



The RKO Gals

James Robert Parish

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Part of the Encore Film Book Classics series, this is a reprint of the text of *The RKO Gals* by James Robert Parish. Movie buff question: what do these 14 actresses have in common: Ann Harding, Constance Bennett, Irene Dunne, Ginger Rogers, Katharine Hepburn, Anne Shirley, Lucille Ball, Joan Fontaine, Wendy Barrie, Lupe Velez, Maureen O'Hara, Jane Russell, Jane Greer, and Barbara Hale? Answer: they all graced the soundstages of RKO Radio Pictures, giving that Hollywood studio its special aura of celluloid chic. Focusing in depth on the lives and movies of these 14 RKO Gals, cinema historian James Robert Parish also discusses such epic productions as *The Outlaw and Suspicion* and the very different styles of such industry titans as Samuel Goldwyn, David O. Selznick, Walt Disney and Howard Hughes who played key roles in the studio's history. Spiced with hundreds of keen-eyed assessments of such movies as *How Green Was My Valley*, *The Fallen Sparrow*, *The Quiet Man*, *The Women*, *Rebecca*, *The Constant Nymph*, *Jane Eyre*, *Letter from an Unknown Woman*, *Out of the Past*, *Man of a Thousand Faces*, *Back Street*, *Roberta*, *Show Boat*, *The Awful Truth*, *I Remember Mama*, *The Window*, *Top Hat*, *Tender Comrade*, and *Kitty Foyle* ... packed with exposés of the behind-the-camera wheeling and dealing intrigues, *The RKO Gals* is a horn-of-plenty of Hollywood goodies on the leading ladies who made RKO a major force in Tinseltown. Each well-documented chapter has detailed cast and credits of the subject's feature film appearances. Formed by RCA on the recommendation of entrepreneur Joseph Kennedy (father of U.S. president John F. Kennedy), RKO thought its sound film patents could monopolize the field ("Radio [RCA] is too big to enter the motion picture field without dominating it"). Things did not quite work out that way. However, thanks in part to angular beauty Katharine Hepburn, stylish Constance Bennett, lithesome Ginger Rogers who teamed with dapper Fred Astaire in several classic musicals, patrician Ann Harding, versatile Irene Dunne, elegant ingénue Joan Fontaine, sexy Mexican spitfire Lupe Velez, fiery redhead Maureen O'Hara, zany workhorse Lucille Ball, doe-eyed Anne Shirley, peppy Wendy Barrie, sizzling Jane Russell, sparkling brunette Barbara Hale, and striking Jane Greer, RKO was one of the major Hollywood movie lots for over 30 years. This dimensional study reveals 14 beautiful reasons why RKO thrived for decades.

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