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Alexanderson: Pioneer in American Electrical Engineering (Johns Hopkins Studies in the History of Technology) Professor James E. Brittain
Ernst F. W. Alexanderson came to the United States from Sweden in 1901. A prolific inventor in the fields of radio, television, power transmission, electric railways, radar, and computers, he secured more than 340 U.S. patents--the last one in 1973, at the age of 95. Now, in Alexanderson: Pioneer in American Electrical Engineering, James E. Brittain provides the first biography of one of the premier engineer-inventors of the twentieth-century. Alexanderson spent most of his career as an engineer at the General Electric Company. He was involved in the controversy over the electrification of railroads--a battle between rival technologies and competitive corporations alike--and in the development of the radio alternator, a device that permitted reliable radio communication between North America and Europe in 1918. In a manner possible only in the early days of electrical technology, he mastered the principles of physics, radio engineering, and power engineering, and many of his breakthroughs demonstrated the creative possibilities of simultaneous work in these fields. Alexanderson: Pioneer in American Electrical Engineering also serves as a case study in the history and sociology of twentieth-century technology. Brittain treats themes that remain of vital interest today, including the issue of creativity in a corporate setting, the distinctions between science and engineering, the importance of corporate style and culture, and the role of the military in bringing about technological change. This revealing and informative biography chronicles the distinguished career of a leading figure in the development of technology during the first half of the twentieth century.

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