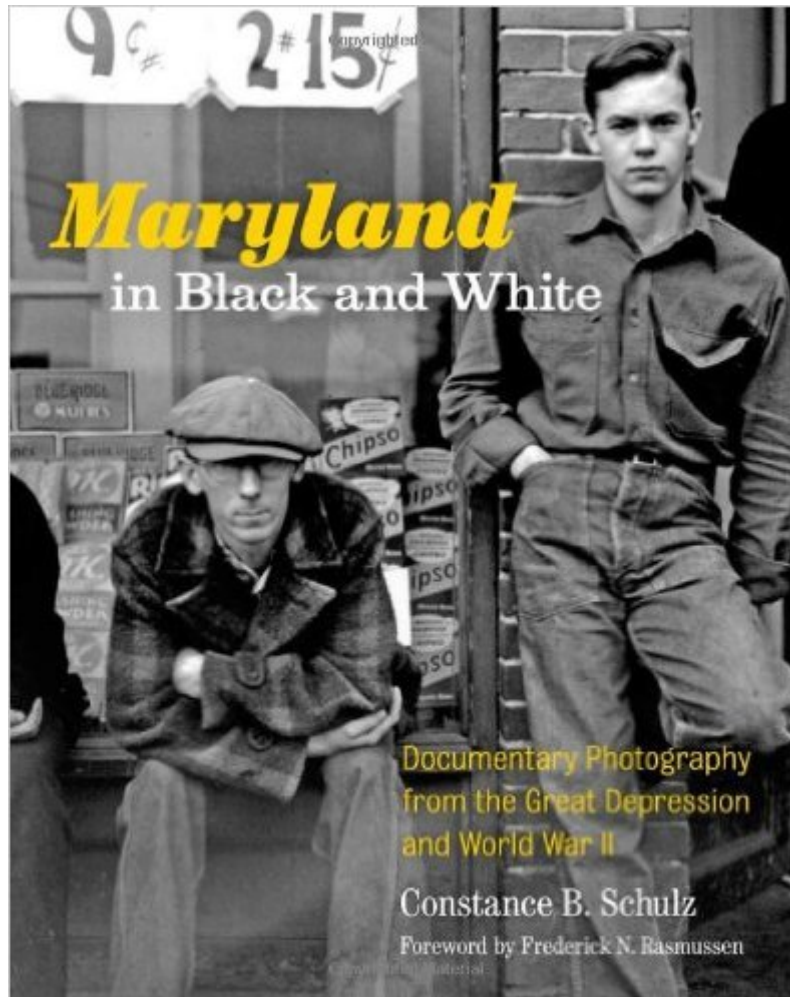


The book was found

Maryland In Black And White: Documentary Photography From The Great Depression And World War II



Synopsis

Between 1935 and 1943, the United States government commissioned forty-four photographers to capture American faces, along with living and working conditions, across the country. Nearly 180,000 photographs were taken—4,000 in Maryland—and they are now preserved in the Prints and Photographs Division of the Library of Congress. Constance B. Schulz presents a selection of these images in *Maryland in Black and White*. Maryland in the 1930s and early '40s truly represented a microcosm of America, a middle ground where beach and mountain, north and south, urban and rural, black and white, farmer and businessman, rich and poor, young and old met. This period also witnessed a turning point in the state's history. The pace and nature of change varied from region to region, but even in areas that seemed most resistant to it—the Chesapeake Bay, where oyster tongs harvested their catch using methods unchanged for centuries, or the mountains and streams of Garrett County, where the seasons timelessly repeated themselves—the momentum toward a modern economy, influenced if not dominated by urban and national concerns, had significant impact. Within these pages, the farms and coal fields of 1930s and '40s Western Maryland, the tobacco fields of Southern Maryland, watermen in wooden boats along the Eastern Shore, and smiling couples dancing at a wartime senior prom come back to life. These photographs reveal places we know but scarcely recognize and give us another look at the people of "the greatest generation."

Book Information

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Customer Reviews

Maryland in Black and White is a beautiful collection of images showcasing life in the State from 1935 to 1943. The images are documentary - taken by a group of photographers and sponsored by government agencies of the time. The book groups images by locations: Central and Western, Chesapeake Bay/Tidewater, Eastern Shore Agriculture/Industry, suburb/city/highway/greenbelt, Baltimore. And then by subject as well: Leisure/Recreation, Maryland Goes to War, Wartime Preparedness, and Life on the Home Front. What I especially appreciated about this book is that there is research done on each of the above categories giving context to what we are seeing. The chapters are prefaced by paragraphs detailing the socio-economic history of that chapter's area and the issues faced by the populace. It really helps to understand why the images that were chosen out of the 8,000 made it into the book and why they were emblematic, symptomatic, or simply great storytelling of the era. The images are all obviously very carefully chosen for their social commentary and showcased large, often spanning two pages. The author went for quality over quantity and I really applaud Ms. Schulz for her selections. Although of the era of Dorothea Lange, they feel less staged and much more candid - giving them a great feeling of honesty and resonance with the viewer. These are by no means artistic marvels - nor were they meant to be when shot. All are technically excellent but the photographers were looking to document not create a masterpiece (not surprising since they shot some 43,000 images). So yes, there are telephone poles going through heads or cut off body parts. But there are also some real gems in there. A couple in the early 40s with their trailer home out camping.

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