

# Indiana Farm Security Photographs



## Using Oral Histories

Students can learn how to analyze primary documents by examining sources such as photographs and oral histories. Students can learn how to critically view photographs by selecting one or more photographs and then describing the economic and social conditions portrayed in them. Next, students can read several life histories and then select one and analyze the needs and desires of the person. Lastly students can research a New Deal program to evaluate how it was intended to improve the life in the oral history. Students learn how to interpret and evaluate photographs and oral histories. They learn how to evaluate the quality of primary documents as well research a New Deal program, and synthesize all the information. Students can get life histories from Studs Terkel's *Hard Times: An Oral History of the Great Depression* (New York: Pantheon, 1970) or by accessing the Library of Congress' *American Life Histories: Manuscripts from the Federal Writers' Project, 1936-1940* at <http://lcweb2.loc.gov/wpaintro/wpahome.html>.