

THE UNCOMMON STRUGGLE OF ALL MEN--  
THE GREAT DEPRESSION

Essay over "Of Mice and Men"

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"I've been doin' some hard travelin', I thought you'd knowd. I've been doin' some hard ramblin', way down the road. . .I've been layin' in a hard rock jail. . .I've been laid out ninety days, way down the road. The darned old judge, he said to me, it's ninety days for vagrancy, and I've been doin' some hard travelin', Lord."

This was the tune or the song of almost everyone during the Great American Depression. People faced struggles everywhere they turned. Webster's Intermediate Dictionary defines struggle as: "to make great efforts or attempts; strive; labor". The Depression brought on many fears and no comprehension. With the Depression came hunger, joblessness and many other things. On a day-to-day basis,

the farmers, workers and every other common person had to wake up each morning with the question: "How am I going to feed my family today?". If you had a job, or could find one, you were very lucky and grateful.

My grandfather was the 11th of 12 children in his family and they moved from Bridgeport, OK to "the city" of Edmond after the Depression hit and he took any job he could find to help out with the monthly income and payments. Many people did not cope with the dust bowl or the Depression very well. The younger generation had to change its way of thinking. They also had just changed the styles of everything in the 1920's (Roaring 20's!).

The styles had changed a lot from the 1920's. The younger generation had to go out and find jobs...jobs such as carrying ice, newspapers, milk, working at a grocery store, or even delivering clothes to needy children. People did everything they could to make money. People worked together to get the job done. My grandfather hauled ice, made ice cream and other things, all the while putting himself and his sisters through high school and even college. Times were so bad that they lost their chicken farm in Edmond because they couldn't pay \$50.00 in land taxes, and the chicken farm was the sole source of income for the family, other than their odd jobs.

Franklin D. Roosevelt said "Hunger is not debatable". Roosevelt had an idea which he called "The New Deal". It set up food, jobs and other necessities of life for many people who were suffering as a result of the Depression. Roosevelt's programs caused many things to be built, some of which exist even today. He put many people to work, mostly doing public works projects, many of which may still be seen today. Those included building bridges, roads, armories, and other public buildings.

In his book "Of Mice and Men", Steinbeck's two main characters are Lennie and George. They showed what real life was like during the Depression. Lennie and George moved from ranch-to-ranch doing whatever needed to be done, all while George took care of Lennie and allowed him to live a dream that could never be. A lot of men who did not have families to support moved from place-to-place, trying to find work. Many people got through the Depression by town-hopping.

The Depression came-and-went and with it came many emotions. People today still ask themselves: "How did we ever get through the Depression?". From my grandfather's point of view, he would have never made it without his family and friends. My grandfather to this day knows that if he ever needs anything, he can call on one of those same people. "My family and I would have never made it if we wouldn't have stuck so closely together as we did". People today cannot grasp what the people in the 1930's had to deal with. Today the world is a stroll in the park, compared with the past. The people lost not only jobs, but faith in their own futures. The Depression made people all over the country come together for a common purpose and a common goal. . .to survive the struggles.

