

[PDF] FDR'S Moviemaker: Memoirs And Scripts

FDR'S Moviemaker: Memoirs And Scripts

Pare Lorentz

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Pare Lorentz : FDR'S Moviemaker: Memoirs And Scripts before purchasing it in order to gage whether or not it would be worth my time, and all praised FDR'S Moviemaker: Memoirs And Scripts:

0 of 0 people found the following review helpful. Five StarsBy CustomerGreat history of documentaries.

In the depths of the Great Depression, the US Government produced a series of films about the pressing problems

facing the nation - drought, flood, poverty and slums. Starting with a minuscule initial budget of \$6,000, Lorentz, a young film critic from New York who had never made a motion picture, was hired to head the project. The first fruit of his labour, *The Plow That Broke The Plains*, was a moving and dramatic account of the Dust Bowl which met with immediate public and critical acclaim.

From Publishers Weekly Documentary filmmaker Lorentz stirred the nation's conscience with *The Plow That Broke the Plains* (1936), an epic account of Dust Bowl migrants, and *The River* (1938), about the Tennessee Valley Authority. In this unpretentious yet oddly impersonal memoir, Lorentz, born in West Virginia in 1905, describes his stint as film critic for *Vanity Fair* and *McCall's*, recounts the making of various films and describes his friendship with John Steinbeck and his years as chief of FDR's newly created U.S. Film Service. There are dramatic moments, as when his life was threatened by a Chicago cameramen's union, as well as brief, tantalizing but unsatisfying glimpses of Franklin and Eleanor Roosevelt, Charlie Chaplin, James Cagney, Virgil Thomson and others. Enriched with movie stills and photographs, this scrapbook includes the scripts of the two aforementioned films plus those of *The Fight for Life* (1940), a study of infant and maternal deaths, and the unmade *Ecce Homo*, a paean to industrial America.

Copyright 1992 Reed Business Information, Inc. From Library Journal During the 1930s, Lorentz made two revolutionary documentary films that epitomize life during that time. *The Plow That Broke the Plains* (1936) shows the tragedy of the Dust Bowl, and *The River* (1936) is a history of the Mississippi valley. President Roosevelt was so impressed with these films that he made Lorentz director of the newly formed U.S. Film Service. Lorentz talks candidly about the making of his films and includes samples of his correspondence with John Steinbeck, who worked with him in the U.S. Film Service. Scripts for four of Lorentz's films are included in this volume, which will be of interest to students of documentary film. - Marcia L. Perry, Berkshire Athenaeum, Pittsfield, Mass. Copyright 1992 Reed Business Information, Inc. From the Back Cover In the depths of the Great Depression, the U.S. Government produced a series of films about the pressing problems facing the nation--drought, flood, poverty, and slums. Starting with a minuscule initial budget of \$6,000, Lorentz, a young film critic from New York who had never made a motion picture, was hired to head the project. The first fruit of his labor, *The Plow That Broke the Plains*, was a moving and dramatic account of the Dust Bowl which met with immediate public and critical acclaim. Lorentz followed up his first film with *The River*, a history of the Mississippi River Basin and the effect of the Tennessee Valley Authority on the area. Both films demonstrated the potential of the documentary as a powerful impetus to social change, prompting widespread discussion not only of the problems they presented but also of the documentary form itself. As a result of the success of *The Plow That Broke the Plains* and *The River*, President Franklin D. Roosevelt established the U.S. Film Service in 1938. A controversial production entity which encountered considerable opposition from Congress and from Hollywood, the Film Service, under Lorentz's direction, began work on documenting the problems of the slum hospitals and infant mortality. Basing his film on a book of the same title, Lorentz made *The Fight for Life*, a memorable film on prenatal hygiene in the Chicago slums. In spite of inadequate budgets, bureaucratic red tape, professional and industrial jealousy, and outright opposition, Lorentz developed new filming techniques and set new standards in his documentaries, which are regarded as classics today. Along with Robert Flaherty, John Grierson, and Joris Ivens, Lorentz is considered one of the great pioneers of the documentary film, and his films and writings continue to influence subsequent generations of filmmakers worldwide. *FDR's Moviemaker*, written entirely by Pare Lorentz, combines the autobiographical history of a creative communicator with the full scripts of *The Plow That Broke the Plains*, *The River*, *Ecce Homo*, and *The Fight for Life*. Woven into Lorentz's materials are previously unpublished communications from John Steinbeck and a narrative of the filmmaker's friendship with that famous author. In addition, *FDR's Moviemaker* provides some revealing anecdotes of Roosevelt's feelings for motion pictures and the author's association with the four-time president.