



Giant in the Shadows: The Life of Robert T. Lincoln

Jason Emerson

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Although he was Abraham and Mary Lincoln's oldest and last surviving son, the details of Robert T. Lincoln's life are misunderstood by some and unknown to many others. Nearly half a century after the last biography about Abraham Lincoln's son was published, historian and author Jason Emerson illuminates the life of this remarkable man and his achievements in *Giant in the Shadows: The Life of Robert T. Lincoln*. Emerson, after nearly ten years of research, draws upon previously unavailable materials to offer the first truly definitive biography of the famous lawyer, businessman, and statesman who, much more than merely the son of America's most famous president, made his own indelible mark on one of the most progressive and dynamic eras in United States history.

Born in a boardinghouse but passing his last days at ease on a lavish country estate, Robert Lincoln played many roles during his lifetime. As a president's son, a Union soldier, an ambassador to Great Britain, and a U.S. secretary of war, Lincoln was indisputably a titan of his age. Much like his father, he became one of the nation's most respected and influential men, building a successful law practice in the city of Chicago, serving shrewdly as president of the Pullman Car Company, and at one time even being considered as a candidate for the U.S. presidency.

Along the way he bore witness to some of the most dramatic moments in America's history, including Robert E. Lee's surrender at Appomattox Courthouse; the advent of the railroad, telephone, electrical, and automobile industries; the circumstances surrounding the assassinations of three presidents of the United States; and the momentous presidential election of 1912. *Giant in the Shadows* also reveals Robert T. Lincoln's complex relationships with his famous parents and includes previously unpublished insights into their personalities. Emerson reveals new details about Robert's role as his father's confidant during the brutal years of the Civil War and his reaction to his father's murder; his prosecution of the thieves who attempted to steal his father's body in 1876 and the extraordinary measures he took to ensure it would never happen again; as well as details about the painful decision to have his mother committed to a mental facility. In addition Emerson explores the relationship between Robert and his children, and exposes the actual story of his stewardship of the Lincoln legacy—including what he and his wife really destroyed and what was preserved. Emerson also delves into the true reason Robert is not buried in the Lincoln tomb in Springfield but instead was interred at Arlington National Cemetery.

Meticulously researched, full of never-before-seen photographs and new insight into historical events, *Giant in the Shadows* is the missing chapter of the Lincoln family story. Emerson's riveting work is more than simply a biography; it is a tale of American achievement in the Gilded Age and the endurance of the Lincoln legacy.

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Book of the Year by the Illinois State historical Society, 2013



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