

The Marble Man: Images Depict Lee, His Friends, And His Legend

Ronald R. Seagrave

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Recommended Citation

Seagrave, Ronald R. (2000) "The Marble Man: Images Depict Lee, His Friends, And His Legend," *Civil War Book Review*: Vol. 2 : Iss. 2 .

Available at: <https://digitalcommons.lsu.edu/cwbr/vol2/iss2/21>

Review

THE MARBLE MAN

Images depict Lee, his friends, and his legend

Seagrave, Ronald R.

Spring 2000

Thomas, Emory M. *Robert E. Lee: An Album*. W. W. Norton, ISBN 393047784

Robert E. Lee: An Album tells of Lee's life through images. "This book is an album in the literal sense," author Emory M. Thomas explains. "It contains pictures, contemporary with Lee and with us, of places associated with Lee. It includes pictures of people Lee knew and pictures of Lee. Here is some of the visual record of what history and hucksters have done with Lee."

Thomas's scholarship, found in his earlier work entitled *Robert E. Lee: A Biography*, has already found its own place in Civil War historical literature and is reflected in this album as well. His offering here is not only a chronological array of period photos, drawings, letters, diary entries, historical objects, and ephemera associated with Lee and his surroundings, but also is an insightful overview of Lee, making him a more recognizable human personality.

The **Album** outlines the major events of Lee's various assignments: first, as a civil engineer whose accomplishments included diverting the waters of the Mississippi to prevent floods; then, as a young and gifted officer in the Federal army who made a mark for himself during the Mexican-American War; next his tenure as superintendent at West Point followed by his efforts to keep the Confederate cause alive, until his final forced surrender at Appomattox. The tale finally concludes with Lee's serving as president of today's Washington and Lee University in Lexington, Virginia.

Clearly Thomas's annotated collection of ephemera, the **Album** should not be considered the complete album of every known image of, or relating to, Lee. A handsome work, with 156 color and rare black-and-white images, it should lure students of Lee and Civil War buffs alike into visually discovering the world of Virginia's Robert E. Lee. With 135 pages, cast in a pictorial maroon dust

jacket and featuring an index, **Robert E. Lee: An Album** would also serve well as a companion to Thomas's earlier biography of Lee.

Ronald R. Seagrave, director of Sergeant Kirkland's Museum and Historical Society, is author of Civil War Books: Confederate & Union, Including Related Titles Ranging from Historical Archeological to Slavery and Civil War Autographs & Manuscripts.