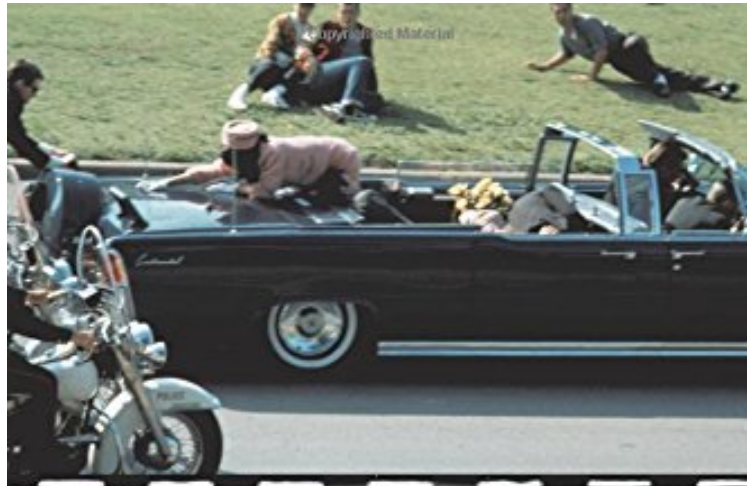


[Library ebook] American History through Hollywood Film: From the Revolution to the 1960s

# American History through Hollywood Film: From the Revolution to the 1960s

Melvyn Stokes

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## AMERICAN HISTORY THROUGH HOLLYWOOD FILM

From the Revolution to the 1960s

MELVYN STOKES



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*American History through Hollywood Film* offers a new perspective on major issues in American history from the 1770s to the end of the twentieth century and explores how they have been represented in film. Melvyn Stokes examines how and why representation has changed over time, looking at the origins, underlying assumptions, production, and reception of an important cross-section of historical films. Chapters deal with key events in American history including the American Revolution, the Civil War and its legacy, the Great Depression, and the anti-communism of the Cold War era. Major themes such as ethnicity, slavery, Native Americans and Jewish immigrants are covered and a final chapter looks at the way the 1960s and 70s have been dealt with by Hollywood. This book is essential reading for anyone studying American history and the relationship between history and film.

*American History through Hollywood Film* is a very useful book. The range of topics and films covered, Stokes's knowledge, rigorous methodology, precise style and experience teaching this topic, make it an indispensable book for a class on American history in Hollywood cinema and a book that should be recommended as an example to all students writing theses or dissertations on the representation of history on film or the relationship between history and cinema. The overviews it offers on each point will provide a good starting point for any student or scholar interested in pursuing them. For all of these reasons, I cannot recommend Stokes's book enough. -- David Roche, Universite Toulouse Jean Jaures Cercles

By drawing on an extensive and well documented range of sources himself, Melvyn Stokes has provided a "one stop shop" for History teachers. Although his focus is America, his pedagogy is easily transferable. This is a book worth including on all faculty bookshelves. History Teachers' Association of NSW

Newsheet A major strength of the book is that it does not try to do too much, providing a highly readable and succinct account of particular pressure points in the American experiment ... Sophisticated in its analysis, this book is well worth reading for any scholar of the subject and a valuable resource to anyone looking for a useful way into a subject that preoccupies academics, critics and audiences alike. -- Gregory Frame U.S. Studies Online

Stokes offers a roughly chronological examination of two hundred years of American history, as portrayed in films produced between 1915 (*The Birth of a Nation*) and 2012 (*Django Unchained*). ... The individual chapters can stand alone, and an introduction by the author offers a persuasive overview of film analysis as historical endeavor. Stokes's *American History through Hollywood Film* is appropriate for undergraduates and will encourage them to think critically about the history they learn at the cinema. -- Cara Rogers, Rice University

The Journal of Southern History In *American History Through Hollywood Film*, Melvyn Stokes offers an impressive overview of filmmakers and audiences' fascination with pivotal periods in the nation's past. With his intelligent analysis and well balanced synthesis of a range of films and historical issues, Stokes has made a significant contribution to the historiography of film and history... The book will be an invaluable resource for students and teachers in a rapidly growing field. -- J. E. Smyth, Associate Professor of History, University of Warwick, UK

*American History through Hollywood Film* is the most readable and wide-ranging book ever published about how movies write US history, and how they reflect the preoccupations of their own time. From the American Revolution to the present, Professor Stokes is nimble and wise in his choice of subjects and themes, his gifts as a storyteller and historian coming together to explain why some films are successful at the box office, endure in the public imagination, or disappear from popular memory. He is never less than fascinating when he analyzes the often strange alchemy between fact and fiction that occurs when historical films are made, paying close attention to the constraints on their production, the imperatives driving their ideology, and the vicissitudes of their reception. -- Robert Lang, Professor of Cinema, University of Hartford, USA

*American History Through Hollywood Film* offers an impressively detailed overview of a lively field of study. Its ten chapters consider the historical periods, events and figures that have captivated filmmakers and audiences from the silent period to recent blockbusters. Each chapter provides a clear and concise commentary on issues of historiography, historical accuracy and interpretation, as well as case studies considering how, when and why key films were made. With topics ranging from the American Revolution to the civil rights movement, and case studies stretching from *The Birth of a Nation* to *Django Unchained*, this is an authoritative and very useful account of Hollywood's treatment of American history. -- Mark Glancy, Queen Mary University of London, UK

With a sharp eye for cinematic detail coupled with historical acuity and old-fashioned research, Melvyn Stokes captures a behind the lens look at some watershed Hollywood pictures that define or-in some cases-interpret significant national events. From the 1776 Revolution to the 1963 Kennedy Assassination, *American History Through Hollywood Film* explains the symbiotic relationship between a country's past and its cinematic interpretation that-once projected on the screen-frequently spins off into fiction, fantasy or, occasionally, falsehood. For historians, sociologists, and movie buffs, this well-crafted book sheds new light on film's persuasive nature to influence and educate. -- Robert Fyne, Kean University, USA

About the Author Melvyn Stokes is Reader in Film History in the Department of History at University College London, UK.