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Review of *Trials and Triumphs: A Colorado Portrait of the Great Depression with FSA Photographs* by Stephen J. Leonard

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Trials and Triumphs: A Colorado Portrait of the Great Depression with FSA Photographs. Stephen J. Leonard. Niwot, CO: University Press of Colorado, 1993. xi+313 pp. Photos and references. \$29.95 cloth (ISBN 0-8708-1311-0).

Stephen J. Leonard has written a book about Colorado during the depression. He portrays an economically and politically conservative state whose failed attempts at local relief forced its officers to seek solutions offered by Franklin Roosevelt's New Deal. Both Colorado officials and residents resented federal assistance believing that it threatened their state's independence. Leonard sets the scene by summarizing the final years of the 1920s in Colorado before describing how the crash affected the state and its dwellers. After commenting on its devastation in urban areas, he turns to

rural sections particularly the agricultural Plains, the San Luis Valley and the Western Slope.

He broadens his study by delving into social history emphasizing racial discrimination together with industrial and labor problems in the state during the stressful 1930s. Leonard writes of Governor Edwin C. Johnson's attempts to use homegrown methods to combat the crisis, highlighting his controversial stationing of national guardsmen along Colorado's southern borders to prevent migrant laborers from entering the state. The author discusses the effects of New Deal programs such as the Federal Emergency Relief Administration (FERA), the Civilian Conservation Corps, and the Works Progress Administration, in the state. He concludes that Colorado business profited more from the ministrations of those organizations than the individuals and groups they were designed to aid.

Throughout this book, Leonard argues that Coloradans squeezed the New Deal administrative bodies for far more than their fair share of government cash. For example, Colorado legislators welcomed federal money, provided by the FERA, but resisted raising taxes to provide matching funds until forced to do so. Such tactics permitted the state to obtain excess federal funds that it used to create an infrastructure which supported "its economic boom during and after World War II" (p. x).

Leonard includes illustrations from various Colorado depositories throughout his text before devoting an entire section of his work to Federal Security Administration photographs taken by professionals of the period employed by the government. These pictures add a fine graphic touch to Steve Leonard's lively prose. Readers who were children during the depression, whether in Colorado or not, certainly will find their memories jogged by these pictures.

The final chapter considers the overall effect of the New Deal in Colorado as the state prepared for World War II. Leonard maintains that Denver's conservative Seventeenth Street operators, and business interests, who understood what government could do for them, controlled Colorado's depression era politics. "The New Deal political revolution in Colorado was, on a scale of ten, at best a two." Colorado returned to the Republican ranks despite the help rendered it by the Democrat administration in Washington, DC.

Leonard's detailed research, good writing style, and sense of humor make this fast moving book a very hard one to put down. His readers will find an engrossing, much needed account of a tragic but, until now, little studied era in Colorado's history. Thanks, Steve. **Liston E. Leyendecker**, *Department of History, Colorado State University, Fort Collins.*