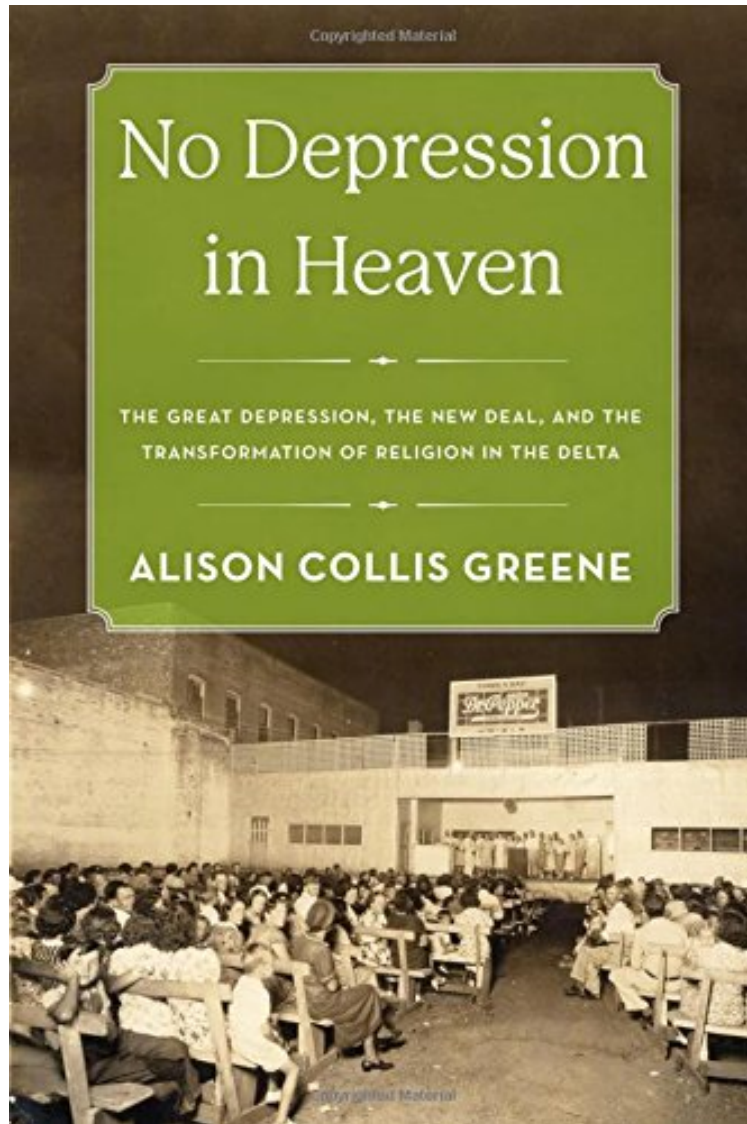


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No Depression in Heaven: The Great Depression, the New Deal, and the Transformation of Religion in the Delta

Alison Collis Greene

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Alison Collis Greene : No Depression in Heaven: The Great Depression, the New Deal, and the Transformation of Religion in the Delta before purchasing it in order to gage whether or not it would be worth my time, and all praised No Depression in Heaven: The Great Depression, the New Deal, and the Transformation of Religion in the Delta:

3 of 4 people found the following review helpful. Very Informative study about the Great Depression, and the role that The Church played. By Maureen An exceptionally well researched study, into the role that the The Church played during the Great Depression in the US, particularly in Southern rural society. Very informative yet heart-rending accounts of people living in dire poverty. There are incidents in this book that shame humanity, and it shows how The Church failed to alleviate suffering for those most in need. Recommended for those with an interest in the Great Depression, the history of religion, and Southern history in particular. The author has done a great job in bringing all these details together to produce this hugely comprehensive study.* Thank you to Netgalley and the publisher for my ARC*0 of 0 people found the following review helpful. A beautifully written and well-researched book that will be the staple ...By Joseph Stuart A beautifully written and well-researched book that will be the staple of history and religion graduate seminars for years to come. Elegantly written and straightforwardly argued, Greene does a magnificent job examining the ways that the federal government, churches, and race relations all came together in the horrors of the Great Depression Delta. A must-read for those interested in the New Deal, the Great Depression, religion, race, and/or the historical antecedents of the Religious Right.0 of 0 people found the following review helpful. This is one of the most beautifully written and cogently argued works of American religious history ...By Heath Carter This is one of the most beautifully written and cogently argued works of American religious history to be published in years. It deserves the widest possible readership.

In *No Depression in Heaven*, Alison Collis Greene demonstrates how the Great Depression and New Deal transformed the relationship between church and state. Grounded in Memphis and the Delta, this book traces the collapse of voluntarism, the link between southern religion and the New Deal, and the gradual alienation of conservative Christianity from the state. At the start of the Great Depression, churches and voluntary societies provided the only significant source of aid for those in need in the South. Limited in scope, divided by race, and designed to control the needy as much as to support them, religious aid collapsed under the burden of need in the early 1930s. Hungry, homeless, and out-of-work Americans found that they had nowhere to turn at the most desolate moment of their lives. Religious leaders joined a chorus of pleas for federal intervention in the crisis and a permanent social safety net. They celebrated the New Deal as a religious triumph. Yet some complained that Franklin Roosevelt cut the churches out of his programs and lamented their lost moral authority. Still others found new opportunities within the New Deal. By the late 1930s, the pattern was set for decades of religious and political realignment. More than a study of religion and politics, *No Depression in Heaven* uncovers the stories of men and women who endured the Depression and sought in their religious worlds the spiritual resources to endure material deprivation. Its characters are rich and poor, black and white, mobile sharecroppers and wealthy reformers, enamored of the federal government and appalled by it. Woven into this story of political and social transformation are stories of southern men and women who faced the greatest economic disaster of the twentieth century and tried to build a better world than the one they inhabited.

"A tale of political transformation within religious communities *No Depression in Heaven* provides an account both historically rigorous and morally compelling."--Philip D. Byers, *Christian Scholar's* "There is much to like in *No Depression in Heaven*: clear evidence, strong prose, and wonderful use of sources...Greene's work is a beautifully written, wonderfully researched portrait of life and belief in the Delta during the Great Depression."--Colin B. Chapell, *History*"[A]n important book that should be of interest to those studying religion, economics, the 1930s, labor activism, and civil rights. This book is deeply researched, includes substantive crucial analysis, and is beautifully written."--Jeannie Wayne, *The Journal of Southern History*"Alison Collis Greene has written an evocative study of religion and politics in the Depression-era Mississippi Delta. Her discussion of flood, drought, and starvation has a biblical cadence, punctuated by a rhythm-and-blues riff Greene's analysis and evidence are of high caliber, and her writing is engrossing."--Kenneth J. Heineman, *American Historical* "Greene makes an important point often overlooked by historians and certainly overlooked by many observers at the time: the religion of the poor was more a lived experience than one they expressed in a church building An important book that should be of interest to those studying religion, economics, the 1930s, labor activism, and civil rights. The book is deeply researched, includes substantive crucial analysis, and is beautifully written."--*Journal of Southern History*"With the flare of a novelist and the urgency of a reformer, [Greene] guides the reader through grassroots America's encounter with catastrophe, pausing frequently to underscore common people's burdens but also to highlight their resilience and empowerment in the fight for survival As stellar history, rigorously researched and analyzed, it is a refreshing call for scholars to reorient their concerns away from the rigidities of the current moment, which paint the South solely as conservative hegemon, to the dynamism of an earlier day when the region served as a test-case for new directions in governance, civil society, and the church."--*Journal of Social History*"[Greene] offers a well-written and captivating narrative...*No Depression in Heaven* adds substantially to our historical understanding of political and religious transformations in the Delta during the Great Depression. By exposing the evolution of church reactions to federal aid, from an initial welcoming response to growing skepticism and antagonism, Greene delivers a broader revelation of post-Depression fundamentalism...Greene's compelling narrative and innovative approach to the roots of modern fundamentalism make

No Depression in Heaven extraordinarily beneficial to political, southern, and religious historians."--Ryan Schilling, H-South

"With No Depression in Heaven, Greene makes a powerful addition to a growing literature on the relationship between religion and political economy in the South, and in the United States in general, in the modern era. This beautifully written, deeply researched book is aimed primarily at historians of religion and politics, but will be of interest to anyone concerned with the moral dimensions of political economy."--Jarod Roll, Journal of Southern Religion

"No Depression in Heaven delivers even more than its ambitious title promises While No Depression in Heaven is a history of how religion changed in the Delta, it is also a thoughtful reminder of how interpersonal and structural racism, capitalism and economics, environmental degradation, and national, state, and local politics worked together to create a society marked by economic disparity and its attendant human suffering--hunger and malnutrition chief among them--all kept in place by white supremacy, and specifically anti-black terrorism While it is decidedly a history it is also a framework for understanding contemporary arguments about the current and future state of the social safety net and an argument for the importance of the study of history for today's politicians and church leaders."--Rebecca Barrett-Fox, Reading Religion

"No Depression in Heaven is a compelling and beautifully written story of the ways in which poverty, welfare, God, and Roosevelt shaped Americans' lives in the 1930s. Greene has provided an excellent history based on first-rate research that speaks in important ways to the present as much as to the past." --Matthew Avery Sutton, author of American Apocalypse: A History of Modern Evangelicalism

"Combines powerful stories and brilliant historical analysis to reveal an important chapter in the reconfiguration of church-state relationships. A vital and important book. Essential. Upper-division undergraduates through faculty."--CHOICE

"While historians have long understood the Great Depression as a decade of political and economic upheaval, Alison Collis Greene brilliantly demonstrates that it sparked a revolution in American religion too. With deeply grounded research and soaring prose, No Depression in Heaven forces us to rethink the tangled relationship between religion and politics in modern American history in innovative and exciting ways." --Kevin M. Kruse, author of One Nation Under God: How Corporate America Invented Christian America

"In her eloquent, incisive, and ultimately heart-breaking book, Alison Greene captures not only the excruciating local effects of the Great Depression, but the powerlessness of local religious institutions in the face of such extreme want. Her work shows us, in elegant prose, that the intensely local consequences of economic collapse in the American south, nourished by racism and myths of self-determination, grew to reshape both the nation and its memories of itself in crisis. No Depression in Heaven provides historians of religion in America an exemplary model for making sense of this devastating period in American history." --Jonathan H. Ebel, University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign

"A gifted historian with a novelist's ear, Alison Greene discerns the texture of lived experience in the most recalcitrant sources. No Depression in Heaven is a masterful work of social history. Equally attentive to the intimate and the political, Greene shows how deeply fraught the responses of the people of the Delta were to the upheavals and transformations of the 1930s. She also demonstrates that religious history at its best is about how people fight, often in ways that are destructive to themselves and others, to make lives for themselves on the razor edge of change." --Robert A. Orsi, Northwestern University

About the Author Alison Collis Greene is Associate Professor of History at Mississippi State University.