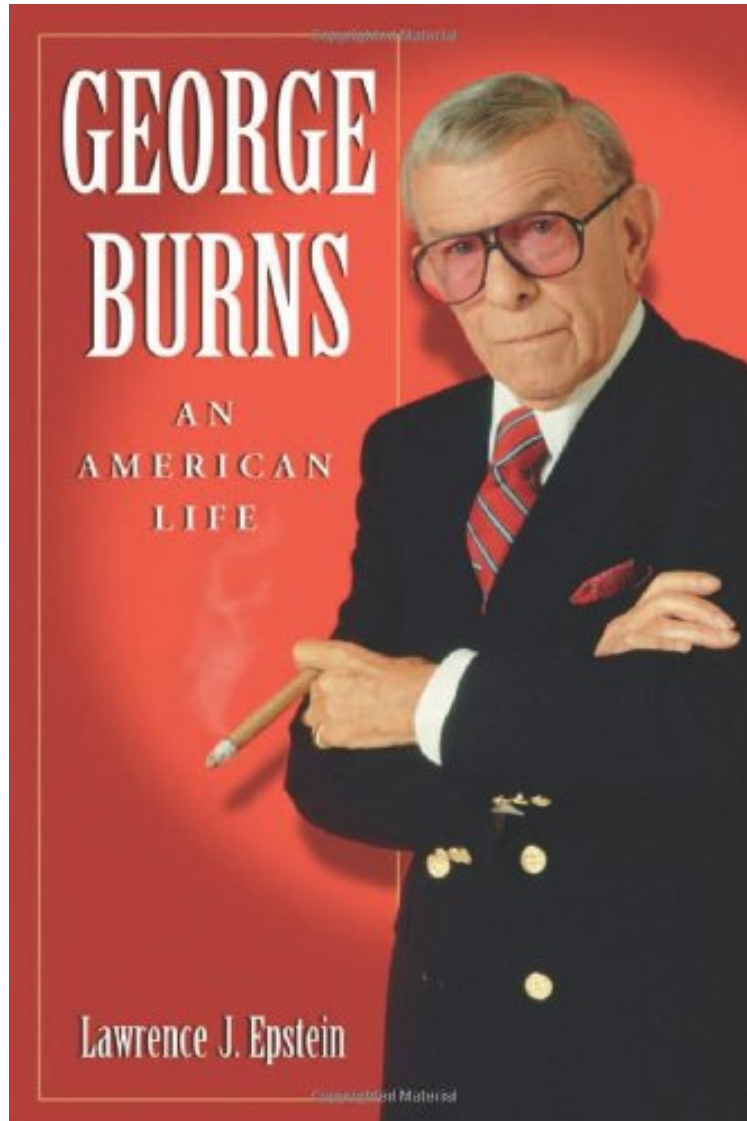


(Free) George Burns: An American Life

## George Burns: An American Life

*Lawrence J. Epstein*

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**Lawrence J. Epstein : George Burns: An American Life** before purchasing it in order to gauge whether or not it would be worth my time, and all praised George Burns: An American Life:

6 of 6 people found the following review helpful. George Burns and Larry Epstein at their best! By Gary E. Eddey This highly readable book on the life and times of George Burns is a gem! It is exhaustive in its scope, yet accomplishes its goal of providing the reader with a great experience as well as a comprehensive look at the comedian known to several generations of those who were lucky enough to have lived during the century Mr. Burns lived. I learned more than I had anticipated, including the fact that Mr. Burns was one of the producers of my favorite TV show, "Mr. Ed". Yes, I

admit that I loved that show. The author uses various methods of telling the story, including through the eyes of George and Gracie by using their own comedy routines. And how old was Gracie anyway? There is so much in this book that it is hard to summarize; suffice it to say that after reading Mr. Epstein's book the reader will know the real Mr. Burns. 0 of 0 people found the following review helpful. No George without Gracie By TR Johnson I devoured the Kindle version of this very readable and enjoyable book in a day. While the author focused on George Burns, the bulk of the book delves into his and Gracie's professional and personal relationship, which is wonderfully and humorously told. Epstein traces the development of their famous characters in their effort to achieve fame, which resulted in George essentially losing his real identity of Nathan Birnbaum once Gracie died. One of the themes Epstein stresses is Burns' need for attention and to hide all unpleasantries from public view. Perhaps Burns' greatest acting achievement was subverting his ego to make Gracie the undisputed star of the act, thus giving him the fame he craved. Burns was no slouch, though, and he spent almost the rest of their marriage keeping their act alive after the death of vaudeville, the rise of radio and into television through hard work and good writers and convincing Gracie to continue, long after her desire for stardom had been quenched. All in all, Burns comes across as a thoughtful and adaptable performer, despite the occasional rough patch. As good as the book is, I think \$9.99 would have been a fairer price due to its length (hint, hint). 0 of 0 people found the following review helpful. Great title By Customer So much about George and Gracie I did not know about. It is a very solid book that I enjoyed. I was watching the old TV shows as I was reading this and gives you a great education into their lives. It is the only George Burns bio on Kindle and a good one at that

Having entered the world in 1896 as a poverty-stricken child named Naftaly (Nathan) Birnbaum, George Burns rose from New York's Lower East Side to the uppermost heights of celebrity in the entertainment industry. His storied romance with Gracie Allen led to their success in vaudeville, films, radio and television as one of the greatest comedy teams in history. Burns experienced both tragedy and triumph during his 100-year lifespan, ultimately recovering from the death of his beloved Gracie in 1964 to re-emerge as a solo performer and an Oscar-winning actor. This all-inclusive biography explores George Burns's career against the backdrop of American entertainment history in the 20th century. His loves, his close friendship with Jack Benny, his rivalry with Groucho Marx, and his latter-day success in films are all carefully detailed.

About the Author Lawrence J. Epstein has written extensively on the history of comedy teams and the influence of Jewish humor in America. From 1974 to 2008 he was a professor of English at Suffolk County Community College in New York.