



Lincoln Steffens: Portrait of a Great American Journalist

Justin Kaplan

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The acclaimed Pulitzer Prize winning biographer of Mark Twain and Walt Whitman brings alive the life and world of Lincoln Steffens, the original Muckraker and father of American investigative journalism.

Early 20th century America was a nation in the throes of becoming a great industrial power, a land dominated by big business and beset by social struggle and political corruption. It was the era of Sinclair Lewis, Emma Goldman, William Randolph Hearst, and John Reed. It was a time of union busting, anarchism, and Tammany Hall.

Lincoln Steffens—eternally curious, a worldwide celebrity, and a man of magnetic charm—was a towering figure at the center of this world. He was friends with everyone from Teddy Roosevelt and Woodrow Wilson to Ernest Hemingway and James Joyce. As an editor at McClure's magazine—along with Ida Tarbell he was one of the original muckrakers—he published articles that exposed the political and social corruption of the time. His book, *Shame of the Cities*, took on the corruption of local politics and his coverage of bad business practices on Wall Street helped lead to the creation of the Federal Reserve.

Lincoln Steffens was truly a man of his season, and his life reflects his times: impetuous, vital, creative, striving. In telling the story of this outsized American figure, Justin Kaplan also tells the riveting tale of turn-of-the-century America.

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