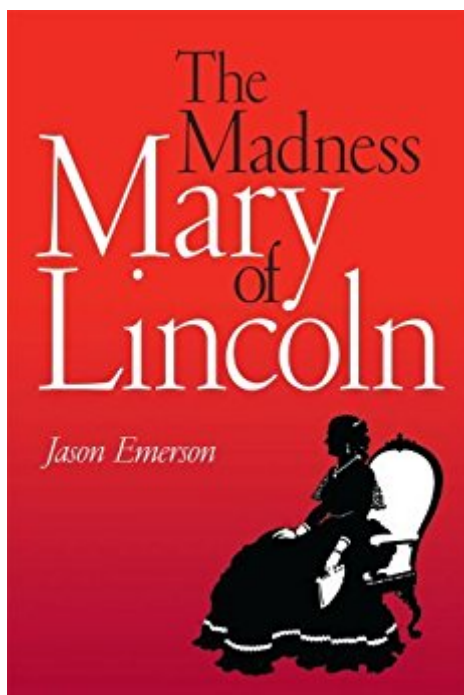


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The Madness Of Mary Lincoln



Synopsis

In 2005, historian Jason Emerson discovered a steamer trunk formerly owned by Robert Todd Lincoln's lawyer and stowed in an attic for forty years. The trunk contained a rare find: twenty-five letters pertaining to Mary Todd Lincoln's life and insanity case, letters assumed long destroyed by the Lincoln family. Mary wrote twenty of the letters herself, more than half from the insane asylum to which her son Robert had her committed, and many in the months and years after.

The Madness of Mary Lincoln is the first examination of Mary Lincoln's mental illness based on the lost letters, and the first new interpretation of the insanity case in twenty years. This compelling story of the purported insanity of one of America's most tragic first ladies provides new and previously unpublished materials, including the psychiatric diagnosis of Mary's mental illness and her lost will. Emerson charts Mary Lincoln's mental illness throughout her life and describes how a predisposition to psychiatric illness and a life of mental and emotional trauma led to her commitment to the asylum. The first to state unequivocally that Mary Lincoln suffered from bipolar disorder, Emerson offers a psychiatric perspective on the insanity case based on consultations with psychiatrist experts.

This book reveals Abraham Lincoln's understanding of his wife's mental illness and the degree to which he helped keep her stable. It also traces Mary's life after her husband's assassination, including her severe depression and physical ailments, the harsh public criticism she endured, the Old Clothes Scandal, and the death of her son Tad.

The Madness of Mary Lincoln is the story not only of Mary, but also of Robert. It details how he dealt with his mother's increasing irrationality and why it embarrassed his Victorian sensibilities; it explains the reasons he had his mother committed, his response to her suicide attempt, and her plot to murder him. It also shows why and how he ultimately agreed to her release from the asylum eight months early, and what their relationship was like until Mary's death. This historical page-turner provides readers for the first time with the lost letters that historians had been in search of for eighty years.

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Customer Reviews

I seldom give five stars to any book but this one was so fascinating that I'm still reading the footnotes! It is exhaustively researched and well-organized. The main story is heartbreaking. The story of the history of the letters upon which the book is based is riveting. The only improvement would have been to hyperlink the footnotes because in an e-book, you want to be able to click a footnote number, read, and then go back to the text. As an e-book publisher myself, I understand the number of footnotes in this text would have created a lot of work to hyperlink them. But it would be a great service to the readers to update the MOBI file with hyperlinked footnotes. Great read.

This was the first novel put out by Emerson. The book mentioned in the subject line has the complete story which includes personal letters. This book is part one of Mary Lincoln's Insanity: The Discovery of Her Lost Letters. Save your money and get the complete story by purchasing the other book.

After recently touring Hildene in Manchester, VT during the Christmas season, I came away with a lot of interest in learning more about Mary Todd Lincoln. I bought this particular book because it was the most recent development in finding lost letters and documents. The author very succinctly and

clearly outlined without bias the story of this found correspondence. I believe the presentation is factual and interesting and defines the real meaning of dealing with mental illness in the family. The author conveyed the endless heartbreak it truly is. I highly recommend this book!

I liked this book very much. It gave me some information I did not have about Mary Lincoln. Now I am able to form a more objective opinion about her mental health. It also provided information about Robert Lincoln. I think he's been misunderstood. It's just more material to add to my knowledge concerning this complex and troubled family. I recommend this book to those interested in the family dynamics.

I really enjoyed the book. Previously, I had only heard or read bits and pieces of what happened to Mary Todd Lincoln after the killing of Lincoln. I thought the author did a thorough job of chronologically telling the events. It's a shame better help for psychiatric patients was just not available at that time. However, it does demonstrate how far we have come along.

Whether you agree or disagree with Mary Todd Lincoln's diagnoses, this book brings to light much of her suffering and pain. She did not have an easy life, and, I can relate to her son Robert's efforts to "do what was right" for his mother, while trying to maintain somewhat of a normal life for himself and his own family. I bought this book after seeing Jason Emerson review it on C-Span. An interesting book.

Mary Lincoln was an interesting character in US history, played a background role with perhaps the greatest President. What happened to her after he was assassinated, and how she faced those years until her death is the story told by this book. The material presented is well referenced, and the book is well written. For those interested in history, or in medical treatment for 'insanity' in the second half of the nineteenth century, this is a good read. It also provides some interesting insights regarding Lincoln's surviving son and his wife. It's a good readable book.

Very, very interesting! I am a MTLincoln presenter and this was valuable for my research.

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