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Honorable Justice: The Life of Oliver Wendell Holmes

Sheldon M. Novick

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Sheldon M. Novick : Honorable Justice: The Life of Oliver Wendell Holmes before purchasing it in order to gage whether or not it would be worth my time, and all praised Honorable Justice: The Life of Oliver Wendell Holmes:

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The first biography of Supreme Court Justice Oliver Wendell Holmes, the best known figure in the history of American law. His book "The Common Law" is still in print after 100 years, and is considered to be one of the great

works of American legal history. Holmes was a complex figure, considerably different from the grandfatherly figure of popular legend. Although he was seen as a role model by three generations of liberal reformers, he at one time adhered to a primitive type of fascism. This account of his life and work spans the years from the Civil War battlefields of his youth, to the impassioned constitutional battles of his old age.

From Library Journal
The importance of family and friends to U.S. Supreme Court Justice Oliver Wendell Holmes Jr. is apparent in this very readable biography of his life in and out of the courtroom. The first general biography on Holmes since Silas Bent's *Justice Oliver Wendell Holmes: A Biography* (Vanguard, 1932; AMS Pr., 1969. repr.) and Catherine Drinker Bowen's *Yankee From Olympus* (o.p.), this covers his early life, his action in the Civil War, law school and his early career, nearly 20 years as justice and then chief justice of the Supreme Court of Massachusetts, and, finally, 30 years as a U.S. Supreme Court Justice. Excerpts from his letters, poetry, writings, and court opinions demonstrate his personal feelings as well as his direct and innovative political opinions. David Burton's *Oliver Wendell Holmes, Jr.* (Krieger, 1979) and Felix Frankfurter's *Mr. Justice Holmes and the Supreme Court* (o.p.) and Mark Howe's uncompleted multivolume *Justice Oliver Wendell Holmes* (o.p.) focused mainly on analysis of his writings and court opinions. This new work will appeal to the general reader as well as the scholar. For academic and public libraries.- Louise Stwalley, Univ. of Colorado Lib., Denver
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