

# LINCARNATIONS

The Newsletter of the ASSOCIATION OF LINCOLN PRESENTERS

Number 16

*Would I might rouse the Lincoln in you all*

Fall 1999

## A "COOL" LINCOLN IN ALASKA

By Dr. Gordon Vincent

Lincoln in Alaska? No, two Lincolns in Alaska!

ALP member, Reed Carlson, principal of Kenny Lake School in "very rural" Alaska, on President's Day in 1999 presented an inspiring Horatio Alger Day along with State Senator Georgianna Lincoln. Senator Lincoln opened the day with her personal stories of growing up in a life filled with adversity. President Lincoln (a.k.a. Reed Carlson) concluded the day with his appearance in an original play called "Abraham Lincoln: More than Just our 16<sup>th</sup> President," written by the junior high Language Arts class. The play stressed the importance of setting goals and working to reach them. All students, kindergarten through 12<sup>th</sup> grade, were involved throughout the day, especially Julie Oatman who is the only Alaska student selected as a Horatio Alger National Scholar. The focus of the day was on overcoming obstacles in life and working hard to reach goals.

One student was overheard to say that principal Carlson's performance of Abe was "cool," but a teacher corrected him and said it was absolutely "chilling."



## ANNOUNCEMENTS

1. ALP Convention, 6<sup>th</sup> Annual, Lincoln birthplace, Hodgenville Kentucky, April 14-16 2000. Contact Jim Sayre, phone (502) 839-7191. For reservations call Ramada Inn (270) 769-9683. The Ramada Inn is in Elizabethtown, 8 miles from Hodgenville.
2. Directory of ALP members including 115 Abe Lincolns, 33 Mary Lincolns, ten groups, and 40 patrons. Available on request for \$1.
3. Website: Check out our new website at <http://www.lincolnpresenters.org> If you want to be linked to it, email Dan Bassuk at [honestlyabe@worldnet.att.net](mailto:honestlyabe@worldnet.att.net)
4. American Heritage magazine (July/August 1999) featured a color photograph of 38 ALP Lincolns in the Land of Lincoln. A few copies available at \$5.
5. New Mexico became the 32<sup>nd</sup> state of the Union to be represented in the ALP when Phil Mackie recently joined as the 115<sup>th</sup> Abe Lincoln.
6. Lincoln (a biography) by David Donald (1995), 600 pages, circulating copy to ALP members for one month free on request.



# THE ASSOCIATION of LINCOLN PRESENTERS

## THE FIRST DECADE

By Dr. Dan Bassuk

The Association of Lincoln Presenters was inaugurated in 1990. During the previous decade, while studying Lincoln, I came to know several people who impersonated the Lincolns. On a trip to Hildene, Robert Todd Lincoln's mansion in Vermont, I met Abraham and Mary in the flesh, also known as Robert and Janet Taylor. Finally, I decided to "Link the Lincolns," and announced the formation of a new Lincoln group in the Lincoln Herald with the motto "Now He Belongs to the Stages." Jim Hitchcock of Florida was the first Abe to join. What began with a score of Abes and three Mary Todds, grew to more than 4 score and 7, and Stan Wernz became our 100<sup>th</sup> Abe in 1997.

In 1991 Bruce Hanks of Minnesota and Ed Francisco of New Jersey joined me for a presidential gathering. A photograph of "the three Abes" made the front page of the premiere edition of LINCARNATIONS, our newsletter. It has been exciting to join other Abe Lincolns for talks at historical societies and Civil War Round Tables, and perform with Mary Lincolns in costume.

The famous Lincoln-Douglas debates were reenacted in seven Illinois cities, and shown on C-SPAN in 1994. Six ALP members were chosen to debate, and twenty videotapes recorded these events, which were made available to the ALP as well as to educational institutions across the country.

By 1995 the ALP had 76 Abes and 22 Marys, and through the wise urging of Jim Sayre, our first convention was held in

Lexington, Kentucky with 34 Abes attending. Conventions in Springfield, IL (1996), Gettysburg, PA (1997), Charleston, IL (1998), and Burbank, CA (1999), followed, as more and more Lincolns wanted to learn from one another and renew friendships. Eleven Lincolns from California performed at the last convention.

It is our mission to preserve the legacy of Abraham and Mary Lincoln, to honor their words and works, and walk in their footsteps. More than 300 Lincoln books have been distributed to our members. 24 Lincolns have received awards for their noteworthy Lincoln work, and 7 Lincolns have written books about the 16<sup>th</sup> President.

The ALP has been featured in Americana (1992), Reenactor's Journal (1994), Lincoln Herald (1994), Lincoln Lore (1997), The Rail Splitter (1997), and American Heritage (1999), as well as numerous books. Our members have been placed in movies, plays, TV, national public radio, parades, schools, and colleges. During these ten years, John Wilkes Booth has dared to make only one appearance, assassinating President McClerren during a performance of "Our American Cousin."

Looking ahead to the new millennium, we count on our 115 Abes and 33 Marys in 32 states to carry out our new motto: "Would I might rouse the Lincoln in you all." At the dawning of the new century, what finer setting for our next convention than at Lincoln's birthplace, where a renewal of the spirit of Lincoln is sure to occur.

### ABRAHAM LINCOLN WALKS AT 8:30 By Phyllis McGinley

Though they laid him down on a quiet hill,  
Abraham's ghost will not be still.  
Abraham's ghost, as man alive,  
Has trodden the boards since '65.  
For, martyr, statesman, or gangling boy,  
At Washington, Gettysburg, Illinois,

In the rural jeans that they snickered at,  
Or the rusty coat and the stovepipe hat,

That homespun figure will always seem,  
America's legend, America's Dream.



## MARY TODD LINCOLN GOES TO KAZAKSTAN

By Ruth A. Boatright

In February, 1999, I applied to be on a team to go to Kazakstan to work with children and teach conversational English to them and adults. I knew in March that I had been accepted, but it was late in May that we had our orientation meeting. I finally was going to meet the others and get to know what was expected of us. Our team was made up of several people: a pastor, a housewife, a husband and wife who own several day care centers and myself – an environmental lab tech/ conversational English instructor/ Mary Todd Lincoln. At the meeting we did not get specific ideas of what we would be doing there, but the husband and wife team had been on a team last year, and knew the ropes.

Kazakstan is a large country about two-thirds the size of the United States. It became independent in 1991 after the breakup of the USSR. The west border is Russia and the Caspian Sea, the north border is Russia, on the east is China, and the south border is Turkmenistan, Uzbekistan, and Kyrgyzstan. The largest city is Almaty with a million people. Total population is about 15.4 million. It is a country rich in minerals, but is land locked so exports are limited. The area we were assigned was north-central. It is rich in coal and several large mines were established but now are closed. A rubber plant had supported them, but as the rubber plant was closed, so were the mines. Unemployment seems to be 90%. Many people are going to other countries looking for jobs.

From previous knowledge, Lincoln was one of their favorite presidents from the United States, so automatically I got a costume together that would travel, and put together a dialogue that would introduce me, but I would speak mostly about Abraham. I thought I was ready. "Best made plans do not always come to pass."

September 11, in the early morning hours we landed in Almaty. We rested for a few hours, saw a few sites and in the afternoon took off for Karaganda. It was an unusual flight because with us was a Muslim wedding party. We then traveled by van to Saran where we would spend the week. It was very dark. The first difference I noted was no street or highway lights. When we arrived at the guesthouse, it was in the early morning hours of Sunday. We did not receive our assignment until early Monday morning. All of Monday we spent at the orphanage. On Tuesday, our morning assignment was to visit a vocational college in Saran. Their English program is new, but they wanted us to visit them and give them a glimpse of America. They also gave us the first true look at the people of Kazakstan. We were only given an hour, so there was not enough time to do a Lincoln presentation as such, but one of their first questions to us was about freedom to do as we wanted and freeing the slaves. On Wednesday and Friday morning, we attended two public schools which contained high schools. The students also asked the same type of questions. On Thursday, we traveled to the Universtiy of Karaganda. We had previously used interpreters at the



schools, but here all students knew English. However, we were only allowed an hour and a half. The questions were the same but in more depth. Economics and women's rights were also discussed. The university students were not satisfied with superficial answers. I may not have done a Mary Todd Lincoln presentation, but I did express many of the things Mary was able to accomplish in her day. Also present day accomplishments based upon the freeing of the slaves. But we also reminded them that some changes take years to accomplish. Things left unfinished in their country now, would be finished gradually in time.

Looking at the devastation that is in some of their villages and cities, it did remind me of what I thought our country must have been like after the Civil War. This reminded me that change does not come overnight, but we must press forward, slowly at times and faster at other times. But as one sets goals, and obtains them, then one day success will follow and each individual will be free to do what he believes is right.

### ABRAHAM LINCOLN IN ALBANIA

One of our "Abraham Lincolns," Brad Lay, is with the Abraham Lincoln Foundation of Albania. The foundation has a home page on the Net at [www.lincoln-intl.org/index.html](http://www.lincoln-intl.org/index.html). The following appears on that home page: "That all may have a fair chance in the race of life." President Abraham Lincoln once remarked that the promise of America was that all have an equal chance to succeed without consideration of their family background and standing, race, or religion. He himself was a prime example of this fact. The Lincoln Foundation seeks to provide Albanians with the tools they need to compete equally and honestly in today's world and thus give them the chance to develop and prosper. Believing that the most important people shaping the future of Albania are its educators, the Lincoln Foundation has had as one of its primary focuses the professional development of those involved in education.

At the California convention in April, 1999, many Lincolns signed a card that was mailed to Brad Lay in Albania. Here was Brad Lay's response: "I just received the very nice card from you and the other Lincoln Presenters. It was a great encouragement. I showed the card to Robb Provost, the chairman of the Lincoln Center, and he appreciated it very much as well. Please convey our gratitude to all those who wrote their notes of encouragement on the card. We thank God for their words and prayers."

You can e-mail Brad Lay in Albania at [Bradlay@compuserve.com](mailto:Bradlay@compuserve.com)



## MEMORIES of CONVENTIONS

By Jim Sayre

After joining the Association of Lincoln Presenters, I was amazed by the number of people who were portraying President Lincoln. Before learning of the ALP, I had met 27 men who were presenting Lincoln, but after becoming a member and learning about all of those other "Lincolns," my thoughts turned to someday meeting them.

In August, 1992, I mentioned to Dan Bassuk my desire for a gathering of the Lincolns, perhaps holding a convention. My thoughts of a convention lay dormant for about two years, when in 1994 I stated that I would like to attempt to organize a meeting for the following year. Dan agreed with this, and plans began. The date was set for January, 1995, and the location was to be in Lexington, Kentucky, where we would visit the home of Mary Todd Lincoln. We expected only a few folks to attend, but as time drew nearer, I received a phone call from Dan in which he said that the Lincolns were coming out of the woodwork, and they did. Even though it was cold and snowy, they came from everywhere. These memories are firmly rooted in my mind. Not only did Abes and Marys show up, but we also had Teddy Roosevelt, Ward Lamon, and Stephen Douglas. A bonding began that continues to grow stronger with each meeting. At the first convention, we shared experiences, made new friends, and renewed old acquaintances. Plans were made at that time to continue with the conventions, and the site for the second meeting was chosen to be Springfield, Illinois. The date was set for April, 1996.

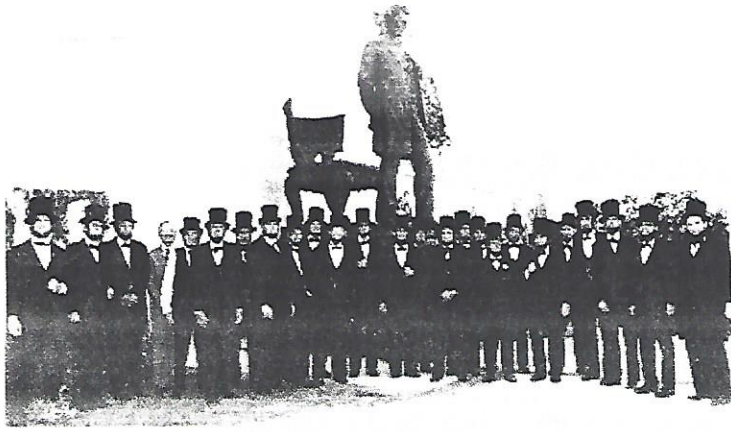
At this convention, even more folks attended: 37 Abes, 13 Marys, Stephen Douglas, Ward Lamon, Teddy Roosevelt, Mathew Brady, and William Crook. In Springfield we visited Lincoln's home, Oak Ridge Cemetery, and had a tour of New Salem, where Abe grew up. Highlights of this convention included reminiscences of performing Lincoln by Lambert Ekster, Lois Schnizlein, Bill Sublett, and G. William Horsley, just months before he passed away. One cannot forget the performances of Judith Winkleman as Mrs. Ninian Edwards, and the shows by Max and Donna Daniels, and Cliff and Joan Howard. The keynote speaker was Brian Lamb of C-SPAN.

Our third convention took us to Gettysburg, Pennsylvania, where we walked those "hallowed grounds" that Lincoln spoke of. The Conflict Theater was the cite for Jim Getty's Lincoln show, and it was "altogether fitting and proper" that Getty recited the Gettysburg Address after Edward Everitt (alias Jim Cooke) delivered his lengthy oration. At the end of this convention, Bill Ciampa took a group of Lincolns to Washington, D.C. for a tour. This trip was better than anyone could have hoped for.

At our next convention, we again visited the land of Lincoln in Charleston, Illinois. The citizens of Charleston made us most welcome. There were many new faces, but all had the same Lincoln look. There was entertainment, food, news media, and many well-wishers. We watched a performance of "Our American Cousin," and witnessed B.F. McClerren assassinated by Booth. The bonding of the members grows stronger with each meeting. This time we had 14 Marys and 41 Abes. After some discussion we decided to go West for the next convention.

Burbank California hosted the 1999 convention. The folks in California do everything in a big way. This meeting was great and I was amazed by all of the talent that these presenters had been hiding during past meetings. I had a wonderful time while in California, except for two times when I lost Bill Sublett. I knew that I had to find him and bring him back to his old Kentucky home, because I had promised Beulah I would return him in the same condition that I received him.





Burbank California  
5<sup>th</sup> Annual Convention  
Association of Lincoln Presenters

Our next convention in 2000 will take us back to where it all began, 190 years ago at Hodgenville, Kentucky. Here we expect the largest gathering of Lincolns ever seen on this planet. We request that you come early, stay late, bring a camera to record the Sinking Springs where Thomas drew water for the cabin where Abe was born, the museum, the city of Hodgenville, and the Knob Creek Farm. Walk where Abe and Sarah walked and see the large field where they planted corn. We know that you will enjoy your visit to the Commonwealth of Kentucky. I look forward to seeing you here.

### Lincoln Look-alike contest, Hodgenville Ky, October 1999

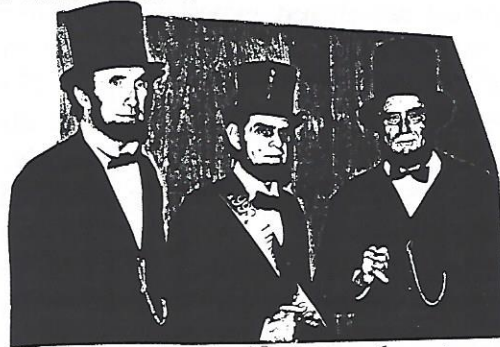
There were 16 contestants. The Abraham Lincoln winners were:

- 1<sup>st</sup> Gerald Bestrom
- 2<sup>nd</sup> Jim Rubin
- 3<sup>rd</sup> Don Ancell

There were 8 Mary Todd Lincoln contestants.

The winners were:

- 1<sup>st</sup> Joyce Browning
- 2<sup>nd</sup> Shirley Long
- 3<sup>rd</sup> Janie Hamilton



TRADING POST By Murray Cox [mcox@netusa1.net](mailto:mcox@netusa1.net)

WANTED: Lincoln Day by Day (Book) contact Donna Bowen

### FOR SALE

1. Honestly Abe – A Cartoon expose of Abraham Lincoln, by Charles Brame. This book won the Ben Franklin biography award for 1999.
2. Thomas Lincoln Boots, sold by Lincoln Log Cabin Historical Site, contact B.F. McClerren. \$125 per pair and well worth it.
3. "Lincoln's Favorite Music" & "Abraham Lincoln Sings On!" CD's by Douglas Jimerson – available from major music stores or from ALP member Doug.
4. Abraham Lincoln on Screen, A Filmography (1903-1998) by Mark Reinhart – call 800-253-2187 or ALP member Mark. Includes eleven Lincolns in ALP.
5. Mary, Wife of Lincoln by her niece, Katherine Helm (1928) reprint available from Hildene Gift Shop, Box 377, Manchester, VT 05254 price \$14.95 + \$3.20 To order call (802) 362-1788.
6. LINCARNATIONS, the newsletter of the Association of Lincoln Presenters, complete set, vols. 1-16, 1991-1999. \$10 Contact Dan Bassuk.  
All proceeds will benefit the ALP.

THE ASSOCIATION OF LINCOLN PRESENTERS is a non-profit educational association, incorporated in the State of Delaware.

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