



The Westerns and War Films of John Ford (Film and History)

Sue Matheson

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Responsible for some of the greatest films of the 20th century—*The Grapes of Wrath*, *How Green Was My Valley*, and *The Quiet Man* among others—John Ford was best known for motion pictures that defined the American West and the face of wartime military. A Hollywood celebrity, Ford lived his life against the background that Twentieth Century-Fox fashioned for him. As he did, the facts of his life merged with—and became inseparable from—his multifaceted legend, fostered by Hollywood’s studio culture and his own imagination.

In *The Westerns and War Films of John Ford* Sue Matheson offers an engaging look at one of America’s greatest directors and the two genres of films that solidified his reputation.

Drawing on previously unreleased material, this volume explores the man, the filmmaker, the veteran, and the legend—and the ways in which all of those roles shaped Ford’s view of America, national character, and his creative output. Among the films discussed here in depth are Ford’s early productions, such as *The Iron Horse* and *Drums along the Mohawk*, his military films, such as *Submarine Patrol*, *The Battle of Midway*, and *They Were Expendable*, and his Westerns, including *Fort Apache*, *She Wore a Yellow Ribbon*, *The Searchers*, and *Cheyenne Autumn*.

Ford imbued many of his creations with a point of view that represented his ideals, and the films discussed here illustrate their director’s distinct vision of American life on the frontier and in service of the country. That vision—Ford’s idealization of the American Character—would, in turn, shape the worldview of several generations. *The Westerns and War Films of John Ford* will appeal to critics and scholars, but also to any fan of this iconic filmmaker’s work.

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