The Great Depression was an economic slump in North America, Europe, and other industrialized areas of the world that began in 1929 and lasted until about 1939. It was the longest and most severe depression ever experienced by the industrialized Western world.

A song about an unemployed man meeting an old friend he has fought alongside in the First World War and asking him for a dime (the price of a cup of coffee) summed up the national mood.

**Brother, can you spare a dime?**

Once in khaki suits,
Gee we looked swell,
Full of that Yankee-Doodle-de-dum.
Half a million boots went sloggin’ through Hell,
I was the kid with the drum.
Say, don’t you remember, they called me Al –
It was Al all the time.
Say don’t you remember I’m your pal –
Brother, can you spare a dime.

*Words by EY Harburg, music by Jay Gorney 1932*