

## EDITOR'S CORNER

The terms "the Thirties" and "Great Depression" are inextricably bound together in American memory. Those who lived through that era of plummeting stock prices, endemic unemployment, bank failures, Dust Bowl "rollers," and farm foreclosures never forgot it.

Looking back across the temporal divide, squinting to get a sense of what it was like to be alive then, we can agree on at least one point: those years trace a tale of stoic and heroic endurance. For that reason, the Great Depression provides the focus for this issue of *Heritage of the Great Plains*.

In "Perceptions of an Era: Northwest Kansas Women Remember the Dust Bowl," Kay Ellen Weller's interviews with women who lived through those days help us understand how they coped with an unforgiving Nature. Brad Lookingbill's "The Living and the Dead Land: The Great Plains Environment and the Literature of Depression America" uses the era's poetry and short fiction to mirror the period. "Long Way from Home: A Selection from *The Baptism of Howie Cobb*," by Kenneth Robbins, excerpt from his novel, takes us to a Civilian Conservation Corps (CCC) camp in South Dakota. We've also included a "Depression Album" of photographs linked to eyewitness accounts collected by sixth-graders in Gary Bruch's class at the Chase County Middle School in Strong City, Kansas. Every year, Gary asks his students to do some oral history and ask someone in the community to remember their experiences during the Great Depression.

In the end, the ancestors of those Chase County students survived, like Ma Joad and her brood survived in John Steinbeck's period classic, *The Grapes of Wrath*. Anyone who listens to Jane Darwell's recital of her "We Are The People" speech in John Ford's 1940 film version of that novel will know how and why.

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Editor