



Oliver Wendell Holmes: Sage of the Supreme Court (Oxford Portraits)

G. Edward White

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An influential justice who refused to bow to politics and devoted his keen mind to the U.S. Supreme Court until the age of 90, Oliver Wendell Holmes (1841-1935) helped formulate some of the most progressive judicial thought in 20th-century American history. G. Edward White first sketches Holmes's early years-his childhood in Boston, undergraduate years at Harvard, and his valiant service in the Civil War, during which he was severely wounded three times. After the war, Holmes went into private law practice, wrote his landmark treatise *The Common Law* in 1881, had a short tenure on the Harvard Law School faculty, and spent 20 years as a judge on the Supreme Judicial Court of Massachusetts before being named to the U.S. Supreme Court. The author focuses on his remarkable 30-year service as a Supreme Court Justice, beginning in 1902, and details Holmes's most significant cases--*Abrams v. United States*, *Northern Securities Co. v. United States*, *Lochner v. New York*, *Schenck v. United States*, and others--which limited working hours, set a mandatory minimum wage, protected women's rights, legalized labor unions, and defined freedom of speech.

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