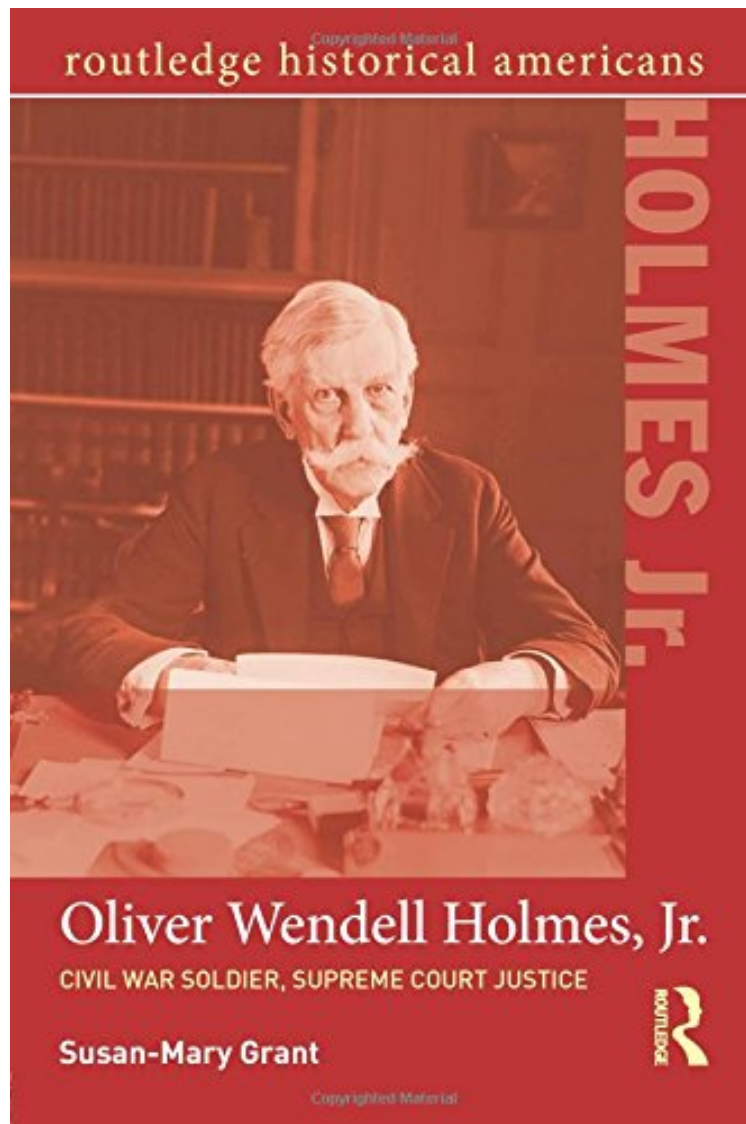


[Mobile ebook] Oliver Wendell Holmes, Jr.: Civil War Soldier, Supreme Court Justice (Routledge Historical Americans)

Oliver Wendell Holmes, Jr.: Civil War Soldier, Supreme Court Justice (Routledge Historical Americans)

Susan-Mary Grant

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Susan-Mary Grant : Oliver Wendell Holmes, Jr.: Civil War Soldier, Supreme Court Justice (Routledge Historical Americans) before purchasing it in order to gage whether or not it would be worth my time, and all praised Oliver Wendell Holmes, Jr.: Civil War Soldier, Supreme Court Justice (Routledge Historical Americans):

1 of 1 people found the following review helpful. A New Justice Holmes Bio By Ronald H. Clark Having read virtually every Holmes bio, I had minimal hopes for this new volume. First, it is relatively short--169 pages of text and notes; 30 pages devoted to 10 related documents. Second, the author is a British academic historian with no prior involvement with Holmes. Finally, what really new could be said about Holmes? I could not have been more mistaken. While the book covers the conventional aspects of OWH's life--Boston youth; Civil War warrior; postwar education and scholarship; appointment to the Massachusetts Supreme Judicial Court and the U.S. Supreme Court; and his judicial legacy--the author has managed to develop a somewhat fresh and novel interpretation which makes her analysis really come alive. She is not afraid to challenge some conventional theories about Holmes; for example, she is not at all convinced that his Civil War experience, as brutal as it may have been, played such a dominant role in shaping his character and later outlook. The author also succinctly discusses some of the major books that shaped the different ideological periods of his life. For example, Ida Tarbell's *History of Standard Oil*, Henry Demarest Lloyd's "Wealth against Commonwealth," and Henry George's "Progress and Poverty," as well as his membership in the famous philosophical Metaphysical Club, are all touched upon--particularly appropriate given OWH's extensive background and interests in philosophy and literature. The big issue re Holmes is what made him tick? The author wisely points out that between his birth (1841) and death (1935), the U.S. population went from 17 million to 124 million. That is, a whole bunch of change took place during his very long life which should caution us about too easily developing psychological theories to explain his thinking. In fact, the author's Holmes, especially in his formative period, emerges somewhat foggy and indistinct since we are not really sure how much he saw the Civil War as a necessary end to slavery, why he concluded he could continue to indulge in philosophy while practicing law, and why he concluded that objective external standards of behavior were better than motive and intentions in assigning legal liability. So the author does not profess to have all the answers about Holmes, and this enhances her credibility. Some aspects of the book particularly stand out. Her analysis of Holmes in the Civil War is probably the best I have ever seen. She chides many students of OWH for passing over too quickly his 20 year period on the Supreme Judicial Court prior to TR's elevation of him to the U.S. Supreme Court. She also argues that Holmes fundamentally was an "evolutionary historian" in his legal scholarship. The author covers some of OWH's major Supreme Court decision, but while this is not a book of sophisticated legal analysis, the key points come through. The author also finishes up with one of the most important aspects of Holmes, his surprising popular conversion into a liberal "great dissenter" because of the proselytizing activities of Frankfurter, Walter Lippmann, and other folks at the "New Republic." In a short book, the author cannot focus upon all aspects of Holmes or any in exhaustive detail. Her book is a suggestive interpretation with elements that many will challenge. But as a short treatment of Holmes, or as one important building block for serious students of the Justice, this book is somewhat essential. Her bibliography and notes are quite helpful in highlighting the key documentary evidence on Holmes. I am certainly quite happy to repudiate my mistaken assumptions about this book and declare it is indeed a fine volume worth anyone's serious attention.

Oliver Wendell Holmes, Jr., was one of the most influential jurists of his time. From the antebellum era and the Civil War through the First World War and into the New Deal years, Holmes' long life and career as a Supreme Court Justice spanned an eventful period of American history, as the country went from an agrarian republic to an industrialized world power. In this concise, engaging book, Susan-Mary Grant puts Holmes' life in national context, exploring how he both shaped and reflected his changing country. She examines the impact of the Civil War on his life and his thinking, his role in key cases ranging from the issue of free speech in *Schenck v. United States* to the infamous ruling in favor of eugenics in *Buck v. Bell*, showing how behind Holmes reputation as a liberal justice lay a more complex approach to law that did not neatly align with political divisions. Including a selection of key primary documents, *Oliver Wendell Holmes, Jr.* introduces students of U.S., Civil War, and legal history to a game-changing figure and his times.

"In this stylish distillation of the life of a towering American, Susan-Mary Grant wrestles brilliantly with the question of what Oliver Wendell Holmes' Civil War experience meant for his subsequent career as a jurist. Richly informed and elegant in argument, this is contextualised biography of a very high order." Richard Carwardine, author of *The Global Lincoln* "This is a superb biography of one of the most influential American jurists of all time. Consistently incisive, it demonstrates not only how Justice Holmes was affected by his jarring experience of battle during the Civil War but also how, subsequently, he sought to negotiate his country's equally painful transition to modernity." Robert Cook, author of *Secession Winter: When the Union Fell Apart* "Susan-Mary Grant expertly tracks Holmes from the battlefields of the Civil War to the legal minefields of the Progressive era, deftly navigating his complex positions on slavery, free speech, and other issues. Understanding Holmes, we better understand America's passage into the twentieth century." Paul Quigley, author of *Shifting Grounds: Nationalism and the American South, 1848-65* About the Author Susan-Mary Grant is Professor of American History at Newcastle University. Her previous books include *A Concise History of the United States of America*, *The War for a Nation: The American Civil War*, *North Over South: Northern Nationalism and American Identity in the Antebellum Era*, and *Themes of the American Civil War: The War*

Between the States (co-edited with Brian Holden-Reid).