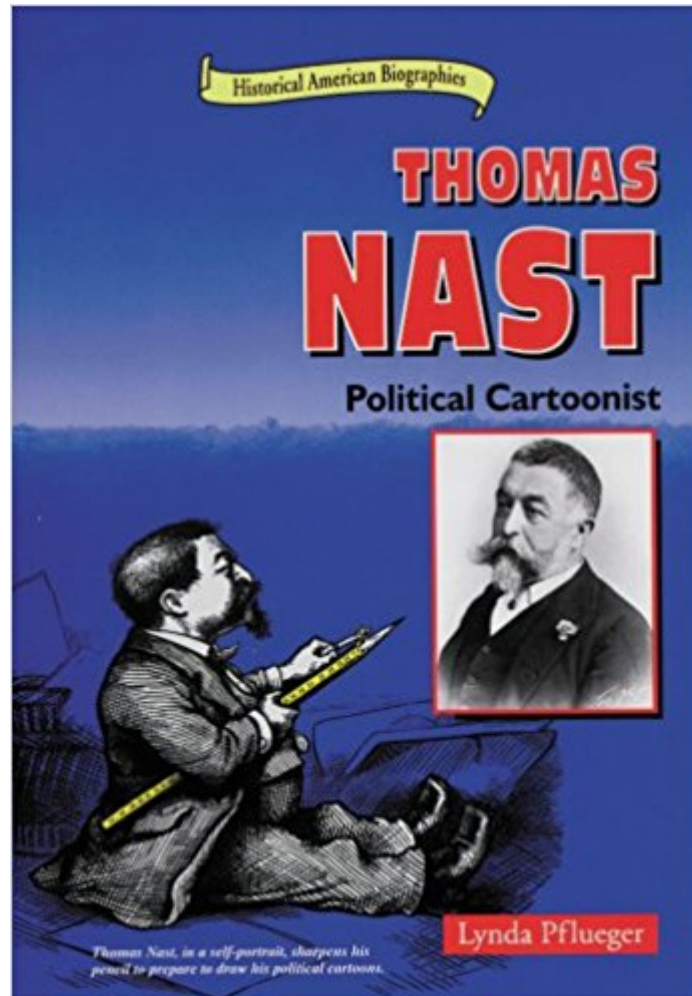




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Thomas Nast: Political Cartoonist (Historical American Biographies)



Synopsis

Book by Pflueger, Lynda

Book Information

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Customer Reviews

Grade 4-8-This well-written, informative, and entertaining title can go a long way toward expanding the horizons of young people. The opening chapter introduces Nast in the prime of his career as he was going head to head with Boss Tweed. The next chapter backtracks to the subject's birth and proceeds to trace his life chronologically. Pflueger successfully gives readers a sense of Nast the man, not just Nast the cartoonist. She provides glimpses of his personality, his foibles, and his principles, and relates many colorful anecdotes about his career, such as his creation of the elephant and donkey as symbols for our political parties. The numerous illustrations include photos, maps, and, of course, cartoons. While the maps are not particularly helpful, and the photographs of Nast's famous contemporaries (such as Abraham Lincoln and Mark Twain) are readily available in any encyclopedia, there is still much to commend in this well-done effort. Marilyn Heath, East Tennessee State University, Johnson City Copyright 2000 Reed Business Information, Inc.

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The man who helped bring down Tammany Hall and delightful cartoonist, Thomas Nast . Lynda

Pflueger brought Thomas Nast back to life in this intimate revealing portrait. Liberally sprinkled throughout are many famous cartoons--especially beloved Santa Clause. I enjoyed the book and its history!

Lynda Pflueger probably didn't realize how propitious her timing was when she released this excellent history book. The 'Je suis Charlie' tragedy is about freed speech in the way that cartoonists can present it, and here we have the biography of one of the more important cartoonists of history. Lynda Pflueger is a history buff, particularly US history. She loves visiting museums and libraries. Nothing pleases her more than roaming around dusty old archives and finding diaries, letters, newspaper articles or photographs she can use in her books. Though this may not be her literary debut, this reader can find no other publications in book form by Lynda Pflueger, but this book is so well written and designed that hopefully she will take on other historical figures and present them in as meaningful a way as she presents Thomas Nast. From is serendipitous beginning in Frank Leslie's Illustrated Newspaper he began a career that addressed politics and government in the mid 19th century - particularly famous for this cartoons of the Civil War and the men surrounding that epic event. Pflueger not only gives us all the details of Nast's life and career, but she also offers a significant number of Nast's inimitable cartoons. All this makes for a powerful indictment about condescending opinions on the part of the press that are always best (and until recently) the safest means of speaking out. This is a very fine book and a VERY timely one. Grady Harp, January 15

Have you ever heard someone's name, thought it was vaguely familiar, thought you might know the general gist of what that person did, but were not sure how you would even know that little bit of info about that vaguely familiar person? Well, that is how I felt about Thomas Nast. I read this book hoping it would either confirm or deny my 'gut feeling' about Nast. Sure enough, I had that decisive 'ah-ha' moment when I re-discovered Nast was the artist responsible for creating the traditional drawings of Santa Claus that I have always loved, and for the political cartoons that helped take down New York City's corrupt "Boss" Tweed in the 1860s-1870s, and that established our political parties' traditional symbols, the Democratic donkey and the Republican elephant. This short, well-written, and well-researched biography of one of our country's most influential political cartoonists was an enjoyable and informative read. The book covered Nast's life, from his humble beginnings as the son of German immigrants born in a military barracks in Landau, Germany, immigrated to the U.S. at age five, and was a mediocre student until

age fifteen when he had to go to work to support his family. He lived to his death at age sixty-two from yellow fever in Ecuador, where he was posted as the U.S. Consul General. In between, Pflueger did a masterful job condensing Nast's life, focused around the cartoons that made him famous. Pflueger's intimate knowledge of Nast's life and times, combined with her easy-to-read writing style, put Nast's drawings in their proper perspective, and deepened my appreciation for the significance and popularity of Nast's work. The only drawback to the book was too many of Nast's drawings were only mentioned and described in detail vice being included with the other Nast drawings. I learned a lot about a famous and prominent public figure, which is a winning formula for a good biography. If you are interested in history, politics, or the power of cartoons to affect both, then you should definitely give this book a try.

The life of a very influential cartoonist during the time of Tammany Hall, President Grant and many others. Thomas Nast was extremely popular and influential in his day. As most people could not read, cartoons made a huge impact. I learned that he really stood his ground on principles to create a better place and rid public life of the corrupt influences endemic in his times. A quick read, it is none the less informative and illustrative of the times. I think democracies still need people like Nast to point out the human foibles as fewer people read for substance and mostly get drowned in information. Hopefully there are people like Nast able to work in countries like China, Myanmar, Saudi Arabia, Iran and Iraq as well as the US.

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