

1931

In September and October 1931, over 800 more U.S. banks close. In December, hundreds of hunger marchers demonstrate in Washington DC seeking employment and a minimum wage. In a December message to Congress, President Hoover requests the establishment of an emergency reconstruction program and public works jobs.

Local Committee Open Office to Aid Unemployed ***The Hempstead Sentinel, January 22, 1931***

Assistance to Hempstead's jobless residents in their search for work was given by a public employment office opened this week at 43 Centre Street. It is under the direction of a local committee with Dr. Francis P. Hamlet as its chairman. It was started Tuesday and evidence of its need was shown in the applications that immediately begun to come in. The employment bureau became a reality after the meeting of the committee in the municipal building Monday night. The meeting was attended by about 500 person, including representatives from the Lions Club, the Elks, Knights of Columbus, the Masons, American Legion, all the churches and various other societies, The mayor complimented the committee and representatives for their civic spirit and assured them they would have the support of the village board.

Questions:

1. What is the purpose of this committee?
2. In your opinion, why are so many local organizations participating in this committee?

Strike Forces State to take over Work at Jones Beach State Park ***Long Beach Life, January 31, 1931***

Work on the construction of the new bath house, swimming pool, and restaurant at Jones Beach State Park which is over half completed had been stopped due to a dispute between labor unions as to whether derrick men and riggers must be employed to move the stone to the masons on the job. Over one hundred and twenty five union men have been thrown out of employment by this dispute between two unions as to whose members shall be employed. The representative of the Labor Department urged the unions to get together and settle their differences so that work can be immediately resumed.

Question:

1. What is the dispute between the two unions?
2. In your opinion, why are the unions involved in this dispute?

Roosevelt Starts New Road Project ***The New York Times, July 27, 1931***

Governor Franklin D. Roosevelt ended his tour of Long Island yesterday with an extensive swing through Nassau and Suffolk Counties. The tour took him to Jones Beach, Valley Stream and a point on the Nassau-Queens boundary near Little Neck where he officiated at the beginning of construction on a new traffic link.

Refraining from political discussion, the Governor devoted the day to an inspection of the state beach development at Jones Beach, a personal investigation of a proposed grade-crossing elimination on the Sunrise Highway, and the laying of the cornerstone near Little Neck for the work which will tie up the Grand Central Parkway in Queens and the new Northern State Parkway in Nassau.

Questions:

1. Why are these projects important for Long Island?
2. In your opinion, why did Governor Roosevelt avoid political discussion?

30 Of Hempstead's Unemployed Given Places This Week ***The Hempstead Sentinel, November 26, 1931***

William L. Powers, Chairman of Mayor Chamberlin's Unemployment Relief Committee, announced that jobs for thirty of Hempstead's 110 unemployed have been found. The thirty are working at jobs created by the County Highway Department and also in cooperation with the Nassau County Emergency Work Bureau. Powers stated that, "the workers will each receive three days of work a week", and also that each person put to work are men with at least one child in their family.

Questions:

1. What is the Town of Hempstead doing to help the unemployed?
2. Why were men with children given the Highway jobs?
3. How many people are still unemployed in Hempstead? In your opinion, whose responsibility is it to help them? Why?

See Nassau County Spending \$1,200,000 In 1932 For Work Relief, Charities And Welfare ***The Hempstead Sentinel, December 17, 1931***

Nassau County may spend more than \$1,200,000 for public welfare charities next year. Last year \$384,449.20 had been spent. This year, so far, \$638,449.20 has been spent. A budget has been set for 1932 for \$735,046.75, exclusive of the emergency work and home relief funds. Henry Root Stern, chairman of the Work Relief Bureau stated, "if complete relief was given for one year, it would cost about \$1,000,000, of which about half would be refunded by state allocations".

Questions:

1. How much money was spent on welfare, charities and work relief in 1930? How much money was spent in 1931? How much will be spent in 1932?
2. Why is so much more money being spent on welfare, charities and work relief?
3. Draw a graph showing the changes in money spent on welfare, charities and work relief?

Investigation Is Disclosing Shocking Conditions Here
The Hempstead Sentinel, December 31, 1931

William L. Powers, Chairman of the Mayor's Unemployment Relief Committee, has found shocking conditions he never imagined existing after investigations of families in Hempstead. Police have been so moved and shocked by these conditions, that many have asked to be released from this assignment. Powers said, "the unemployment enrollment number is 593, with a total of 3,087 dependents." He also stated, "the white collar element don't register." He said possibly that there are 300-400 of these white collar workers unemployed in Hempstead. Right now only 17 men are working for the county and six others have been put to work by the villages.

Powers has found children in scant clothes and sole less shoes. This week he will open a clothing distribution and receiving station. The majority of the unemployed come from the new south and east areas of the village. Powers said he will help all the unemployed because, "It is Hempstead's job and we are going to do it".

Questions:

1. How many people are officially unemployed in Hempstead?
2. How many dependents are there in families of unemployed workers?
3. According to Mr. Powers, which category of unemployed workers is not registering for help?
4. In your opinion, why do some unemployed workers refuse to register for help?