

RELIEF COMES TO TEXAS

IN TEXAS, NEW DEAL AGENCIES HOPED TO IMPROVE PEOPLE'S LIVES BY PUTTING MONEY IN THEIR POCKETS AND GIVING THEM PLACES TO MINGLE.

ALPHABET SOUP

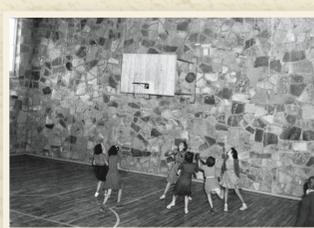
Across America, unemployment was at an all-time high during the Great Depression. People needed money but many didn't want government handouts. In response, the government created work relief programs that allowed people to earn their wages while also benefiting their local communities. These work relief programs were accompanied by financial reforms and regulations to create the New Deal: a plan to relieve the effects of the Great Depression. The heavy use of acronyms to title these programs led to them being called "alphabet soup." In Hamilton County, these agencies included the National Youth Administration (NYA), the Civil Works Administration (CWA), and the Works Progress Administration (WPA).



A laborer employed by the Federal Works Agency paused to admire his work. The FWA helped fund the building of public infrastructure, including the Hamilton Post Office.

BUILDING UP THE COMMUNITY

Work relief projects helped meet community needs by building necessary infrastructure when communities were not able to afford it. These projects often met very practical needs. In small towns like Hico and Cranfills Gap, the WPA funded schools and their gymnasiums and auditoriums. Cranfills Gap had more students than its school could hold and needed a new building quickly. Down the road in Hico, the community rallied around the building of the Hico School auditorium and gymnasium and it quickly became a space for community events.



New recreational spaces like this rock gym allowed children more space to play and have fun.

Bathing Beauties and Sport Stars

Roosevelt believed that getting Americans to exercise would help lift their spirits. As such, his New Deal programs valued creating spaces for recreation and physical activity. In Hamilton County, the Hamilton School District gymnasium and sporting courts were built with more than student athletes in mind. They allowed local residents to exercise where there wasn't space to do so previously. The Hamilton City Pool also helped people to remain active - and cool - despite the blazing Texas sun. The Hamilton City Pool provided the community with a source of entertainment, too, hosting family "bathing beauty" contests.

A "Bathing Beauties" contest at the Hamilton City Pool shows off local women and girls in their extraordinary bathing suits.



Hamilton County Historical Commission

LISTEN AND LEARN



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