

# GOOD TIMES IN HARD TIMES

*At one time, one-sixth of the glass used in the United States was made in or around Pittsburgh. In a single year, Pittsburgh Plate Glass, American Window Glass, United States Glass and other local factories produced 27 million square feet of plate glass, 175 million square feet of window glass, and 260 million bottles and jars.*

*Catholic orphans were placed in either St. Paul's Roman Catholic Orphan Asylum of Pittsburgh or in St. Joseph's Protectory. St. Paul's orphanage later merged with Holy Family Institute.*

**T**imes were now getting tough all over the country. In one single year, the number of Americans who were unemployed doubled. Pittsburgh, a city filled to the brim with busy factories and banks to handle their payrolls, had been a hotbed of prosperity. Now one by one banks were closing. Glass factories were slowing down and letting workers go. Steel production was at a low point.

Most families in Greenfield were used to hardship. When the Depression hit Pittsburgh, people just pulled up their bootstraps and dealt with it.

*When we were married, I wore a dress of cornflower blue velvet with a high scooped neck and big puffed sleeves and a hat to match. I cut the bottom off and got a lot of use out of that dress, because I could wear it in the street. A lady down The Run used to sew and she made me a purse from the bottom of the dress.*

Two or more families shared a house, each family taking a floor and sharing the kitchen and bathroom, which—you may remember—was often in the basement. Families took in foster children for the extra income it would provide.

*People took in foster kids all over the place. Orphans, too. They'd bring them into their house and be paid to keep them there. And the kids would do the work. Some of them worked their little butts off.*

*Orphans and foster kids were discriminated against. They played with all the other kids, but after school they worked with the C-Y-something and cleaned the blackboards and polished the desks, and they got so much money for doing the work. There were a lot of them at St. Rosalia.*

Every scrap of food was used, and leftovers became soup for tomorrow's supper. Bacon grease was spread on bread like butter, and when it got rancid, it was used as shoe polish. New clothing was often an unaffordable luxury, so women cut, sewed and reshaped their dresses and hats.

**A**n overwhelming majority of Americans lost their faith in the Republican Party during the Depression and chose a Democratic president, Franklin Delano Roosevelt, to lead the country back to prosperity. In Pittsburgh, most voters even changed their political