

America 1933: The Great Depression, Lorena Hickok, Eleanor Roosevelt, and the Shaping of the New Deal

Michael Golay

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DURING THE HARSHEST year of the Great Depression, Lorena Hickok, a top woman news reporter of the day and intimate friend of Eleanor Roosevelt, was hired by FDR's right-hand man Harry Hopkins to embark upon a grueling journey to the hardest-hit areas of the country to report back on the degree of devastation.

Distinguished historian Michael Golay draws on a trove of original sources—including the moving, remarkably intimate, almost daily letters between Hickok and Eleanor Roosevelt—as he re-creates that extraordinary journey. Hickok traveled by car almost nonstop for eighteen months, from January 1933 to August 1934, surviving hellish dust storms, rebellions by coal workers in Pennsylvania and West Virginia, and a near revolution by Midwest farmers. A brilliant observer, Hickok wrote searing and deeply empathetic reports to Hopkins and letters to Mrs. Roosevelt that comprise an unparalleled record of the worst economic disaster in the history of the country. Historically important, they crucially influenced the scope and strategy of the Roosevelt administration's unprecedented relief efforts.

America 1933 reveals Hickok's pivotal contribution to the policies of the New Deal and sheds light on her intense but ill-fated relationship with Eleanor Roosevelt and the forces that inevitably came between them.



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