

"Hard Times"

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The WPA stands for "Works Progress Administration". The men in those days use to say, "We pay after."

This program was established and begun by President Franklin Delano Roosevelt in 1938, which helped not only young guys but older men get jobs. Ray Viets says, "In those days there were hard times".

To be apart of this special program men had to fill out required forms. One of the requirements was that they had to be the oldest in the family or the head of the house. Different jobs had to be carried out, such as: making county roads, and spreading gravel that trucks had hauled. Digging ditches was an important part just as was constructing bridges.

These workers were paid \$22 every two weeks for their services, and making a monthly salary of \$44. They worked for eight hours a day and for a very low pay. Can you imagine \$44 a month? They did have one break to lounge around and talk to their buddies, while eating a typical lunch. Towards the winter months the bread they ate was toasted to a lightly browned sandwich, which was heated over a flaming hot fire in an uninsulated shack. That helped also to keep the men alive.

After a long day at work they got

home around 5:30-6:00 p.m. By this time they were extremely bushed!! When the program ended the guys had earned about \$600-\$700. Most hadn't saved any though, because of hard times.

People never bought as much in those days as we do now. There weren't many luxuries. People just bought what they needed. But one way the guys used to amuse themselves was by going down to Gus Johnson's and play pool.

After the W.P.A. programs ended a new one opened called "McCormick's Lodge" out by the Michigamme River. The jobs were much the same. The back breaking job of cutting wood and making roads. McCormick's paid a little more than the W.P.A. but not much. It was \$60 a month for room and board. But it was better than nothing. I guess it is true what Ray Vial says, "In those days hard times".