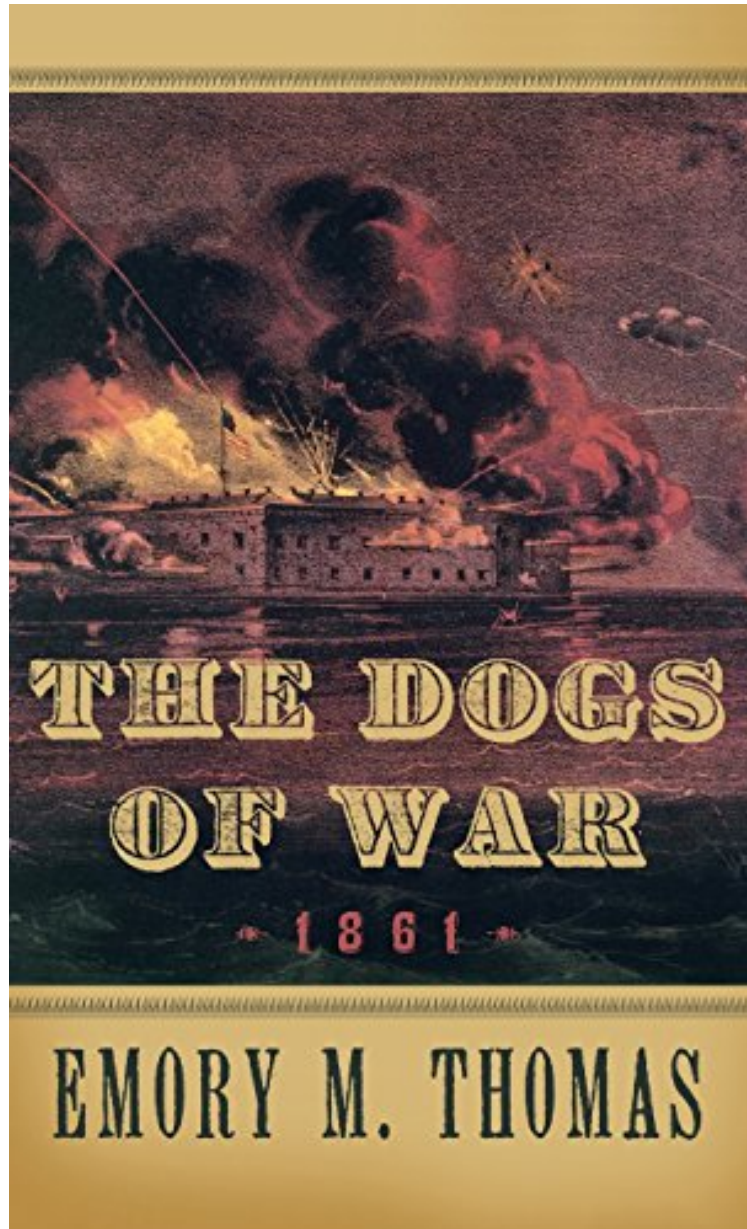


[Ebook pdf] The Dogs of War: 1861

The Dogs of War: 1861

Emory M. Thomas

*DOC | *audiobook | ebooks | Download PDF | ePub*



[Download](#)

[Read Online](#)

#1867209 in Books Thomas Emory M 2011-05-06Original language:EnglishPDF # 1 5.70 x .90 x 8.30l, .60
#File Name: 0195174704128 pagesThe Dogs of War 1861 | File size: 67.Mb

Emory M. Thomas : The Dogs of War: 1861 before purchasing it in order to gage whether or not it would be worth my time, and all praised The Dogs of War: 1861:

0 of 0 people found the following review helpful. A debate sparkerBy HHIn this slim volume, longtime Civil War historian and emeritus professor of history at the University of Georgia Emory M. Thomas offers readers a self-

described "think book" (p. ix). Although cast as a revisionist history of the months leading up to the Civil War, from Abraham Lincoln's election to the presidency in November 1860 to the first Battle of Bull Run in July 1861, Thomas's analysis, while stimulating at times, is reminiscent of an older historiographical tradition. Harkening back to the "blundering generation" school of the immediate post-World War II period, Thomas writes that "the Civil War happened because nearly no one had a clue about what they were doing" (p. ix). In support of this thesis, Thomas devotes an entire chapter to popular attitudes during the martial moment, when more peaceful solutions were cast aside and the choice for war was made. He makes great hay of the widespread belief in the North and the South in early 1861 that war, if it came, would be brief. Thomas is especially critical of President Lincoln, who wrongly characterized secession as an "artificial crisis" (p. 18). But as the author demonstrates, both northern and southern political leaders merely reflected the popular assumptions. Most Americans naively assumed that if war came -- and many doubted this possibility -- it would be short, decisive, and perhaps even good for the nation. To be fair to Civil War-era Americans, however, Thomas should have provided some comparison with other societies on the brink of war, particularly Europe in August 1914. Many have opted for war believing that victory for their side would be quick and effortless. Otherwise, who would go to war in the first place? Furthermore, emerging military technologies often produce devastating results early in conflicts, forcing everyone to recalculate the costs of war. Both the North and the South did this and decided to carry on in the face of the Civil War's destructiveness, no matter what false notions they held at the outset. In chapter 2, Thomas fully reveals one of his purposes in writing this book by drawing stark comparisons between the Civil War and the 2003 invasion of Iraq. As for the earlier struggle, he provides a series of vignettes to demonstrate that those in decision-making positions never consulted professional soldiers, which produced a myriad of false assumptions. As further proof of the politicians' limited vision, the Union and Confederate governments selected wholly inadequate, if not criminal, men to occupy the all-important posts of secretary of war. This brought about a series of contingencies and unintended consequences, foremost of which in Thomas's mind was prisoner abuse. In comparing Andersonville and Abu Ghraib, the author makes the mystifying assertion that next to the latter, its Civil War predecessor seemed "like summer camp" (p. 36). Inaccurate comparisons aside, Simon Cameron's appointment reflected less "the degree of seriousness with which it [Lincoln's administration] took the coming conflict" than the reality of mid-19th-century political patronage practices and the need to reward Pennsylvania for supporting Lincoln's nomination at the 1860 Republican National Convention (p. 25). In two chapters that evaluate the leadership provided by Lincoln and Confederate president Jefferson Davis, Thomas concludes that Davis had a better idea of what was going on in the spring and early summer of 1861. Lincoln's greatest failing, according to the author, proved to be his inability to comprehend the white South's commitment to slavery and secession, especially among the plain folk. In Lincoln's first inaugural address, Thomas detects a president "all but obsessed with accommodating the South," but to no avail (p. 45). In addition, Lincoln's call for 75,000 three-month volunteers and subsequent convening of a special session of Congress in July proved his lack of foresight, since the Militia Act of 1795 prohibited the president from extending military service beyond 90 days with Congress in session. Others will surely read these two events differently. In contrast, Davis, who is described by Thomas as "almost savvy," possessed the foresight to recognize the potential for a long war (p. 63). Ironically, the extended conflict that Davis anticipated and Lincoln failed to comprehend ultimately proved the latter to be a far better commander in chief. Admitting that the North benefited from Lincoln's leadership, Thomas characterizes him as a "great man" and "extraordinary president" whose "capacity to learn and grow" served his country well (p. 37). This leaves one to ponder the long-term significance of having a better grasp of the situation on the eve of war. In his concluding chapter, Thomas acknowledges the circumstances that probably proved decisive in defining both men's initial views of the conflict, writing that "Lincoln had to deny the legitimacy of secession" while "Davis had to act out independence" (p. 90). This, perhaps more than anything else, best explains their early outlooks and actions. Thomas closes with one final jab at the Bush administration's mishandling of the Iraq War, asking rhetorically of First Bull Run: "July 21, 1861: mission accomplished?" (p. 87) This book should succeed in sparking debate in undergraduate classrooms. Specialists, however, may find its brevity and sweeping generalizations less than satisfying.

0 of 0 people found the following review helpful. An Interesting - But Very Short - Work! By Gilberto Villahermosa This book is well written, interesting, and insightful. There is little here that is truly new and the author spends too much time using this work to express his views on the United States and its military in its current wars in Iraq and Afghanistan. This short book is actually a series of short essays. Well worth the Kindle sale price. Recommended for those interested in the American Civil War.

0 of 0 people found the following review helpful. Interesting slice of Civil War history By melo drifter Understanding the miss-understandings between the North and South leadership provides yet another clue to the way in which wars come about even when not the intent of the parties involved. This short book (almost an essay) provides some useful insights into the (wishful) thinking of both sides. It delves to small extent into how the people involved formed the conceptions of their opponents will and capability. Found it useful for going back and looking at some of the older works such as Shelby to better understand those works underlying messages.

In 1861, Americans thought that the war looming on their horizon would be brief. None foresaw that they were

embarking on our nation's worst calamity, a four-year bloodbath that cost the lives of more than half a million people. But as eminent Civil War historian Emory Thomas points out in this stimulating and provocative book, once the dogs of war are unleashed, it is almost impossible to rein them in. In *The Dogs of War*, Thomas highlights the delusions that dominated each side's thinking. Lincoln believed that most Southerners loved the Union, and would be dragged unwillingly into secession by the planter class. Jefferson Davis could not quite believe that Northern resolve would survive the first battle. Once the Yankees witnessed Southern determination, he hoped, they would acknowledge Confederate independence. These two leaders, in turn, reflected widely held myths. Thomas weaves his exploration of these misconceptions into a tense narrative of the months leading up to the war, from the "Great Secession Winter" to a fast-paced account of the Fort Sumter crisis in 1861. Emory M. Thomas's books demonstrate a breathtaking range of major Civil War scholarship, from *The Confederacy as a Revolutionary Experience* and the landmark *The Confederate Nation*, to definitive biographies of Robert E. Lee and J.E.B. Stuart. In *The Dogs of War*, he draws upon his lifetime of study to offer a new perspective on the outbreak of our national Iliad.

"Intelligent and engaging. Thomas's musings will remind readers that wars should not be left to either generals or politicians alone. An instructive lesson recommended for any free people thinking they can control events, especially wars, simply because they think their cause is just."--Library Journal
About the Author
Emory M. Thomas is Professor of History Emeritus at the University of Georgia. His books include *Robert E. Lee: A Biography*, *Bold Dragoon: The Life of J.E.B. Stuart*, and *The Confederate Nation, 1861-1865*.