

Mary's Velvet Rose

August 2019

ASSOCIATION OF LINCOLN PRESENTERS



Lincoln Days - Hodgenville, Kentucky



October 4 – 6, 2019

<http://www.lincolndays.org/schedule/>

This is always a great event for ALP members. The Woman's Club serves a great breakfast and lunch – free for our members in costume. There are Abraham and Mary Lincoln Look-A-Like Contests along with a parade, craft booths, festival food and good company.

Cash prizes are awarded to the 1st, 2nd and 3rd place winners of the “Look-A-Like” contest. Mary Lincoln participants will be allowed a maximum of 3 minutes to describe their costume and/or to deliver a portrayal of some event in Mary's life. Participants will be judged on both authenticity of costume and presentation. Please come to support Hodgenville's event and the Lincoln Museum. It wouldn't be a great event without the support of the Association of Lincoln Presenters.

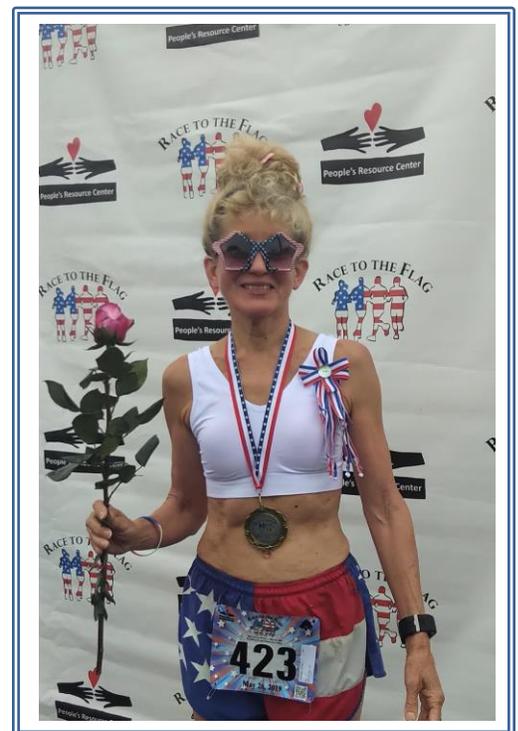
Kathleen Jensen Long Distance Runner

Kathleen wore her patriotic chatelaine at a race that was in Westmont, Illinois on Memorial Day weekend. She made it at the 2019 ALP Conference in Georgia.

2019 is Kathleen's 28th year of competitive running! Kathleen has run over 1,050 races of all distances: 5K, 10K, Half Marathons and Full Marathons (26.2 miles)!

She has participated in a full Marathon in all 50 states with a total of 101 full marathons.

Now Kathleen is working on running a Full Marathon in all the Canadian Provinces! So far she has run 8 of the 10 Provinces! And only has Prince Edward Island and Labrador/Newfoundland left to do!



Southern Living Magazine



Mary Todd Lincoln The Cavalier King Charles Spaniel

Mary Todd the dog lives in Alexandria, Virginia. She was featured in the July Southern Living as the pet of the month. She has her own Facebook page.

Mary Todd is the fur baby of Amy Graham Grappone and Jeff Grappone.

Mary Todd goes to work every day with them in the U.S. Senate. Amy works for a Senator from Indiana and Jeff works for a Senator from Wyoming.

Mary Todd alternates between the two offices when the senate is out of session. She likes to ride the subway that connects the senate offices to the National Capitol.



Mary Todd is snoozing at the office.

Mary Todd is 7 years old. And she realizes she's a special dog and enjoys wearing pretty doggy outfits, similar to her namesake.

Amy's family is related to Mentor Graham, who was a teacher and friend of Abraham Lincoln. Amy's dad is a big Lincoln history buff. Her dad is from Springfield and her grandparents are buried in the cemetery there.

So, Amy says she naturally wanted to name her dog after Mary.

Conference Update

The 2020 Conference is in Springfield, Illinois, April 16 – 19. The Mary Lincolns will enjoy a Strawberry Luncheon or Tea.

Elizabeth Keckley, Mrs. Lincoln's dress maker will be our guest speaker. Kathryn Harris is a retired librarian, and is the Past President of the Abraham Lincoln Association.



A new Mary Lincoln, Association of Lincoln Presenters polo shirt will be available next year. You will find an order form with the Conference materials. Cost is \$30 each. The first 24 ladies who order a shirt will also be able to pick out a free reticule.



Courting Mr. Lincoln

Courting Mr. Lincoln is another Lincoln book published this year and it is by Louis Bayard. He is said to be a master writer of historical fiction. He creates "a sparkling tale of strategy and desire". It is grounded in fact, but brought to life as only this critically acclaimed author could do; the novel is an intimately drawn evocation of love between the brilliant, melancholic future president and the two people who knew him best: his charming confidante Joshua Speed and his spirited future wife, Mary.

Told in alternating chapters from Speed and Todd's points of view, it offers a psychologically astute three-pronged portrait that honors each party and captures the essence of the awkward young lawyer, the self-possessed debutant who is surprised by her own attraction and the inseparable and loyal friend.

Who else has it? Let's have a book club!!

Buy it on Amazon - <https://www.amazon.com/Courting-Mr-Lincoln-Louis-Bayard/dp/1616208473>

What did Lincoln see in Mary Todd? Perhaps that is the wrong question.

The following article is from the Washington Post also by Louis Bayard – It circulated on Facebook early in the summer. If you are not on Facebook, here is the entire article.

She was an ambitious and polarizing first lady who was scorned by her enemies as “gross,” “avaricious,” a “she wolf” and “cold as a chunk of ice,” slammed after leaving the White House for basic “unloveableness,” and sarcastically derided in a 2012 tweet as “such a b----.” If the name Hillary — or, for that matter, Michelle or Nancy — is dancing on your lips, then cast your gaze back, 150 years ago, to Mary.

Mary Todd Lincoln, to be clear, whose arraignment in the court of mid-19th-century public opinion enrolls her in a vexed sorority with today’s first ladies and female politicians. Her example reminds us, in case we needed reminding, that America has never known quite what to do with women who enter the public sphere.

It was Mary’s particular misfortune to be the woman to one particular man. Indeed, of all the mysteries that have enveloped Abraham Lincoln, his choice of a life mate has been, for both his contemporaries and for later generations of scholars, the least soluble. Lincoln himself, writing to an acquaintance a week after his wedding, declared his marriage “a matter of profound wonder,” and scholars have been wondering ever since. What drew Lincoln to such a complex and mercurial creature? What kept him from seeing all the black moods and emotional cloudbursts she would rain down on him? He had already called off their wedding once. Was he simply too chivalrous to do it again?

In fact, as I found in researching my new novel, “Courting Mr. Lincoln,” there was nothing chivalrous, martyrish or mysterious about Lincoln’s choice. He had simply found the partner he needed — one who fully shared both his ambition and his passion for politics and who was prepared to do whatever was necessary to make a success of him.

It takes some effort, though, to roll back that clock, to see Mary Todd as Lincoln first saw her. Daguerreotypes taken later in her life, for instance, show a rather grave and rounded woman with a floury complexion, and she would dismiss her own figure as a “ruddy pine knot” with “periodic exuberances of flesh.” Family members, though, would recall young Mary’s graceful presence on the dance floor, her “adorable slow coming smile,” the “dewy violet shyness” of her eyes. They would recall, too, her considerable effect on men. As her brother-in-law once said, “Mary could make a bishop forget his prayers.”

Unusually well-educated for her era, she could hold her own in any conversation. Even the man who would become her primary character assassin — Lincoln’s law partner and biographer William Herndon — considered her “brilliant,” “handsome and vivacious,” with a “quick intellect” and “an intuitive judgment of men and their motives.” Had she come up 150 years later, we can imagine her following a Hillary Clinton path to power, but in those pre-suffrage days, her only option was to find a suitable husband.

And here, perhaps, is the real mystery: Why did a marriageable young woman with several promising candidates in her orbit (Stephen Douglas was reportedly besotted) settle on a raw, uneducated country lawyer, still deep in debt and on nobody’s shortlist to become president of anything? Somehow or other, Mary, alone among the young women who glided through Springfield’s parlors, divined the man’s potential and then set to work bringing it to fruition.

We know it wasn't easy. Lincoln spent months out of the year riding the Illinois court circuit; he was, in fact, the only lawyer who stayed away from home the whole time. Even when he came back to Springfield, he was invariably distracted and distant, moody, stingy with compliments and stinting with affection. To judge from his own letters, the only person he'd ever been emotionally intimate with was Joshua Speed, his bed mate and companion for 3½ years, and Speed had embarked on his own matrimonial journey in Kentucky.

Mary persevered, nevertheless, serving as helpmeet, counselor and motivator, and nobody who watched Lincoln's political ascent from up close could doubt Mary's central role in it. As one law partner said, Lincoln was at heart "a gloomy man — a sad man. His wife made him President." Lincoln's own reaction to his 1860 campaign victory says it all: "Mary, Mary, we are elected!"

Unfortunately, the more public a figure she became, the more her private demons came to the fore. The mood swings that had always marked her character grew progressively more violent, and by the time she was ensconced in the White House, she had picked quarrels with friends, alienated family members and engaged in pointless public tantrums. But she had also refused to submit to the ideal of passive femininity. "What is to be is to be," she once said, "and nothing we can say, or do, or be can divert an inexorable fate, but in spite of knowing this, one feels better after losing, if one has had a brave, wholehearted fight to get the better of destiny."

It was a fight that usually got the better of her. Newspapers of the era gleefully raised the specter of Mary the termagant, who may or may not have gone at Lincoln with a piece of firewood. Mary the spendthrift, who frittered away tens of thousands of 1860s dollars on clothes and furnishings and auctioned off her dresses. Mary the kook, who used White House séances to communicate with her dead son Willie and who, in 1875, was committed by her sole surviving son to the good graces of an Illinois asylum.

That she remained, through her husband's life, his trusted adviser and a doting mother to their four children did little to stem the tide of rancor, and it was Herndon, the law partner turned biographer, who, in the years after Lincoln's death, sealed her fate in the court of public opinion. Under Herndon's psychohistorical retelling, the conveniently dead Ann Rutledge, Lincoln's friend from New Salem days, was resurrected as the maiden he should, in a just universe, have drawn to his bosom, and Mary Todd became the woman who made his life a misery as punishment for loving another. "I do not think [Lincoln] knew what joy was," wrote Herndon, "nor happiness for more than 23 years."

In fact, Mary had no idea who Ann Rutledge was (neither did the vast majority of Lincoln's friends, Speed included), and her admiration for the man she called "my idolized husband" never wavered, either before or after his death. Nevertheless, it was Herndon's mythos that would inform depictions of the Lincoln marriage down to the present. It comes as no surprise, then, at the end of Steven Spielberg's "Lincoln," when Mary (Sally Field) tells her husband: "All anyone will remember of me is I was crazy and I ruined your happiness."

It's time to remember other things about Mary, because those are the things that Lincoln himself remembered. It's time to stop asking what he saw in that "difficult" wife and start asking what she saw in him and how she managed to see it before anybody else — and how she helped him realize it on such an exorbitant scale. And it's worth wondering if the American political scene, 150 years later, has become any more receptive to complicated and ambitious women.