

The Nickel and Dime Decade: American Popular Culture During the 1930s

By Gary D Best



American Popular Culture
During the 1930s

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This study shows that, despite numerous surface similarities, the popular culture of the 1930s was different from that of the 1920s in a variety of ways, and not only because of the Great Depression. It was a period of quiet desperation and shifting values, one in which nickels and dimes replaced dollars as the currency of popular culture, and in which the emphasis was on finding methods to occupy idle time and idle minds. Popular culture during the 1930s is important for understanding not only how Americans coped, but why they did so with such good humor and so little of the discontent visible elsewhere in the world. An appreciation of popular culture during the 1930s is essential to understanding other aspects of the decade.

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About the Author

GARY DEAN BEST is Professor of History at the University of Hawaii at Hilo. He is the author of *The Politics of American Individualism* (Greenwood, 1975), *To Free A People* (Greenwood, 1982), *Herbert Hoover: The Postpresidential Years* (2 volumes, 1983), *Pride, Prejudice, and Politics: Roosevelt versus Recovery 1933-1938* (Praeger, 1992), *FDR and the Bonus Marchers, 1933-1935* (Praeger, 1992), and *The Critical Press and the New Deal: The Press versus Presidential Power, 1933-1938* (Praeger, 1993), as well as numerous essays in scholarly books and journals. He has held fellowships from the American Historical Association and the National Endowment for the Humanities and was a Fulbright Scholar in Japan from 1974 to 1975.

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