The Historical Atlas of Canada: Mapping the Great Depression

In this activity, you will take on the role of a historical geographer, examining various maps related to the Great Depression and the effect it had on Canadians in various parts of the country.

**Make sure your pop up blocker is turned off!**

**Searching for Work**

*Open the interactive map “Trek in Search of Work.”*
http://www.historicalatlas.ca/website/hacolp/defining_episodes/social/UNIT_43/UNIT_43_Trek_2839/UNIT_43_frame_TS2839.htm

1. Nelson Thibault’s journey as a transient will be highlighted on the map. Notice how far he travelled between 1934 and 1939.

   a. Use the zoom tool to view his path more closely, as well as the numbers that indicate his stops along the way.

      a.
      b. On the DATA SELECT toolbar, click on the Identify Tool () and then click on one of the green circles on the map to pop up Thibault’s itinerary.

      c. Despite his efforts, Thibault spent most of the Depression unemployed. When he was able to work, what kinds of jobs did he do?

2. Turn off NELSON THIBAULT’s layer, and turn on the layer for PHYLLIS AND ALI KNIGHT.

   a. Notice that Phyllis and Ali, a married couple from Germany, covered far less ground than Nelson Thibault.

   b. Bring up the itinerary for Phyllis and Ali using the Identify Tool.

   c. What do you notice about this record that may explain their reluctance to travel long distances between jobs?

3. Turn off the PHYLLIS AND ALI KNIGHT layer, and turn on the RAILWAY layer.

   What is the correlation between the railway and the general movement of transient people? What does this tell us about how transients moved around during the Depression?

**Relief Recipients by Province**

*Open the static map “Relief Recipients by Province, 1930-1940”*
http://www.historicalatlas.ca/website/hacolp/defining_episodes/social/UNIT_43/U43_staticmap_relief_prov.htm
1. Which province (other than Newfoundland, which has not joined Confederation yet!) has the highest total proportion of the population receiving relief in most years?

2. In what year does the average number of people receiving relief per month peak in this province? How does this compare to the year in which the average number of relief recipients peaks in Ontario and Quebec?

3. Read the Map Study on page 84 of your textbook.
   a. How does this information help explain your answers to the previous two questions?

**Relief Camps**

Open the interactive map “Unemployment Relief Work Camps, 1932-1936”
http://www.historicalatlas.ca/website/hacolp/defining_episodes/social/UNIT_43/UNIT_43_Work_camps_3236/UNIT_43_frame_WC3236.htm

Ensure that the WORK CAMPS and TRANSPORTATION layers are turned on.

1. Which types of projects are dominant in:
   a. Southern British Columbia and Alberta?
   b. Central and Northern Ontario?
   c. Southern Ontario and Quebec?

1. Which department of Canada’s federal government department is in charge of most of the relief camps?

2. Why might most of the relief camps be concentrated in southern Canada? You may want to turn off the “Work Camps” map layer in order to answer this question.

1. On the DATA SELECT toolbar, click on the Table Tool () and use it on the map to draw a rectangle that includes Quebec City and Halifax.
   a. What type of work camp is located in both of these cities?
   b. Why might the federal government consider these sites a priority, even during an economic crisis?