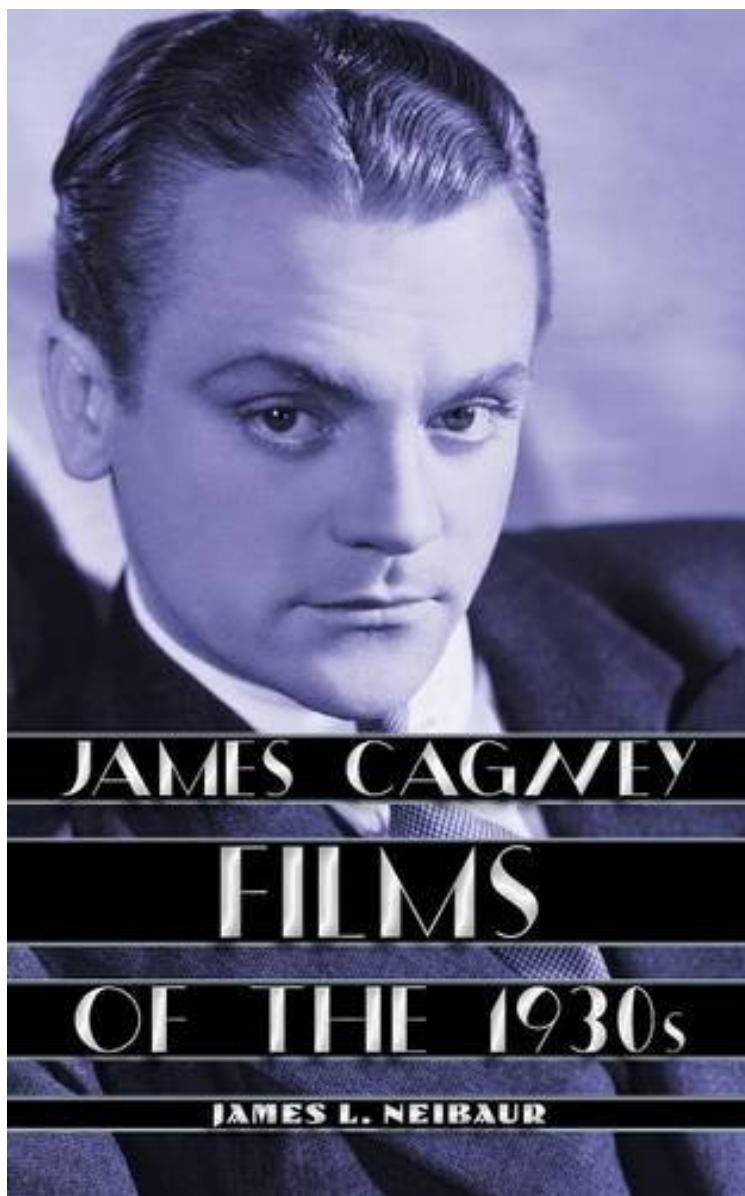


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James Cagney Films of the 1930s

James L. Neibaur

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James L. Neibaur : James Cagney Films of the 1930s before purchasing it in order to gage whether or not it would be worth my time, and all praised James Cagney Films of the 1930s:

2 of 2 people found the following review helpful. James cagney reviewBy John GonzalezGreat book on cagney5 of 5 people found the following review helpful. A screen legends pivotal decadeBy willsummerFew movie actors could match James Cagneys charisma and commanding screen presence. This excellent book closely examines his output in

the 1930s, the most pivotal decade of his career. It was during this period that he quickly rose from supporting player to leading man to box-office superstar, in movies such as *THE PUBLIC ENEMY*, *FOOTLIGHT PARADE*, *G MEN*, *ANGELS WITH DIRTY FACES* and *THE ROARING TWENTIES*. Yet the book doesn't limit itself to film-by-film coverage. It reveals the Hollywood studio system that was alternately nurturing and restrictive, even to the biggest stars. Tired of being overworked in a series of nondescript projects that capitalized on his popularity, Cagney walked out on Warner Brothers, his home studio, to seek creative freedom elsewhere. He would eventually return to Warners with a guarantee of profit sharing and creative control, thereby paving the way for other actors to use their clout in a similar manner. All the bases are covered here: plot summaries, production data, and contemporary reviews, as the author places each film in its historical and aesthetic context. Fans of Cagney and golden age Hollywood in general will find it a captivating read.

3 of 3 people found the following review helpful. **READ IT, MA! TOP OF THE SHELF!** By James Zeruk, Jr. This excellent filmography of Cagney's defining decade is a must-have for every fan of the legendary performer! Film historian James L. Neibaur presents a careful, thoughtful, and well-researched reference book filled with wonderful images and information. If I were going to write an essay or biography on Cagney--or any of his co-players, for that matter--I would certainly have "James Cagney Films of the 1930s" open, marked up with highlighter and well dog-eared. And yet as essential as this book is to an author tackling a biography of Cagney or his contemporaries of the silver screen, it proves equally invaluable to those who just love viewing his pictures. Indeed, this book contains so much in the backstory and trivia departments that one might well be tempted to hit "pause" on the remote several times to see what Neibaur has to say in the film's corresponding chapter! Breezy and fun, informative and chock full of images, Neibaur's "James Cagney Films of the 1930s" is without question another remarkable filmography in an already impressive stack of published work.

One of the biggest stars of the golden age of Hollywood, James Cagney appeared in more than sixty films throughout his career. In addition to starring in the classics *White Heat*, *Mister Roberts*, and *One, Two, Three*, Cagney received the Academy Award for his performance as George M. Cohan in *Yankee Doodle Dandy*. From his debut in *Sinners Holiday* to one of his many gangster portrayals in *The Roaring Twenties*, the actor appeared in more than thirty films of the 1930s. Though he started out in supporting roles, Cagney quickly became a leading man and by the end of the decade, he was a box-office star. In *James Cagney Films of the 1930s*, James L. Neibaur reviews the first decade of the great actor's work. A film-by-film look at Cagney's movies during this pivotal period, this book traces the actor's transition from a song-and-dance man on stage to a tough guy on screen. Although Cagney occasionally was able to deviate from studio typecasting in such films as *Footlight Parade* and *A Midsummer Night's Dream*, his most notable roles were in gangster dramas like *The Public Enemy* and *Angels with Dirty Faces*. Throughout this book, Neibaur provides readers with plot summaries, production details, and critical and commercial reception of each film. For fans of the actor's work, *James Cagney Films of the 1930s* is an invaluable resource that will also appeal to anyone interested in movie-making during one of Hollywood's greatest eras.

The amount of attention Neibaur pays to each film is striking, and his detailed breakdowns of individual scenes are not only insightful, but also convey a love and respect for Cagney and his work. One could watch a Cagney movie and enjoy him immensely, but the brilliance of his talent is really apparent while reading Neibaur's book. The book is also complemented by a stunning array of publicity photos, screenshots, and movie posters featuring Cagney. With *James Cagney Films of the 1930s*, Neibaur more than succeeds at the book's goal of examining the trajectory of Cagney's career and how he developed his screen persona. This book is more insightful than any biography or overview of his entire filmography could ever be. That's not to say that Cagney didn't have a successful career following the 1930s; in fact, he continued to deliver amazing performances in an array of fantastic films, finally getting to branch out from his gangster persona a bit and even winning a Best Actor Oscar for 1942's *'Yankee Doodle Dandy'*. But by focusing on the career-defining years, Neibaur gives readers a chance to watch Cagney the movie star unfold before them, with bracketing chapters filling in the details on some of the rest of his career. It's a fantastic read that is sure to become one of the definitive works on the great James Cagney. (Examiner.com) The format of the book follows along the lines of most of Neibaur's other books in which he will take a classic Hollywood star and focus on a theme or an aspect/time of their career: ie. Clint Eastwood's westerns or Harry Langdon's silent comedies with a chapter dedicated to each film and a credits detailed list for each film. Each film is covered in detail tracing the films from a professional point of view. . . . [T]his is a good read and does effectively focus well on the career-defining films of the decade. (Filmwerk) About the Author: James L. Neibaur is a film historian and educator who has written hundreds of articles, including more than forty essays in the *Encyclopedia Britannica*. He is the author of several books on film, including *The Fall of Buster Keaton* (2010), *Chaplin at Keystone* (2012), *The Silent Films of Harry Langdon* (2012), and *The Charley Chase Talkies* (2013), and coauthor with Terri Niemi of *Buster Keaton's Silent Shorts: 1920-1923* (2013), all published by Scarecrow Press.