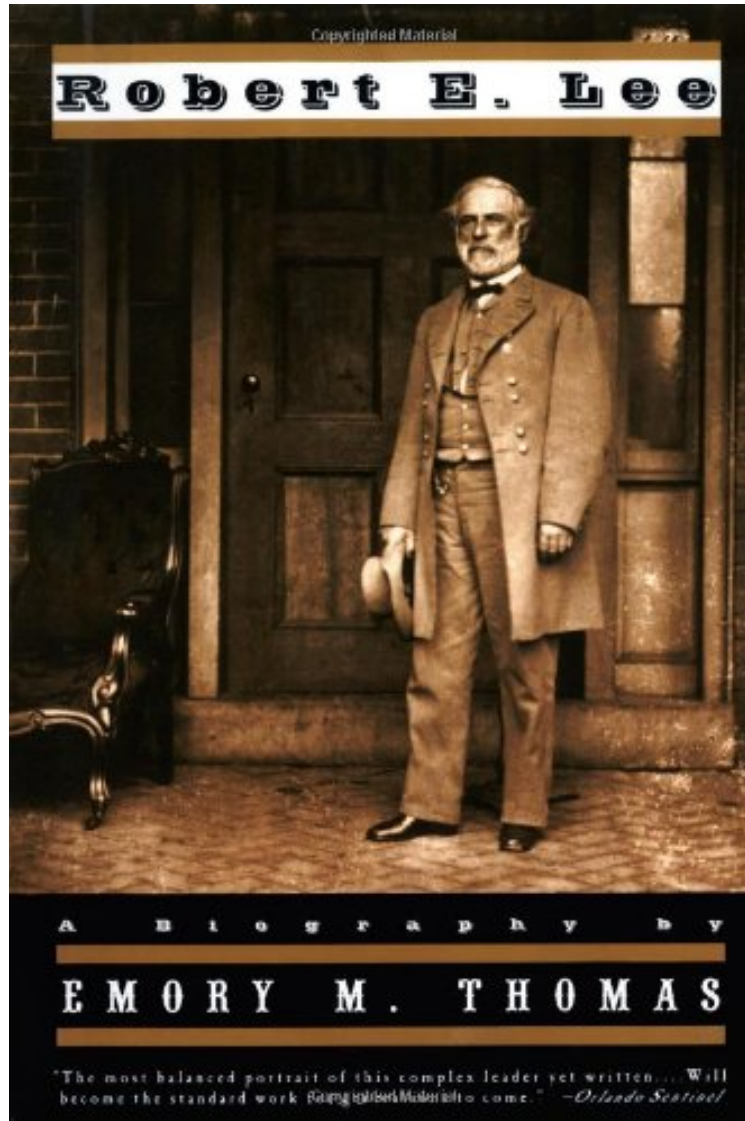


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Robert E. Lee: A Biography

Emory M. Thomas

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Emory M. Thomas : Robert E. Lee: A Biography before purchasing it in order to gauge whether or not it would be worth my time, and all praised Robert E. Lee: A Biography:

0 of 1 people found the following review helpful. Everything you have read about General Lee w/flaws brought out. By Carl Much more detailed than anything you have read about General Lee in other publications. You would expect this since it is a biography. But, it takes you into General Lee as a person and not just a commander of the Army of Virginia. Some things like his penchant for communicating w/young ladies is a little off-putting. But, it is this kind of information that knocks Lee off of the marble pedestal a little. A brilliant tactical and strategic commander

moving and reacting w/his fewer troops and supplies. He does make mistakes, and he admits this openly. This again is another facet of Lee you do not get by just reviewing individual battles. Like Grant, there is a command of an entire army that we tend to forget. Just because Lee is directly involved in Antietam for example does not mean he is not responsible for the western corps and those south toward Mobile and New Orleans as well as always worrying about the protection of Richmond. 0 of 0 people found the following review helpful. Robert E. Lee demystified By Research Guy A good clear look at the man - his brilliance in command tempered by his inability to be a tough commander. His experience in the Mexican-American War is particularly interesting. This is a good read except for the bits about his wife which go on and on and on. That part could have been summarized in one word, dysfunctional. 0 of 0 people found the following review helpful. Five Stars By steven cook An excellent biography into a complex man

"The best and most balanced of the Lee biographies." New York Review of Books The life of Robert E. Lee is a story not of defeat but of triumph? triumph in clearing his family name, triumph in marrying properly, triumph over the mighty Mississippi in his work as an engineer, and triumph over all other military men to become the towering figure who commanded the Confederate army in the American Civil War. But late in life Lee confessed that he "was always wanting something." In this probing and personal biography, Emory Thomas reveals more than the man himself did. Robert E. Lee has been, and continues to be, a symbol and hero in the American story. But in life, Thomas writes, Lee was both more and less than his legend. Here is the man behind the legend. Photographs, drawings

From Publishers Weekly Thomas, a distinguished historian of the Civil War (*The Confederacy as a Revolutionary Experience*), has written a major analytical biography of Robert E. Lee. Synthesizing printed and manuscript sources, he presents Lee as neither the icon of Douglas Southall Freeman nor the flawed figure presented by Thomas Connolly. Lee emerges instead as a man of paradoxes, whose frustrations and tribulations were the basis for his heroism. Lee's work was his play, according to the author, and throughout his life he made the best of his lot. Believing that evil springs from selfishness, he found release in service to his family, his country and, not least, to the men he led. One of history's great captains and most beloved generals, he refused to take himself too seriously. This comic vision of life ultimately shaped an individual who was both more and less than his legend. Highly recommended. Photos not seen by PW. Copyright 1995 Reed Business Information, Inc. From Library Journal Gen. Robert Edward Lee was a leader who inspired great devotion among the men who followed him, and he continues to inspire great interest to this day. Thomas (*The Confederate Nation, 1861-1865*, 1979) presents a fresh look at the general. By examining Lee as a person, the biographer renders him intensely human. Lee is shown to be the son of an unstable father, a frustrated husband, and a devoted parent. He encountered many hardships but became great not "because of what he did ...but because of the way he lived." Given the prodigious number of Lee biographies available, this may be an optional purchase, but it is nonetheless a valuable addition to the studies of the general. Robert A. Curtis, Taylor Memorial P.L., Cuyahoga Falls, Ohio Copyright 1995 Reed Business Information, Inc. From Booklist Thomas positions this life of the Marble Man as a corrective to critical appraisals such as Alan Nolan's *Lee Reconsidered* (1991). Both authors must contend with Douglas Southall Freeman's enduring *R. E. Lee* (1934), so what a revealing delight are Thomas' newly mined nuggets that humanize the image of the imperturbable, heroic, saintly, and suffering Lee. Thomas extracts them from Lee's pre-Civil War career, when he was mastering battlements (as an engineer) before mastering battles. Family life predominates, especially the legacy of Lee's famed father, "Light Horse" Harry Lee, Washington's cavalry chief, who landed in debtors prison. Thomas makes the case that that disgrace impelled the son on a lifelong, if subconscious, quest to repair by personal example the family name; hence Lee's legendary devotion to honor, duty, and courtesy. Perhaps his unspoken embarrassment was compounded by dependence on others for a living (his wealthy wife, the military, a college). The war narratives are professionally rendered (Thomas is many times an acclaimed Civil War author), but always in focus is the shy, conflict-avoiding Lee personality, excepting conflicts at the Seven Days and elsewhere, of course. Be Lee traitor or patriot, he is a compelling American figure. This fine work is an obligatory acquisition. Gilbert Taylor