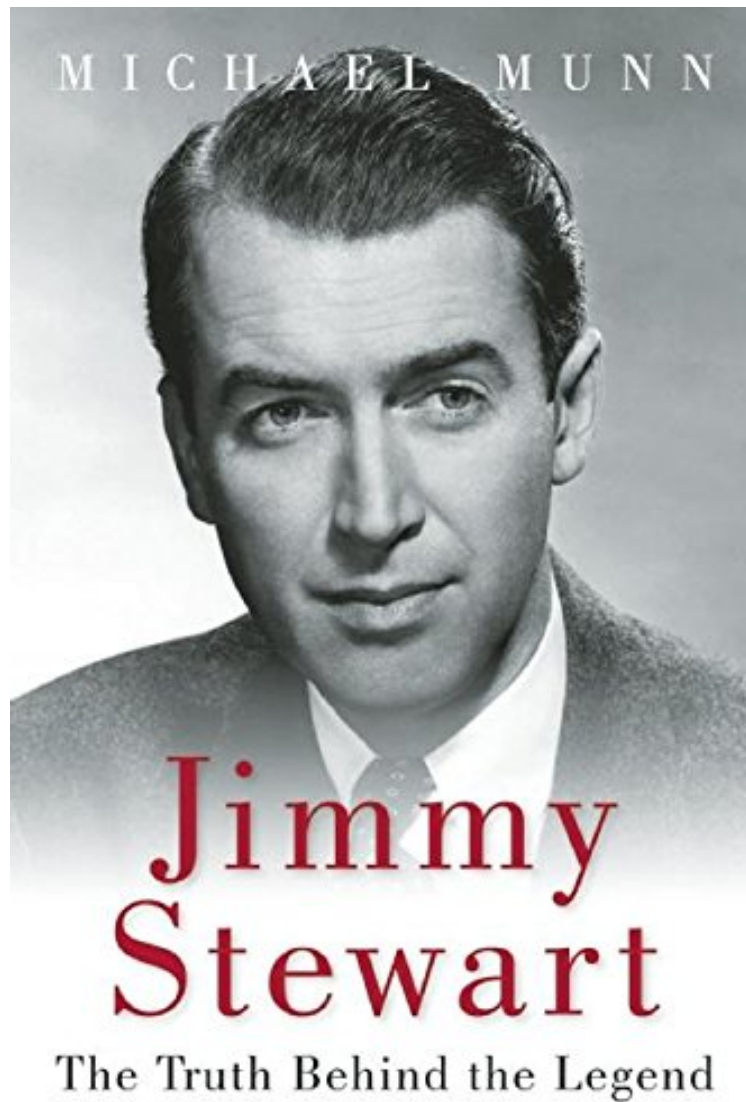


[Download] Jimmy Stewart: The Truth Behind the Legend

Jimmy Stewart: The Truth Behind the Legend

Michael Munn

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Michael Munn : Jimmy Stewart: The Truth Behind the Legend before purchasing it in order to gage whether or not it would be worth my time, and all praised Jimmy Stewart: The Truth Behind the Legend:

96 of 97 people found the following review helpful. Warm portrait of an all-star -- with a few surprisesBy Wayne EngleJimmy Stewart wasn't just Jefferson Smith, raging at his corrupt fellow senators on behalf of "the little fellow" in "Mr. Smith Goes to Washington;" or George Bailey, saving Bedford Falls and neglecting himself for years, in "It's A Wonderful Life;" or Elwood P. Dowd, a kindly drunk arm-in-arm with an invisible, giant rabbit, in "Harvey." He was

an actor who could seem on the surface as if he were a fairly simple character; but who hid much "below the surface." Michael Munn tells us of Stewart's childhood in Pennsylvania, the son of a conventional middle-class couple who owned a hardware store. Skip ahead a few years, and we find Jimmy in college, dabbling in student theatricals. Then he is on the stage as a young professional; and finally, in the mid-1930's, he makes his way to Hollywood and eventual stardom. Stewart was an amiable, gently-spoken man who got along with almost everyone but who was not a "hail-fellow-well-met," often preferring time by himself to think and dream. He enjoyed his own company. But, as a young, single man, he also liked the company of young women, and "played the field" often, Munn shows us through extensive interviews with people who "knew him when," especially his best friend fellow actor Henry Fonda. Stewart was also an excellent dancer; that was a second quality that many of his fans had no knowledge of. But after his marriage to his wife Gloria in 1950, Stewart settled down and trod the straight and narrow, Munn tells us. He branched out from the "nice guy helping other people" roles he had been known for in the '30s and '40s, to playing cowboys -- and doing it very professionally, too -- in a number of '50s Westerns in which another side of the real Jimmy Stewart's character sometimes came out. That was the extreme rage that he usually kept well hidden, but which could explode into verbal and sometimes physical violence when he was pushed too hard. Stewart was known to have punched out a few men in real life just as he did in his Western cinema of the '50s. Munn's story takes us through the '60s, '70s and '80s, as Stewart's career wound down to situation comedy films and the like. Gloria's death in 1994 devastated Jimmy Stewart, and he died quietly in his sleep just three years later. This is an especially valuable biography of the man who I believe to be the greatest of all American actors, giving us facets of his character which I had not seen explored before. It's well worth reading. I gave it four stars instead of five for two reasons. The first was a number of typographical errors which should have been caught in proofreading, but were not. The most egregious was a reference to "Edward P. Dowd" as the main character in "Harvey." In fact, Munn compounds the error of getting the character's first name wrong in narration, by also having Stewart refer to "Edward P. Dowd" in a direct quote on the same page. Stewart would most certainly have not made that mistake. The second reason, was Munn's apparent obsession about whether Stewart was a "racist." He returns to this topic several times, including some quotes from the black actor Woody Strode about a movie he appeared in with Stewart. My feeling about it was, "Who cares?" Jimmy Stewart has been dead for 17 years. He was a product of his time, and the mores of that time. Whether or not he fits someone's definition of what a "racist" is in 2014, I couldn't care less.

2 of 2 people found the following review helpful.

Jimmy Stewart Biography
By carolyn c porter
I suppose if you are a biographer you are doing a poor job if you fail to research your subject completely. This author certainly did to the point of providing a synopsis of almost every Jimmy Stewart film. I found this a bit tedious, having seen most of the movies myself. I guess there are other readers who have not, and perhaps the stories of the movies add a dimension to Stewart for them. Here are several of my observations: It seemed that more words are said about Stewart loving Margaret Sullivan than are said about his loving Gloria Stewart; Sullivan is a theme throughout the book. There are few quotes about the Jimmy/Gloria marriage. Although Gloria adds a lot of information to the story, there is little about their personal relationship. It does not seem to have been a "cozy-up-by-the-fire-together" relationship.....which obviously worked for them. There is some interesting info about the communist hunt in Hollywood, and J. Edgar Hoover, and a lot about Henry Fonda. Some of the observations about directors and other stars is entertaining. Stewart had several significant, abrupt, and long-lasting disagreements with friends and family. I would have liked to know more about his business dealings. His income/net worth is never really spelled-out although there are references to what he was paid per picture. There is only one teeny reference to real estate holdings and investments. That is an equal part of the man as far as I'm concerned. The book ends on a "down" note rather than ending as celebrating Jimmy Stewart and his accomplishments.

0 of 0 people found the following review helpful.

Most worthwhile
By Dougall
I wondered what I was getting into when I bought this. I've always liked Jimmy Stewart, but I can't actually say he was one of my very favorite actors. Still, he'd be in the top ten due to an incredible body of work and some truly great portrayals. Ultimately, this was, for me, a great book. Though I doubt any book on a man as well known and loved as Stewart will be free of disagreement and nitpicking... everyone has their opinion! I enjoyed it and truly felt I had learned many things about Jimmy Stewart that I hitherto had no inkling of. I was particularly fascinated by his lifelong love of flying and the details of his service in WWII. Also, I had no idea of his involvement with J. Edgar Hoover (in and of itself a can of worms of which few will find consensus). My foremost compliment must be that from now on, whenever I have the opportunity to watch a Stewart movie, I will do so with more empathy for the man and more appreciation of his skills as an actor. In so very many ways, it's true what is said; they don't make them like this any more.

Many stars of the silver screen in twentieth-century Hollywood became national icons, larger-than-life figures held up as paragons of American virtues. However, the private lives of actors such as John Wayne, Henry Fonda, and Errol Flynn rarely lived up to the idealistic roles they portrayed. James Stewart was known as the underdog fighter in many of his films and in real life. He was highly decorated for his bravery as a bomber pilot during World War II and was adored for his earnest and kindly persona. But there was much more to the man. In this New York Times bestseller, the many sides of Stewart are revealed: his explosive temper, his complex love affairs and his longstanding marriage,

his service as an FBI agent, his innate shyness, and his passionate patriotism. Munns personal touch shines through his writing, as he was a friend of Stewart and his wife, Gloria, and interviewed them as well as their colleagues and friends. This definitive biography reveals the childhood ups and downs that formed this cinema hero; explores the legendary Fonda-Stewart relationship; and recounts Stewarts experiences making such acclaimed films as *The Philadelphia Story*, *Rear Window*, *Anatomy of a Murder*, *Its a Wonderful Life*, and *Mr. Smith Goes to Washington*. Skyhorse Publishing, along with our Arcade, Good Books, Sports Publishing, and Yucca imprints, is proud to publish a broad range of biographies, autobiographies, and memoirs. Our list includes biographies on well-known historical figures like Benjamin Franklin, Nelson Mandela, and Alexander Graham Bell, as well as villains from history, such as Heinrich Himmler, John Wayne Gacy, and O. J. Simpson. We have also published survivor stories of World War II, memoirs about overcoming adversity, first-hand tales of adventure, and much more. While not every title we publish becomes a New York Times bestseller or a national bestseller, we are committed to books on subjects that are sometimes overlooked and to authors whose work might not otherwise find a home.

From BooklistAsk a younger audience about Gary Cooper or Spencer Tracy, and you might get a blank stare. Jimmy Stewart, thanks to *Its a Wonderful Life*, hasnt suffered the same fate. Stewarts fans are in for a treat with this anecdote-filled biography, which features a major bombshell: for years, Stewart provided undercover reports to the FBI's J. Edgar Hoover. Among the nuggets mined here: the rift over politics between conservative Stewart and his liberal best friend, Henry Fonda; Stewart being tempted by Grace Kelly; and how Stewart wanted to help Hoover rout the Mafia from Hollywood but ended up naming Communists. Unfortunately, these revelations and the text as a whole could have been better documented. Appended is a list of sources, but as Munn, a friend of both Stewart and Stewarts wife, Gloria, testifies, its limited to who Ive quoted . . . along with the year (as best I can remember it) and the location. Much of the information comes from phone calls and social chats with Gloria Stewart. Did Munn really write everything down? Still, shaky bona fides aside, this a fun Old Hollywood bio. --Ilene Cooper This affectionate biography is intriguing and groundbreaking. . . . The content is immensely valuable in exploring Stewarts dark side. Sunday Times A fun Old Hollywood bio. Booklist