



LINCARNATIONS

The Newsletter of the ASSOCIATION OF LINCOLN PRESENTERS

VOL. 4, NO. 2

SPECIAL ISSUE: THE LINCOLNS OF NEW JERSEY

Fall, 1995

Dr. Gordon Vincent - Basking Ridge, NJ

Life Member of the Association of Lincoln Presenters

The very first time Gordon Vincent "became" Abraham Lincoln, the judges declared him "first runner-up" in the Lincoln look-alike contest in Hodgenville, Kentucky in 1993. Six feet, four inches tall, lean, lanky and bearded, this septuagenarian admires the 16th President and through Lincoln has found renewed life after retirement.

Not only does Gordon bear an honest resemblance to Abraham Lincoln, but he has Marfan's syndrome. A member of the Marfans Foundation, he can explain what it is and discuss the controversy as to whether Lincoln had it or not.

Gordon enjoys giving talks to school children, elderhostel groups, senior citizens, and at libraries, faculty retreats, and talent shows. He also reviews the troops at Civil War reenactments where he and his brother-in-law are members of the Third N.J. Infantry, and Gordon rode in the same coach as Abraham Lincoln in the parade in Jamesburg, New Jersey. (See page 7)

Gordon has a dry sense of humor and is rarely without a joke. At the drop of a stovepipe hat, he will tell you a funny Lincoln story. Gordon admires Lincoln for being a "life-long learner," and taking his lesson from Lincoln, Gordon participates in elderhostel programs and symposia dealing with Lincoln and the Civil War. His Lincoln library is already bursting the shelves, and his energy for Lincoln knows no bounds. Gordon enjoyed attending the first convention of the Association of Lincoln Presenters in Lexington, Kentucky and frequently attends meetings of the Lincoln Group of New York.

We wish you four score and seven as Lincoln.



Herb Wolke - Neptune, NJ

Member of the Association of Lincoln Presenters

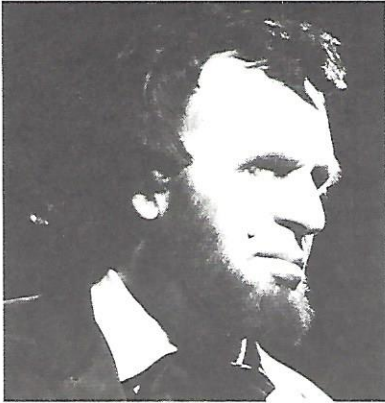
Who performed Lincoln in "Abe Lincoln in Illinois" before an audience of five thousand? Who was Lincoln at the Ford's Theater replica in Irvington, New York? Which Lincoln was photographed with Generals Grant and Sherman? Herb Wolke, of course.

For thirty years, Herb has been acting Abraham Lincoln. Inspired by Hal Holbrook, Herb studied Lincoln, then wrote a one-man play called "A Visit With Abe Lincoln" in 1985, and has performed it about thirty times in New York, New Jersey, Virginia, and Michigan. Even as a teenager, Herb was acting and has been in thirty-eight plays. "Always

smitten with Lincoln, I'm a history buff," said this Lincoln look-alike who is six feet, two and a quarter inches tall. Many people have said that they learned more about Lincoln from Herb's show than from reading books about the 16th President, and that makes Herb proud.



Ed Francisco - Branchville, NJ



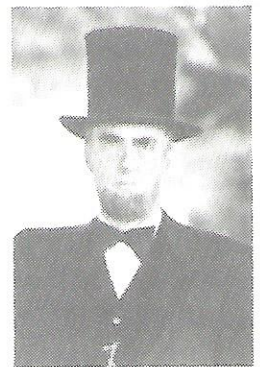
Life Member of the Association of Lincoln Presenters

Ed is a versatile Lincoln. When he retired from Rutgers some years ago, he developed a Lincoln program for school children but prefers presenting Lincoln to adults at historical societies, churches, and retirement homes. Topics he addresses are Lincoln on religion, slavery, and the Constitution. His major program, however, is the full-length play by Herbert Mitgang called "Mister Lincoln," which Ed has performed a dozen times.

Dan Bassuk - Neshanic, NJ

Founder and President of the Association of Lincoln Presenters

Not long after I was born in a log cabin, my mother warned me about putting money in my mouth, but one day I swallowed a penny, and lo and behold, I started looking more and more like the man on the penny. When my whiskers grew and I got a black coat and stovepipe hat, I began telling school children about my life and what books I had read. For me, Lincoln is the great storyteller, with a wonderful sense of humor, and an appeal to children of all ages. So after years of reading about the 16th President, I joined storytelling groups and began telling the stories that I had written about him. Now I perform as Lincoln more than four score and seven times a year, telling such stories as "How Abraham Lincoln got his Beard Gracefully," "How Young Abe Stung a Bee," and "Lincoln's Dream." Over the years I have collected books and vintage Lincoln clothing and hats. My Lincoln show includes many books about Abe Lincoln that children can read. I have even performed in fifteen schools named Lincoln.



In 1990 I started the ASSOCIATION OF LINCOLN PRESENTERS to link up the Lincolns. It has been a pleasure to see this association develop and to meet today's Lincolns at our annual conventions. I enjoy writing for our newsletter called LINCARNATIONS and spending the summer traveling and researching Lincoln. What a blessing it is to be in the company of today's Lincolns and feel and convey the spirit of our greatest President.

Ken Karnas - Wantage, NJ

Member of the Association of Lincoln Presenters

When February arrives Ken lets his beard grow, and on the 12th Ken transforms himself into Abe Lincoln for boys and girls at Wantage School where he teaches 4th grade. His program is called "A Visit from Mr. Lincoln," and includes the Gettysburg Address and Lincoln's life story. Ken is interested in storytelling and has written some stories. His Lincoln show has a few follow-up activities for the students, such as figuring out how much four score and seven really is, or memorizing a famous Lincoln saying. Ken receives many lovely letters from kids thanking him for presenting a real live Lincoln.





Bob Conrad - East Rutherford, NJ

Bob had been performing as Abe Lincoln for nine years. "I grew up with Lincoln," he said. "My father admired him, and I wrote my book reports on Lincoln." Now Bob performs for elementary school children, presenting a living Abe, playing Lincoln's favorite tune, "Dixie" on the banjo, and including some magic tricks and ventriloquism. Mostly during February, Bob does about forty shows, and the kids love his Lincoln.

Mary Todd Lincolns:

Mary Eunice - Middletown, NJ, Member of the Association of Lincoln Presenters

Mary is related (distantly) to the Booth family and has inherited its acting abilities. She takes pride in referring to Edwin Booth and how he saved the life of Robert Todd Lincoln in Jersey City, but she does not refer to his younger brother. Mary portrays forty-five women characters to audiences of all ages who enjoy her portrayals of Mary Todd Lincoln, Mamie Eisenhower, Eleanor Roosevelt, and Rose Kennedy. She does about 100 shows a year in addition to teaching speech and dramatics at St. Mary's School.

For the past twenty years during February, Mary has performed Mary Todd Lincoln throughout the Northeast. Her Mary Todd Lincoln portrayal takes place in the year 1870, when Mary was in Germany and reflecting on her life and her late husband. She describes her love for her children and her husband's devotion to them. Using costumes made by her partner, Florence, Mary hopes to convey to her audience a more positive attitude about Mrs. Lincoln than is generally held. All of Mary's portrayals of women are meant to be inspirational, and this septuagenarian is truly an inspiration to many.



Mary Campo - Randolph, NJ, Member of the Association of Lincoln Presenters



"You become kindred souls when you portray someone like Mary Todd Lincoln," said Mary Campo, and for four years she has been presenting Lincoln's wife on behalf of The Traveling Stage Company. "I like to leave the audience with a better understanding of who Mary Lincoln was and to describe her relationship with her husband and children. I carry pictures of three of my children and the house at Eighth and Jackson. My husband was so kind and loving to our children and understanding of me. We were unusually close."

Mary Campo's portrayal begins before the White House and ends at Ford's Theater. Sometimes she is joined on stage by other historical women such as Martha Washington or Sojourner Truth. And she loves to answer questions about Mary's life after 1865 and set the record straight. Mary was not really insane. A bit erratic, yes; out of control, yes; obsessive, yes; but "insane," no!

Mary deserves credit for motivating Abe politically. She had a keen sense of politics and knew how to promote him. He needed a person with drive, and she was the great force in his life. "I love and believe in what I'm saying as Mary Lincoln," said Mary Campo, and it would have made Lincoln and his wife proud.

Mary Todd Lincolns Continued

Ellen Weber - Dayton, NJ, Member of the Association of Lincoln Presenters



"I work for the military during the week, and for the Civil War military on weekends," said Ellen Weber, a Mary Todd Lincoln look-alike. She and her husband Don are members of the 14th Regiment New Jersey Volunteers, Company K. Since 1993, Ellen has been portraying Mary Todd Lincoln and riding in the same coach that Lincoln rode in Trenton in 1861. Ellen has two Civil War roles, a lieutenant's wife, and the First Lady. She would like to improve the image that people have of Mary Todd. She has plans to speak with a southern accent and learn French, to acquire more of Mary's gowns, and to ride in the Lincoln coach on the original route in Trenton with a team of horses. But she truly wants to share with school children and on local television the story of Mary's hardships, her losses, her feelings, her plight, so that people will respect this misunderstood woman. Showing a photograph of her new baby, Ellen said, "I hope my daughter will carry on the legacy of Mary Todd Lincoln."

Lincoln in New Jersey

Patrons of the Association of Lincoln Presenters

Dorothy Beaman - Union Beach, NJ Life Member of ALP

Here is Dottie's story:

"When I was a teenager in 1937 or 1938, one night we went to church, and I remember that Dad's friend turned out the lights. Then someone read a poem that ended with

'We see his pictured face today,
There's light upon it still.'

Then a spotlight focused upon my father's face behind the pulpit. He was a carpenter and had made a large wooden picture frame. He had a beard and was all made-up to look like a picture of the 16th President, and when his eyes moved it became a living Lincoln. I can still hear the audience gasp. Even though it happened fifty-five years ago, I shall never forget it."

Dorothy's father, David Beaman (1889-1969), had a natural interest in dramatics and performed as Lincoln several times. She said, "I only wish there were camcorders back then."

Paul A. Friedrich - Hackettstown, NJ Member of ALP

On November 2, 1995 Rev. Paul Friedrich was four score and seven years young. This octogenarian gave his "Picture Story of the Life of Lincoln" for the Hackettstown Historical Society on April 5, 1995, and who should show up but three modern Abraham Lincolns, Dan Bassuk, Ed Francisco, and Gordon Vincent. Paul took us on a travelogue through Lincoln territory, Kentucky, Indian, and Illinois, using slides and audiotape. He transported his audience to many interesting Lincoln sites, sharing his extensive knowledge of Lincoln's life and giving fair treatment to Mary Lincoln. After Ford's Theater and the Peterson House there were Oak Ridge Cemetery, Hildene, and Lincoln statues in Newark, Mt. Rushmore, London, and Chicago. The three Lincolns present were delighted to see the interest in their life by both lecturer and audience and wish Paul Friedrich a very happy 87th birthday and many more years of Lincoln lecturing.

Historical Society of Jamesburg, New Jersey - Member of ALP

The Jamesburg Historical Society invited Dan Bassuk to present a talk on The Lincoln Coach, at the homestead of James Buckelew for whom Jamesburg is named. On July 5th about forty people attended this talk, and the historical society became a patron of the Association of Lincoln Presenters.

Lincoln in New Jersey Continued

Dr. Cornelius Stover - Flemington, NJ Member of ALP

Quakers are usually pacifists who eschew war, but this Quaker is fascinated by the War Between the States. Dr. Stover is an orthopaedic surgeon who became interested in the Civil War in 1958 at the Gettysburg battleground and today is a member of the Society of Civil War Surgeons and on the board of directors of the Museum of Civil War Medicine. Three of his ancestors fought for the Union, and Dr. Stover has recently written a monograph on his great-grandfather who survived imprisonment at Andersonville, entitled Cornelius George Washington Stover in the Civil War.

Dr. Stover's current research deals with stress-fractures and the Civil War soldier. Stress-fractures, also known as march-fractures, were not known prior to x-rays, but today we know a great deal about them. Dr. Stover is certain that the Civil War marching soldier was prone to this fracture and severe consequences. While stress-fractures have been studied in modern wars, no one other than Dr. Stover has studied this phenomenon with regard to the Civil War. His conjecture is that some soldiers marching twenty miles a day became "stragglers" or "malingerers" or even "deserters," due to stress-fractures, which in those days could have been called "rheumatism," or just plain cowardice.

Dr. Stover hopes to uncover valuable information about stress-fractures in the Civil War by studying diaries and letters of soldiers and surgeons at the National Archives and Civil War museums. One of his prime sources is Lincoln's Fifth Wheel: The Political History of the United States Sanitary Commission by William Q. Maxwell. We wish him continued success, stresslessly.

Civil War Round Table of Cape May Life Member of ALP

On June 23, 1995, three modern President Lincolns with beards and stovepipe hats appeared at the old, historic Courthouse in Cape May Court House in the very room where a contingent of volunteers departed for the Civil War on August 22, 1862. Gordon Vincent, John Kemple, and Dan Bassuk, all Lincoln look-alikes, were escorted down the aisle by a Union soldier from the 148th Pennsylvania Volunteer Infantry. Each Lincoln explained his admiration for the 16th President and how he portrays Lincoln to American audiences. John Kemple set up a display of Lincoln statues and photographs of Lincoln impersonators. Gordon Vincent spoke about how Lincoln touched him and continues to touch "the better angels of our nature." Dan Bassuk showed his collection of Raymond Massey memorabilia from "Abe Lincoln in Illinois." They called the evening a triple-header.

Drew University - Madison, NJ Life Member of ALP

Dan -

As promised, (and honored to do so), enclosed is a check for lifetime membership into The ASSOCIATION OF LINCOLN PRESENTERS. It's wonderful to see the success of this worthy organization growing and Drew is proud to be a part of it. Moreover, to have yourself, a Drew alumnus, as the key player in the formation and ongoing efforts for memorializing Abe Lincoln is admirable.

*Sincerely,
Jim Diverio
Director of Alumni Affairs*

Scott Sandage, Highland Park, NJ, Honorary Member of ALP

A Lincoln prodigy, Scott read all the Lincoln books in his school library, collected pictures, posters, and busts of Lincoln, and recited "four score and seven" more than fifty times by the time he was only seven. No wonder that today he is teaching history at Rutgers University and completing his doctoral dissertation. Scott was the first person to recognize that ex-President Reagan had misquoted Abraham Lincoln (see THE LINCOLNIAN, Nov. 1992).

Collector's Corner

Greg Romano - Lawrenceville, NJ **Member ALP**

Greg Romano is a Lincoln aficionado extraordinaire. Sitting in his Lincoln rocker (he has two), reading one of his 580 Lincoln books, surrounded by fifteen sculptures of Lincoln and seven lithographs from Lincoln's era, Greg conveyed his love of Lincoln's language, logic, and ethics.

Greg Romano is the Deputy Attorney General for the State of New Jersey. He has a B.A. with honors in history and a law degree from Dickinson. His research interests include Lincoln and electoral politics, Lincoln's relationship with the Supreme Court, and why Lincoln chose Chase for Chief Justice of the Supreme Court.

Greg's Lincoln room is like a museum. There are four different sets of The Collected Works of Abraham Lincoln. His Lincoln library is a scholar's collection and includes signed first editions by such notables as J. G. Randall, David Donald, Paul Angel, Benjamin Thomas, Carl Sandburg, H. C. Whitney, and Ida Tarbell.

Greg's enthusiasm for Lincoln is shown in his membership in the ASSOCIATION OF LINCOLN PRESENTERS, the Abraham Lincoln Association, the Lincoln Group of New York and its award committee. He owns every Lincoln sculpture by the artist Dan Gray and plans on writing about this sculptor and his art.

Bob DeLorenzo - Garfield, NJ

Bob DeLorenzo is an active Lincoln collector and his collection includes 100 Lincoln post cards, 100 Lincoln books, 15 statues, 15 CDVs, 15 signed Lincoln portraits, plus a portrait of Lincoln on glass and a French portrait on ivory. He also has an 1865 iron bust of Lincoln used as a trophy, 10 Lincoln watches, 6 Lincoln paperweights, and a miniature log cabin from the 1920's.

Cindy Beim - Kendall Park, NJ

Looking for a Lincoln cookie cutter, a Lincoln Royal Doulton mug, or a Lincoln Classic Comic book? Cindy Beim has these items and more in her collection. Almost born on Lincoln's sesquicentennial, Cindy collects Lincoln bottles, plates, statues, post cards, book ends, and books. Of her 450 Lincoln books, her favorites are the two dozen she has from the 19th century. Cindy is a member of the Lincoln Group of New York.

Dr. John Lattimer - Englewood, NJ

Author of Kennedy and Lincoln. Medical and Ballistic Comparisons of Their Assassinations (1980).

Dr. Lattimer has a collection that focuses primarily on Lincoln's assassination. His collection includes: the tablecloth of the last dinner that President and Mrs. Lincoln ate together, a ticket to Ford's Theater on April 14, 1865, the scarf that Mary wore on that date, a lock of Mary's hair, a lock of Lincoln's hair, a lock of one of their children's hair, the key to the Presidential box at Ford's Theater, a piece of cloth from Lincoln's rocking chair at the theater, Lincoln's blood-stained collar, a piece of the blood-stained pillowcase, and reserved signs for Presidential seats at Ford's with blood-stains (perhaps Major Rathbone's). Pertaining to the assassins, Dr. Lattimer has John Wilkes Booth's walking stick, many of Booth's letters, Lewis Payne's dagger, and two nooses that hanged the conspirators. Dr. Lattimer gives many informative talks on the Lincoln assassination about which he is an expert.

Margaret J. O'Connell - Pennington, NJ **Lincoln Author**

Margaret O'Connell was truly a student and seeker of Lincoln. Her first book, Lincoln Lives (1957), was dedicated "to all Lincoln Lovers" and consists of her diary from June, 1952 to August, 1956. During those four years, Margaret takes us on a delightful search to numerous Lincoln sites in the North, South, and mid-West, and describes two Lincoln presenters, Royal Dano and Ray Middleton. Her second book, Jersey's Story (1958), unmistakably reflects her admiration for Lincoln and includes four pictures connected with the 16th President.

Miss O'Connell was the first woman to become a member of the Civil War Round Table of the District of Columbia. She was granted special permission to attend Carl Sandburg's famous address before Congress in 1959 on the 150th anniversary of Lincoln's birth and invited to the inauguration of JFK in 1961. She died in 1971 after spending the last years of her life writing Pennington Profile (1966).

On February 12, 1953, Rutgers University Press, New Brunswick, NJ published The Collected Works of Abraham Lincoln in nine volumes. In twenty years more than 40,000 copies were sold.

LINCOLN IN TRENTON, N.J. – A SEQUEL

by DANIEL BASSUK

Living not far from Trenton, I was intrigued by Wayne Temple's article "Lincoln in Trenton, N.J." in the Fall, 1993 issue of the *Lincoln Herald*. The two photos of the Trenton House, the hostelry where Lincoln occupied room 100 on Thursday, February 21, 1861, as it looked in 1861, and just before the wrecking ball demolished it in 1987, seemed to sever the connection between the Trenton that Lincoln knew and today. The article seemed to resonate with a note of finality pertaining to Lincoln's visit to this city. But shortly after reading Dr. Temple's article, I received a startling phone call from "Mary Todd Lincoln." Well, almost. This "Mary" is really Ellen Weber, a member of the Association of Lincoln Presenters, who informed me that on Memorial Day (May 30, 1994), I could see the coach that Lincoln rode in when he went to the legislature in Trenton.

What? Was it possible? Was this another Lincoln legend like the many that circulate through this state?

I re-read Wayne Temple's article, and found this passage:

"As the Presidential Special pulled into the city, an artillery battery fired a salute to honor Lincoln and his party. Mayor Franklin S. Mills was at the station and welcomed the President-elect. Then, the chairman of a Legislative reception committee escorted him to a waiting open barouche which would carry him to the State House."¹

I thereupon wrote to Dr. Temple, asking if he knew anything about this barouche, and he kind-



GORDON VINCENT AND ELLEN WEBER

ly replied, saying:

"I have no idea whether or not the barouche from Trenton still exists, nor do I have a photo of it, but I think that you are on to something. If there is a "tradition" that this one is the correct one, it probably is so. People tend to keep such items, especially after Lincoln was killed. After all, the owners of the barouche knew at the time that Abraham Lincoln was going to be the next President."²

So, on Memorial Day, who should be riding in an open barouche but "Abraham and Mary Lincoln," in the persons of Gordon Vincent and Ellen Weber³. Tradition has it that this barouche is "The Lincoln Coach," presently preserved by the Historical Society of Jamesburg, N.J. The coach was made in 1850 for Mr. James Buckelew, the founder of Jamesburg, and one of the wealthiest men in the Trenton area who could afford to have a coach made for as much as \$600. It was a double-seated carriage with polished wood frame, black leather upholstery, and doors with sliding glass windows. Originally it was pulled by four beautiful bay stallions which Buckelew had carefully bred. Buckelew had agreed to provide the coach for Lincoln on the condition that these horses and his driver be used. Lincoln reportedly complimented the reception committee on the appearance of the coach, and said it was the most elaborate he had ever ridden in.⁴ When the President-elect climbed into the carriage, Buck-

EDITOR'S NOTE: Daniel Bassuk received his Ph.D. from Drew University in 1974 and is the author of *Abraham Lincoln and the Quakers*. Lecturer and storyteller, he does research on Lincoln when he is not busy writing and telling stories about the 16th president. He is the founder and president of the Association of Lincoln Presenters.

Lincoln in Trenton Continued

elew began to climb in too. Guards interfered, but he insisted, saying "if my coach is good enough for Lincoln to ride in, then I am good enough to sit beside Lincoln," and he did.⁵

The coach travelled west on State Street to the State House, where Lincoln spoke, first to the Senate, then to the Assembly, and later from the balcony of the Trenton House, before leaving for Philadelphia. Lincoln never visited Trenton again, although four years later his funeral train would pass through this city on its long, sad journey home.

But what of the coach? It remained in the Buckelew family for many years. After James Buckelew died in 1869, it was moved from place to place, but from World War I to 1933, Memorial Day parades in Jamesburg always featured the famous "Lincoln coach," carrying veterans of the Civil War, the Spanish-American war, or Gold Star Mothers of World War I.

The coach remained in Jamesburg until 1954, when the city of Trenton, planning to build an historical museum in Cadwalader Park, brought it there. And here the Lincoln coach was forgotten, neglected, and deteriorated, while money for the historical museum did not materialize.

Anticipating America's Bicentennial Celebration, the Lincoln coach was given to a wagon restorer for restoration in 1974. But Trenton's museum commission members kept changing, and interest in the coach waned, and the restoration of the coach proceeded very slowly. With hindsight this was most fortunate, for if the coach had been restored speedily and housed in Trenton's Civic Center in 1975 as planned, it would have been consumed in the flames that destroyed that Civic Center.

With the newly formed Jamesburg Historical Association in 1977, interest in the Lincoln coach was rekindled, and Jamesburg negotiated with Trenton, paid the wagon restorer, and got its coach returned after twenty five years. Today it is fully restored, polished and beaming with pride as it stands tall within the glass-enclosed summer alcove of Buckelew House on Buckelew Avenue in Jamesburg. And next Memorial Day, if you can attend the parade, be sure to look for the coach in which Abraham Lincoln rode to the State House in Trenton with James Buckelew. Who knows, the Lincoln re-enactor's riding inside may even evoke the ghost of Abraham Lincoln. ❧

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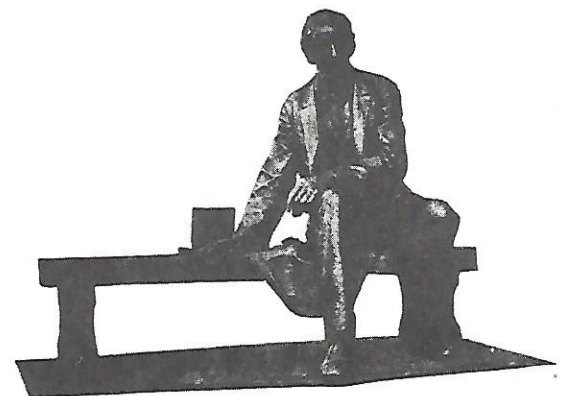
Old Abe's Story of New Jersey

"One terribly stormy night in bleak December, a vessel was wrecked off the coast of Jersey, and every soul save one went down with the doomed craft. This one survivor seized a floating spar and was washed toward the shore, while innumerable kind-hearted tools (laborers) of the Camden and Amboy Railroad clustered on the beach with boats and ropes. Slowly the unhappy mariner drifted to land and, as he exhaustedly caught at the rope thrown to him, the kindly natives uttered an encouraging cheer."

" 'You are saved!' they shouted. 'You are saved, and must show the conductor your ticket!' With the sea still boiling about him, the drowning stranger resisted the efforts to haul him ashore. 'Stop!' said he, in faint tones, 'tell me where I am! What country is this?' They answered: 'New Jersey.' Scarcely was the name uttered when the wretched stranger let go the rope, exclaiming as he did so, 'I guess I'll float a little farther!'"

THE ASSOCIATION OF LINCOLN PRESENTERS is a non-profit association dedicated to the proposition of supporting and encouraging the presenting of Abraham and Mary Todd Lincoln to the American people. It is altogether fitting and proper that we should do this. Membership in the ALP is \$20. Life membership is \$100.

Officers in the ALP are Dr. Daniel Bassuk, President; Max and Donna Daniels, Vice-Presidents; Patricia Thomas, Treasurer; Associate editor, Ted Zalewski; reporter, James Keeran; media specialist, John Kemple. Address inquiries and correspondence to Daniel Bassuk, 1143 River Road, Neshanic, New Jersey 08853, or call (908) 369-7648.



Statue in Newark, NJ