

Giant in the Shadows: The Life of Robert T. Lincoln, by Jason Emerson. Carbondale and Edwardsville: Southern Illinois University Press, 2012. xiv, 600 pp. Illustrations, notes, bibliography, index. \$39.95 cloth.

Reviewer S. Chandler Lighty is an assistant editor with the Papers of Abraham Lincoln.

Independent historian Jason Emerson's biography of Robert T. Lincoln (1843–1926) is the first full-length study of President Lincoln's son in more than 40 years. As the title, *Giant in the Shadows*, suggests, the son has languished under his father's glorified stature. Emerson argues that Robert "should and must be recognized for his independent achievements" (3). His accomplishments included service as Secretary of War (1881–1885), U.S. Minister to Great Britain (1889–1893), president of the Pullman Car Company (1897–1911), and stewardship of his father's papers and legacy.

This biography's unifying theme is Robert Lincoln's strong sense of honor and duty in private and public life. As the scion of a future president, Lincoln studied at Phillips Exeter Academy and Harvard University. After graduation in 1864, he joined General Grant's staff, resigning after his father's assassination. As he became the head of the family, the financial and emotional well-being of his widowed mother and younger brother became Robert's responsibility, so he became a Chicago lawyer. After an interrupted courtship, he wed Mary Harlan, daughter of Iowa Senator James Harlan, with whom he had three children. Despite this connection to Iowa, this biography gives only passing mentions of family trips to Mount Pleasant.

Robert's concern for his family's honor and privacy led him to jealously protect his father's papers; he "planned to weed out anything purely personal" in the manuscripts (159). He permitted very few biographers access to the material, and when he deeded the papers to the Library of Congress he restricted their public use until 21 years after his death. Lincoln's sense of familial duty also led him to institutionalize his mother in 1875. Robert is sometimes vilified for this episode, but Emerson depicts him as a son deeply concerned for his mother's psychological and financial welfare.

Although not politically ambitious, Robert yielded to civic duty's call. As Emerson explains, "No honorable man could refuse his party or deny his duty to his country if called to serve" (256). President Garfield selected Robert as Secretary of War, in part, to appease an influential faction of the Republican Party. Once in office, Robert confided to a friend, "I prefer practicing law to performing my duties here" (222). Robert also did not solicit the appointment as Minister to Great Britain but accepted it for reasons of "honor and duty" (304). Some

Republicans promoted him for vice president in 1884 and president in 1888, but he dissuaded supporters from sending him to the “gilded prison” (297).

Emerson’s depth of research, with endnotes and bibliography covering 180 pages, is impressive. Yet one might question whether Robert Lincoln’s achievements merit a 421-page biography. In Emerson’s own words, Lincoln’s time as Secretary of War was “a record of unexciting administrative duties,” and his tenure in Britain “was not extraordinary” (236, 334). Emerson believes that Robert Lincoln deserves to be mentioned in the same breath as “Carnegie, Rockefeller, Morgan, and Pullman” (421), but that contention is not effectively supported. Emerson’s attempts to interpret favorably labor and race relations during Robert’s presidency of the Pullman Company are also not entirely persuasive. He credits Robert with being simultaneously concerned with “the company’s bottom line” and also “the health and well-being of his employees” (364). All things considered, Emerson has produced a definitive, informative, and engaging biography of a man often marginalized because of his father’s status. It will appeal to Lincolnphiles, but also to students, scholars, and lay readers of Gilded Age and Progressive Era history.

Land of Promise, Land of Tears, by Jerry L. Twedt. Bloomington, IN: AuthorHouse, 2012. 451 pp. Notes, bibliography. \$25.99 cloth, \$20.90 paper, \$2.99 e-book.

Reviewer Marvin G. Slind is professor of history and head of the History Department at Luther College. His research interests focus primarily on Norwegian immigration history. He is the translator and coeditor of *Linka’s Diary: An Immigrant Story in Word and Pictures* (2008).

Land of Promise, Land of Tears is a historical novel that traces the lives of a Norwegian immigrant family through much of the year 1869. Ole and Helena Branjord and their children settled near Fairview (now Story City). Their experiences illustrate the rapid developments in American—and Norwegian American—society following the Civil War. While their story is generally told in the third person, there are also short sections that comment on events from the perspectives of different characters in the novel. The result is a moving account of the ordeals of pioneer life, such as the difficulties of harvest work, food preparation and preservation, personal tensions within the immigrant community, disease and health care, and immigrants’ religious concerns (including controversies that contributed to the splintering of the Norwegian Lutheran church into many disparate synods). In his