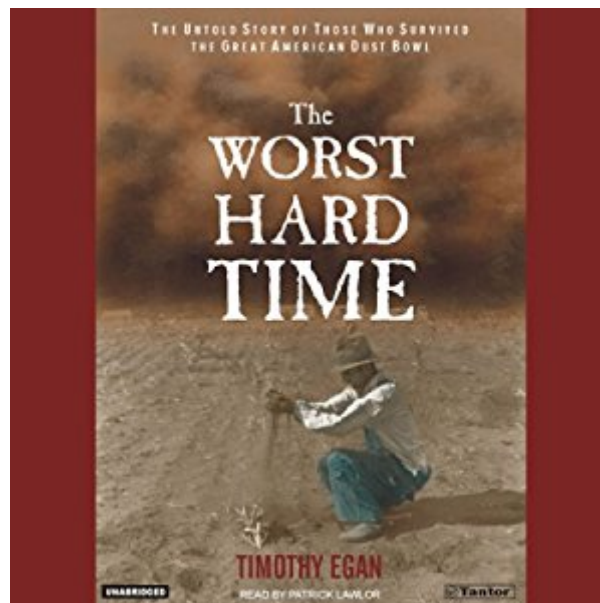




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The Worst Hard Time: The Untold Story Of Those Who Survived The Great American Dust Bowl



Synopsis

The dust storms that terrorized America's High Plains in the darkest years of the Depression were like nothing ever seen before or since, and the stories of the people that held on have never been fully told. Pulitzer Prize-winning New York Times journalist and author Timothy Egan follows a half-dozen families and their communities through the rise and fall of the region, going from sod huts to new framed houses to huddling in basements with the windows sealed by damp sheets in a futile effort to keep the dust out. He follows their desperate attempts to carry on through blinding black blizzards, crop failure, and the death of loved ones. Drawing on the voices of those who stayed and survived-those who, now in their eighties and nineties, will soon carry their memories to the grave-Egan tells a story of endurance and heroism against the backdrop of the Great Depression. Egan captures the very voice of the time-its grit, pathos, and abiding heroism-as only great history can. Combining the human drama of Isaac's Storm with the sweep of The American People in the Great Depression, The Worst Hard Time is a lasting and important work of American history. --This text refers to an out of print or unavailable edition of this title.

Book Information

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Customer Reviews

Excellent history book. Before I read this book, I had very little knowledge of what so many Americans went thru during the "Dirty Thirties." The author did a great job not just retelling the story of that period, but making it personal; depicting how hard many of the families had it back then. Their triumphs due to hard work and their painful losses. People lost so much and suffered so long. How the Comanche and other Native American tribes were moved out of the Great Plains. I learned

so much about this environmental disaster. Hope it never happens again. I love all of Timothy Egan's books.

This book is so amazingly timely, not just for the aspect of the man-made contributions to natural disaster happening at a time of economic hardship, but also for a lot of the political aspects of it, and of course for the human aspects. People don't change so much. I did watch the Dust Bowl miniseries first, and they do cover some of the same ground, though with different focuses, but I feel like you get more details from this book. To be fair, it is rough. There are a few main people that you follow and they are constantly defeated by the land, dying broke, or physically broken, and any chances for renewal and success have to wait for the next generation. Even as things get better, there are indications that we are on the same path, not just in other places, but even right there with the demands on the Oglalla. That's why it is so timely, and so important. Humans don't change much, and they will keep making the same mistakes over and over again unless information, and education, can change that.

As someone who's lived on the East Coast my whole life, a continuous forest with ideal farmland, I took for granted the hardship that settlers faced as they moved out West and decided to settle. However, it was also baffling how incompetent the government was in not only supporting the destruction of natural habitats without repercussions, but also the sheer idiocy they fell back in in dealing with the situation. Timothy Egan's dive into the Great Dust Bowl is superb. His precise, narrative writing does much to draw the reader in and make its real-life characters easier to relate to. He gives personalities to these people who refused to bow down to nature and for that they were punished, in a way. But punished not only by the land, but also by their own government. Egan details the slow spiral of the Great Plains from lush prairie land to desiccated, desolate hardpan without a hint of green. He compliments the personal narratives of these farmers with in-depth historical analysis of the towns and the governments working behind the scenes, while also providing a sort of biological analysis of the ecosystem and how it rapidly fell apart.

I'm not a history buff, but I'm partial to disaster stories. I doubt I was ever taught much about the Dust Bowl, so this was an engrossing read that kept me coming back, even though I stretched it out over several months' time. This author brings you into the stories of individual people and also lays out the larger political environment -- both the policies that set up this tragedy and the attempts to remedy the situation. It seemed like a timely read for me, with all the discussion of climate change.

Could we be this insanely STUPID again? Maybe.

TWHT should have won every book award available the year it came out - and the years since. Simply put, this is a fine book. People search for a non fiction book that reads like fiction. Why? Because non fiction has a bad connotation to some people and in some cases, rightly so. Some non fiction reads like a bad textbook : taking a subject that should be interesting and turning into boring and dry words on a page. The Worst Hard Time is fascinating from first page to last. If you are interested in the Depression, farming during those times, the Great Plains, migration in the U.S. Mid 20th century ; the WPA and its ilk, the sociology of cities and towns and what happens when they are changed, traumatically. Interested in conservation methods, FDR, the effects of isolation on human beings, what happens to animals in an ecosystem when that ecosystem is destroyed and the pain of watching your children wither and die - this is your book. It also is about hope, strength, small victories and large ones too. It is also a book that will help you to understand the real seniors in your family- those in their 90's on average. What they lived through and who they became by doing so - just spellbinding stuff. The Worst Hard Time one of my favorite books for ever and is a present I frequently give to people, who may not at first understand why I would give such a book , but after about 4 minutes of reading; the smart ones do, and are grateful. It's a masterpiece and stays with you, unlike a dinner of chopped grass and maybe a clubbed rabbit part.

I have read most of the books written by Timothy Egan and this one is my favorite. In addition to being extremely descriptive, Egan puts the events into proper historical perspective. It is a lesson in the use and misuse of our resources. Having traveled extensively in this area, I appreciated the attention to detail. I could almost taste the dust when reading the book. It is now very affordable on Kindle and you don't want to miss it. I recently read it for the second time for a book review group and picked up on some things that I had missed the first time. I can see why this book won a Pulitzer Prize.

The book was depressing as it told the stories of the illnesses of the people, their children and their animals. People have not learned anything from their struggles and today we risk greater disasters due to global warming and the wanton use of our national resources. Weather is getting violent, airline passengers are experiencing terrible turbulence, flooding and earthquakes are happening as never before. We need leaders who can implement corrections before we die from ignorant greed.

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