



The Great Depression: A Diary

By Benjamin Roth

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When the stock market crashed in 1929, Benjamin Roth was a young lawyer in Youngstown, Ohio. After he began to grasp the magnitude of what had happened to American economic life, he decided to set down his impressions in his diary.

This collection of those entries reveals another side of the Great Depression—one lived through by ordinary, middle-class Americans, who on a daily basis grappled with a swiftly changing economy coupled with anxiety about the unknown future. Roth's depiction of life in time of widespread foreclosures, a schizophrenic stock market, political unrest and mass unemployment seem to speak directly to readers today.

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Editorial Review

Review

Charles R. Morris, *The Trillion Dollar Meltdown*

“Benjamin Roth has left us a vivid portrait of the Great Depression that is all the more powerful for the similarities and differences with the financial upheavals of today. Roth enables us -- in ways no historian can match -- to immerse ourselves in the sense of despair that Americans of that era felt and their hope that the economy would revive, long before it did. To read the diaries now is both enlightening and chilling.”

Jonathan Alter, *The Defining Moment: FDR's Hundred Days and the Triumph of Hope*

“We imagine the Great Depression at two extremes--Franklin Roosevelt's jaunty smile and the haunting images of Dustbowl destitution. But in between were everyday middle class strivers like Benjamin Roth, trying to sort through the wreckage. FDR and the WPA may be long gone but the professional class remains, and the record of its struggle in the Depression has been thin until now. Roth's incisive diaries are more than a precious time capsule. They speak to our economic hopes and fears directly, and to the bewilderment of our own time.”

About the Author

James Ledbetter is the editor of “The Big Money,” Slate.com's web site on business and economics.

Daniel B. Roth, son of Benjamin Roth, is the chairman of the law firm of Roth, Blair, Roberts, Strasfeld & Lodge in Youngstown, Ohio.

From The Washington Post

From The Washington Post's Book World/washingtonpost.com Reviewed by Justin Moyer

moyerj@washpost.com If economists sound like party poopers in bailout-happy 2009, imagine how much more dismal the dismal science seemed to a struggling Youngstown, Ohio, lawyer in the 1930s. Benjamin Roth's "The Great Depression: A Diary" offers a firsthand account of hard times along the Mahoning River in short entries that brim with the frustration of a man trying to save his failing law practice. A fiend for macroeconomics who was more likely to list stock prices in his private journal than discuss his wife or children, Roth struggles with the same issues that vex Ben Bernanke today: inflation, protectionism and whether deficit spending really stimulates the economy. Like many other stiff-upper-lipped professionals of his generation, Roth is anti-interventionist, anti-whiner and anti-Roosevelt. (Turns out Obama's election wasn't exactly one-of-a-kind: "the Democrats will win [in 1932] because everybody wants a 'change,'" Roth writes.) Except for his patrician disgust with King Edward's decision to abdicate the British throne for the "twice-divorced" Mrs. Simpson and his occasional "long[ing] for normalcy," Roth withholds the personal take on poverty that made Studs Terkel's "Hard Times" and Ben Reitman's "Sister of the Road" cultural treasures. "Diary" is a valuable document, but it offers underwhelming lessons about man's powerlessness before market forces.

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Users Review

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Verline Custer:

This The Great Depression: A Diary book is absolutely not ordinary book, you have after that it the world is in your hands. The benefit you have by reading this book will be information inside this book incredible fresh, you will get facts which is getting deeper you read a lot of information you will get. This specific The Great Depression: A Diary without we comprehend teach the one who reading it become critical in imagining and analyzing. Don't become worry The Great Depression: A Diary can bring once you are and not make your tote space or bookshelves' come to be full because you can have it in your lovely laptop even cell phone. This The Great Depression: A Diary having excellent arrangement in word in addition to layout, so you will not truly feel uninterested in reading.

Bruce Brown:

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Shirley Demers:

Playing with family in the park, coming to see the ocean world or hanging out with good friends is thing that usually you could have done when you have spare time, and then why you don't try issue that really opposite from that. A single activity that make you not sense tired but still relaxing, trilling like on roller coaster you already been ride on and with addition associated with. Even you love The Great Depression: A Diary, you are able to enjoy both. It is very good combination right, you still need to miss it? What kind of hang-out type is it? Oh come on its mind hangout people. What? Still don't get it, oh come on its referred to as reading friends.

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