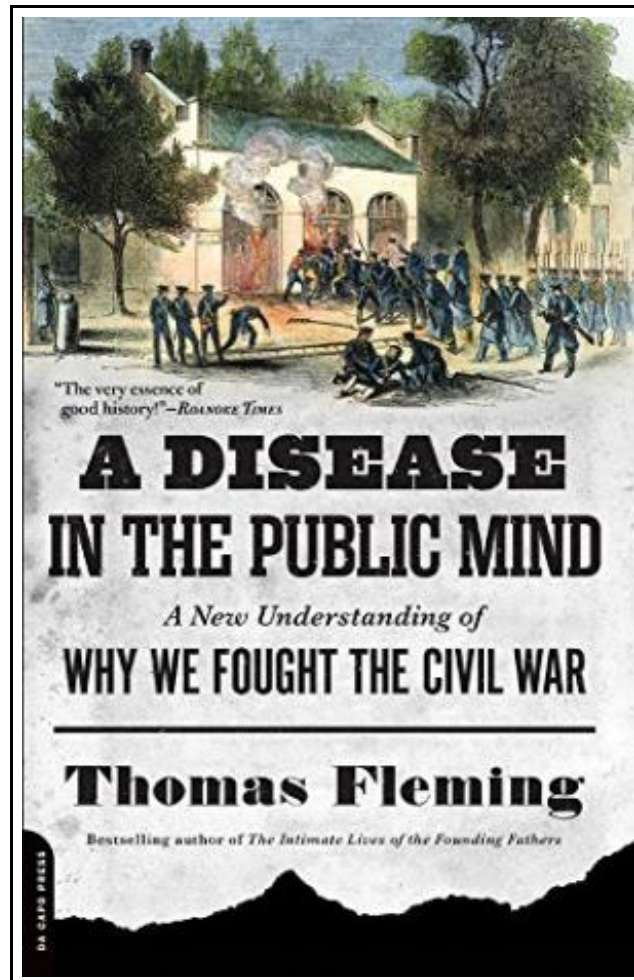


A Disease in the Public Mind: A New Understanding of Why We Fought the Civil War



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A DISEASE IN THE PUBLIC MIND: A NEW UNDERSTANDING OF WHY WE FOUGHT THE CIVIL WAR



DaCapo. 1 Paperback(s), 2013. soft. Book Condition: New. In his character-driven history, Thomas Fleming takes readers back to the mid-19th century to trace the "diseases in the public mind" the distortions of reality propagated by politicians, self-interested businessmen, moralists, and a clamoring media that unraveled George Washington's vision of a united America and brought the country to fratricidal war. "With myth-destroying zeal and careful research Fleming contends that a fanatical sense of moral superiority on the part of the abolitionists, an irrational fear of a race war by Southerners abetted by sinister political posturing, and a deeply biased media were the prime motivating factors in a war that by far surpassed the casualties of all wars combined since America was founded. Fleming delves deeply into the hate and alarm engendered by both sides." *Huffington Post* "The prolific Fleming, for decades a fixture among American historians, pinpoints public opinion as the proximate origin of the war, specifically its acquisition by 1860 of a polarized, paranoid character, pitting Northerners' fear of 'slave power' against Southerners' terror of a race war sparked by Northern abolitionists (John Brown was their nightmare made real). Fleming recounts attitudes of prominent Founders toward slavery, emphasizing how their general recognition of its injustice never quite trended, during the early decades of the 1800s, toward emancipation. Instead of declining, the peculiar institution retrenched and expanded. Without understanding white Southerners' predicaments, Fleming argues, abolitionists like William Lloyd Garrison damned them, their region, and the Union. An array of Southerners' ripostes to Northern criticisms peppers Fleming's narrative of each section's exacerbating willingness to impute baleful motives to the other. Making a plausible presentation of antebellum attitudes and illusions, Fleming is sure to spark lively discussion about the Civil War." *Booklist* 354.



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