

# Interview with Irma McDowell on The Great Depression

By Blaine McDowell

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Q: What is your full name?

A: Irma McDowell

Q: How old are you today?

A: 86 Years old

Q: What jobs have you had?

A: Farming

Q: Where were you born and raised?

A: Randolph County, Missouri

Q: How old were you during the Great Depression?

A: 16-20

Q: Where did you live during the Great Depression?

A: Moved to Fowler in 1934 from Missouri

Q: What did you do during the Great Depression?

A: Mainly stayed on the farm

Q: What were the first hardships you noticed?

A: When you got up and couldn't see your hand in front of you

Q: In what ways did the depression change the way you live?

A: I got used to living on nothing

Q: What did you eat?

A: We ate mainly baked bread, canned meat, potatoes, eggs, and milk.

Q: What responsibilities did you have to take on?

A: I had to herd the cattle

Q: What did you do for fun?

A: For fun we would visit people and play games.

Q: Did you ever party?

A: Wedding showers and baby showers were the only parties.

Q: What was the thing you remember doing that was worthwhile?

A: Scooping sand out of the house.

Q: Could you tell me what it was like in a dust storm?

A: It would get dark and your house would fill with sand and dirt.

Q: How had was it to survive?

A: It was hard to make a living. I sold eggs at 12 cents a dozen and when they went up to twenty-eight cent a dozen we felt like we were rich. Sand mounds got as big as houses.

Q: Did you remember Black Sunday?

A: It was a warm beautiful day and one of our neighbours had a funeral in town. I did my hair then went to take my nap then my husband, Fred, woke me up and told me that there was a dust storm a coming. It was clear when I went to sleep but when I woke up I couldn't even see my hands in front of my face.

Q: Do you remember the rabbit drives?

A: Yes we helped people kill thousands of rabbits with clubs guns and what ever else we could find. We tried to spare the cottontails tough.

Q: Is there something else you would like to tell me that you would like to tell me?

A: Some people just abandoned their land and move. At times the tumbleweeds got so big that two of them would fill a wagon. The weeds were very destructive and took out many miles of fence.