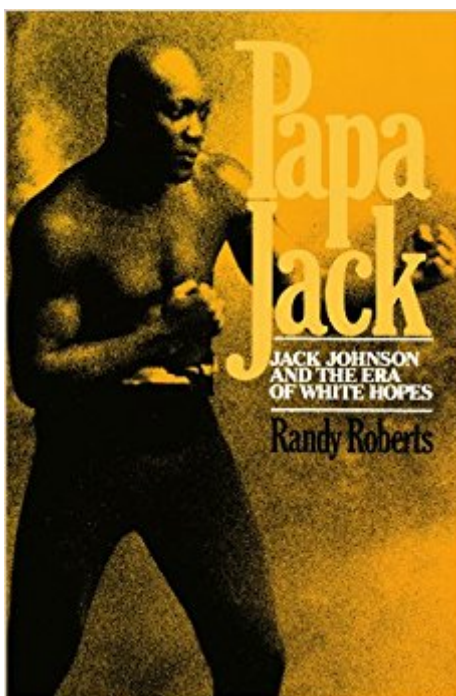


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Papa Jack: Jack Johnson And The Era Of White Hopes



Synopsis

When Jack Johnson defeated white heavyweight champion Jim Jeffries in 1910, it was America's notions of racial superiority that staggered under his blows. Amid riots and lynchings, the search began for the Great White Hope who could put the "uppity" new champion in his place. Here is the startling true story of the most famous-and most hated-black American of his day. "Papa Jack" takes us into a violent and sordid world. It is an astonishing tale of black defiance-and white retribution-set against the dramatic canvas of sports and spectacle in Jim Crow America.

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Customer Reviews

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Interesting and great read for school!

Interesting book. A little tedious at times but detailed and interesting. Shipped fast.

Met expectations on all levels

This book has lack of research, and no facts. I studied the life of Jack Johnson. The author did not do any major research. A lot of biased comments. He never relate that Jack Johnson met black Russian Frederick Bruce Thomas who will finance Johnson big fights in Europe. A lot of missing data. A lot. Please don't waste your money

Besides being the biography of a great heavyweight, this book is a history of race relations at the turn of the 20th C., with plenty of insight. Jack crossed all the lines, pissing off the whites as well as the blacks. He was bigger than life.

I never knew about Jack Johnson until reading this book and I am glad I did. A very interesting story about a man who was ahead of his time.

I found this book to be good reading, as it told of Jack Johnson who was born 31 Mar 1878 and who on 26 Dec 1908 won the heavyweight championship of the world. On July 4, 1910, in what has been described as the Fight of the Century he defeated Jim Jeffries, who was trying to regain the title and who was favored by I suppose every white person in The U.S. I remember my Dad talking about that fight when I was a kid--some 30 or 35 years after the event. Johnson did a lot of stupid and immoral things but one has to feel good that he was able to accomplish as much as he did in a time when bigotry was so vicious. The account of the Jeffries fight is well-done and one suffers through the awful race prejudice which Johnson endured--resulting in his being sent to Federal prison for a year. This is a 1983 book and there probably are better biographies of Johnson but I had ready access to this one and found it good and informative..

I guess it would be too much to objectively view Jack Johnson as a man and not a symbol. As with all Johnson biography's the author apparently feels compelled to reduce his subject to a level that is readily digestible to the reader. Though you don't find the author referring to Johnson as a "shiftless coon" in the tradition of Denzil Batchelor, Mr. Roberts summation that Johnson was "not the hero..." places his work in line with practically every other book written on Jack Johnson. So what makes a man dead 60 years a threat to an establishment and culture which says it long ago set aside the error of its ways in regard to race relations. If this were true would we still be reading books which at every turn question the methods and motives of a Jack Johnson? Would the words of angry racists

in the guise of official government reports carry the weight and ring of truth the author gives them while pointing out frequently that the subjects life style, choice of company and words are subject to scrutiny due to his ego and self-centered nature? In this age of ego driven athletes, businessmen, politicians, clergy etc., it was a wasted point to declare that Johnson's greatest strength "his ego," was his most glaring weakness. I think it safe to make this assumption of many men. Though we have politicians admired for their drive and commitment to the very values which Jack Johnson was and apparently continues to be viewed as a threat to. Their egos nor motives are challenged. What man worth his salt doesn't believe he is the best at the things he commits himself to mastering? Jack Johnson was harshly scrutinized and mistreated because of his ability to dominate his circumstances. Be they opponents or a system which physically, financially and emotionally abused the hopes and dreams of his people, Jack Johnson was an overcomer. Jack Johnson is despised today as a symbol. A bad example of what happens when one man is allowed to much independence. In every since of the word Jack Johnson was a revolutionary. We are told he wasn't a hero, nor was he a man to be admired but I would disagree whole-heartedly. Jack Johnson was simply a man born a century to soon. Mr. Roberts says there is no ghost in the house, but how wrong you are Sir. The ghost is in the house everytime a camera snaps a photo of Tiger Woods and his wife. Everytime you see a clip of Ali with his arms thrust high in the air in victory look closely you'll see the ghost smiling his golden capped smile in the front row. For every man who longs to live free you'll find the ghost dancing in his heart. Long live the spirit of freedom and the ghost of Jack Johnson.

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