Fireside Chats: The Depression of the 1930s by James L. Taylor

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local histories are the numerous photographs found in the more recent publications such as this one. The remainder of the book deals with the depression, World War II, and the postwar era.

The major criticism of the book is the seemingly endless pages of names, that have little significance except to immediate family, friends, and old timers in the community who can recall most of this themselves. The value for future historiances is obvious, but it is distracting and cumbersome for most readers. It would also be interesting to see more comparison of Dunedin to concurrent development on the peninsula.

Ken Ford

_Fireside Chats: The Depression of the 1930s._ By James L. Taylor, ed. (Dade City, Fla.: Social Science Dept., Pasco Comprehensive High School 1979. 165 pp. Illustrations.)

The catastrophic stock market crash of 1929 signaled not only an end of the prosperous "Roaring Twenties," but also initiated a dramatically new era, the “Depression years.” _Fireside Chats—The Depression of the 1930’s_ lucidly illustrates the lives and struggles of individuals and their families during the Great Depression. Through the establishment of an oral history project at Pasco Comprehensive High School, Dade City, Florida, students interviewed older members of their community to collect a series of impressions of this area. The method of collecting historical data through personal contacts was as stimulating as the interviews recorded, since it actively involved students in the collection and compilation of materials. Their history class became something more than just textbook reading; it involved a personal contact with the events of the past.

_Fireside Chats_ is a series of vignettes of personal experiences given by Dade City residents who were scattered across the nation in the 1930’s. Its eighteen chapters and ninety-eight interviews are illustrated with student sketches, depicting several of the more picturesque stories. Although the individual experiences varied, the general themes of scarcity of food, sharing with others, and strong familial ties characterize most of the interviews. Glimpses of T.V.’s Walton family race through your mind as you read the sometimes sad, sometimes humorous personal experiences. Tales about “skunk bread,” feed sack clothing, and “Hoover blankets” made from newspapers, are facets of the Great Depression which students would have otherwise never been aware of had it not been for their personal experiences in interviews. The colorful retention of local dialect in conversations and emotionalism of the stories add a dimension to the era which is seldom recorded in historical documentation. The touching personal views offer a delightful opportunity to witness the Depression’s effect on the everyday lives of Americans.

_Fireside Chats_ will hopefully stimulate additional oral history projects, making history more interesting to students. An additional benefit will be that otherwise forgotten personal experiences will be recorded, and students may be stimulated to obtain a perspective of the past which is all too often ignored by younger generations. _Fireside Chats_, an exhilarating experience and accomplishment of high school students, serves as a model for others to involve students in the discipline of history.

L. Glenn Westfall

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