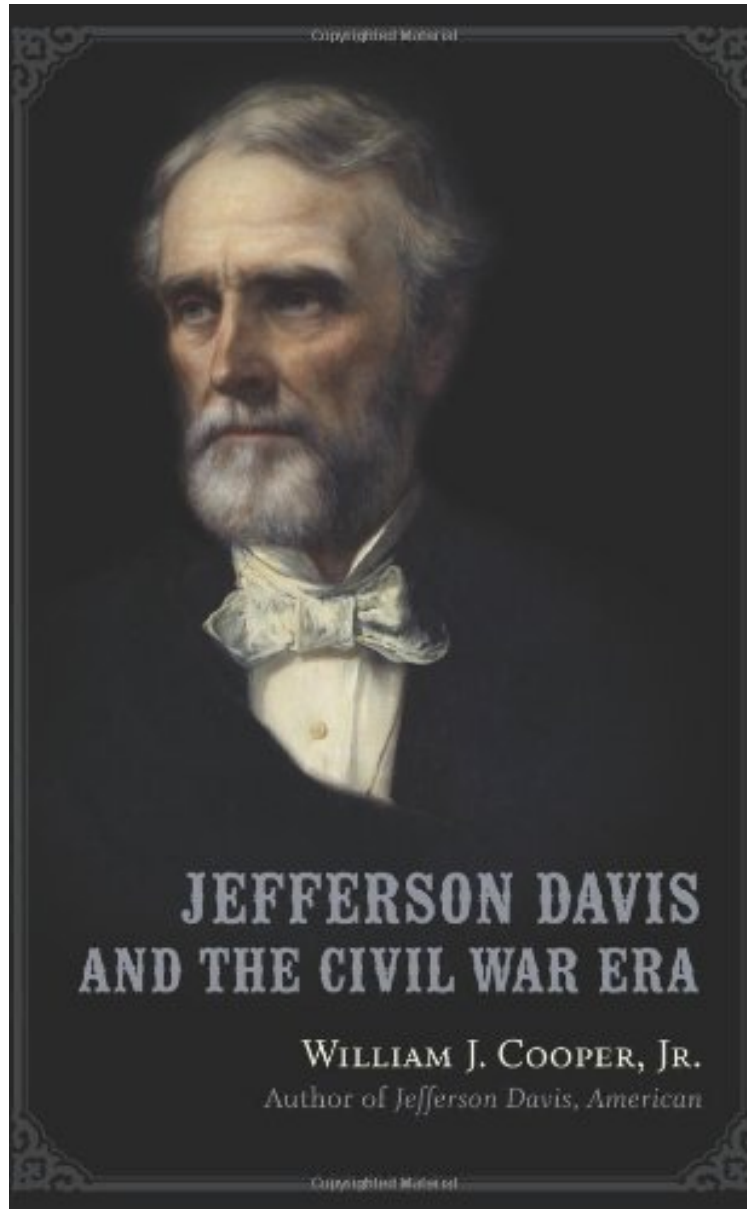


[Free] Jefferson Davis and the Civil War Era

Jefferson Davis and the Civil War Era

Jr. William J. Cooper

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In his masterpiece, Jefferson Davis, American, William J. Cooper, Jr., crafted a sweeping, definitive biography and established himself as the foremost scholar on the intriguing Confederate president. Cooper narrows his focus considerably in Jefferson Davis and the Civil War Era, training his expert eye specifically on Davis's participation in and influence on events central to the American Civil War. Nine self-contained essays address how Davis reacted to and dealt with a variety of issues that were key to the coming of the war, the war itself, or in memorializing the war, sharply illuminating Davis's role during those turbulent years. Cooper opens with an analysis of Davis as an antebellum politician, challenging the standard view of Davis as either a dogmatic priest of principle or an inept bureaucrat. Next, he looks closely at Davis's complex association with secession, which included, surprisingly, a profound devotion to the Union. Six studies explore Davis and the Confederate experience, with topics including states' rights, the politics of command and strategic decisions, Davis in the role of war leader, the war in the West, and the meaning of the war. The final essay compares and contrasts Davis's first inauguration in Montgomery, Alabama, in 1861 with a little-known dedication of a monument to Confederate soldiers in the same city twenty-five years later. In 1886, Davis -- an old man of seventy-eight and in poor health -- had himself become a living monument, Cooper explains, and was an essential element in the formation of the Lost Cause ideology. Cooper's succinct interpretations provide straightforward, compact, and deceptively deep new approaches to understanding Davis during the most critical time in his life. Certain to stimulate further thought and spark debate, Jefferson Davis and the Civil War Era offers rare insight into one of American history's most complicated and provocative figures.

From Booklist Jefferson Davis is synonymous with the Confederacy, which is synonymous with the Civil War. Even though Davis had a distinguished career before assuming the Confederate presidency (as U.S. senator and secretary of war under President Pierce) and lived many years after Appomattox, Davis' "participation" in the Civil War and how he addressed the important aspects of being chief executive of a new and besieged nation are the focus here. These nine essays distill the author's thinking as displayed in more comprehensive fashion in his lengthy, full-treatment biography Jefferson Davis, American (2000). In succinct terms, the author views Davis within the spheres of his thinking on succession advocacy, his handling of the issue of states' rights within the Confederacy, his conduct as a war strategist, and how he led the war in the western portion of the CSA. The draw of his slender but potent volume is its fairness and balance in treating the often-discredited Confederate leader. For all active Civil War collections. --Brad Hooper "All of the essays are the product of solid research and offer the sort of compelling insights that make this a book students of Confederate political and military history will enjoy and find valuable." --Blue Gray Magazine From the Back Cover "The book would be terrific for a graduate seminar, for the topics covered promote discussion and debate." -- Journal of American History "All of the essays are the product of solid research and offer the sort of compelling insights that make this a book students of Confederate political and military history will enjoy and find valuable." -- Blue Gray Magazine "[This] volume challenges and rewards the reader as much as many heavier tomes." -- Civil War Book In his masterpiece, Jefferson Davis, American, William J. Cooper, Jr., crafted a sweeping biography and established himself as the foremost scholar on the intriguing Confederate president. Cooper narrows his

focus considerably in Jefferson Davis and the Civil War Era, training his expert eye specifically on Davis's participation in and influence on the American Civil War. Nine self-contained essays address the way in which Davis reacted to and dealt with a variety of issues that were key to the war, illuminating his role during those turbulent years. This volume offers rare insight into one of American history's most complicated and provocative figures. William J. Cooper, Jr., is the author or coauthor of six books. The recipient of fellowships from the Guggenheim Foundation and the National Endowment for the Humanities, he has won the Los Angeles Times Book Prize for Biography and the Jefferson Davis Award, among other honors.