

## DOCUMENT 5: AFRICAN AMERICANS AND THE DEPRESSION

African Americans were deeply affected by the Depression, and they benefited from much of the New Deal. However, many African Americans were not able to get government jobs or relief because of discrimination, though many whites believed that African Americans received most of the relief.



**Negro Man Entering Movie Theatre by "Colored" Entrance. Belzoni, Mississippi (October 1939).**

Marion Post Wolcott  
Library of Congress, Prints & Photographs Division,  
FSA-OWI Collection [LC-USF33-03067-M3 (8-3)]

Camp Hill, Alabama April 22, 1935

Mr Roosevelt the President of the unite State I want to Explain the condition of the poor farmer and the unemployed people. Mr Roosevelt I know that the government has ProBale enough Money to Feed all Negro and Poor White and to Day they are suffering For Food and clothes We know that you has prepare Money enough to give every one a Decent living But to Day the relief offices and other who has a plenty to live on is getting this money and slaving the Poor People.

[Anonymous]

Source: McElvaine, p. 86

October 27, 1935  
Marietta. Ga

The President Roosevelt:

You honor sir and your royalty. Majesty. This is the one of the most honorable Colored workers of America who has been faithful and true law abiding Citizens of this Cob County & City of Marietta, Ga. Your honor sir I am down now is very feeble and isn't able to work for my living I've been keep up by the relief but now have fail They haven't help me any in a month I am very poor and needing Condition I am not able to support my self so dear sir you honor I begging you please sir for food and raimnot dear sir. I am very much in need now They are helping white but are not me poor Colored man my wife has been going there times after times but refused give her anything to eat. So I am hoping through your highness and good natured and kindness that I succeed. So dear sir I am Thanking you in Advance and your benevolence will never be forgotten here after For I know have the power to Correct such matters if you will.

Those of the Community Chest and the state of Releif and the food Administration and distributors.

Your honorable  
President Roosevelt.  
Colored  
Cob Co. Marietta. Ga.

Source: McElvaine, pp.90-91

This letter was written by a white woman in the South who was concerned about government aid for African Americans.

[Canton, Georgia  
July 22, 1935]

[President Franklin D. Roosevelt:]

dear Sur as you are the president of our State it looks like you could do something to help out the poor white people the negroes can get work where the poor white man cannot and his family are one starvation. The Negroes are in post offices getting \$1000 dollars a month and white families suffering and it is not write just look at it your self if it was your family in Canton Ga there is a Negro working in the post office and white men cant get a job to feed his family and a white woman up holding for just such as that and negroes being worked ever where instead of white men it don't look like that is rite and is not rite and lay off white men where there is a large family and keep men with big farms and just a man and wife and both at work unless there are something done the poor people will push to death will you please help the poor people out this relief work is not helping the poor out just make \$300 a week them that uses the pick and shovel and the office men and woman gets the rest there is to many in office for the poor working man to get any pay. Rote by a woman that has a large family and is on Sufference

[Anonymous]

Source: McElvaine, p. 94