

Entertainment

Although times were tough during the Great Depression, it wasn't all gloom and doom. People still found ways to enjoy themselves and have fun. They just had to do things that were free or cost less money.

What did people do for fun during the Great Depression?

People found unique and inexpensive ways to entertain themselves during the Great Depression. They listened to a variety of radio shows or took in a cheap movie. They also took part in sports, fads, or fun contests that didn't cost anything at all.

Radio

The 1930s was part of a time that is called the "Golden Age of Radio." Around 40 percent of families owned a radio. The family would often gather around the radio at night to listen to their favorite show. There were all sorts of shows including comedies (Amos 'n' Andy, Burns and Allen), mysteries (The Shadow, Sherlock Holmes), and adventure shows (The Lone Ranger, Buck Rogers).

People also got their news from the radio. This included the "fireside chats" given by President Franklin D. Roosevelt to explain his new programs and what was going on in the country.

Movies

Going to the movies was a popular pastime during the 1930s. New technology allowed for movies to have synchronized sound and be in color. Some of the movies made are still popular today such as The Wizard of Oz, Gone with the Wind, and King Kong. Walt Disney released his first full length animated film Snow White and the Seven Dwarfs in 1937. Some of the popular movie stars included Shirley Temple, Clark Gable, and Will Rogers.

Sports

Baseball was the most popular sport in the 1930s. It wasn't too expensive to go to a game and it was free for kids to play in the park. The most famous professional team at the time was the New York Yankees who had players such as Babe Ruth, Joe DiMaggio, and Lou Gehrig.

Contests

The 1930s was a time of all sorts of crazy contests. One popular contest was marathon dancing. Couples would compete to see who could dance the longest without stopping. Some of these contests would go on for days until all the dancers had collapsed and only one couple was left standing. Other contests included gold fish swallowing, kissing marathons, flag pole sitting events, and soap box derby races.

Interesting Facts About Entertainment During the Great Depression

Monopoly, the popular board game about money and wealth, was first published by Parker Brothers in 1935 during the Great Depression.

Disney started the Mickey Mouse Club in theaters in 1930. By 1932, it had over 1 million members.

Miniature golf was a very popular fad during the early 1930s.

The first electronic and coin operated pinball machines were introduced in the 1930s.

College football became very popular in the 1930s. Several new bowl games were introduced including the Orange Bowl, Sun Bowl, Cotton Bowl, and Sugar Bowl. The Heisman Trophy was first awarded in 1935.

