



**Title:** Behemoth: The History of the Elephant in America

**Author:** Ronald B. Tobias

**Description:**

Tracing the incredible journey of the elephant in the United States, *Behemoth* offers the astonishing history of one of America's most beloved creatures.

If the country's official mascot is an eagle, then its unofficial mascot is the elephant. Since arriving in America in 1796, elephants have been involved in the social, commercial, and political business of the nation. First, they worked on pioneer farms, mills, mines, and railroads. Later, some elephants went to Hollywood, while others played professional baseball. Over centuries, the elephant has become an unparalleled symbol in the American imagination.

Elephants contributed to the national discourse on civil rights, immigration, capitalism, the Depression, the future of electricity in America, and the spirit of the Republican Party. They became so deeply ingrained in the American way of life that they were accorded the rights of American citizenship, including the right to vote and the right to provide testimony under oath in a court of law. They were even held to the same high moral and legal standards as humans: when they broke the law -- whether for vagrancy, theft, or premeditated murder -- they were often sent to prison or brutally executed.

In *Behemoth*, Ronald B. Tobias, a natural historian and filmmaker, has written the first comprehensive history of the elephant in America. As tragic as it is comic, this enthralling chronicle traces the indelible footprint of the elephant on American culture.

**Reviews**

***Publishers Weekly:***

This book is a vital history lesson on the myriad ways elephants have permeated American culture, from Taft to Dumbo.

***Kirkus Reviews:***

A personable exploration of how the pachyderm has impacted America since its arrival in 1796....fascinating, comprehensive reading on the giants of the big top and beyond.

***The Boston Globe:***

In his thoroughly entertaining history of elephants in America, Tobias muses on animal

behavior, human psychology, and the business of the circus. Most insightfully, he looks at the elephant as stand-in for America itself. In the 19th century a new expression arose: to see the elephant. It implied the loss of innocence and the cost of experience, Tobias writes. The elephant, in this formulation, was joy and pain, success and failure, freedom and slavery, and, most of all, he was life and death.

***Psychology Today:***

This carefully researched, well written, and easy to read book contains countless facts and stories about the kaleidoscopic history, ranging from tragic to comic, of these magnificent beings -- how they have been worshipped, treasured, used and abused in numerous venues.

I can't say enough about this book and I heartily recommend it.

**Marc Bekoff, author of *The Emotional Lives of Animals*:**

*Behemoth* is a fitting title for this most welcomed book about elephants -- huge, magnificent, and sentient beings with legendary memories -- who have captured the hearts of innumerable people. Ronald Tobias's book is a wonderful read, packed with detailed information about these iconic animals.

**David Hancocks, author of *A Different Nature*:**

*Behemoth* reveals in devastating detail the 200-year history of the elephant in America. Ronald Tobias's meticulous research should encourage us to make the future for these animals a brighter, more respectful, and more caring episode.

**John Heminway, author of *Yonder* and producer/director of the National Geographic special *Battle for the Elephants*:**

Carefully researched and elegantly written, Ronald Tobias's book brings shape and color to America's longstanding tradition of hucksterism--this time, at the expense of the world's largest land animal.

**Dr. Rob Atkinson, former Chief Executive Officer, The Elephant Sanctuary in Tennessee:**

In his unique book *Behemoth*, Ronald Tobias brilliantly weaves the story of captive elephants into the very fabric of America's history, revealing the delight and the horror, the glory and the grief, until the reader hangs his head and vows that they shall never again suffer as they have and, disturbingly, still do.

**Ed Stewart, Co-Founder and President, Performing Animal Welfare Society:**

*Behemoth* is an astounding collection of everything elephant in America: the most magnificent animals on earth against small, exploitive humans. The battle continues, and the elephants are losing.