

Snapshot of 1930s Chandler



Lavinia Baska's fourth grade class, Cleveland School, 1932



Kirby service station, at the northeast corner of Arizona Place and Boston Street, 1932



Juana Abel (right) and family in the Heights neighborhood of west Chandler, c. 1932

During the Great Depression times were lean. Since Chandler was an agricultural community, families had their own food sources, unlike many of those living in the big cities. But financial woes hit everyone—the two banks in Chandler closed, farmers lost their profits, and families relied on Federal relief programs to get by and find temporary work. Town founder Dr. A.J. Chandler lost a great deal: most of his investments, ownership of his beloved San Marcos Hotel, and his wife Charlotte.

Chandler's population was around 1300. White, Hispanic, and African American families from America's Dust Bowl region blew through town, working the fields and living in camps in rural areas. Some of these families put down roots in Chandler.

By 1941 Chandler's economy began to recover. It wasn't long until World War II ignited. War brought a demand for cotton, workers, and the opening of Williams Air Field (now Phoenix-Mesa Gateway Airport). This paved the way for more prosperous times in Chandler. To learn more about the Dust Bowl and Chandler during the Great Depression, use your smart phone to visit



Lillian Kemp (Woods) at her great-grandfather R.J. Harris' 1932s barbeque cafe, a converted 700,000 gallon water tank.



Chandler baseball team, c. 1932

Aerial view of Chandler, looking southwest, c. 1932



- [Farm Security Administration, Chandler Cooperative Farm](#)
- [Lesson Plan on Dorothea Lange and Dust Bowl Migrants in Chandler](#) (uses FSA Cooperative Farm images)