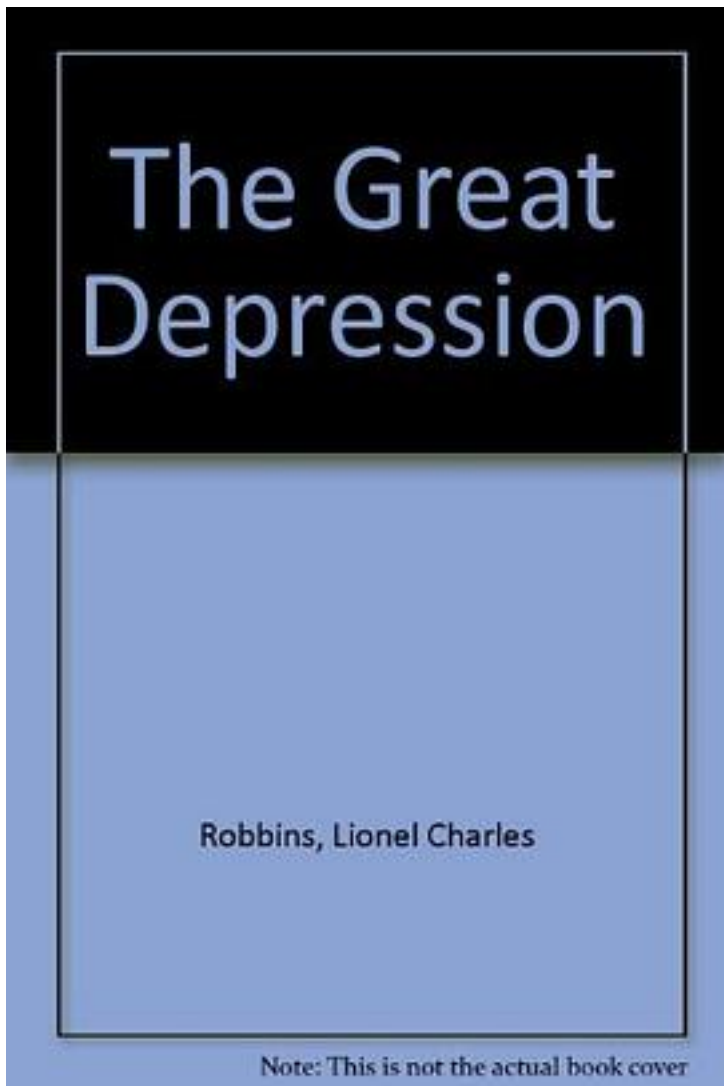


The Great Depression



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著者:Benjamin Roth

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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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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."

作者介绍:

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评论

这是我2014年最喜欢的一本书。1929-1938.年，从这本书我看到了美国当时是怎么样的。非常非常佩服作者的智慧和观察力。

几乎读过的所有历史书都是后知后觉，但这本记录了作者在历史发生当下的思考。推荐。

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