**Chapter 23**

The Great Depression

*Reviewing Objectives*

**A thorough study of Chapter Twenty-Three should enable the student to understand:**

1. The relation between the stock market crash and the subsequent Great Depression.
2. The reasons that the Great Depression started and lasted so long.
3. The effects of the Depression on business and industry.
4. The problems of unemployment and the inadequacy of relief.
5. The particuar problems of farmers in the Dust Bowl.
6. The impact of the Depression on minoiries.
7. The impact of the Depression on working women and the American family.
8. The reflection of the economic crisis in American culture.
9. President Herbert Hoover’s policies for fighting the Depression.

**Chapter 23**

**Pertinent Questions**

**The Coming of the Great Depression**

1. What caused the stock market boom to get so out of hand that stock prices outran company values?
2. The decline of what previously prospering industries contributed especially to the economic decline?
3. How did the weakness of consumer demand contribute to the severity of the depression?
4. What impact did domestic debt factors have on the American economy?
5. What role did U.S. policies on trade and international debt play in worsening economic conditions?
6. What weaknesses in banking helped lead to the Great Depression and what happened to banking system early in the Depression?
7. What happened to the banking system and GNP in the three years after the stock market crash of 1929? What economic statistic best represents the human costs of the depression?

**The American People in Hard Times**

1. Describe the extent of unemployment, especially in industrial cities. What mental burdens often come with the loss of jobs?
2. How effective were local, state and private relief agencies in meeting the ravages of widespread unemployment?
3. What special problems were faced by rural America?
4. Compare and contrast the impact of the Great Depression on blacks, Hispanics and Asians with the impact on Americans of European heritage. What demographic shifts occurred?
5. What effect did the Depression have on the work force role of women in general and African-American women in particular? What happened to the women’s movement?
6. How did families adjust to the pressures of life during the Depression?

**The Depression and American Culture**

1. How did American values, especially individualism and the success ethic, fare during the hard times?
2. In what ways did photographers and writers chronicle the impact of the depression?
3. What sort of fare dominated radio programming? How did it shape American culture?
4. What was the tone and focus of most movies of the 1930s? How were women and minorities portrayed?
5. How did popular literature of the 1930s compare and contrast with popular radio and movies?
6. What allure did such radical movements as communism and socialism have for Americans in the 1930s? What role did artistic work, film and books play in portraying the social ills?

**The Ordeal of Herbert Hoover**

1. What were Herbert Hoover’s first approaches to combating economic downturn? How effective were they?
2. In the spring of 1931 what was Hoover’s new approach to the Depression? What caused his shift in emphasis?
3. What impact did Hoover’s handling of the “Bonus Army” have on his popularity?
4. What made Franklin Roosevelt such an attractive presidential candidate for the Democrats? Why did he win the 1932 election?
5. What happened in the months between Roosevelt’s election and his inauguration?

**Where Historians Disagree: Causes of the Great Depression**

1. Briefly explain the monetary, spending and timing explanations of the causes for the beginning and/or duration of the Great Depression. What are the implications of each for public policy?

**American in the World” The Global Depression**

1. Why could the depression be called “a major factor – maybe the single most important factor – in the coming of World War II”?

**The American Environment: Dust Bowl**

1. Describe the characteristics of the Dust Bowl. Where was it centered?
2. Why can it be said that the causes of the Dust Bowl had as much to do with people as with nature? What solved, or at least partially solved, the problem?

**Patterns of Popular Culture: The Films of Frank Capra**

1. What was Frank Capra’s vision of society and politics? Why did it resonate so clearly with American audiences in the 1930s and 40s?