

New Deal Medicine: The Rural Health Programs of the Farm Security Administration

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Professor Michael R. Grey MD MPH : New Deal Medicine: The Rural Health Programs of the Farm Security Administration before purchasing it in order to gage whether or not it would be worth my time, and all praised New Deal Medicine: The Rural Health Programs of the Farm Security Administration:

In New Deal Medicine, physician and historian Michael Grey brings to light the diversity, reach, and complexity of the medical care programs of the Farm Security Administration. Drawing on oral histories, archival records, and medical journals from the 1930s and 1940s, Grey finds the programs were both a rehearsal for more modern forms of medical organization and a lightning rod for critics of "socialized medicine." He assesses the compromises made to try to preserve the programs' somewhat "secret objective" of providing the poor with health care while not running afoul of conservative politicians and their colleagues in the AMA. Acknowledging the effect of changing demographics (doctors, nurses, and farmers alike marched off to war) and economics, Grey contends that these factors do not fully explain the demise of the FSA experiment in health care. Rather, the political winds shifted at the same time that the medical profession acted to protect its authority over the practice of medicine. New Deal Medicine shows that, by the peculiarly American style of "incrementalism," many of the FSA medical care structures and goals have been at least partially realized in the United States and in Canada. The lessons learned by the FSA personnel were transferred into

health programs in Canada, in the labor unions, and finally in Lyndon Johnson's "Great Society."