

Mr. Roosevelt Comes to Champaign County: An Examination of the New Deal

Fellowship Lesson 2009
Marshall Schacht (St. Joseph-Ogden High School)
Champaign County Historical Archives

Lesson 4.1: Illinois Emergency Relief Commission (IERC)

[“Parasites on Relief”](#) Daily Illini, Editorial: Sept. 21, 1934 (pg. 4)

- What is the question that the author of this editorial is seeking to address?
- What did the survey conducted for the president’s committee on economic security find?
- What attitudes does the author harbor for those that receive financial relief?
- How do these compare with your own?
- How does this type of public opinion put FDR in a difficult situation?
- What advice would you have for him?
- Do you believe that “relief work” was highly paid?
- What future threats does the author relay in the second to last paragraph?
- Have you heard or seen similar criticisms of liberal government action by the Obama administration? Are these criticisms justified?

[“Make Second Cut in IERC Relief Funds”](#) Urbana Daily Courier: Nov 14, 1935 (pg. 1)

- The state office of the Illinois Emergency Relief Commission controls the budget for all counties. They in turn await federal funds from the Federal Emergency Relief Administration, headed by Harry Hopkins.
- For what reasons would relief funds for the unemployed be decreasing?
- What did the county relief committee suggest to reduce relief expenses?
- What does it mean that “the relief load is being absorbed by the WPA”?
- If “no relief is issued”, what would that mean for recipients and their dependents? Where could they go for help?
- What agencies do we have in place today to help provide relief for those in need?

[“Drastic Cuts in Relief Due Says Miss Gugenheim”](#) Urbana Daily Courier: Dec. 5, 1935 (p. 3)

- What will happen to men who are assigned to or working on WPA jobs?
- Do you approve of this decision? Why or why not?
- The article states that 338 relief cases were closed during November. Why did these people no longer receive relief funds?

- In what way would relief clients and their families be affected by receiving neither relief nor paychecks for a week?
- How many relief clients were employed in Champaign County by the WPA during December of 1935?
- Do you think that the workers themselves were happy to be working for pay rather than receiving relief from the IERC?
- What might be the emotional impact of being dependent upon receiving relief money (welfare checks) to provide for your family? Ties to the film “The Cinderella Man”?

“IERC Violating Pact, Pogue Says” Urbana Daily Courier: Dec. 6, 1935 ([Part I](#), [Part II](#))

- What problems does this article indicate regarding the relationship between two agencies: The WPA (Works Progress Administration) and the IERC (Illinois Emergency Relief Commission)?
- Who is Miss Francis Gugenheim? What is her position in this disagreement?
- Who are Fred Lohmann and Harold Pogue? What is their position in this disagreement?
- With which party do you agree? Why?
- According to Mr. Pogue, what must WPA workers do to adjust to the situation?
- Why would there be a delay in the delivery of WPA checks?
- What is the process by which WPA workers receive their wages?
- Is this system efficient? Do you see any way to speed it along?
- How have merchants (community business owners) been enlisted to help out?
- While county relief headquarters have no funds to distribute, of what do they have a surplus to distribute to relief clients?
- What does Miss Gugenheim and the relief office say about “canned meat”? What is your impression of these comments? How would recipients of relief hear them?

Enrichment: Research depression era cooking and prepare a dish for the class. Cooking with Clara (<http://www.greatdepressioncooking.com>) is a wonderful site to share with the children. It couples oral history with depression-era food. Wonderful stuff.