

The Great Depression and World War II

By 1929, Washington had experienced much change and growth since it was admitted as a state. The population had grown from over 300,000 people in 1889 to about 2.2 million in 1929. As discussed in the previous chapter, the population growth in Washington was due to a variety of factors. There was tremendous economic growth and development during that time period. Existing industries, like timber, agriculture, fishing, and mining saw increased demand for materials and larger profits. New industries, like shipbuilding, airplane manufacturing, heavy industry, and banking also emerged. The emergence of Washington's economy drew workers from other parts of the country and world.

Potential workers and residents were drawn to Washington as a result of a clever and sophisticated advertising campaign. Through the use of brochures, fairs, exhibitions, and speaking tours, Washington cities and business employers advertised the opportunities and potential of the state. Advertisers found a receptive audience of American workers and foreign immigrants who were hungry for the chance to earn more money, live comfortably, and improve their social standing. Especially noteworthy in Washington was the amount of foreign born residents who came to the state looking for better opportunities.



▲ Storing and preserving food was important during the tough conditions of the 1930s.

Both the economy and migration to Washington were assisted by an improved transportation network. Although the Northern Pacific Railroad was completed in 1883, it did not benefit Washington as much as many had hoped. The railroad terminated in Portland and thus its impact upon Washington was not as great as on Oregon. In 1893, though, the Great Northern Railroad was completed. It ended in Everett and traversed much of Eastern Washington along its path. The Great Northern Railroad also operated lines to Seattle and Tacoma. By virtue of its main destinations, the Great Northern Railroad had a tremendous impact upon Washington. In the early 20th century, the Great Northern Railroad purchased the Northern Pacific Railroad, creating one large and expansive rail network in the Pacific Northwest. This rail network effectively and efficiently transported goods and people to and from Washington.

In spite of the economic growth, improved transportation networks, and the promise of limitless opportunities, the reality of Washington was quite difficult for most. Washington's booming economy tended to benefit business owners and industrial moguls. Employees and laborers had a difficult time earning enough money to provide basic living necessities for themselves and their families. The gap between wealthy business owners and employees and laborers was large. This class division between the upper and working classes was not unique to Washington. In fact, it was quite common in most parts of the country, especially the large industrial cities of the eastern United States. However, immigrants to Washington had been fed stories of the unparalleled opportunity in the state. To realize that Washington was so similar to other parts of the country proved disappointing to many new arrivals.

During the 1920s, Washington's economy took a decided downturn. Washington's economy had grown considerably during the build up to World War I and during the war years. The United States military machine relied heavily upon the agricultural products, natural resources, shipbuilders, and airplane manufacturers found in Washington. But demand for these materials stopped after the conclusion of World War I. Unfortunately many Washington industries were still operating at wartime capacity, meaning that they



▲ The prices of agricultural goods sold at market declined during the 1920s. This photograph is of Seattle's Pike Place Market.

were overproducing. The prices for many goods, especially agricultural products, dropped. Many businesses went bankrupt and unemployment increased.

Yet the stagnating economy did little to stop people from coming to the state. Washington promoters had so effectively marketed the virtues of the state that people still came to the region in spite of the sluggish economy. For the most part, they migrated to Washington's cities. Cities also saw a growth from migration within the state. Rural residents, particularly farmers, struggled during the economic conditions of the 1920s. Thus, they migrated to cities to seek employment.

The combination of migration from within and outside of the state to cities caused the cities of Washington to grow even larger. However, new arrivals often found living in cities to be expensive. Housing prices were high and post war inflation caused the cost of basic goods to also rise. Moreover, the economic conditions of Washington created difficulties in finding employment. Thus, the outlook for Washington at the end of the 1920s was not good.



▲ The old promotional campaign, as demonstrated above by a Great Northern Railroad brochure, still continued to encourage more people to arrive in Washington.

THE GREAT DEPRESSION

On October 29, 1929, the New York Stock Exchange, located on Wall Street in New York City, collapsed. Coined in the press as "**Black Tuesday**," the crash of the stock market was a worrisome sign to contemporary observers. In the following days, the situation became worse as the market plunged even further. Historians estimate that at least \$16 billion was lost by investors during the Crash. While this sum is considerable by today's standards, it was even more damaging in 1929.

As far as economic indicators go, stock markets can be unreliable. Growth and decline in stock markets do not always indicate the true state of an economy. However in the case of the stock market crash of 1929, it was a significant event. Up to this point in American history, the stock market had primarily been an activity reserved for the wealthy and upper middle class. Few others had the cash necessary to participate. But the booming economy of the 1920s had led many people with smaller resources to invest in the market in hopes of striking it rich by picking the right stock.



▲ Panic began to set in with people on Wall Street, following the stock market crash on October 29, 1929.

The strategy was quite successful early on in the 1920s, leading even more people to become involved in the market. Thus, when the crash of 1929 occurred, it was not simply wealthy businessmen and financiers who suffered, but the middle and working classes as well. Many people lost everything in the market. In a matter of weeks, entire savings were lost. Moreover, many had incurred debt to play the market or had to borrow money after losing their investments. The ripple effect of the crash was enormous and signaled the start of the **Great Depression**.

CAUSES OF THE GREAT DEPRESSION

The stock market crash of October 1929 was not the sole cause of the Great Depression. In fact, historians and economists today still debate what caused the Great Depression. While there is no definitive agreement, scholars generally agree that there were four main factors contributing to its onset.

The first factor was the lack of diversity in the American economy. While Washington's economy suffered during the 1920s, much of the rest of the United States boomed. The expansion of the American economy was built primarily around demand for industrial goods both in the country and abroad. These goods included steel for building, automobiles, and consumer goods like household appliances, clothing, entertainment items, and the like. Other industries, such as agriculture, military equipment, and logging, were already suffering in the 1920s. Thus, it was not the entire American economy that excelled but a select few industries. In the late 1920s, prior to the stock market collapse, these industries began to stall.

A second factor in the Great Depression was the uneven distribution of wealth. As noted in previous chapters, there was a large divide between the wealthy and working classes in America. Over half of American families in the 1920s lived near the poverty line. They were too poor to purchase the consumer goods listed above. Moreover, these families could barely afford to live and many had to borrow money to keep their property, houses, and provide basic necessities. Thus, there were only a few people in the United States able to purchase consumer goods. When that market became exhausted, there were no new buyers for goods. Thus, factories began to cut production and began laying off workers.

A third factor was debt. As noted above, many Americans were already in debt. Particularly vulnerable were small business owners and farmers. These groups



◀ When the Great Depression hit, many banks were overextended and could not cover their customers' savings accounts. As a result, many citizens who had deposited their money with banks for safekeeping found their entire life savings gone. As news of bank failures spread, people panicked and mobbed their personal banks to retrieve their money, as seen in this photo from New York City.

borrowed heavily to keep their lands, businesses, and homes. Moreover, many other individuals had borrowed to invest in the stock market. Thus, when the market collapsed, not only did they lose their savings, but they also had no way to pay back loans that they had used to purchase stock. Many banks themselves had been deeply involved in the stock market. When it collapsed, it sent a ripple through the banking industry.

Many banks began to pressure people to pay back their loans. But most Americans who had borrowed money lacked the resources to pay back their loans. Many banks had counted on loan money being paid back to meet their obligations. Thus, banks were overextended and literally had no money. Banks were forced to take homes and property in place of money owed on loans. But property and homes were not cash and thus banks did not have the money in their vaults to cover their customers' saving accounts. Thus, people who had not borrowed money from a bank, but had simply kept savings accounts found that the bank could not give them the money that was deposited in their vaults. As a result, millions more people lost their savings in addition to those who could not pay their loans back.

The fourth, and last factor, in the Great Depression was the international situation. The Great Depression was not simply an American event, but was also a global phenomena. The American economy had relied on exports to foreign markets, particularly in Europe. But the post World War I economies of European countries were unstable. Many countries could not afford to buy American industrial goods as the 1920s progressed. Additionally, several European countries were heavily in debt to American banks. They had borrowed money from American banks to finance World War I.

After the war, they continued to borrow money from the United States to fund reconstruction and rebuilding activities. But economic growth in Europe following the war was tenuous and these countries could not afford to pay back loans. American banks lost millions, perhaps billions, of dollars on these bad loans. As these banks struggled for cash in the months leading into the stock market crash of 1929, the unpaid debt by European nations became crippling. This debt combined with the loss of European markets for industrial goods helped create the economic instability that led to the Great Depression.

The Great Depression, which began in 1929 and did not end until 1941, was a national catastrophe. The United States had experienced depressions before, particularly in 1837, 1873, 1893, and 1907. But these were minor in comparison to the Great Depression. When asked if he had ever known of a similar depression, the esteemed English economist John Maynard Keynes replied "Yes, the Dark Ages." With no recent historical precedence for the economic suffering, the American government was slow to react to the Depression. It took almost four years and a new President, Franklin Roosevelt, for the federal government to act decisively to help alleviate the suffering.



Henry Ford



William Randolph Hearst



John D. Rockefeller

Top Business Leaders of the United States ...

"In America today, we are nearer a final triumph over poverty than is any other land."

— President Herbert Hoover

THE DEPRESSION

A National Crisis



▲ The Depression forced many people, such as this migrant woman and her children, to leave their homes in search for work in other parts of the country.



▲ The economic troubles of the Great Depression were magnified by the Dust Bowl in the Great Plains during the 1930s. The Dust Bowl was a series of severe dust storms made worse by droughts in the 1920s and the 1930s in the Great Plains.



▲ As a result of the Dust Bowl conditions, residents throughout the Great Plains, known collectively as Okies, could not farm and thus went elsewhere seeking work.

"Capital punishment is as fundamentally wrong as a cure for crime as charity is wrong as a cure for poverty."

— Henry Ford

"We have not reached the goal but... we shall soon, with the help of God, be in sight of the day when poverty shall be banished from this nation."

— President Herbert Hoover



▲ It was not just single men and women who left their homes in search of work, but entire families as well. Above are the children of an Okie family.

"These are days when many are discouraged. In the 93 years of my life, depressions have come and gone. Prosperity has always returned and will again."

— John D. Rockefeller, October 1929

1929

Stock Market Crash - October 29th

1930

Dust Bowl began

1931

Depression spreads to Europe

1933

First New Deal programs

- Agricultural Adjustment Act (AAA)
- Civilian Conservation Corps (CCC)
- National Industrial Recovery Act (NIRA)
- Tennessee Valley Authority (TVA)
- Grand Coulee Dam

Adolf Hitler made Chancellor of Germany

1934

National Labor Relations Board established

1937

Depression worsens

Roosevelt attempts to pack the Supreme Court

1939

Germany and Soviet Union sign Non-Aggression Pact

Germany invades Poland

World War II begins in Europe

1941

Roosevelt established Fair Employment Practices Commission

Germany invades the Soviet Union

Japanese Attack Pearl Harbor

United States enters World War II

1930

1932
Veterans protest against Depression in Washington, D.C.
Franklin D. Roosevelt elected President

1935
Works Progress Administration (WPA)
Social Security program enacted

1936
Roosevelt wins re-election

1935

1938
Munich Pact
Austria joined to Nazi Germany
Roosevelt increases New Deal spending

1940

1940
Roosevelt re-elected President
Germany began blitzkrieg campaign in Western Europe
Alliance between Japan, Italy, and Germany
United States began to send military materials to Great Britain

THE GREAT DEPRESSION IN WASHINGTON

The Great Depression was devastating for all parts of the United States. Prices for all goods collapsed. As prices collapsed, businesses were forced to shut down or layoff employees to offset expenses. Consequently, unemployment soared. Scholars estimate that during the Great Depression at least one-quarter of the people in the United States were unemployed. That equates to several million people. Some areas were hit worse than others, with unemployment in many major cities reaching as high as 60 percent.

Without work, people could not feed, clothe, or house their families. Even more devastating was the loss of any savings. As mentioned earlier, banks had loaned out too much money and they did not have enough cash in their reserves to cover savings accounts. There was simply no money available to reimburse people. Therefore, even people who had no debt and had saved money for difficult times often found that they too had lost everything. The stock market collapse, high unemployment, loss of property, foreclosures on homes, and disappearance of bank savings, created a wave of despair in the United States. People everywhere were desperately looking for relief.

The situation in Washington was as bad as anywhere in the country. Remember, while the rest of the United States experienced economic growth and comparative

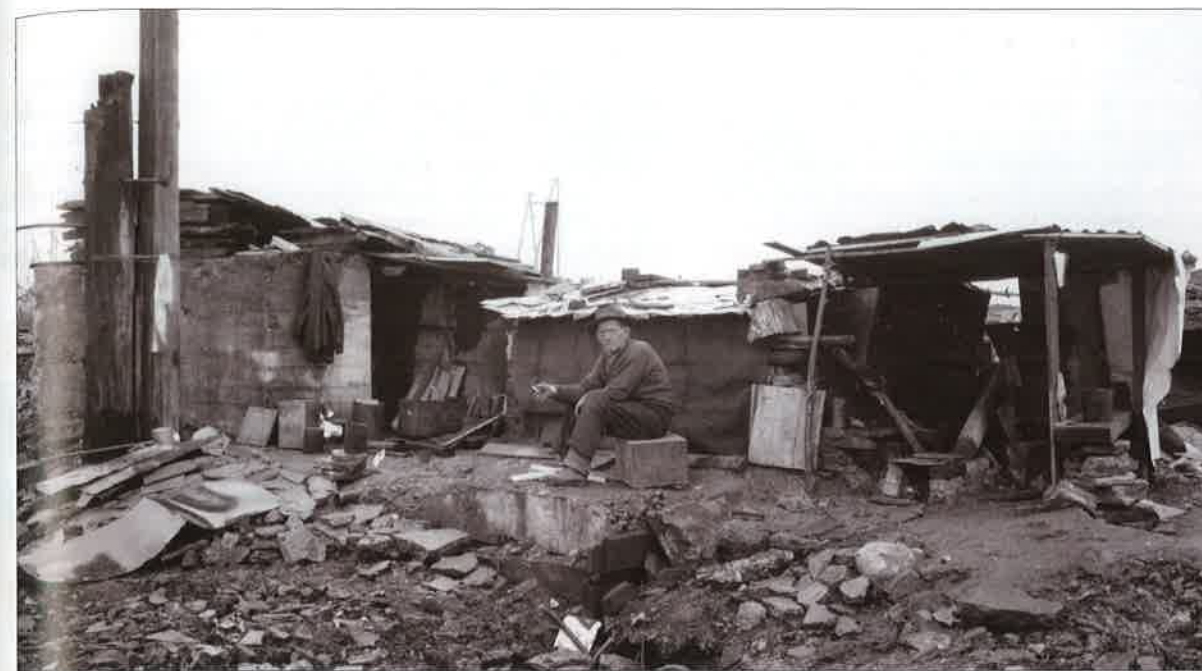
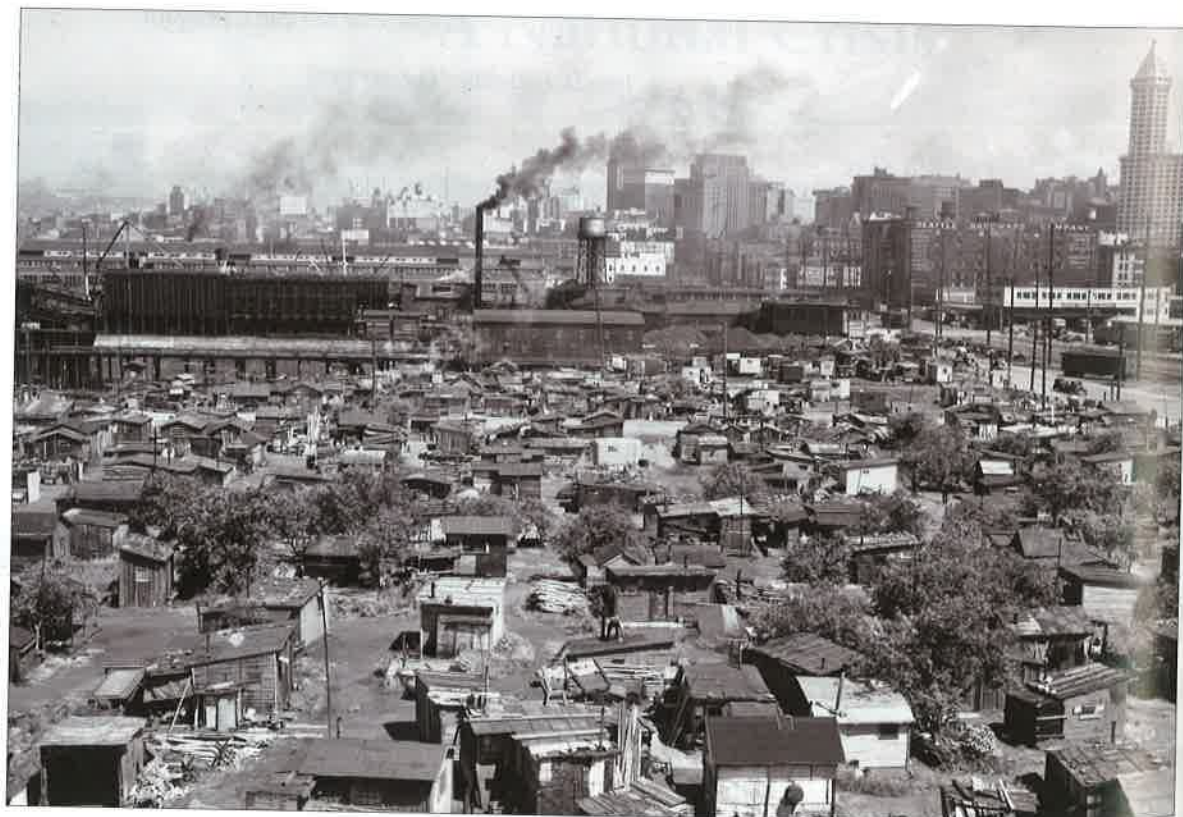
prosperity, Washington was already struggling. During the 1920s, war industries, agriculture, and many natural resource sectors struggled. These were economic industries in which Washington had experienced substantial growth between 1890 and 1920 and constituted a substantial, if not majority, of Washington's economy. Thus, in the 1920s Washington struggled.

The onset of the Great Depression simply worsened conditions in Washington. In Washington, the depression was first felt in rural communities. Agriculture was already struggling and many Washington farmers had accumulated debt in an effort to sustain their farms and homes. When prices collapsed during the Great Depression, many farmers and their families lost everything and were forced to move. With nowhere to go, they relocated to the cities.

Unfortunately for rural migrants, life in the cities was no better. Unemployment was high and housing costs were expensive. The price of food and goods was low, but many people simply had no money and were unable to take advantage of low costs. As a result of the high cost of living and high unemployment, many people in cities were homeless. Thus, the arrival of people from rural areas compounded an already difficult situation.

In response to the high cost of living, the massive overcrowding, and large homeless population, communities sprouted up around the outskirts of major cities, especially Seattle. These communities consisted

Hoovervilles were large shantytowns that grew up along the outskirts of major cities. Hoovervilles were a common feature of urban life during the Great Depression. Seattle's Hooverville, shown here, was one of the largest in the country.



Hoovervilles became communities from desperation, not choice. Life in a Hooverville was difficult and living quarters were built from little more than pieces of wood, sheet metal, cardboard, and garbage.

of homeless and unemployed males who lived in tents, shacks, and roughly put together shelters. Communities such as these were called **Hoovervilles**, named after President Herbert Hoover who was in office when the Great Depression began.

Hoovervilles arose out of desperation. Local and state governments were unprepared to deal with the massive unemployment and impoverishment of the Great Depression. With the government paralyzed and unable to assist people, individuals improvised and adapted to the situation as best as they could. Hoovervilles were one such example. Hoovervilles were squatter communities. People paid no rent, but simply erected tents and makeshift shelters on whatever land was available. Eventually people began to settle in the same areas so as to assist and protect one another. Hoovervilles gradually became organized communities, with their own "local" governments and representatives who dealt with local authorities. While clearly imperfect, many people preferred life in a Hooverville than as a lonely traveler, constantly moving in search of work.

However, many people, particularly government officials, distrusted Hoovervilles. They saw them as places that could potentially encourage crime, violence, and radicals. City ordinances forbade women and children from living in these communities. In Seattle, site of one of the first and largest Hoovervilles in the country, city officials tried to eliminate the community by burning it to the ground on several occasions. But each time a new one arose from the ashes. In times as difficult as the Great Depression any home, even one in a Hooverville, was better than no home at all.

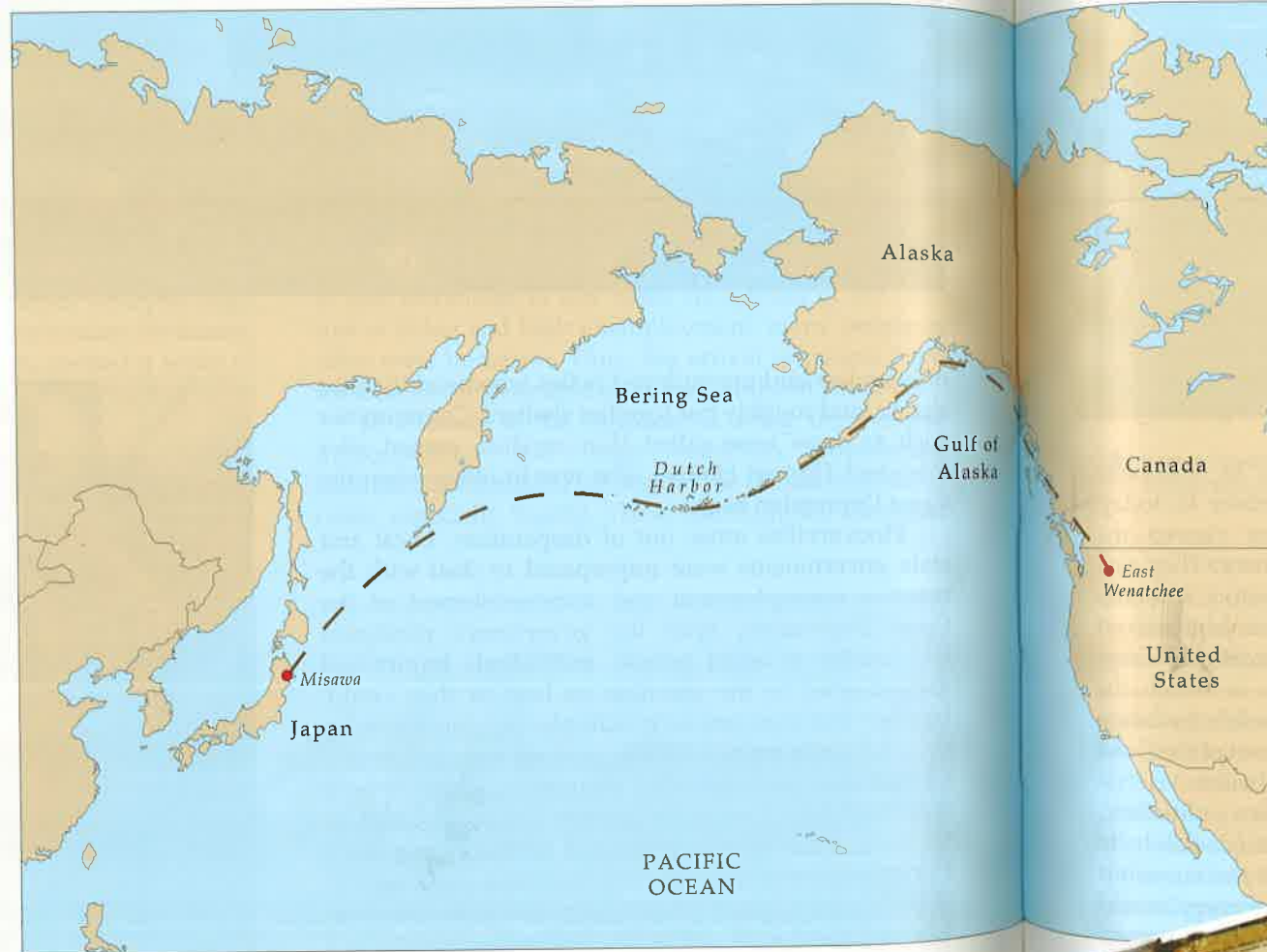


The economic realities of the Great Depression left people with very little. It was not uncommon to see people with tattered clothing and no shoes living in makeshift homes.

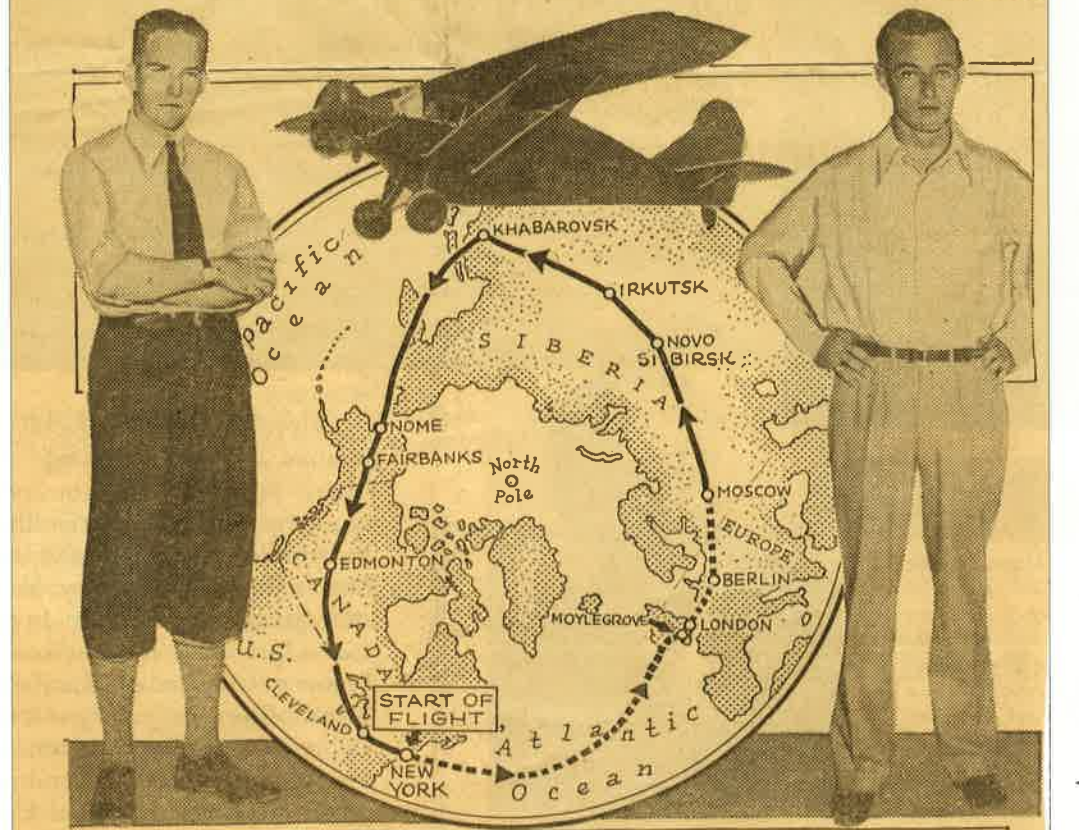
FOCUS ON

Clyde Pangborn and Hugh Herndon ...

In spite of economic conditions, events during the Great Depression were not all bad. In 1931, Washingtonian Clyde Pangborn and his partner Hugh Herndon achieved a feat no one else had accomplished. Few outside Washington know of **Clyde Pangborn and Hugh Herndon**. But they hold a special place in aviation history as the first men to fly non-stop across the Pacific Ocean. As such they warrant a place among the greatest pilots of all time. The 1920s marked a period of rapid advancement in airplane technology. It was an exciting time when brave pilots constantly pushed the boundaries of possibility. In 1927, Charles Lindbergh became the first man to fly solo across the Atlantic Ocean. His accomplishment inspired countless others to conquer new records. Still by 1931, no one had yet flown non-stop over the Pacific Ocean. A Japanese newspaper offered a \$25,000 reward to any pilot who could achieve the feat. On October 4, 1931, Clyde Pangborn and his co-pilot Hugh Herndon took off in their plane, the *Miss Veedol*, from Misawa, Japan. After 41 hours they reached the United States, landing in East Wenatchee.



FLIERS, PLANE AND ROUTE OF ROUND WORLD FLIGHT



Associated Press Photo
Clyde Pangborn (left) and Hugh Herndon, Jr., and route they are following on an attempt to set a new around the world flight record. Their monoplane is shown above. Dotted line on map indicates progress of the flight.
(NOTE TO EDITORS: Line can be tooled after cast is made to indicate how far the fliers have traveled.)

MISS VEEDOL

The First Trans-Pacific Flight

"Economic depression cannot be cured by legislative action or executive pronouncement. Economic wounds must be healed by the action of the cells of the economic body - the producers and consumers themselves."

— President Herbert Hoover



◀ Herbert Hoover was President of the United States at the onset of the Great Depression. President Hoover was overwhelmed by the conditions of the Depression and failed to provide any solutions to economic collapse.

▶ Franklin D. Roosevelt defeated Herbert Hoover in the 1932 Presidential election. He won based on a platform of government reform and action to end the Great Depression.



"The test of our progress is not whether we add more to the abundance of those who have much it is whether we provide enough for those who have little."

"One thing is sure. We have to do something. We have to do the best we know how at the moment... If it doesn't turn out right, we can modify it as we go along."

"All we have to fear is fear itself."

— President Franklin D. Roosevelt

FRANKLIN D. ROOSEVELT

In 1932, the Great Depression hit its lowest point. Unemployment reached record levels and the economy was stagnant. The feeling of desperation and depression was everywhere. People were broke and homeless. With no one else to rely on, Americans turned to the government for assistance and answers. Unfortunately, government at all levels was ill equipped to handle the Great Depression.

In order to understand why the government could offer little aid to citizens, it is important to understand the history of the relationship between the government and the economy. Prior to the Great Depression, many American citizens did not want the government involved in economic affairs. This is not to say that the government was not involved in the economy. After all, organized labor and many Progressive reformers in the early 20th century actively sought to increase governmental presence in economic affairs. In their opinion, government absence from the economy allowed abuse and excess from industrial moguls and business leaders. As noted in the previous chapter, these reformers had some spectacular legal victories and the government did assume a larger role in regulating the economy.

However, governmental presence in economic matters was still miniscule in comparison to today. Many politicians and business leaders viewed the economy with almost scientific detachment. They saw it as cyclical with highs and lows. To them, it was only natural that economies would experience both record growth and depressions. In fact, according to these individuals, depressions were the way in which the economy corrected itself and made it possible for future growth. The American President at the onset of the Great Depression, **Herbert Hoover**, held these beliefs.

As a result of his, and many other politicians', personal beliefs, President Hoover reacted slowly to the Great Depression. He believed that the economic downturn would be short lived and recovery would quickly follow. However, the years proved him wrong. What little actions President Hoover did take were ultimately ineffective. While historians have determined that there was probably little Hoover could have done to prevent or correct the Great Depression, people living at the time blamed him. They saw a president who offered no solutions to the dire problems facing most Americans. Thus, when a charismatic Democratic candidate named **Franklin D. Roosevelt** emerged offering change and hope, Americans embraced him and elected Roosevelt in a landslide victory in 1932.

President Roosevelt came into office in 1933 offering the country what he called a **New Deal**. The New Deal programs were a departure from previous federal



▲ Barren landscapes and abandoned farmland, such as this scene in Eastern Washington, were part of the inspiration of President Roosevelt's New Deal programs that were designed to transform the country.

economic policy. The New Deal was an active attempt by the federal government to establish programs and spend money in order to reenergize the economy. The goal was to stimulate the economy by spending money in order to create jobs. Once people had jobs, they would have money to spend, enabling them to buy goods and services, which in turn would increase prices.

But more than these programs, President Roosevelt offered the American public hope. Roosevelt candidly spoke to the people about the challenges posed by the Great Depression. He asked for sacrifice, patience, and hard work from citizens. However, in return President Roosevelt promised to establish a federal response that would bring about economic recovery.

"It can be accomplished in part by direct recruiting by the government itself, treating the task as we would treat the emergency of a war, but at the same time, through this employment, accomplishing greatly needed projects to stimulate and reorganize the use of our national resources."

— President Franklin D. Roosevelt
First Inaugural Address, March 4, 1933

QUICK FACTS

AMERICA IN 1930

- Population: 123,188,000
- Life Expectancy: 58.1 (Males) and 61.6 (Females)
- Average Salary: \$1,368.00 (Annual)
- Unemployment: 25%

Price of Goods:

Milk (per quart)	\$ 0.14
Bread (per loaf)	0.09
Steak (per pound)	0.42
Women's Sweater	1.00
Women's Purse	2.25
Women's Bathrobe	1.00
Women's Winter Coat	28.00
Men's Shirt	1.00
Men's Sweater	1.00
Men's Bathrobe	4.90
Men's Overcoat	18.50
Sled	3.95
Ping Pong Table	23.50
Doll	1.95
Table Lamp	1.00
Portable Sewing Machine	23.95
Electric Washing Machine	33.50
Gas Stove	19.95



▲ Members of the Civilian Works Administration (CWA) construct a road in Washington in 1934.

" We are trying to construct a more inclusive society. We are going to make a country in which no one is left out. "

" Not only our future economic soundness but the very soundness of our democratic institutions depends on the determination of our government to give employment to idle men. "

" I pledge you, I pledge myself, to a new deal for the American people. "

— President Franklin D. Roosevelt



▲ The Civilian Conservation Corps, shown above building a road in Washington, was one of the most successful of the New Deal programs.

The New Deal

The New Deal programs, passed between Roosevelt's first term in 1933 and his second term in 1939, were a widespread series of reforms aimed at tackling a variety of problems in the American economy. While there are far too many programs to discuss here, there are several that had an important impact upon Washington State.

One of President Roosevelt's first tasks was to restore public faith in the banking and financial system. Banks are essential to a modern economy. They provide money, through loans, that finance businesses, farms, and mortgages. Without reestablishing the banking system, economic recovery would be quite difficult. In order for banks to loan money, they have to have money in their vaults. However, because so many banks had failed in the early days of the depression, people were reluctant to place their money back in banks.

In fact, the banking system in Washington was so bad that the governor, **Clarence Martin**, ordered all banks closed on March 3, 1933. Three days later, President Roosevelt did the same to all banks across the country. When Roosevelt reopened the banks, he did so by authorizing the **Federal Reserve System** to release one billion dollars in cash to assist banks. Later in that same year, Roosevelt created the **Federal Deposit Insurance Corporation**, a program in which the government guaranteed that savings accounts would be honored even if banks failed. As a result of these measures, Americans all over the country used banks once again.

Another area that Roosevelt wanted to address was agriculture. As discussed earlier, agriculture suffered during the 1920s and only became more difficult during the Great Depression. Prices for agricultural products were very low and farmers everywhere were losing their farms and homes. To address these problems, Roosevelt created the **Agricultural Adjustment Act** in 1933. The Agricultural Adjustment Act was designed to attack the two key problems: price and supply.

Low prices kept farmers from making enough profit to maintain their families and farms. In response, Roosevelt proposed to have the federal government subsidize selected crops, thus increasing agricultural prices. But raising prices was only part of the problem. Another issue was too much supply. Farmers had overproduced in many areas and this overproduction was hurting prices.

As a result, Roosevelt had the federal government pay farmers to reduce crop sizes, livestock populations, or simply take land out of production in order to limit supply. In Washington this program of price subsidies and reduction of supply helped to provide relief for wheat farmers, cattle ranchers, and dairy farmers. Fruit orchards, vegetables, hops, and other Washington crops were not covered by the Agricultural Adjustment Act.



◀ In Washington, the construction of Grand Coulee Dam was one of the most important products of the New Deal. Commissioned by the Public Works Administration, construction began in 1933 and finished in 1942.

In 1933, President Roosevelt also crafted the **National Recovery Administration**. The NRA, as it was known, was designed to promote the recovery of industrial businesses. It did so by offering government contracts, which guaranteed business and income for recipients of these contracts. These contracts ranged from constructing buildings and roads to military equipment. In exchange for receiving these contracts, businesses had to agree to many federal regulations, such as abolishing child labor, limiting the work week for employees to 40 hours, and to recognize the rights of workers to unionize. In Washington, many companies received government contracts as a result of the NRA. Additionally, many new unions formed as a result of NRA provisions.

Washington also benefited from four other New Deal Programs. In 1933, Roosevelt established the **Civilian Conservation Corps (CCC)**, the **Works Progress Administration (WPA)**, the **Public Works Administration (PWA)**, and the **Civilian Works Administration (CWA)**. These four programs all performed similar functions. They spent large sums of money on public works projects throughout the country. Moreover, they took unemployed individuals, mostly young men, and gave them work and training through these programs.

These agencies, especially the Civilian Conservation

Corps, left a lasting legacy in Washington. Young single males between the ages of 18 and 24 constructed roads, bridges, schools, hospitals, and parks in communities across the state. Workers for these agencies also spent a considerable amount of time working in the state's national parks, building trails, campgrounds, and recreational facilities that are still enjoyed today.

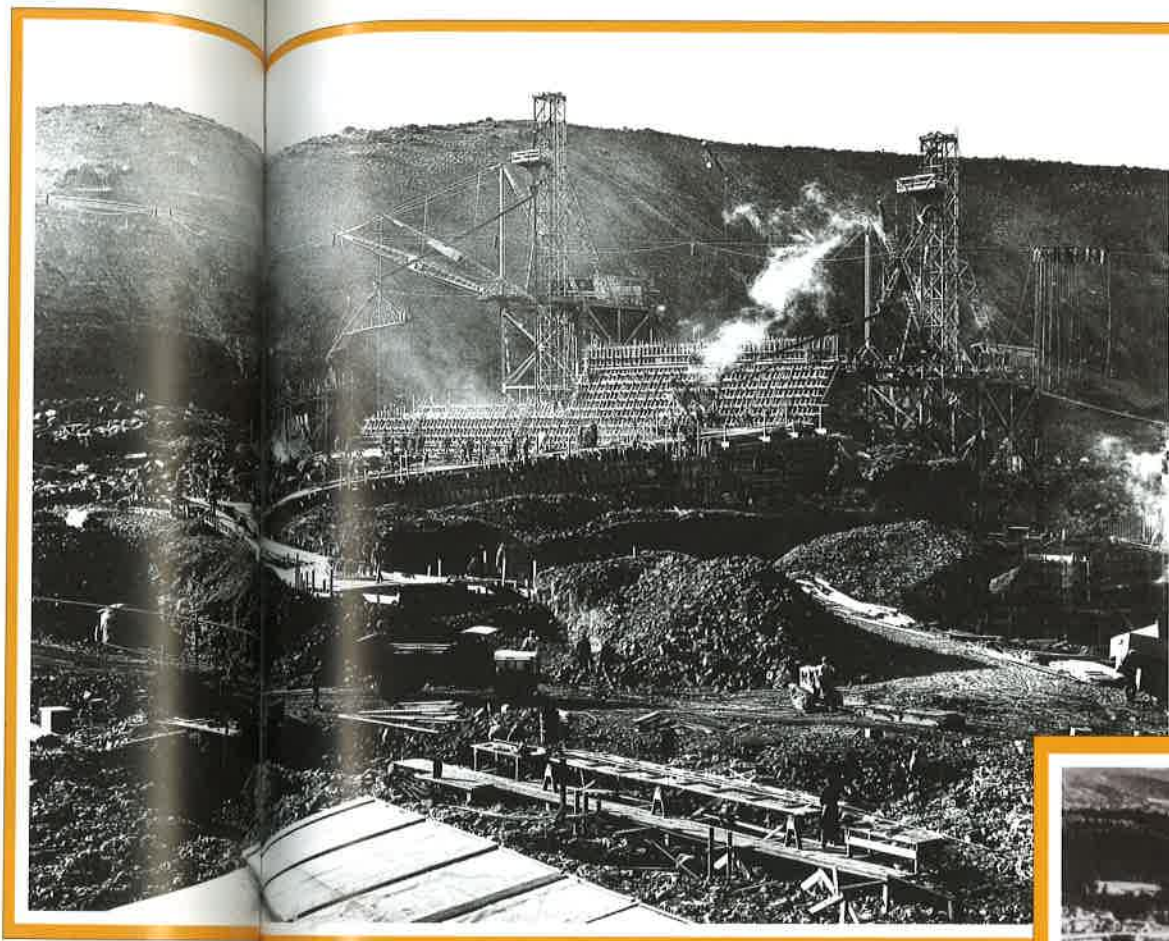
One of the most important creations of the Public Works Administration was **Grand Coulee Dam**. In 1933 President Franklin Roosevelt approved a proposal to construct a massive concrete hydroelectric dam across the Columbia River. The construction site of Grand Coulee Dam would be located where the Okanogan Ice Lobe had dammed the Columbia River during the last Ice Age. The idea originated with two North Central Washington leaders, **Rufus Woods** and **Billy Clapp**. They promoted the project for two purposes - hydroelectricity and to irrigate the arid lands of the Columbia Basin using the remaining coulees to move and store irrigation water to the area.

Construction of Grand Coulee Dam began almost immediately as thousands of workers and engineers worked eight years to complete the one mile wide and 550 foot high dam. Upon its completion in 1942, the Grand Coulee Dam was the largest dam in the world producing 1.9 million of kilowatts of electricity.

THE DAMS

Harnessing Energy from the Columbia

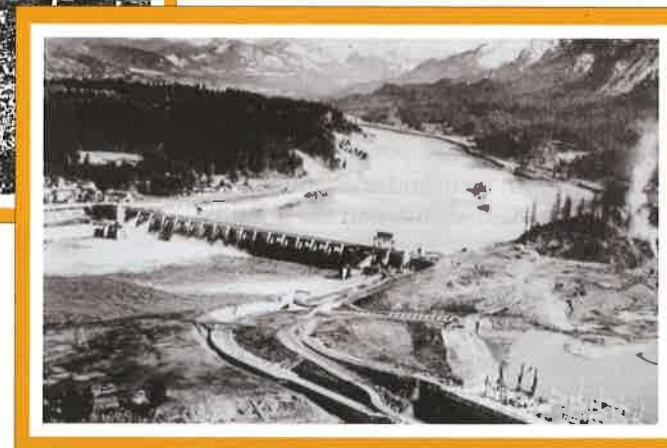
During the Great Depression years from 1929 to 1941, three major hydroelectric dams were constructed on the Columbia River. The first dam, Rock Island Dam, was owned and operated by the Chelan County Public Utility District. Rock Island Dam is located ten miles south of Wenatchee near the geographical center of the state of Washington. Rock Island Dam was completed in the early 1930s. Since the early 1950s a portion of its electricity was sold to the ALCOA plant which produces aluminum ingots. The second major hydroelectric dam built on the Columbia was Bonneville Dam. Bonneville Dam is located on the Cascade Locks about 40 miles up river from Portland, Oregon and Vancouver, Washington. Its electricity was used by the Vancouver aluminum plant during World War II. The third hydroelectric dam was Grand Coulee Dam.



Bonneville Dam (1933 - 1937)



▲ Construction of Bonneville Dam's spillways.



▲ Bonneville Dam was the first dam of eight on the Columbia River to have locks, which allowed barge traffic to travel up the Lower Columbia and Snake river systems to Lewiston, Idaho.

Grand Coulee Dam (1933 - 1942)



▲ Worker carrying a 193 pound nut and bolt.



▲ Workers stand atop one of Grand Coulee's many turbine impellers.



▲ Wire worker hangs 500 feet above the ground.



▲ Aerial view of the dam site in 1935.

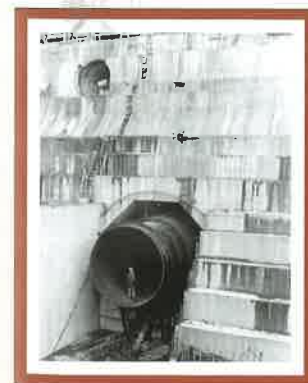


▲ Steamboat Rock before the flooding of lands that were inhabited by Indians and wheat farmers.



▲ Diversion channel to redirect the Columbia River for construction.

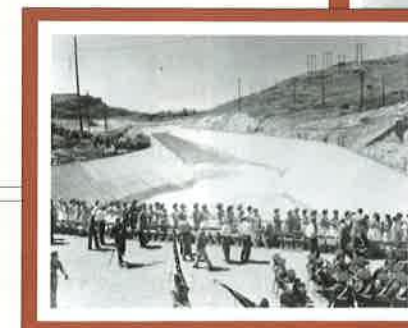
▲ Rock Island Dam was the first dam constructed on the Columbia River system. Construction began in 1930 and finished in 1933.



▲ A construction worker stands inside one of Grand Coulee Dam's 18 foot diameter penstocks. The penstocks carry water from the upstream side of the dam through the turbine and downstream.



▲ The first concrete load of the Grand Coulee Dam construction.



▲ Filling the irrigation reservoir with water from the Columbia River.



▲ Once completed, Grand Coulee Dam provided electricity to the wartime industries in Washington during World War II.

WASHINGTON SOCIETY

Unsurprisingly, the Great Depression impacted society in Washington. Some of the more widespread and obvious changes have already been discussed. Poverty and unemployment were commonplace. People tended to move from place to place frequently in search of jobs and security. The economic uncertainty coupled with migration resulted in fractured families. It was not uncommon for men, single and married, to travel alone or in groups in search of work. When work was found, many moved their families to new locations. Others let their families remain at home and simply sent their earnings back.

The conditions of the Great Depression forced many families and individuals to rely on the charity provided by both the government and private institutions. Bread lines and soup kitchens were familiar scenes in Washington State and the country as a whole. The food services offered at such places were limited, but they did keep people from starving. Scores of people lined the streets in front of business and government offices in search of whatever employment was available. Certainly, the New Deal programs aided in this regard, providing employment for thousands of Washingtonians. But the New Deal alone only partially filled the employment void. Unemployment and economic stagnation remained high both in Washington and the country even after the establishment of the New Deal.



▲ Over 200,000 Okie migrants packed their cars and headed for the Pacific Northwest during the Great Depression.



▲ Harvesting and other agricultural labor became an important source of employment for new arrivals to Washington during the Great Depression.

Conditions in Washington were compounded by a small, but significant, trickle of immigrants to the region. The economic climate across the country was quite poor and people who had lost everything frequently packed up and left for other regions of the country. Many of them ended up in Washington. They came here partially because of the effective advertising campaigns from earlier in the century. These migrants remembered the brochures promoting Washington as a land of infinite possibilities and prosperity. In tough times, many individuals and families figured that conditions in Washington would be better than elsewhere in the country. Unfortunately, they were not and the arrival of more people put further strain on life in Washington.

The largest group to come to Washington during the Great Depression was the **Okies**. The Okies, named because so many of them came from Oklahoma, were migrants from Oklahoma, Arkansas, Kansas, Texas, Missouri, and other places in the South. They traveled in large numbers from their home states to the western United States in search of work. The Okies left behind lands caught in a severe drought, referred to as the "**Dust Bowl**" today, and widespread poverty. Of the several hundred thousand Okie migrants in the 1930s, 200,000 ended up in the Pacific Northwest.

The Okies came in search of work. Most found employment in the agricultural industry. As migrant workers, they rarely stayed in one place for long and followed the harvest seasons from California to Oregon, Idaho, and Washington. However, many Okie families returned to Washington year after year, and some stayed permanently. Many families, especially in Eastern Washington are descendents of the Okie migrants. The Okies who came to Washington encountered very

difficult conditions. Moreover, these people were quite poor and few had an extensive education. Their poverty and presence in a state that was already experiencing difficult economic conditions made them easy targets for prejudice and discrimination from residents in Washington.

The Okies were not the only group to suffer discrimination in Washington during the Great Depression. Asian populations, especially the Japanese, continued to feel discrimination in Washington. They were forbidden to own property in their own name and often found themselves treated poorly. African Americans also faced prejudice in Washington. While their treatment was no where near as poor as in other areas of the country, the state was not free of discrimination. Unions and employers often refused membership and job opportunities to African Americans. Many charity organizations, such as orphanages, refused to offer services to African Americans. Thus, strains of the Depression increased pre-existing racial prejudices.

In addition to spurring migration and straining social tensions, the Great Depression brought about a resurrection of reform and liberal movements in Washington. Remember, Washington was a leading Progressive and reform state during the early 20th century. The economic downturn of the 1920s hurt

these movements. Inspired by the liberal President Roosevelt and his New Deal programs, Washington resumed its liberal political tradition. As a result of the NRA, and later legislation, Washington workers became even more unionized. These unions took advantage of the Roosevelt administration's support for organized labor and conducted several strikes during the Great Depression in order to secure better wages and other concessions from employers. Among the most important union leaders in Washington were Dave Beck of the Teamsters Union and Harry Bridges of the International Longshoreman's Association.

In addition to the unions, liberal political activist groups, such as the **Washington Commonwealth Federation (WCF)** and the **Unemployed Citizens League (UCL)**, formed during the 1930s. These groups advocated further reforms to Washington than those enacted by the New Deal. Many of these ideas and proposals, such as the state ownership of banks, utilities, and natural resources, were openly socialist in nature. The influence and prominence of socialist groups like WCF brought a unique political climate to Washington and made the state quite different from other states, especially those in the West. These organizations also helped the Democratic Party win elections in the state throughout the 1930s.



▲ President Roosevelt kept the nation informed about the government's efforts to fight the Great Depression through the use of radio telecasts called "fireside chats."

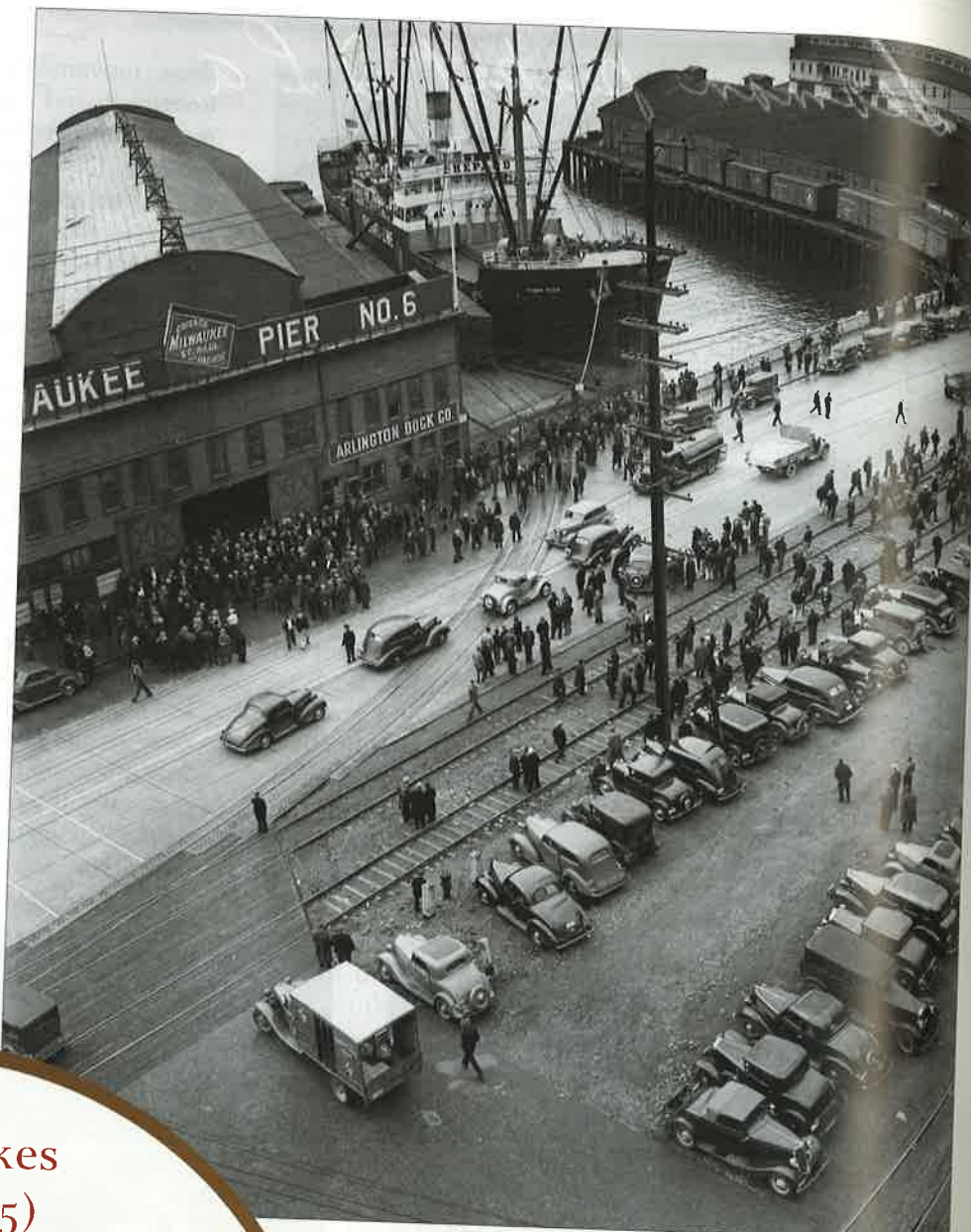


▲ In spite of the difficult times, families still attempted to maintain a sense of normalcy during the Great Depression, as evidenced by this Tacoma family.

CONNECTING TO HISTORY

Labor Strikes in Washington ...

President Franklin Roosevelt was a strong supporter of organized labor. President Roosevelt sponsored legislation that forced many industries to recognize the right of workers to unionize. In Washington, this reform helped create resurgence of organized labor, which in turn resulted in strikes. Of these strikes, the West Coast Longshoremen's Strike of 1934 and the Pacific Northwest Lumber Strike of 1935 were the most famous. The West Coast Longshoremen's Strike was organized and executed by dockworkers in Seattle and the entire West Coast. The strike lasted for 83 days and resulted in higher wages and better work hours for employees. Similarly, the Pacific Northwest Lumber Strike was conducted by loggers and mill workers, and achieved better wages for union members.



▲ Labor disputes and strikes involving dockworkers were common in the 1930s, as demonstrated by this photograph from Seattle in 1938.

Labor Strikes
(1934 - 1945)

1934

West Coast Longshoremen's Strike

1935

Pacific Northwest Lumber Strike

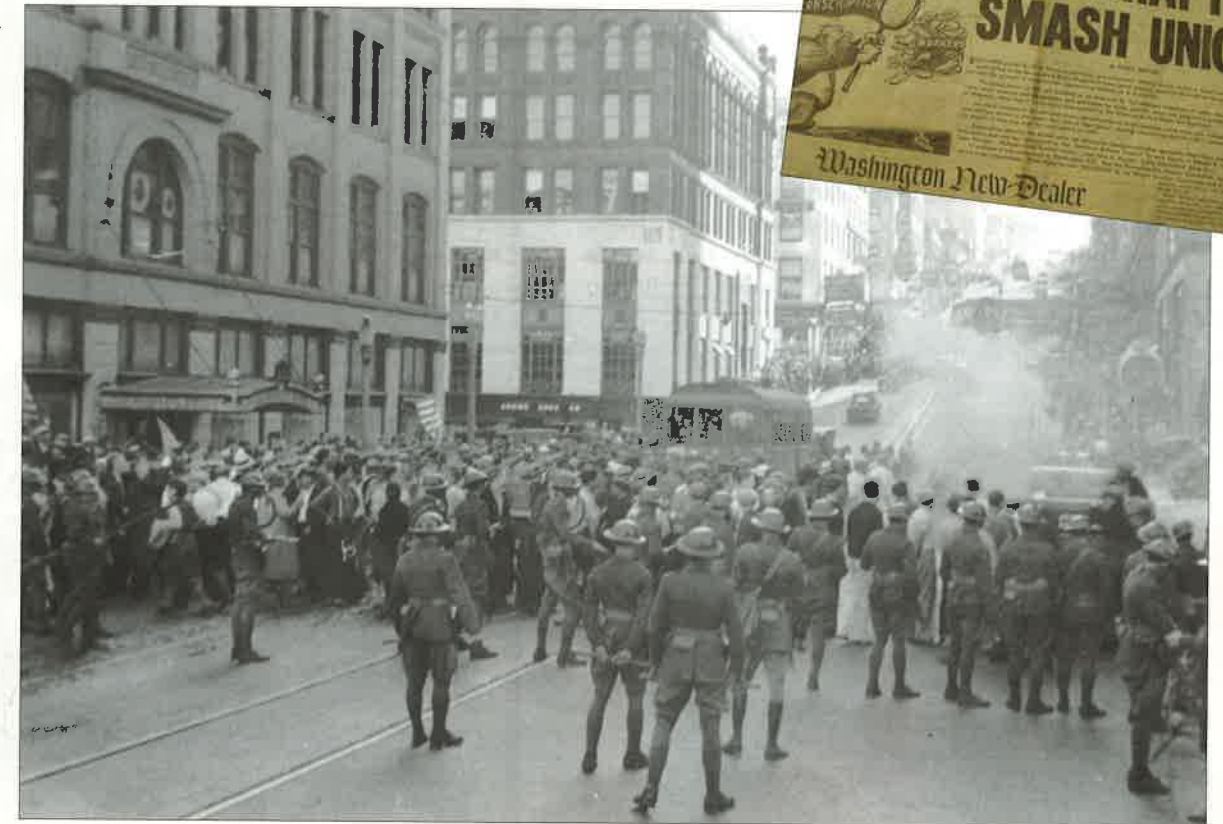
"Let us never forget that government is ourselves and not an alien power over us. The ultimate rulers of our democracy are not a President and senators and congressmen and government officials, but the voters of this country."

— President Franklin D. Roosevelt

THE UNIONS

Re-emergence of Progressive Ideals

Lumber mill workers in Tacoma took to the streets to voice their objections to current wages and working conditions on July 12, 1935. Protests such as these were often met by police officials attempting to discourage or arrest demonstrators.



▲ Tacoma lumber mill workers clashed with the National Guard on June 23, 1935.

"If I went to work in a factory the first thing I'd do is join a union."

— President Franklin D. Roosevelt



▲ Striking hop pickers in the Yakima Valley were imprisoned in this makeshift prison.



▲ A flier promoting union solidarity.

WORLD WAR II

While Washington and the United States were embroiled in the Great Depression, international affairs became tense. Aggressive, fascist, and militaristic governments came to power in Germany, Italy, and Japan during the 1920s and 1930s. On September 1, 1939, Germany invaded Poland beginning **World War II**. The United States would not become militarily involved in the conflict until after the Japanese bombing of **Pearl Harbor** on December 7, 1941.

After Pearl Harbor, the United States fought a war conducted on two fronts: Europe and the Pacific. The United States was part of a coalition known as the **Allies**, along with Great Britain, France, and Russia. The Allies fought against a group called the **Axis Powers**, Germany, Italy, and Japan. Fighting on two fronts required a massive personnel and economic build up of the military. A **draft** was instituted for all young men. Over the course of the war, approximately 100,000 Washingtonians served in the military. In addition, Washington's economy transitioned to provide materials for the war effort.

ENLIST NOW
U.S. MARINE CORPS

▲ Just as in World War I, the United States Armed Forces embarked on an aggressive recruitment campaign to bolster enlistment during World War II.

CONNECTING TO HISTORY

The Indian New Deal ...

In spite of their poor historical treatment, many Indians chose to serve in the U.S. Armed Forces during World War II, such as these men.



▲ Indians from throughout Eastern Washington gathered at Grand Coulee Dam for ceremonies to lament the loss of an important fishing ground and cultural heritage site.

The United States government constructed, maintained, and operated over fifty military installations in Washington during World War II. They were divided into two groups - the Puget Sound area and the interior area between the Cascade and Rocky mountains. The Puget Sound area was strategically located and one of the most concentrated areas of key wartime industries and military installations. Puget Sound and Western Washington had US Navy, US Army, and US Coast Guard military installations. It also had numerous air bases, air fields, training centers, debarkation facilities, shipyards, repair facilities, camps, forts, hospitals, and medical care centers.



▲ A Yakama woman and her child during the Great Depression.



▲ A group of Swinomish Indians harvest fish. The Indian New Deal helped provide money for expanding economic activities like fishing.

Life for most Americans was difficult during the Great Depression, but times were especially tough for Indians living on reservations. Since the Dawes Act in 1887, Indians across the nation had lost over 100 million acres of reservation land. Moreover, the Bureau of Indian Affairs, the federal agency in charge of reservations, pursued a policy of forced assimilation, whereby Indian children were educated in white schools, indoctrinated in American culture, and forbidden to practice native traditions. In 1934, though, President Roosevelt extended the New Deal to Indians by signing the **Indian Reorganization Act**, also known as the **Wheeler-Howard Act**. The Indian Reorganization Act stopped the selling of reservation land to non-Indians, empowered Indians to form tribal governments, and provided funds for education, healthcare, and technological development. The federal government even went so far as to purchase additional lands for existing reservations or for new reservations entirely, as they did with the S'Klallam Indians in 1938. Undoubtedly, life became better for most Indians in Washington as a result of these actions. But this period was also a sad time, with the construction of the Columbia River dams destroying traditional fishing grounds at Grand Coulee, Kettle Falls, and, eventually, Celilo Falls.



▲ Three generations of Yakama Indians gathered at Celilo Falls, a place of immense cultural importance to the Plateau tribes of Washington. Celilo Falls disappeared with the construction of the Columbia River dams.



▲ Indian boys attend school at Fort Simcoe on the Yakama Reservation. Note how they are dressed in American clothing and not traditional dress. Additionally, they were required to cut their hair as whites did.

QUICK FACTS

AMERICA IN 1940

- Population: 132,122,000
- Unemployment: 8,120,000
- National Debt: \$43 billion
- Average Salary: \$1,299.00 (Annual)
- Minimum Wage: \$ 0.43
- Life Expectancy: 60.8 (Males) and 68.2 (Females)
- Auto Deaths: 34,500

GERMAN P.O.W.s IN WASHINGTON

- During World War II, the United States Army sent many German prisoners of war (POWs) to Dayton, Washington. At Dayton, they spent their days working in the agricultural fields and their nights in a prison camp. They were released in 1945, following the end of fighting in Europe.



▲ Boeing played a key role in the war effort, producing airplanes for the United States military. Most of Boeing's critical production facilities, like this factory, were located in Puget Sound.

WASHINGTON'S WARTIME ECONOMY

During the war years from 1941 to 1945 the state of Washington's economy grew at a record setting pace. More than 98.5 percent of Washington's labor force were fully employed, only 1.5 percent were unemployed. In fact the demand for workers was so great during the war, more than 500,000 people moved to Washington to fill the job openings, especially in war related industries. Washington's total production output for each resident ranked in the top five of the nation's 48 states. The government limited the working hours per week to 40 with additional hours at overtime pay. Wages increased based on the need and skills demanded by the job. Washington workers and industries continued to establish new production records each year during the war. Americans simply out produced their adversaries, Germany and Japan, to win the war.

The rapid economic expansion that resulted from the onset of World War II brought about the end of the Great Depression in both Washington and the United States. In particular, the economy of Washington grew quite quickly. During the Great Depression, people simply could not find work and were unable to support themselves, let alone their families. After 1941, the situation radically changed. There was a labor shortage in Washington, with the creation of more jobs than the population could fill. As a result, Washington employers had to recruit employees.

MAJOR WARTIME INDUSTRIES

Washington's traditional natural resource oriented industries experienced a significant period of substantial growth between 1939 and 1945. The United States government needed record setting amounts of all natural resources for its war effort. Washington farmers, loggers, miners, and fishers produced tremendous quantities of food, wood products, minerals, and other metallic and non-metallic substances, and seafoods respectively.

During World War II, the state of Washington had to plan, develop, and establish certain key industries. The United States had to provide food and war materials to the three major allies — Great Britain, the Soviet Union, and China. In addition, residents of Washington needed to increase production to satisfy the needs of the government and Armed Forces. The President, his advisers, and military leaders relied heavily on products from Washington.

The state of Washington's major wartime industries were agriculture, timber, mining, shipbuilding, aircraft, aluminum, as well as plutonium. The production of energy from Grand Coulee Dam and other hydroelectric dams allowed these industries to prosper. Important companies included the **Todd and Kaiser** shipyards, the **Boeing Airplane Company**, **ALCOA** and other aluminum plants, and the top secret **Hanford Nuclear Reservation**. The key wartime industries will be briefly discussed as to their wartime contributions.

Agriculture

For the first time since the Great Depression began, Washington farmers were to cultivate and plant more acreage and increase their output. With strong international and domestic demand for almost every product, prices increased. Washington farmers utilized new scientific information, more mechanization, and improved technology. New developments in pesticides, fertilizers, disease resistant plant varieties, refrigeration and storage facilities helped the farmer produce higher yields and improved the overall quality of their product. Irrigation systems and more mechanization allowed each farmer to expand acreage production and to reduce the need for more workers. Excess workers moved to urban areas to work in other war industries.

Timber Industry

During World War II Washington continued to produce large quantities of wood products for war related construction projects such as dam construction, transportation projects, the aircraft and shipbuilding industries, and the construction of buildings and homes. Construction of military installations, fortifications, government buildings, businesses, office buildings, and industrial plants in Washington and throughout the United States and the world needed more and more wood products. Again harvesting and processes of production were greatly improved thus allowing more production with fewer workers. The lumber industries prospered during World War II.

Mining and Fishing Industries

During World War II the mining industries expanded and diversified. Construction materials such as sand, gravel, cement, concrete, and asphalt were in great demand throughout the war years and beyond. Minerals such as gold, silver, lead, zinc, copper, iron ore, mercury, tungsten, and other exotic metallic substances were necessary for war related industries. Coal mining and exploration for oil and natural gas increased. Mining used more technology and more mechanization to improve output per worker and total production. War time consumption was very high as manufactured products needed new minerals and metallic substances.

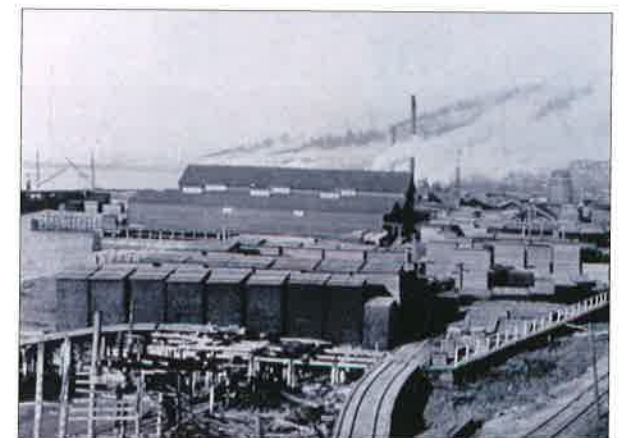
Commercial fishing was uniquely affected because of the threat of attack from Japanese submarines and aircraft in the rich coastal fishing grounds of Washington, Canada, and especially Alaska. Most of the canned salmon was consumed by American Armed Forces personnel during the war.



▲ The onset of World War II led to an increased demand for Washington's agricultural products due to the need to feed both the nation and the soldiers.



▲ With stronger demand for agricultural products, and the reforms of the New Deal, prices for food rebounded from their Depression Era lows.



▲ Lumber and timber products, photographed above, were important commodities during World War II.



▲ Shipbuilding became a major industry in Washington during World War II. This photograph is a wooden drydock at Bremerton's Naval Shipyard during World War II.



▲ Naval ships of all sizes and types were in high demand by the United States Navy during World War II.



▲ The U.S.S. Duxbury Bay in Lake Washington Shipyards was a common naval ship used during World War II.

Shipbuilding Industry

In 1939 when World War II began the state of Washington had only one major shipyard. The United States government immediately issued contracts for the construction of hundreds of cargo, freighter, and transport vessels. These ships were needed to transport troops, war equipment, munitions, war materials, and food supplies to U.S. troops and allies in Europe, Asia, and the South Pacific. The United States Navy needed aircraft carriers, battleships, destroyers, and submarines to engage our enemies and to protect the country's long coastline from attacks or invasions. During the four years of war, Washington shipyards employed thousands and received hundreds of millions of dollars in orders.

Washington was perfectly suited for the shipbuilding industry due to numerous factors. First, there were existing shipyards that had previously contributed to the demand for ships during World War I. Secondly, Puget Sound and the Columbia River were well-protected and positioned ports that were both safe and convenient for the construction of naval vessels. Thirdly, the expansion of hydroelectricity, as well as the growth of cities, meant Washington had the infrastructure necessary to rapidly expand shipbuilding production. Finally, Washington had the room to develop and accommodate the thousands of workers who would inevitably flood the state to work in the shipyards.

During World War II the shipbuilding industry in Washington rapidly grew in two separate regions. Both major shipbuilding regions were located more than one hundred miles inland from the Pacific Ocean for better protection from Japanese submarine attacks. Washington's two major shipbuilding centers were the Puget Sound region — Seattle, Tacoma, and Bremerton and the Columbia River region of Vancouver and Portland. These shipbuilding areas employed between 210,000 and 250,000 workers and had nearly one hundred shipyards, boat companies, and repair facilities.

Within the Puget Sound area more than 150,000 men and women worked at 88 shipyards, boat companies, and repair facilities between 1941 and 1945. Seattle and Tacoma were major shipbuilding centers during the war. Todd Shipyards was the largest shipyard in the region. The city of Bremerton was home to the massive Puget Sound Naval Shipyard and accompanying repair facilities. Smaller companies made a variety of wooden and steel vessels in locations ranging from Bellingham in the north to Olympia in the south. At the peak production year in 1945, almost every port in Washington produced some type of vessel.

Today, San Diego, San Francisco-Oakland, and Seattle-Tacoma have the greatest concentrations of port facilities, repair facilities, naval shipyards and naval bases along the West Coast of the United States. However during



▲ The protected and easily accessible harbors of Puget Sound made the region a natural fit for shipbuilding and naval bases. Above is a picture of the Puget Sound Naval Shipyard at Bremerton.

World War II the West Coast's largest shipyard complex was located 110 miles inland on the Columbia River in the Portland, Oregon - Vancouver, Washington area.

In Washington, the most important individual in the shipbuilding industry was **Henry Kaiser**. Before the war Kaiser operated steel mills and aluminum plants. During World War II Kaiser constructed and operated three major shipyards. These shipyards were located in Portland, Vancouver, and the Puget Sound area.

The **Kaiser Shipyards** in the Portland-Vancouver area produced 80 light aircraft carriers and more than 1,200 Liberty or Victory ships. The Kaiser Shipyards employed more than 50,000 workers of which 46 percent were women. Using modern welding techniques and assembly line organization, the Kaiser Shipyards established amazing production records. Whereas the construction of a ship usually took more than one hundred days, Kaiser Shipyards reduced the time to five days on the average by the end of the war.



▲ A fleet of U.S. Navy battleships — the U.S.S. Pennsylvania, U.S.S. Colorado, U.S.S. Louisville, U.S.S. Portland, and U.S.S. Columbia, which were stationed in the Pacific Theater during the war.

The Aircraft Industry

During World War I, **William Boeing** and his partners manufactured aircraft for the United States and its Allies war effort. Between World War I and World War II, the **Boeing Airplane Company** continued to manufacture airplanes for commercial and military use.

During World War II, the airplane played a much larger and different role in the military operations than it did during World War I. During World War I, airplanes were in their infancy and military leaders largely used them for scouting and intelligence. Airplanes could, and did, carry bombs and guns, but their relatively small size limited the number of bombs that they could drop.

However, between the end of World War I and the beginning of World War II, great advancements were made in aviation, enabling planes to be much more useful to the military. One such advancement was the development of aluminum. **Aluminum** is a lightweight material that is also durable and strong enough to endure the stresses of air travel. The creation of aluminum allowed the production of larger and safer airplanes, which in turn made planes able to carry larger numbers of bombs. For the first time in military history, planes had offensive capabilities.

Thus, for the mass production of airplanes for the war effort to be possible, aluminum also had to be mass produced. Washington was ideally situated for the mass production of aluminum. It was home to Boeing, the most important airplane manufacturer in the country, and Washington was the source of a wealth of cheap

hydroelectric power from the Columbia River, and other, dam projects. As a result, the aluminum industry grew along with the aircraft industry in Washington during World War II. The major aluminum producing centers in Washington were located in Spokane, Vancouver, Longview, and Tacoma.

The growth of the aluminum industry helped Boeing to produce many types of aircraft. At the Seattle-Renton plant, workers assembled two bombers, the B-17 and B-29. The **B-17** medium range propeller driven bomber was also called the "**Flying Fortress**." Before Pearl Harbor, Great Britain ordered large quantities of Boeing B-17s. More than 8,200 B-17s were manufactured in Washington and used to conduct daytime and nighttime air raids on Germany's industrial cities. By the end of the war Boeing was building sixteen B-17s daily. The B-17 carried one half of all bombs dropped on Germany.

By 1943 Boeing had designed and manufactured a new long range bomber, the **B-29 "Superfortress."** In addition to Boeing's 50,000 workers, the company hired subcontractors from around the United States to make parts, engines, and sections of the plane. Seattle's expanded assembly plants worked around the clock to produce more than 1,119 B-29s. Originally each B-29 took five days to build at a cost of more than one million dollars. Eventually the cost of the plane was reduced to only \$600,000 and six planes were completed each day. Boeing's B-29 delivered 96 percent of all bombs dropped on Japan including two atomic bombs.



▲ The Boeing B-17 airplane, nicknamed the Flying Fortress, was one of the most important military vehicles during World War II. It was used to make high altitude bombing runs. It is pictured here with the crew of the *Memphis Belle*, the most famous B-17 unit during World War II.



▲ A poster designed to highlight the efforts of military aviators, such as B-29 pilots in World War II.

1940s



◀ McChord Air Force base near Tacoma.



◀ Aircraft carriers were a new innovation, allowing airplanes to reach combat zones with no available runways.



▶ A line of Boeing B-17s at Boeing Field.

1942



▲ The Boeing B-29, nicknamed the Superfortress, was a larger bomber.



▲ A squadron of F6F Hellcat fighter planes stored at Ault Field on Whidby Island.



▲ The Boeing B-17 as seen from the air.

1944

1943



▲ The U.S.S. *California* sinks following the surprise attack at Pearl Harbor on December 7, 1941.

"Yesterday, December seventh, 1941, a date which will live in infamy, the United States of America was suddenly and deliberately attacked by naval and air forces of the Empire of Japan."

— President Franklin D. Roosevelt
December 8, 1941



▲ Prior to the attacks at Pearl Harbor, Japanese Americans proudly celebrate their culture, traditions, and clothing in Seattle.

ORIGINS OF JAPANESE INTERNMENT

The outbreak of World War II affected not only Washington's economy but society as well. The bombing of **Pearl Harbor** caused an increase in the discrimination and suspicion of Japanese Americans living in the United States. The Japanese, as well as other people of Asian descent, already experienced discrimination both nationally and in Washington. As World War II broke out, many people feared a Japanese invasion of the West Coast of the United States. Thus, fears of Japan were widespread.

The press and media contributed to this wartime hysteria even further. Newspaper tycoon **William Randolph Hearst** regularly published columns implying that any Japanese invasion would receive help from the Japanese already living in the country. The federal government shared this sentiment. Secretary of the Navy **Frank Knox** implicated Japanese spies in America as assisting the Pearl Harbor attack. The Treasury Department speculated that 20,000 secret agents could cripple the United States war effort to defend itself against Japan. California Attorney General **Earl Warren**, and newspaper columnist **Walter Lippman** suggested that even though no acts of sabotage had yet occurred, there might be one massive coordinated attack by loyal Japanese citizens living along the West Coast.

As a direct result of this wartime environment and with the full knowledge that nearly 120,000 Japanese Americans lived along the West Coast, high ranking United States military and government officials immediately began planning for the domestic security of the country.



▲ A Japanese bazaar in Everett during the 1930s. Stores such as this one supplied traditional Japanese products for Washingtonians of Japanese descent living in the Seattle area.

At the time, it did not matter that two-thirds of the 120,000 Japanese Americans were American born citizens, called the **Nisei**, who proclaimed their loyalty to the United States. Moreover there was no evidence that the older generation, called the **Issei**, who were not American citizens had committed any acts of treason either. In spite of the evidence to the contrary, all Japanese Americans were viewed as potential saboteurs and spies for Japan.

Lt. General DeWitt, commander of the Western Defense Command, formally recommended on February 14, 1942 securing the West Coast by removing all Japanese Americans to the interior of the United States. On February 19, 1942, President Franklin D. Roosevelt issued and signed **Executive Order No. 9066**. This order gave the Secretary of War and the military commanders the authorization to secure the **Western Defense Zone** with the immediate removal of all Japanese living west of the Cascade and Sierra Nevada mountains.

Executive Order No. 9066 and subsequent documents (**Executive Order No. 9102** established the **War Relocation Authority** on March 18, 1942 and the **Civilian Exclusion Order No. 5** on April 1, 1942 removed all Japanese on the West Coast) were instituted to secure U.S. coastal areas from potential saboteurs and spies.



▲ A group of Japanese elementary students attend a Seattle area school before they were forced to leave their homes in Washington and relocate to an internment camp.



▲ A Japanese family awaits transportation to an internment camp. The family carries suitcases with all the belongings that they were allowed to take.



▲ Japanese families from Washington arrive at the Minidoka internment camp in Idaho.



▲ A Japanese family boards a train at Union Station in Tacoma. The train was bound for an internment camp in Pinedale, California.

Japanese Removal and Internment

All Japanese Americans, defined as anyone with at least one-eighth Japanese ancestry, were immediately removed from those areas west of the Cascade and Sierra Nevada mountain ranges designated as **Military Area #1**. The evacuation plan called for all those of Japanese ancestry to either voluntarily or forcibly be moved to a nearby assembly area for processing until 10 permanent **internment camps** or **relocation centers** could be constructed. The government issued 25 specific orders that allowed only a few days for the Japanese Americans to sell their assets and be transported to the assembly areas to which they were assigned.

West Coast "**assembly centers**" included C-1-70 Camp Harmony located at the Western Washington Fair Grounds in Puyallup, Washington; the Livestock Exposition Hall in Portland, Oregon; Mayer, Arizona; and Salinas, Tanforam Racetrack in San Francisco, Turlock, Tulare, Sacramento, Merced, Fresno, Pinedale, Pomona, the Santa Anita Racetrack in Los Angeles, Marysville, and Stockton, California. In excess of 110,000 people were temporarily fed, housed, and detained for a few months. Between March 22 and June 5, 1942, all persons of Japanese ancestry had been removed from Military Area #1.

Some of the first Pacific Northwest families removed were the 54 Japanese American families who lived on Bainbridge Island in the Puget Sound area of Washington. They were ordered to move within ten days in late March 1942. They were transferred to Camp Harmony in Puyallup before being shipped to Manzanar Relocation Center, some 235 miles north of Los Angeles near Owens Valley, California for the duration of the war.

Ten "Relocation or Internment" camps or centers were hastily constructed in the spring of 1942. These camps were usually located in isolated desert areas of the West. The internment camps with their population capacity were: Poston, Arizona (17,814); Tule Lake, California (18,789); Gila River, Arizona (13,348); Heart Mountain, Wyoming (10,767); Minidoka in Hunt, Idaho (9,397); Manzanar in Owens Valley, California (10,046); Granada Center in Amache, Colorado (7,318); Topaz, Utah (8,130); Jerome Center in Denison, Arkansas (8,497); and 8,475 in Rohwer, Arkansas.

Physically isolated and located in rather inhospitable natural environments, life was harsh in these detention centers. Intense heat in the summer; cold winters; and dry, dusty, windy conditions made life miserable throughout the year. Fortunately, family members lived together and the children were allowed to attend school. Even low paying work was available both inside and outside the internment camp. Other amenities of life were either very sparse or did not exist. These camps were fenced and guarded by United States Army personnel.



◀ Hundreds of Japanese families gathered at the Puyallup assembly center to await transportation for relocation to one of the internment camps located throughout the interior of the American West. Below, a Japanese business proclaims its allegiance to the United States.



The camps were organized into "blocks" comprised of 12 residential barracks. Each tarpapered wood frame barrack contained six rooms, approximately 20 feet by 25 feet in size. This room provided shelter for an entire family, with six families per barrack. Normally each block housed 300 people. There might be 40-60 blocks in the camp. Each block had a common kitchen, mess hall, recreation hall, laundry, shower, and toilet facilities. There was no running water or toilet facilities in the barracks. Life was monotonous and difficult for everyone, including the army personnel. The years spent in these camps made an indelible impression on each and every Japanese American, adult or child.

Most of Washington's 13,400 Japanese Americans living west of the Cascades, were detained at either the Minidoka Relocation Center in Hunt, Idaho or the Tule Lake Center in northern California near Klamath Falls, Oregon. Many of the Japanese Americans did not return to their original residences; they moved elsewhere upon being released after the war.

During the period of physical detention and internment, there were a few significant legal challenges to the constitutionality of Executive Order No. 9066. **Fred Korematsu** was arrested for violating the Civilian Exclusion Order. He was found guilty and jailed; his legal case became **Korematsu versus United States**. In December 1944 the United States Supreme Court

handed down a majority decision upholding the validity of the evacuation order. A young University of Washington student, **Gordon Hirabayashi** purposely violated the 8:00 P.M. to 6:00 A.M. curfew law and the evacuation order. The FBI arrested him, he was fined and imprisoned for two years. Hirabayashi was supported by the **Japanese American Citizens League (JACL)** and **American Civil Liberties Union (ACLU)**. A Portland attorney, **Minoru Yasui** also violated curfew. The court ruled that the military laws do not supersede the Constitution. However, Yasui was placed in jail for one year and fined \$5,000.

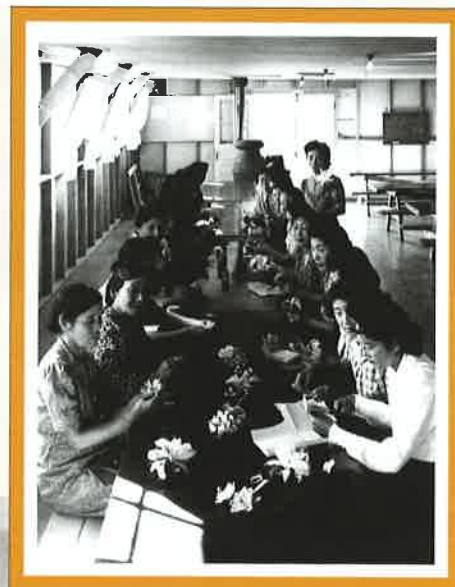
Not all Japanese Americans on the West Coast were placed in internment camps. Many chose to enter the Armed Forces. Approximately 33,500 Nisei served with particular military distinction in both the European Theater and Pacific Theater. Of particular note was the famed 100th Infantry Battalion of the 442nd regimental Combat Team; the most decorated military unit in World War II.

Finally on December 17, 1944 the War Department issued an announcement rescinding the exclusion order against Japanese American citizens. On December 18, 1944 the War Relocation Authority announced the closure of all detention centers in 1945. On March 20, 1946 all centers were permanently closed nearly four years to the day after the initial detentions.

IMAGES OF THE TIME

The internment of the Japanese on the West Coast during World War II ranks as one of the great tragedies of liberty in the history of the United States. Not only were foreign born Japanese residents detained, but natural born American citizens as well. The federal government justified the internment on the grounds that the Japanese community might harbor spies. However, there was no evidence of wrong doing by any Japanese American citizen. Moreover, people of Italian and German descent, the other enemies of the United States during World War II, were not treated in a similar manner.

The following photographs illustrate life at the Minidoka internment facility. Minidoka was one of several camps spread throughout the West.



WESTERN DEFENSE COMMAND AND FOURTH ARMY
WARTIME CIVIL CONTROL ADMINISTRATION
Presidio of San Francisco, California
May 15, 1942

INSTRUCTIONS
TO ALL PERSONS OF
JAPANESE
ANCESTRY

Living in the Following Area:

All that portion of the County of King, State of Washington, within that boundary beginning at a point about midway between the Cities of Tacoma and Seattle (east of the Maline) at which U. S. Highway No. 20 intersects Washington State Highway No. 5A; thence easterly along said Highway No. 5A to Green River; thence easterly and following Green River to the King-Kittitas County line; thence southerly and following the King-Kittitas County line to the King-Pierce County line; thence westerly and following the King-Pierce County line to U. S. Highway No. 99; thence northerly along U. S. Highway No. 99 to the point of beginning.

Pursuant to the provisions of Civilian Exclusion Order No. 79, this Headquarters, dated May 15, 1942, all persons of Japanese ancestry, both alien and non-alien, will be evacuated from the above area by 12 o'clock noon, P. W. T., Friday, May 22, 1942.

No Japanese person will be permitted to move into, or out of, the above area after 12 o'clock noon, P. W. T., Friday, May 15, 1942, without obtaining special permission from the representative of the Commanding General, Northwestern Sector, at the Civil Control Station located at:

Auburn High School Gymnasium,
711 East Main Street,
Auburn, Washington.

Such permits will only be granted for the purpose of visiting members of a family, or in cases of grave emergency. The Civil Control Station is equipped to assist the Japanese population affected by this evacuation in the following ways:

1. Give advice and instructions on the evacuation.
2. Provide services with respect to the management, leasing, sale, storage or other disposition of most kinds of property, such as real estate, business and professional equipment, household goods, boats, automobiles and livestock.
3. Provide temporary residence elsewhere for all Japanese in family groups.
4. Transport persons and a limited amount of clothing and equipment to their new residence.

The Following Instructions Must Be Observed:

1. A responsible member of each family, preferably the head of the family, or the person in whose name most of the property is held, and each individual living alone, will report to the Civil Control Station to receive further instructions. This must be done between 8:00 A. M. and 5:00 P. M. on Saturday, May 16, 1942, or between 8:00 A. M. and 5:00 P. M. on Sunday, May 17, 1942.

2. Evacuees must carry with them on departure for the Assembly Center, the following property:

- (a) Bedding and linens (no mattress) for each member of the family;
- (b) Toilet articles for each member of the family;
- (c) Extra clothing for each member of the family;
- (d) Essential personal effects for each member of the family.

All items carried will be securely packaged, tied and plainly marked with the name of the owner and numbered in accordance with instructions obtained at the Civil Control Station. The size and number of packages is limited to that which can be carried by the individual or family group.

3. No pets of any kind will be permitted.
4. No personal items and no household goods will be shipped to the Assembly Center.

5. The United States Government through its agencies will provide for the storage, at the sole risk of the owner, of the more substantial household items, such as iceboxes, washing machines, pianos and other heavy furniture. Cooking utensils and other small items will be accepted for storage if crated, packed and plainly marked with the name and address of the owner. Only one name and address will be used by a given family.

6. Each family, and individual living alone, will be furnished transportation to the Assembly Center. Private means of transportation will not be utilized. All instructions pertaining to the movement will be obtained at the Civil Control Station.

Go to the Civil Control Station between the hours of 8:00 A. M. and 5:00 P. M., Saturday, May 16, 1942, or between the hours of 8:00 A. M. and 5:00 P. M., Sunday, May 17, 1942, to receive further instructions.

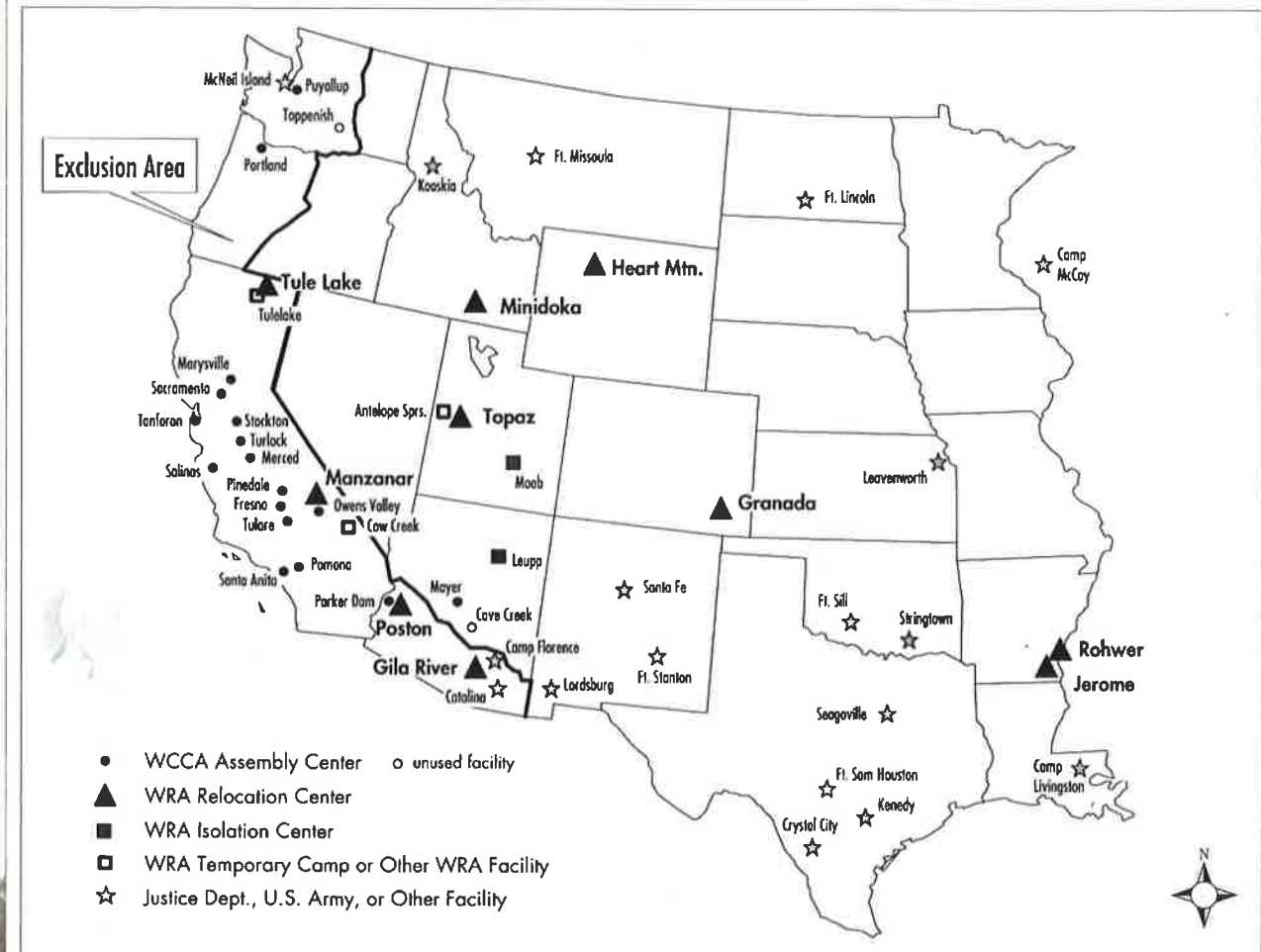
J. L. DeWITT
Lieutenant General, U. S. Army
Commanding

SEE CIVILIAN EXCLUSION ORDER NO. 79

JAPANESE AMERICANS

Life at the Relocation Centers

Japanese American Relocation Centers, 1942-1945



▲ Japanese men at Minidoka.

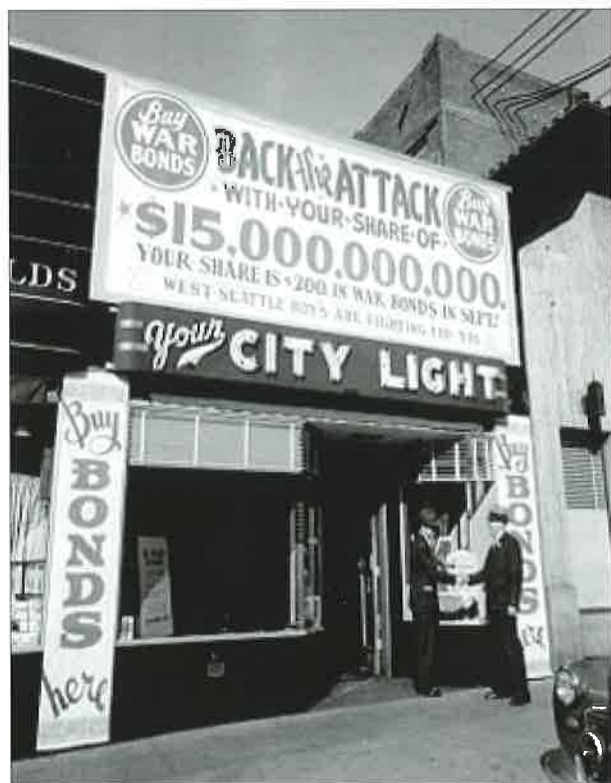
▲ Members of the Minidoka Consumers Cooperative.

▲ Members of the Japanese American Citizens League celebrate happier times before the war.

ASSISTING THE WAR EFFORT

The onset of World War II and the accompanying economic boom changed life in Washington. As during World War I, citizens of the United States were asked by the federal government to make personal and economic sacrifices. Food items were rationed and each family and individual were only allotted a certain amount of many major food and consumer items. These amounts were monitored by **ration books**. In addition to food and consumer items, factories were all geared towards producing materials for the war. Thus, many goods, such as automobiles, electronics, boats, and the like were no longer made for sale in the domestic market, but were geared towards manufacturing similar items for the war movement. Energy, such as gas, coal, and electricity, were also conserved. In addition to conserving important resources, the federal government embarked upon another aggressive campaign to fund the war effort through the sale of **war bonds**.

Residents of Washington, and the West Coast, were also asked to make additional sacrifices. Washington was an important and essential manufacturing region for the American military machine, particularly in airplane and ship production. As such, military personnel believed that the state could be a target for bombing campaigns,



▲ To support the military, American citizens were encouraged to buy war bonds. Many local businesses sold these war bonds.



▲ Anti-aircraft guns became a feature of many West Coast towns, including Tacoma as seen here.

"More than an end to war, we want an end to the beginning of all wars - yes, an end to this brutal, inhuman and thoroughly impractical method of settling the differences between governments."

— President Franklin D. Roosevelt

especially in light of Washington's proximity to the Pacific Ocean. To prevent any air raids, anti-aircraft guns were stationed on the tops of important buildings, in parks, public spaces, and other strategic locations. Moreover, at night much of Puget Sound was under blackout, where residents and businesses were asked to dim or turn off lights to prevent any airplanes from spotting cities and towns from above. Blackouts and strategic heavy arms placement were such a success that they were continued throughout the war years.

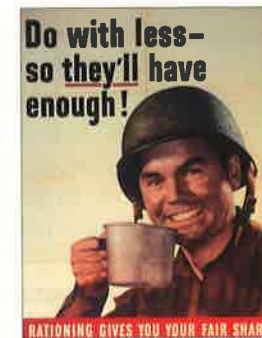
Monetary and personal sacrifices were not the only way Washingtonians contributed to the war effort. Residents volunteered to help in the military in a civilian capacity. This option was especially popular with many women, such as the **WAVES** organization, who assisted soldiers by promoting war heroes, organizing dances, throwing parades, creating care packages, selling war bonds, and other services for the military. Additionally, many men and women chose to volunteer with organizations, such as the Red Cross, which provided medical and charity services for soldiers, veterans, and the wounded. Thus, through organizations, rationing, purchasing bonds, and personal sacrifices, residents in both Washington and the United States were affected on a daily basis by World War II.

IMAGES OF THE TIME

Assisting the War Effort ...

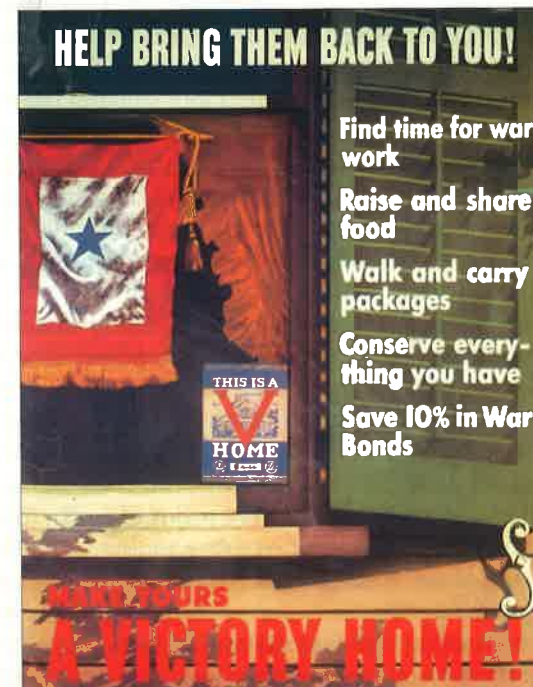
"Prosperous farmers mean more employment, more prosperity for the workers and the business men of every industrial area in the whole country."

— President Franklin D. Roosevelt



"The point in history at which we stand is full of promise and danger. The world will either move forward toward unity and widely shared prosperity - or it will move apart."

— President Franklin D. Roosevelt



▲ Red Cross Workers Greet Soldiers at Fort Lewis.



▲ The economic necessities of the war meant that more women joined the workforce and performed jobs traditionally reserved for men.



▲ Women at the Rainier aircraft school learn about airplane manufacturing.



▲ To assist in the war effort, many women were trained as Women Airforce Service Pilots, known commonly as WASPs. These women flew planes from factories to their intended air bases.

SOCIETY

World War II also had a deep impact upon society in Washington. This social change was due to the economic revival caused by the war industries. Historians often note that although the New Deal helped ease the suffering of the Great Depression, it did not end the economic malaise. Rather, it was the boom in the economy caused by the production demand created by World War II that truly ended the Great Depression. Nowhere was this fact truer than in Washington.

As noted earlier, Washington's economy soared under the military demands of the United States military. With the resurgence of the economy, unemployment virtually disappeared from the state. In fact, Washington had an employee deficit. Thus, there were more jobs than workers in the state.

Most of these jobs were located in the cities, especially around Puget Sound and Vancouver, since these locations were where the factories and military facilities were located. To meet employment demands, workers were encouraged to move from rural locations to the cities to work in the burgeoning industries. As a result, Washington's urban population grew at an increased rate.

Still, even the migration of rural residents to Washington's cities could not provide for the labor demands created by World War II. Thus, Washington businesses began to turn to new sources for employees. One of the most important sources for new workers were women. While today it is common place to see women who work outside the home, it was less frequent prior to World War II. Certainly many women, especially from working class families, had held jobs outside the home. But the vast majority did not. In fact, one of the goals of many Progressive reformers during the previous decades was to pass legislation restricting the hours of female employees in order to provide them with more time to spend at home with their families. Washington passed such a law in 1911.

The demands of the war forced many businesses, particularly factories, to turn to female laborers to fill vacancies. In fact, the United States government encouraged women to join the factory workforce, promoting it as a patriotic duty and service to the country. At factories, women performed the same jobs as their male counterparts. They put together planes, worked in shipyards, and in other industrial facilities. At Boeing alone, it is estimated that half the employees during World War II were women. The impact of women entering the factories in Washington and the United States as a whole cannot be understated. For the first time in the history of the country large numbers of women obtained employment outside the home, working in positions traditionally reserved for men. It



▲ The economic resurgence caused by the war created a need for good affordable housing. As a result, new neighborhoods and suburbs, like this one in Seattle, were constructed.



was a significant movement and would have a major effect on the history of all parts of the United States in subsequent decades.

In addition to the recruitment of women in the factories, the labor shortage in Washington also led to the increased migration of African Americans to Washington. They settled mostly in the cities of Western Washington and worked primarily in war industries. While the new migration of African Americans to the state was not large, it was significant. During the war years, the population of African Americans living in the state had doubled. However the presence of new African American residents was not welcomed by all and there were instances of racial discrimination and violence, especially in Seattle, Vancouver, and Bremerton.

The increased migration of people to cities in Washington forced government officials to provide enough housing for workers. During the Great Depression, housing prices were so high that people were homeless, many congregating in Hoovervilles spread throughout the cities of Washington. However, with the return of economic stability and the growth of available jobs, the Hoovervilles disappeared. They were replaced by new, affordable housing. Some of these housing complexes were privately constructed. Many, though, were subsidized by the federal government

and offered to workers, military personnel, and others at reduced rates. These new housing initiatives helped to expand cities in Washington and contributed to their modern appearance.

While the war years were a time of growth for Washington's cities, in contrast, rural populations decreased. The decrease in rural populations put a strain on agriculture. Farmers needed people from rural communities to work in the fields, especially at harvest time. As more people flocked to Washington's cities in search of high paying factory jobs, the labor shortage in the rural parts of the state became more serious.

To meet the needs of farmers in Washington and the rest of the United States, the federal government created the **bracero program**. The bracero program brought workers from Mexico, called **braceros**, to the state to help with the harvest. Braceros first came to Washington in 1942 and continued to come through the war years. For the most part, these workers were migrants who came to the state for the seasonal harvests and left after they were concluded. However, some chose to stay or returned to Washington at a later date. Regardless of whether they stayed or were seasonal labor, the bracero program marked the first time that a significant number of Hispanics came to Washington and would set the stage for later migrations to the state.



▲ United States Marines raise the flag following victory at Iwo Jima in 1945.

"The atom bomb was no 'great decision.' It was merely another powerful weapon in the arsenal of righteousness."

"A president cannot always be popular."

"A pessimist is one who makes difficulties of his opportunities and an optimist is one who makes opportunities of his difficulties."

— President Harry S. Truman



▲ Soldiers from Fort Lewis celebrate the announcement of Japan's intent to surrender on August 14, 1945 in Tacoma during a Victory over Japan Day parade.

THE END OF WORLD WAR II

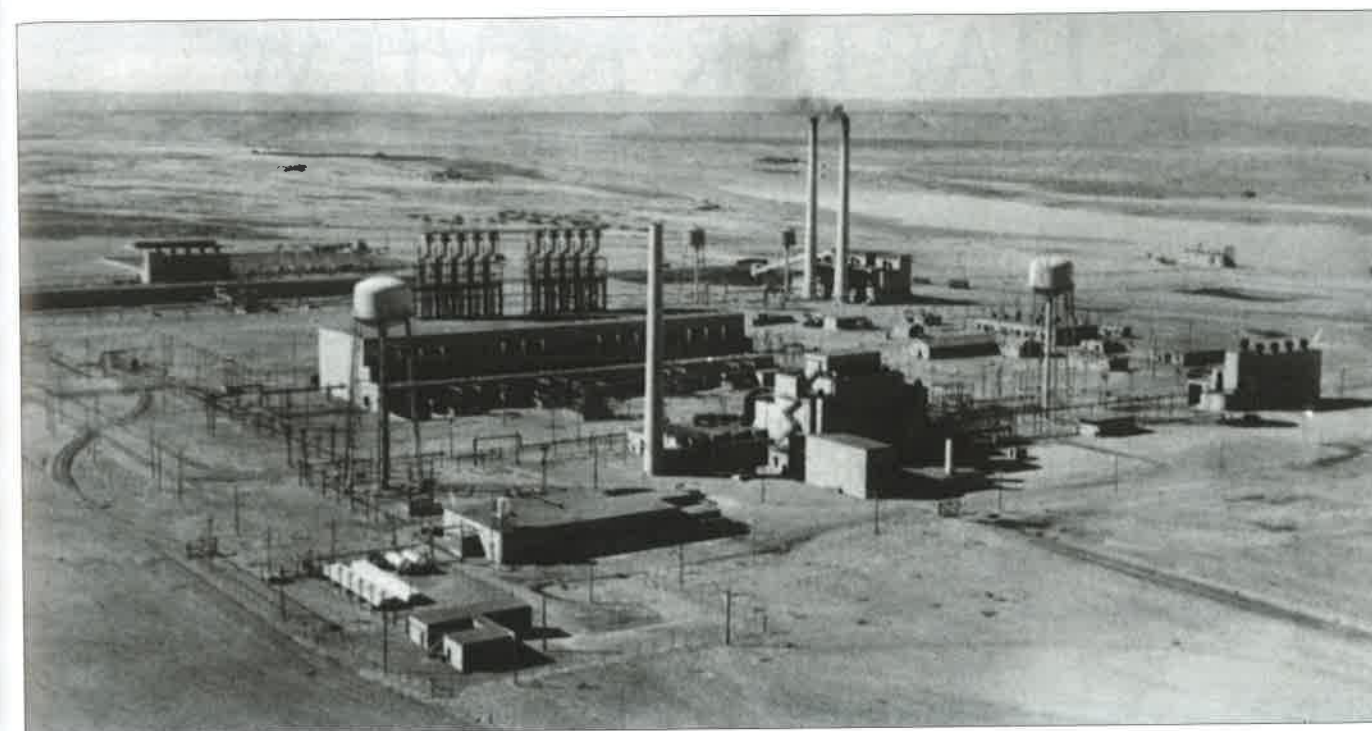
World War II was the bloodiest and largest military conflict in world history. Following the attack on Pearl Harbor, the United States entered the war on the side of the Allies, fighting alongside Great Britain, the Soviet Union, France, and other resistance leaders. World War II was fought on two fronts. One front, known as the **European Theater**, was fought in Europe and North Africa where Nazi Germany and their ally Italy had invaded and taken Poland, Czechoslovakia, Hungary, Austria, Greece, Belgium, the Netherlands, Luxembourg, Norway, most of France, and large tracts of North Africa. The second front in the Pacific Ocean, known as the **Pacific Theater**, was fought in East Asia, Southeast Asia, and South Pacific Islands.

Initially, the Axis Powers, Germany, Italy, and Japan, had the advantage in both theaters. However, the fortunes of the Allies began to change in 1942. On June 6, 1942, Allied forces defeated Japan at the Battle of Midway, beginning a slow, but steady campaign of "island hopping," which involved the United States and its allies taking conquered territories from the Japanese one-by-one. In the European theater, Allied forces won a large victory in October of 1942 at El Alamein in Egypt. In November of that same year, the United States landed troops in Morocco and the Germans were slowly driven from North Africa. The victories in North Africa began the gradual process of reclaiming land from Germany and Italy in the European theater.

The victory of the Allies over the Axis powers was due in large part to the superior economic and industrial capacity of the United States. The American economy could simply out produce all the Axis powers combined. This production advantage was due in large part to Washington industries. Boeing's airplane manufacturing capabilities, the enormous shipbuilding facilities, the budding aluminum industry, the expansion of hydroelectricity, and the agricultural abundance of Washington, contributed significantly to the Allied victory during World War II. As a result of these industries, Washington was recognized as a significant asset to both the American economy and the military war machine.

But energy, industrial, and agricultural production was not Washington's only contribution to the end of World War II. In 1942, President Roosevelt commissioned the **Manhattan Project**, a top secret government program aimed at producing an atomic bomb. The Manhattan Project was conducted at several sites throughout the country. One site was in Hanford, Washington. Construction began in March 1943 and by 1945 there were 554 buildings and three nuclear reactors. The primary purpose of the **Hanford Nuclear Site** was to produce plutonium, the fuel for an atomic bomb. However, all knowledge of the site and its mission was kept secret, and only a handful of workers at Hanford knew what they were producing.

On May 8, 1945, Germany surrendered to the Allied forces, thus ending the military conflict in Europe. However fighting with Japan continued. The Allies had succeeded in forcing Japan to retreat, but given the geography of the Pacific and Japan itself, total defeat of the Japanese military was proving



▲ In March 1943 agents of the federal government came to Hanford, Washington. Their mission was to deliver eviction notices to residents of the small town. Each homeowner was informed that the federal government had purchased their land and they had 30 days to leave their homes. Residents were not told why the government required their land or how they intended to use it.

to be difficult. President **Harry Truman**, who had succeeded Roosevelt when he died in office, and his military advisors decided that the human cost of invading Japan would be too great. They issued an ultimatum to Japan to surrender or face the possibility of an atomic bomb strike. Japan refused and on August 6, 1945, the United States dropped an atomic bomb on Hiroshima, Japan. After Japan refused another opportunity to surrender, a second bomb was dropped upon Nagasaki on August 9, 1945. Plutonium from Hanford was used in both bombs. On August 14, 1945, Japan surrendered, unofficially ending World War II.

CHAPTER SUMMARY

From 1929 until 1945, Washington experienced numerous challenges and transformations. In 1929, the state's economy was still recovering from the end of World War I. The Great Depression brought even more trying times. The New Deal programs provided some relief, but it was the economic expansion that accompanied World War II that brought prosperity back to the state. Washington was a key producer of war goods for the military and the country. The war industries reinvigorated the economy and caused a transformation of the rural landscape, cities, and society. The transformations Washington experienced during the Great Depression and World War II would define the state's history in subsequent decades.



▲ Japan officially surrendered to Allied forces on September 2, 1945 aboard the U.S.S. Missouri. Above, sailors on the Missouri celebrate the end of the war.