



A Newsman Remembered: Ralph Burdette Jordan and His Times 1896-1953

Robert Smith Jordan

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A Newsmen Remembered is not just the story of the life of Ralph Burdette Jordan (RBJ - or "Jock") - who was a remarkable newspaperman/motion picture publicist/war correspondent. It is also a glimpse into an era of American social and political history that is now, unfortunately, largely forgotten if not discarded. The compelling personalities with whom he engaged- Aimee Semple McPherson, William Randolph Hearst, Louis B. Mayer, General Douglas MacArthur - are but fading memories which this book briefly restores. The first half of the 20th century began as an era of optimism that encompassed a belief that working hard - along with seizing the "main chance" - would produce social, professional and financial success. Ralph Jordan certainly exuded that optimism in everything that he encountered in his short life. Along with his contemporaries, moving into the great (largely ill-defined) middle class was his overarching goal. Within this goal, family life was an important ingredient for him - marriage in his day was still a partnership with clearly defined marital roles and expectations. Ralph and Mary's marriage reflected that domestic configuration. Religious faith - if not always observed to the letter - also formed an important part of their family life. It could not be otherwise for them and those other largely third-generation descendants of Mormon pioneers (and their non-Mormon contemporaries) with whom they associated. These so-called Mormon second- and third-generation diasporans were willing - even eager - to leave behind them the remoteness of what was then described as "Zion," to seek more promising futures elsewhere, retaining as best they could their unique heritage. Thus, Ralph Jordan's story is indeed a "life and times" story worth telling!

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