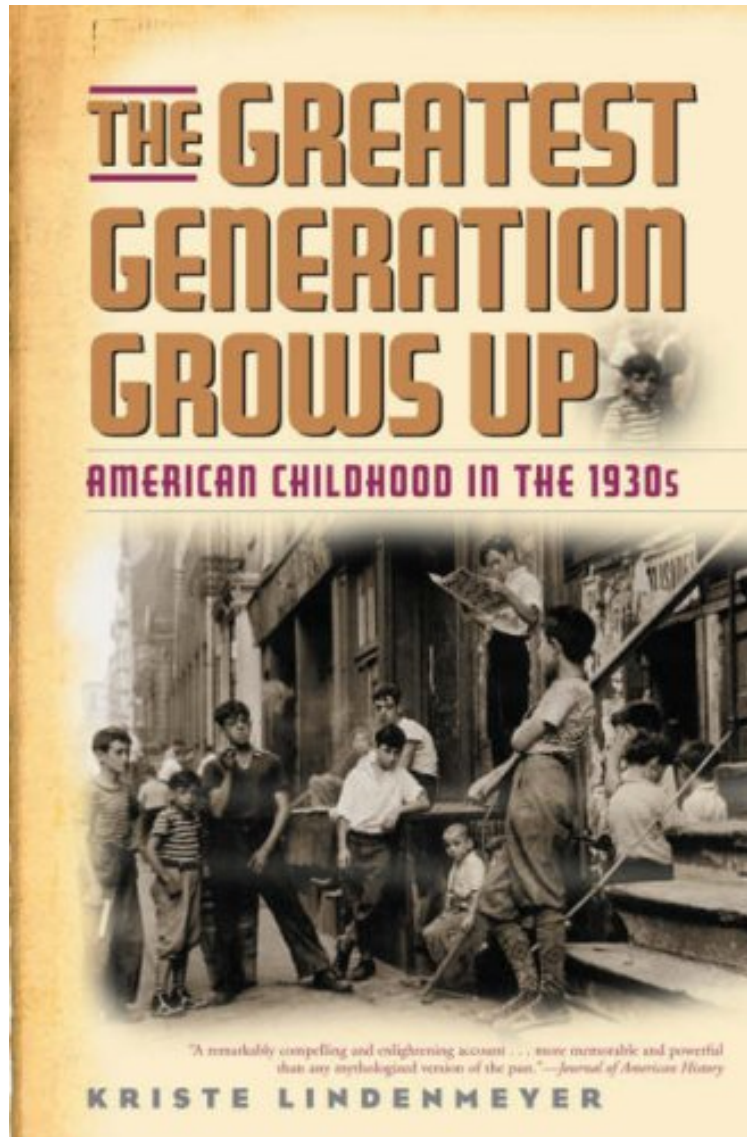


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## The Greatest Generation Grows Up: American Childhood in the 1930s (American Childhoods Series)

*Kriste Lindenmeyer*

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**Kriste Lindenmeyer : The Greatest Generation Grows Up: American Childhood in the 1930s (American Childhoods Series)** before purchasing it in order to gauge whether or not it would be worth my time, and all praised The Greatest Generation Grows Up: American Childhood in the 1930s (American Childhoods Series):

0 of 0 people found the following review helpful. A disappointment By d edwards I thought this would be a book of

anecdotes by people who grew up during the Depression and how they and their families made do. Instead, it mainly discusses government programs enacted to deal with youth problems like education, etc. I read about 40% of the book and stopped. A much better choice on the topic is "Riding the Rails" about teenagers on the move during the Depression by Errol Lincoln Uys. Here you'll find personal accounts of life on the (rail) roads, some stories are just amazing. But, there is an underlying sense of hope-"if I can make through today, tomorrow will be better." I read it twice. It was also made into an excellent documentary available on Netflix. etc. 1 of 3 people found the following review helpful. ...By Paul Daniels Sounds like that the author leans strongly to Socialism and writing her opinions rather than reality. I had to put it down. 5 of 5 people found the following review helpful. Kids in the 30's -- The men women of war By Eric Hobart Kriste Lindenmeyer has done us a wonderful favor by giving us a portrait of childhood in 1930's America. She looks at many different facets of youth during these turbulent years including child labor, education, consumerism, and how the New Deal affected these youngsters. Lindenmeyer's book is well written and is an enjoyable read. Her prose is clear her arguments concise and well thought out. After reading this book, it is easy to see why the decade of the 30's changed childhood forever in America. Before this ten year span, education was of secondary importance, and children were not considered consumers. During the 30's, education became of prime importance to so many, youngsters were seen as consumers that could spark economic growth, and children were removed from the most oppressive labor conditions (i.e. manufacturing mining). The author's concluding chapter on the New Deal really struck me as important - it helped me to see where the FDR administration really did try to help the youth of America in addition to the adults who were so negatively impacted by the Great Depression. Formation of the EDC (Emergency Day Centers) for care of toddlers, the NYA (National Youth Administration) to promote education by providing stipends for work, and the FLSA (Fair Labor Standards Act) with its abolition of child labor in most industries were all examples of positive impacts made by the New Deal for America's youth. She borrows Tom Brokaw's phrase "The Greatest Generation" in describing these youngsters, because most men that went off to war in the 1940's were reared during this economic crisis. A very apt title for very important book.

What was it like growing up in the Great Depression, and how did America's youngest citizens contribute to the history of that fateful decade? In *The Greatest Generation Grows Up*, Kriste Lindenmeyer shows that the experiences of depression-era children help us understand the course of the 1930s as well as the history of American childhood. For the first time, she notes, federal policy extended childhood dependence through the teen years while cultural changes reinforced this ideal of modern childhood. Grade-based grammar schools and high schools expanded rapidly, strengthening age-based distinctions among children and segregating them further from the world of adults. Radio broadcasters, filmmakers, and manufacturers began to market their products directly to children and teens, powerfully linking consumerism and modern childhood. In all, the thirties experience worked to confer greater identity on American children, and Ms. Lindenmeyer's story provides essential background for understanding the legacy of those men and women whom Tom Brokaw has called "America's greatest generation." While many children suffered terribly during these years and are remembered vividly in the Farm Security Administration's stunning photographs of the era, Ms. Lindenmeyer argues that an exclusive focus on those who were ill-housed, ill-fed, and ill-clothed neglects the contributions and widely varied experiences of American youngsters. The decade's important changes touched the lives of all children and teenagers. By 1940, the image of an idyllic modern childhood had been strengthened in law and confirmed in culture by the depression years. With 21 black-and-white illustrations.

From Booklist This latest volume in the American Childhoods series chronicles the lives and times of Americans who grew up during the Great Depression and entered adulthood during World War II. Lindenmeyer's aim is to show how children and adolescents both influenced and were the targets of important social and political changes. Chapter headlines relate Lindenmeyer's subject matter: "Stable and Fragile Families in Hard Times," "Work, If You Could Find It," "Transient Youth: On the Road to Nowhere," and "The Importance of Being Educated." Lindenmeyer rejects popular myths that idealize the past as a time of idyllic childhood, and this scrupulously researched book makes that point perfectly clear. She concludes that the 1930s model of childhood became the standard of modern American life but was unattainable for too many to make the dream a reality. This thought-provoking book, with 21 black-and-white illustrations, will encourage readers to reexamine their understanding of the 1930s and its effect on that generation. George Cohen Copyright American Library Association. All rights reserved A heartening account of a tragic time. (Tom Starnes Delaware News Journal) Clear and concise. (CHOICE) Vividly told. . . . An eye opener. (Dennie Hall Oklahoman) A remarkably compelling and enlightening account. . . . The children's experiences were distinguished from each other . . . as Lindenmeyer beautifully demonstrates. (Julia Grant Journal of American History) [This book] covers a broad range of experiences. . . . It features highly accessible writing [and] vivid illustrations. (David Macleod H-Net: Humanities and Social Sciences Online) Lindenmeyer has written a highly readable, entertaining, and very useful volume. (Pamela Riney-Kehrberg, Iowa State University The Annals Of Iowa) Kriste Lindenmeyer's lucid prose and lively narrative chronicles the history of childhood and children during the Great Depression in this handsomely printed volume with crisp photographic images and an original argument. (Journal of Southern History) Tightly

focused. . . . Lindenmeyer's resourcefulness in this respect makes this book compelling and persuasive. (Stephen Lassonde *Journal of Social History*) Thought-provoking. (George Cohen *Booklist*) A splendid little book! An amazing amount of information . . . masterful synthesis . . . no student of children and youth and the 1930s can afford to be without it. (Joe Hawes, University of Memphis) Combining lucid prose with telling anecdotes and compelling analysis, Kriste Lindenmeyer explains why the 1930s was a crucial watershed in the history of childhood. A fascinating and insightful book. (Steven Mintz, University of Houston) Kriste Lindenmeyer, one of our most perceptive historians of childhood, acutely dissects the conceptions and misconceptions that have grown up about them. Our picture of them and their times will never be quite the same again. (Roger Daniels, University of Cincinnati) She revises our understanding . . . and reminds us of the value and the complications of generational histories. (Harvey J. Graff, Ohio State University) Entertaining as well as thought-provoking. This book will be useful not only to scholars, but also to all who wish to understand the grass-roots impact of the Depression and New Deal on American families an impact that reverberates through the generations to the present day. (Jeanette Keith, Bloomsburg University of Pennsylvania) Anyone studying children's rights or the concept of American childhood will want to make [Lindenmeyer's book] a part of their reading. (Midwest Book )

About the Author Kriste Lindenmeyer teaches history at the University of Maryland Baltimore County. A graduate of the University of Cincinnati, she has also written *A Right to Childhood* and edited *Ordinary Women, Extraordinary Lives* and *Politics of Progress*. She lives in Owings Mills, Maryland.