

Document Citation

Title	Our daily bread
Author(s)	William K. Everson
Source	<i>Janus Films</i>
Date	1973
Type	distributor materials
Language	English
Pagination	
No. of Pages	2
Subjects	
Film Subjects	Our daily bread, Vidor, King, 1934

KING VIDOR'S

OUR DAILY BREAD

Ignus Films Catalog

1973

One of the finest films of the depression years, this neglected classic by King Vidor sees the land as the solution to the country's economic ills. Simple, underplayed, the more effective for avoiding boxoffice stars, OUR DAILY BREAD holds up beautifully as a film. As a commentary on the depression years it is far more valid a reflection of those times than many of its better-known contemporaries which sold out to the "hard-sell" of melodrama.

"Delivers very completely the mood and climate of the Great Depression with all its human waste."

MUSEUM OF MODERN ART FILM LIBRARY



STORY

In the early days of the depression, a young married couple, John & Mary Sims see a possible solution to their dilemma — no jobs, no money for food or rent — in the visit of a comparatively affluent relative.

Their uncle, hit by the depression himself, is unable to offer them money or a job — but he does hand over to them a deed to some farmland he owns. If they can make a go of it, it's theirs. Their initial optimism is soon dashed when they realize how little they know about farming, and how hopeless it will be for them to cultivate the land.

Providentially, a migrant farm-worker and his family, having lost their own place in the dust bowl storms, stops by for water — and an idea is born. Signs are hastily erected along the highway, and soon an army of similar migrants join the little community, and the farm begins to show signs of life.

There are problems along the way defeated by the ingenuity of the various "citizens" of the community. An attempt by the banks to take the land over is foiled; a seductive tramp tries unsuccessfully to steal John away from Mary; and the major threatened disaster — a drought which seems about to wipe out all of the crops — is overcome when John leads his small army in a superhuman effort to divert a stream and irrigate the parched land.

Faith in the land pays off, and as their first crop comes in, John and Mary look forward to a richer and fuller future than had seemed possible only a year earlier.

OUR DAILY BREAD

CAST

Mary Sims
John Sims
Sally
Louis
Chris
Uncle
Carpenter
A laborer

Karen Morley
Tom Keene
Barbara Pepper
Addison Richards
John Qualen
Lloyd Ingraham
Henry Hull
King Vidor

CREDITS

Direction and original story	King Vidor
Scenario	Elizabeth Hill
Dialogue	Joseph L. Mankiewicz
Camera	Robert Planck
Music	Alfred Newman
Editor	Lloyd Nosler

A Janus Films Release

COMMENT

"It is difficult for many young people to realize that the early 1930's were a period of real crises for the United States, with widespread unemployment and depression. Hunger-marchers and "Hooverville" stories took up a lot of space in our press, while farmers and their neighbors blocked the selling of foreclosed lands for nonpayment of taxes. I wondered how I could corral this nationwide unrest and tragedy into a film. I wanted to take my two protagonists out of THE CROWD and follow them through the struggles of a typical young American couple in this most difficult period. The fact that my characters were unemployed and down to their last few pennies seemed to scare the studios . . . Having exhausted the supply of big companies, I was left with one alternative: to raise the money and make the picture myself."

King Vidor

"One of King Vidor's most deeply-felt works, OUR DAILY BREAD was one of the very few films of the depression years to take a theme of social comment and not camouflage it within a framework of melodrama. Today its optimism and faith in the prosperity that was "just around the corner", and its "back to the land" cure for all ills, can be seen to have been a trifle unrealistic, but nevertheless its passionate sincerity and filmic skill mark it as one of the permanent classics of the early thirties. Its simplicity stands out in stark contrast to the more formal and stylized handling of a similar theme by John Ford six years later in THE GRAPES OF WRATH, while the climactic sequence — an entire reel devoted to the creation of an irrigation channel over rocky and hilly ground — is a tour-de-force of design and editing that can rank with the finest bravura episodes by Eisenstein or Griffith."

Bill Everson

80 minutes. Black and white. U.S.A., 1934.