



LINCARNATIONS

The Newsletter of the ASSOCIATION OF LINCOLN PRESENTERS

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Now He Belongs to the Stages

Fall, 1996

AN EXPLORATION OF LINCOLN IN THE WORDS HE LOVED

by Kevin Bossenmeyer, A.K.A. President Lincoln

In 1995 I was interested in developing an Independence Day play exploring our Constitution and Bill of Rights. As my ideas germinated and my research evolved, Abraham Lincoln came more and more to the fore. I had wondered, who was this man? What was he about? What effect did he have on this nation? I am moved to tears by what I discovered.

I soon discovered a man of great compassion and humanity, a man who sincerely believed our government was "the last best hope" for the world. As I read more about his life and his words I became convinced this man's higher sense of purpose and being had developed from his reading. The vision for my play was to explore Abraham Lincoln through the poetry and the works of Shakespeare he so loved.

My one-man play recreated Lincoln's trip on the River Queen from City Point, Virginia to Washington on April 8 & 9, 1865. On that trip Lincoln spent hours reading his favorite play, "Macbeth," and reciting his favorite poetry. For Lincoln's spirit these were not just words, but thoughts to live and breathe by.

I performed my play on April 23-27, 1996 at a wonderful church/theatre in Newport Beach, California. The stage was transformed to become the Presidential steamship. Audience response that week was very positive and enthusiastic. I am planning to enhance the play and perform as Abraham Lincoln many more times in the future.



An Exploration of

A Lincoln

IN THE WORDS HE LOVED

GIFTS to the ASSOCIATION OF LINCOLN PRESENTERS

1. Mr Stuart Schneider who is writing a book on *Collecting Lincoln*, has traded photos of Lincoln impersonator Elmer Grandin from the 1890s.
2. Lois Schnizlein, a Mary Todd Lincoln and Life member of ALP has donated many of her Lincoln treasures including a large poster of Roy Dotrice as Lincoln.
3. Mr. Joseph Garrera has graciously donated photographs of Lincoln impersonators Walter Huston, Lincoln Caswell, and Ben Chapin, from his collection which was amassed by Valentine Bjorkman in the 1930s.
4. The Lincoln Museum in Fort Wayne, courtesy of James Eber, has contributed information on Lincoln impersonators Chic Sale, H.L. Summerville, John Ireland, Mary Waterstreet, Gayle Belcher, Roger Vincent, Nelva Currens, and Napoleon Beaulieu.

WE THANK THEM ALL.

ANNOUNCEMENTS

1. The third convention of the ALP will convene on April 25-27, 1997 at Gettysburg. See inserts enclosed.
2. The Association of Lincoln Presenters is now incorporated thanks to Thomas Herlihy.
3. Winners of the Lincoln Look-alike contests at Hodgenville, KY. 1996 were
 - (1) James Conine
 - (2) Bill Wiseman
 - (3) J.D. Frakes
 - (1) Donna Daniels
 - (2) Shirley Long
 - (3) Ruthanne Boatright

HELM PLACE by Donna Bowen, A.K.A. Mary Todd Lincoln

In the heart of horse country in Lexington, Kentucky is the pastoral setting of a magnificent, antebellum estate. The ivy stone wall and black iron gate invite a guest to visit a land rich in history and tradition. Up the graceful winding lane to the "mansion house," one is greeted by a graceful lady with the charm and hospitality of a by-gone era when visiting friends was an event. Her smile radiates friendship, warmth, and Kentucky hospitality. This is Mary Genevieve Townsend Murphy, and this is Helm Place.

Helm Place is so named because it is the last home of Emilie Todd Helm, sister of Mary Todd Lincoln, and her three children. This is where Levi Todd, (Mary and Emilie's grandfather) began a settlement in 1779 known as Todd's Station. In 1912 the granddaughter of Levi Todd purchased the property and christened it "Helm Place." Here, Emilie would live until 93, and her children would live out their golden years. Here they met and developed a special friendship with William Townsend, Mrs. Murphy's father.

When the Helms first purchased the property there was renovation to do. The house had sat empty and was sadly neglected for several years. There was no plumbing, heat, or electricity. Changes were made. The back porch was transformed into a dining room and bathrooms were added. The kitchen was incorporated into the main house, and part of the large hall upstairs was converted into a bedroom. This is the Helm Place of today, the Helm Place I had the pleasure of visiting in the summer of 1996.

Entering the mansion, I was impressed by the large portrait of General Benjamin Hardin Helm in full Confederate uniform painted by his daughter Katherine. She is a renowned portrait artist and her painting captured her father's passion and dignity. In the foyer is a stand holding three of the general's Civil War swords.

The two parlors are my favorites. In these rooms are many of the Todd and Helm family portraits including one of Abraham Lincoln by an unknown artist. Above the fireplace is a portrait of William Townsend, famed Lincoln scholar, collector, and author of *Lincoln and His Wife's Home Town* (1929).

At one time, Mr. Townsend owned the largest private collection of Lincoln artifacts. Several years after her husband's death in 1964, Mrs. Townsend was staying at Helm Place with her daughter when a neighbor called to report that her door was open. Mrs. Murphy rushed to the home and found several pieces of the collection missing. Gone were several Lincoln statues, the Healy portrait of Abraham Lincoln, and the portrait of Mary Lincoln painted by Katherine Helm as a gift for Mr. Townsend. The portrait of Robert Smith Todd, Mary's father, was found propped at the front door. Apparently the thieves had been frightened by something. None of these items have ever been recovered.

The back parlor houses a portrait of Henry Clay and his will. A reproduction plate of Mary Todd Lincoln's White House china sits on the desk along with several pieces of Mr. Townsend's Bowie knife collection. The Bowie knife which belonged to Cassius Clay is upstairs. On the wall beside the desk are pictures of Emilie and Mary as they appeared in mourning attire. Miss Katherine's portrait of Alex Humphries Todd hangs next to the door leading into the foyer.

In the library hangs another portrait painted by Miss Katherine of her father, General Helm. The painting of Robert Smith Todd that was almost stolen hangs above a desk. Portraits of Abraham Lincoln, Helm Place, and William Townsend flank the doorway. On a shelf is the original life mask of Abraham Lincoln made by Leonard Volk in 1860. Helm Place has a "vagrants' lodging" room upstairs where a portrait of Abraham Lincoln with a note written by him states, "Let the prisoner be discharged." There is also a table made by Abraham Lincoln's father which Mr. Townsend purchased from the Hanks family. Nearby is a Mary Todd Lincoln doll.

Helm Place is one of the grandest places I have ever visited. Not only was I enthralled with the vast amount of art work, Todd family heirlooms and historical artifacts, but I was most enchanted with the owners of Helm Place, Joe and Mary Murphy. These individuals are shining examples of the grace, manners, and style that embodies Kentucky hospitality. Meeting Mrs. Murphy was a blessing. Not only is she the daughter of William Townsend, but she was a friend to Emilie and her children, and I was enthralled with her stories about her home, her relatives and her family. As a Lincoln presenter, I know that I will never meet anyone else who personally knew Mary Todd Lincoln's sister.

THE FAVORITE LINCOLN BOOKS OF SOME OF TODAY'S LINCOLN PRESENTERS

TAD ALLEN (FL)

1. *Lincoln*, David Donald
 2. *With Malice Toward None*, Stephen Oates
 3. *Abraham Lincoln*, Benjamin Thomas
 4. *The Lincoln Nobody Knows*, Richard Current
 5. *Abraham Lincoln*, Albert Beveridge
 6. *Mary Todd Lincoln*, Justin and Linda Turner
 7. *Lincoln's Youth*, Louis Warren
 8. *Abraham Lincoln*, Lord Charnwood
 9. *Mr. Lincoln*, J.G. Randall
 10. *Lincoln's Own Yarns & Stories*, Col. A.K. McClure
- Least Favorites:
Lincoln, Gore Vidal & *The Real Lincoln*, Charles Minor

B.F. and D. McCLEEREN (IL)

1. *Mary Lincoln*, Ruth Randall
2. *The President's Wife*, Ishbel Ross
3. *Abraham Lincoln*, Benjamin Thomas
4. *Lincoln*, The Kunhardts
5. *Collected Works*, Basler
6. *Mary Todd Lincoln*, Turners
7. *Lincoln*, Don Fehrenbacher
8. *Lincoln-Douglas Debates*, Holzer
9. *Quotations from Abraham Lincoln*
by Ralph McGinnis
10. *Lincoln in American Memory*
by Merrill Peterson

MARTIN TULLAI (History Dept. St. Paul's School, MD) Dr. GORDON VINCENT (NJ)

1. *Lincoln*, David Donald
2. *Collected Works*, Basler
3. *Abraham Lincoln*, Benjamin Thomas
4. *The Abraham Lincoln Encyclopedia*, Neely
5. *Lincoln in Amer. Memory*, Peterson
6. *The Lincoln Nobody Knows*, Current
7. *Lincoln The President*, Randall, 4 vols.
8. *Lincoln, The Liberal Statesman*, Randall
9. *Constitutional Problems under Lincoln*, Randall
10. *Lincoln and his Party in the Secession Crisis*, Potter

1. *Lincoln*, David Donald
2. *Collected Works*, Basler
3. *Abraham Lincoln*, Ben Thomas
4. *Abraham Lincoln*, Lord Charnwood
5. *Lincoln*, Gore Vidal
6. *Myths After Lincoln*, Lloyd Lewis
7. *Lincoln at Gettysburg*, Gary Wills
8. *Lincoln on Democracy*, Cuomo & Holzer
9. *Drawn with the Sword*, McPherson
10. *Abraham Lincoln The Boy The Man*
by Lloyd Ostendorf

Dr. RICHARD SWANSON (MA)

1. *Lincoln*, David Donald
2. *Lincoln Day by Day*, Miers
3. *Abraham Lincoln*, Benjamin Thomas
4. *The Abraham Lincoln Encyclopedia*, Neely
5. *Inner Life of Abraham Lincoln*, Carpenter
6. *Behind the Scenes*, Keckley
7. *Lincoln in the Telegraph Office*, Bates
8. *Lincoln's Sons*, Ruth Randall
9. *With Malice Toward None*, Oates
10. *The Face of Lincoln*, Mellon

DONNA BOWEN (IN)

1. *Mary Todd Lincoln*, Jean Baker
2. *Mary, Wife of Lincoln*, Helm
3. *I, Mary*, Ruth Randall
4. *Lincoln and his Wife's Hometown*
by William Townsend
5. *Lincoln's Sons*, Ruth Randall
6. *Behind the Scenes*, Keckley
7. *Dear Mr. Lincoln*, Holzer
8. *Wit & Wisdom of Lincoln*, Ayres
9. *Astonishing Saber Duel of Abraham Lincoln*, Meyers
10. *Crowns of Thorns & Glory*, Heuvel

Dr. DAN BASSUK (NJ)

1. *Lincoln in American Memory*, Peterson
2. *The Poet's Lincoln*, Oldroyd
3. *Lincoln Talks*, Hertz
4. *Lincoln's Sons*, Ruth Randall
5. *Lincoln and His Generals*, T. Harry Williams

6. *The Lincoln Reader*, ed. Paul Angle
7. *The Faces of Abraham Lincoln*, Harry Wood
8. *Inner Life of Abraham Lincoln*, Carpenter
9. *Lincoln's Herndon, Lincoln Reconsidered*,
Lincoln, David Donald

10. "We Cannot Escape History" - *Lincoln and the Last Best Hope of Earth*, ed. McPherson

B. Thomas 5
D. Donald 5
R. Randall 5

J.G. Randall 4
M. Peterson 3

Collected Works 3
H. Holzer 3

LINCOLN'S INFLUENCE THROUGHOUT THE AGES

(This is the fifth in this series by Ted TR Zalewski)

CLARA BARTON and ABRAHAM LINCOLN

by Jessa Piaia who presents Women in History

Clara Barton (1821-1914) was one of the first women to be working for the federal government when the Civil War began. A firm believer in charitable organizations, she volunteered to ease the hardships that the troops endured. She placed a small ad in the *Worcester Spy*, asking for provisions. The response was tremendous. However, she had to wait several months for the Surgeon General to grant permission for what was "hitherto unheard of," a civilian woman entering the battlefield.

Serving along the Mason-Dixon line, Ms Barton was soon referred to as "the Daughter of the 21st Regiment." When the supplies she brought were depleted, she returned to Washington to replenish the food, bandages, and candles. Choosing to work as a free agent rather than under the auspices of the Sanitary Commission, she maintained that it was most expedient for her to arrive at the battlesite without having to go through official routine. This direct contact with soldiers earned her the honorary title of "the Angel of the Battlefield."

When the Civil War ended, Ms Barton offered to make lists of the soldiers who were missing, wounded, and dead, and to notify their family, friends, and newspapers. President Lincoln endorsed this:

To the family and friends of missing prisoners: Miss Clara Barton has kindly offered to search for the missing prisoners of war. Please address her at Annapolis, MD giving name, regiment, and company of any missing prisoner. A. Lincoln

This was the first time that official records were kept by the government, and the last appointment that Lincoln made before he was assassinated. After Lincoln's funeral, Clara Barton began to receive invitations to speak at public functions. She spoke about her experiences as part of the war effort, and addressed the cause of abolition as well as equal rights for negroes and women. Here is her description of Lincoln's funeral:

"That was the grandest funeral that ever passed on earth. From city to city, the silent train passed on bearing the one sable, shrouded casket. The nation's emblem for a pall, and, ever, the crowing, clinging mourners between the head and feet. From the northern ocean to the southern seas was only this. A silence born of grief too mighty for words; too deep for moans. And thus they bore him on, and laid him in the quiet grave among his own."

OBITUARY: G. WILLIAM HORSLEY

Just 3 months after addressing the ASSOCIATION OF LINCOLN PRESENTERS at its second convention at Springfield, Illinois, beloved member, G. William Horsley, senator, lawyer, and Lincoln impersonator, passed away at age four score and six, nearly. He had given us a stirring message to encourage theatrical efforts and hold to Lincoln's idealism.

Horsley, who was 6'4" tall, played the role of Abraham Lincoln in the play "Abe Lincoln in Illinois" in New Salem State Park for 17 years (1947-1964), and appeared as Lincoln in Washington D.C. and in movies and television. He was a member of the ASSOCIATION OF LINCOLN PRESENTERS, and we were fortunate to receive his message and his support. He will be greatly missed.

An award of \$250 in honor of Mr. Horsley will be granted by A. L. P. in 1997 for creative efforts on Lincoln in the arts.

THE ASSOCIATION OF LINCOLN PRESENTERS:

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 Rd., Neshanic, NJ 08853, or call (908) 369-7648.

