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Stars Fell On Alabama (Library Of Alabama Claasics Series)



Synopsis

Stars Fell on Alabama is truly a classic. The book enjoyed enormous popularity and notoriety when it was first published (it was a selection of The Literary Guild and also sold widely in Europe). It can be described as a book of folkways—not journalism, or history, or a novel. At times it is impressionistic; at other times it conveys deep insights into the character of Alabama. Carmer visited every region of the state, always accompanied by someone intimately familiar with the locality. The mosaic that emerges from the pages of his book portrays Alabama's human landscape in all its variety, and it is a work essential to an understanding of Alabama and its culture. --This text refers to an out of print or unavailable edition of this title.

Book Information

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Customer Reviews

"Carmer reveals himself here as a writer of more than ordinary perceptiveness and imagination, with the power of extracting from what he sees, hears, and feels an essence which is fundamentally poetic."—New York Times "The 'strange country' that Carmer visited hardly exists anymore save in his pages. Alabama is a healthier, richer, more just, and better-educated place. Yet whenever I read the dazzling initial image of the book--when I see through Carl Carmer's words a blood-colored moon and pine trees standing darkly against the sky--it is possible to understand the power of that old, dark magic."—From the Introduction by Howell Raines --This text refers to an out of print or unavailable edition of this title.

Carl Carmer, a Harvard-educated New York state native, was one of America's most popular writers during the 1940s and 1950s with thirty seven books, documentary films, his own radio program, and four albums of regional songs to his credit. He taught at The University of Alabama for seven years during the 1920s. Howell Raines, an Alabama native and former New York Times editorial page editor and Pulitzer Prize winner, is the author of *My Soul Is Rested: Movement Days in the Deep South Remembered* and *Fly Fishing through the Midlife Crisis*. --This text refers to an out of print or unavailable edition of this title.

This is an old forgotten gem. The author had the rare talent of telling a warts and all story and yet with empathy. It is very refreshing to read an author who can tell the story and let the reader make up his or her own mind. It is worth noting that Carmer I think described the racial attitudes of the poor white hill people with much more nuance than the usual treatment in the media and some history books. They definitely had racist attitudes, but they were opponents of slavery and the Confederacy. They felt if slavery was outlawed they would be able to afford better land in the flatlands with better soil. I won't spoil it, the stories run from the hilarious to the disgusting and everything in between. I bought an original copy from 1934, still in great shape. I read it because it inspired the song "Stars Fell on Alabama." A great song.

Fictionalized, but based on experiences of the author during his tenure in Alabama in the 1920s.

Was a very good read. Glad I bought and read it. Would order from this seller again.

thank you very much

Book was written in the 30s about a northerner's experience in Alabama. It captures the time and place and demonstrates the changes made. This was a used book in good condition as promised and a great price.

As someone who grew up in western New York, I had been aware of Carl Carmer's other books like *Listen for a Lonesome Drum*, *The Hudson*, and *The Farm Boy and the Angel*. However, I had never heard of *Stars Fell on Alabama* until I saw the license plates that the state of Alabama put out in the beginning years of the new century. It was only when I did some digging around that I found out that

it was based on Carmer's book. It was only recently that I finally got around to buying it and reading it. I had tried reading some of his material before and found it to be rather boring. Thus, I was expecting the same. Not necessarily with this one. The book deals quite a bit with what the former University of Alabama professor had experienced during his time in the state of Alabama. Even though he lived down there for six years and eventually returned to his native New York State, he saw much during his time. He witnessed a Ku Klux Klan meeting (off in the distance), a fiddler's contest, a lynching, and the treatment (both good and bad) of what were called Negroes back in that day and age. At the same time, he also came into contact with legends and folklore from both blacks and whites. His descriptions of places like Birmingham and Mobile were quite fascinating - even in that day and age. I have to wonder what his thoughts of Alabama would have been in the 1960's and beyond. What has probably been burned in people's minds is the struggle that blacks fought with regard to civil rights. However, I would not be surprised if there were instances where people were colorblind and got along with each other side by side - contrary to the stereotypes we've been told. Overall, Carmer's book was quite fascinating. Folklore is not exactly my cup of tea, but Carmer did manage to hold my attention with this book. Whether one agrees with the way he wrote the book or not, it still is worth reading to get a taste of the culture and events going on in everyday Alabama back when he lived there.

Reading "Stars Fell on Alabama" brings to mind lines from the opening scenes of "Gone With The Wind," lines that said something like "look for them (these days) no more because they are gone with the wind..." The same could be said of the Alabama described in Carl Carmer's book. The days of Margaret Mitchell's classic "Gone With the Wind" never really existed, at least not in the romanticized way in which she wrote about them, but the days described in "Stars Fell on Alabama" did happen. They did, unfortunately, exist, but thankfully, for the most part, they, too, are now "gone with the wind..." This book is about life, a cross section of real life in the terribly rural South from about 1921 through 1927. It was not a pretty time or an easy time, and these are not quaint, pretty sketches of life during that time. The innocent, naive and politically correct reader of today might find parts of this book, most of it actually, quite offensive. And rightly so. But these times, these days and these ways, did exist. And they put life in today's Alabama into perspective. It is clear to a reader living in Alabama that the state has progressed far more in the last 75 years (1930-2005) than it did in the 75 years immediately after the Civil War (1865-1940). That may be true for the country as a whole, but it is especially true for Alabama. Many intellectuals and scholars cite this book as one of the points at which this progress began. As Howell Raines writes in his introduction (added in 1990)

this book was one of the first times Alabamians read about themselves as others saw them. It was not a pretty picture, not all bad not all ugly, but for the most part, it was not how Alabamians felt about themselves and not how they wanted their state--and themselves--to be perceived by those outside the state. To be sure, there was some beauty among the thorns, but it was a racist time and the thorns greatly outnumbered the rosebuds. There are no memories of the grand and glorious "Lost Cause" in these pages. Any and everything but. Speaking of Howell Raines' introduction, it would be far more useful and appropriate as an Afterword or Epilogue. In this book it would be better to put what you have read in perspective than to write about what you are going to read. That's not true for all books, but it is true for this book. In the hours after finishing "Stars Fell on Alabama," two thoughts come to mind again and again:--"We may not be where we ought to be, but, thank God and by the grace of God, we aren't where we used to be..."--And this book was obviously written before football took over the University of Alabama (where Carmer taught for six years) and the state as a whole. Football is never mentioned, either during his time in Tuscaloosa, or in his travels around the state. Not once. In that respect, life in Alabama has certainly changed. But even now, there are racial overtones in the rivalry between Alabama and Auburn. But that is another story for another time. If you are from Alabama, live in Alabama, or want to learn about the rural South as it was in the twenties and thirties, read the book. You will learn from it and you will enjoy it. Parts of it will make you cringe but it will be a learning experience. And learning is good, even if you don't appreciate and agree with all that you learn or are exposed to.

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