## Going to School During the Great Depression (1930-1940)

Children were greatly affected during the Great Depression, even if they didn't understand what was happening. They knew if their parent(s) had lost their job. They knew that money was scarce. Some children had to leave school to take jobs and help support the family. Most of the time it was 16 and 17 year old children who dropped out of school to go to work. But sometimes younger ones had to drop out and go to work.

## No transportation

Other children couldn't go to school since many rural areas lacked high schools. Tilda Guy lived in Guy Hollow located in Campbell County. She loved school and wanted to go to high school. Because she lived so far back in the mountains, Tilda couldn't go to high school. There was no car or bus transportation, and the nearest high school was 25 miles away.

### Couldn't afford books

More Tennessee students had the opportunity to attend high school during the Great Depression. However, not all families had the resources to keep their children in school. Wilma Cope Williamson only attended high school for one year in 1931-32. "Dad couldn't buy books, and they didn't furnish them then, so I didn't get to go back to high school after the first year," she explained.

#### **School lunches**

Many poor students went to school hungry every morning because their families didn't have anything to feed them. Typically students brought lunches to school because there was no school lunch program.

Federal public works programs funded construction of many new schools in Tennessee during the 1930s. However, schools in Tennessee remained segregated. African American and white children attended different and unequal schools.

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# Going to School Then and Now

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