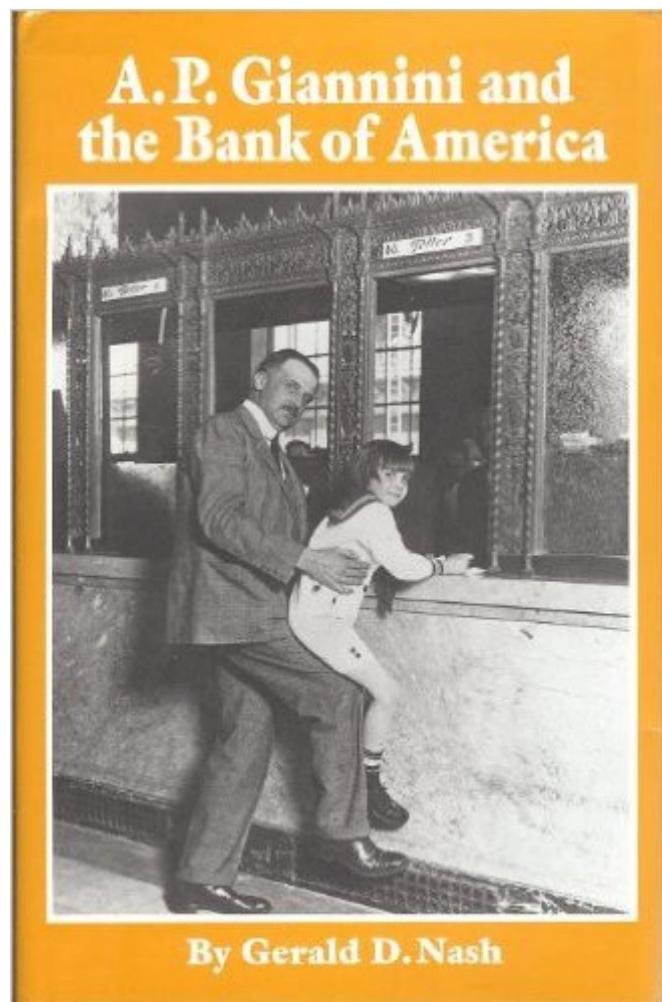


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A.P. Giannini And The Bank Of America (Oklahoma Western Biographies)



Synopsis

Book by Nash, Gerald D.

Book Information

Series: Oklahoma Western Biographies (Book 5)

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Customer Reviews

As an American with Italian ancestry, I read with great interest and enjoyment of the great leadership of A.P. Giannini in developing and expanding the role of the Bank of America. As is the case of most successful people, he was lucky to have a very intelligent advisor and confidant. In his case, it was his step father. If you are a young American of Italian heritage, be sure to read about this very interesting and successful personality who took pride in helping other people.

Gerald Nash's portrayal of Giannini is both excellent academic history and a very readable drama of an entrepreneur who shaped the development of California in the early 20th century. Nash weaves Giannini's personal and family relationships into this economic history of modern California and the West, making this important story a page turner. Born in the Bay Area, Giannini's role in bringing San Francisco back from the earthquake and fire of 1906 is legendary. Lesser known is his role in making Los Angeles the movie capital of the world. Every aspect of California's maturing economy, from small and large-scale agriculture to heavy industry, is included in this short but meaty history. Giannini's participation in politics--from backing reform in San Francisco in the early years of the 20th century to cooperating with Franklin Roosevelt's New Deal and then complaining about its

interference with his dreams--is covered. His aspirations grew from local to national and even international, as he founded what is today one of the most powerful financial institutions in the world. That which began as the Bank of Italy in the North Beach section of San Francisco morphed into the Bank of America as his operations entered Los Angeles. Despite a strong prejudice against Italians in the world of banking during his lifetime, Giannini forged strategic alliances with businessmen of Yankee ancestry with the idea of opening doors that otherwise would have been closed. His self-perception of the banker of the little guy persisted throughout his career which was laced with accusations that he was forging a dangerous monopoly. This is a memorable history of a very complex man whose life made a difference.

I love finding books like this. As someone who reads a great deal about business, finance, banking, and related fields, I was aware of who A. P. Giannini was and knew a bit about him, but I had never read a biography on him. I use the state of Delaware library system for most of my books, and one of their branches dug this out of their archives for me. A splendid little book (and I do mean little, it is about a 3/4 size hardback and only runs to about 150 pages). This is an easy book to read, very clear and concise, obviously written for the casual reader, not academic in tone at all. I enjoyed it from beginning to end. You get a good insight into the man and the bank that he built (Bank of America, starting out as the Bank of Italy), along with a very interesting overview of economic conditions in the far West during his lifetime. I found this book to be educational, inspirational, and downright interesting. Good stuff!

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