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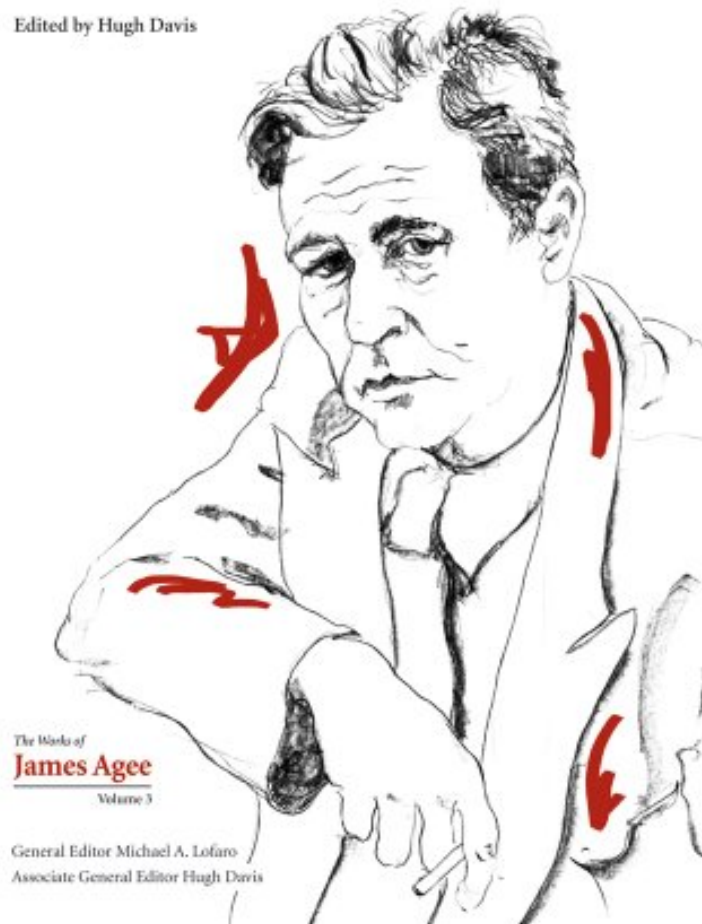
Let Us Now Praise Famous Men: An Annotated Edition of the James Agee Walker Evans Classic, with Supplementary Manuscripts (Collected Works of James Agee)

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Let Us Now Praise Famous Men

An Annotated Edition of the James Agee–Walker Evans
Classic, with Supplementary Manuscripts

Edited by Hugh Davis



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From Univ Tennessee Press : Let Us Now Praise Famous Men: An Annotated Edition of the James Agee Walker Evans Classic, with Supplementary Manuscripts (Collected Works of James Agee) before purchasing it in order to gage whether or not it would be worth my time, and all praised Let Us Now Praise Famous Men: An Annotated

In the summer of 1936, writer James Agee and photographer Walker Evans, on assignment for "Fortune" magazine, went to central Alabama to document the lives of three white sharecropper families. Agee's editors killed the article, and after a torturous five-year struggle to do artistic justice to the material, the author finally published it in book form as "Let Us Now Praise Famous Men," only to see it sink with barely a ripple. The posthumous revival of Agee's literary fortunes led to the work's reissue in 1960, its adoption as an unofficial bible by civil rights workers, and its enshrinement as an American classic. It has remained in print ever since. In this, the third volume in The Works of James Agee series, editor Hugh Davis not only offers a thoroughly annotated edition of the Agee-Evans masterpiece, featuring invaluable explanatory notes as well as notes comparing the published work to extant copies of the original manuscript, but also supplements that text with a wealth of additional material: an insightful critical essay, variant versions of key sections, unused chapters, correspondence between Agee and others involved in the book's publication (notably Houghton Mifflin editor Robert Linscott), generous selections from the author's notebooks, and much more. This volume opens with the original gallery of Evans's thirty-one photographs from the 1941 edition and also includes, as part of the supplementary material, the expanded gallery of sixty-two photos that appeared in the 1960 edition. Here as well is the text of the rejected "Fortune" article, "Cotton Tenants," fully annotated for the first time. Informed by Agee's love of his subjects, his acute observational skills, and his poetic, passionate, raging voice--not to mention the stark artistry of Evan's black and white photography "Let Us Now Praise Famous Men" is a book that to this day defies easy classification. This volume recaptures the aesthetic impact of the original, corrects errors from earlier editions, and, most important, illuminates the difficult process that spawned its creation.

"Agee's "Let Us Now Praise Famous Men" is the Moby Dick of nonfiction. Both masterpieces have elements of the style and tone of fiction and of the information and tone of nonfiction. Hugh Davis has put together all the components that went into the making and remaking of Agee's epic subjective saga. Solidly scholarly on the loftiest level, this compilation may be read in the spirit and with the effect of one's reading of the first published version--Agee's profound exploration of various kinds of perspectives on what he saw and felt in Alabama." --David Madden
About the Author
Hugh Davis is an associate professor of English at Piedmont College in Demorest, Georgia. He is the author of "The Making of James Agee" and coeditor, with Michael A. Lofaro, of "James Agee Rediscovered: The Journals of "Let Us Now Praise Famous Men "and Other New Manuscripts," both published by the University of Tennessee Press.