

The population of Sarpy County made a substantial gain between the 1920 and 1930 censuses. It grew from 9,370 in 1920 to 10,402 in 1930 – a gain of 1,032 or just over 11%. City populations were Bellevue 1,017, Papillion 718, Springfield 419, and Gretna 477.

The Great Depression resulted from a combination of factors. The stock market crash in 1929 caused massive economic problems. Jobs disappeared. Soup kitchens sprang up to help the hungry. Everyone was touched by these monetary problems. Then there was the weather. Winter blizzards with huge snowfalls alternated with summer's blistering heat and dry conditions. When rain did come, it came in torrents. The town of Fort Crook experienced several floods during the 1930s. Of course, building a town on the banks of Papillion Creek was not the best idea as both Fort Crook and Papillion found out the hard way. Sometimes it seemed that the whole world was falling apart.

But everything was not depressing during the Depression. Life goes on in the best and worst of times. Many people were born and some died. Many people got married and a few got divorced. Sarpy Countians may not have eaten well and they may not have had much money to spend, but no one starved.

The Sarpy County Fair was discontinued after 1903, but was revived in 1937 in Springfield and is still a major county-wide event.

Springfield gained its Community Building thanks to the WPA, one of many government programs, which provided jobs for the unemployed. Sixty years later the building was placed on the National Register of Historic Places. Numerous other government programs left their mark in the county. Roads, bridges, and county garages were all built by the early 1940s. Then WW II came along and changed everything.

Meanwhile, back at the Fort . . . In 1931, the two runways were improved and floodlights added. In 1933, the Nebraska-South Dakota Headquarters of the Civilian Conservation Corps (CCC) were established at the fort. A 1955 interview reported that in the mid 1930s “the (Army Air Cops) detachment at Offutt performed their assigned tasks and kept their morale high by occasionally rolling out all the planes and using the hangar for a dance. The music was good, the food was plentiful and everybody was invited, particularly, pretty girls from Bellevue, Omaha, and elsewhere.”