

Go West, Young Women!: The Rise of Early Hollywood

Hilary Hallett

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In the early part of the twentieth century, migrants made their way from rural homes to cities in record numbers and many traveled west. Los Angeles became a destination. Women flocked to the growing town to join the film industry as workers and spectators, creating a "New Woman." Their efforts transformed filmmaking from a marginal business to a cosmopolitan, glamorous, and bohemian one. By 1920, Los Angeles had become the only western city where women outnumbered men. In Go West, Young Women, Hilary A. Hallett explores these relatively unknown new western women and their role in the development of Los Angeles and the nascent film industry. From Mary Pickford's rise to become perhaps the most powerful woman of her age, to the racist moral panics of the post-World War I years that culminated in Hollywood's first sex scandal, Hallett describes how the path through early Hollywood presaged the struggles over modern gender roles that animated the century to come.



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