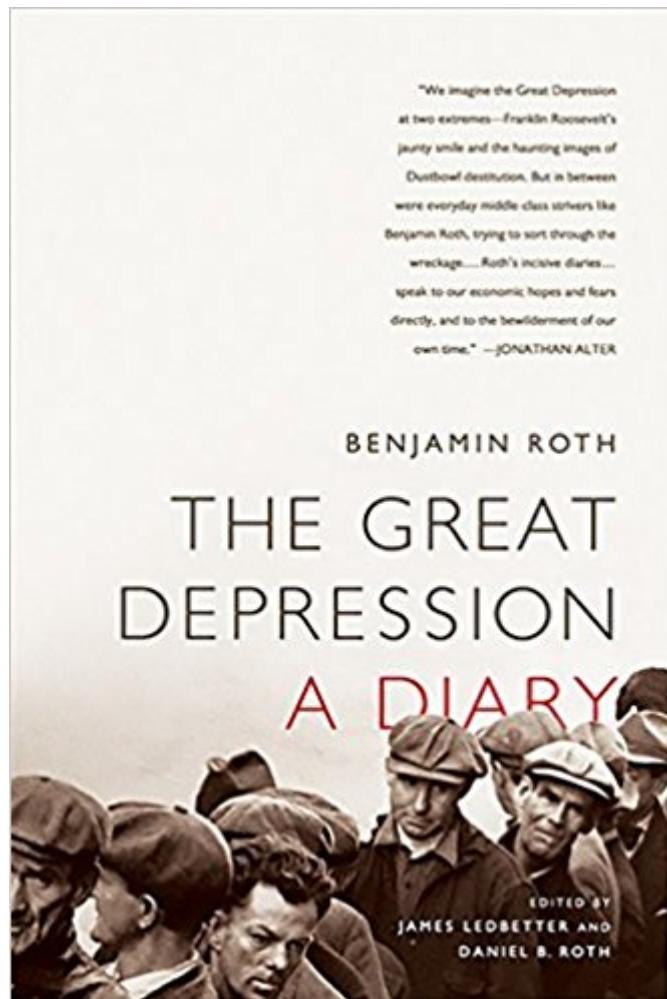


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# The Great Depression: A Diary



## Synopsis

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.

## Book Information

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## Customer Reviews

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." New York Times "Mr. Roth's diaries are compelling reading, because they force readers to reflect on both the similarities and the differences between then and now." We're all a little like Benjamin Roth, asking questions we don't know the answer to, and wonder, as he did 70 years ago, whether the crisis is, indeed, over. Spectator Business(UK) "Here are brief, unsentimental, clear-eyed notes of the growing sense of hopelessness that came over Midwestern American life. This moving book is edited by [Roth's] son Daniel." Financial Times "A fascinating read, and strangely familiar." Seattle Times "Roth's diary is plainly written and professionally edited. It is a window on another age." Minneapolis Star-Tribune "There is an honest searching quality to his day-by-day accounts of banks closing, bread lines forming, friends failing. Striving to understand, he provides a remarkable and often engagingly literate discussion of the great Depression's impact on people like him." --This text refers to an out of print or unavailable edition of this title.

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.

Interesting initially, but quickly became repetitive. Still, probably worth a quick perusal for those interested in the depression. Very poor predictor of election outcomes. Hah.

The diary provided a perspective of the events of the Great Depression from an attorney in Youngtown, OH. I was able to gain a better understanding from his thoughts about the gold standard, the stock market, and investment strategies. His stories of friends and acquaintances who either made or loss money were good examples of lessons to be learned. This book documents many of the events that occurred and includes some of his personal perspective.

This book provides amazing insight to the Great Depression. I didn't really how many day to day parallels there are (and aren't) to today's Great Recession.

Great read to get a feel for the depression and stock market moves from a non-academic viewpoint.

The similarities in how the press covered the market, analyst and economist predictions, and the main street trading practices are eerily similar to the last decade. Highly recommend reading.

Very interesting book full of notes on days' events as they transpired throughout the Depression. I was especially surprised by the relevance of some of the entries to current events and circumstances. The book provides a good comparison between government efforts to pull the economy through the 1930s and the efforts made in our recent crisis. A very good read.

A very large part of the book repeats over and over again some very basic financial rules for surviving a depression: wait for the low price point; buy with cash, not margin; wait for the high price, sell; hold onto till the highest high; have a ready supply of cash on hand; bonds give steady returns, government bonds the most secure. Then there is a litany about how difficult this is without a crystal ball. Another major theme in the book deals with how hard the Depression was on the law profession. The Diary did paint a very depressing picture of all the bank failures, everywhere. It helped me understand why my parents and grandparents never really trusted banks. Overall somewhat depressing and not very informative. The editor's notes are from 2009 and are very dated as they were done at the very beginning of our Great Recession.

One of the best real life reviews of the depression and how it impacted one man in particular. However, Roth does a fantastic job of explaining exactly what was happening while using great conversations/examples.

There is nothing like a good diary to show the human side of any event. Although the author did not have the global perspective that a historian has when writing about the period, the diarist reveals the personal side better. Roth's perspective, that of a young urban lawyer, is seldom covered, and probably not covered as well since he lived it. It is very much worth reading for those interested in the Great Depression or in market cycles in general.

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