



The American People in the Great Depression: Freedom from Fear, Part One (Oxford History of the United States)

David M. Kennedy

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On October 24, 1929, America met the greatest economic devastation it had ever known. In this first installment of his Pulitzer Prize-winning *Freedom from Fear*, Kennedy tells how America endured, and eventually prevailed, in the face of that unprecedented calamity.

Kennedy vividly demonstrates that the economic crisis of the 1930s was more than a reaction to the excesses of the 1920s. For more than a century before the Crash, America's unbridled industrial revolution had gyrated through repeated boom and bust cycles, consuming capital and inflicting misery on city and countryside alike. Nor was the alleged prosperity of the 1920s as uniformly shared as legend portrays. Countless Americans eked out threadbare lives on the margins of national life.

Roosevelt's New Deal wrenched opportunity from the trauma of the 1930s and created a lasting legacy of economic and social reform, but it was afflicted with shortcomings and contradictions as well. With an even hand Kennedy details the New Deal's problems and defeats, as well as its achievements. He also sheds fresh light on its incandescent but enigmatic author, Franklin D. Roosevelt.

Marshalling unforgettable narratives that feature prominent leaders as well as lesser-known citizens, *The American People in the Great Depression* tells the story of a resilient nation finding courage in an unrelenting storm.

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