

BOOK 5

Growing Up in Hard Times



School in the Depression



One-room country schools offered eight grades taught by one teacher. Older kids helped the younger ones. Anyone wanting to attend high school had to go to a nearby town or city and find someone to live with there. Rural schools had split terms --time in school depended on planting and harvest.

Rural schools had no electricity and were heated with wood or coal stoves. Restrooms were out-houses. Water came from a pump --all kids drank from the same ladle dipped in a bucket.

All kids walked to school --some rode horses. They brought their lunch. There was no playground equipment. Kids played games like tag or ran foot races.



Schools during the Depression were segregated by race. The schools were supposed to be “separate but equal.” They were almost NEVER equal. The buildings were run down. Textbooks were those the white schools no longer wanted.

Migrant kids who traveled from place to place in the 1930s were lucky to attend school at all. Many kids had to work too, so they couldn't go to school.

Both urban (city) and rural schools faced problems because of the Depression. They had less money, but the numbers of children stayed the same. Laws were passed to help stop child labor. Federal programs encouraged young people to stay in school.

Schools, during the Depression, differed all across the country --however, each was very different than the school you see today.



WEINER SCHOOLS during the GREAT DEPRESSION

There were many little schools scattered all around the Weiner area that children attended. People were isolated. That means there were no phones or school buses. Most did not have a car.

The schools were usually had one room with one teacher for first grade to eighth grade. Let's look at some of those schools!



Beautiful Home --about two miles past Miss Hesse's house...



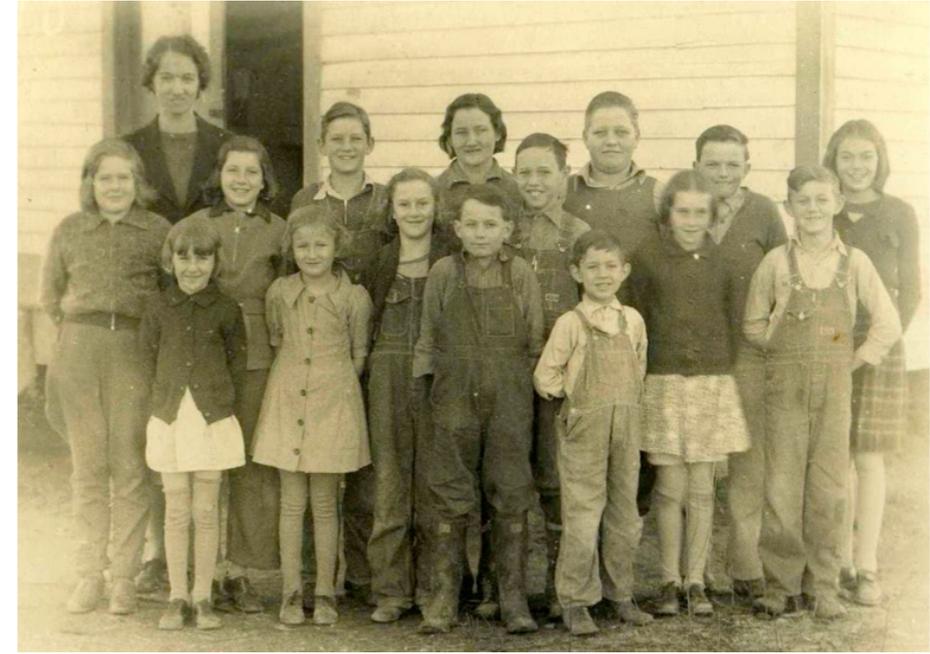
Scott Raybourn School - where the City Park is today...



Cooper and Hanes School/Church --across the bayou near O.K. Duck Hunting Club



Thomas School - North of Weiner



Ukena School --between Weiner and Fisher



Tapps School - outside of Waldenburg, going toward Newport



Weiner School --located close to the covered Pavilion by the entrance to the gym.

Going to School Then and Now

School life	During the Depression	Now
Clothing	Girls all wore dresses, boys sometimes wore overalls	Girls wear pants or dresses, everyday clothes, some uniforms
School books	No free school books, parents had to buy them	School system provides books
Transportation	No school bus transportation, a lot of children walked	School buses, walkers, cars
Technology	Learned to use electric appliances/equipment	Computers, television
Family money	Some had to drop out of school to take job to help support family	Most drop out today for personal reasons, not to support family
Classrooms	All grades were in one large room	Different rooms for different grades/subjects
Sports	There were team sports and P.E. classes	Team sports and P.E. classes
DARE programs	Drugs were unknown in schools and alcohol wasn't a problem	School children have access to both drugs & alcohol
School Safety	Any disciplinary problems were handled by teachers	Some schools have police officers & metal detectors

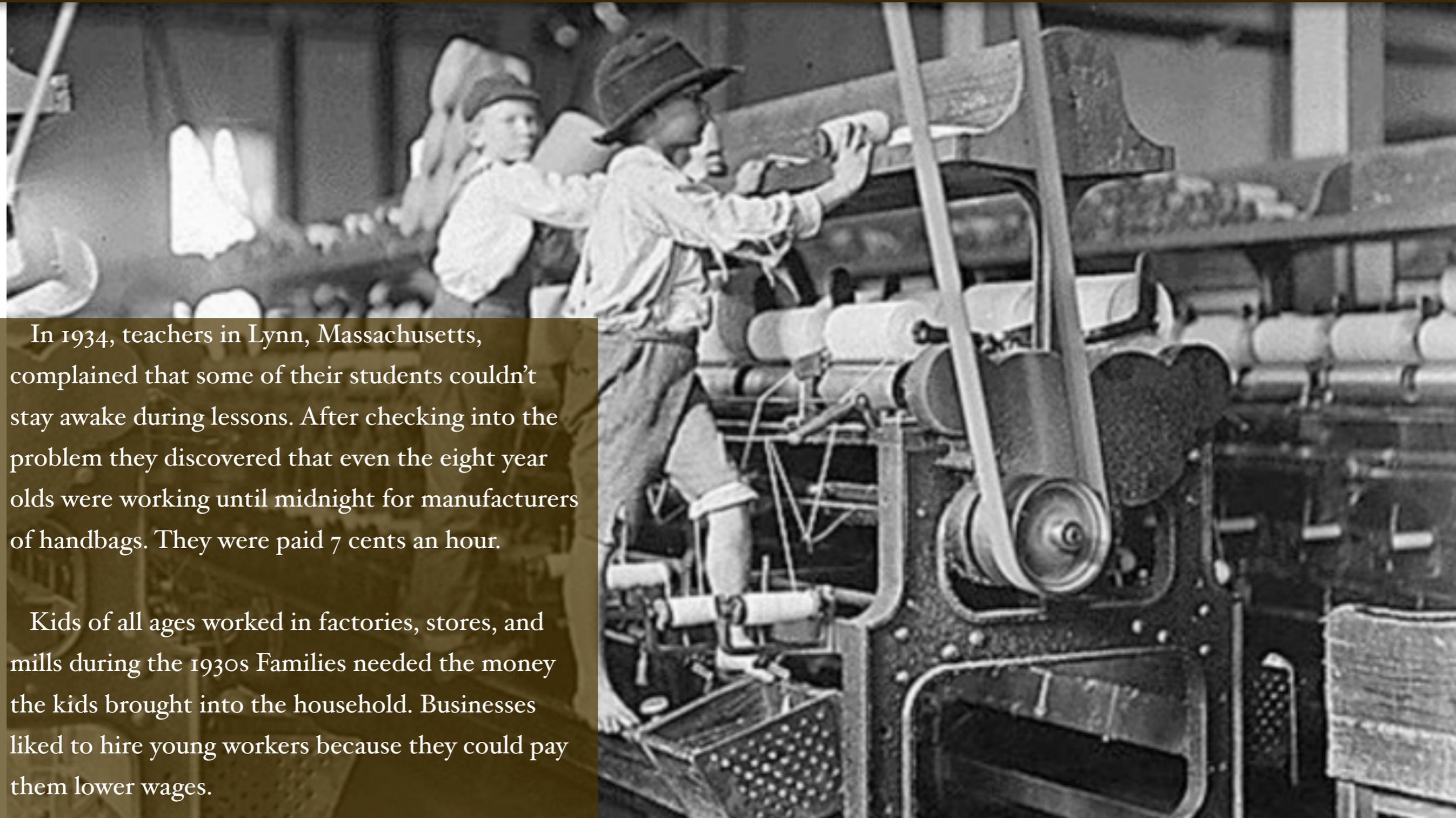
* Schools have got larger and larger over the years. The small schools during the Depression gradually were consolidated into larger and larger schools.

Despite the modern innovations in today's schools, what are some positive things kids in the Depression would know and understand that would benefit today's kids.



Chapter 2

Kids at Work



In 1934, teachers in Lynn, Massachusetts, complained that some of their students couldn't stay awake during lessons. After checking into the problem they discovered that even the eight year olds were working until midnight for manufacturers of handbags. They were paid 7 cents an hour.

Kids of all ages worked in factories, stores, and mills during the 1930s Families needed the money the kids brought into the household. Businesses liked to hire young workers because they could pay them lower wages.

President Roosevelt opposed child labor, saying, “a self-respecting democracy can plead no justification for the existence of child labor.” He hired Frances Perkins as head of the Department of Labor because of her determination to wipe out child labor.

Finally, in 1938 the Fair Labor Standards Act was passed. It limited work for kids under 16. It also said that kids under 18 couldn't work in hazardous jobs.

Children began working on the farm at a young age gathering eggs, working in the garden, and caring for animals. Their chores changed as they got older. Farm chores were divided by gender --boys helped in the fields and girls worked in the house, cleaning, cooking, canning, and caring for younger siblings.

During the Depression, those on farms raised animals and planted gardens for food. Every morsel was precious. Bacon grease was spread on bread in place of butter.

Today people who were children living on farms during the Great Depression remember that most farm families struggled and were poor, but because they grew food and raised animals, they always had plenty to eat.



Today child labor is still a problem in many countries. Watch the [video](#) --what do you think is the WORST thing about this type of child labor? Explain.

Poor Eating - Health Problems



Gravy made with bacon grease, flour, and water. Baked bean sandwiches. Both were part of mealtime for families in the Depression.

There were no free lunches at school. Poor children often went without. Most were under weight and suffering from malnutrition.

Potatoes were eaten at almost every meal. Lunchboxes almost always contained cold boiled potatoes and a biscuit.

Farm children had food in their lunch boxes that was grown on the farm, but many children suffered from poor nutrition.

During the Great Depression it was common to see children who were not more than four with a set of black, decayed teeth. The children were not eating enough fresh vegetables and fruit needed to build good teeth.

The American Association of Social Workers directed a survey of Dust Bowl children in the migrant camps in California and discovered that 27 out of 30 were malnourished.

Most children didn't even realize how poor they were. Parents tried keep their children as happy as possible in such hard circumstances. Although many children were hungry, they were happy to be with their family. Their parents believed it was best to follow this advice: "Don't let the children know."

In schools, teachers taught children whose parents still had jobs, not to tease or make fun of their classmates whose fathers were out of work, forcing them to move out of their homes and wear made-over clothing. Many of those who were children during the Depression, grew up to be thrifty. They were careful not to waste anything. They remembered ...they remembered what it was to be in need.



The movie, "To Kill a Mockingbird," shows a **scene** with a poor sharecropper's son, Walter Cunningham (above) eating at the home of the town's lawyer. He asks for syrup, which he pours over his food --something poor parents did to get their children to eat bland food. In this scene, the lawyer's daughter makes fun of Walter and hurts his feelings. View the clip at the link. What lesson can we learn from this scene?