

# H-Net Reviews

in the Humanities & Social Sciences



**Byron W. Daynes, William D. Pederson, Michael P. Riccards, eds.** *The New Deal and Public Policy*. New York: St. Martin's Press, 1998. 293 pp. \$49.95 (cloth), ISBN 978-0-312-17540-5.



**Reviewed by** Michael V. Namorato (Department of History, University of Mississippi)

**Published on** EH.Net (April, 2000)

This volume grew out of the American Studies program at Louisiana State University-Shreveport and its sponsorship of a presidential conference series originally beginning in 1983. In 1992, LSU-Shreveport sponsored a conference on Abraham Lincoln which, in turn, led to a summer institute for teachers. Three years later, in 1995, the university sponsored "Franklin D. Roosevelt after Fifty Years." According to the editors, this 1995 conference had nearly one hundred scholar participants and was "the largest ever held" on FDR, even winning awards from the Louisiana Endowment for the Humanities (which apparently assisted in funding it) and the Olympic Games Cultural Olympiad. The published result is this volume on public policy. The edited book is divided into four parts: agriculture; environment; housing, welfare, and economics; and industry regulation. A brief historiographical article concludes the work along with a select bibliography and list of contributors. The authors are individuals who have master's degrees, or are doctoral students, or are academics in disciplines such as political science, or are university administrators. Evaluating this book is not an easy task. In general, the work is disappointing. There are no notable New Deal historians who contributed any articles, except for Roger Biles, who has done work on the New Deal on the local and regional level. In the articles themselves, a good number of the authors rely heavily on outdated secondary source materials. The articles offer little or no originality whether it be in the problems studied, the approaches used, or the

conclusions drawn. And, at least one of the articles is simply a jargon-filled social science tract of little value.

Fortunately, there are a few bright spots. June Hopkins, granddaughter of Harry Hopkins, presents a substantive (although biased) study on Harry Hopkins' attitude towards relief. Roger Biles offers a good piece on public housing, demonstrating FDR's dislike for such governmental interference. Jim Codling writes a solid paper on the economic impact of Roosevelt's programs in Oktibbeha county, Mississippi and on Mississippi State University. And, finally, Erik Carlson offers a good, yet tedious to read, piece on the Civil Aeronautics Authority, showing how the federal government's role in this blossoming industry had particularly significant long-term effects.

Nevertheless, other than these four articles, *The New Deal and Public Policy* has little to offer. New Deal scholars or anyone interested in Franklin D. Roosevelt and his era will not find anything in this work that adds significantly to what is already known about this presidential era.

Copyright (c) 2000 by EH.NET and H-Net. All rights reserved. This work may be copied for non-profit educational uses if proper credit is given to the author and the list. For other permission, please contact the EH.NET Administrator (administrator@eh.net; Telephone: 513-529-2850; Fax: 513-529-3308).

If there is additional discussion of this review, you may access it through the network, at:

<http://eh.net/>

**Citation:** Michael V. Namorato. Review of Daynes, Byron W.; Pederson, William D.; Riccards, Michael P., eds., *The New Deal and Public Policy*. EH.Net, H-Net Reviews. April, 2000.

**URL:** <http://www.h-net.org/reviews/showrev.php?id=3978>

Copyright © 2000, EH.Net and H-Net, all rights reserved. This work may be copied for non-profit educational use if proper credit is given to the author and the list. For other permission questions, please contact the EH.NET Administrator ([administrator@eh.net](mailto:administrator@eh.net); Telephone: 513-529-2850; Fax: 513-529-3309). Published by EH.NET.