashes Lot and take unused wood, break it up, place it in bushels and deliver it to the people in the lower districts of Cincinnati. The older boys did the chopping; we younger ones found out where the people lived, placed the wood and their baskets in a wagon, delivered it and collected the money. And we did that all day! We worked from early morning to night! But we worked!"

- Eli Mitchel, age 74, Delaware

"I walked two miles to high school. My younger brother, four years older than I, quit school in the 10th grade. My sister, two years older than I, quit school to go to work at the Republic Steel Mill, sorting tin. My father and six year older brother worked at Republic Steel. during the steel strike of 1937, my father received a cut on the forehead from clubs or stones on the picket line. He lost his job. My brother swam across the Mahoning River to get in the plant to work. Supplies were dropped for the men in the mill by helicopter."

- Olga Morrison, age 91, Youngstown

"I grew up in southeastern Ohio, which at one time had been very prosperous with many iron ore furnaces and coal mines. But it was getting depressed even before the Great Depression hit. When I was about 12, the Workman's Compensation law was passed and the company my father worked for would not pay the insurance. So, Pop was not called back to work after the summer shutdown. He never held a job again."

- Delcie Pound, age 92, Medina

"We were living on a dairy farm in Marian county, West Virginia, my parents and nine children. My parents were hard working farm people. We had many cows, I helped to milk the cows, by hand twice a day. We cooled our milk - so much stirring - and bottled it. My father had a Model-T ford truck. We loaded the cases of quart bottles in the truck. My father left early for the milk route. I went with him many times to place a quart bottle on the porch. The customers on the milk route ran up large bills and paid when they could. My father had many bills: buying feed for the animals and food for the family, plus equipment for the farm. When the Depression hit, no one had any money. The milk customers could not pay their bills, so my father could not pay his. There was a sale, all animals, equipment and a lot of personal items were sold. We had no place to go. Uncle Loyd had bought a farm in Vinton county, Ohio, but he was not ready to move into it. Uncle Jesse had a nursery in Ohio and a large truck he used in the nursery business, he also had a family car. They came to our rescue."

- Neva Rees, age 87, Marietta

"In 1931, I was eight years old and I decided I wanted to make some money by doing something after school. But there were no jobs - you had to make your own job. So, my Dad got me some magazines from a wholesaler (in those days, nobody could afford yearly subscriptions), so I went door-to-door to sell them. I still remember my spiel: 'Do you want to buy a Literary Digest, Radio Dial, Liberty, True Story, Woman's Home Companion, Collins or American?' I'd go every week to the same places and eventually I had a magazine route built up. Most of them cost only 5 cents, so I made half a cent on them. But, I saved my money and I was able to buy most of my
clothes since I was 8."
- Thomas Rosmarin, age 85, Columbus

"My dad became embittered with a broken spirit; there were no jobs for men. Momma worked for a fleabag hotel as a chambermaid (now called housekeeping) and supplied our only income to support a family. Later, momma baked bread to sell to anyone who could spare a dime for a big, round, two-pound loaf of homemade. Momma did this three days a week for 12 or 14 hours a day. She had a crippled left hand from birth. She learned and practiced an economy that goes far beyond a present day college economics course. She lived it and she made it work. I was too young to understand her pain when occasionally I would see her quietly weeping."
- Russell Harold, age 85, Gratiot

"In 1934, I graduated from Bowling Green State College, earning a BS degree in education. For four years, my father struggled financially to pay my tuition, which was $50.00 a semester. Upon graduation, I discovered there were few jobs. After sending out many applications, I was hired to teach at Chesterfield Centralized School in Fulton county. Mr. Abbott, board president, said he thought I'd make a good teacher since my application was so neatly underscored in red ink. My salary was $800.00 per year. I roomed and boarded at George and Wilma Holman's farm home near the school. Mrs. Holman served delicious meals and fixed box lunches for noon. I paid her $5.00 a week."
- Hazel Schroeder, age 97, Wauseon

"I worked at a store after school and Saturdays and vacations for $6 a week - 57 hours. Roosevelt was elected and put the N.R.A. symbol with the Blue Eagle in the window, and then I made $13 a week for 40 hours. I was in heaven and rich. Before long, he started the W.P.A. and my Dad went to work at night on West Main Street. It was a cold winter, but he worked 30 hours a week for 47 cents an hour."
- Margaret Smith, age 94, Barnesville

"Dad (Oscar) had lost his job at a laundry in Louisville because the owner could no longer afford to pay him. He had worked at Armco Steel several years before he married our Mom (Cora), and so he decided to go back to Armco and see if he could get a job there. He was hired on and he worked as many hours as the company would let him, but he had to find other ways to make enough to support the family. To supplement his meager income, he cut hair for people in the neighborhood for whatever they could afford to pay. He also played the fiddle in contests to win groceries, and he played for dances, etc., being paid sometimes with money and sometimes with food. Armco Steel provided garden plots for families of the workers, and the family grew beans, sweet corn, tomatoes and other vegetables, as well as popcorn."
- Wanda Stubbart, age 78, Columbus, Vic Thomas, age 83, Middletown and Kathleen Lambert, age 80, Middletown

"In North Royalton, at a relatively young age, (brother) Joe and I were always looking for some kind of work that could generate some income. We both managed to latch onto paper routes."
Mine was a Press route, with 18 customers on a four-mile walking route (initially). Deliveries were made six days a week, paying six cents per customer, for a total income of $1.08 per week. This proved to be a time-consuming, long walk each day. I needed a bike! Twenty weeks later, with the approval of mom and dad, I purchased a new bicycle through the Sears catalog for $20. This put a completely new perspective on the 4-mile route."

- Larry Taddie, age 82, Parma

"My family lived in Port Clinton. My little brother and I had a dew-worm business, selling to Lake Erie fishermen. Ten cents a dozen, three dozen for 25 cents. This was our spending money and many a time, it helped out with the grocery bills."

- Thelma Thomas, age 87, Port Clinton

"My older brother worked as a handyman/mechanic at a department store. The boss told him he would have more in his pay envelope the coming week. My brother thought 'Oh boy, maybe $15.00 a week.' The 'more' in his pay was 50 cents a week raise."

- William Turner, age 89, Cleveland

"I was hired by Firestone Tire and Rubber Co. as a teletype operator due to previous employment in the Telegraph Office. My intended 'marriage partner' was Carl Waters, also a 1933 graduate who worked at Firestone. Men were 'selling apples' on street corners for food, and due to a company policy, married couples were unable to work at Firestone simultaneously. To avoid publication of our names applying for marriage licenses in Akron, we drove to Huntington, WV, on Feb. 14, and were married on the same day by a Minister who was presiding at his church's children's St. Valentine's Day party. To complete the day, we 'fibbed' and said we were movie actors from Hollywood, Calif. That made the day!!"

- Lehla Cox Waters, age 94, Florida (formerly of Akron)

"Pops worked as the manager of a delicatessen at Tiedtkes Department store. We bought our clothes there on discount, and he would bring home unsold food like potato salad and baked beans. He got Mom's sisters jobs there. We kids had chores to do and even went from door to door selling grapes. At an early age, we picked berries, mowed lawns, etc., to contribute to the family income. We had little money, but Dad created job projects for our relatives less fortunate. Their remuneration was in hefty dinners for their families, and take-home produce. Grandpa did the carpentry, Uncle Bill the electrical and cousin Jim repaired our Model-A Ford. The door was always open and extra plates ready for visiting relatives and their families."

- Bill Williams, age 79, Perrysburg

"At 4:30 a.m., in the winter of 1930, I was awakened by my mother, who was preparing to go to work (housecleaning), and getting me ready to stay at the Christ Mission Day Care Center. We walked one block in the middle of the street in 8 inches of snow to get the streetcar into town where she left me and went on her way. I was there for the rest of the day. My father was employed by the Republic Steel Corp., in the engineering shop, Blacksmith by trade. During this period, everything was in limbo and there was little call for steel. If he was lucky, he might be..."
called to work, one day a week and sometimes only one day a month, and he had to call in everyday, regardless. The Superintendent was the only one that had a telephone and he lived five blocks away. My father used to walk across town to the wealthy section, during the summer months to cut and take of the yards, and walk back home after a long days work."
- William L. Zurkey, age 84, Boardman

"Daddy made $10 a week on W.P.A. and I made $4 at the laundry. I also helped several ladies within walking distance of our home. I watched an English bulldog on Saturdays so the Winslows could go shopping. I helped make supper when they came home and had supper with them. They would give me the leftover gravy to take home for our family."
- Virginia Beeman, age 86, Walbridge

"Mornings, mother would go and wait with a group of people outside the Powell Pressed Steel plant, and sometimes a boss would come out and select a few people to come in and work for a few hours for 25 or 30 cents an hour, for a few hours. She also went house to house in the city looking for housework and accepted food or old clothes if cash wasn't available. One of mother's projects was the 'Greek Restaurant' at the center of Hubbard. They couldn't afford to hire her, but if she came in at night after they closed and scrubbed the kitchen and anything that needed cleaning, she could collect any leftover food and bring it home in a bucket. To this day, I can see her in my mind's eye: bitter cold snowy night, hands wrapped in rags to keep warm walking way down Maine Street to the tracks then east to the end of the street then down to the house by the tracks. Shaking the stove to try to get it to warm up a bit. Kids watching from the bed where they were cuddled up to stay warm. Seventy years later in a casual discussion, a woman mentioned living in Hubbard when she was a little girl and her grandparents used to have a restaurant at the center. I took her hand and said, 'thank you and your grandparents, Mrs. Limperos. If it weren't for them I don't know if I would be here today.'"
- Edward R. Brienz, age 85, Farmdale

"My brother, John, and I were slim and lean, hustling cardboard and rags to Berkman's junkyard. We sold newspapers on the streets, in the Moose, Eagle Club, BPoE."
- Frank Chihocky, age 77, Amsterdam

"Daddy was also good at playing the saxophone, clarinet and fiddle (he always felt that he didn't play it well enough to call it a violin). Daddy belonged to the musician's union and he picked up work playing in many bars, night clubs and fraternal organizations. This type of work did nothing to please my mother, however, because my father was gone nearly every weekend to play at some bar or nightclub, and there were nearly always strippers in those places. Daddy gradually became master of ceremonies for many of the Friday and Saturday night entertainment venues and he became a rather well known personality. Mama sometimes went along while I stayed with either her parents or Daddy's over the weekends."
- Doris V. Curmode, age 78, Columbus
"When my Dad lost his N.Y. Central Railroad job in March, 1931, my parents bought a small, neighborhood grocery and meat market store in Cleveland, Ohio. We lived with my grandparents behind the store in a two-bedroom apartment. The store got us through the Depression. However, it dictated our lives. For example, if chicken didn't sell, we cooked it for supper. If pork didn't sell, we cooked it for supper - sometimes, eating it for 14 nights in a row... And, we never complained, as we had food while most people were struggling for the basics. To help our struggling, unemployed neighbors, grandma made a big pot of soup and coffee to have on hand for the neighbors who came to the door politely asking for a little food, daily."

- Audrey Dvorak, age 75, Gates Mills

"I cut neighbors' grass for pennies or home-baked cookies or fruit for our table. I carried packages of groceries home for customers at the grocery store for pennies or a nickel, and later worked after school as a packer in Foodtown, Cleveland's early supermarket. Occasionally, I could splurge a little: a movie matinee cost five cents, a stick of gum a penny, an ice cream scoop was a nickel and, after an endless period of saving, a comic book cost ten cents."

- Lawrence Forbes, age 78, Cleveland

"Later, my father was able to purchase a team of horses and a wagon, and we began selling baled hay. My dad would mark each bail with a card listing the price of each bail at 10, 15 or 20 cents. My father, my older brother, Bill, and I would head off to Hillsville, Carbon and Briar Hill, selling hay to people who kept one or two cows. As I recall, we did this about once a month. We would return with enough money to buy staple food at the store."

- Alfred M. Glass, Cambridge

"On the morning that I was born, May 15, 1931, my father left the hospital after my birth and went to his job as a salesman for household and commercial refrigeration that was part of a large hardware store in downtown Hamilton, Ohio. When he arrived at work, he learned that half of the other employees had just been laid-off due to the Depression, but he was a survivor. He and the remaining employees had 'survivor's guilt' and, after realizing how much they would miss the laid-off employees, went to the owner and offered to take a 50 percent wage cut so all the employees could stay on. This was on the day that I was born, with all the hopes and dreams my parents had for me as their first born. The owner said 'yes' and all the employees were able to continue to work."

- Richard Haid, age 78, Hamilton

"During the years 1936-40, I was a newspaper carrier. Nothing noteworthy about that, but in the space of those years, I peddled three different newspapers in succession: Cleveland Plain Dealer, Akron Times-Press and Akron Beacon Journal. The Plain Dealer at that time was not much of a factor in the Akron area, and its routes were very spread out. I quickly seized the opportunity to change to the Times Press... (The Times-Press) printed the latest stock sales summary, and included in this summary was the total daily sales number. The final three figures of this number were used as a gambling number. People would predict and bet with bookies on
their numbers choice. As I walked my route, people constantly hollered, 'Hey Dan, what's the number?' I usually answered, but sometimes I'd say, 'Buy a Times-Press!'

"The competition between the Beacon and Times-Press was very fierce, and when rumors circulated about the papers merging, I became a Beacon carrier. The Beacon did buy the Times Press and moved production to the newer building on the corner of East Exchange and High streets. To keep good carriers, both newspapers gave awards for exemplary work. Awards were usually certificates, T-shirts or caps, but the Times-Press gave us live turkeys or chickens. I can recall walking from our pick-up location on Howard Street (the Ritz theater was later built on that spot) to my home on Nebraska Street near City Hospital. Those birds gave me problems with their flapping wings as I proudly took them to my mother for Sunday dinner.

"Newspapers have experienced many changes since my career as a carrier ended in 1940. Rumor has it that it won't be long before newspapers will give way completely to the Internet. If this happens, many young boys and girls will miss a great learning experience."

- Dan T. Hayes, age 84, Akron

"My parents owned and operated a mom-and-pop restaurant in Cincinnati called 'the Victory Diner' during the Great Depression. It opened in 1931, during the worst of times, when most businesses were failing. Many street people wore signs saying, 'work for food.' With no money for the purchase, my parents agreed to pay out of their minuscule daily sales the price to purchase the restaurant - a sort of lease-buy. The Victory Diner was an elongated diner car with two large and two small booths up front and a long counter that ran down to the end of the car, about 18 seats. Staying open 24 hours a day, seven days a week, was tough. My dad did the night shift from midnight to noon; mother took the other 12-hour shift. They met crossing paths between home and restaurant."

- Alice J. Hornbaker, age 82, Cincinnati

"In 1929, I was 19 and was engaged to be married. But that had to wait when the Depression hit and my Father lost his job. I was the only one in my family who could find work. My parents, my older brother, who had a chronic lung disease, and my three younger sisters depended on me. So I moved to New York City, where I had a house-keeping job. My duties included caring for the children and doing housecleaning and laundry after the children went to bed. I worked six and a half days a week, getting only a few hours of on Sundays. Visits home to Toledo were not possible, since every cent I earned was needed for my family's food, clothing and medical expenses. Letters were my only contacts with my family and my fiance, Al Johns. I became very homesick and am not sure I would have been able to persevere. But then I found a similar job for my 17-year-old sister, Betty, and she joined me in New York. How we treasured those few hours that we had together each Sunday!"

- Mary Johns, age 97, Tiffin

"My brother Joe and I sold papers downtown for three cents a paper. Once, a man gave me a nickel for a paper and I didn't have two cents for his change. He told me to keep it. With our
earnings, Joe and I went next door and bought hot dogs and root beer for five cents each. The ride home on the streetcar took the balance of our earnings. After school, I worked at a mom-and-pop grocery store, where I would sweep the floors, grind the hamburger and do other odd jobs. In those days, people went to the grocery store several times a day. My week's pay was five dollars and a bag of penny candy. The five dollars went straight home to mom. In strawberry season, Joe and I took a bus downtown, transferred and took a second bus to north hill. We were picked up there by farmer, who took us to his strawberry farm, where we picked strawberries for a penny a quart. On a good day, we could pick a hundred quarts. Later in summer, we retraced our route to the strawberry farm to cultivate a new patch. This time, we carried our hoes with us on the buses. We worked ten hours for ten cents an hour."

- Frederick M. Kovacic, age 82, Akron

"I started out job hunting at 7 a.m. and went every day until 5 p.m. for two weeks before I found work at Atlas Underwear - 40 hours a week, 30 cents an hour, for all of $12 a week. I had talked to the Woolworth Store Manager several times and he talked like he might hire a stockman in October. He had also told me about a Woolworth manager training program. The middle of October, I started to work for him for $18 a week, for 56 hours, but usually worked helping the assistant manager trim windows at night and working on the sales floor when I could. I was working those extra hours for no pay. On Jan. 1, 1937, I started as a manager trainee and had a regular income with a future so the Depression was over for me."

- John Lamb, via e-mail

"When I got out of High School, it hit me that there was a Depression. My father always had employment, so we were able to keep afloat but, after my graduation from high school and I started to date, I needed some cash of my own. I felt I had to help with the family finances and I found getting a job wasn't easy. I was lucky, I did have people who could help me, but it wasn't always a steady job - house work here, unloading a boxcar there, or yard work, a couple of months on Public Works Project. It was touch and go, but it did give me spending money. Then, through one of my leads I did get a steady job as a night watchman, this gave me time to get some schooling in to prepare me for the accounting work where I finally ended up."

- Louis J. Leibold, age 93, Centerville

"Dad was a motion picture projectionist (movie operator) and worked at a small theater on Superior Street. In spite of the dismal condition throughout the country, the Royal enjoyed a full house every day. Homeless men could panhandle passers-by and get a dime, which was just enough to get a ticket to the Royal. That ticket provided them with shelter for the entire day."

- Mildred Malare, age 91, Toledo

"My dad and grandfather had a small florist business raising annuals such as geraniums and petunias for spring trade, followed by chrysanthemums and carnations for fall cut flowers. We were lucky, as there was always work - not much money, but work to give you a sense of worth. Of course, you had to sell the product, which wasn't always easy. Memorial Day was a big event in the spring. Most everyone decorated the graves in the family plots with geraniums or
petunias. Usually, the greenhouse benches were almost empty of geraniums by Memorial Day. I remember my dad standing by a bench of solid-color red two days before the holiday in 1933. You could not see where a pot had been moved out. Tears were running down his face. How were we going to make it? A neighbor stopped by with some advice: 'Basket them up and take them to the market down on Woodland Ave., in Cleveland.' We did, and they sold. We squeaked through another season. Not much money, but doable"  
- Martha McMahon, age 85, Medina

"The agent at the B&O depot would blow a whistle outside when he received a telegram to be delivered in Utica. The neighborhood child who got there first could deliver it for five cents."  
- Jeannette Mellott, age 78, Plymouth

"Our family was fortunate. My father had a job at a local lumber yard. The owners of the lumber yard told my father to close it up - there was absolutely no business. My father said this was all he knew and asked if he could stay and work on. My father was a cabinet maker by trade. He used what little lumber he had to do little jobs. During the summer months, when I was out of school, my father would take me to the lumber yard office. I would wait for phone calls or if a customer walked in, I would press a buzzer and my father would come running."  
- Raymond J. Mock, age 85, Centerville

"I lived on a farm during the Depression. My father farmed 120 acres with his horses King and Queen. He walked behind a plow, pitched hay on the wagon by hand and milked the cows by hand. My brother helped with the milking when he grew older. At hay-making time, I drove the horses when Daddy pitched the hay onto the wagon. In the summer, I, with an adult, would take a jug of water to the cornfield and hoe the weeds."  
- Helen Oliver, age 83, Poland

"Children, and sometimes adults, had paper routes. They delivered local newspapers daily for a fee. In larger towns, men sold single apples, pencils, etc., on the sidewalks. People with gardens raised starter plants like sweet potatoes and tomatoes to sell to the public. There were a variety of berry patches, where people could pick their own or buy them by the quart."  
- Helen Cook Railer, age 95, Burlington, IN (formerly of Greenfield)

"My Father was a tinsmith by trade and this involved sheet metal roofing jobs for farmers or the installation of coal furnaces for both farmers and townspeople. Very often, he would come home after completing a job with several bushels of potatoes or apples as part of the pay. We were never hungry, but we knew we should not ask our parents for anything special; we did not want to embarrass them by their having to say they could not afford it."  
- Bob Reichard, age 86, Willoughby

"Boys my age carted a shoeshine box downtown to shine the shoes of those could afford a dime... Most people walked to stores, their place of work or a welfare agency. They walked before the Depression also; cars were scarce in my neighborhood."  
- Tony Rugare, age 83, Highland Heights
"I was the fourth child of five, and went to work at the age of 9 1/2 selling the *Blade* at Swayne field. I sold the most papers at Swayne Field, and I moved up to selling scorecards at 5 cents each; we would receive 1/2 cent each. All of the games were played in the afternoon, and at a single game, I would usually sell about 50 score cards, earning about 25 cents daily. At a double-header I would usually sell about 80 scorecards and earn about 40 cents. I progressed to turning styles and earned 40 cents for a single game and 75 cents for a double-header. I finally moved up to usher and earned 50 cents a single game and 75 cents for a double-header. I ushered for slightly more than two seasons, and upon graduation from high school, I went to work at Sherlock Bakery at 40 cents an hour. I worked there for almost five years and then became a substitute U.S. letter carrier in April 1941, at 65 cents an hour. I retired after 32 1/2 years at age 55. Although the wages were low, so were prices. We could buy two hot dogs, a piece of pie and a bottle of pop for 25 cents."

- **Willis Ryan, age 90, Toledo**

"I remember a lot about the Great Depression. I was only seven or eight years old. We lived on a farm; that was to our advantage. We were able to have fresh eggs, milk and meat. We could raise our own crops. Our family was able to help many others as much as we could. Dad sold calves for $8-10 for 200 lbs. Eggs sold for 8-10 cents a dozen. Gas was 12 cents a gallon. Grain and oats were 11 cents a bushel, wheat 40 cents a bushel, and ears of corn sold for 100 ears for 50 cents. We made do with what we had and not much else able to buy."

- **Leo Seasley, age 85, Bloomville**

"I had to quit high school in my junior year, as my step-dad lost his job at the railroad and only earned 32 cents per hour at his new job. So, I had to go to work and got a job on a farm working from 4:30 a.m. to 8 p.m. for 50 cents per day plus food and a bed to sleep in. When I was 18 years old, I got a job at the Superior Sheet Steel plant, and when I was 20, I got very ill. The doctor said I was going to die and funeral arrangements should be made. My girlfriend (future wife) asked her Pastor to come and pray for me and he did. A couple weeks later, I could get out of bed a little at a time, and several months later was able to return to work."

- **Melvin Stermer, age 93, Hartville**

"Young boys and even some men would walk to the golf courses and work all day for a meager wage as a caddie. Other boys went to town as shoe-shine boys. I would walk miles with a basket to a shop that sold chickens, where they would tie a chicken in the basket so I could take it home."

- **Esther R. Sukosd, age 91, Carrollton**

"My father bunked with his brother-in-law in Cleveland while he looked in vain for a job. He heard of a printing job in Chicago and hitch-hiked there. He shaved with a piece of broken glass for the interview, but when he applied the job was already taken. One day, after looking for work in downtown Cleveland, because he didn't have car fare, if he wanted a bed that night he would have to walk more than 100 blocks to near the Fisher Body Plant where his brother-in-law lived. He saw a bus token on the ground at a trolley stop. He picked it up without breaking
stride and was able to ride."
- Betty Curtice Taylor, age 85, Akron

"My father had many different jobs during his life. He was excellent no matter what he did. During the '20s and '30s, he was in the house construction and repair business. Things got tough and he went to the mortgage company and told them he could not make his house payments. The company found out he could repair houses and gave him a job for their company. I remember one winter when the City of Columbus was paying citizens to shovel snow downtown for a dollar or so each night. My dad and a neighbor man did this. I think they had cardboard patches in the bottom of their shoes."
- William Thompson, age 80, Columbus

"My mother would help make money, too. She would take roosters from the coop, tie their feet to the wash-line and cut their heads off. They splattered blood for a while, I hated seeing that. When they quit bleeding, we would scald the chickens. Then, I would pull the feathers off and Mom would gut the chickens. One of the grocery owners in town ordered the number he wanted to buy. As we got the chickens ready, we would put them in cold water until the order was filled. Then, Dad would take them to the store. I'm glad they had refrigeration."
- Marie Vaughan, age 85, Bucyrus

"Dad decided there must be another way to provide for his family. We owned a 1923 Dodge 4-door sedan. That was useful. He contacted a nearby Bohemian baker who made good rye (light) bread with caraway seeds to ask if he would bake bread for a possible route in Parma, Ohio. Dad made several shelves and placed them over the back seat of the car and accessible to the front seat of the Dodge. He built up a steady route and worked five days a week. Coffee cake was added on Saturdays. Dad was a proud man and he never had to apply for welfare (relief). Going was tough, but he provided for his family."
- Sally K. Weil, age 89, Bartlett, IL (formerly of Cleveland)

"Both of my parents were physicians. We had more than the average family at the time. We weren't rich, we weren't poor. When a loaf of bread was five cents and a doctor's home or office call was $2 ($1.50 if paid in advance for several visits), an income of $5,000 was a good wage. Our home cost $5,000 with a 10-year loan. There was a struggle to make the payment. Not all office or home visits were paid in cash. Many times, a patient would trade their resources. Either before or after a doctor's visit, the patient would stop at our home. They'd open the unlocked door, walk into the kitchen and leave their payment on the counter or refrigerator. The payment could have been in the form of meat, chicken (if alive it would have been left in a cage outside), vegetables, pie or cake. We never knew what the menu was for the week, it was always a surprise. We had a large refrigerator. We did not have a freezer in those days. To preserve food, we canned. These were families that had no refrigerator and were lucky to have an ice-box. Some had no electricity, they couldn't afford it. There were other professions that traded for medical care. Our family treated the dentist's family and he treated
Family, Community and Kindness Toward Strangers During the Great Depression

"My mother and father had a son and three daughters. We lived off of the land and everyone had to work. I was the youngest and even had chores to do. We were very poor, but always had plenty to eat and we played well together, making our own fun. We had lots of relatives who lived in the big cities with good jobs and had everything they wanted. Now, they were losing their jobs and were desperate with no money coming in. There was no road for about a half mile from our house. Now we would see heads popping up over the hill. These rich people needed help and were coming to our house. They pretended to be coming for a visit, but they forgot to go home."
- Mary Ammons, age 81, Cleveland

"We lived in a very close-knit Italian neighborhood and shared what we had. Others did the same. Often times 'trades' were made for needed goods and food. Meat was a big source for trading. Milk was a luxury - one quart per week was what we could afford. Desserts were non-existent. We were lucky to have an orange or an apple as a treat."
- Madge Conti Browning, age 92, Columbus

"A neighborhood was more like one family than just a collection of families living on the same street. No one locked their doors and children were permitted to come and go as they pleased. In addition, this sense of 'family' also limited any sentiments of competition. Ms. Weber contested the old saying of 'keeping up with the Joneses' and said, 'The Joneses didn't have anything to keep up with. If you needed a cup of milk, you went next door and got it.'"
- Emma Polly, about Julia Weber, age 87, Olmsted Falls

"My Dad raised corn, wheat and oats, and each year there was a time for threshing. He made a reservation with a man who had the machinery to do the job, and our neighbors all pitched in to help. The women came and worked in the kitchen to make meals for the workers. It was truly a big threshing party - an event for every farmer and a day of hard work."
- E. Marie Dornbrook, age 87, Parma Heights

"Just like today, grown children found they couldn't make it on their own and moved back to their parent's homes, bringing their families, too."
- Laverne Hillyer Fifer, age 92, Northwood

"We helped our neighbors and they in turn helped you. We went to church, I walked about three miles to go and my Mom and I would chat with our neighbors. Back then, everyone helped each other."
- Patarica LeMay Hauger, age 81, Meigs County
"In fact, together (our parents) raised nine children, who may have lacked occasionally from material things. But, there was always food on the table, plenty of playmates and a piece of pie for anyone who stopped by. Mom and Dad worked hard to make ends meet and strove to instill the values of hard work, honesty, and morality into their brood. To this day, Mom stubbornly refuses still to pick a favorite child, saying instead, 'I love them all.' And when a son or daughter might try to point out an occasional character flaw in Dad, her instant defense, with a twinkle in her eye, would always be, 'I coulda done worse!'

- Mary Inbody about her mother, Dorotha Inbody, age 94, Findlay

"Telephone was the only source of news. A dear friend, Lucy Pritchard, would always keep mother informed and we would also hear stories at church. We had wonderful neighbors who were like family. We gave to each other what we could. We cried, worried and laughed together. That was true friendship, and we are still close friends to those who are still living."

- Phyllis Spohn Johnson, age 81, Butler

"My dad had a Victory Garden on Detroit Rd. during the Depression. From that, he loaded the tables for all our neighbors, and he loved it. It was quite a bit of work for his garden, as we had to haul large bottles of water out there to keep the plants alive. I was a slim girl in those days, and the bottles of water were heavy... but when I knew that this garden meant so much to him, I gladly did it. I am now 88 years old, and still happy I did that."

- Jean Lee, age 88, via e-mail

"As the wall of Wall St. crashed and the world went into a world-wide economic down spin, I was eight years old in 1929. For the next eleven years, each day brought stress and strain upon my family until circumstances, added to the nature of the Depression, we became a dysfunctional family. Grandfather, father, mother sister, aunts and uncles, shattered and scattered all over the country, each seeking their own survival."

- Louis Mamula, age 88, Lowellville

"I was raised during the worst years of the Great Depression. In 1927, when my family returned to Ohio from Florida, my birthplace, we were destitute. My widowed Grandpa expected us and took us in. He lived in a big modern (for that day) home on a farm. There were three children, soon to be four, and now three adults in our family to feed. My Dad was to sharecrop Grandpa's land for our rent. He tried everywhere to find extra work to no avail. Grandpa helped us as much as he could. He also had nine other children, and he tried to help them all."

- Ouida Peacock, no age or location given

"We had so much company. Now we were not rich, not at all. But, because my dad had a job, they came so often and we didn't know they were coming. But they knew if we ate they were not going to leave until they ate... When these relatives, and sometimes their friends, came all the time, this had to make us low on funds. I don't ever remember any of us children ever having winter over boots. So I couldn't play in the cold weather and in the snow. I don't remember having gloves either. It was like my dad was trying to feed (other) families when it
was hard feeding his own. My mother said in later years that she sometimes had to cook twice to get everyone fed."
- Louine Smith, age 85, Lima

"Over the hill about a half mile through the woods, was a row of coal company houses where people lived who had worked in the mines before they closed. Some had found jobs but most were unemployed. These houses were a faded red and we called the street 'Red Row,' and the kids who came up through the woods to go to school with us, we called 'Red Rowers.' They had strange names: Peter Galice and Peter Valinski are two I remember. They were poor and a little different. One day after lunch, Peter Galice smelled so strong, it made me gag. He must have eaten a raw garlic sandwich for lunch. We never cooked with garlic at my house, and the smell was strange and repugnant to me. I remember complaining to the teacher. My brother recalls eating an orange on the way to school. Oranges were a treat we received on Christmas or special occasions. One of the Red Rowers was walking to school behind us and asked if he could pick up the orange peels and eat them. That was as close to an orange as he would have for a few years. It was 1940 and times were rough for most people."
- Julia K. Swan, age 76, Cambridge

"Our wash lady (we had no washer or iron) and her family of 12 kids were evicted from their home when they no longer could afford to pay the rent. We found them with the 12 kids - heads shaven to discourage lice - living in a tent in the woods, fishing in the creek and picking wild blackberries for food. All were barefoot and shirtless and hollow-eyed, hiding behind trees when we approached them with a box of sparse food and clothing. They were so grateful they all cried and we rode all the way home quietly in silence, wondering why we were so lucky!"
- Joy Thomas, age 80, Canfield

"My favorite time each summer was threshing day. The owner of a big old cumbersome threshing machine took it from farm to farm and all the neighbors would congregate at the respective farms to help. Mom baked pies and bread all week, and on threshing day, some of my aunts came early in the morning to help. The women cooked a huge meal for as many as thirty men on our coal stove. When noon came, the men came in and ate, while we women and girls served. Then, we sat down to talk and laugh and eat the rest of the food."
- Carol Vincent, age 86, Centerville

"Caring and sharing was top priority. Relatives who lived in town and had hardly any income were welcomed to come help and take home produce from the gardens and from butchering, meat. Two neighbors out of work were hired to shock wheat and ooooh SOOO grateful for that little bit of income. I was sent with prepared food down the country road to an elderly lady without family. I was sent to care for four little boys when a traveling bread man found a mother down with a heart attack... We did lots of things in the community without pay."
- Gladys A. Wilhelm, age 87, Sebring
"We saw destitution almost daily when passing homeless males called at our door for food to keep them on the road - always looking for food and work. Many slept in our barn overnight after my mother, as always, provided food from our garden or table with a peanut butter sandwich to go."

- **Roger Barrick, age 84, Canton**

"During the Depression, many men left their families and walked miles from state to state in search of work. Our farm was about a mile from the railroad tracks and some of these men would follow the tracks and then go from farm to farm to do whatever work they could for a meal or a night's sleep in the barn. Dad was always soft-hearted and would have some chores for them to do, and Mom would fix extra of whatever we were having for supper. She always made me stay in the house when one of these men was around, because she was not as trusting as Dad was. One man who came was selling or trading some fancy scarves and rugs with fringe on the ends and I think Dad bought four or five of them, which we sure couldn't afford, but we had them on the library table and piano stool, etc., for a long long time."

- **Donna Jean Donovan, age 83, Massillon**

"We had a small vegetable garden but we could not afford to buy fruit. I also remember bums (that's what they were called at that time) knocking at our door for something to eat. My Mother would fix them a sandwich; she knew what it was like to be hungry. The bum would mark an 'X' on our step so that other bums would know they would be fed by us."

- **Louise Norling Maccioli, age 83, Louisville**

"My parents and I lived across the street from the 'hobo camp.' The neighborhood kids and I would go there and eat with them and listen to the stories they had to tell. They were family men looking for work wherever they could find it. They would come to our door asking for a potato or whatever food we could spare - Always offering to do work for it. We didn't have much, but my mother always gave them a little something."

- **Jeannette Mellott, age 78, Plymouth**

"After a few days there, my father was very concerned about our survival. One cold winter morning, he got up very early, dressed as warmly as he could and left walking. He said: 'I will not be back until I find a job.' My mother was very worried about him; she thought he may not make it back. He stopped at a farm house four miles away. A man (there) had a trucking business. My Dad told the man: 'We have just moved in. I have no job. I have a wife and nine children. I need work. We have no coal for heat and very little food.' The man said: 'Go with me today and help me, we will get coal and groceries on the way home.' There was no phone; we did not know where he was. At 10 p.m., we saw a vehicle coming up the lane. It was the man with the trucking business. I will never forget the tears in my Mother's eyes, as she hugged my Dad. My Dad worked for the man for $1 a day, until spring. He then got a job working on the road, pounding up rocks. He got $1 a day."

- **Neva Rees, age 87, Marietta**
"The Depression, with many men out of work, forced some of them to 'ride the rails' in search of work. Some called some of these men bums and just plain beggars who went about asking for free meals. The ones who came to our door, my mother would feed if they would take on a small job on the property. Often as not, they would offer to do work first. We called them hoboes; bums never got a free handout. It seemed as though every county had it's 'poor house' or county home. Many, through no fault of their own, came on hard times and spent the rest of their lives in these poor houses. I am glad to see they have closed down over the years."
- Richard J. Steinmetz, age 78, Tiffin

"The B&O Railroad ran through town, so my mother was always feeding what we called bums - what a misconception! These were men traveling from town to town in search of work. This railroad was very crooked and the train sometimes stalled on a short curve outside of town until they could get up enough steam to continue. This was a favorite place for these transients to cook up what they called 'railroad stew.' I have no idea what the ingredients were but, as I remember, it smelled pretty good. We could see the curve and train from our house, so a number of times, when the train was stalled, a couple of my friends and I would venture out to the curve, and most of the time there was cooking taking place. Most of these men were friendly and we enjoyed hearing their stories. Some were from out of state and had families, and had some really sad tales. I did not fully realize until later on in life the sad plight of these men."
- Robert Vensel, age 92, Canton

"The neighborhood of yore was a wonderful place to live in. We knew all of our neighbors up and down the road and we helped each other out in time of need or crisis. The railroad ran directly behind our property and many poor souls rode the rails. Hardly a day would pass when there was a knock on our door by someone seeking food. Mom would provide them with a grape jelly sandwich, a glass of cold well water and a place to sit and rest in the shade while they ate."
- Bill Williams, age 79, Perrysburg

"Things were rough, but I never heard them complain. They worked together, and I don't know how my mother managed because she was always caring for someone in our home. Her mother was a diabetic and stayed with us until she died. Grandma got the best of care, since my mother had been a registered nurse before she married. Poor thing gave her savings to a brother in Cleveland, who invested it in the stock market and lost it all"
- Elizabeth A. Bartholow, age 85, Columbiana

"Mrs. Cunningham had a garage in her yard. So, some men fixed a place for the women to cook soup in big kettles and everyone came and ate. They worked two at a time. I was 12 years old I had to help Mary Deualt. The farmers would donate meat for the soup. Everyone who had a garden brought potatoes and vegetables. Once in a while, Nickel's Bakery would give us some day old bread, it wasn't sliced yet then."
- Lucy Burris, age 90, Barnsesville
"On occasion, street-level apartments would be converted into a family-run butcher shop, candy/cigar/cigarette store or a miniature restaurant whose owner would prepare all homemade soups, entrees and breads (desserts were not part of the menu as this was considered a luxury). These small entrepreneurs would also rent the apartment above the store in order to open their business very early and close late. To meet this end, every member of the family shared in the work, with school-age children doing their chores before and after school. Parents would make their purchases from these neighborhood stores. The owners were our friends as well as neighbors and, after closing their shops and on Sundays/holidays, the men would play cards or chess while children played together - boys playing bat ball in the street and the girls jumping rope or playing jacks and tick-tack-toe."

- Frances, Daubert, age 80, Centerville

"Next door to our house lived 2 sisters who were concerned about a family who were members of their church. They enlisted my help. Despite my father being able to give us only $5 each week for food, Mom allowed me to take a loaf of homemade bread each Saturday evening. Alice and Emma Lou brought a jar of pickles, some margarine and some board games. We descended upon the family - an unemployed husband and a discouraged wife with three little ones not yet in school. After the children were tucked in, we sat with our games around the dining room table, and then feasted on pickle sandwiches and tea! One time, I was able to help the husband with some math as he studied from a booklet prior to hopefully passing a test to be hired on one of Lake Erie’s boats."

- Florence Field, age 91, Willoughby

"If your parents, grandparents or members of your family became ill or needed assistance, you moved them into your home. There was no available help in rest homes or assisted living facilities."

- Millie Gavitt, age 91, Fremont

"I was born and raised in Point Place. Dad was killed in an auto accident and Mom had tuberculosis. So, at 3 years old, Grandma Stader, who was 76 years old, took me. My sister was 8 month old and raised by my aunt and uncle. I thought we were rich. Grandma got $19 a month old age pension - so I was told - three uncles chipped in 50 cents a week toward my keep. We had a garden (small with a peach tree) and in the middle was a strawberry patch, grape vine and rhubarb, so Grandma canned a lot. I had a wagon loaded up with her canned food and my toys and gave them to a poor family living in a garage around the corner. Grandma was mortified when she found out."

- Dorothy Heibeck, Toledo

"We five moved to our home on South College Drive. The house had to be readied for the move, so my parents would make a blanket bed where we kids slept while they worked. We moved into the house when it was cleaned, but still in need of repairs. Neighbor kids had broken windows, and, the first few days, birds would fly in one window and out the next. Dad installed new windows quickly. Some of the kids who had broken the windows helped us move
from the rental home to 'our home.' My dad had developed sciatic rheumatism and was in a lot of pain. The neighborhood kids used carts and wagons and pulled, pushed and carried our things the block between the two houses. They were a big help to us, and probably felt better after atoning for their window-breaking misdeeds."

- Ruth Marilyn Isaacson, age 83, Germantown MD (formerly of Bowling Green)

"This little town was like a large family. People would share their food: potatoes they had grown, a pan of fresh meat from hog killing. People also shared their cars. Many people hitchhiked to the nearest town to work. Children walked miles to school. There were no buses."

- Leonora Joyce, age 86, Powell

"In most neighborhoods, people bonded regardless of race, religion or ethnic background. They shared whatever they had, whether it was food, shelter or clothing. For example, two of my neighbors each contributed a dime so that we were able to purchase three pounds of ground meat that Fisher Foods had for 29 cents. We split the pack and three families enjoyed some meat. There were no food stamps at that time."

- Mary Grace Lukacevic, age 98, Seven Hills

"Family and church were great stabilizers during that period. Activities outside of family were largely centered in church and school. We took our family for granted; it would always be there. Uncles and aunts, grandparents and cousins were all part of our extended family. A year's supply of apple butter came at the end of a day of apple butter stirring at Grandma's. So did the supply of pork from butchering day. An aunt came to help when mother had a couple of bushels of peaches to can. Another aunt who had enough money to buy nice clothes, periodically sent a box of things. Mother, who was an excellent seamstress, would make them over for us."

- Alma Mast, age 94, Walnut Creek

"I came from a Catholic Background and this was what held us together as a family. Prayer was very important and helped us through. We did as we should and what we could. We were a happy family. Dad did not think much of President Hoover, and when Roosevelt was elected, it gave us much hope and gave jobs back to the people. We made it and, to this day, I feel it was a good learning experience."

- Leo Seasly, age 85, Bloomville

"Barbershops and beauty parlors were set up in the basements of private homes. Shoe repair men set up shop in garages. It was not at all difficult to find some neighbor willing to bake and decorate a special birthday cake or even a wedding cake. Lots of kids took piano lessons from someone just down the street or in the next block. You could get private in-home violin, accordion or guitar lessons for maybe 10 to 25 cents an hour."

- John W. Straka, Jr., age 91, Maple Heights

"In our first attempt at growing food crops, dad, my siblings and I had to dig the earth by hand. The only mechanical help we had was a push-type tiller. Even dad was thinking that there had
to be a better way. With people power only, our first garden plot covered about 1/4 acre. Relief came to us the second year, in the form of our World War I, partially disabled neighbor. He had bought a little Farmall tractor and plowed and tilled about one acre of land for our expanding garden. All that it cost my dad was a bottle of homemade grape wine. What a deal! What a garden we had then! We grew tomatoes, potatoes, beans, peas, lettuce, radishes and more. The greatest thrill was not only picking beautiful red-ripe tomatoes throughout the summer, but also digging-up the hills of potatoes in the fall and finding from 4 to 6 nice potatoes in each hill. What a thrill. To us, it was like finding gold. Several years later, our parents purchased fruit trees through the Montgomery Ward catalog (not all at once, but over a period of time). Once again, our neighbor came to our rescue with his little Farmall. This time, however, our parents could afford to pay him in addition to the bottle of wine. The trees were planted on the hillside about 1,000 feet behind our house. We planted and grew peach, cherry, plum and pear trees. We did not plant apple trees, because we had seven of them in our front yard, which were left over from the original farm."

- Larry Taddie, age 82, Parma

"I was a young teenager during the 'Great Depression.' I remember my brother, Vic and brother-in-law, Gardner, were out of work. Their company had shut down. So Vic, Gardner, and my sister, Mary, came home to my parents' big farm house to live. I thought it was wonderful, as I had never had brothers and sister at home before. I had someone to teach me board games, checkers, Parchesi, anagrams, etc. They also put up a tire swing for me to use. They weren't at all happy, though, at being out of work through no fault of their own."

- Ernestine Van Asdale, age 86, Columbus

"Dad lost his job. They moved around town to various houses. Landlords were allowing people to live in some houses for free, just to keep the residence occupied. To make money, people were stealing sinks, copper and major parts of houses that were not lived in. To pool resources, my aunt and uncle lived with my parents. Each week, they went back to the farm and brought back canned fruit. Items from my grandparents' farm were stored under a bed because the shadowed area was cooler."

- Mary Ann Wasserman, age 78, Toledo

"People back then were kind and helped everyone. No one was a stranger. Mom found a meager job. We lived during the era of 'Thatcher' (slogan was Thatcher's beans). People were issued a card and, on certain days, used them to get groceries like beans, rice, potatoes, even some canned goods. Neighbors shared these items with each other. Men went fishing and sold and gave away fish to their neighbors."

- Mary Williams, age 87, Toledo

"The men in the neighborhood kicked coal off the train as it went by about a block from our house. They got chased by a railroad dick and the next day he was guarding it as I went to school. I was crying because I was hungry (I was in first grade, 1929). The guard asked me why I was crying. When I told him I was hungry, he asked where I lived, I told him and pointed so he
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took me back home and asked my mother if we had coal. This was in the winter and she showed him the one lump of coal we had left. Dad was at the grocery store nearby trying to get a loaf of bread and paying for it the next day when a relief check was due. They wouldn't do it, but when he came back, the railroad dick told him to come get as much coal as he wanted. We still didn't have any bread but our neighbor loaned Mom enough bread to go with the beans she cooked with no seasonings."
- Virginia Beeman, age 86, Walbridge

"There was always listening to adult conversation. That is where I learned about the men who came to our back door. They were beggars and they wanted a meal and a pair of socks. They told each other which house fed them. So, if you didn't want a string of beggars or were low on your husband's socks, don't feed them."
- Josephine Fell, age 81, Columbus

"There was a railroad track right behind our house, I would sit on the window seat in our dining room and watch the trains, counting the number of 'bums' on the roofs of the train cars. Men were going all over this country to try and find work and, since they could not afford to buy a ticket, they would sneak a ride on top of the box cars. Many were killed and the trains would stop now and then to clear the roofs of the bums so, they would not fall off. Sometimes if the train would stop near our house, the bums would jump off before they were caught, and soon they would appear at our back door and ask for a handout - hence trick or treat on Halloween when the children turn into the beggars or bums. My grandma always fed those men soup, a sandwich and a cup of coffee, but the beggars had to sit down on the porch steps and wash their hands under the hose. If they wanted drinking water, they could help themselves from the hose, also. She would boil the plates and cups they used so we would not catch any germs. Paper plates were too expensive."
- Marilyn Markle, age 79, North Royalton

"Lots of men hopped freight trains, going from place to place, trying to find work. My aunt lived near the railroad and a water tower where the steam locomotives stopped to take on water. Hoboes got off the trains and came to her house begging for food. Some of them offered to do chores to repay her."
- Beulah Milbern, age 88, Monroe

"Bums used to come around for hand outs. Mom and most neighbors would share the little they had. They were half afraid of the homeless men, but they could not - and would not - let them go away hungry."
- Ann Shook, age 85, Akron

"I remember the half-starved dogs that ran about and my brother and I crying just to see them, ribs showing so plainly. My mother baked a bread using the saved meat drippings - and this we fed to the strays."
- Thelma Thomas, age 87, Port Clinton
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"There was a train track across the road from the farm, and Aunt Ida would feed the hoboes who 'rode the rails' and stopped at the back screen door to ask for something to eat in exchange for work. She always found work for them such as chopping wood or other small chores. In those days when men were begging, 'Brother, can you spare a dime,' my Aunt had a lot of faith, and I remember her saying, 'The Lord will provide,' and he usually did."
- Ada Goss Weygandth, age 86, Grove City

"My uncle was a window dresser in the same store where Dad worked. The company had transferred him and family to Flint, Michigan, to open a branch. A decision was made not to open the store, so they sent Dad, with the truck, to Flint to bring their furniture back. This was in February or March, when the temperature was 10 above zero. When they got back to Youngstown (cold and tired), they had no place to stay, so they moved in with us. That made five more people in a two-bedroom house. My two cousins and I slept on two army cots. I think my sister and cousin slept on the floor."
- Robert Brown, age 86, Youngstown

"I used to walk downtown to pay Mom's bills and ask neighbors if they'd like me to pay theirs - this way I could make tips. My mother not only took care of all her children, but also neighbors' children when they needed a babysitter. She never charged them. She also helped neighbors who were too ill to care for themselves, cooking or anything else to help."
- Sally Carrico-Baum, age 75, Columbus

"Back then, they learned to be a very close-knit family, which is one of the life lessons we still continue today. The community was close, also. If someone needed help, anyone and everyone lent a hand without thinking twice about doing it. If something needed to be repaired in their house, they fixed it themselves. They didn't have the money to have someone else repair it, so if they couldn't fix it, a friend helped them out. My grandma described it as being almost like the way the Amish live today."
- Meg Denman, sophomore at Madison Comprehensive High School, about her grandmother, Marcella Denman, age 92, Mansfield

"My brother and sister were older than me and they each got married during this time. My brother and his wife had a room in our house, and also my sister and her husband. We didn't think anything of it. That was a way of living. It was just what you did."
- Magnolia Fielder, age 93, Cincinnati

"I was born in the Depression. I was the oldest of seven. I remember that Dad had to go off and find work. This was hard on my mother and the family. I was the oldest and had to take on the responsibility of helping with my brothers and sisters. When Dad returned home, the money was little. It was rough on my parents, but yet it made us strong as a family, everyone with duties. We raised chickens, so that was a help. We had a ration book for powdered milk and corn meal. If we had a meat bone, mom would make soup and make it stretch for days. I was not able to finish my education, for I had to go off and find work. Mother made clothes and we
always had hand-me-downs. They were tough times but, as a family, it made us strong."
- Paul Gies, age 77, Bloomville

"Neighbors helped neighbors back then. 'We knew everyone within 10 miles. Everyone was friends. When it was time to thresh wheat, all the neighbors would come and help. We canned in the summer and had enough for winter. Field work was all there was back then for the kids to make any money.' Jo remembers working for a couple hours a day for 10 cents. Pickles were the worst job, but paid the best. There was a pickle factory down the road in Neapolis. 'We'd get in trouble if one yellow pickle was found in the field.'"
- Rick Prentice, about Jo Herr, age 84, Grand Rapids

"Times were different then because folks just helped one another as the need arose. We would butcher a hog or veal if we needed it and hang it overnight to set (usually in the cold weather), then call the neighbors to help dress it and cut it up and prepare it for canning or rendering the lard. We would share whatever the neighbors needed and they would do likewise whenever they could. There was never any money exchanged, that way we helped when we were called on."
- Myron Johnson, Barnesville

"'You mean it's my turn again?' I asked my sister. We took turns taking my grandmother's 'slop jar' to the little house out back. Our paternal grandma lived with us until she died. Nursing homes, visiting nurses and hospice were unheard of in the late 1930's. There was the old folks home, but that was for only the really poor or those with no family to care for them."
- Martha King, age 83, Carrollton

"More than anything, I remember the sharing that my parents engaged in. There were always kettles of soup or extra pies, cakes and cookies being wrapped and delivered to friends or other family members. Mother was a good shopper and knew how to stretch her grocery dollars. There were now three children to feed and clothe, and sharing was also impressed upon us. My middle sister and I shared a 'wardrobe' (meager but ample) and Mother, who was an excellent seamstress, was able to add to it from time to time."
- Mildred Malare, age 91, Toledo

"People worked together! They made sure no one needed anything. Without them, we would have had a hard time. With their help, it made things easier. We never went without a meal. Neighbors were just great! Breakfast was always great! I thought everyone liked me. What it was, was my fathers pancakes. That's why they used to spend the night with me. They enjoyed his pancakes! It wasn't me!"
- Eli Mitchel, age 74, Delaware

"During a Saturday night in July, an ice cream social was held for all members of the community. The storekeeper would bring packets of ice cream from the produce company and the women would bring cakes. Games were played and a good time was had by all. The store served as a meeting place for patrons of the local telephone company. They would meet to
discuss the condition of the line, buy needed supplies, decide the amount each patron was to pay and plan work days to repair the line. There were about twenty households on our line. To talk with someone outside our community, we had to go through the central office in Sarahsville."

- William M. Shaw, age 87, Sarahsville

"Because everyone was in the same boat financially, people were more willing to help each other. My sister, Kathleen, remembers that Mom sometimes handed out food to people who were down on their luck. When times were too tough for us to buy food at Jim Vittori's neighborhood store, Jim would keep a tally and let Dad pay the bill a little at a time until he got caught up. On payday, Dad would go first to Jim's and pay him what he could before he would pay any other bills. The two older boys sometimes passed out Jim's grocery ads to earn a little extra money. When Mom and Dad decided to leave the neighborhood near Armco and try to buy their first house, Jim was instrumental in helping them get the house they wanted."

- Wanda Stubbart, age 78, Columbus, Vic Thomas, age 83, Middletown and Kathleen Lambert, age 80, Middletown

"In March, 1928, my mother took me, age four, and my brother, 15 months, to visit her mother in Tennessee, where there was no electricity or running water. She didn't intend to stay long. While she was gone, my father lost his job, the house and the furniture, which he had put in storage. My mother had no home to come back to. We were at my grandmother's three and a half years."

- Betty Curtice Taylor, age 85, Akron

"At about age two, I lived with my brother and parents in a small rented house, until my father was laid off. As a result, he missed several rent payments and we were evicted. A farmer passing by noticed all of our belongings sitting in our front lawn. Feeling sorry for our situation, he offered my dad the free use of an old abandoned farm house on his farm. All that he asked in return was for my father to work full-time for him as an all-around farmhand. My Dad took the offer and had to work hard night and day, but was very grateful, especially since we could raise most of the meat, eggs, milk, produce and fruit that we needed."

- Elmer Viertel, age 78, Canton

"At threshing time, the farmers came in overalls from all around to help, taking turns helping each other. Aunt fed them at noon with a big spread of wholesome food. Everything was homemade from scratch and nothing wasted. She even grabbed and killed her own chicken by chopping off its head with an axe on a wood tree stump, throwing it in scalding water, plucking off its feathers, calmly cutting it up and frying it in a big iron skillet with lard. Aunt used or sold the eggs from the chickens she raised, milked the cows and used or sold the cream she separated."

- Ada Goss Weygandt, age 86, Grove City
"Church life was very active during this period. Everybody was in the same circumstance... Even my church, which was not the custom in a Protestant church, held Sunday night BINGO. It was different, however, as all the prizes were donated by the church families. The mothers excelled in this regard, by showing off their donated goods (canned fruits and other canned foods and talented sewers of various materials, clothing, etc.) A three-cent BINGO card and three hours of BINGO netted some support to keep the church functioning."

- William L. Zurkey, age 84, Boardman

"I remember homeless people would come to our door asking for food and help. They were never turned away we always shared our food and whatever else we could. No one ever was sent away hungry. Everyone was willing to help whoever was in need back then."

- Madge Conti Browning, age 92, Columbus

"I also remember men occasionally coming to our home about meal time and begging for food. If we were fortunate enough to have meat for dinner, my mother cut the meat in half and gave half to the needy person."

- Richard Haid, age 78, Hamilton

"As a young boy in Illinois during the Depression I was not aware I was deprived because I had few toys. There were many fun things to do. A favorite game in my neighborhood was hide and seek. We found a great place to play this game just a few blocks from my home. It was a corn field. There were usually four or five of us but sometimes there were only two and that made it more difficult. One late summer afternoon, my friend and I were the only ones available. My friend did an excellent job of hiding and it took me longer than usual to find him. It was an overcast day and starting to get dark before I found him. As we were heading for the street and home, we saw something glowing in the field. Of course, we had to find out what that strange light was doing in the corn field.

"As we approached the site, we recognized an old chicken coop. The door opened and we saw and old man and it scared us to death. In a very gentle voice, he said he didn't mean to scare us and would we like to come in and talk for awhile. We looked inside the door and saw he had a lantern, a pile of straw which was his bed and an old wooden chair. He had a big coffee pot, but we didn't see a stove. We decided to go in and the old man told us he had walked from Iowa and searched for a job along the way. When he got to my town, he saw this old chicken coop, which was not being used and asked the farmer if he could sleep there for a day or two. In those days there were few if any shelters for the homeless but there were soup kitchens in most communities. We visited the old man every day and enjoyed his stories. Then, one day we found he had moved on to another town and we really missed him. He was the first of many homeless men I met, and many found our home a stopping place where a modest lunch could be had on our back porch."

- Paul C. Messplay, Mansfield
"Some men hit the hobo trail, thereby eliminating one mouth to feed. I remember a song that became popular. It went something like this: 'We free bums, we jolly old bums, we live like royal Turks. We have good luck in bumming our chuck, God Bless the man that works.' In the midst of despair, there still survived a tiny spark of humor."

- Harold Russell, age 85, Gratiot

"One day, my sister and I were walking to the store. A man passed who was dressed very poorly. My sister said, 'let's see if he stops at our house.' Sure enough, he kept walking and looking and when he got to our house, he turned in. He was a tramp (we never called them bums). My folks thought our house was marked as a place where a tramp could get a hot meal - at the table, not on the back porch where many people gave them a meal. I learned very early to treat everyone as equals. I remember one tramp who came at supper time. After awhile he realized he had worked for my dad years ago. My dad went in and found the time book and he had worked for my dad."

- Ferd Thoma, age 82, Newton Falls

"Often, men out of work, whom we called hobos (although usually they were just desperate men trying to survive), would come down the road, and if any came by early enough, Dad might hire one for a day's work. His pay was a delicious dinner at noon. Dad worked hard, planting and harvesting the crops using our two workhorses to pull the equipment. Sometimes, because of bad weather, Dad would still be picking corn in December snow."

- Carol Vincent, age 86, Centerville

"The most vivid memory of that time was of the 'tramps.' They came begging at our doors; they were hungry. They would work for a meal or anything to eat. Most rode the freight trains into town. They camped in groups or singles under or near the railroad culvert at the local tile factory. It was a mystery to me how the men would pick a house, passing many on the block before stopping at another. They were always different men, but then they chose the houses as those before had. One day, finding the culvert empty, I ventured to explore where the men stayed. On the culvert walls were secret markings. These marks were for the arriving men. It gave directions to homes that were likely to feed them. We were not afraid of the men. They were a common sight in town, on the road and in rail cars. Some were educated, teachers, business men. Others were uneducated. They were fathers, grandfathers, husbands, sons, young men or boys. They were clothed in wrinkled suits to tattered outfits. They didn't want to live like this. The Depression had chosen for them."

- June A. Young, age 84, Worthington

Lessons, Values and Advice from the Great Depression
"Am I glad to have lived through the Great Depression? Yes. I learned to appreciate the simple life and to have compassion for those truly in need."
- June M. Baden, age 79, Westerville

"I wouldn’t change any of these experiences even if I could. It was more enjoyable than you can ever imagine. I have come to appreciate what a wonderful opportunity my family had to grow up poor in the back woods of West Virginia deprived of nothing that was truly important, and blessed with everything we really needed."
- Betty Banta, age 80, Columbus

"I learned from my father that I should pay myself first and save a portion of everything I earn; to save not just for what I want, but for what I might need; to not spend what I don’t have - but to wait until I can afford it whatever it is. I learned that before agreeing to work, I should know what I will be paid, to determine if my time and labor will be best spent in this endeavor. Finally, I learned that there are times when anyone, including me, might need help, and, recognizing this, when others need help, I must step forward, if I am able, and be the helper."
- Stanley L. Blum, age 79, Dayton

"From these humble beginnings, each of us children survived and grew up to have families of our own. In my case, I helped raise three generations of children. Early lessons of the importance of family helped me maintain my perspective during these times. I am grateful for the love and support of my family during our current economic downturn. The lessons of my life have taught me that things can always be worse and can always be better than they are today."
- Marty Bryan, age 82, Columbus

"Yes times were tough and hard, but you know what? Between yesteryears and today, I would go back to that again because you learned how to survive."
- George Campbell, age 74, Cleveland

"Never throw anything away if you can make some use of it. Clean your plate (think of the starving Armenian children and be grateful for what you have). Don’t waste anything! Those were lessons for a lifetime of thrift. Buy remainder sale-priced fabrics to repair clothes and to patch badly-worn furniture. Don’t throw out food if it’s still edible. Don’t discard household items, no matter how shabby or out of style, as long as they still work... To build savings, you must discipline yourself. Think very hard about every purchase you make. Always ask yourself: 'Do I really need this, or can I get along without it?' If you can, put it back on the shelf and move on. (When I hear children or adults exclaim, 'I've GOT to have this!' I want to yell: 'No, you DON'T; you won't have to starve or wear threadbare and patched clothing or be forced to live in the dark without that object. You may DESIRE it, but you really don't NEED it!')... If a possession malfunctions or frays, fix it up. If it falls apart, get along without it, just as millions did, because they had no choice. In the Great Depression, few families could afford to buy
replacements - and forget buying NEW stuff!"
- Juanita Coulson, age 76, London

"Let us look at these times not as a time of disruption, but as a purposeful step to avoid the
greed and over abundance that may have ingrained our way of life in the past. Find ways to give
to the less fortunate, for it is in giving that we receive!"
- Frances Daubert, age 80, Centerville

"One day, while at Grandma's, I was sent to the corner grocery store (Patterson's), and I spied a
large candy display. To have any candy was a real treat! My favorite, at that time, was the Mary
Jane yellow-wrapped caramel peanut butter chew. Well, I stole one (a penny candy). When I
returned to Grandma's house and Mom saw what I had done, she made me take the candy
back to Patterson's and apologize to Mr. Patterson. I never forgot that, and never did anything
like that again."
- Mary Rose DeMaria, age 83, Oregon

"There's always something to enjoy, a bird's song or the bright face of a dandelion. We learned
to be cooperative, resourceful, responsible and creative, and to appreciate our blessings. It
turned out all right, and this time, it will, too."
- Margaret B. Edwards, age 89, Gibsonburg

"Even though times were tough and uncertain, we accepted what people today would call
hardships and made the most of them. Because our lives were simpler, we didn't miss the
luxuries people are used to today. We were happy for what we did have and were creative with
what we had."
- Laverne Hiller Fifer, age 92, Northwood

"So, I learned frugality, especially since mostly every kid in my neighborhood was in the same
situation, or worse off and I was not alone. That forged an optimistic bond I have not forgotten
to this day.

"Caution - When I was 6 or 7 years old, I saw a man get scalped. Sitting in the window seat of a
streetcar as it pulled up to one of the raised concrete islands where passengers got on, I looked
down and saw a man stumble and fall between the edge of the island and the wheels of the
streetcar. The whole bloody top of his head flopped back as he fell. Several people tried to help
him. The police came and he was finally taken away to a hospital, and we were allowed to
proceed. I never did find out how he was, but someone said he would probably survive. Being a
somewhat awkward kid, this instilled in me a sense of caution, not to rush willy-nilly into
situations, but to take my time.

"Crime - My one big caper as a child came when I was 3 or 4 years old. My father (a bank
security guard) usually brought home his handcuffs, pistol and blackjacks. They would go onto
the top shelf of his closet. On this occasion, though, he seemed to be very tired and only
succeeded in putting away his pistol before getting on his slippers and flopping down in a chair."
Great Depression Story Project

I then hatched my perfect crime. First, I would incapacitate him and then make my getaway while he slept. With cunning, I very carefully, carefully, snuck up and handcuffed him to the arm of the chair. And, then, I (literally) had a stroke of genius. I hit him on top of the head with the blackjack to ensure enough time to get away. Unfortunately, he caught me halfway down the street and burned my backside with the one slipper that hadn't fallen off as he ran. Another lesson: crime does not seem to pay!

"Religion - About 1938, my parents and I got a ride with one of my uncles to Pennsylvania for my maternal grandmother's funeral. Wakes were usually held in one's home in those days, and it happened I was sitting in front of the coffin while all the others were elsewhere in the house. Naturally, being curious about death, I was closely watching Grandma, whom I hadn't known too long, but who had turned out to be a real pal to me. Suddenly, I thought I saw one of her eyes open and close, giving me a wink in a sea of grinning wrinkles, just as she had in life. It was a daydream or a hallucination of some sort, of course, but as I mulled this over later, I began to think seriously about an afterlife the priests and nuns had been trying to drum into us. Maybe there was something to that after all.

"Mortality - On another trip to Pennsylvania, also for a funeral, my parents and I stopped at an uncle's house. He and his boys were great hunters, and there in the corner of the living room was a pile of rifles and shotguns. Being a kid who played cops and robbers in the streets back home, I immediately rushed over and grabbed shotgun from the stack before anyone could stop me. Pointing it at a man passing by, it went off inches from him, blowing a head-sized hole in the wall where he had been a second before I fired. The recoil blew me across the room, but I think I learned in one look at that man's stricken face what the difference was between living and dying. Then, hysterics hit me, saving my parents the need to hit me themselves. Another lesson in living. Not only did I almost kill someone, but I broke my own rule about rushing into something."

- Lawrence Forbes, age 78, Cleveland

"As I face unemployment and financial challenges, the lessons learned from my folks provides me the reassurance I need when I feel like things are way too tough. We must remain hopeful. We must remain determined. We must remain spiritual. And, in a pinch, a ketchup sandwich makes a great snack!"

- Karen Gaeblein, via e-mail

"When I was old enough to understand a little about life as it was, I found out soon the words 'we can't afford it.' We learned to do without and to appreciate what we had... I still live the way I grew up. When our eldest son was going to graduate, he said some of his friends were getting a car. I told him: 'You're getting a wallet to put the money in that you earn. Save enough until you can buy your car.' He did just that, and found out how hard and long he had to work in order to afford that pleasure. Maybe a depression is what we needed to teach people to live within their means. If more parents pay more attention to what their children are doing, we wouldn't have so many problem children running loose on the streets. Put them to work at
home!"

- Theresa Giallombardo, age 80, Maple Heights

"People have it easy today. They need to cut back and do without and change their lifestyle to use what they've got and learn how to live on less money. Children can go without all their toys, and parents, too, can do without all the conveniences of Pampers, paper towels, etc., and all the shopping. Everyone should think about the future and try to be prepared in all ways they can. I believe the best thing to do is for people to stay where they are if at all possible. Moving takes you away from your families and good friends, who help each other out."

- Charlotte Walters Grant, age 88, Jacobsburg

"Those years of the Depression and war molded most youngsters that lived then. Our strength came from a deep sense of what was right and what was not. We knew the difference and lived our lives according to our sense of what is right and what was wrong. To this day, most of us follow those lessons learned in a difficult time of our lives: Help each other. Don't hurt each other. Share what you have. Pull together. If you follow that advice from another time, your life will be better."

- Edna Hanson, age 76, Toledo

"Your word was your bond. Children respected their parents and obeyed them, not the opposite. We shared with others less fortunate. We were taught to tell the truth, and spanked our children for their misdeeds at their bottom so their message would go to their brains."

- Era Harper, age 93, Bedford

"I'm pretty healthy today at eighty-seven years of age, and I think a lot of it was the way we lived at that time. Plenty of exercise and healthy food and a good family working together made a good life."

- Elizabeth Helber, age 87, Logan

"My advice to young people now that have families is first, watch your grocery shopping and shop at nice slightly-used clothing stores for school clothes. And consider a wood burner for next winter."

- Iona Hervey, age 77, Spencer

"For me, the lesson from the Great Depression is that people today still need to live within their means and plan for the future. We somehow made it back then with just a few things to hold on to. I know there's more temptation today to buy things. But do people really need a big new TV set, when they should have other priorities, such as going to school? I didn't get a college degree until later in life, in my late forties. My life would have been much different if I could have gone to college when I was younger. People today need to think carefully before they spend so easily."

- Mildred M. Jacobs, age 89, Columbus
"Our parents were strict, holding us accountable for certain tasks. But, in looking at this part of my life, I can see that we were taught by example to be frugal and responsible, and grew up as a close family - all things that I hope I have passed along to my children. I think I have done this for we all had children, none of them ever got into drugs or crime of any kind, and all of them have families of their own with the same attributes."

- Ruth Mueller Jones, age 88, Cincinnati

"Probably the best advice for today's generation is to cooperate with your employer, buy sensibly, sticking to necessities, and give up some of the luxuries until the recession is over. It will be rough on the kids with their cell phones and high priced toys, but it is one way to get by in hard times. Ignore the word "only" when it appears in an ad with a price."

- Harry G. Moll, age 92, Wauseon

"I believe working hard, sticking together, and watching our pennies helped us through those difficult times. 'Waste not, want not' - important even today. Keep a positive attitude. Remember 'Above the clouds the sun still shines.'"

- Helen Oliver, age 83, Poland

"We didn't have much but made do with what we had. We didn't know we were poor. Perhaps we were better off than other people. We had food, clothing, shelter, each other and love. I'm sure we were happy from within, as material things and money just doesn't do it. I feel when our possessions get too big, they own us instead of us owning them. Also a friend in need is a friend in deed. Hard times teach us values. We should not live off the labor of others."

- Carl Reed, age 76, Malvern

"My father had a store and an old truck and wholesale grocery route. I remember Dad and Mother arguing over giving credit to people. Living in a small community, everyone knew each other. Dad would not cut off credit to families who would go hungry if he did. This finally forced them to close the door. Some folks had chickens, and eggs were used as money. You could take eggs to the store and get your needs, or part of them, according to how many eggs you had. The pleasure of an egg for breakfast was rare. If Mom had an extra egg to spare, she'd give it to my two younger sisters and me and we'd get a bag full of candy."

- Edith Ann Richardson, age 88, Middletown

"We were always taught if you're last out of a room, turn out all the lights. Also, don't drive over the speed limits - it saves gas and prevents tickets. We also learned how to budget our money by putting it in several jars each month. Consequently, we never had to use a soup kitchen."

- Thomas Rosmarin, age 85, Columbus

"The Depression taught me many things I might never have learned in a more affluent life: sharing, compassion, responsibility and thrift, perhaps mostly thrift. I learned it early and still have not adjusted to a throw-away economy. I abhor waste, perhaps to a ridiculous degree. Some even today believe me to be a 'cheap skate.' Although I am generous to others,
extravagance is not a part of my makeup and I believe most people my age feel the same. At this late date, we're not likely to change."
- Harold Russell, age 85, Gratiot

"The 30s were years when we didn't know we were poor. The quality of life was not about material things, and was still rich and fulfilling. Parents provided a normal as possible life for children. We had few store-bought toys and used our imaginations."
- Esther G. Schwartz, age 77, Columbus

"Having grown up with these hardships, I appreciate having the nice things I have. We had to get our lessons before we went to bed. We sat around a table with an oil lamp with our dad. He made sure we knew our spelling and arithmetic. It was instilled in us as well as honesty and helping our neighbors, along with responsibility."
- Betty Shay, age 83, Delaware

"Those of us who lived during the old Depression learned much about living - 'bitter or better' - when my mom learned to save our home: took in boards, cut down on food, no credit cards, layaways to pay your bills, then it was yours."
- Mildred Sternberg, Toledo

"We came from very humble surroundings, but My Father made us believe that we could do anything if, number one, we listened, learned by study and experience and never do anything to destroy you good name - it can’t be bought back. My Mother always added that God came first. In fact, we didn't have a car to get to the Catholic church, we went to the Methodist on Sunday to give thanks. They knew our faith, but just like Holloway people, we all were one."
- Geraldine Vincenzo Szymialis, age 81, Flushing

"Even though we were very poor, as children, we were taught the social graces and rules of etiquette. I learned how to set a table and write a thank-you letter and what clothes were appropriate for various occasions. We were expected to use good grammar and do well in school. I took piano lessons, we went to Sunday School, but there were no extras: One birthday gift, one Christmas present, no movies, no vacations, only necessities."
- Betty Curtice Taylor, age 85, Akron

"What's wrong with packing your lunch? Do you have to get breakfast, lunch and dinner out at a restaurant? A week's groceries could be purchased for the cost of a dinner out. How about saving up for things you 'got to have,' instead of putting them on a credit card? How about mixing and socializing with the neighbors instead of spending money elsewhere? During the Depression years, nothing was wasted. Leftovers were not thrown out and the last amount in the box or tube was squeezed out. People entertained at home. A nickle was something cherished. We can do the same now, and will emerge a better people for it."
- Carl R. Trompeter, age 85, Toledo
"The 'Tithe' was still given. Faith was a guiding force in making right decisions. 'Integrity' was joined by its twin, 'honesty,' as our foundations for hope - we would make it through... and, we did."
- Gladys A. Wilhelm, age 87, Sebring

"You'd work to get something; if you could save it you'd save it, and you did not overspend. I think that probably one of the biggest lessons I got, and a lot of my generation got, was that you didn't buy a lot of stuff you didn't need."
- Dean Bailey, age 82, Lordstown

"The little money we did earn went a long way. Maybe this was the foundation that caused many of us to become part of The Greatest Generation. I like to think so. I believe it made us believe in patriotism and fighting the greatest war in the history of the world. Not being a part of the World War II war effort was anathema to me and my friends from Jackson-Milton High School."
- William E. Bletso, age 82, Youngstown

"We were taught to respect our parents, grandparents and educators and be tolerant and to share with others. People thought we were poor, but they were wrong, we ate gourmet every day, our food was organic and no pesticides."
- Rachel Clara Patrone Boyd, age 78, Niles

"A phrase I heard frequently while growing up came, I am certain, from this period in my family's life: 'Use it up, wear it out, make it do, or do without.' Good advice in today's economic climate as well!"
- Stephanie A. Burke, about her mother, Mildred Burk, age 88, Middletown

"We learned not to go into debt, explained Ms. Christian. 'If you borrowed money or went on the books, you paid that money back as soon as you got it.' Another important lesson the ladies learned during the Depression was to use everything until it was completely worn out. They did not replace something if it broke, but rather got it fixed. Ms. Weber's husband still wears his socks until he has worn holes into the soles."
- Emma Polly, about Julia Weber, age 87, and Hallie Christian, age 87, Olmsted Falls

"Now as I think about it, I was learning during those years something good about the value of the American dollar that has stuck with me throughout my entire life. My sister, Mary Jane, and I were never given a weekly allowance as so many children have today. We felt lucky as we were growing up if we had a penny or a nickel or a dime in our pockets. Money just didn't grow on trees."
- William Cox, age 85, Sylvania

"I live with the satisfaction of knowing that happiness is having what you need. The Depression taught us how to be strong and that hard work is the source of your strength and success. Our
only guarantee in life is to cherish the moment."
- Helen De Gifis, age 83, Warren

"It seemed that if you owned a piece of land, had a cow and a garden you could make it in the thirties. You learned to manage. During all the hard times, we never had to rely on the government; God took care of us."
- Bernice Dixon, age 80, Galloway

"To get through a Depression or recession, to my way of thinking, it is imperative to have a faith, family and friends to help or be helped, to keep physically and mentally fit, to learn the 'new' and to be flexible in wants and needs. Life, for me during the Great Depression, was 'doable' because I was blessed with these!"
- Florence Field, age 91, Willoughby

"I never knew we were in a Depression until a decade afterward. I started working part-time when I was 12 and never thought I was sacrificing. Now, I feel sorry for the kids who cannot do that. Wide work and play experiences taught me many lessons."
- Russell S. Fling, age 82, Columbus

"Our motto became: 'Eat it up, wear it out, or make a rug out of it.'"
- Mary Alice Foster, age 89, Reynoldsburg

"When it comes to tough times, a human being will take care of himself and family, and others hopefully. Sorry to say, but those people who do not know or learn from tough times will go for the easy way out: robbing, stealing, killing. The world has always been like that from the beginning of time. I would not mind living back in my younger days. To me, they were so much simpler than they are nowadays."
- Daniel P. Gentile, Sr., age 70, Parma

"What is happening today does not even compare to the Great Depression. People need to learn to save and not buy over their heads. We learned how to save, we had to. You couldn't borrow money back then unless you had almost 50 percent of the loan value already in your pocket."
- Earl Gorsuch, age 88, Lebanon

"A word to the wise, try not to pay more than 25 percent of your monthly income for house payment. Buy only what you can afford and try to save some money for any emergency that may arise."
- Charles Green, age 87, Columbus

"It is said that period was the worst of times, but to many it was the best of times. I became a stronger person because of it. I learned the art of volunteering and giving because everyone was in the same position at that time, and neighbors and friends helped each other."
- Violet Hardin, age 89, Wapakoneta
"I remember food was scarce, and if we had soup for lunch, we had soup for supper. Life was simple but hard. I think it made us stronger. We had nothing and expected nothing. We made do with what we had. We got along as a family. I recall how the whole neighborhood would get together and play, it was so much fun."

- Geneva Hawkins, age 88, Bloomville

"They never remember having it that bad because of the food available on the farm, but they did remember never getting any toys for Christmas. 'We hung stockings up by the fireplace, but never got anything. All the kids would go down to the local Fire Station, where we would get candy and fruit'

- Rick Prentice about Jo Clifford, age 90, Grand Rapids

"I think back and remember the Depression as a good thing since we learned to do with and without what we had. We were never jealous of anyone. We were always glad when someone got something new. Life was good in many ways, and still is."

- Phyllis Spohn Johnson, age 81, Butler

"As I was growing up during the Depression, if someone asked me whether I felt deprived, I would have said 'no.' We lived no better, and no worse, than anyone else in our community. And, maybe most importantly, my parents never seemed very worried about the future. They made us feel safe and secure."

- Evelyn Brewer Neff Mitrione, age 86, Pickerington

"Just know that people do survive hard times and carry on with their lives. I am 91 and have lived a very good life. So can you. Don't give up. We should all join together in helping where we can. There are other things to develop, perhaps from a hobby. Something you have done well can be developed into a new business. American people have all been known for their ability to learn new things and how inventive they can be. So get in there and show the rest of the world what winners we can be!"

- Margaret Obenour, age 91, Marion

"Growing up in the early forties in Brooklyn, New York, we were dirt poor, but then so were our neighbors. In those days, people were happy to have food, clothing and a roof over their heads. We, as children, tried to keep our parents in every way; doing chores for our neighbors and our family was a duty, not just a favor... Life was far more simple; not everyone had a car, money was tight, and we never demanded what our parents could not provide...

"The younger generation has many life lessons to learn, and nothing is learned without great pain and hard work. Reach out to offer a helping hand to someone more unfortunate. Be of good spirit - and don't give with strings attached. Make life worth living by doing what you preach, and being an example of loving kindness. You'll never go wrong!"

- Leona M. Osrin, Beachwood
"With the bank holiday in 1933, all banks in the nation were closed for audit. Those with sound operations reopened, those without closed permanently. Many people lost their life savings. The Depression was here - and it hurt!! Many businesses were in jeopardy, but the American dream was the driving force that kept the nation alive. Men, women, children, rich and poor all worked together at recovery. It was not easy."

- Viola Reed, age 95, Barnesville

"We went through hard times, but with the help of our dear loving mother, we managed to finish high school. So today we have a lot to be thankful for. If we just stop spending so much on material things we don't really need, less eating, drinking, and partying, and work together to help those less fortunate than we are, then God will bless us and help us through these hard times facing us. So let's stop complaining and be thankful for what we have."

- Elizabeth Rollins, age 72, Columbus

"There were several important lessons from the Depression years. Get an education - learn how the other half lives! From my father: no sacrifice is too great for the welfare of your family. If adversity strikes don't whine, adapt! As much as some may complain about big government, it was big government that got us through the last Depression (with a little help from Hitler)!"

- Tony Rugare, age 83, Highland Heights

"It was humor that brought us through the Depression. We were all in the same situation. Neighbors were close and helped each other. Each one the same. We never heard of allowances. We had our chores. We didn't expect it, didn't have it, but respected our parents."

- Blossom Schmoll, age 98, Berea

"In all, looking back, people had better character, and many times a handshake sealed an agreement. People enjoyed and appreciated each other and any small gifts of good or necessary items. They were simpler times where we joked and had fun just working and then playing together. We worked hard and weren't allowed to feel sorry for ourselves."

- Marian Seilheimer, age 89, Tiffin

"This was a time when people looked out for each other. Honesty and industriousness were highly valued. If we kids got out of line in school, we caught it at school and got it again from our parents when we got home. And we knew we could count on it!"

- Ann Shook, age 85, Akron

"As children, we never felt that we lacked anything important, although we knew that we didn't have a lot. But we learned at an early age that people can't always have everything they want, and we learned to value the things we had... The surviving members of our family still talk a lot about the advantages of growing up during the Great Depression and of being part of a large family. We feel that the experiences we had as children equipped us to be self-reliant and content with very little in the way of this world's goods. We wish all children could grow up in an atmosphere such as we enjoyed in our childhood because of our loving and nurturing parents. Without their determination to work hard to supply the things we needed, our story
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might well have been a tale of woe instead of a recital of rich blessings."
- Wanda Stubbart, age 78, Columbus, Vic Thomas, age 83, Middletown and Kathleen Lambert, age 80, Middletown

"Neither of our parents completed high school, but what they lacked in formal education, they more than made up for in common sense. What they taught us was love of family, a belief in each other and a work ethic that has carried throughout our lives. I think that the greatest thing they taught us was to work for what we wanted or needed. On this basis, we would always survive."
- Larry Taddie, age 82, Parma

"We always had and gave love, showed respect, were honest, knew both pride and humility and lived on perseverance. Our patriotism and reverence to God were real."
- Joy Thomas, age 80, Canfield

"From The Great Depression my parents learned to save as much money as possible from every paycheck. They also learned to buy one thing at a time, pay off any balance and then go on to the next consumer need or appliance."
- Mary Ann Wasserman, age 78, Toledo

"Make changes and surely don't live in the past. Be aware of your problems. Sacrifice and make adjustments where necessary. Share with family, neighbors and friends. Don't let the doom and gloom that is the main topic of the media these days get you down. Keep that great American spirit. We have always faced adversity, but we know how to band together and overcome it. Things may not get better for a while, but they will with each of our efforts and attitudes. As bad as things were, we remained relatively happy and optimistic. We didn't have the mass media preaching doom and gloom. Today's generation needs to accept the realities of the time, make needed adjustments, appreciate life's blessings and reinforce their sense of family. We are Americans and have inherited the spirit of overcoming adversity and surviving hard times. We have done it repeatedly in the past and will do it again. We owe it to coming generations and to keeping our country great."
- Bill Williams, age 79, Perrysburg

The Great Depression: Then vs. Now

"Today we live in a disposable society: Use it and throw it out, buy more. Most foods are prepackaged. Immediate gratification prevails. We no longer know how to do very basic things for ourselves. We depend on money and others to make our lives fulfilling and happy. Financially, old times were tough, and I'm sure my parents worried, but basically I think we were much happier and healthier in that lifestyle."
- Paula Deatrick Ashton, age 69, Toledo
"I had a brother about five years older than me. We both helped with chores around the house. Some of the children today don't know how to do much of anything. Some are out on the street at night destroying property, even in our small city of Columbiana. We had one cop on duty when I was little... no drug problems... a few town drunks and minor robberies."
- Elizabeth A. Bartholow, age 85, Columbiana

"Great-grandma Crain, during the Depression in Indiana, opened her big house to boarders and thereby helped our own family and others... One revealing piece of writing today might be how through legislation and laws, we have closed ourselves off from many of the very ideas that saved people in the past. How many people are allowed to live together in certain apartments and houses, under one roof? Doubling up isn't as possible as it used to be, so the lesson there might not be as simple as it was for our great-grandparents and great-greats. We have been well-intentioned by government out of some of the possibilities. For example, boarding houses are pretty much illegal now and have been for decades. A few were grandfathered in and ignored into withstanding. The situation would be less likely now. They saved our lives once and then became illegal. To protect us, right? Because everyone didn't have their own bathroom. Because the kitchen wasn't licensed, etc."
- Jenniver Bosveld, Columbus

"In spite of the hardships, which we were unaware of, we survived and thrived without public assistance. There was no social security or Medicare... There were very few beauty parlors, restaurants, motels. We never ate out, as it cost twice as much to eat out as to cook your own meals... Automobiles were scarce and a new one could be bought in 1939 for $810. Today, people have two or three sitting in their driveways. There are many millionaires today, but during the Depression one could scarcely be found. Today, tour agencies can take you to far-flung places that we never dreamed of seeing. We were lucky to get to go to the county fair. There, everyone got all dressed up in the best. Now, fairs are smaller and geared mostly to 4H exhibits. During the Depression, people were lucky to have two outfits to wear. Often, they were hand-me-downs or made from feed sacks. Everything was put to use. Today, most people have closets packed with clothes. Each season they go out and buy more... People today take exercise classes for fitness. We got our exercise from the sweat of the brow. We got our tanning from picking berries or making hay. Children were brought up more strictly. There was a great deal of discipline. Today many children are allowed free reign. Back in those days, neighbor helped neighbor, borrowed machinery and the like. Today, people would rather buy prepared foods or eat out at restaurants, where many of the patrons are overweight, and it is quite costly. Sports events are big time now. Coaches and players alike are paid millions of dollars, and thousands of fans seem to be able to afford seats to the events. During the Depression, baseball games were held in farmers' fields or on school playgrounds, with little money involved. You just had the price of the ball and bat."
- Mary Cole, age 91, Cadiz
"A great gift of the era was to be able to lie on the grass under a tree, day or evening, with a clear mind and imagination - an experience unlike today's technologies."
- Helen De Gifis, age 83, Warren

"What we didn't have was electricity. So, there was no TV, cable, radio, washers and dryers, computers, air conditioning or electric lights at night. We had no furnace, heating (instead) with the wood-burning stove. We did have a phone, but not a private line. We shared with eight to ten other families. Ours was four short rings. But you never said anything you didn't want the entire neighborhood to know. People listened to others' calls because it was the way we got news. There were no newspapers."
- Laverne Hillyer Fifer, age 92, Northwood

"We did have a lot of company. People did visit more then. We didn't have TV, and very few had radio. We also didn't have a phone. We learned to save for things we needed. No charge cards. We had a grocer on the corner of the street where we had a bill. If we couldn't pay for food, it was put on our bill and was paid whenever we had a few extra dollars. Thanks to parents who taught us the value of hard work and saving what we can. We respected our parents and elders, which is lacking today."
- Theresa Giallombardo, age 80, Maple Heights

"I grew up in New Bedford, Massachusetts. We lived in a very poor tenement house. But in all of my memories, the one that sticks out the most was not the poverty, but the importance of honesty and trust. Locks on doors were not needed. No one stole from another. We helped, not harmed, other people. The whole neighborhood was suffering together. We would not harm each other. Our family and our good name was what mattered."
- Edna Hanson, age 76, Toledo

"I feel sorry for the younger generation, as they don't know how to make do with nothing. My Mom taught me how to cook and I have taught my daughter and son to cook and do it without much. Thank God they have jobs, and I pray they will always have them until this awful mess is cleared up. Too bad most people now day don't even know their next-door neighbors. We are spoiled rotten and our Grandchildren are, also. I can hear them say: 'I want my kids to have more than I did.' That's natural, I guess, but I was 10 years old before I had a doll for Christmas; we always got a pair of socks or stockings which came up above your knee. I hated them and I would roll them down around my ankles."
- Patarica LeMay Hauger, age 81, Meigs County

"I feel sorry for our kids of today. I wonder if they will have happy memories of growing up other than computers and TV boob tube watching and sex. Sex? I didn't learn about that till I went into nurses training at Women's and Children's Hospital on Summit Street."
- Dorothy Heibeck, Toledo

"Parents today think of themselves first and children last. They want to rely on the government to help them out when they can help themselves. They are the ones that got themselves in the
mess they are in today, by getting the bigger house and car and all the stuff they buy. Also, they buy too much for their children. They don't teach them to work."

- **Leola Kearney, age 81, Lima**

"The current generation of young people is so much different from ours. Where I think many of those in my era were saved from having the Depression coming at them from all angles, from TV and all the many other means available for communication. Having a pack of gum or an ice cream cone does not hold much appeal when compared with cell phones and other electronic gadgets of this generation. But I am sure they will survive it successfully as we did."

- **Dawn Knopp, age 87, Centerville**

"Of course, we had some advantages over the present day, we didn't have to go a long distance for shopping, the grocery store was a block away, the bakery a couple of blocks and downtown just a streetcar ride away. Walking and public transportation were the norm in those days."

- **Louis J. Leibold, age 93, Centerville**

"Today, your money is guaranteed by FDIC. When banks failed back then, and finally re-opened, depositors received 10 cents on the dollar. There were no unemployment insurance, food stamps, food banks or federal and state agencies to help find employment, housing, care for children, etc. We were on our own, period."

- **Magaret Obenour, age 91, Marion**

"It was a time when four-term President Roosevelt gained much support from Americans because they felt that economic improvements occurred despite the recession setbacks. The W.P.A. and the C.C.C. helped many people get through the hard times and created for the nation benefits that lasted long after those programs ended. World War II became economically significant because of the need for military weapons; industries experienced growth as the wartime economy developed. It was unfortunate that a war - a necessary war to combat the evil thrust upon nations because of arrogant, defiant, ruthless rulers - helped bring about an improved economy, especially after the war. A parallel may be seen between programs of the 30s and plans of the current Obama administration. Stimulus packages or bills to improve domestic problems related to infrastructure, education, jobs, health care, etc., were developed then, as now, to gear the economy up once again. Core values based on frugality, friendly cooperation and fortitude remain as valid now as they were back then."

- **Wallace L. Pretzer, age 78, Bowling Green**

"In 1932 my grandfather, who lived in Louisville, Kentucky, died. He never adjusted to city living and his one wish was to be buried in Russell County in Kentucky, his old home place. There wasn't money to hire a hearse to transport his body. My Dad brought his casket home on the back of his truck. That wouldn't be heard of today. It may even be against the law. Then, it was a way of life, people struggled to survive."

- **Edith Ann Richardson, age 88, Middletown**
"This was a rough time for us, but we survived it. We can also survive the depression that is approaching us today, because we have the facilities to help us, such as electricity, gas and electric stove, running water and indoor toilets. Also, we have free programs to help us get food and clothing. We didn't have any of those things. Our light came from kerosene lamps, We washed our clothes by hand on a scrub board, cooked our meals on wood stove, kept warm with fireplaces and gathered our wood to burn in the stove and fire places."

- Elizabeth Rollins, age 72, Columbus

"Remember how things have improved just since you were born. How would your ancestors react if they saw you hit the thermostat and get instant heat or air conditioning? Let alone, you don't boil your clothes on wash day?"

- Grace M. Schuler, age 83, Napoleon

"It was a time of simplicity. A time of stay-at-home mothers who were always there when you came home from school. Families only had one car, and the father used it for work. There were fewer brands of shampoo, soap, canned goods and food staples to purchase. Advertising was done largely by catchy jingles, which most of my generation still remember and can intone: 'Pepsi Cola hits the spot, 12 full ounces that's a lot.' or 'Won't you buy Wheaties, the best breakfast food in the land?' or 'Brylcreem, a little dab'll do ya' or 'Poor Miriam... neglected using Irium... Pepsodent toothpaste.' We didn't have store-bought glue. When we needed paste, my mother would mix a small batch of flour and water, which worked perfectly fine. A bandage was a strip of cloth from a clean, but worn-out sheet or pillowcase. A scratch or scrape was treated with iodine (ouch!) or merthiolate (pink and much preferred)."

- Esther G. Schwartz, age 77, Toledo

"Technology, engineering and the inventive human mind combined to provide most of us, even the poor, with conveniences that even the rich did not, at one time, have access to. Furthermore, the number of conveniences continues to grow. This advanced technology is both good and bad. The good is self-evident. The bad: Television has replaced good books; video games keep children indoors when they should be outside playing, getting healthy exercise that wards off obesity; noise pollution has replaced music and pornography has replaced art. I remember when all the people I knew grew their own vegetables and many had fruit-bearing trees in their yards. I remember when people had a greater trust of one another - all a contract required was a hand shake and one's word. There was less fear, thus more freedom. No city street was too dangerous to walk, at any hour. There was very little fear of picking up a hitch-hiker. Terrorism did not exist until after World War II. Many left their doors unlocked. I remember a strong middle class - the productive back bone of our country. I remember strong family unity and the resulting high values."

- Frank C. Sohaiby, age 87, Youngstown

"Today the daily paper comes by car, two in the home are working, fast foods pass for homemade food. Start out where parents are leaving off, driving bigger and better cars. Who
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has the biggest diamond? Kids' shoes cost more than our house payments were.
- Geraldine Vincenzo Szymialis, age 81, Flushing

"The generation of the 1930s was more self-sufficient than now. There was more of an agrarian culture, with many small farms. These farms supplied lots of produce at a very reasonable cost. There were not the support systems, as now. The main source of help was you. There was no entitlement, as now; no food stamps, subsidized housing, heating assistance, Medicare, Medicaid, Social Security or unemployment insurance, etc. This made a generation of self-determined people. They made do with what they had. They worked, when it was available, shared when they saw a need, and communicated with each other. There was no two or three hours each day watching T.V. or computers (because they did not exist!)."
- N. D. Zimmerman, age 82, Cambridge

Depression Era Entertainment and Recreation

"On the whole street, we only had one radio - our house - and all the kids (14 of them) loved to come over and listen to Superman, the Shadow, Jack Benny, etc. But you know we all enjoyed playing together, boys and girls, outdoors from after school to 9 p.m. (curfew) and bedtime. We all played in the street - football, baseball, hockey, etc. On Sundays, we all went to Brookside Park (one mile away) to watch the AAA Sandlot teams play. It was great. During the summer vacations, my friend, John Sidor, my best buddy and I would collect all the free tickets for Euclid Beach Park, hop on the ol' trolley and away we'd go to spend all day."
- Joseph Banas, age 85, Broadview Heights

"When my brother Bill and I were little, toys were scarce, so we improvised. We made pretend cars out of match boxes or blocks of wood. We dug and carved roads out of the hillsides and ran our cars over the roads we made. We also had 'rooster fights' using violets from the yard. Each of us would grab a violet, hook our bloom around the other's bloom and jerk. The one who pulled the bloom from the other's stem was the winner. We learned to hold a blade of grass between the thumbs of both hands and blow through it to create the perfect whistle or noisemaker."
- Betty Banta, age 80, Columbus

"We played games and cards for entertainment, and in the summer we went on picnics close to home. When we went to the movies, we spent 10 cents for children and 25 cents for adults. These movie houses were in the neighborhoods where we lived. All the grocery and drug stores were close. If we wanted to shop downtown, we took the street car. No malls then."
- Rita and Jack Brenner, Thornville

"Brother Dave and I were given 10 cents each every Saturday. The neighborhood theater charged 5 cents if one got there before a certain hour, and we blew the rest on candy. Nothing more until next Saturday. For our five cents at the theater, we saw the main feature, a second
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feature, a newsreel, a cartoon, coming attractions and a 'chapter show.' The latter was a series of about 13 or so films that would end each week with the main characters facing almost certain death and one had wait until next week to see how they avoided it.

- James T. Canning, age 82, Mansfield

"I don't know where our living expenses came from nor how much money my father made. What I do recall is that I had a very happy childhood and don't recall being deprived of food or clothing. I do recall that my grandfather took my sister and me to the movies frequently and bought us an ice cream on Sunday and some candy for the movie."

- Jim Clayton, New Mexico (formerly of Ohio)

"When our chores were done, we played countless games of croquet or soccer, rode our pony, shared a bike and walked on stilts. We made a treehouse (almost), dug to China (sort of) and made sling-shots to shoot at birds, but they were too quick for us."

- Ruth Maloney Cowgill, Marion

"Air conditioning was a blanket laid out on the grass in the heat of summer. Our recreation was marbles, jacks, climbing trees, sled riding, a long bike ride to a creek for swimming and fishing, football and baseball in the neighborhood fields."

- Helen De Gifis, age 83, Warren

"There were very few cars and many kids in our neighborhood. People walked to most places in town, visited on the front porch or over the backyard fence. We knew everybody. The lack of cars gave the streets to us for playgrounds. We learned to create the things we played with, such as rubber guns, push go-carts, kites and rag footballs. I never heard a kid say that he was bored. It was a learning experience that has been taken away."

- Ralph W. Dennings, age 87, Saint Marys

"We listened to 'Myrt and Marge,' 'Jack Armstrong, the All-American Boy,' 'Little Orphan Annie,' 'Fibber McGee and Molly' and others on the radio, which stood on four legs. All the kids sat on the floor around it."

- Adele Federman, Toledo

"As for entertainment, there were no TVs, video games, computers, cell phones or any other electronic devices. And nothing we had required batteries. We did have a radio. We listened to Jack Benny, Eddie Cantor, Lux Radio Theater and Major Bowes Amateur Hour (our version of American Idol). We could see a double feature, serial and news reel for 10 cents at the neighborhood movie theater. There was a neighborhood full of boys and girls to play games with. We lived on a hill, which was great for sled riding or roller skating. There was free swimming in the mornings at South Side Park. A picnic at Mill Creek Park was a wonderful time for the whole family to enjoy nature - for free. Adults were very sociable - visiting each other's homes to play cards or gossip on the front porch. For me the best entertainment of all was also free - the books my mother and I brought home by the armful from the public library."

- Manila Fellows, age 84, Youngstown
"We always had lots of snow. One time we had so much snow that the holler, which was about fifteen feet deep, was level hill-to-hill. With no public snow removal, we were stuck until it melted. But one of the benefits of the snow was snow ice cream. We took sugar, mixed with cream and vanilla extract until smooth, then added fresh, clean snow. What a treat!! Today, my kids and grandkids love this treat. We entertained ourselves in many simple and joyous ways. Families invited neighbors in, having music and dancing in their homes. My dad played fiddle for these dances. We went fishing for fun and food. Children played many different card games, had taffy pulls and popped corn."

- Laverne Hillyer Fifer, age 92, Northwood

"We had a White treadle sewing machine and we made our own clothes. Calico was 10 cents a yard and rick-rack was the new trim. I had two dresses when I was a sophomore in high school. Dad patched and re-soled my shoes. He also patched his tires and innertubes. Mom made us stuffed toys from Dad's old work socks. Dad made us toys of skill from wood, nails and Mason jar lids. He also made us stilts from broom handles. We made our own sunglasses (to watch the eclipse of the sun) by cutting up the X-rays from my father's broken arm. We went barefooted from early spring until late fall. The soles of our feet looked like elephant hide."

- Mary Alice Foster, age 89, Reynoldsburg

"Silent movies were held at the high school every Saturday night, for which we had to pay 15 cents. A young boy played a violin all during the movie."

- Alfred M. Glass, Cambridge

"I had 11 brothers and sisters and we had only one bicycle to share. But, being that we worked from dawn to dusk. we were always too busy to play. Our gardens were tomatoes, eggplants, potatoes, radishes. Our orchards were Bartlett pears, Elberta peaches, Jonathan apples, Damsel plums and Queens Cherries. Our crops were corn, oats, and wheat. Our animals were horses, cows, chickens and pigs. Having all my brothers and sisters, we had very few friends. For our entertainment, we play canasta, pinochle and euchre. We played ball after the cornfields were cut. We would play cards on a rainy day after the chicken pens were cleaned."

- Charlotte Oesch Greene, Chagrin Falls

"With all the hardships we still managed to have fun. We cut our own Christmas trees, decorated with homemade decorations, pulled taffy and made maple candies. In winter months, we had snow ball fights, built igloos and played fox and goose. During the summer, we played ball, jumped rope, caught fireflies and put them in jars, and had family reunions."

- Violet Hardin, age 89, Wapakoneta

"We always attended church. That was the order from both mother and father. We went as a family, walking across the field together. We walked home after church and Mother always had fried chicken for lunch. My sister, Pauline, would entertain us with her stories that she had read. 'The Pit and the Pendulum' and the 'Rhyme of the Ancient Mariner' were her favorites. She would tell us stories from the bible and, many times, we would end the afternoon with a
"With the neighborhood kids plus four or five of us, we always had enough to play kick-the-can, run-sheepy-run, baseball or football. We had one leather football helmet and whoever carried the ball wore the helmet. In winter, we made snow forts, sledded down hills on cardboard and used flat curtain rods for skis."

- Frederick M. Kovacic, age 82, Akron

"We spent many hours at Bridge Shop Field playing baseball. There were four or five baseball fields there and Timken had a softball league of their own. We played baseball for many hours. We were hoping some day to play in Cleveland. How did we get our equipment? We went to watch the big boys play. Whenever they broke a bat, we ran and got it. We took it home and nailed it together. Same way with the baseballs, when they hit hem in the creek at City Field, we jumped in the creek and got the ball. It was ours."

- Edward Machuga, age 86, Canton

"There sure wasn't much money available to be spent on entertainment, but the whole family gathered around the Philco radio to listen to Amos and Andy. Mom and Dad and Grandma and Grandpa all belonged to card clubs that met every two weeks at each other's houses to play pinochle. The women all pitched in to furnish the refreshments. If you didn't have a baby sitter, the kids went along and usually fell asleep on a spare sofa or the floor. Nobody worried about personal space. If you weren't hungry, you were happy."

- Martha McMahon, age 85, Medina

"For entertainment, mom played the organ and we would sing. We played a lot of checkers and dominos. I played the six-string guitar, one of my brothers played the jug (he blew into the opening and made it sound like a big bass fiddle) and another brother played a four-string guitar in the summer evenings on our porch. The neighbors would come over to listen, join in with their instruments or sing to what was being played. We boys would take an empty thread spool and put a rubber band through it. Then, we'd take a round piece of soap with a little hole through the center and run the the rubber band through it. (We would) wet the soap a little bit, put a small stick, about 4 inches long, through the rubber band, wind it up, set it down and watch it go. It was fun to watch it spin."

- Thomas J. Miller, age 90, Elmore

"My first job for pay was a three-day affair digging out a sewer. I got 25 cents an hour. I saved the pay. And went to Chicago to The World's Fair for 3 days. We camped on the beach at 75th St. I got home flat broke, but it was a great experience at a time when entertainment was so sparse."

- Harry G. Moll, age 92, Wauseon

"Entertainment during those times consisted of playing card and board games (including Chinese checkers) at home; visiting and, occasionally, eating with neighbors; going to church..."
and school socials and, infrequently, going to a movie in a nearby larger town. Admission was
25 cents for adults and 10 cents for children. The first movie that I remember seeing was
'Kentucky,' starring Loretta Young, Richard Greene and Walter Brennan. (My) favorite movies
featured Shirley Temple, Judy Garland and Mickey Rooney, Abbot and Costello, Laurel and
Hardy, Deanna Durbin, Roy Rogers, Gene Autry and George ‘Gabby’ Hayes. There also were
school plays at the township hall and outdoor movies (usually, cowboy westerns) in town on
Wednesday and Saturday evenings. Listening to the radio meant FDR's fireside chats, Amos 'n
Andy, The Lone Ranger, Fibber McGee, Burns and Allen, and Charley McCarthy. Even grocery
shopping in town, especially on Saturdays, became socialization with others. Rural friendliness
was evident when nearby farmers helped one another whenever crops were harvested.
Threshing grain was, in particular, similar to a social event with friendly chatter. Talk among the
threshers consisted of their views on which farm wives cooked the best and, especially, which
ones served the best pies! My mother's cooking was a favorite!"

- Wallace L. Pretzer, ag 78, Bowling Green

"We sometimes would take a bust trip vacation. (We) saw pandas at the Chicago Zoo and went
to a restaurant there where they served various separate items each on its own tray. Friends
paid $5.00 each! (We) also went to Detroit and saw Bob Hope in person from the seventh
balcony. (We) visited the Ford Co. complex and Greenfield Museum."

- James Randolph, Columbus

"Families made their own entertainment with games, popping corn, making fudge, and 'taffy
pulls.' The fellowship was great. I never heard kids say they were bored. We all worked together
to put food on the table, milk cows to bring in income to pay taxes, insurance, make needed
home repairs, paint buildings or whatever was needed. There was not an activity scheduled for
each night of the week - you looked forward to weekends. The Church had many activities
scheduled for us and we looked forward to that. Camp was the highlight when we learned
around the campfire there was a higher power than man alive and at work in the world and in
our individual hearts."

- Viola Reed, age 95, Barnesville

"People got together with parties and dancing and singing with the player piano. Parks like
Puritan Springs, Euclid Beach and Chippewas did not charge admission. We had a volunteer
band at the Triangle."

- Blossom Schmoll, age 98, Berea

"Show your family ways to entertain themselves and that to do creative things, you don't need
to buy a kit. We sorted buttons by color and made things from scrap. Whittling is a lost art, as is
tatting. Things like this have a calming effect and we don't have to take a pill to relax."

- Grace M. Schuler, age 83, Napoleon

"Cards were the entertainment and we enjoyed playing them often. There was laughter and
talking and enjoyment. Politics were talked about, as were religion and local news (maybe
called gossip!). People helped each other a lot. For children's' games, we made up our own along with hide and seek, tag, jump rope and dolls. I had no bike or roller skates. We even played with the chickens and made pets out of a few of them."

- **Marian Seilheimer, age 89, Tiffin**

"The swimming hole was an important part of our summer activities. The best place to swim was located under and below the bridge located near the country store. Our attire would be called 'skinny dipping' today. We would always post a lookout to warn us when anyone was approaching the bridge so we could get under the bridge or muddy the water."

- **William M. Shaw, age 87, Sarahsville**

"There was no radio to connect us with the outside world. Not always a paper. News came second-hand from Walker's General Store. The owners kindly allowed us to use their wall phone for local calls. During these bleak years, we depended upon our own creativities often. We did not have allowances or spending money. Church, school and 4-H made up most of our social life. Through 4-H arrangement, we saw a picture show infrequently. There were taffy pulls, card games and play parties. In the summer, croquet; in winter, sled riding on our hills and infrequently traveled roads. We made do. We were resourceful. In our parlor, a handsome piano furnished music a la my two sisters."

- **Willa B. Stanforth, age 93, Hillsboro**

"People have asked me what we did for entertainment. Dad played musical instruments: violin, banjo and harmonica. We played checkers, dominos and old maid. (We) made homemade candy and popped corn."

- **Beva Stonebreaker, age 89, Cadiz**

"We thrived on jacks, a jump rope, a bag of marbles and a Shirley Temple book. Movies at the Roxy were 10 cents. We could barely feed six kids, but we always had a dog. Specky had 12 puppies in my brother's bed! Once we dug a swimming hole and filled it with buckets of water, then jumped in from atop the step ladder. We must have been a sight of 'mud frogs' as people craned their necks in disbelief as they passed by. 'It was hot in Depression summers!'"

- **Joy Thomas, age 80, Canfield**

"We have several gangs in our neighborhood. We played softball, football and basketball, keeping out of trouble. Swimming in the Mahoning River - (We) couldn't afford the city pool. As we got older, we found ways to sneak into pools and theaters."

- **Joe Trolio, age 83, Hubbard**

"My Cousin lived next door. She and a friend were going to a movie and invited me. We were around 11 years of age. I ran back home for permission and 10 cents. Mother said absolutely not. I was devastated and cried. My tears were real and soon mother handed me 10 cents."

- **Mary Jane Willis, age 89, Wadsworth**
"I had two girlfriends across the street who had a small hill in their front yard. We used to slide down that hill in the winter snow by sitting in a coal shovel and holding onto the handle. What fun that was. On warm summer evenings, for fun, the family of one of the girls had me over and we sat around the kitchen table and sang harmony. I guess that’s where I acquired my great love of vocal music that has followed me all of my ‘alto’ life. What fun!!"
- Dolores L. Younger, age 79, Westerville

"Entertainment consisted of putting puzzles together, playing cards, singing songs and, listening to the radio. Movies were 10 cents and consisted of serials, so you would return the next week to make sure your hero didn’t fall of the cliff. Tarzan, Tom Mix and several others were the call of the day. Ice cream skyscrapers - five cents - were popular, as we had to stand in long lines waiting for that treat. Sunday bus and street car rides also were popular, as Sunday passes for 25 cents gave you the opportunity to ride all day. You would hand the pass out the rear window to your buddie, so he could ride as well."
- William L. Zurkey, age 84, Boardman

"We didn't have the entertainment the kids have today - no TVs, no computers - no electronic toys. We played jacks, running games and jumped rope. To have paper dolls, I would cut pictures of little girls from the Sears catalog. Then, I would look for pretty dresses they advertised and make them into outfits for my paper girls. Outside, we would pick clover flowers when they were in bloom and make them into necklaces and bracelets to wear while we were playing house. My brother played mumbly peg with his knife."
- Pauline Bandzk, age 91, Hubbard

"Although there was a lot of work being done, there was always room for fun. Grandpa always gets a big smile on his face when he tells me about his childhood entertainment. Ice skating, baseball, hockey, checkers, track, square dancing and free shows downtown are what he did for fun. While the kids played, the adults enjoyed playing cards, eating popcorn and drinking hard cider. These community activities brought everyone together."
- Nicole Boggs, 10th Grader at Madison Comprehensive H.S., about her grandfather, Linus Bishop, age 86, Mansfield

"During these years there was an amusement park, Olentangy Park, on High Street at the end of the trolley line in Columbus. Occasionally, we got to visit the park. A White Castle sat near the park entrance. At that time, hamburgers were five cents.. and much bigger! A half-pint carton of milk was another five cents. For 50 cents, our family of five had a 'meal.' Admission to the park was 10 cents for adults and children under twelve were free. Rides were five cents, except for the roller coaster, which was 10 cents. We children were allowed one ride, so we spent much of the time scouting out all the rides, then making our decision - which was usually the merry-go-round or the ferris wheel."
- Elinor M. Brown, age 85, Napoleon
"Despite a lack of money, Ms. Christian emphasized an abundance of creativity and imagination. Children never asked to go to the toy store; they instead made their own toys. One of her favorite toys was a makeshift scooter made out of orange crates and roller-skate wheels. They had paper airplane wars and spent hours dressing up and playing with paper dolls."
- Emma Polly, about Hallie Christian, age 87, Olmsted Falls

"For recreation in the winter we played card games and checkers, and people had parties in their homes. We would roll up the rug and square dance the night away. In the summer, we played softball in the roadway, or went swimming in the old swimming hole', which was a dammed up creek and sometimes muddy."
- Mary Cole, age 91, Cadiz

"Our complete wardrobe consisted of one pair of shoes per child and two home-sewn outfits. We didn't dare ask for money for the movies, even occasionally, as we knew the typical response would be to remind us of the essential item that money would buy. Good times were a picnic in the park with family and friends, carrying our food and drink."
- Frances Daubert, age 80, Centerville

"Our family entertainment consisted of happy family times listening to radio programs, such as 'The Lone Ranger,' 'The Green Hornet,' 'The Shadow Knows,' 'Fibber McGee and Molly' and 'Amos and Andy,' to name a few. Once in a while, Grandpa would take me to the Palm or Tivoli Theatre on Friday nights, when they had western movies. Grandpa loved cowboy movies featuring the Lone Ranger, Tom Mix, Roy Rogers and Gene Autry."
- Mary Rose DeMaria, age 83, Oregon

"We were lucky! Born in the United States of America, healthy, smart; our parents were proud of each other and of us. They taught us to use good English, to do well in school, to be polite and to behave ourselves. We enjoyed family walks in the woods or hearing our parents read good books aloud. Sometimes we sang or made up plays... we always had an audience! We had no dolls, but real babies to care for and love."
- Margaret B. Edwards, age 89, Gibsonburg

"The evenings were a delightful time for children of the Depression. The adults would turn every light off in the house and sit on the front porch. The children would play hide-and-seek with the other children. When it became too dark to play, we caught fire-flies in a glass jar."
- Josephine Fell, age 81, Columbus

"Minus having a telephone or a car, walking through lovely tree-lined Bratenahl was one source of recreation. There were 2 places during the summer we could swim for free. Five or six of us in the neighborhood would walk to one or the other of these. Being flexible in those days was a must. When we couldn't get the change to see a movie, we played card games or took long walks. Before thinking one time, I agreed to attend a prom at another school. A girlfriend graciously loaned me a formal. Hopefully, my date didn't notice the gown was a bit snug."
- Florence Field, age 91, Willoughby
"In the summer from the time I was seven years old, our mother made us a bag lunch and sent my younger sister and me off to spend the day at Morningside swimming pool. We walked along the railroad tracks about a mile and stayed all day until suppertime. We got brown as a berry and learned to swim by ourselves - no instructors. When we wanted to play ball, first we found someone with a ball, and in the case of baseball, a bat. We agreed on a vacant lot to meet and then we played, usually 'monkey move-up,' which required a minimum of only 3 or 4 players. Everyone got to play every position. When the batter was out, he went to the outfield, the catcher became the batter and the pitcher became the catcher. No adults were involved. In the summer, under the streetlight, boys and girls played various games such as elephant steps, kick the can and others with no name. We would have played half the night, but mothers made us come in. In daylight hours, we played red rover and hide and seek, plus other made-up games. Again, no adults involved."
- Russell S. Fling, age 82, Columbus

"In the 1930s, bicycles were quite scarce in our neighborhood. But, an older sister became employed and purchased a bicycle that was available to my siblings and me while she was at work. We were restricted by our parents to ride the bicycle only on our street, traveling south to the first cross street or traveling north to the first cross street. Being a young teenager, I soon learned that this was quite an attraction to many other teenagers in the neighborhood, both male and female. After beginning the ride up and down our street, you would soon see about 14 teenagers at our yard and all quite enthusiastic about the bicycle. So I developed a plan. The boys were in one line and the girls in another line. One boy would ride the bicycle and one girl would ride on the handlebars. They would make one trip around our assigned area and then return. Then it was the turn for the next boy and girl in line; doing the same route and return. This would continue until every one had been on the bicycle at least once and continue another set of rounds until we were required to return to our homes."
- Dorothy Geiger, age 82, Dublin

"My brother and I would cut grass, shovel snow, sell bottles and do other odd jobs to make money to go the movies or skating rink. Other entertainment was cards and telling ghost stories. We played games like kick the can, red rover and more."
- Charles Green, age 87, Columbus

"When we were in the 30's, our kids games were marbles. Even at school, the girls even got down at recess and played take away marble games with the boys. Then we had jump ropes (a piece of clothesline) and jacks to play with or pick up sticks. My brothers and I played cards and we played with a ball."
- Ruth Hahn-Shrayer, age 78, Holland

"My brothers were busy collecting milk bottles, hauling ashes and doing odd jobs, and they sold Christmas trees. On Saturday afternoon, they would take me to the Lyric Theater on Broadway for 10 cents. We would see a full length movie, news reel, an ongoing serial, cartoon and
coming attractions. It was the highlight of the week!"

- Ruth Jacquillard, age 83, Millbury

"I remember hearing Adolf Hitler's speeches to the German people. My uncle Edgar was a World War I veteran, and he said 'that is a man to keep your eye on' He was right! Folks in our community would gather at the Cadiz square to listen to radio broadcasts. I heard a heavyweight match between Joe Louis and Max Schmelling, which Joe Louis won in the first round by a knockout. My brother and I used to take wheels and put them on boards to make scooters; that was fun. Later, we took a job hoeing corn for fifty cents a day and bought a new bicycle. We were in seventh heaven."

- Russell G. King, age 83, Carrollton

"For entertainment in our early years and up through high school, we made our own: singing around my cousin's player piano, board and card games and the whole run of outside games including tennis (which was free), horse shoes and miniature golf (which we built ourselves). We saw free shows like the NCR School House Saturday morning free show and programs at Church - anything that was free and that we could walk to."

- Louis J. Leibold, age 93, Centerville

"In 1933 Peg Marburger and Ruth Ross planned a trip to Chicago. Peg often mentioned to me that I should go with them. I never took it seriously. One evening, after work, Peg said, 'We are leaving in the morning, at 4. Can't you go?' The wheels in my head began to turn. I went to the telephone office (where I worked) and asked Mrs. Thompson if I could leave for 10 days. She said, 'If your dad says so.' I went home and asked Mom and Dad, and he said, 'If you spend your own money.' By now it was 9 p.m. By 4 the next morning, I was on my way to Chicago... Ruth was driving the Marburgers' Exxco car. Every time we filled the gas tank, we put a quart of oil in the engine. Eight hours later we were in Chicago. Ruth meant to visit relatives, but spent some days with Peg and me at the Fair. Peg and I had a room near the fair area. Sally Ran, nude with her ostrich feather fan, was a big attraction. The Cab Calloway band was another. A trip I'll always remember."

- Verna Mauer, age 98, Bolivar

"Admission to the theater on Main Street was 10 cents and our families didn't have the money to give us. If we only earned a dime, we went to the dairy to buy one milkshake and two straws. There was a bakery on Main Street, and in the window was a tray of red skin peanuts. There were tiny paper bags and a small glass, and for five cents I could buy a glassful of my favorite snack to place in one of the bags. During high school, my friends and I would go home by way of Ritchey's, the teen hang out. For 10 cents I could buy the best hamburger I have ever tasted. If I was fortunate enough to have an extra five cents, I could get a cherry coke. I worked at Ritchey's weekends and, for Friday evening and all day Saturday, I earned $2.50."

- Jeannette Mellot, age 78, Plymouth
"Toys were at a premium. We used to find a bushel basket, knock the bottom out of it, nail it up on some garage and that was our basketball net. To play football, we could not afford equipment, so we just played without it."

- Raymond J. Mock, age 85, Centerville

"We had no TV until I was about 18. We had a small radio to hear Red Skeleton, 'Fibber McGee and Molly,' 'The Lone Ranger,' 'Stop The Music' was time for all the family (including my grandparents, who lived with us) to listen. My grandparents used the two bedrooms upstairs for their bedroom and kitchen. My sister and I shared the other bedroom."

"A sled was a sheet of cardboard and McKinley Monument was the best hill. The park to play in was Water Works Park. In the summer, it was Myers Lake Park for the grocery store picnic. Ice cream from Islays was an extra treat once or twice a year in the summer - my Grandmother always bought. The ice man gave us all chunks of ice from his truck. We also had a milk man and a bread man, when we could afford them. We took rides in the car on Sunday afternoon and walked to church every Sunday morning. Watching movies a couple times a year at Dueber Theater was an extra special treat. We played, kick the can, hide and seek, tag, hop scotch, red rover, jump rope, etc. There were a lot of fun times, as everybody shared the same hard times. We kids really didn't know we were poor."

- Doris Portmann, age 76, Navarre

"Sundays were quiet days. We went to church in the morning and night. My mother baked a cake and dressed a chicken Saturday morning, which was ready for Sunday dinner. In the afternoon, we often took an automobile ride in our Ford or visited friends and relatives. Picnics and family reunions were popular. Movies and radio were about the only entertainment available. In Greenfield, the Wednesday afternoon nine-cent matinee was very popular. The women flocked to them while the men were working. Feature movies were shown at night. A few gifted men built their own radios and crystal sets. I remember the first one I ever saw; it was quite large. We made a lot of our own entertainment. In high school, I was part of a group of seven or eight that got together often with friends to have a party whenever one of us had a birthday or it was a holiday. We gathered at one of our homes, played games and had refreshments. Besides the parties, we had picnics in the summer, gathered nuts in the fall and went sledding in the winter. An occasional treat was a day at the Cincinnati Zoo with a picnic dinner. The monkeys, with their antics, were the favorite attraction."

- Helen Cook Railer, age 95, Burlington, IN (formerly of Greenfield)

"Dad made us some toys and we would spend time at night before bed time playing games. Mom would sit by the kerosene lamp and read letters or stories out of a book for us. They loved us so much. At bed time, she would get bricks out of the oven on cold nights and wrap them in towels and put them in our beds to warm up the bed and keep us warm. There was no heat in our bedroom or insulation in the ceiling, walls or floor, so it got very cold."

- Carl Reed, age 76, Malvern
"We made most of our play things, such as a wooden scooter out of 2x4s by separating a single roller skate. We rolled a metal hoop with a handmade, wooden, inverted T-stick. We played 'peggy' with an old broomstick. We cut off the bottom 12 inches for the peg, which we leaned against a brick, then we tapped the peg into the air and attempted to hit it with the stick. Few kids had a bicycle; My oldest brother had one to deliver Western Union Telegrams. Later, my older sister, next oldest brother and I shared the bicycle."
- **Willis Ryan, age 90, Toledo**

"For recreation, a man from Morenci sponsored roller skating parties in the Grange Hall near the school. Young and old joined in the fun, along with several eligible bachelors! A few years later, I married one of those bachelors. Never lacking for fun, we ice skated on the lake, enjoyed hay rides and bobsled parties, went to the movie theaters for a dime a ticket, played cards and went dancing at Devil’s Lake. Some of the kids even went swimming in the Maumee River."
- **Hazel Schroeder, age 97, Wauseon**

"We entertained ourselves, playing board games, outdoor hide-and-seek type of games, roller skating as fast as we could around the block or listening to radio serials such as 'Don Winslow of the Navy' or 'Jack Armstrong.' We read a lot of books from the library. We learned about the outside world from LIFE magazine, a large glossy format that was a veritable history of memorable photographs. The swimming pool season ticket was $2. Going to a movie cost a dime. There was no air conditioning, but the Ohio Theater was comfortably 'air cooled' with fans blowing across blocks of ice. Broughton's Ice Cream had sodas and sundaes for 12 cents, while an ice cream cone was a nickel. S. S. Kresge was full of wondrous items you could buy for a nickel or dime, many of them now collector's items."
- **Esther G. Schwartz, age 77, Columbus**

"There was an ice house on the corner of Nevada and Parker, and we kids would go there to get free chunks of ice. Sometimes in the summer, we went there and got chips of ice to make our own ice cream. We all took turns grinding it until done, but what a treat it was for us! Our toys were mostly handmade. My brothers made their scooters out of orange crates and wheels, when they could find them. We girls made our own dancing dolls out of hollyhocks. What imaginations! For adult entertainment, Friday nights was usually Pinochle night with the neighbors, at their house or ours. We never had a sitter, so when it was at the neighbors, my brothers watched me. We played games such as hide and seek with a candle lit to find each other - it's a wonder we never started any fires! Also, my brothers made a basketball net over their bedroom door from a box and, having no ball, they used my favorite muff - I hated that!"
- **Mary Johnson Shank, age 77, Toledo**

"Entertainment came from imagination and the Sears catalog. Children played all sorts of outdoor games, such as tag, and indoor parlor games, such as 'I spy with my little eye' and 'upset the fruit basket,' which is a game in which one child tries to claim a seat in a circle (there is one less chair than children) by giving every child a fruit name and commanding certain fruits to get up and change places, thus setting off a scramble for a chair. The catalog was the source
for paper dolls, which my mother and her older sister, Marie, cut out and glued on saved cardboard. If the doll wanted to change outfits, the one doll merely went into the 'closet area' and then came out as another doll, cut out from a different page, with a 'new' outfit on."

- Amy Adler, about her mother, Ferne Smith, age 89, Elyria

"I went to the library during these days - we weren't bored. We made up games: jacks, marbles, jump the rope, hopscotch. We learned to use our imaginations. We sang and had fun. Fun was walking to the library or art museum and 10-cent movies, where it was a double feature and even gave you a dish. There was lots of walking, but we didn't mind. Our fun was riding the trolleys from end to end on a hot day."

- Mildred Sterberg, Tiffin

"Most of the commercial radios those days were large floor models. I remember 'watching' the Cincinnati Reds on such a radio, back when Bucky Walters was a pitcher for the Reds. The whole family would gather in front of that radio to listen to President Franklin Delano Roosevelt's Fireside Chats. We were never bored and we could always find something to do. We played with other children in the neighborhood, playing such outside games as kick the can, hide and seek, red rover and golf (using a tin can in the ground for the hole, discarded golf balls from the golf course and an old golf club Curtis found). For indoor entertainment, we played jacks, checkers, and Chinese checkers. During 'checker time,' we often enjoyed some of the popcorn that was grown in our small garden. Our Dad played the fiddle, banjo and mandolin. His friends, Pete LeMay and George Goforth, played guitar and bass fiddle. They would often gather at our house and enjoy a night of music. Ours was a home full of love, fun and music."

- Wanda Stubbart, age 78, Columbus, Vic Thomas, age 83, Middletown and Kathleen Lambert, age 80, Middletown

"In the 30's there was radio (no TV), which brought good stories to your home. Joe Lewis prize fights were big deals. For amusement, neighbors would get together with their musical instruments, play monopoly or penny-ante poker. I remember great euchre games at my grandma's farm house. My dad and mom decided I should take guitar lessons at the Calbourne School at Town and High St. The lessons were $1.25 per week, which also guaranteed a paid-for guitar after awhile. It turned out to be a tremendous task to try to get $1.25 per week. We made a lot of our toys, such as rubber inner tube guns and orange crate racers, and I even made a kayak out of orange crates and canvas. We went fishing a lot. We would gather soft crawls in the rivers and could find good night crawlers in our lawns (before insecticides killed most of them). Fishing and hunting back then was better than now."

- William Thompson, age 80, Columbus

"I was about 4 or 5 years old when the Beacon Journal came out with a cardboard cutout doll. Every Sunday, they would print outfits to fit her. I believe her name was Betsy. I lived for Sundays just to get new clothes for her and my sister, and I would play for hours with her. We never knew about toys."

- Maxine Vargo, age 80, Akron
"As children, we created our own toys. With hollyhocks, we made colorful dolls using discarded Campfire marshmallow boxes and round cardboard lids from quart milk bottles. We constructed a wagon for our hollyhock dolls. These were all for free. We invented other pasttime activities. Our imaginations went wild. We rode bikes for transportation, or just walked. We got exercise and didn't know it was healthy. No TV, no computers or cell phones; we played outdoors and got our vitamin C and D. In winter, we froze, had chapped hands and legs, red noses and wet and soggy clothes, but we still grabbed a sled. The snow fell and we headed for the nearest hill. We took ice skates and tested the ice on the city park pond. We gathered around a pot-belly stove to dry and had hot chocolate to warm us."

- June A. Young, age 84, Worthington

"I remember that, every Saturday morning, we went up to market and mother bought food and Dad took us to the 10-cent store to look around while mom shopped. When Mom was through, we put the food in the car and dad took us to Coonsie's on High St. for baked beans and hot dogs. Then, we went to the Southern Theater to see a movie. This was the extent of our wonderful weekend. Sunday, we went to Sunday School at our church, Thurman Avenue Methodist Church, where I still attend when I am able."

- Dorothy Zubovich, age 85, Columbus

Public Assistance and Government Relief During the Great Depression

"There was no unemployment compensation, no social security, no Medicare, no health or any groups that would help. You lost it (a job) and when you lost it there was no place to go. There are a lot of people today perfectly willing for the government to take care of them and that is the bulk of the problem. They are getting the checks, of course. Now remember, we never got that, that never was there. But we also had situations where we knew how to take care of ourselves. I'm not sure that a lot of young people figure they can. They are learning and they are learning pretty fast."

- Dean Bailey age 82, Lordstown

"We had to go on welfare. I hated to wear the welfare clothes because everyone could spot them and would make fun of us. I could not afford school books so the school board loaned them to me, and at the end of the term I had to pay for any damages. I remember I was taking industrial art class and could not pay for the wood. The teacher gave me scraps of wood to use, and this was very demeaning. I could not play any sports because the equipment cost too much. I became very envious of the few who could afford these things. In approximately 1936, F.D.R. started the W.P.A.. This was run by the government, and men were hired and paid to do construction and public works. Dad was hired and this made things a little better. The wages were small, but it put food on the table. I remember sitting on the front yard watching my Dad and other men laying bricks for our street. I must have been about 10 years old."

- Robert Bohyer, age 84, Lima
"Recently, I've heard commentators refer disparingly to the W.P.A. and the P.W.A. I saw lots of evidence that it provided jobs at the time, and facilities that are still around today. The Akron Rubber Bowl was built by them. People did kid about them, good naturedly. The W.P.A. was often said to mean 'We Poke Along,' rather than the Works Progress Administration. And, P.W.A. supposedly meant 'Poppa Works Again,' rather than Public Works Administration."
- James T. Canning, age 82, Mansfield

"They didn't have any money to buy the things in the stores downtown, so she rarely went into the stores. If they needed anything, they went to the local thrift stores or to welfare. One time, her shoes broke and she didn't have money to buy any new shoes, so she went to welfare. She had to sign a bunch of papers and, in her words, 'sign her life away,' just to get a pair of shoes. When she finally received the shoes, they were four sizes too big, but she didn't care. She said, 'Even though they fell off my feet if I didn't tie them real tight, they were something between my skin and the ground below me so I was happy.' She said that things like this happened on a normal basis, so she learned many things, including how to appreciate what you have and not want more than you need."
- Meg Denman, sophomore at Madison Comprehensive High School, about her grandmother, Marcella Denman, age 92, Mansfield

"Our neighbor teenage boy worked for the C.C.C., one of the many successful programs of F.D.R. He was sent to a work camp in California and worked in a forest, and the government sent the pay each month home to the parents. My grandpa got a job on the W.P.A., cleaning up and beautifying the roadsides with grass and bushes. We were so lucky to have his income."
- Audrey Dvorak, age 75, Gates Mills

"The government had to help, too. For a number of years, the county paid my father one-fourth of the previously charged rent for the tenants who were unemployed. An agricultural agent taught and helped students at an old brooklyn school how to plant, care for and harvest a garden. These, near the school, produced lettuce, peas, beans, beets, kohlrabi, swiss chard, etc. My unemployed uncle was amazed and grateful for the produce my cousin brought home. This cousin's eldest sister willingly became the 'breadwinner' for that family of five children with two parents."
- Florence Field, age 91, Willoughby

"Times were difficult, people were starving, and there was a lot of stealing. My father joined a program of tattooing farm animals. We did this for two years, and as I remember some farmers did not participate, and the practice failed. However, I still have the unit that was used to tattoo the animals. Also at this time, a farmer shot at a father and 9-year-old son stealing potatoes. The father shot at them and killed the young boy. When this news hit the newspapers, we began to see churches and other groups starting soup kitchens and other events to help people out."
- Alfred M. Glass, Cambridge
"Men out of work could work for the W.P.A. during the 30's. They came in the coldest days of winter to clean the trees and brush out of the ditch (creek) that ran along my parent's home. My parents felt sorry for the men and asked them into their house to warm up by the wood stove fire over their lunch hour and gave them the hot coffee, tea or hot chocolate to drink."
- Ruth Hahn-Shrayer, age 78, Holland

"In a strange way, the Great Depression actually improved our lives. Upon graduation from high school, I couldn't find a job, so I joined the National Youth Administration in 1937. For the work we did, each of us received a check for $25 dollars! It was so much money in those days. I remember proudly handing over each check to my mother. The entire amount more than met our needs. I am so appreciative because the N.Y.A. enabled me to continue my violin lessons and gave me a place to play with other young aspiring musicians."
- Mildred M. Jacobs, age 89, Columbus

"When President Roosevelt began the C.C.C. (Civilian Conservation Corps) in March of 1933, I was among the first group of young guys to join. The age limit was 17 to 30. I was just 15. I was so desperate to join, I lied about my age. Over a three-year period, I was in four various C.C.C. camps throughout the country. Two in Ohio, one in Idaho and one in Yellowstone Park, WY."
- Alex James, age 91, Columbus

"My oldest brother worked under W.P.A. as a timekeeper on a highway. Now Highway #10 passed our home. Another brother was in a C.C.C. camp in the state of Washington felling trees. A sister had business training and got a secretarial job under National Youth Administration at our Court House."
- Wilda Jones, Obetz

"Money was scarce and I remember walking downtown with my brother Joe to get free food from the surplus store. We would never know what we would get - sometimes grapefruit juice or prunes or canned stew meat that could contain horse meat."
- Frederick M. Kovacic, age 82, Akron

"I was born in 1926 and was seven years old when the Depression had a severe affect on my family. My Father left my Mother without child support when I was three years old. I had an invalid sister three years older and a younger sister one year old. My Mother cleaned houses and beauty parlors to put food on the table. We had to go on relief in order to survive. I still remember going two miles, pulling a little red wagon and the wheels were ready to fall off, to City Hall to get our monthly ration of old potatoes and canned mutton."
- Loise Norling Maccioli, age 83, Louisville

"It seemed impossible, to these adults during this time, to believe that they would ever prosper again. My dad would stand for hours in what was called a 'soup line' where he would get a free bowl of broth for lunch and hopefully a slice of bread. People begged on the street corners and sold pencils for a penny."
- Marilyn Markle, age 79, North Royalton
"(I remember) the presidential campaign and landslide victory of Franklin D. Roosevelt over Alf Landon in 1933. Roosevelt helped start the recovery after the Great Depression by setting up the New Deal with Civilian Conservation Corps, National Recovery Act, National Industrial Recovery Act, Civil Works Administration, Public Works Administration and the Committee for Industrial Organization, with John L. Lewis, with the bush eyebrows. The CIO president was known for saying 'President Roosevelt wants you to join the union.'"

- Olda Morrison, age 91, Youngstown

"I decided to go to a Civilian Conservation Corp camp in order to help support the family. This camp was run by the government to have young boys work to help support the family. I made $30.00 a month; $22.00 went to my family and I only got $8.00 a month. I had to leave school in the middle of the 12th grade to go to the C.C.C. Camp. Several years later, I took a course and completed my schooling, getting my diploma."

- Ed Persino, Niles

"(Dad) wore out many of the shoes that were given out to the people on relief. He said if they got wet, they fell apart. They were pressed cardboard. Tennis shoes were a little rubber and canvas soaked in paint."

- David Rizzo, age 66, Sagamore Hills

"I remember the soup kitchens. Every two weeks you would be eligible to receive 1/2 gal milk, flour, rice, potatoes and bread. Our family was fortunate that we did not have to use this hand out. I remember the W.P.A. They were responsible for putting men to work. They poured cement for all the streets in Shadyside, Ohio. My younger brother worked for Belmont Tumbler Glass Factory. His pay check consisted of half cash and half script (certificate that took the place of money). The problem with script was that many of the merchants would not accept this as a form of payment. This created a hardship for many families."

- Matthew Sabatina, age 94, Akron

"We were poor when I was a child. But just about everyone was. When things were real bad, we pulled our little wagon to the Relief Agency for food and often wore clothes they provided."

- Evelyn Skala, age 80, Cleveland

"My father worked in a steel mill in Newton Falls. It shut down. There was no income. (Then,) he worked with the W.P.A. I remember playing out at recess and saw my daddy with a shovel. I ran to hug him and he said 'Go back, pretend you don't know me.' How sad! He was eligible for free food - canned beef, flour, sugar, rice, etc. There was no $$ for gas so he had to walk 10 miles to get the food. I remember him walking on the ice in the Mahoning River, which ran back of our farm house."

- Rita Suter, age 85, Canton

"Clothing, we got help from the Welfare Department. The good clothes we wore to church and school. Most of the time we wore patched clothes and tennis shoes and no socks. Ma made
clothes for the girls - dresses and skirts."

- **Joe Trolio, age 83, Hubbard**

"After graduation I did nothing as there was just no work for single men. In August, a friend of mine whose family was on relief (now known as welfare) had received a notice about joining the C.C.C. This was a single male program for ages 18 and over whose family was on relief. My family was not on relief and I was told there was little chance of me being accepted but did take my application. Shortly after, I received a notice to report to an armory. Upon reporting, I was told my application had been approved as each county had been allotted a certain number of enrollees and my county was below its quota. I spent over 2 years in this program. We were paid $30.00 per month - $25.00 was sent directly to our parents. Each enrollee was paid $5.00, but we had a roof over our heads, three meals per day and either too large or too small excess army clothing. It was rough, but I enjoyed most of it and it made a man out of me, prepared me for army service and, most of all, it helped my parents. Sorry to say, but I lied about my age. I was only 17 - 25 days short of the required age of 18."

- **Robert Vensel, age 92, Canton**

"Well, the W.P.A. came about and people were given work. My mom, being a seamstress, worked making clothing for men, women and children, even inmates. She soon worked up as supervisor and made more money. I even worked after school and while in high school in the office. It helped me get my year book. They had a program I worked at called N.Y.A., and I worked making street signs, and soon became timekeeper. I am thankful for those hard times. It teaches you to be a careful spender and live within your means."

- **Mary Williams, age 87, Toledo**

"When my brother, Earl, was about 16 years old, he participated in the C.C.C. (Civilian Conservation Corps), a government-sponsored, make-work program for young men during the Depression. He and a friend went to Idaho to work; tasks involved building roads, bridges and fire towers, doing erosion control work and planting trees. They were fed by the C.C.C. and paid approximately $30 per month for their services."

- **Betty Banta, age 80, Columbus**

"I remember the soup lines. No work or money was available in those days. We grew all our vegetables and killed our chickens and beef. When we went to the soup lines, we got a pail of broth, came home and put our fresh vegetables in the pot. We had stamps to get sugar and flour. We also got cheese and butter."

- **Margaret O. Brawley, age 86, Youngstown**

"Yes, we went to school many times hungry. Dad would never accept charity. My brother went to White Cross Hospital one day asking for food. When they got ready to fix him a plate, he said 'It's not for me. It's for my family.' When they investigated, they saw no food or coal and sent bags of groceries and loads of coal to the house. Dad was boiling mad when he got home and saw this. About that time, the Salvation Army sergeant drove up and gave Dad some money. He
said 'I don't take charity.' The sergeant replied 'This is not charity. It's a gift.' Dad accepted, and we were in church every Sunday. Later, he saved enough money to give the church a station wagon for their use."

- **Sally Carrico-Baum, age 75, Columbus**

"I remember Franklin D. Roosevelt being elected president. Around that time, the government started several work programs. One of them was called P.W.A., meaning Public Works Administration. My husband took this work and traveled from home, painting buildings with a crew of men. There were other crews of men who traveled buildings and bridges."

- **Josephine DiBell, age 103, Cortland**

"Finally, (Dad) was hired as a carpenter by the W.P.A. (Works Progress Administration) at $70 a month in 1937. Shortly afterward, the bank informed us that our house would be repossessed because of non-payment of the mortgage. Dad found a suitable duplex for sale in the neighborhood, and my aunt sent us a thousand dollars for a down-payment. When he approached the HOLC (Home Owners' Loan Corporation) for a mortgage, however, Dad was denied a loan because his house had been foreclosed. So we were in a catch-22: we needed a house because our house was being foreclosed, but we couldn't get a house because our house was foreclosed. So I, aged 17 at that time, wrote a letter to Eleanor Roosevelt, the President's wife, explaining our dilemma. We were pleasantly surprised when the HOLC wrote us (we couldn't afford a telephone) asking my father to come in to apply for a loan."

- **Jean Elsner, age 89, South Euclid**

"I had several friends whose families were on welfare. That department was operated by two people. Their assistance amounted to a bag of potatoes, flour, corn meal, eggs, bread, etc. They were happy for that."

- **Millie Gavitt, age 91, Fremont**

"My brother graduated in 1931, when jobs were impossible to find. We heard about C.C.C. for young men. You had to be a welfare recipient to go there. My parents had always supported their family by hard work and making every penny count. However, my dad applied for welfare, and my brother was accepted. I think he got the great sum of $30 a month, most of which was sent home to his family. He learned to type and was able to get a job in Washington, D.C."

- **Mary Elizabeth Stillwagon Glass, age 88, Cambridge**

"Around that time, the government formed the W.P.A., putting people to work building outhouses, roads and bridges, mowing yards, and doing anything that was needed. The C.C.C. camp for younger men was formed, teaching them a career. But you did need to work to receive payment - no work no pay. In retrospect, people helped people. Government did not pay grandparents for babysitting, nor family for nursing care, nor stimulus, nor food banks. Families relied on families."

- **Louis Hughes, age 85, Marion**
"Dad said our worst time was when he had to apply for relief assistance. We had moved to Cresceus Heights on Navarre Ave., in east Toledo. We raised chicken and made a garden. We were supplied with such necessities as flour, corn meal, dried fruit, sugar, canned milk and other things. Mom baked bread, made jelly and prepared food for winter. At times, some folks would hop the slow-moving coal trains nearby and throw off coal. People would fill their sacks to fuel the potbelly stoves that heated our homes."
- Ruth Jacquillard, age 83, Millbury

"There were some that used the government programs such as C.C.C., W.P.A. and P.W.A., but my father was not in favor of that. We traded produce with some stores for clothing and sometimes for shoes, but my father was able to make shoes from the leather from hides that he processed himself."
- Myron Johnson, Barnesville

"My Dad was a skilled tradesman and a builder, and was out of work starting in the fall of 1929. There was no unemployment insurance or other aid available. All savings, including my $34 college fund, were used completely. Even the furniture was disassembled searching for long-lost coins. Excellent character and good credit reputation provided coal and food until spring of 1930. Finally, city relief (a bitter experience for proud parents) gave us basic food. A two-week supply included four pounds of navy beans and three pounds of green peas. With these ingredients, we had soup made without meat five nights a week, every week. We were given enough corn meal and oatmeal, which we had for breakfast. Our brown bag lunches were peanut butter sandwiches. We had plenty of bread and milk for a healthy, yet boring diet."
- Bernard L. Kasten, age 90, Lucas

"I was determined I would never be so poor that I had to make a sale to buy lunch, so I started saving a few dollars a week. Many people had lost trust in banks, so a savings account program, called Postal Savings, was started through the post office. As people began to learn more about FDIC, and no bank had closed for a couple of years, money started to return to the bank and eventually Postal Savings was dropped in the 1940s."
- John Lamb, via e-mail

"In 1932, FDR was elected President and, even though he wasn't inaugurated until March of 1933, he and his Cabinet were hard at work devising plans for the Recovery that he had promised. When he took office, they were ready to start immediately. My dad had been meeting his mortgage payments but was worried about the banking situations, and when FDR closed the banks, he immediately began to investigate how best to save our home. President Roosevelt had a list of plans ready and we were bombarded with Initials for each of them: F.H.A., W.P.A., P.W.A., C.C.C., etc. Dad was able to arrange for a new mortgage with F.H.A. and all was well."
- Mildred Malare, age 91, Toledo
"The W.P.A. worked on the road. They also helped to build the new school that I graduated from in 1938. Some people looked down on the W.P.A. workers and derided them by saying they leaned on their shovels and that W.P.A. stood for 'We Piddle Away.' The W.P.A. families were 'on relief.' The government gave commodities to them. Once a week, a truck delivered the foodstuff to the town and the country people walked there and got it. It was just one thing; sometimes it was cheese, sometimes it was oranges. Once, it was grapefruit; those poor people had never seen a grapefruit before. I heard that one woman said she tried cooking it every way she knew how and it never was fit to eat."
- Beulah Milbern, age 88, Monroe

"My Father worked for H.I. Spicker Company when he was laid off as a Traffic Manager. There was little construction at the time and he was forced to 'go on relief.' My Father walked from home and rode the street car to get food on Dorr St., near Detroit Ave. My sister, Virginia, and I would meet him at Lawnview and Dorr with our wagon. The three of us would walk back home. One time, my father borrowed my Grandfather's old Ford to get the groceries. The people handing out the food, questioned him regarding him having a car. There were five children at that time, plus Mother and Father. My mother made delicious meals from the food given to us. Believe me, we had little meat, no shrimp or fancy food. We didn't get to buy with stamps, we ate what we were given."
- Margaret Brazzil Perkins, age 95, Toledo

"Living in a small town during the Great Depression meant we had no bread lines and no soup kitchens that were to be found in larger metropolitan areas. But there was an effect, nonetheless. The most important word at the time was PRIDE. People did not want their neighbors to know that they were in need, they wanted to continue to be self sufficient. They did not want to be seen going to the commissary to collect a few cans of white label meats or fruits. All they wanted was a job and an opportunity to make a living and support their families."
- Bob Reichard, age 86, Willoughby

"Through the W.P.A., aid from veterans organizations and community gardens provided by the city, we survived. No one griped, other than an occasional 'that S.O.B. Hoover' from my mother. I do remember my father coming home from his W.P.A. job one wintry morning, his ears twice their normal size from frost bite."
- Tony Rugare, age 83, Highland Heights

"My father lined up for the free food line on Wednesday, and it was a three-pound can of beef, butter and dry beans, and cheese. Our grocery store (Shafts), where you put the bill 'on the book' until you had enough to pay, is still here."
- Blossom Schmoll, age 98, Berea

"I recall the fireside chats in which President Roosevelt talked to the American people and offered reassurance during those difficult times. In order to put men back to work, much was
accomplished in our town through the federal W.P.A. - a list of the projects that I can see today yet: two new concrete bridges, two state routes in the city, a new modern sports stadium and a new combined city hall, police and fire station. Another example of the works projects was the 'turning of the bricks' on a few of our residential brick streets. Over many years prior, the bricks became somewhat rounded, similar to the appearance of cobblestoned streets, as a result of years of wear from horse-drawn buggies, wagons, etc. Large numbers of jobless men would be hired to turn the bricks 180 degrees, which would then reveal the reverse, flat side of the brick. Another works project that was created during FDR's first and second terms in office: young men joined the C.C.C., a works project that my brother-in-law entered. His unit was involved in forestry and the work made men of them."

- Richard J. Steinmetz, age 78, Tiffin

"You must also remember we had no viable social programs in place back then, as we do today. My father died at age 76. He was in the hospital for about two weeks before he died. He worked all his life, six days a week, and kept his books and sent out bills on Sunday. Evenings often were spent bidding on jobs. He never applied for Social Security, which was then in place, neither did my mother, who died later. They were both Republicans and felt the government was on the wrong track... I did have one uncle who did not share my dad's view. He was called 'Red.' Was it his hair or his party affiliation?"

- Ferd Thoma, age 82, Newton Falls

"When things got really severe, Dad applied to the county for some allowance for food and for a short time, we were allowed $1 each per month for food necessities. When I was 15 years old, I dropped out of school for a year to work in a small grocery store. My earnings for a 60 hour week were $3, and my father saved it till, after three months, he could take it and buy a cow. At last we had milk for our porridge, cream for the wild strawberries we picked and butter on our hot homemade bread."

- Margaret Vail, age 86, Mansfield

"Since there were no other safety nets in those days (such as unemployment benefits, workmen's compensation, Social Security, etc.), we were 'on relief' for a time. It was sort of like food stamps: we could get bulk flour and some other staples. However, to receive relief, my father was told he was not allowed to drive his car. He agreed to this, but told the authorities that if his sons become sick, he would drive them to the doctor. (Can you imagine this happening today?)"

- Elmer Viertel, age 78, Canton

"The C.C.C. camp and W.P.A. were introduced then. Men and young boys were able to work through these programs. The W.P.A. men built our new High School football bleachers and the city park rest rooms. Many a boy just out of school joined the Navy not to see the world, but to relieve the family of feeding them."

- June A. Young, age 84, Worthington
Finances, Money and Making Ends Meet During the Great Depression

"Well, we did not have credit cards or direct deposit so our Parents (both of whom worked) were paid in cash, and then at home we had envelopes for rent, gas, electric, phone, groceries, insurance and, finally, savings. That lasted through the war years. The rule was 'you don't need it unless you can pay cash for it.'"
- John Batista, Dayton

"We had a grocery store. We owned three houses aside from our store, and those days, you did not have Social Security. You bought rentals. The bank took all three of our homes. They were rented and were paying, but they took the homes and closed the banks. The sign on the bank said 'closed.' Those are some of my thoughts along the way. The interesting part was the poor people had integrity. That was terrific. My Granddad ran a book, and when payday came, the poor people would come and pay him. Granddad had a stack of them."
- Robert Brenner, age 92, Toledo

"A year or two before the 'crash' (my parents) bought a newly built house in a nice neighborhood for $5,000. Dad, a Scot, was proud to become an American Citizen and the future looked bright. In 1933, that all changed and we lost the house (No bailouts!). Years later, Mom told me that if they thought the Depression would be short lived, they might have been able to make house payments out of savings, but there was no way to predict that. So, they found a rental in a decent neighborhood and struggled to survive."
- James T. Canning, age 82, Mansfield

"After several years, my father was employed as a delivery man for an office machine company. Following some time of not making enough money to keep up with the debts incurred during unemployment, my parents declared bankruptcy. Their pride had held them back from doing this, since it was considered a shameful thing to do. Clearing this debt, though, enabled them to move forward financially. In the meantime, the landlord, who was a bachelor, decided to move in and take advantage of some good home cooking in order to cancel the rent debt. He was a very obnoxious person to have at dinner. Then he went to his special locked-door room for the evening."
- Margaret B. Carver, age 91, Cortland

"During World War II, many parents worked double and triple overtime in Defense Plants and had money to spend - but there were very few domestic products being produced, so there was nothing to spend that money on (except War Bonds). And ration stamps limited your choices for those products that WERE available"
- Juanita Coulson, age 76, London

"'Quick, Doris Ann! Get over here and hide behind the icebox!' That is my most lasting impression of the Depression. I was born in 1931, two years after the stock market crash."
Hiding behind the icebox in the kitchen became a weekly task to avoid the bill collector who made his rounds of the many homes occupied by people unable to pay their bills on time.
- Doris V. Curmode, age 78, Columbus

"The worst year for us was when Dad had to start selling trees from the woods to the lumber company for money to carry us through the winter, until the vegetables and apples came in again the next summer. Near spring, we had one huge tree which Dad had saved, hoping he would not have to cut it down to sell. It stood at the end of the lane at the edge of the peach orchard. Money was still short, so the tree had to go. It was like losing one of the family. But after that year, things started gradually improving and work began to pick up."
- Donna Jean Donovan, age 83, Massillon

"Even now, I close my eyes and see my parents seated at the kitchen table, my mother sobbing convulsively. It was 1933 and President Franklin D. Roosevelt had just declared a 'bank holiday.' The Union Trust Bank had closed and we had lost our lifetime savings - all 400 dollars!"
- Jean Elsner, age 89, South Euclid

"You'd make $30 for a week's work. But my husband and I both worked and we did just fine. We bought a house and paid it off in half the time. And we always had a decent car. We put our money to good use. If you know how to manage it, you can make it."
- Magnolia Fielder, age 93, Cincinnati

"Dad made a truck - we called it Ajax - from a Model-T car. We heated our irons on the cook stove and ran them across newspaper to test them for scorching. We had a milk and egg route. Milk was eight cents a quart, and dressed chickens were 10 cents each, or 15 cents if mom cut them up. We tithed 50 cents a week to our church. The minister made $15.00 a week and all the chicken and eggs we could give him."
- Mary Alice Foster, age 89, Reynoldsburg

"My father was buying a home, there was not enough money for everything. So he went to the bank and made a deal to pay only the interest on his home: $10 a month."
- Charles Green, age 87, Columbus

"One of my first memories was walking with my father when I was ten years old in 1929 to the Pennsylvania Bank and Trust on Fifth Avenue in Pittsburgh. We heard that the bank was closing, so he was anxious to withdraw his $12 balance. I remember that a crowd had already formed in front of the bank and that people were pushing on the locked doors in desperation. The bank was closed. My father never, ever, forgot that he lost the princely sum of $12 on that day."
- Mildred M. Jacobs, age 89, Columbus

"My mom baked bread to sell. One day, the bread was mixed, in pans covered with dishcloths to raise. A knock on the door saw a man from the gas company. He said he was to turn off the gas because of delinquency of the bill. My mother begged him to let her bake her bread and then she could pay the bill. He refused, so mom took the bread to a neighbor who let her bake
the bread. It was a rude awakening for me."

- Dorothy Harriet Lyons Jones, age 85, Youngstown

"They wasn't money anyway, so you couldn't buy a thing. No credit card, food stamp. Credit cards are the down fall of this nation. People think thing they are going to bring them happiness, but they don't."

- Leola Kearney, age 81, Lima

"Mother got paid every other week. Mr. Volsky had 'the book' at his store. People who didn't have money to pay for their groceries on any given week had a page in The Book. Purchases were entered and erased when the bills were paid. Then, Mr. Volsky would start a new page for the family. This was a necessary but very embarrassing situation for my parents and our neighbors, but it was a viable solution for trying times."

- Mina Kulber, age 86, Lyndhurst

"In 1929 the Union Trust Bank closed. This was the bank my dad used for his business and where I had my school savings account. I suppose there might have been a few weeks he didn't get paid. He had to borrow against an insurance policy to meet the payroll. I never knew if he missed a rent payment and, if so, our landlord, who lived next door, would have been patient, as they were like grandparents to us kids. After the Depression had progressed for a few years, our rent was reduced from $25.00 to $20.00. The first act in the liquidation of the bank was in paying off the school savings accounts. We always had food on the table and mother could always come up with something if a person came to the door asking for something to eat. There was always a nickel for Sunday school and a nickel for the weekly deposit to the school savings account. My dad had to give up our car in 1932 because he couldn't afford to pay rent for the garage and the other related expenses in operating a car. He walked back and forth to work which must have been two miles. He didn't buy another car until 1937 after I was out of high school."

- Richard E. Lee, age 90, Centerville

"My grandparents that lived with us would receive a notice occasionally, and Grandma Eva would get on a bus and transfer several times to go to a bank called 'The Guardian Trust.' She would take a very old, beat-up bank book with a $0.00 balance showing. All of their money had been lost in the crash, but they said that the bank made a promise to pay everyone back, over time, therefore a few dollars that was accumulated brought the customers back to the 'Teller's Window'. They were trying to right the wrong."

- Marilyn Markle, age 79, North Royalton

"I first became aware that our family was experiencing financial difficulty when I heard my mother tearfully explaining to her mother, via the telephone, that my father received a $1,500 pay cut. By best estimates, I believe that it amounted to a 50 percent reduction in pay per year. This sent a signal to the older children that they had to contribute financially to assure our family's survival. My oldest sister acquired an office position with Fairchild Aviation, and
dutifully paid for her room and board. This amount was set at ten dollars per week. An older brother had to work hard for many long hours for a 40 cents per hour wage. He, too, paid for weekly room and board. Two other sisters, upon entering high school, worked every Sunday afternoon at a large florist and garden center for a single dollar of pay. Once, on a weekday evening, we were without electrical power. My mother paid the bill that same day, but it was not in time to notify the line crew whose job it was to disconnect the power of those delinquent in payment. The fact that we were without power for a day irritated my father. Soon he was quick to find fault with everything that displeased him."

- William McDonald, age 86, Centerville

"When the word came out about the banks failing, one of our neighbors had a heart attack. His life savings was gone in the blink of an eye. We had no money in the bank, so didn't lose any in that manner. I remember the next time we drove by the bank, I was surprised to see it still standing. As a little kid, I thought failing meant falling down."

- Martha McMahon, age 85, Medina

"Although the Depression started in 1929, the effects lasted during most of my school years. In our community, bartering played a very large role in everyday life. While we were self-sufficient in many ways, we could barter to get things we did not have. Every week, the local 'huckster' stopped at our house in a wooden-bodied truck. My father would trade eggs to the man in exchange for flour, sugar and other staples. The truck had an icebox. For an occasional treat, my father would trade for cheese or cold cuts. We also bartered with our school. My parents traded items to the school so my sister and I could purchase lunch tickets. In junior high and high school, I also helped cook and serve the school lunches in return for lunch tickets and various other school expenditures."

- Evelyn Brewer Neff Mitrione, age 86, Pickerington

"I remember soda pop was $0.05 a bottle. My sister and I would get a bottle about once a month. Milk was 10 cents a quart and that was our drink other than water. The local picture show was five cents. There was a park called Lakeside on the extreme west side of Dayton. This park had a three-cent day on Wednesday during the summer months. The Dayton Street car charged three cents on Wednesdays; normally, the fare was five cents. Newspapers were 18 cents Monday through Saturday. Sunday papers were 10 cents. Haircuts were 35 cents, but very few children went to the barbers; someone in the family usually did this. Gasoline was twelve cents a gallon and that included wiping of the windshield and checking the oil."

- Raymond J. Mock, age 85, Centerville

"I married in 1937, when a three-bedroom home cost $1,400 and the average income was $1,898. I found work after high school graduation at Kresge Five and Ten for $12.50 a week. I worked from 9 to 6 on weekdays and 9 to 9 on Saturday. A gallon of gasoline was 20 cents, bacon was 37 cents a pound, standing rib roast 39 cents and a bottle of Coke was 5 cents. Pillsbury flour was 99 cents for a 25-pound bag. A loaf of bread was 10 cents. Oles market had
bread five cents a loaf. A fur coat at Strouss was $39."

- Olga Morrison, age 91, Youngstown

"Most people would not understand, especially in this day and age, what being truly poor really was. They had no jobs, no money and not much hope. But they would keep fighting until all was lost. And that nearly happened more than once. When each girl turned about 10 years old, they started cleaning house for the rich people. They were paid about 25 cents for a days work. Mom's brothers sold newspapers and chunks of coal on the street corners for pennies and nickels. The men on the trains would throw down lumps of coal for the boys to sell and use. Grandma would take the change the kids made to the local grocery and purchase flour and fatback (a very fat version of bacon). She would bake her own bread and make gravy out of the fatback. They would eat gravy bread for supper that night. There was no fruit or vegetables."

- Joyce M. Pack, age 69, Toledo

"Things got pretty tough at home, and we nearly lost our home. We couldn't pay the mortgage. Fortunately, I wrote a letter to the loan company and they sent a man to see us. He was able to set up a plan that we just barely could afford to pay our monthly mortgage so that we would not lose our home."

- Ed Persino, Niles

"Honesty and thrift were absolute traits. A handshake was as good as your word or signature. Children were taught to be saving. Most had a personal bank at home, and the school had a savings bank project. The students brought money each week to add to their account at school."

- Helen Cook Railer, age 95, Burlington, IN (formerly of Greenfield)

"A tricycle momma had almost promised me was on sale for a dollar, but they were sold out. I doubt I was more disappointed than momma, who had pledged that days' wages to me. The up-side was now she could buy a pound of bologna and a loaf of bread, some salt fish and have money left over for tomorrow."

- Harold Russell, age 85, Gratiot

"As I remember and my parents told me, the good times ended very quickly for most people, and when the banks failed it turned into chaos in the streets. We were in Toledo, Ohio, and they were hit really hard by it all. One evening, when we went downtown to check on the bank, there were hundreds of people out front yelling and crying and fighting and beating on the locked doors and windows. They had fires built in the street to keep warm and there were people milling around all over the downtown. Anybody that thinks what we are going through now is a Depression doesn't have a clue of what a real Depression is. We lost maybe $400.00 in the failed bank, but we moved on, went to Florida and soon Dad was working again. I remember, for years after the banks began to come back, Mother would receive a check every once in a while. They were small by today's standards, I think $4.00, but well received in 1933. I learned a lot from living in those times. Maybe that's what we need again, to show these young
The country store was very important to many phases of life in the community; it was our connection to the outside world for our necessities as well as a few luxuries such as candy, chewing gum, cookies and yes, chewing tobacco, pipe tobacco and cigarette tobacco to roll your own. The store was heated by a pot-bellied stove located near the center of the building and light was provided by two pump-up gasoline lamps, which were placed on a hook near the ceiling. In the evening, many of the men of the community would gather to buy a few items, exchange news, tell tall stories and enjoy snacks, such as bologna, long horn cheese or sardines. It was ordered by asking for ten, fifteen or twenty five cents worth of the product. One day, one of the regulars at the evening gathering asked for a nickel's worth of cheese just to test the storekeeper but it didn't work out that way he thought it would. The storekeeper stepped from behind the counter with the cheese knife in his hand, raised it to the man's face and said, smell this!"

- William M. Shaw, age 87, Sarahsville

"As for the Depression, many lost money in banks, but our cash was so meager there was no bank account. Mother raised chickens so she would take eggs and butter to the grocery store to get the few supplies for her baking needs. Dad would sell half a beef to pay the yearly taxes."

- Beva Stonebreaker, age 89, Cadiz

"At my elementary school, the teachers taught us how to save. I had a bank book and was very proud of the $48 dollars I had saved, but we had to withdraw that money and use it for food. It served us for many weeks. A maiden aunt would also stop by, en route from the grocery store, and leave us meat, eggs and sometimes flour. I would, in turn, do things to help her like pulling my wagon to the ice house and bringing her back a large block of ice for her ice-box. To have it delivered by an ice wagon was a luxury. Dad removed our doghouse from the back yard and brought it on the porch so we could dig up the space and plant a garden."

- Esther R. Sukosd, age 91, Carrollton

"I was in the kitchen with Mom when Dad came home. Mom was comparing the shopping list to the purchases while Dad put 10 percent of the proceeds in the church box."

"Mom said, 'Great. Everything's here. Where's the excess cash?'"

"Dad said, 'There isn't any. There was so little that I told the grocer to just put the excess in the sugar bag.'"

"Mom, aghast, said, 'George, we don't have a nickel in the house!' The church box contents were not 'our' money."

"Dad asked, 'does the roof leak?'"

"'George, you know it doesn't leak.'

- Vane S. Scott, Jr., age 85, Newcomerstown
"'Do we all have clothes?'

"'Yes, of course.'

"'Do we have something to eat?'

"'Sure, you can see it on the stove.'

"'Well, we have a dry place to sleep tonight. If we had more clothes, we couldn't even wear them, and we have more food than we can eat.'

"Mom cautiously asked, 'But what about the mortgage?'

"Dad responded, 'It isn't due for another thirty days. Call the boys for supper.'"

- George K. Weimer, Jr., age 77, Sebring

"There was a run on the banks, People lined up for blocks to get their money, so the banks closed their doors and everyone was in a panic. My parents lost their home. The bank foreclosed for a balance of $ 3,200 dollars. My parents' home was built brand new for approximately $7,800, and the bank stole it for that balance, as my parents could not even afford to pay the interest. Very interestingly, my mother persuaded the bank president of the First Federal Savings and Loan to accept $ 5 as a down payment on another home, which needed much work, promising that my Dad would fix all that was needed to upgrade and make it a very livable place again. It was done and the bank president, years later, visited my mother in the nursing home, still remembering the down payment and change that my Dad made in that house."

- William L. Zurkey, age 84, Boardman

"Groceries were cheap, if you had money. Stamps were three cents. No food stamps, no government aid, no McDonald's, etc. And thank God, no credit cards."

- Wilma Blasiman, age 88, Lake Milton

"One other memory of that time was the money I had in the bank - and lost! At school, every Tuesday was 'bank day.' An arrangement with a neighboring bank provided a savings account for each participating student. With pennies and nickels and an occasional dime, I had accumulated a dollar or two - a fortune to me! When the bank closed, there went my fortune!"

- Elinor M. Brown, age 85, Napoleon

"We were all hard workers. When I was nine years old, Dad bought a grocery store, Smith's Family Market, at Goodale and Harrison. I would walk to school with my brother, Dick, then walk to the store to work bagging groceries or walking people home carrying their groceries. My brother and I would walk to houses asking people for pop bottles and newspapers. We would get a penny deposit for the bottles, then take the newspapers to the junk yard to sell. I saved all my money and opened a savings account at the bank. By the time I was 12 years old I had saved $108.00. Mom had nine children by then, and with times being hard, I had to buy my
own clothes."
- **Sally Carrico-Baum, age 75, Columbus**

"The folks had just sold the annual crop of lambs and had received just enough money to pay the year's real estate tax. My mother and I went to West Mansfield to deposit that check in the Farmer's bank. We noticed in the lobby there were several well-dressed people transacting business. They took my mother's check as a deposit. The next day, President Roosevelt declared the 'bank holiday.' It was a long time in the future before the folks received their money. Those well dressed people of which I spoke were the fore-warned stockholders making a 'run' on the bank. The Farmers Bank never re-opened."
- **George Clapsaddle, age 85, East Liberty**

"In the years just prior to the Depression, our school, Jones Elementary, had a program urging students to open a savings account at a local bank through the school. Both (my sister) Mary Jane and I opened accounts, with our grandmother giving each of us a quarter every other week to make a deposit. Then bang! The Depression hit and the bank closed its door - no money for us. Then, shortly after the Depression lifted, the bank reopened, and there was our money waiting for us."
- **William Cox, age 85, Sylvania**

"A good friend at our church owned a small grocery and he let us charge food. I thought everyone had a $300 grocery tab. When he received any money, he gave Mother five or six peppermint sticks. She would break one in half and surprise my sister and me once a week when we finished with washing dishes."
- **Evelyn Donohue, age 85, Columbus**

"An average, good pay for those who worked was $1 a day. That was luxurious! Since we had income, we had an occasional treat: a bottle of Coke or Pepsi at five cents, a double dip ice cream cone for for five cents or a single dip for three... My family's biggest extravagance was buying a Sunday church dress for me in the late 1930s - a Shirley Temple dress for fifty cents. I surely was a little Wippersnapper and the talk of the neighborhood. Can you imagine the luxury of a new fifty-cent dress? We really never bought much else; we did without and we followed the policy of most people: If you didn't have cash to pay for it, you did without! And, we never complained, as we were so thankful for what we had."
- **Audrey Dvorak, age 75, Gates Mills**

"Eventually, my family got its own apartment. We moved very often, though, because landlords would give three months free rent. After the three months were up, we would stay a bit longer (probably without paying rent) until we had to move again to another apartment, where we would get free rent. We made a lot of friends that way."
- **Adele Federman, Toledo**

"We had no phone and no radio until I was 9 or 10 years old. My father was lucky to have a job in the guard unit of the Federal Reserve Bank, where he earned, I think, $8 a week. After rent,
electricity and coal to heat our second floor apartment, there was little money left for food to feed himself, my mother, me and a steady stream of uncles, aunts and cousins who came from Pennsylvania to find work. It was a good thing I had so many older cousins, though, because 'Second-Hand Rose,' of the Fannie Brice song, had nothing on me. From crib to clothes, to shoes and toys, things were handed down to me, including squeaky corduroy knickers, which I hated."

- Lawrence Forbes, age 78, Cleveland

"My family moved from Pennsylvania to Newton Falls, Ohio, when a steel mill was opened there, and my father got a job (1924, I think). Things were going well and we bought a house with an acre of ground. Two more children were added to the family, making a total of seven children. When Wall Street collapsed, banks were closed, and the mill closed down. We were able to stay in our house because nobody had money to buy houses. As long as we paid the interest, we could live there... One time we had a chance to rent our house out for $15, and rent a vacant church parsonage for ourselves for $10. That gave the family $5 extra, which bought a lot of groceries. We lived there for two years and enjoyed it."

- Mary Elizabeth Stillwagon Glass, age 88, Cambridge

"The street car fare was 10 cents, movies 25 cents and stamps 2 cents. Wages were around $20 per week, tops."

- Era Harper, age 93, Bedford

"My parents and Grandparents had money in the Butler bank and, overnight, the banker closed the bank, packed his bags and left town. All of their money was gone, but they still owed all their bills. My mother had just used the cash that they had to buy a new $100 coat and a photo of her to hang on the wall. I remember her sitting and crying and holding her new coat and wishing for her money back."

- Phyllis Spohn Johnson, age 81, Butler

"My lovely young mother was made a widow on Christmas morning with two little girls. Our businessman father had left my mother well provided for with his life insurance. After his death, we moved to a large city where my mother deposited her insurance money and opened up safe deposit boxes in a bank. Months later came the stock market crash. Our bank closed their doors. They kept my mother's money and our safe deposit boxes, which contained our $20 gold pieces. They kept it all."

- Leonora Joyce, age 86, Powell

"My father held his job, although with several pay cuts, during those Depression years. We moved in 1930 from a four-room apartment to a five-room house that rented for $35 a month because the building association that held the mortgage could not find a buyer. In 1937, the house, in Covington, KY, was heavily damaged in the historic Ohio River flood and we were forced out for several months while repairs were made. After its refurbishing, the rent was raised to $37.50 Imagine fifty cents making a difference! We elected to show our disdain for the raise in rent, so we moved to a more favorable suburb and payed $42.50 in rent, this time for a
six-room house. My parents were elated when their meager Christmas savings account was restored after the bank holiday President Roosevelt imposed. They were able to retrieve their $12.50 Christmas Savings account that many banks offered at 25 cents a week, but with little or no interest accumulating. The money quickly went to pay for a vacuum sweeper that was being bought 'on time,' also at 25 cents a week."

- Jack Klumpe, age 88, Monroe

"By late 1931, we began to see the Depression was real. Men were being laid off or only working a few days a month. People were unable to pay their rent or mortgage payment, which soon put the banks in trouble and, in 1932, the banks started to fail. Most of the small country banks and some of the larger banks went out of business, causing runs on the banks as people tried to get their money out - which, of course, made it worse. One Saturday in March, we had a nice warm afternoon and Dad sent me with the day's receipts in a night deposit bag to walk it up to the bank; I remember I was tired and loafed along the river bank before making the deposit. I might as well have thrown the money in the river because the bank - I believe it was the American Trust Company - never opened again. As I remember, they appointed a receiver to cash out the assets of the bank but they had so many loans on farms that were no longer worth the amount of the loan. Anyway, after a couple of years as receiver, the man spent two years in the Indiana State Prison. About this time, Dad had a $5,000 note that the interest and a small payment were to be made each year and the farm was the security on the note. I remember going to the bank receiver with Dad; he had saved the money for the payment, but it was in the closed bank. I heard the receiver tell Dad that he could not use the money in the bank as they had lost it. And he had to make the payment or they would take the farm on April 1. This was, of course, impossible as all the money they had was in the closed bank. So there was no longer a business or a home."

- John Lamb, via e-mail

"My Dad worked every day, and even though his wages were low, we managed to live within whatever he brought home and were not allowed to incur any indebtedness. Nothing was ever charged. If there wasn't cash to pay for something, we just lived without it. My Dad hated debt worse than anything else in life. His mortgage on the new house was about $4,000, and to him that was astronomical."

- Mildred Malare, age 91, Toledo

"I can show you the very spot where it happened - that breezy summer evening was different. We were eating supper and my father said, 'I think it's going to rain, we better go back to the field and try to get in one more load of hay.' Mama said, 'We'll stack the dishes.' After that she grabbed her hoe and went to the garden to weed around the tomato plants. A perfect night for me, I thought. I can play my favorite game; all I needed was my ball and an empty Mother's Oats Box. I liked to run, throw the ball up in the air and try to catch it in the container - and of course, YELL! It seemed like I was in a world all my own - just running and yelling in the breeze. After about three times going around the house, my mother yelled, 'Emily, you have to stop just
playing and do something worthwhile. You don't realize it, but between sunrise and sunset we
must earn $1 just to pay taxes.' She was crying and working at the same time. I thought: What
happened? What did I do wrong? I didn't know why, but I do know I never enjoyed playing my
game in the same way again. Doing nothing made me feel guilty. I was seven, and it was in
1932."

- Emily Marks, age 83, Ross County

"I was 10 years old and remember when the banks were closed. My mother did not receive a
pay check for the rest of that year. However, the one grocery store let us have what we needed
for food. We lived in an upstairs two-room apartment in an older couple's house. It was on the
edge of town. He had several cows and a garden, and they gave us milk, vegetables and fruit.
We lived there three years and probably paid little or no rent most of that time. I had started
piano lessons previously and was able to practice in their cold living room, which was kept
closed off so they didn't have to heat it. The fourth year we lived in this small town, we moved
closer to the school but had nearly the same arrangement: two upstairs rooms and a small
kitchen next to the owner's kitchen. That year I dusted the furniture in payment for piano
lessens."

- Ruth L. McGinnis, age 86, Hilliard

"My dad was never out of work. He was an automobile mechanic in the small town two miles
from where we lived. Sometimes he walked to work to save on gasoline. After the stock market
crashed, he was leery of banks. He either carried his money on his person or left it at home. A
young man who had served time in a reformatory and had been released was overheard to say
he had seen a roll of bills on my dad. Dad was walking to and from work at that time, but when
he heard what that boy said he started driving to work."

- Beulah Milbern, age 88, Monroe

"We had a fruit orchard and my mother had a large vegetable garden in back of the house. My
older brothers would put fruit and vegetables in a pick-up truck and go into the city to sell
them. However, when the Depression hit, you couldn't give it away. Also, nobody was buying
the milk. My dad missed two house payments and lost everything he owned."

- Walterine Mize, age 85, Lorain

"A lot of farmers were losing their farms, as they bought when the price was high, and the
payments were too much to make from the prices of produce. With the price of cattle and hogs
around three or four cents per pound, there was little left after living out of their income. Banks
were auctioning off the chattels of the foreclosed farms. A group got together and organized
the area farmers to hold 'penny auctions.' They attended the auctions and would bid one or
two cents for a tool, and everybody went along with it. It was frustrating for the banks, but they
seemed to be the only ones who cared."

- Harry G. Moll, age 92, Wauseon
"One early evening in the heart of winter, my mother sent me to the corner grocery store with a one dollar bill to buy a loaf of bread and a quart of milk. With the dollar tucked inside my mitten I trudged through five to six inches of snow to the store, about a half-block away. The change probably amounted to 65 cents (I seem to remember that bread cost 14 cents and milk 20 cents). I clasped the change in my mitten, but not inside the mitten, as I had the dollar bill.

At home, I set the bread and milk on the kitchen table, and plopped my mittened hand on the table to release the change—but nothing was there. You may infer the anguish of my mother from the fact that she and I spent at least the next hour on our hands and knees, sifting through the snow in a fruitless search for the change. I have no doubt that this experience established a fearful sense of frugality in me to the effect that I must never be in significant debt. More philosophically, that one must not live beyond one's means."

- William E. Norris, age 74, Columbus

"When I was 14 years old, our farm had to be sold. Dad went all over trying to borrow money to buy it, but no one had any to lend. If they had any, they lost it in the banks. We tried to rent, but could find nothing, so he had to sell all of his farm animals and machinery for a little of nothing and we moved to Genoa and rented a house. Dad only knew farming, so he couldn't get a job. He went to boilermakers school and took a course in that and finally got a job as boilermaker at United States Gypsum in Genoa."

- Evelyn Peloquin, age 89, Genoa

"My father lost his savings when President Roosevelt closed the banks for a week in 1933. My grandfather, who was either smart or lucky, bought Liberty Bonds during WWI and never lost a penny. He was a retired school teacher with a pension of $30 a month. He and my grandmother could live very well on that amount of money. We rented an 11-room house for $10 a month, so when people try to tell me that we are in a Depression, I tell them 'you don't know what the hell a Depression really is.'"

- Irmin Pfalzgraf, age 85, Massillon

"I was born in 1923 and was made aware that something was terribly wrong economically when I was at the tender age of 10. My very first recollection occurred in the fall of that year. I was on our front porch of our home, which was downtown in the little village where I grew up. It was raining and the street was crowded with men - men who were obviously worried, men who were terribly concerned. Included among those gathered on the street was my own father. There was a possible run on the bank; everybody was anxious to withdraw their monies while there was some still available. The result was a failure of the bank to open and a sizeable amount of money was lost by each depositor."

- Bob Reichard, age 86, Willoughby

"During the 30's, a penny was a small fortune. Whenever I was lucky enough to beg a penny from my mother, Barth's Confectionary had many choices. B-B Bats were two for a penny. Dum-Dum lollipops were two for a penny. Licorice cigarettes in a domino printed box were a penny. Wax lips or wax teeth were a penny. Very rarely did I have a nickel for a Clark Bar or O'Henry.
There was no high-fashion branded clothing. We had one pair of shoes, worn until they were outgrown. Watches and toys were not 'collectibles.'"
- Esther G. Schwartz, age 77, Columbus

"My dad worked part time at Price Lumber. Mom raised chickens. As long as we paid the interest on our house, we could keep it. We had a Ford (1923?) for my dad to get to work in, but it was used only when really necessary. My father lost $500 when the Liberty Bank folded up. If he needed something as far as tools and such, he usually made it himself, often with help from a neighbor."
- Marian Seilheimer, age 89, Tiffin

"When there was no money for house payments, my mother went to the man they had purchased the house from. We had no telephone. He told her that he was 'carrying' other families and would carry ours. The grocery next door allowed us to charge what we needed, and any coins we found were put on the bill. One year, we did without a car until the price of the car license came down later in the year."
- Ann Shilling, age 80, Canton

"There was no sales tax, no payroll tax, no income tax and not even a Social Security deduction. The necessities of daily life were purchased at local 'Mom and Pop' stores (no supermarkets) and many of them would sell to their good customers on credit. If a customer did not pay, it was the store owner who had to absorb the loss... When funds ran out, government agencies resorted to issuing scrip. Scrip was a promise to pay issued by an agency like a school board to its employees and which would be accepted by some businesses in the hope that in some future time it would be redeemed for U. S. currency. In the meantime it would circulate like real cash. Not every business would accept it. Many businesses had to choose between accepting scrip or losing a sale."
- John W. Straka, Jr., age 91, Maple Heights

"My father owned quite a few rental properties. One of our tenants was a barber. Since he could not pay his rent, my dad would take us there and he would cut our hair in partial payment of his rent. Once, I remember, he came home very angry because the barber had offered rent money to my dad, and when my dad asked about back rent, the barber grabbed the money from his hand and said, 'Oh, you don't want the money.' It made my dad so mad he had them evicted - the only time I ever remember that happening, because he was quite generous in waiting for his money."
- Ferd Thoma, age 82, Newton Falls

"My grandpa, a stationary fireman, was crippled after a cinder in his shoe made its way into his foot and caused osteomyelitis of the hip bone, leading to six major surgeries. He received $100 per month in workman's compensation. The State of Ohio paid grandma $25 per month for giving him in-home nursing care. That usually paid our rent. We lived on the west side in Franklinton and moved frequently. When grandma heard of a house in the area with cheaper
rent, we were thankful for the opportunity and moved."

- Dolores L. Younger, age 79, Westerville

Depression Era Clothing and Laundry During the Great Depression

"Clothes that were too worn or torn to be given away or passed down were made into dust cloths or cut into strips and woven into rag rugs. Dust cloths were washed and used over again until they wore out. My mother made most of my clothes that hadn't been handed down. Shoes had to last through the season. One summer, my feet grew before it was time for school shoes, so mother cut the toes out of my tennis shoes so they wouldn't hurt my feet. My mother's cousin, who lived in Indiana on a farm, would send flour sacks with patterns which my mother would make into pajamas."

- Paula Deatrick Ashton, age 69, Toledo

"I can remember my mother carrying buckets of water, scrubbing her hands raw on a scrub board. She saved every penny so she could buy yard goods to make dresses for my sisters and me. Every stitch was made by hand. When I started to school, I had a new dress. My mother would sit up all night making it."

- Margaret Byrum, age 83, Chillicothe

"My mom was a non-complaining mother. She kept us fed and clothed and taught us how to sew on buttons, how to sew the holes in the toes of our socks and how to iron our clothes. Ironing involved two heavy irons heated on the kitchen cook stove. No easy task. Mom washed our clothes on a scrub board in a big tub. We used rain water when available. We caught the water from the roof gutter downspouts in big wash tubs. Eventually she did have a washer. Winter or summer, she always hung our clothes out to dry. She never had a dryer. She would stand our frozen long underwear against the wall behind the stove to thaw."

- Ralph W. Dennings, age 87, Saint Marys

"We all wore well-patched and darned clothing. A neighbor gave my sister and me clothing her daughter outgrew. One dress for the week of school, one dress to change into in the evenings to keep the school dress clean, and one dress for church."

- Evelyn Donohue, age 85, Columbus

"My aunt, an actress, mailed packages of her used clothing to us, and my mother transformed them. When I was twelve, I wore a black satin spring coat - beautiful material, but so unsuitable!"

- Jeans Elsner, age 89, South Euclid

"Laundry was an all day affair. Water was pumped from the well and heated on a wood stove. We did good whites first, light colored clothes next, household linens, work clothes and darks last. This was all done in a wash tub with a wash board. Everything was rinsed, rung out by
hand, and hung up to dry - outside in warm weather and inside in cold weather. Then there was ironing: a flat iron heated on the wood stove. We only had one pair of shoes; they were kept for good wear and cold weather. Most of us kids walked barefoot to school until cold weather. One fall day, we walked the mile-and-a-quarter to school, barefooted. While in school, it snowed. We ran all the way home barefoot in the snow."

- Laverne Hillyer Fifer, age 92, Northwood

"Sometimes, Mom sent for clothes from Sears Roebuck or Montgomery Ward. She'd order dresses for 75 cents, and they would send us whatever no one else wanted! Dad would fix all of our shoes, putting new heels or soles on them."

- Dorothy Orthwein Fundum, age 82, Malinta

"My sister and I learned homemaking in a hurry at age six. I stood on a bench to reach the ironing board. I ironed all flat stuff: hankies, dish towels, pillow cases. We also learned how to wash clothes on scrub boards and hang them up to dry. At 12, I was taught how to cook, wash clothes and I also learned how to embroider and crochet. We also cut patterns out of newspaper and I sewed my own outfits. We also made aprons. My parents were great teachers and taught us how to earn and save."

- Theresa Giallombardo, age 80, Maple Heights

"That year, when it was about time for my brother Charles and me to start back to school, I didn't have any shoes to wear. Mother saw an ad for shoe sales in a town about 20 miles away. My brother rode his bike all the way to that store and brought back a pair of old lady shoes with high heels and pointed toes. I cried and didn't want to wear them, but my dad cut the heels off and I wore them anyway."

- Charlotte Walters Grant, age 88, Jacobsburg

"The women would gather occasionally to quilt from scraps of cloth that they had left over from making their own clothes for the family; the quilts would be given to those who needed them. The churches often had clothing sales to raise cash to purchase clothing for the children; this practice was carried out without respect for the many denominations of religion. This practice helped in distributing clothing that was outgrown, and provided for infants' clothing. As you see our community was quite cooperative in helping as the need arose."

- Myron Johnson, Barnesville

"I am enclosing a picture of a shoe that I still have, which my dad was wearing in the '30s when he stepped on a rusty nail. He would have been 23 or 24 years old. You can see a hole in the top toe area and it looks like there was a resole. When he ran that nail through the shoe and into his foot, we had no money, no health insurance. He believed, as did other people at that time, that if you kept the shoe with the nail in it, you would not get blood poisoning. He lived until age 86. Can you imagine anyone today who would wear a shoe to this point of use?"

- C. R. Lanning, Fostoria
"What I was aware of was the Saturday trips to town to the clothing stores in Bellaire became scarce, we did not get a lot of clothes. You wore them till they wore out. My little Red coat was worn till it couldn't be worn any more. As for shoes, Dad had a device that he repaired shoes on - an iron device with a shoe on it. Dad had a shoe repair gadget and would repair our shoes when they wore out. He would get a repair kit at the woolworth store and proceed to fix the worn shoes at home."

- **Martha Rosella McCabe, age 88, Saint Clairsville**

"We patched our clothes, put cardboard in shoes when soles got holes, and wore hand-me-downs. We washed our clothes by hand, heated water in a boiler on the coal stove, hung them outdoors to dry in the summer, and ironed them with an iron that was heated on top of the coal cook stove."

- **Helen Oliver, age 83, Poland**

"Each year, the Depression got worse. Mother patched and made-over as clothes wore out. Dad half-soled our shoes as they were handed down to the younger ones. I learned to darn socks at an early age and that is an art. If done right the hole is filled in by weaving with needle and yarn back and forth. The surface will be smooth and the sock will have many more months of wear."

- **Oida Peacock, no age or location given**

"We had two pair of shoes a year. Mother made our dresses in grade school and they were 'hand me downs'. Our brother was lucky, I think. Mother didn't make boys shirts or trousers. Not complaining, our dresses were pretty, we thought. Two of our aunts worked in a coat factory and cut down coats to fit us girls."

- **Margaret Brazzil Perkins, age 95, Toledo**

"We had very little clothing and wore most things interchangeably - like a sweater first day, sweater and blouse next day; just the blouse next day and back to just the sweater. One dark skirt only; no jeans back then - at least not for me."

- **Doris Portmann, age 76, Navarre**

"Our clothes were mostly homemade or made over. About the only clothes we bought were shoes, stockings, jersey gloves and overalls for the boys. Garments were handed down, passed on, taken up and let down. I was a pretty good seamstress by age 14. Women in the neighborhood saved feed sacks and often traded them back and forth to get matching material for some items. They made nice kitchen curtains, aprons, dresses for small girls, and Mom even used them for pillow cases."

- **Delcie Pound, age 92, Medina**

"Being the youngest member of the family I was the one most acquainted with hand-me-downs. Standard procedure, for us boys especially, was a 'summer haircut' (which meant right down to the scalp) and the immediate removal of shoes. Both boys and girls went barefoot for the rest of the summer."

- **Bob Reichard, age 86, Willoughby**
"Those high top boots I wanted would not be showing up, the ones with the knife pocket on the side. Instead we would be cutting out cardboard insoles to cover the holes in the old shoes. This was an everyday chore since cardboard would only last a day."
- Harold Russell, age 85, Gratiot

"The first new snow suit my mother was able to purchase for me was in about 1938. We took our sleds to school with us and slid down the pasture field hill belonging to the neighbor who lived next to the school. Unfortunately, I hit ice and had no control of the sled and went under the barbed wire fence which tore into my snow suit hood and jacket ripping them apart making it unable to be repaired. I cried the rest of the day and prayed that when I arrived home my 'real' parents would be there to take me to their rich home. My mother was very upset and informed me that I would have to go back to wearing 'hand-me-down' clothes."
- Ann Shilling, age 80, Canton

"Mom's creativity, however, extended beyond the kitchen. When the flour bag was finally empty, she would lovingly launder it, hang it up to dry and gently iron it. Then, the seamstress in her would go to work. I can still see her sitting at her foot-pedal Singer sewing machine stitching together... would you believe? Bras! And more. The very fine, delicate cotton from which those flour bags were made was perfect for bras, slips, scarves, even café-style curtains for the kitchen. But I was most fascinated with the bras. I emulated my 14-year-old sister and couldn't wait to be old enough (and developed enough) to have my very own flour-sack bra (or brasseire, as we called them in those days.) Yes, my mother (probably like many others of the Depression era) had her own version of Victoria's secret. I just wonder how many women of the day wore undergarments with the words 'Pillsbury's Best' and those recognizable four Xs stretched across their bosom!"
- Anna Marie Slezak, age 88, Middletown

"Mom made most of our clothes. Not even a scrap of fabric was wasted. Everything was utilized, even Dad's old suits. Used flour bags were bleached and made into pillow cases, and doll's socks were not thrown away - they were darned (and we kept wearing them). One incident I remember is my noticing that Mom's coat had a patch on it. I said, 'Daddy, why don't you get Mommy a new coat?' Then I cried, as there was no reply from either Dad or Mom."
- Gladys Case Stent, age 84, Columbus

"Mom would buy coats and other clothing at rummage sales for about ten cents a garment, and then she would cut patterns out of newspapers for clothing for the children, using the cloth from the best parts of the garments."
- Wanda Stubbart, age 78, Columbus, Vic Thomas, age 83, Middletown and Kathleen Lambert, age 80, Middletown

"My Mom and the women in town washed clothes with a wringer washer or scrub board and boiled clothes in a copper boiler over a wood stove that heated water. You used a large, long wood stick to lift the white clothes out, then put the others in. Even in winter, you hung them
on the line, they froze, but when brought in to dry, they smelled like washing never smells today."

- Geraldine Vincenzo Szymialis, age 81, Flushing

"My uncle brought me a beautiful alpaca coat for 'good' that his stepdaughter outgrew and said I should wear it as long as it fit and then give it to his granddaughter, which we did. It was a lovely coat (soft to the touch and stylish), and I hated it when I outgrew it. We got it cleaned and gave it to cousin Audrey. I hoped she enjoyed it as much as I did. So one coat was worn by three young teenage girls. Our school dresses were usually homemade by our mothers or later by us girls. They were quite often made from feed sacks. As farmers, we often had to buy animal feed, and the feed companies started to make pretty printed cotton sacks. My mother also used feed sack material for pillow slips, and I think I still have some of them."

- Ernestine Van Asdale, age 86, Columbus

"Our mother was an excellent seamstress and she made all of our clothes, except for the overalls my father and brothers wore. It was a problem getting the money together for shoes and socks. I can still picture my father wrapping his feet in cloth strips because he had no socks to put on. Also, we were always so glad for any clothes that anyone gave us."

- Margaret Willford, age 87, Plymouth

"We wore hand-me-down clothes too big so we could grow into them. We changed our clothes after school. They were folded or hung to wear for the next day. No wash and wear, no automatic washers or dryers. We took care in order to pass them on. You learned not to waste what you had. Our Sunday clothes were precious. They were passed on for many years for others to wear. I hated our stockings [or socks]. They were cotton but not like today's. With wear, the heel got a hole that was repaired with darning cotton. The repair was so big that it rubbed your heel till a sore blister appeared. Those that had no socks had other problems. Our shoes could easily have a hole in the sole. If they were not half sole at the cobblers, one could slip card board into the shoe to cover the hole. You were lucky to have more than one pair of shoes - everyday and good shoes which we passed on too."

- June A. Young, age 84, Worthington

"There was mainly no money for clothes. I and my girls needed coats for the winter. For my coat, I took apart an old tweed coat and reconstructed it inside out. For the girls' coats, I picked up coats at the Goodwill and took them apart to reconstruct. I sewed for many years. My first store-bought dress was for the prom in high school."

- Opal Yowell, age 99, Centerville

"I remember wearing ill-fitting shoes and putting cardboard in them to cover the holes in the soles. I also remember the beautiful clothes that my mom made by hand from feed sacks and odds and ends of material that my aunts gave us - we wore each piece proudly. Then, there was the weekly bath. We all bathed in the same water, youngest to oldest, in a large galvanized
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- Bonnie Brunner, age 75, Lorain

"Dad gave my sister and me our first store-bought coats when we were in high school. When it was time to purchase new shoes for school, Mom would have us stand on a piece of paper and draw around our foot before sending it off to the catalog's address. The shoes always fit."

- Ruth Maloney Cowgill, Marion

"I think my mother was the inventor of open-toed shoes. When I outgrew my Sunday black patent leather shoes, my mother cut the toes out. I can still remember the wet feet from the dew on the grass or the rain. A good supply of newspapers or lightweight cardboard cut to fit inside my shoes and a pair of dry socks took care of the problems. I knew I was lucky when dad bought new soles for fifty cents at Grant’s 5- and 10-cent store and resoled my shoes on the metal shoe last. If the stitching came loose on the sole, a rubber band took care of the problem - we put it around the toe, stopping it from flapping as I walked."

- Mildred Redman Dieter, age 81, Youngstown

"My mother was a good seamstress and received hand-me-down clothes from relatives, which she took apart and made dresses for us girls and some item for my brother, but not much for herself... One of the big items that embarrassed me was getting holes in the soles of my shoes. When I played on the playground at school and my schoolmates saw the holes, they would razz me about them. It was bad enough to have high-top shoes you had to use a button hook to button them up. We had Mary Janes for Sunday, but we better not wear them to school! I had an Aunt that always gave us long, black, heavy stockings for Christmas. Oh, how I hated those stockings. Plus, we had to wear them with high top shoes. Mercy!"

- E. Marie Dornbrook, age 87, Parma Heights

"My grandmother made our clothes from remnants of fabric bought on sale or remodeled garments bought at the Salvation Army store. I had a new pair of shoes at the beginning of the school year and cheap sandals to play in. Who needed more for one pair of feet?"

- Manila Fellows, age 84, Youngstown

"We had a White treadle sewing machine and we made our own clothes. Calico was 10 cents a yard and rick-rack was the new trim. I had two dresses when I was a sophomore in high school. Dad patched and re-soled my shoes."

- Mary Alice Foster, age 89, Reynoldsburg

"We had a friend who worked in an office and handed down clothing, which mother made over for me. She was a good seamstress, so I was quite well dressed. I never had a store-bought dress until I was out of high school in 1935. I had a knit skirt, which I wore very frequently - and you know how those skirts got out of shape from sitting (rump sprung). Each morning, I would put the skirt on the ironing board with a damp cloth, and press it back into shape. Our transportation was mostly by foot. It was not unusual to have a hole in the sole of our shoes. You did not discard worn out shoes. You had them repaired with new soles and heels at the tub."

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shoe repair store. Repair shops were popular and did a good business."
- **Millie Gavitt, age 91, Fremont**

"I remember my father coming in and saying the stock market crashed, but I had no idea what it meant. We didn't have much anyway. My shoes had holes in them and I remember getting some leather and nails and repairing them. My grandmother used to sell cream for 10 cents a quart and, when she saw my shoes, she saved enough from her cream sales to give me, so I went into Franklin and bought a pair of shoes for $1.00."
- **Earl Gorsuch, age 88, Lebanon**

"We walked to school 8-10 blocks, and wore long stockings in the winter. Our eyelashes would freeze, as would Mom's laundry which she hung on the clothesline. She had to heat water on the stove for laundry, and made soap out of fat and lye, but I never heard her complain about her work. However, she really appreciated her washer and dryer later in her life. Back when my mother graduated from high school, at age 16, she left her boyfriend, Kenneth, behind farming on the family farm and moved from Convoy, Ohio, to Fort Wayne, Indiana, to work in the knitting mills. While working, she bought herself a nice wardrobe. During the Depression she re-made that wardrobe into dresses, coats, jackets and hats for us three kids."
- **Ruth Marilyn Isaacson, age 83, Germantown MD (formerly of Bowling Green)**

"One winter, the soles of my shoes were worn through, and my feet were touching the snow. Swallowing his pride, my father went to a neighbor, Mr. Feldman, for advice. The two men walked to Woolworth's on Kinsman Road where, for a dime, they bought two pieces of leather that looked like shoe soles. Back at his house, Mr. Feldman taught my father how to fit the inner heel of the shoe over a chair post. Then he glued one piece of leather to each shoe, nailed it down around the edges and, with a sharp knife, cut the leather to fit the shoe. That's how I got (dryly) through the winter walking to and from Robert Fulton Elementary School."
- **Mina Kulber, age 86, Lyndhurst**

"I remember my sisters and I had one dress for school and one dress for Sunday School. My Mother washed and ironed those dresses all the time so we would always have a clean dress to wear. Our shoes had cardboard in them when the soles wore out. I always admired my Mother for toughing it out during those rough years. Her love and devotion of my sisters and me will never be forgotten."
- **Louise Norling Maccioli, age 83, Louisville**

"Our clothes were patched and our shoes half-soled. There were two pairs: one for every day and one for school and Sunday. Saturday night, we polished the better pair to wear to church. Today we would feel deprived, then we were privileged."
- **Harry G. Moll, age 92, Wauseon**

"In the Depression year of 1930, I was ten years old. A girl's coat came on the market under the name of 'Timmy Tuff.' A new coat for me that year was out of the question! On a visit to Aunt Phoebe, my mother noticed the dog sleeping on a discarded tan wool coat. She asked if she
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might have the coat and proceeded to take it apart, lining and all, and launder it. She made a 'Timmy Tuff' look-a-like coat for me. I proudly wore the coat. When someone complimented me on new coat, to my mother's chagrin, I innocently remarked, 'Yes, and Aunt Phoebe's dog used to sleep on it.' I am now 89 years old and still remember the coat!"

- Doris L. Page, age 89, Trenton

"Mom made our pajamas or gowns from flannel and our underpants, bras and underslips from Sateen. My aunt worked in an office and she would give Mom her old clothes. Mom would make us dresses out of the good parts. I do not think my folks ever spent more than $2 for a pair of shoes, and sometimes we would have holes in the soles. Of course in the winter we had to wear galoshes. I remember wearing a coat for two years. Mom crocheted us hats and mittens."

- Evelyn Peloquin, age 89, Genoa

"Our family had a mantra, which was: 'Use it up, wear it out; Make it do, or do without.' We did this with everything. My mother and grandmother were seamstresses, and my mother made nearly all of my clothes, including suits and coats, throughout my college years. My after-school play clothes were frequently made from feed sacks, the patterned, cotton bags that contained the chicken feed my grandparents fed to their chickens. The cloth was durable, quite colorful and survived many washings. I never had to worry that I would find someone else wearing the same clothes I had! My grandmother went a bit farther. Ladies' clothes in those days had long, full skirts (no such things as slacks or pants for women). Once a dress was worn out, the still-good material would be made into a blouse. When the blouse was no longer wearable, it became an apron. When the apron finally was not useable, what was left became a dust rag. My great aunt and many of the women in the small town where they all lived were quilters, and every scrap of material left from the original garment was hand sewed into beautiful patchwork quilts, then quilted during the evening hours when the work of the day had been finished. These, of course, were our winter blankets."

- Mary Lou Pollak, age 78, Fairview Park

"Lye soap was made from leftover grease and lye. Some was shaved up and put in a copper wash boiler containing hot water and white clothes. A wooden stick was used to stir the clothes. The bleached clothes were then rinsed and hung on the clothesline. The clothesline was wound around a pulley at the top of a pole and then around a pulley on the back porch. The clothes were pinned on the bottom line and rolled out over the barnyard. Only in extreme circumstances did I get a pair of shoes. We went barefoot in the summer. When there was a hole in the bottom of the leather sole, I found a piece of cardboard to put in the shoe. When that wore through, I found another cardboard. From jumping rope at school, the sole came loose from the front of one pair. At every step the sole would fold back under, so I learned to step out and then down fast hoping to swing it to the toe of the shoe. Dad saw it and fixed it! 'Go get me the hog ringers!' So I went to school the next day with three hog rings in the toe of
my shoe!"
- **Deskey Posey, age 82, Chillicothe**

"Mom used a wash tub and wash board to clean our clothes. We'd carry water and heat it on
the stove. Later, she got a washer that turned a crank and an agitator stack down in the clothes
and swished them back and forth. She got a wringer you turned to squeeze out soap and water.
All clothes were dried with solar and wind power (clothesline)"
- **Carl Reed, age 76, Malvern**

"I remember when I got my first formal: it cost $25; it was beautiful, I thought. My mother and I
were afraid to go home and tell Dad because it was unheard of to spend that much on a party
dress or any dress."
- **Pauline Robinson, age 84, Minerva**

"When I was six or seven years old I saw a picture of a pair of red-topped knee boots in a
magazine and fell in love with them. I am sure I told my parents I wanted those boots more
than anything in the world. I got the boots and liked them very much and wore them in the
house and outside for several days. Then the trouble began. Whenever it was wet and muddy
outside, I was always the one who was asked to do the chores, such as bringing the milk cows
from the pasture to the milking barn or to go to the well for a fresh bucket of drinking water.
This was my first experience of 'be careful what you wish for, you may get it.'"
- **William M. Shaw, age 87, Sarahsville**

"We kids knew money was scarce, so we never asked. We just made do without complaint. The
oldest got a new home sewn-dress or trousers, and then it was hand-me-downs on down the
line. Once, my mother sewed me a new dress. I remember feeling like a new person as I set out
for school. I still remember how crisp it felt and how new it smelled."
- **Ann Shook, age 85, Akron**

"Clothing ourselves was a different matter, especially for us girls. The men folk wore bib
overalls, patched and re-patched. Socks were darned. Rips and tears mended. Shoes re-soled.
We girls' underwear was made from bleached feed sacks; hose were ribbed cotton or lisle -
later, rayon if it was affordable. Our dear Grandmother Lewis gave, on special days, lengths of
material, which Sister, Marmo, an excellent seamstress, stitched into fashionable apparel. Also
occasionally, a cousin who held a postal position in Norwood cleaned out her closet and sent
outmoded dresses, etc., our way. These, Marmo re-styled and re-sized into very nice dresses
and blouses."
- **Willa B. Stanforth, age 93, Hillsboro**

"I remember that my mother took down the white cotton curtains from the back windows of
our house in order to make blouses for our school uniforms. She did not have enough spare
cash to spend on either the blouses or the material to make them."
- **Geraldine Stevens, age 85, Worthington**
"Many girls wore panties and slips made from flour sacks. Some were lucky that theirs had a
flower print on them. We wore our silk hose until they were in tatters."
- Esther R. Sukosd, age 91, Carrollton

"Mom made our underwear, aprons, pinafores and dish towels out of flour sacks - all by hand,
no sewing machine. I made my own sewing kit in 4-H and managed to create a pot holder,
apron and blouse that I wore in our style show."
- Joy Thomas, age 80, Canfield

"I remember that we had many 'hand me down' clothes. One winter, I wore a boy's sheep-skin
coat to school. Kids made fun about it, but it was nice and warm."
- Marie Vaughan, age 85, Bucyrus

"I was in the third grade when the Depression came. I remember it well. There were nine of us.
I had no shoes, so my dad made a pair out of cardboard and glued it together. When we ran out
of glue and had no money to buy more, we used rubber bands and a paste made with flour and
water. When it rained, I was soaked. I had no umbrella, no rubbers and no raincoat, and stayed
in school the whole day in wet clothes until I went home."
- Gladys Saba Wright, age 89, Richmond Heights

"Once grandma was given someone's old mouton coat, and she took it apart and made me a
winter coat. Most or all of my clothes were made from friends' older children's clothes they had
outgrown. If they were skirts, I just pinned up the waistbands or did whatever I had to to make
them somewhat presentable."
- Dolores L. Younger, age 79, Westerville

"Being the middle daughter, during the Depression years especially, was not easy. I complained
to Mother that Ruth got new clothes because she was the eldest. I had to wear her hand-me-
downs, and Mimi got new clothes because mine were worn out. In her usual diplomatic way,
Mother explained, 'Mina, dear, think of yourself and your sisters as a sandwich. They are only
the crusts of bread, but you are all the good stuff in the middle!'"
- Mina Kulber, age 86, Lyndhurst

Medical Care and Home Remedies During the Great Depression

"Illness and injuries were handled much differently in those days. There was no emergency
squad nor emergency room. Most people did their own doctoring. They used castor oil, soap
and water soaks, Epsom salts, scalded milk for diarrhea, warm oil put in an aching ear or
someone who smoked blowing smoke into an aching ear, inhaling Vicks or some other inhalant
over a boiling teakettle or maybe Camphorated oil rubbed on your chest when you had a
cough. Other ointments were bought from the traveling Watkins man. When I was four years
old, I was knocked unconscious by a rock thrown by another child. The children carried me to a
nearby house, where I was revived and the blood was washed off my head with a cool wet cloth. The children carried me home. No doctor was called and my hair has covered the untreated scar for 81 years. I had whooping cough, chicken pox and other illnesses without a doctor. People had no money for doctors. When my finger was shut in the neighbor's car door, my mom had me walk around for a couple days with my finger in a cup of warm water that had turpentine in it. The finger is crooked but it works. We learned about deaths when a neighbor hung a black wreath on their door. And when I was in the third grade, I learned how a big orange sign on a porch that said 'QUARANTINE' and a red-eyed mother saying 'Don't stop for Rebecca anymore' told me that my best friend had died."
- Maxine Bartelt, age 85, Columbus

"No need for a doctor - plenty of skunk's grease and castor oil on hand."
- Wilma Blasiman, age 88, Lake Milton

"Mom's mother, my grandmother, cleaned houses and businesses to supplement her husband's (somewhat sporadic) income. Around this time, she developed some severe dental problems and had to have most of her teeth pulled, but could not afford dentures. However, the owner of the beauty salon she cleaned had a client whose husband was a dentist, so Grandma cleaned the salon, in return for which the salon's owner did the dentist's wife's hair, and the dentist made Grandma a set of beautiful dentures that lasted until her death at age 90!"
- Stephanie A. Burke, about her mother, Mildred Burk, age 88, Middletown

"I was born during World War I (1918). It was a home delivery and the doctor charged $5. People in those days scarcely went to a doctor. I never remember my parents ever seeing a doctor for an illness. When I went to college, it was necessary to have a physical, and when they gave me a thermometer to take my temperature, I didn't know that it went under your tongue. When a new baby was coming, people bought white outing flannel and made diapers for the new arrival. They had not made Pampers yet! On one occasion in the 1940s, a neighbor came for me one night, as his wife was in labor, and they had no money for a doctor or hospital. I went and by the light of a kerosene lamp, with a pair of scissors, a bottle of alcohol and two strings, delivered a big baby boy. He later went on to college and graduated Summa Cum Laude. It didn't cost them a cent for the delivery and now it costs a fortune to get all the things needed for the new baby's arrival."
- Mary Cole, age 91, Cadiz

"In the middle 1930s, I broke my arm playing leap frog and the Doctor just couldn't get it set right because it was an elbow break. So, he came to our house several times to break it and reset it again, to no avail. It's been crooked ever since, but has never given me trouble. Another time, we had the thresher gang at our home, and all the fellows were washing up in a large tub in our front yard. I reached up to pet our neighbor's dog, and he grabbed my face. Poor Dad had to drop everything and take me to the doc. It took six stitches with no painkiller. The doc told me I was a brave little girl - never screamed or cried. That scar is still there today. I must
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have been one of their most expensive children."
- Dorothy Orthwein Fundum, age 82, Malinta

"I broke my arm when I was 6 years old. Dad walked down to the neighbors and asked them to come and take me to the doctor's office in Waterville. The doctor x-rayed it and said he could not set it because it was too bad of a break. So the neighbor took Mom and me to Toledo Hospital to have surgery to set and operate on the splintered elbow. We stayed all night in the hospital. All these emergencies and no telephone yet at our home."
- Ruth Hahn-Shrayer, age 78, Holland

"Since father was gone from home a lot with his work, Mother was left to raise us. When I was thirteen, my sisters and one brother came down with scarlet fever. My parents were also ill with other medical problems, so I was the one to care for them. We were quarantined for six weeks. I made bread and many pots of soup. The doctor came once a week to check on everyone and bring needed medicines and supplies, and neighbors helped with chores."
- Violet Hardin, age 89, Wapakoneta

"No one could afford to go to the dentist or doctor unless it was a real necessity. Each year, in school, the school nurse would look us over and always said my tonsils needed to be removed. Since we couldn't afford to have that done, I got arthritis as a child. After the Depression, when I was about 20, I got them removed and my arthritis went away."
- Irene Class Haueter, age 94, Bolivar

"Frequently, there was a new baby in the big laundry basket. We never had a crib. Just before the baby arrived, the doctor would come with his black bag and go upstairs. We always thought he brought the baby in his bag."
- Frederick M. Kovacic, age 82, Akron

"The county healthy nurse came to school once a year and gave examinations for eyes, ears, throat and teeth. I think they also checked for head lice, impetigo and ringworm, since these were very contagious. The nurse sent several notes to my house before my Dad finally went to the City Loan and borrowed enough money to take me to the dentist. I still have my own two front teeth, thanks to a persistent county nurse."
- Donna Lehman, age 86, Eaton

"In those days, we didn't run to the doctor's if we had an ache or pain or the sniffles. We had home remedies and we had to be tough. When I see these youngsters today, I often wonder how we survived, but I've lived to be almost 90 so I guess it didn't hurt us."
- Evelyn Peoloquin, age 89, Genoa

"(There were) signs on our home for every childhood disease that came around. Nobody was allowed to visit us and only my Dad could come and go to work. We were all stuck in the home until we were free of what ever germ we carried. We had almost all childhood diseases, including whooping cough! (We got) no such things as a hair cut or a perm (others did, but we
never had the money). The dentist was free at Lincoln High School; doctors came to your home."

- Doris Portmann, age 76, Navarre

"Mom made a lot of home remedies. I remember gathering old field balsam, boneset, snake root, ginseng and black cohosh. She made cough syrup from the bark of shellbark hickory and beech and honey. Luckily, we never had much in the way of illnesses - just colds, croup, tonsillitis, etc. None of us ever broke a bone or needed braces."

- Delcie Pound, ag 92, Medina

"Mother was in bed with the flu for two weeks in 1937. While the county nurse stayed with her, I stayed with friends. I was to live with them if she died."

- James Randolph, Columbus

"Father worked one day a week and got food from Akron welfare. Through school, tonsils were removed from three of us at the children's hospital one year, as no money was available for this or a dentist. Our teeth were repaired with lead or pulled out. I was not allowed to join the scouts, as dues were five cents a week. My eyes were checked and after the exam of ten dollars my father took me home, as he could not pay for glasses."

- Alvin Reece, age 83, Mansfield

"Professionals in the community would barter their services for farm products. One physician, who was a relative, received much of his pay in the form of farm products and baked goods. He never turned anyone away and always accepted what was offered. When he received more than he could use, he would call someone he knew who would be glad to come and pick it up."

- William M. Shaw, age 87, Sarahsville

"If we got sick, a neighbor lady looked at us and decided what was wrong and just waited a few days and were better. When we were going to have our baby, my husband's family had a player piano. He started putting $1 bills in a roll of music. When the nine months were up and I went to the hospital for 10 days, he played the music and had $50-$75 for the hospital - 10 days for me and my son - and $25 for the doctor. Cash on delivery."

- Margaret Smith, age 94, Barnesville

"Home remedies took care of all our illnesses - sometimes one dose that was so bad it was a real cure, so we didn't need the second."

- Beva Stonebreaker, age 89, Cadiz

"I badly needed dental work done. Many times, I went to school with my face swollen from toothaches. It was painful and embarrassing too. I couldn't take care of the problem until I graduated from high school in 1939. Then I went to a friend and she took me to the bank, signed for me and then I could go to a dentist. In those days, there weren't any credit cards. In the meantime I did housework for people, making 50 cents a day."

- Margaret Willford, age 87, Plymouth
Holidays During the Great Depression

"We were so poor that, one particular Christmas, my younger brother, Bill, and I thought we would have no Christmas presents. However, our older sister, Dorothy, surprised us by bringing a beautiful big baby doll for me and a fire truck for my brother. The doll's head, hands and feet were made of a plaster-like material, and the rest was made from cloth and stuffed with straw. It had molded hair. We were thrilled with our gifts."
- Betty Banta, age 80, Columbus

"Christmas gifts were oranges and great yeast biscuits embedded with crispy cracklings from rendered pork fat. A Medina County cousin who raised pigs sent in football-size plumb and fatty parts, rendered over a hot stove fire into lard. The old White sewing machine was mother’s best friend. For the holidays, we had new shirts, skirts, pants and jackets. This was a contrast to our cousins who had May Co. boxers under the tree because a cousin worked at May Co."
- Doris O'Donnel Beaufait, age 86, Hudson

"Our Christmas trees came from a nearby woods. It didn't matter if they were lop-sided. We thought they were beautiful. We had very few presents: one a piece, if any, through my married sister."
- Wilma Blasiman, age 88, Lake Milton

"At Christmas time, you didn't get toys. You had homemade stockings with fruit and hard candy... All family took trains to get to be with us for Christmas. It lasted a whole week."
- Margaret O. Brawley, age 86, Youngstown

"I was one of seven children: four girls and three boys. I was the youngest. My three older sisters and brother went to Michigan to work in the automobile plants and, at Christmas, they all put some of their earnings together to buy two scooters, a toy train, some small cars and a set of dishes (some of the cars and dishes I have to this day). My brother also bought my father our first radio (at Water Kent) so we could listen to the news and the comedy shows and also the Joe Louis fights."
- Irene Burkhart, age 83, Shadyside

"For Christmas, we always had a small tree with homemade paper streamers and popcorn; of course, no Christmas lights. To save on electric, we used candles. Our present was one doll, which we girls took turns playing with. Our biggest surprise on Christmas was that we would have chicken on the table and plenty of fruit."
- Margaret Byrum, age 83, Chillicothe

"At Christmas, we usually had a live Christmas tree that could be planted in the front yard afterwards. Mom thought it was unthinkable to cut a tree to be thrown out in a few days. We decorated our beautiful tree with red and green paper chains from school and strings of..."
popcorn. For a Christmas treat, Mom would bake dozens of cookies for us and frost them in all different colors. We loved it!"

- Ruth Maloney Cowgill, Marion

"Several evenings before Christmas, Mom and Dad would take Mary Jane and me on the streetcar into downtown Toledo. We got off at the front entrance to the Lion Store on Summit Street, where there were two life-size statues of lions. There, Mom and Dad would set us loose to do our own Christmas shopping, with the explicit instructions that we were to be back at those lions by nine o'clock. So, Mary Jane and I set off. We each had fifty cents in our pockets with which we each were to buy a gift for Mom, Dad and our grandmother Meme, and of course, I would buy a gift for Mary Jane and she likewise for me - All with fifty cents each, mind you! We went from one five-and-ten store to another until, finally, as time was running out, we each purchased the gifts we were to give on Christmas day.

"On Christmas morning, we jumped out of bed to see the Christmas tree with all its pretty lights and decorations. Under the tree were the many gifts wrapped in white tissue paper and tied with red ribbons. As I remember it, we never tore open the tissue paper to get at the gifts. Very carefully, we folded up the tissue paper, knowing that in the not too distant future we would be using it in our bathroom. We opened our presents with great joy and excitement. For Mary Jane, it was usually a new hand-sewn dress made by Mom, plus stockings and undergarments and sometimes a new pair of shoes. For me, it was generally new pajamas or perhaps a shirt and a couple of pairs of stockings. Of course, there was usually for me a new toy and for Mary Jane a new doll. One year to my great surprise I opened my eyes on Christmas morning to discover a brand new tricycle beside my bed. Another year there was an electric train for me under the tree. My son, Skip, still has that train. All in all and despite the deep Depression Santa Claus was always good to us. It didn't take much to make us very happy."

- William Cox, age 85, Sylvania

"Our Christmases were so exciting! Christmas Eve, we would go down to the market after it closed, pick up a tree they had thrown away, and decorate it that night. What family fun for my brother, sister, me and my mom and dad! It always was beautiful in my childish eyes. We had no gifts under our tree until the day after. The morning after Christmas, we went down to Montgomery Ward on Main Street and Mother and Daddy purchased our gifts at sale price. In those days, the day after Christmas was really honestly marked down good merchandise before Jan. 1 inventory. I remember one year I wanted a certain doll so bad, but of course we couldn’t afford it. The day after Christmas, we went down to Montgomery Ward and yes, there was one of my dolls still for sale, marked down. My mother grabbed her up and hugged her and actually cried. She had been marked down enough for us to buy her. My daughter has her in her treasures."

- Carolyn Davison, age 86, Columbus

"Christmas was a cotton sock with a little fruit and nuts. Halloween was canvassing the neighborhood. Few treats were available, so some windows were soaped and outhouses turned
"In 1938, my Dad developed pneumonia and was unable to work for six months. We were put on relief, which is somewhat like welfare is today. All we got for Christmas that year was a bushel full of staples: potatoes, flour, sugar, etc., and one jigsaw puzzle. Dad was able to get out of bed for Christmas and he, my brother, Joe, and I worked that puzzle together on our living room floor. It was one of my most memorable, meager, beautiful Christmases."

- **Mary Rose DeMaria, age 83, Oregon**

"My dad always waited until Christmas morning to get our free tree, choosing from the scrape of trees left from the night before. If it was baldy on one side, we put the baldy side facing the corner, then decorated it. It looked great!"

- **Mildred Redman Dieter, age 81, Youngstown**

"One year, we three older kids decided to surprise the family. In August, we secretly began to hoard every penny and nickel we earned. By December, we had $2.25 exactly. We shopped carefully, so everyone had a 25-cent gift on Christmas morning. I never saw Dad so surprised as he was with his: two cigars! He said we shouldn't have, with a smile! The favorite gift was a checkerboard and checkers. We had tournaments all winter."

- **Margaret B. Edwards, age 89, Gibsonburg**

"We never had turkey and oysters for Thanksgiving. We had roast chicken and salsify, a vegetable that tastes like oysters. We called it oyster plant."

- **Mary Alice Foster, age 89, Reynoldsburg**

"Holidays were special. We had foods that we didn't get during the year, like oranges and nuts and freshly made peanut butter from West Side Market. That was our treat at Christmas. We didn't have a tree or gifts."

- **Theresa Giallombardo, age 80, Maple Heights**

"On Christmas 1929, Armco was giving free toys to all the children (of its workers). I had asked Santa for a cowboy suit. Christmas morning, there were two big boxes for Alice and me. When we opened them, I was so sad: two big dolls - I cried all morning. I never did get my cowboy suit. Later that morning, my mother started having labor pains. My dad took her to the hospital and she delivered twins: a girl and a boy - Jack and Jeanne. Dad made them a little nursery out of our little bathroom. So, we had a merry Christmas after all!"

- **Mary Jane Grimes, age 87, Monroe**

"I have always been told that our parents, Dorotha and Cloyd (preferring to be called 'Sport') got engaged on Christmas Eve in 1938, and married the next night. When quizzed about the short engagement, Mom always responded that they couldn't afford a ring until then... There wasn't any belling or wagon ride, as was the custom, because it was so cold. The wedding picture was taken in Findlay on the following Tuesday. Wedding gifts included: $100.00 from..."
Grandma Hattie; a rooster and five hens from Dad's brother and sister-in-law, Lawrence and Mildred; hand-embroidered pillowcases from Mom's Uncle Roy and Aunt Mabel; a bedspread from Mom's cousin Stella; and a milk stool and milk bucket from another relative.

- Mary Inbody about her mother, Dorotha Inbody, age 94, Findlay

"I recall when Christmas came along, my dad told us that he could not buy us much, but we were happy with what we got. Plus, when we wanted to light the tree, we had to go down to the milk house and start the generator. It was tough times, but we learned how to accept it."

- Carl Krob, age 82, Bridgeport

"Crita, Mom's sister, and Russell Foley brought us their Victrola. It was a modern record player - a modern convenience. She also sent us Christmas presents. It was a sack for each of us which contained an orange, three gum drops and a package of gum."

- Wendell Litt, New Concord

"We got very few toys, but our neighbors allowed us to play with theirs. One year, I received a macinaw, green and gray, a turtle neck sweater and corduroy pants. I wore them all on Christmas day to the movie because I was very proud of them. I wanted to show them off! It was 65 degrees. But I didn't care, I was proud of what I got!"

- Eli Mitchel, age 74, Delaware

"My sister and I learned to appreciate simple indulgences. On one Christmas, my only gift was a pair of rayon panty hose. I thought it was a wonderful gift because it was much nicer than the cotton I had always worn. And on another occasion, when I was a senior in high school, I had to make a choice between buying a winter coat and buying a high school class ring. I chose the coat."

- Evelyn Brewer Neff Mitrione, age 86, Pickerington

"My childhood was a very happy one. We did things together, helped each other with our lessons and chores, sat around and listened to Mother and Dad telling their tales of Italy and their childhood and loved to hear them sing in Italian. Our holidays were wonderful. The house was always full of relatives and friends partaking of the delicious food prepared by Mother and other delicasies we were allowed. Dancing and singing was a must; someone played either the accordion or the concertina and we loved to watch Mother and Dad dance the Italian dance, the Tarantella. They were terrific."

- Madelyn L. Naples, deceased, Youngstown

"We learned early on to amuse ourselves and not to have many wants. It's the wants, not the needs, that do people in. Having less wants creates contentment and one is satisfied with the simple pleasures in life. Holidays, we baked cookies and wrapped them up in tea towels to give to relatives and neighbors."

- Leona M. Osrin, Beachwood
"Sometimes, we girls got a length of material for a dress as a Christmas present. The boys got chambray for a shirt. I remember that we ordered a lot from the Montgomery Ward catalog. Dress print was 11 cents a yard and gingham was 14. Our other presents might be a yellow pencil, a rubber ball or a hair barrette. The boys got pop guns or yo-yos. Rims of wheels made nice hoops to roll. We made stilts from saplings we found in the woods. Pop made us hickory whistles, limber jim dolls and bows and arrows."

- Delcie Pound, age 92, Medina

"Christmas was a time of much activity as most gifts were handmade and took time to make. Women sewed clothing, embroidered hankies, pillow slips, dresser scarves and doilies, and knitted and crocheted caps, neck scarves, mittens, aprons, etc. Men made shop items such as toys. Books and magazine subscriptions were popular. People read a lot, as TV and electrical gadgets were not invented yet. There were many serial books for children and adults."

- Helen Cook Railer, age 95, Burlington, IN (formerly of Greenfield)

"Milk was delivered in a horse-drawn wagon. I remember we always had a nice Christmas with gifts. One gift was a large gorilla bow and arrow placed on the side of the house. When the car lights hit it, the drivers would be very scared."

- James Randolph, Columbus

"When Christmas came, my mother told my older sister and me that there wasn't a Santa Claus, as we had believed, and we gave what we had to our little sister to make her think that Santa came."

- Rosemary Rausch, age 83, Plain City

"Christmas was special in the one-room school. We had a Christmas tree. All the students made the decorations for the tree. There were no lights on the tree, but there was a gas light in the ceiling of the room. As we left school that day, the teacher gave each of us a orange. My brothers had found a pine tree in the field at home. They cut it and we had a Christmas tree for our new home. We strung bittersweet berries and made decorations for the tree. There were no gifts to put under the tree. On Christmas Eve, Uncle Lloyd arrived with a gift for each of us. I got a doll. I still have her."

- Neva Rees, age 87, Marietta

"All I got for several Christmases was doll clothes made by my mother; nothing was made commercially like now. My clothes were often remade from hand-me-downs. Our Christmas was preparation of food and going to church, where we got a bag of hard candy and one orange."

- Marian Seilheimer, age 89, Tiffin

"For Christmas, I had a hand-me-down used doll with new clothes made by my mother at night while I was asleep. In our stockings were the usual orange and nuts. We were thrilled! When company came, our Sunday chicken had to go a little farther. Mom would always whip up her
special spice cake. I wish I had that recipe today!"
- Mary Johnson Shank, age 77, Toledo

"We used to sit around the Christmas tree and play a guessing game. I see something red (or
silver or whatever). Whoever guessed the ornament first and pointed it out got the next turn.
Christmas time, we each received one present. One year, it was home-made embroidered
velvet slippers with rabbit ears. I remember the totally impractical silk lining and how much we
loved those slippers."
- Ann Shook, age 85, Akron

"We had very little money for celebrating birthdays and Christmas, but our Mom always baked
a cake for each birthday child. And, for Christmas, our parents always provided each of us with
an orange, a few nuts to crack and one present. Over the years, it became a tradition to have a
Christmas coconut for the whole family. Dad would break it open with a hammer."
- Wanda Stubbart, age 78, Columbus, Vic Thomas, age 83, Middletown and Kathleen Lambert,
age 80, Middletown

"Christmas always meant stockings filled with an orange, apple, tangerine, banana, nuts and a
candy cane. We felt so lucky! We made gifts for each other at school and I always drew violets
in the snow on my cards - no doubt a harbinger of 'a season of Spring' eventually rising from the
'winter' of our conditions then."
- Joy Thomas, age 80, Canfield

"Christmas was wonderful. There were six of us. At Christmas, we each had one sock hung on
the fire place. We got an apple, an orange two walnuts and a candy cane. My brother was old
enough to work in a factory in Alliance and he would buy each of us girls a beautiful colored
handkerchief and hang it on the tree."
- Maxine Vargo, age 80, Akron

"We had a round, oak table in the corner of the living room. Every year at Christmas, we would
put a plate for each child around the table. We usually got an orange, pencil, gum and a few
pieces of candy from Santa. One year, I wanted a harmonica. Santa brought one for me. My
father could play a harmonica, so he started to play mine. I started crying. I still have the
harmonica, like new and in the box. How I would love to hear Dad play it now."
- Marie Vaughan, age 85, Bucyrus

"Each holiday, the aluminum co. delivered a bushel-sized basket of food to each of its laid-off
employees. My father was too proud to accept the donation and refused the basket."
- Sally K. Weil, age 89, Bartlett, IL (formerly of Cleveland)

"When Christmas Eve came, Grandma and I went out very late and found a tree to decorate for
free, since the vendors had made their profits by then."
- Dolores L. Younger, age 79, Westerville
"That Christmas, Mother knew we wanted bicycles, so she saved money for one and charged the other one at Montgomery Ward. It was a good Christmas for us."
- Dorothy Zubovich, age 85, Columbus

**Rural vs. City Life During the Great Depression**

"Living on a farm had its advantages during the Depression. They always had food. In the city during the Depression, businesses were closed, factories were closed. In some cases the only clothes people had were on their backs. I guess that is the difference between being poor and being in a Depression."
- Lila Baer, age 89, Dayton

"Grandpa grew up on a farm in New Washington, Ohio. During the Depression, the farm was all he had. In order to save their farm, his father became a bootlegger. 'We had no money at all,' Grandpa told me. 'I only had two pairs of shoes and one pair of pants. I didn't even realize I was poor because everyone else was, too.' Along with no money, they had no electricity, toilets or running water. Although they didn't have any of those things, they did have plenty of food. The farmers were better off than the people who lived in town because they hunted and had their own food right there on their land."
- Nicole Boggs, 10th Grader at Madison Comprehensive H.S., about her grandfather, Linus Bishop, age 86, Mansfield

"Dad worked doubles to save for the privilege to build his four-room, red brick home across the street from where he worked. It was a two-story house across the street from the Niles Firebrick Company. There were two bedrooms, one large (it housed my six brothers), the other for the five girls (we climbed twenty steps to get there), a large bedroom for Mom and Dad and a small living room. The basement was the kitchen, and had one bathroom with a shower, furnace, stove and a fruit, vegetable and wine cellar."
- Rachel Clara Patrone Boyd, age 78, Niles

"Mom and others who lived through the Great Depression will confirm that those who lived on farms probably had life a little easier, since they could grow much of their own food. But folks living in town found ways to make do as well. Mom went to live with (and help out) a British couple, the husband of which was her father's boss at the paper company. Mom's sister went to live with and help out another couple. Mom writes that she still remembers how homesick she was, even though the British couple were kind to her."
- Stephanie A. Burke, about her mother, Mildred Burk, age 88, Middletown

"As I talk with same-age friends, many of them who had an easier financial time than our family seem to regard that era as more 'fun' than I did. I've also heard stories of whole neighborhoods in rural areas or towns that banded together to survive. That did not happen in the city. There,
each family was a unit by itself, sometimes helped by kind-hearted friends."
- Margaret B. Carver, age 91, Cortland

"Dad and Mom had a truck garden, which means you plant more than what you need and sell the rest. We all worked like horses, planting, weeding, cultivating, picking, cleaning, and putting everything into boxes or baskets to take to the market. Dad went to the farmers' market every Tuesday, Thursday and Saturday mornings at 6 a.m. Sometimes, I went along and helped make change and tend our booth. Some of those women still are fresh in my minds: they were so picky and would try to talk Dad into selling for less than the price we had posted on each item. With all the work involved to get those vegetables from the seed to the market, that is when I decided I would never live on a farm when I grew up, and I never have. No one appreciates it unless you have done it."
- Donna Jean Donovan, age 83, Massillon

"During this time, my mom and dad took in her brother, his wife and three kids, which they later regretted. Her brother's wife would sleep in while my mom fed all of us breakfast and got us ready for the day. She made three big hot meals a day, as farmers' wives did then. When my aunt finally got up, she dressed all up in her black dress, big black hat and high heeled shoes. They would go to downtown Columbus on the street car and spend the work day while mom took care of their kids. Their kids fought with us and pushed us off the porch swing. My mom told us not to fight with them. One day, my aunt and uncle came home from downtown. She brought her kids a big red delicious apple for each one, none for us. Another day, the boy started to fight me and I hauled off and gave him one big fist on the mouth; the blood spurted and he never bothered us again. They finally left. She inherited thousands of dollars from a relative. They moved to the richest neighborhood in Columbus. She completely furnished the house with the best and had a maid. He took a job at the Statehouse in Columbus as a bookkeeper. They never once offered to repay us for our caring about them. At one time, my mother wanted to put them out, but my dad said they had no place to go. I guess this really taught them a lesson."  
- Evelyn Eckert, age 90, Crestline

"I lived on a farm and we hardly knew there was a depression. We weren't rich, but my father was a good provider. We butchered beef and hogs in the wintertime. We had 11 people living in our house. We had chickens, so we had our own eggs. We milked cows, so we had our own milk. We sold the cream because we separated the milk for the cream."
- Helen Haney, age 83, Fostoria

"Jo and Helen were two of 11 siblings, born in Liberty Center, Ohio. Their family had an 80-acre farm. They raised all kinds of vegetables and had a variety of animals on the farm, ranging from cows, pigs, geese, ducks, pigeons, rabbits and about 1,000 chickens that were bought as chicks every year. They remember getting the baby chicks by mail."
- Rick Prentice about Jo Herr, age 90, and her sister, Helen, Grand Rapids
Great Depression Story Project

"My maternal grandparents' 60-acre farm just outside Painesville city limits was in jeopardy of foreclosure. My parents and grandparents pooled their resources to pay that mortgage bill, and we moved to the farm. The farm had no electricity at that time, my grandparents lit their house with kerosene lamps. There was no city water; several wells and a cistern supplied water, but no running water. That also necessitated having an outhouse. The farmhouse was heated by a wood-burning, potbelly stove in the living room. Cooking was done over a wood-burning kitchen range. We formerly city folks had the feeling of pioneering on grandpa's farm. We learned that farm work is rewarding and belly-filling, but also hard work. Electricity was connected in 1931, and city water was piped in 1950. Survival and thriving, fruitful, loving, giving lives proved that the Depression years made us stronger and more compassionate toward others."
- Marjorie Hurst, age 85, Painesville

"Living on a farm provided advantages that other families did not have because we could provide for ourselves. We raised cows and pigs for butchering, and we made our own butter in a wooden churn. We also had horses to work the fields, where we raised a variety of crops. Although we raised alfalfa, corn and wheat, we learned that we could earn the best profit by raising tobacco. We had a sufficient supply of fruits and vegetables that we raised and harvested, including strawberries, raspberries, gooseberries, melons and every vegetable imaginable. In order to have an abundant supply of food yearlong, we canned potatoes, apples, pears, cabbage and some meats, which we stored in the dirt cellar. We also prepared and canned sauerkraut, applesauce and pickles. Sweet potatoes, on the other hand, were kept in the bedroom under layers of newspapers."
- Evelyn Brewer Neff Mitrione, age 86, Pikerington

"Mother taught me to quilt. We made quilts from scraps of material left over from dresses. Mother would convert an old dress into an apron, which she wore for her everyday chores. Once every summer, I would spend some time with my aunt and uncle who lived in the city. Aunt Mary let me use her electric sewing machine - a real treat since Mom had a treadle machine."
- Helen Oliver, age 83, Poland

"Life on a farm during Depression days was like living on an island today: no close neighbors, town five miles away and the only social times were Friday nights when everyone went to town to buy groceries, or Sundays, church day. The rest of the time was spent tending crops, the chickens, hogs, cows, horses and housekeeping."
- Deskey Posey, age 82, Chillicothe

"I always felt so sorry for the people who lived in town. They didn't have access to the opportunities to care for themselves like we did. We could either provide for most any need or decide it wasn't a real need."
- Delcie Pound, age 92, Medina
"We lived as the Amish do today. Very basic and simple and as a community. Our neighbors helped each other in times of trouble or need. All would pitch in to thresh, fill silo, butcher or help in emergencies. The people had gardens behind most of their homes, which needed plowed up and worked down for planting. We would load the horse plow and harrow and marking out plow in a box wagon and plow many each spring. Gardens were everywhere in our nearby town. All farmers had them too. There also were potato patches, corn patches, etc."
- Carl Reed, age 76, Malvern

"The effects of the stock market crash in 1929 reached rural areas soon: poor markets, general decline in factories, fewer markets, people without jobs and with no income. Some families in cities lost a job but went to the home of relatives in the country. They had food and shelter, and worked on the farm without pay. This made a strain on family living, but as soon as any kind of work became available, they moved out to available living quarters in the community."
- Viola Reed, age 95, Barnesville

"The Depression broke more than banks. It broke ambition and spirit and destroyed hope. I believe the affluent believed themselves hardest hit. They had money in the bank and it suddenly disappeared. They were reduced to living like the poor were already accustomed to. They were not prepared to face poverty. The small farmer was probably better off than most. Though devastated by falling prices for farm goods, many were still able to put food on the table."
- Harold Russell, age 85, Gratiot

"My mom was a school teacher and my dad was a WWI veteran and a farmer. Our family included my parents, my younger brother, me and my grandfather. We lived on a 285 acre farm and grew corn, wheat, hay and pasture. Our livestock included beef cattle, sheep, swine, poultry and a few milk cows. Our power was horses. My chores in wintertime included taking care of the horses. We usually had three or four head, and they had to be fed and watered each morning and evening. The well we used to water the horses was located near their barn and was also the source of our drinking water so I had to bring a three-gallon bucket of water to the house when I fed the horses."
- William M. Shaw, age 87, Sarahsville

"My father, a 1926 graduate of Heidelberg College in Tiffin Ohio, having had his job as chemist ended at Universal Oil in Chicago, had decided to relocate his family to the area of Ohio where he had grown to adulthood. To me, looking back, it seems a very risky undertaking. My mother, who had lived her entire life in Chicago with no knowledge of farm life, was leaving her mother and siblings behind heading to an unknown 17-acre chicken and fruit farm with four small children ages 10 months to seven years. My dad, having no occupation other than attempting to begin a small truck farm, had purchased the farm with no indoor plumbing and only a limited amount of Delco-generated electricity. Unfortunately I will never know if my parents were in complete agreement concerning that decision to move to Ohio."
- Doris C. Stahl, age 77, Sebring
"The Great Depression and me; I confess it took a while to realize and to feel the impact. From one's perspective as a farm person, it was just more of the same. Money had always been a scarce commodity. Stock to us farm folk meant four-legged bovines, not paper certificates denoting ownership in companies. Owning one's land was a goal feverishly sought after and, once gained, would be its own reward. I married my high school sweetheart in 1935. We were naïve, but eager to try our wings. Walter was employed by his uncle at Cappel Furniture in Springfield, where we sat up housekeeping. This industry-based town was deep in the throes of hard times. We were not prepared for the difference in lifestyle. In the heat of summer, I longed for the cool shade provided by the maples around our house, and missed the goodies that came from the country garden. We managed to keep our heads above water; we were accustomed to living frugally. Stretching our meager income ($15.00 per week) required ingenuity many times, but we hung in there. Fortunately, no health problems existed and we never tired of cornbread and beans and fried mush - good ole country fare."
- Willa B. Stanforth, age 93, Hillsboro

"After school had ended, we were all assigned farm chores, starting in May with strawberries, then early cherries, raspberries, blackberries and huckleberries. If we were not picking the various fruits, it was time to finish planting the huge garden - planting enough potatoes to keep us over winter and spring. After the planting was done, it was time to start putting up hay. After the haying was done, then it was time to help with wheat and oats. Dad had a binder pulled by the team of horses, but we had to stack the sheaves that the binder made. When the grain had dried well, there was a threshing. Neighbors came and helped. We girls and mother had to fix a huge meal for the men."
- Beva Stonebreaker, age 89, Cadiz

"Growing up on a farm during a Depression had some advantages. We had lots of exercise and we ate. We ate because we grew it. In fact, if we didn't grow it, we didn't eat it. Somehow, Mom fed us, clothed us and kept us moderately clean. Canning and drying fruits and vegetables went on all summer and turned into a frenzy in the fall."
- George K. Weimer, Jr., age 77, Sebring

"I remember how scared my sister and I were when our Daddy drove down the lane to the farm in Millersport, Ohio, 1929, the beginning of the 'Depression years.' Being city kids, we were afraid of everything on the farm: the dogs running and barking, the chickens scattering wildly on long, skinny legs, horses, cows, pigs, everything. We were supposed to stay with our Aunt Ida Mae Bright and her family for three weeks. Little did we know it would be for three years."
- Ada Goss Weygandt, age 86, Grove City

"I knew we were far better off than those who lived in the cities. Many people there had to depend on the bread lines for survival. Although food was never a problem with us, finding money to pay for doctor bills, utilities and clothing was a never-ending quest. With seven kids, it was accept hand me downs or go bareback."
- Leon White, age 89, Columbiana
"Saturday was the one day stores stayed open late (after 6 p.m). The country folks could come to town to shop and visit. Just about the whole town turned out. Those who had a car or horse and buggy would arrive after an early supper. They claimed a parking spot for the whole evening (no parking meters). The best spot was as close to the center of the businesses. The farmers would make their purchases, store them in the car and then visit with other parked near by. They usually were the first to leave; they had chores to do and early Sunday rising. Others would sit all evening gossiping with friends and watching the people walk by. The gals walked arm-in-arm, passing the boys sitting on car fenders watching the girls. The boys made remarks and the girls giggled. Sometimes, they paired off on their way home. When the local theater let out, the crowd started to thin out and the movement of traffic up and down the street dwindled. By midnight, the town was put to bed."
- June A. Young, age 84, Worthington

Transportation During the Great Depression

"I recall the love of the autos in 1932: Ford Model A with six cylinders, 1933, 1934 and 1936, V-8 Fords. Chryslers had trouble with their ignition. Ford was notorious for being hard to work on by mechanics. Chevrolet was very popular, competing with Ford in the 1930s. I never saw a tool made in any country but the U.S.A., except, once in a while, Germany or Sweden."
- Frank Chihocky, age 77, Amsterdam

"When you went to high school, you either rode the train or, later, we got a Model-T Ford to drive. It had to be cranked to start it. When we got to school, we had to drain out the water so it wouldn't freeze, and when we were ready to go home, we filled it with water again, cranked it and we were on our way home. Gasoline was eleven cents a gallon. If you were low on gas and you came to a big hill, you turned the car around and backed up the hill so that the gas would run forward and keep the motor running."
- Mary Cole, age 91, Cadiz

"My father, a carpenter, drove a team of horses, pulling a wagon to work. Before the Depression, he bought a new, crank model-T for $400.00. While very young, I learned to drive it in the fields. We took a trip to St. Louis, MO. Heated bricks around our feet kept us warm. My first year in high school, I was lucky. I was allowed to drive Dad's Model-T Ford into town, where school was located. In cold weather, the boys at school would crank the car for me. The second year, Dad couldn't afford the gas, so my niece drove her family's horse and buggy the 4 3/4 miles into town. After that year, I walked the 1 3/4 miles to Highway 50. If someone I knew drove by, I could ride with them. If not, I walked the remaining three miles, and did the same thing home going each day."
- Laverne Hillyer Fifer, age 92, Northwood
"One day, I asked my Dad if we could take a ride. He said he had to save the gas to go to work. I said 'why not put a pan under the car and save the gas.' He said it didn't work that way, The gas burned up when the motor ran. I learned something new that day."
- Mary Jane Grimes, age 87, Monroe

"I started first grade in a one-room school south of Bangs. We walked about a mile to camp school. Also here, Pop bought a 1931 Hudson limousine. It had wheel wells on the front fenders, jump seat in back of the front seat, and a luggage carrier on back. He paid $135 for it during the depth of the Depression. It got nine miles to a gallon. He planned and did haul feed from town."
- Wendell Litt, New Concord

"There was a two-car garage that went with this house, and each weekend my father and the man that lived upstairs from us would take the whole engine and everything under the hood of the car apart, just for something to do. They would take turns with each other's car and be covered with grease. If there was a problem with either of the cars, they would be fixed at home by these self-made mechanics."
- Marilyn Markle, age 79, North Royalton

"Many of our relatives, friends and neighbors didn't have a radio and they came to our house to hear the war news, prize fights or comedy shows. My dad was the only one for miles around who owned a car. People came and asked him to take them to the doctor, the train station, or wherever they needed to go. The road was just dirt. When it rained, cars got stuck in the mud. My dad got his tractor with cleats on the wheels and pulled them out."
- Beulah Milbern, age 88, Monroe

"Almost all of the field work was done by horses, such as plowing, planting, cultivation, harvest, etc. The only tractor was used just for belt work, such as buzz saws to cut firewood to length and a buzz folder to cut corn into short pieces for food and bedding. The tractor was also used for threshing and grinding chop for cows. If it got too hard for horses to plow in the fall, we would occasionally use the tractor. We had a buggy and sleigh to go to town, etc. Later, we got a Model-A Ford (1929) for some trips: going to the county seat to pay taxes, legal work and some shopping a couple times a year. Many times a year, we walked to town (1 1/4 miles) and carried home the groceries. The trips to town were far and few between, as it took money to buy our needs."
- Carl Reed, age 76, Malvern

"The railroad that served our community was narrow gage: only three feet between the rails compared to four foot eight and a half inches for a standard gage track. It was a small train, but it looked big to me. I remember riding the train very few times, but it was exciting. It was our link to the far away places. Service began in 1883 and continued until the late 1920s. The train system was known as the OR&W (Ohio River and Western) but it was better known as the BZ&C (bent, zigzagged and crooked). The train track ran from Bellaire on the Ohio River to
Woodsfield, then Caldwell and on to Zanesville, a distance of 112 miles. My family only used the train in wintertime, when the roads were too muddy to travel in my dad's 1921 model-T Ford. My principal use of the railroad was to use the roadbed as a mud-free path to school in the wintertime. The train was a very slow method of transportation, not because it was not capable of high speed, but because it stopped at a station in every small community along the route. There also were flag stations located about a mile apart in the open country where you could flag the train to stop and pick you up."
- William M. Shaw, age 87, Sarahsville

"Our next-door neighbor (nice guy) had a 1933 Chevy that he would sell us for $35. I had just gotten a part-time job at the Royal Ridge Dairy, which was about six miles from where we lived - too far to walk. Mom couldn't take me after school, but I didn't have a driver's license. I had heard that Chief Akins would 'look the other way' if the 15-year-old drivers would keep their noses clean. Dad was a reasonable and understanding man, so he let me buy the car. Brother Joe and I went to work on it immediately, after all, he was going to be riding with me, even in the rumble seat, if he wanted to. We sanded and brush-painted the car black and the spoke wheels red. The running boards were a little weak, but somewhere we found some stainless steel panels, cleaned them up, cut them to size and glued and bolted them to the running boards. Did we have a 'spiffy' car! We used this car for work and for trips to 'Spike's' roller skating rink at State and Wallings Roads. Sister Rita rode with me inside the car. I never remembered who brother Joe had with him in the rumble seat - it was always that way: I had the car and its expenses and Joe had the girls... One afternoon, on the way up to the school in the truck, I was stopped by Chief Akins, Royalton's one-man police force. He just wanted to let me know that he knew that I did not have a driver's license. He said that this was all right as long as he never caught me speeding or screwing up with a car. I never broke his trust." 
- Larry Taddie, age 82, Parma

Other Thoughts About the Great Depression

"Everybody was stealing. If you were on the street car, the man sitting next to you had a gun and would stick you up, and nobody on the streetcar would know you were robbed. Our house was robbed when we went visiting. The neighbor never helped, everybody was for themselves. If they worked, they were blessed. The butcher picked your pocket and padded the bill. Lots of bathtub Gin was being made by neighbors." 
- Walter Bednarz, Garfield Heights

"I was born Feb. 12, 1935, and, yes, I remember how tough it was then for me and my mom. Mom and Dad divorced in 1938. We lived in Edgewater Park slept under a tree. Police would bring us coffee and doughnuts. In 1943, I went to live with my dad; my mom could not support me anymore."
- George Campbell, age 74, Cleveland
"Reliance upon our faith gave us hope and put into perspective what was happening. Our priorities had to be adjusted. No longer did my parents require me to take two street cars each Sunday to the church my grandfather had helped to found. I could now go to a nearby church, where many of my school friends attended and where there was an active program for the young people. The president of that group one time called us all together to ask what we could send to southern Ohio, where many suffered from a flood. Our treasury was meager, but our empathy was large!"

- Florence Field, age 91, Willoughby

"Dad planted a very large garden as well as beautiful flowers and lawn. He did this without any modern machinery, just a cultivator pushed by hand. I remember one year we all pitched in and planted a big field of potatoes, which became a staple food. As a reward, dad took us to Milton Lake for the rest of the day."

- Mary Elizabeth Stillwagon Glass, age 88, Cambridge

"Orders: 'Don't go past the pig sty.' Oh no? Don't tell a four year old adventurer, 'not,' because the first thing she'll do is find out why not. So, off she went when Grandma wasn't looking. She came upon a shack way out in the back acreage, where she saw a 'black' face for the first time! Girlie ran as fast as her legs would carry her! She couldn't scream and couldn't tell because she did what she was forbidden to do. Years later, now grown and investigating the sighting, as segregation died and integration was on the upsurge, she learned her precious Great Grandfather, 33 percent Mason and flag bearer for his group, had adopted the black boy, just as he had adopted her own father so long ago. It was the best-kept family secret when relatives came down from Cleveland, Ohio, or up from Cincinnati Ohio (on the 3-C highway)."

- Jan Heaton, age 73, Mansfield

"My parents were charter members of the Lutheran church in Bowling Green. They had hearts after God and they started tithing when my Dad made $90 a month. Our lives were always church-centered, and we served in many ways: church council, women of the church, choir, organist, choir director, Sunday school teacher and treasurer. My dad helped build a garage for the pastor's family and helped dig out a basement under the church."

- Ruth Marilyn Isaacson, age 83, Germantown MD (formerly of Bowling Green.

"And all through the night, and during the day, the shriek of train whistles was constantly heard. The belching stacks would spew dark smoke over the nearby neighborhoods as the trains passed through Columbus. It was smelly and, at times, so thick it hurt our eyes and made us choke. Housewives hurriedly gathered their clothes off the lines, lest they be spotted by the soot."

- Alex James, age 91, Columbus

"We didn't really feel the Depression for a few years, except the price of farm products we had to sell kept going down. Herbert Hoover, then president, was saying we would soon have a chicken in every pot and a car in every garage, but somehow it got mixed up and many people
ended up with a chicken in the garage."
- John Lamb, via e-mail

"The Depression lasted at our house from the time I was in the first grade until after high school. The start of school in September was a time of joy for me because it meant getting out of our house, where it seemed we never did anything but work. The Great Depression robbed me of my childhood. However, I learned work skills, which have maintained me through many lean times since. I can still come up with a meal from a sparse cupboard. I only ask please don't make me can pears, make grape jelly or eat spam."
- Donna Lehman, age 86, Eaton

"We didn't realize that not everyone lived as we did, and were happy children. But our mother must have had many bad days. One of the things I will never forget is when my mother was carrying a rope clothesline. I asked her what she was going to do with it. She answered, 'I'm going to hang myself.' I didn't sleep well that night. It was a horrible thing to say to a child, but I'm sure many adults felt that way much of the time."
- Ruth L. McGinnis, age 86, Hilliard

"Weddings always were held in the bride's home or church parsonage. No one could afford a church wedding. Funerals were held in the home of the deceased. A large, black wreath was hung by the front door."
- Helen Cook Railer, age 95, Burlington, IN (formerly of Greenfield)

"Living in an ethnic ghetto as a young boy, I really did not know how green the grass was on the other side of the fence. During the Depression, my diet did not change, my threadbare clothes did not change. I did not go hungry and all my basic needs were provided. Yes, my parents lost the house and my father lost his job. One thing he didn't lose was his spirit."
- Tony Rugare, age 83, Highland Heights

"Spelling contests were sometimes conducted to add a bit of variety to the learning process. Participants would line up across the front of the room and words would be presented to each student. If the word was spelled correctly, the student would hold their place in the line. If incorrect, the student would go to the bottom of the line. On one occasion, a seventh grade boy had been at the top of the line for several days and along came the word 'sugar.' The boy spelled it 'sugEr' and had to take his place at the bottom of the line. When the students returned to their desks, the boy who spelled the word correctly was sitting at the desk in front of the boy who had missed it. The failed speller must have felt very frustrated and embarrassed and did a very irrational act by pulling the hair of the boy who beat him. I earned and received my first and only whipping of my school career for this unthinkable act."
- William M. Shaw, age 87, Sarahsville

"Many banks were closing; people lost all their money. People would walk around with their pockets turned inside out, waving them and calling them the 'Hoover Flag,' as they blamed
President Hoover for their ills."

- Esther R. Sukosd, age 91, Carrollton

"Each Sunday, my father would drive to Bellville to visit my aunt (his sister). I remember once seeing people out by the side of the road with all their household belongings. I asked my dad where they were going and he said they probably didn't know. These were people who were evicted."

- Ferd Thoma, age 82, Newton Falls

"I sing of the Great Depression: 'You made me what I am today...' and, I laughed while the tear drops fell. What a kaleidoscopic time to have been a kid! Days and nights were colored by events that shaped my life in spite of myself, as I hop-scotched through them, unaware that our family was the poorest, yet the richest we would ever be!"

- Joy Thomas, age 80, Canfield

"I can remember when we went to church one Sunday and my mom had about 300 young chickens about ready to lay eggs. When we came home, all of her chickens were gone and my mom cried for days. People would steal anything that they could. It was terrible in those days. My dad would get up at night and go out and shoot his 12-gauge shotgun to scare people away. We had a dog, but he barked all the time and we couldn't tell what he was barking at. My dad farmed with horses and he had to keep the barn locked at night. People would kill your cows and butcher them in the field if you didn't watch them carefully."

- Charles Warrick, age 81, Barnesville

"(My parents) waited three years to have me. When I was only months old, their home caught fire. Dad was working when the fire broke out. My mom and I were safe, outside. She was watching the conflagration, knowing her wedding dress and unpaid furnishings were literally going up in smoke. She could not stand any more and ran back into the house to retrieve my baby picture that was on the wall in the stairwell. Dad finally found us. He went back days later to search out silverware he had purchased for my mom as a wedding gift. The pieces were in ashes. He put them on a glass tray and returned to our temporary home."

- Mary Ann Wasserman, age 78, Toledo

"One time when I was in fourth grade, or maybe fifth, I was chosen 'May Queen' to preside over May Day at Avondale Elementary School (it's still there). I knew there was no way mom and grandma could afford a costume and flower crown, so I DIDN'T TELL THEM. Somehow mother found out and stayed up all night sewing a simple dress with a cardboard bodice covered with fabric and laced up the front. Bless her for that!"

- Dolores L. Younger, age 79, Westerville