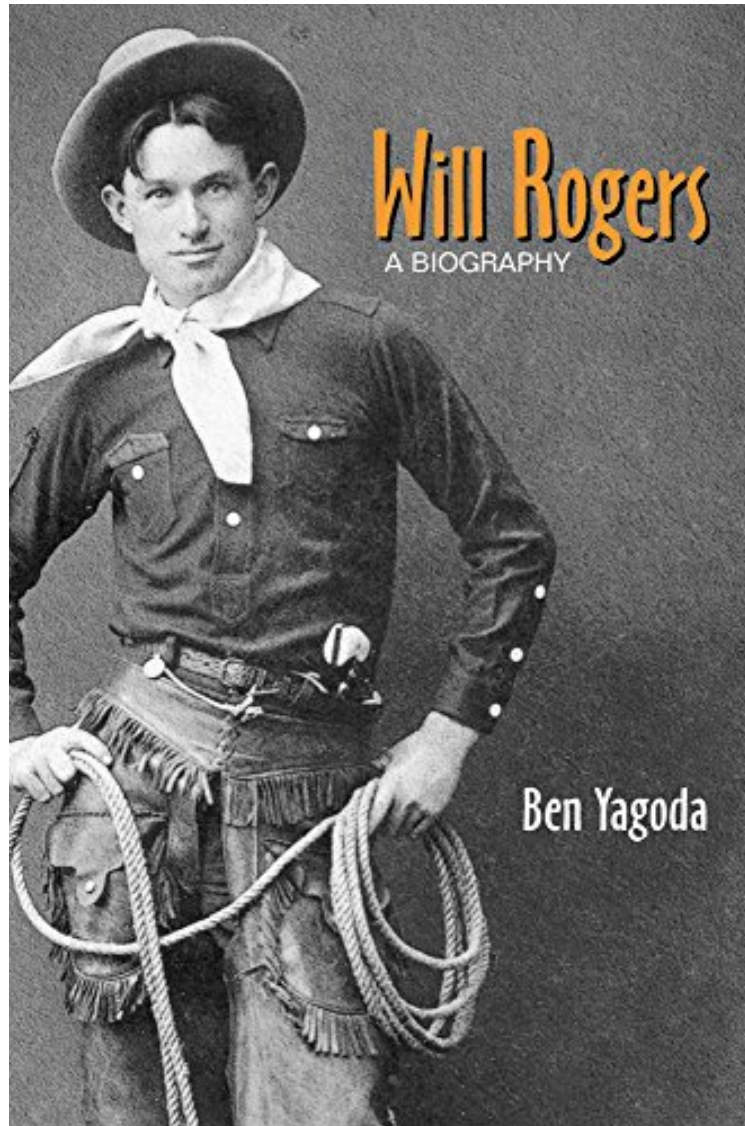


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Will Rogers: A Biography

Ben Yagoda

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that should not stop anyone from reading this well done book. 0 of 0 people found the following review helpful. Great biography
By Customer
This book tells the story of Will Rogers from a historical perspective. I read this book for class and really enjoyed it

Will Rogers was a true American icon. His newspaper column was read daily by 40 million people, and as radio entertainer, lecturer, movies star, and homespun sage, he was one of our most popular entertainers.

From Publishers Weekly
Born in Indian Territory (now Oklahoma), cowboy humorist Will Rogers (1879-1935) had a "dual consciousness," in Yagoda's estimate. The rope-twirling vaudeville monologist, salty political commentator, silent film actor and New York Times columnist was the son of a former slaveholder and Confederate veteran, but he was also one-quarter Cherokee and the tribe vividly remembered Andrew Jackson's massive betrayal of the Cherokees. Rogers embodied old-time values, yet he "opportunistically" embraced the new mass-culture media. Apostle of decency, he headlined in the "all-but-pornographic" Ziegfeld Follies. Yagoda, a University of Delaware assistant professor of English, has written the fullest biography of this American icon, a resonant portrait imbued with Rogers's irreverent spirit, yet attuned to both the strengths and limitations of his commonsense, crackerbarrel world view. Sam Goldwyn, W. C. Fields, Charles Lindbergh, Calvin Coolidge, FDR and Mussolini stride through these pages. Photos. Copyright 1993 Reed Business Information, Inc.
From Kirkus
Clear as a Walker Evans photo: a biography of folk-humorist Will Rogers (1879-1935), who, like Cary Grant and Humphrey Bogart, grew into his mask, becoming the image of wry, genial common sense until his death. Yagoda (English/University of Delaware) offers an utterly thorough, brilliant taking-apart of the unique Rogers persona. Ronald Reagan, he tells us, gave "an impressive Rogers impersonation in the White House" and back in the 40's was thought to be a natural to play Rogers in the film bio--but Will Rogers, Jr., got the role. "For there to be another Will Rogers today," Rogers says, "he (or she) would have to combine...Johnny Carson, Mark Russell, Roy Rogers, Clark Clifford, Walter Cronkite, Bill Cosby, Bob Hope, Russell Baker, H. Ross Perot, and Walter Lippmann. It just can't happen." Yagoda finds Rogers to have been a divided being, a rather gleeful but sometimes despairing and angry youth who clammed up after marriage and became the model of "unmatched stability, drive and contentment." One-quarter Cherokee, he rode the plains as a young cowboy, then took his mastery of the lariat and patter to the vaudeville stage, emerging as the Lincolnesque figure who "never met a man I didn't like." Rogers went on to a rather bumpkin-ish career in silent movies; graduated to a kind of sheepishly patriarchal status in talkies; made records; then became a radio humorist, syndicated newspaper columnist, and crony of politicians while grabbing the ear of FDR and topping out as Hollywood's number-one star: An amazing, unforeseeable life. As a speaker about politics, he kept his knife sheathed, talking as if from the very pulse of the people during the Depression, and was finally seen by all as the apostle of decency and archetype of American wisdom. His interest in aviation led to his death in Alaska--and to the grief of a nation. So immediate you can scratch a match on his boot sole. (Photographs) -- Copyright 1993, Kirkus Associates, LP. All rights reserved. "Rogers embodied old-time values, yet he 'opportunistically' embraced the new mass-culture media. Apostle of decency, he headlined in the 'all-but pornographic' Ziegfeld Follies. Yagoda...has written the fullest biography of this American icon, a resonant portrait imbued with Roger's irreverent spirit, yet attuned to both the strengths and limitations of his commonsense, crackerbarrel world view." Publishers Weekly