

Brer Rabbit, Uncle Remus, and the 'Cornfield Journalist': The Tale of Joel Chandler Harris

Walter M. Brasch



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Joel Chandler Harris was widely praised by his contemporaries for his writing and insights into black American folklore and language. His works were translated into more than thirty languages, and he was second only to Mark Twain in popularity with the American public. This book explores Harris's four-decade newspaper and literary career which remained a key part of his life and character even after he achieved critical and financial success in literature. Harris is not widely known today. Like Brer Rabbit getting stuck in the tar baby, by the 1950s Uncle Remus stories were politicized and often stuck with racist labels, partly because of the depiction of Uncle Remus in Disney's 1946 movie Song of the South and partly because of the movie's extensive use of American Black English. Brasch defends the accuracy of Harris's literary depiction of both American Black English and Reconstruction Georgia. Brasch also examines the nature of fame and places a variety of other social and political issues in the context of this major American writer. Brer Rabbit, Uncle Remus, and the Cornfield Journalist: The Tale of Joel Chandler Harris is essential reading for anyone interested in social history, Southern history, journalism, literature, popular culture, or Harris himself.

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