

Mary's Velvet Rose

October 2018

ASSOCIATION OF LINCOLN PRESENTERS



Mary Todd Lincoln Symposium

The Association of Lincoln Presenters is a sponsor of the Mary Lincoln Symposium. ALP is sponsoring a lunch on campus during the seminar. It is important that ALP members learn as much about Lincoln AND HIS FAMILY to accurately portray the Lincolns.

November 2, 2018, Friday 9:30 am – 4:30 pm. University of Kentucky, Lexington, Kentucky. William T. Young Library, UK AA Auditorium, Room 162.

Mary Todd Lincoln House is partnering with the University of Kentucky to bring 3 prominent Mary Lincoln authors to Lexington to celebrate Mary's 200th birthday. The 3 authors are: Jennifer Fleischner, author of Mrs. Lincoln and Mrs. Keckly, Catherine Clinton, author of Mrs. Lincoln, A Life and Angela Elder, who has written an article comparing how Mary Lincoln and Emilie Todd Helm handled widowhood. This article can be found in Kentucky Women, edited by Melissa McEuen and Thomas Appleton.

The lectures will be packaged as a symposium and the date is November 2. The Symposium is free. But make sure you notify Susan Miller if you are going to attend and you will have reserved seating. Susan Miller – susanviolamiller@gmail.com or home phone 859-885-7294.

For more information about the seminar and schedule go to: www.mtlhouse.org/symposium.

Lunch: The Hilary Boone Staff and Faculty Center is right next to the Library on UK's campus. The Boone Center will provide a lovely lunch for the ALP and others attending the Mary Lincoln Seminar. The cost is \$20 per person for a sandwich buffet that includes 3 different artisan breads, 3 meats and 3 cheeses, condiment tray, 2 "house made" salads and dessert and beverages. It also includes a service charge.

There are other places to eat on campus but none more convenient than the Hilary Boone Center. If you wish to reserve lunch at the Boone Center please contact Susan Miller at susanviolamiller@gmail.com. Sending a check to Susan to pre-pay your lunch would be appreciated. 108 Hidden Meadow Lane, Nicholasville, KY 40356. Deadline for reservations is October 24. Susan has guaranteed 20 guests for lunch.

The Boone Center is directly adjacent to the Center and Library. It is very convenient to park, attend the seminar and walk over for lunch and walk back. The Boone Center has reserved 20 spots in their parking lot for ALP members. However, we ask people to "ride share". ALP is asked to car pool from the hotel.

So, instead of paying \$20 to park and then have to find a lunch option, come to the Boone Center for lunch and free parking!! It's Mary Lincoln's 200th Birthday. Come celebrate it with other Mary Lincoln devotees.

The following article was in the October 6-7, 2018 Lincoln Day's program in Hodgenville, Kentucky. Thank you to Joan for allowing the republishing of this wonderful letter to us all.

In Remembrance of Mary Ann Todd Lincoln's 200th Birthday
By Joan Emily Hixson Howard

Letter to the Editor:

Dear Family and Friends,



By now you probably have heard that this year I, Mary Ann Todd Lincoln, am celebrating my 200th birthday. When I was born no one ever thought this anniversary date would be noteworthy. I, too, am a Kentuckian arriving in Lexington on December 13, 1818.

My beautiful birth town was often called the Athens of the West. Some people said that I was from the frontier and did not have the appropriate social graces. I laugh now because my Grandmother Parker, in Lexington, and my Step-grandmother Humphreys, in Frankfort, saw to it that all nine of the Robert Smith Todd daughters knew how to serve tea. We were instructed in the proper etiquette for the most lavish balls and events of the season.

My mother, Eliza Parker, died after the birth of her seventh child. Barely a year later my father married Betsy Humphreys from Frankfort and they had nine more children. Adding such a large family including friends and servants to his household, Father soon bought the house on Main Street which is now open to the public. As I think about it, I suppose the house was all but opened to the public when we lived there. Cassius Clay visited frequently, Betsy's relatives stayed for long periods and several Transylvania students also roomed with us. Quite a few people called this house "home". The present day Board and Staff are taking such good care of my girlhood home; please stop by for a visit.

Among his many occupations my Father was a Kentucky State Representative, House Clerk, and a State Senator. Often he allowed me to attend Legislative Sessions in Frankfort and sit in his political meetings with men like Henry Clay giving me an education and understanding that most young women did not have.

There were multiple opportunities in Lexington such as Transylvania University, the first college west of the Allegheny Mountains. My grandfather, uncles and great uncles were part of the founding body. Lexington was also home to a wonderful French Confectionary owned by Monsieur Mathurin Giron. I was learning French at Madame Charlotte Mentelle's Boarding School and would often stop at the bakery just to talk to Monsieur Giron in his native tongue. Years later at the Executive Mansion in Washington City I would talk to the French dignitaries in their language. Some thought I was giving away secrets, but I assure you I was only trying to make these people feel comfortable.

Elizabeth my oldest sister, met Ninian Edwards, a student at Transylvania and married during his Senior year. They lived at our house until Graduation when he wanted to take his bride home to Springfield, Illinois. My older sister, Frances, moved to Springfield as did I and my younger sister, Ann, soon followed.

While visiting I had heard stories about a long tall Kentuckian and finally at a Cotillion (ball/dance) I saw a gentleman duck a little as he came through the door. After being properly introduced, he said he wanted to dance with me in the worst way...he did...he stepped on my pink satin dancing slippers. Even though he was not a polished man, I could see the same qualities in him that I had seen in my Father and Henry Clay. I knew Mr. Lincoln had a "keen" mind and could lead this great country.

We fell in love, married, had four sons and moved to the Nation's Capital. Life often has its ups and downs. There have been a lot of stories about me, some with exaggerations. I may not be a perfect person, but neither is anyone else. I am a daughter, sibling, wife, mother, grandmother, relative and friend. My love and feelings were unending but often misunderstood.

As he sat beside me at Ford's Theatre, my husband gave his life for this country. The country we were born in, lived in, died in and are buried in; the United States of America. Take a moment and look at the blessings you have because of those who came before you. In recognition of my 200th birthday please do something for someone special in your life.

With Great Respect,
Mary Ann Todd Lincoln

Post Script: I have the honor and privilege of knowing Mrs. Howard for several years. She and her late husband, Cliff Howard, portrayed President Davis and Mrs. Davis in numerous venues. The debate developed by Cliff Howard and Jim Sayre was amazing, as it was based on historical facts and was a discussion that 'should have been'. Cliff and Joan were unique in that they not only portrayed the Davis family, they also were part of the founders of the Lincoln Presenters Association. I asked her to share a brief synopsis of her experience. Her humbleness of spirit and love of our American legacy reminded me once again as to the reason she and her late husband were so well respected along with being sought after presenters. I offer the following in her own words. DPC

"On February 12, each year, the Boys Scouts in the Frankfort area do a Lincoln pilgrimage to the State Capitol. In 1985-86 the Lincoln presenter was ill. Cliff was a scout leader & former high school history teacher, so they asked him to do the Gettysburg address for the event. I was an elementary teacher and went along as Mary Todd Lincoln. People started asking us to do other events, so we began to seriously study Abe and Mary Lincoln.

"Around 1990 Cliff started looking at Jefferson Davis in depth. Again, I studied Varina Howell Davis. By 2000 Cliff Howard and Jim Sayre (Lincoln presenter) had developed a Lincoln / Davis debate based on speeches, letters, and articles written by the two presidents. This has been a great way to study our history. Cliff always said that you have to understand our history before you can understand our country. I am a retired Kentucky Department of Education Program Consultant. Every week I learn something new about Mary and Varina, two very special ladies."

