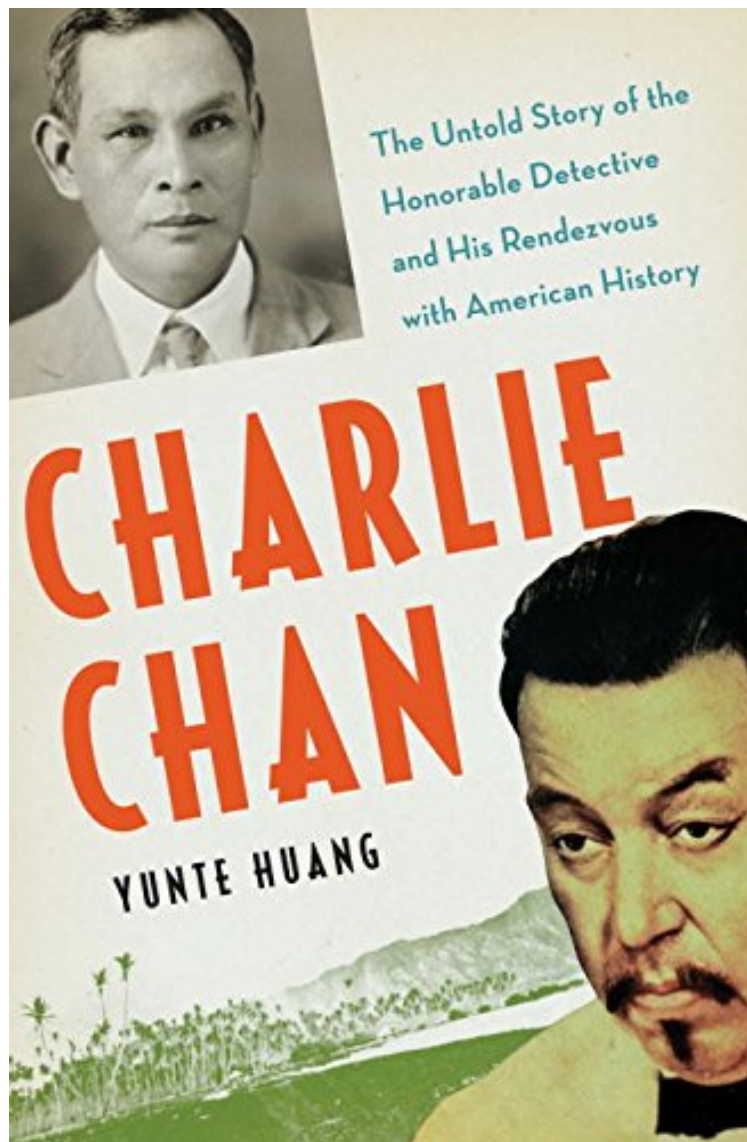


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Charlie Chan: The Untold Story of the Honorable Detective and His Rendezvous with American History

Yunte Huang

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#127371 in Books 2010-08-30Format: Deckle EdgeOriginal language:EnglishPDF # 1 9.60 x 1.10 x 6.50l, 1.52 #File Name: 0393069621384 pagesMystery, Thriller SuspenseMystery DetectiveAsian American Studies | File size: 61.Mb

Yunte Huang : Charlie Chan: The Untold Story of the Honorable Detective and His Rendezvous with American History before purchasing it in order to gage whether or not it would be worth my time, and all praised Charlie Chan: The Untold Story of the Honorable Detective and His Rendezvous with American History:

1 of 1 people found the following review helpful. One of the best books I've ever read! Absolutely great read! Enjoyed the history and all the research the author did to put this magnificent book together. Didn't want it to end. This is one book that will never be sent to the used book store. A lot more history than I ever knew or imagined but what a ride. Was never aware of all the negative aspects of no-Chinese playing Chinese and the racist sentiment that evolved from these films. I always just enjoyed them for what they were a good mystery. Never delved into the social impact and the analysis of stereotypes of the actors and the parts they played. I had a multi-cultural childhood and never associated the stereotypes portrayed with real people. I always knew it was just a movie but I laughed and enjoyed the efforts of all the actors to entertain me and I appreciated all their efforts. I never dissected the characters deeper meanings and all and I still don't. Movies are entertainment and I enjoy them as such, similar to reading books. Great effort on the author's part!

0 of 0 people found the following review helpful. interesting, rewarding, worthwhile, ... By T. L. H. Written by an Old-World-born-and-raised, Chinese-American professor, this "biography" of a favorite character of New-World fiction is an analysis of why Charlie Chan is NOT an offensive stereotype. Yunte Huang explains how the character was inspired by Chang Apana of the Honolulu police department, one of the 100 most important people in Hawaiian history. He mines the pre-Chan literature of "Chinese-ish" characters. He analyzes the experiences of Asian immigrants to the US and its territory, Hawaii. Chan and Chang turn out to have a good deal in common, as well as some interesting differences. Huang approaches this subject with less emotional baggage than many of Charlie Chan's critics do. He explains how and WHY the Chan movies appealed TO CHINA when they arrived in the movie-theatres there, and how Warner Oland was welcomed during the series, though some of his previous characters (in "Shanghai Express" and the Fu Manchu films) were hated and banned. There were spots in the book that were rather dry, and some seemingly-irrelevant anecdotes recited, but they do tie into the cultural experiences of life in Hawaii for Chang Apana, the real-life detective -- and only by understanding his story can we appreciate Charlie Chan.

0 of 0 people found the following review helpful. A well-written study of Chinese and American cultural interaction By Steve Hurl Charlie Chan: The Untold Story provides a comprehensive look at the world that spawned the great detective character Charlie Chan. The somewhat discursive nature of the work was no drawback for me, as I enjoyed the frequent thumbnail historical sketches. These greatly added to my understanding of Asian-American cultural development. I had only fragmentary knowledge of the history of Chinese and other Asiatic peoples within the context of American history, and this book helped me solidify that knowledge and to make connections between actual history and cinematic history. This book is not really a critique of the films or the novels, although they are dealt with frequently in these pages. It's more of a social history, and in many places, it's fascinating. The life of Chang Apana, the historic Honolulu detective who inspired the original Charlie Chan novels and films, runs as an important thread throughout the book. The life of author Earl Der Biggers, the history of Hawaii, and early Hollywood are also chronicled, but always within the larger cultural/historical context. Fans of the Chan movies or novels will gain appreciation, or at least a good understanding, of the world which gave us these movies and novels. Modern eyes and ears often see offensive racial stereotypes embedded in the Chan works, they are there to be sure, and author Yunte Huang does not apologize for them at all (in fact, he reviews some of the cultural criticism directed at the Charlie Chan icon), but there is much more than meets the eye, and Charlie Chan: The Untold Story supplies the greater, deeper context that can lead to a fuller, more balanced understanding of 20th century American society.

Winner of the 2011 Edgar Award for Best Critical/Biographical Book and Shortlisted for the 2010 National Book Critics Circle Award in Biography: "An ingenious and absorbing book It will permanently change the way we tell this troubled yet gripping story." Jonathan Spence On a balmy July night in 1904, a wiry figure sauntered alone through the dim alleys of Honolulu's Chinatown. He strolled up a set of rickety steps and into a smoky gambling den ringing with jeers of card sharks and crapshooters. By the time anyone recognized the infamous bullwhip dangling from his hand, it was too late. Single-handedly, the feared, five-foot-tall Hawaiian cop, Chang Apana, had lined up forty gamblers and marched them down to the police station. So begins Charlie Chan, Yunte Huang's absorbing history of the legendary Cantonese detective, born in Hawaii around 1871, who inspired a series of fiction and movie doubles that long defined America's distorted perceptions of Asians and Asian Americans. In chronicling the real-life story and the fraught narrative of one of Hollywood's most iconic detectives, Huang has fashioned a historical drama where none was known to exist, creating a work that will, in the words of Jonathan Spence, permanently change the way we tell this troubled yet gripping story. Himself a literary sleuth, Huang has traced Charlie Chan's evolution from island legend to pop culture icon to vilified, postmodern symbol, ingeniously juxtaposing Apana's rough-and-tumble career against the larger backdrop of a territorial Hawaii torn apart by virulent racism. Apana's bravado prompted not only Earl Derr Biggers, a Harvard graduate turned author, to write six Charlie Chan mysteries but also Hollywood to manufacture over forty movies starring a grammatically challenged detective with a knack for turning Oriental wisdom into singsong Chinatown blues. Examining hundreds of biographical, literary, and cinematic sources, in English and in his native Chinese, Huang has pursued the trail of Charlie Chan since the mid-1990s, searching for clues in places as improbable as Harvard Yard, an Ohio cornfield, a weathered Hawaiian cemetery, and the Shanghai Bund. His efforts to refashion the Charlie Chan legend became a personal mission, as if the answers he sought would

reshape his own identity no longer a top Chinese student but an immigrant American eager to absorb the bewildering history of his adopted homeland. With rare personal intensity and capacious intelligence, Huang has ascribed a starring role to the honorable detective, one far more enduring than any of his wisecracking movie parts. Huang presents American history in a way that it has never been told before. 35 black-and-white photographs and illustrations