

Mary's Velvet Rose
June, 2014
ASSOCIATION OF LINCOLN PRESENTERS



Friends,

Now that our lovely visit to Natchez and Vicksburg are a pleasant memory from our 2014 convention, we would like to greet our Mary Todd Lincoln members of the ALP and wish you all a wonderful summer. Our thanks go to Norman Zucker for his time and energy in planning and carrying out all the many details that made up this year's convention, and to fellow Californians Bob and Diane Broski, for their assistance to him.

Although not all of us were confident that our first convention in the South would be without incident, the reality was that we were greeted with classic Southern hospitality, visited many of the historic sites in the area, and enjoyed almost perfect weather. Rain fell on us only on Sunday evening, as those of us flying home from the Jackson, MS airport spent one last night in a motel in Vicksburg. Every other day was sun-kissed and comfortably mild.

At the MTL Luncheon, held in an elegant dining room in the historic Eola Hotel, a dozen of our ladies gathered to enjoy the same sumptuous buffet that was served our Lincoln counterparts in the larger dining room across the hall. We enjoyed each other's company and spent a little time talking about next year's convention in Vandalia, and some of the details that would help to make us ladies more comfortable.

We realize that each convention location presents different challenges and the pros and cons of some of our requests may have to be weighed when each convention host plans activities for the weekend. The tightly packed schedule in 2014 allowed us to see and experience more of Natchez and Vicksburg in four days than we might have chosen to do on our own. But we wanted to make known some things that we would like to see incorporated into future ALP conventions.

#1. Building in some time to ourselves: more free time to enjoy visiting with each other, not just while seated on a bus or at a dinner table; not having so many activities planned that we don't have time to relax

#2. Time to sleep: rest is important to help us recharge each day; no early morning nor late evening activities please!

#3. A return of the Strawberry Tea: I admitted to telling the last few convention hosts that while we needed to schedule time for our annual MTL meeting, that did not need to happen at a separately scheduled tea with an alternate activity planned for the gentlemen at the same time. Placing our meeting at a luncheon seemed an efficient use of our time when scheduling weekend activities. After all, we all needed to eat lunch.

However, I did not anticipate how much we would all miss the opportunity to experience a tea party in the style of Mary Lincoln. We have been promised by the Vandalia planning committee that a Strawberry Tea will be an important part of the 2015 convention.

#4. Inclusion of speakers on topics of interest to the ladies. This point has been considered in many past conventions and needs to be kept in mind by future hosts.

#5. Although we are a small percentage of ALP members, those of us who follow the Roman Catholic faith have not always been able to make arrangements to attend Mass on Saturday evening or Sunday morning, without missing a scheduled convention event. We hope this will be addressed in Vandalia, by having free time written into our schedule at a time when Mass will be said at a nearby Catholic Church.

Before I close, let me remind you of the Memorial and Wreath Laying Ceremony at the Lincoln Tomb on July 16. Mary Lincoln's Coterie, an interest group focused on our favorite First Lady, will continue their tradition of hosting the event on the anniversary of Mary Lincoln's death.

Planned this year are a Strawberry Party with a lesson in the graces of tea on Tuesday evening, the ceremony at the tomb on Wednesday at 10am (the hour that Mary Lincoln's funeral was held) followed by luncheon at Maldaner's in Springfield. The guest speaker is Shannon Brown, a member of the group responsible for the Lincoln Funeral Train reenactment planned in 2015.

A block of rooms has been reserved at Ramada North, 3281 Northfield Dr, Springfield, IL. The special price of \$81 a night includes a continental breakfast, free internet, and free parking. Mention Mary Lincoln's Coterie to get the special price, which will be available until June 15th. (217-523-4000)

The cost of the luncheon is \$21. Space can be reserved by sending a check payable to Mary Lincoln's Coterie to Donna McCreary, 4620 Lake Forest Drive, Charlestown, IN 47111.

It has been five years since I participated in this event. Last year a memorial wreath in the name of ALP was purchased by donations from MTL members. I'm looking forward to attending this year. If you'd like to come too, please contact Donna McCreary any questions, (812-256-2370 or mtlincoln@hotmail.com)

Fondly,

Sharon Wood, MTL Chair

(written after 2014 ALP Conference, but not printed until March of 2015)