



The Great Depression: America in the 1930s

By T. H. Watkins

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This companion volume to the public television series delves into the events and impact of the Great Depression. The text is illustrated throughout with photos, documents, and posters, many previously unpublished.

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Editorial Review

From Publishers Weekly

The Great Depression, as Watkins shows, was a scarring experience that forever changed the United States, instilling ubiquitous fear of job loss while also creating an activist federal government inextricably involved in the everyday life of ordinary Americans. This type of government, he adds, is precisely what most of us want. Augmented with reproductions of news clips, documentary stills and period photographs in both black-and-white and color, this lively, involving chronicle--companion to a PBS series--begins with the "thoroughly repressive" 1920s, then moves on to the Stock Market crash, the ascendancy of organized labor, mass migrations caused by drought, persistent racism within New Deal programs, the powerlessness of agricultural labor even as industrial unions got stronger, and the ugly domestic rise in intolerance and political confusion as Europe sank into a totalitarian quagmire. Watkins, biographer of New Dealer Harold Ickes, admires Franklin Roosevelt but calls him a "most reluctant dragon" who neither conceived nor vigorously pushed through Congress two of his administration's major pieces of legislation, Social Security and comprehensive labor reform.

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From School Library Journal

YA-A captivating companion volume to the PBS series. Watkins offers a panoramic view of this challenging and painful decade, and includes approximately 150 photographs, posters, and documents. The book surveys the era's business closures, bank failures, labor movements, unemployed, disenfranchised, soup-kitchen lines, apple sellers, drought, farmers' strikes, and homeless. Students will appreciate the depth of coverage, the primary-source material, the photographs, the comprehensive index, and the list of additional resources. Anyone interested in history and specifically the cause-and-effect relationships between history and modern life will relish this book.

Sue Davis, Cedar Falls High School, IA

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From Library Journal

Watkins, the author of *Righteous Pilgrim* (LJ 9/1/90), the acclaimed biography of Harold Ickes, has written a brief history of America's Depression years that will serve as a companion volume to this fall's PBS television series. The decade's legacies, he believes, are the hope and popular cohesion born of the struggle against the era's devastation and a sense of mutual responsibility between Americans and their federal government. It was an era formed by the New Deal's early accomplishments, and it spawned a perception of intimacy between Americans and their president that FDR bequeathed to all his successors, for good or ill. Academic librarians with a good scholarly survey at hand in Robert McElvaine's *The Great Depression* (LJ 12/1/83) can be selective. Libraries wishing to own a serviceable popular narrative, enhanced by over 100 photographs, may want Watkins's survey, too. The television series should create noticeable demand. Previewed in Prepub Alert, LJ 6/15/93.

- *Robert F. Nardini, North Chichester, N.H. Law & Crime*

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Users Review

From reader reviews:

Jean Smith:

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Richard Oneal:

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