

The Second Annual Seminars in American History at Sonoma Valley Library



FDR and the DECADE OF CRISIS

FOUR SATURDAY DISCUSSIONS • JANUARY, FEBRUARY, MARCH 2010



Saturday, January 30 at 1:30 p.m.

FDR THE MAN Hosted by Donald Van de Mark

This presentation will address FDR's personality and leadership style. How did this scion of East Coast wealth and privilege become the passionate advocate for ordinary, struggling Americans? How did his confident demeanor calm a troubled nation? What instincts, beliefs, and personality traits enabled Roosevelt to guide America through the uncharted waters of Depression and war? Who, really, was that enigmatic figure behind the jaunty smile and upraised cigarette holder?

Saturday, February 13 at 1:30 p.m.

FDR's FOREIGN POLICY FROM 1937-1941 Hosted by John S. Futini

Stymied by the failure of his Court-packing scheme, as well as the "Roosevelt Recession" of 1937, FDR turned his attention from domestic economic issues to world events. Beginning with his famous "Quarantine speech", FDR gradually began reacting more forcefully to the military aggression of the Fascist powers, until by 1941 America had become the great "Arsenal of Democracy". This talk will trace the precarious path FDR took to lead a largely isolationist populace and congress into the maelstrom of global war.



Saturday, February 27 at 1:30 p.m.

CALIFORNIA LITERATURE OF THE 1930s Hosted by Alison Manchester

The works of novelist John Steinbeck and poet Robinson Jeffers provide us with a marvelous artistic window into the Depression-Era experience in California. Both writers simultaneously celebrated the beauty of the California landscape, and lamented man's relentless assault on nature. Although scorned by many contemporaries as dissidents, these writers were two of the most powerful voices to carry the torch of environmental consciousness through the tumultuous '30s and on into post-war America.

Saturday, March 6 at 1:30 p.m.

FDR: SECULAR SAINT OR WOULD-BE CAESAR? Hosted by Mick Chantler

With the possible exception of Abe Lincoln, no president in our history has been as beloved—and reviled—as FDR. While the majority of Americans practically worshipped FDR, and anointed him as the savior of the nation, there were others who demonized him, and saw him as a quasi dictator. This talk will trace the roots of these highly emotional partisan feelings, and attempt an assessment of FDR's major critics—Charles Lindbergh, Huey Long, and Father Coughlin.



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