

# Radical History of School Meals

1890s-1946: The first wave of non-profit school meal organizing

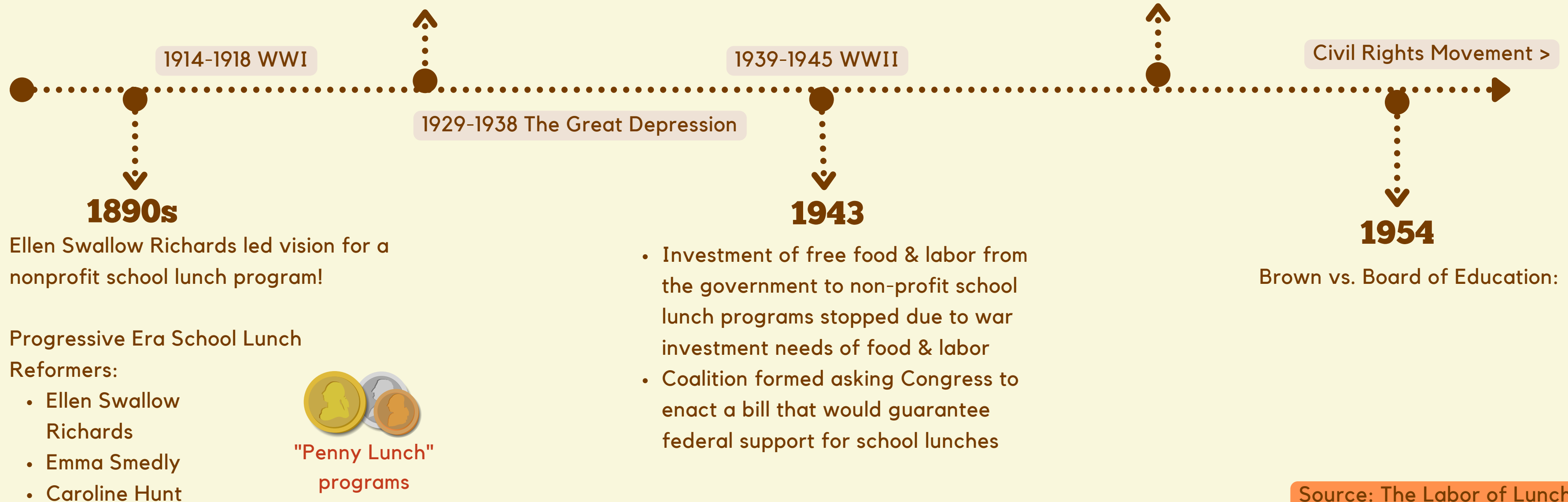
## 1930s

- 1933-1939 The New Deal: provided free food & free labor from the federal government
- 1/3 of 5 million drafted during WWII were rejected due to effects of childhood malnutrition

## 1946

### National School Lunch Program (NSLP) Act Passes!

- American School Food Service Association (ASFSA) formed



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1960s & 1970s: A time of large social & racial change in the US

## Federal Policy

- 1962 - School lunch appropriation formula revised to account for participation & poverty by state
- 1964 - Food Stamp Act & Economic Opportunity Act
- 1966 - Special Milk Program (SMP)
- 1968 - NYC public schools invest in 367 elementary "frozen food" kitchens

- **1966 - Child Nutrition Act (CNA)**
  - instates 'free' lunch bracket
  - 1968 - funded
  - 1970 - uniform eligibility set

- 1970 - USDA overturns rule to allow for-profit management companies to outsource school lunch operations
- **1975 - USDA begins free breakfast program**
- 1979 - Participation in the National School Lunch Program (NSLP) reached a peak with an average of 27 million lunches served per day

1971-1976 USDA Secretary Earl Butz:  
"cornification" of American Food System

1/2 of public schools participate in NSLP, reports of poor children unable to afford & access lunch

**1960s**

1954-1968 Civil Rights Movement

**1970s**

## Grassroots Activism "right-to-lunch"

- 1966-1975 **National Welfare Rights Organization (NWRO)** brought together 25,000 mostly black mothers to take on local, state, and federal government for rights to school lunch for their children

- 1967 **Committee on School Lunch Participation (CSLP)** formed uniting woman across race & religion to tackle the "food justice problem" in NSLP
  - Printed *Daily Bread* publication to release findings of widespread discrimination and racism under NSLP
  - Asked for universal free meals - USDA rejected and only funded meals for the poor = means tested social welfare program

- 1968 **Poor People's Campaign (PPC)** led by Dr. Martin Luther King called for free lunch
- 1969 - **Black Panther Party (BPP) start Free Breakfast for Children Program all 45 chapter cities**

1970 - ASFSA starts "Feed them All" universal free school meal lobby initiative

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1980s to NOW

