

Contents

Acknowledgments	ix
Introduction: On Native Grounds and Beyond	1
I. Theorizing New Deal Documentaries	
1.1. The Problem of Telling the Truth: On Documentary Realism	11
1.1.1. What is Documentary Realism?	11
1.1.2. Making Sense of (Documentary) Excess	26
1.1.3. 'Not with Words alone': The Use of Different Media	41
1.2. The Public and its Problems: Picturing People in Need	59
1.2.1. The Iconicity of New Deal Representations	59
1.2.2. 'Us' versus 'Them': The Problem of Looking at Others	76
1.3. The Politics of Art	89
II. New Deal Documentary Practices	
2.1. The Federal Writers' Project:	
Conducting and Constructing Oral Histories	103
2.1.1. Introduction	103
2.1.2. Conducting	113
2.1.3. Constructing	125
2.1.4. Summary	139
2.2. The Farm Security Administration Photography:	
The Thirties on File	143
2.2.1. Introduction	143
2.2.2. Subjects & Styles	151
2.2.3. Selections	165
2.2.4. Summary	177

2.3. The New Deal Documentary Films:	
People, Power and the Land	181
2.3.1. Introduction	181
2.3.2. <i>The New Frontier</i> (H.B. McClure, 1934)	188
2.3.3. <i>The Plow that Broke the Plains</i> (Pare Lorentz, 1936)	194
2.3.4. <i>The River</i> (Pare Lorentz, 1937)	203
2.3.5. <i>Power and the Land</i> (Joris Ivens, 1940)	211
2.3.6. Summary	220
III. Conclusions	225
Photographs and Film Stills	231
Works Cited	275
Photo and Film Credits	285