

JUNE 2014 "LINCARNATIONS" - ASSOCIATION OF LINCOLN PRESENTERS
"WOULD I MIGHT ROUSE THE LINCOLN IN YOU ALL"

From our ALP President;

May 27, 2014

Dear Members,

The 2014 Conference in Natchez, MS, was very successful. For members who were able to attend, we were treated to many totally different experiences. A huge "Thank you" to Norman Zucker and those who assisted him in putting together this very educational conference.

Recently several people have encouraged the ALP Board to revisit host guidelines for planning and carrying out our ALP annual conferences. That work, for now, has been completed. Persons wanting to host a conference should secure a copy of the guidelines, and familiarize yourself with them. If you have questions, please don't hesitate to ask. One big change is that we eliminated the requirement that even numbered year conferences be held in places where Lincoln walked.

The conference for 2015 will be in Vandalia, IL, April 16-19. Our host will be Abe Clymer and his committee. Abe has again arranged for us to have access to the very Legislative Hall where Lincoln served. As noted elsewhere in this issue of Lincarnations, the Vandalia Team is putting together a varied and exciting agenda.

Regarding Lincarnations: The ALP Board spent considerable time discussing this publication, and has put in place a few steps to assure that at least two issues are published annually. Please submit materials to Gerald Payn, Editor. His email address is gmpayn@sssnet.com. Materials for the first issue should be to Gerald by June 7; materials for the pre-conference issue should be to Gerald not later than January 2.

If you are considering lengthy articles, please prepare a summary of the article for publication (250 word limit). Include in the summary a website address where the full article can be found. In this way we will be able to keep Lincarnations to a manageable size, and yet our members will be able to take advantage of your complete writing.

Another issue discussed by your Board was the ALP Website. Dean Dorrell, our Webmaster, is aware of some problems and working to resolve them. If you find a problem, please advise Dean. His email address is: abe@honest-abe.com. We discussed the bio's of members, and decided to limit them to 100 words. Again, we suggest that you provide a site address where people can access your complete biographical information.

Thank you for allowing me to continue serving as ALP President. I am grateful for service of our elected Board, and cherish the opportunity to promote The ALP.

Your humble servant,
Stan Wernz
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Cincinnati, OH 45215

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Association of Lincoln Presenters 20th Annual Conference Report
April 10-13, 2014, Natchez, MS, submitted by Stan Wernz, ALP President

Southern hospitality was the word upon our arrival at the Eola Hotel in Natchez, Mississippi for the 20th Annual ALP Conference. The conference host, Norman Zucker, had planned for months to assure us that our conference in the Deep South would be enlightening and worth our investments of time, travel and expense. Norman's vision became reality.

The Thursday evening activities included a social hour and buffet dinner, followed by a presentation by Professor Michael Ballard, of Mississippi State University. His speech introduced us to "Atrocities at Milliken's Bend Supply Depot, named for the diversionary actions of John Milliken. It was at Milliken's Bend that many slave families reported, which created logistical problems for the Union Army. It was here that Col. Isaac Shepherd (3rd Missouri Regiment) started to raise a Black Brigade under Sherman, fulfilling Gen. Grant's General Order #25, that all officers must facilitate recruiting and training of black soldiers.

Friday morning, following breakfast, we boarded a bus for the Natchez Visitor's Center. Here we viewed a twenty minute film introducing us to history of the area. The Center administration supported the ALP visit through a major contribution to defray our transportation costs.

From the Visitor's Center we traveled to Louisiana and the Frogmore Cotton Plantation. This plantation visit gave us much information and an opportunity to see tools used in plantation life during the Civil War period and beyond. The Turners were remarkable hosts, escorting us through buildings on their property. Mrs. Lynette Alta Turner narrated a presentation about plantation life and slavery. She informed us that Louisiana Territory was under French law. Slave couples had to be sold together, and any child under 14 years of age could not be sold separately from his/her parents.

As parts of the Louisiana Territory applied for statehood, they did not maintain the French law nor that standard. We later learned that some slave dealers in Natchez, a large slave market, practiced their business in compliance with the French law standard.

Upon return to Eola Hotel for lunch, at which time the MTL's held their Annual Business Meeting. Lunch was followed with academic sessions by Prof. Ballard, Edward Haney speaking on General/Senator Garfield, and several ALP members leading/presenting discussions. Moderators were Norman Zucker, Richard Miller and Mark Rehagen.

Our evening meal was at the Lansdowne Plantation, where we enjoyed a presentation on southern cuisine. The meal concluded with Gospel Music presented by the plantation cooks and servers. We then retired to the hotel for our Annual Business Meeting.

We boarded the bus early Saturday morning for Vicksburg. Our tour guide was General Parker Hills. We first stopped at the Vicksburg Visitor's Center, where we viewed a short film introducing us the Vicksburg Military Cemetery. We then traveled through the cemetery, with stops at the various memorials. General Hills kept us informed about the sites, and provided commentary about the Siege of Vicksburg and the surrender of Pemberton to Grant. It is interesting to note that Pemberton's men were granted leave to go home following the surrender. We had lunch at the USS Cairo.

Our afternoon event was a "Truth and Reconciliation Forum" at Southern Cultural Heritage Foundation. ALP Members filled various parts of Robert E. Lee (Chet Damron), Jefferson Davis (Robert Broski), Abraham Lincoln (John Mansfield), Frederic Douglas (Michael Crutcher) and moderator (Joe Woodard). Our evening event was back at the hotel, with guests for dinner and the auction. Presentations were made by several Association members.

Sunday morning we visited the Natchez Slave Market site. Here we were privileged to hear a local person speak on the significance of this slave market, why it was just outside the city. Another local singer then presented several Gospel Songs.

We boarded the bus, and were off to three plantations (Linden, Stanton and Longwood). Each had a different flair, and tour guides with special interest in their home. Many of the furnishings had interesting stories which were told by the docents.

Following the plantation visits, we returned to the hotel for a box lunch. Lunch was followed by a church service at Trinity Episcopal Church. Chet Damron led the service, and Michael Crutcher provided the sermon. Michael's topic was, "Reconciliation of Master and Slave." Several members continued the conference by touring with General Parker Hills, following General Grant's Campaign to the South and East of Vicksburg. Others bid fond farewell, amid wishes for safe travels home.

Ed. Note: As more exhaustive reports become available, they will be posted on our website in the Member-to-Member section.

Mary's Velvet Rose, submitted by Sharon Wood, MTL Chair
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.

(continued from page 3)

#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

Major Thomas Eckert, Chief Telegrapher in the War Department

Hopefully you will appreciate this story of where Pres. Lincoln spent much of his time! Major Eckert grew up in Wooster, Ohio - my hometown. Submitted by ALP Member, Gerald Payn (from various sources).

Thomas Thompson Eckert was born in St. Clairsville, OH on April 23, 1825. He moved to Wooster with his family at a young age and while a teenager, developed a fascination with the new technology of telegraphy. He became a voracious reader of anything related to the telegraph system and eventually traveled out of state for a more formal education in the telegraph.

In 1849 (24 yrs old) Eckert was appointed Wooster postmaster and he had the telegraph lines brought into the post office. He became both postmaster & telegraph operator for the village. Then in 1852 (27 yrs old) was employed by J.H. Wade to supervise the construction of the telegraph lines between Pittsburg and Chicago (which later became the Western Union Telegraph Co.) Wade was impressed with Eckert's aggressive vigor and industry and appointed him superintendent of the lines.

In 1861 (36 yrs old) Eckert joined the Union cause at the outbreak of the war and was drafted by Gen George McClellan to take charge of the military telegraph office and given the rank of Captain. The next year he was called to Washington by the new Sec. of War, Edwin Stanton, to take charge of the military telegraph headquarters in the War Department building next to the White House. He was soon accused by Sec. Stanton of neglecting his duties and withholding important dispatches from the Pres. and Sec. of War. Eckert denied the claims and offered his resignation. He then felt the President (who happened to enter the room) lay his hand upon his shoulder and reported; "Mr. Secretary, I think you must be mistaken about this young man neglecting his duties, for I have been a daily caller at the telegraph office for the last 3 or 4 months and I have always found the captain to be at his post and I never observed any reporters or outsiders in the office." It turned out that Gen. McClellan had been withholding the news. Eckert was soon detached from McClellan's staff and assigned directly to the War Department and promoted to Major.

No message went into or out of the War Department and White House without Eckert being the first to receive the news. One of the early messages regretfully taken to the president was the shooting of his young friend, Col. Elmer Ellsworth on May 24, 1861 in Alexandria, Va. Another message which greatly disturbed the president was the news of the death of his old friend, Col. Edward Baker on Oct. 21, 1861. Col. Baker had preceded Mr Lincoln in Congress, and there had always been a close friendship which formed when they practiced law in Illinois. The Lincoln's named their 2nd son Edward Baker Lincoln.

Pres. Lincoln was the first US Pres. to be able to communicate directly with his Generals and others during and after their battles. Prior to then there would have been messengers or letters sent. Pres. Lincoln spent much more time in the telegraph office than any place other than the White House where he could get away from all the confusion and hustle and bustle. He seldom failed to come over late in the evening before retiring (walking by himself) and frequently Major Eckert would accompany the President on his walk back to the White House.

They became trusted friends with Eckert never breaking a confidence with the President.

During June of 1862 Pres. Lincoln spent many hours penning his drafts of the Emancipation Proclamation while seated at Eckert's desk. The President asked Eckert to lock his papers in the desk while he was not there working on them and to show them to no one.

In the telegraph office the President could hear the news directly from the front and send messages directly back out. Sec. Stanton called the telegraph service his "right arm" and said the military telegraph has been of inestimable value to the service and no corps has surpassed - few have equaled - the telegraph operators in diligence and devotion to duties.

(continued from page 5)

The cypher-operators had the privilege of seeing the President at close range and in his most anxious hours amid the excitement of great military movements. They also met him in the calmer but no less trying hours of patient waiting for the slow development of wide reaching plans for the preservation of the Union. A personal trait of Mr Lincoln which impressed the telegraphers more than any other was his kindly, charitable disposition, which was especially shown toward his political opponents and his country's enemies. They greatly enjoyed Mr. Lincoln's stories. Often he would have a humorous article written by Orpheous Kerr, Petroleum Nasby, or Artemus Ward. It was clear to those in the telegraph office that the telling of stories and the reading of droll articles gave him the needed relaxation from the severe strain and heavy burden resting upon him. It was overheard Mr Lincoln saying "that if it were not for this occasional vent I should die".

The telegraphers were especially delighted on Apr. 9, 1865 to hear the wonderful news from Appomattox Court House that Gen. Lee had finally surrendered!

Eckert was greatly flattered when the President asked him to accompany he and Mary that fateful night of April 14, 1865 to see a production in Ford's Theater. Sec. Stanton was doing all he could to keep the President from attending the theater that evening. He refused to allow Eckert to go with the excuse that he had other work for him. Pres. Lincoln's last words to Eckert were "I shall take Major Rathbone along, but I should much rather have you."

The rest of that story is for the ages! You can almost imagine the horror upon horror that the telegraphers felt as they heard the terrible rumors and then the news of the assassination of that great man just five days after the war was over!!

Eckert was eventually promoted to Asst. Sec. of War by Sec. Stanton and was later brevetted as Major General before leaving the service in 1866 (41 yrs old). In 1866 he became general superintendent of the Eastern Division of Western Union, in 1875 he became President of Atlantic and Pacific Telegraph Company, and in 1880 he became Pres. of the American Union Telegraph Co. When American Union, A & P, and Western Union Companies consolidated he became VP and Gen. Mgr. of Western Union. In 1893 (was 68 yrs old) he became President and chairman of the board of Western Union.

He died Oct 20, 1910 (85 yrs old) with many fond memories of his time with Pres. Lincoln and with great regrets that he was not at Ford's Theater that fateful night of April 14, 1865 when he might have been able to prevent the great President's assassination!

"Blast to the Past"

Submitted by Mark Rehagen, ALP Board Member,

One activity that I have been involved with this Spring is our annual "Blast to the Past" series at our State Archives Office, within the Secretary of State's Office. I participated in 30 shows to students in the 3rd, 4th and 5th grades from around the state of Missouri, during which we "set the record straight" regarding the impact of the Civil War in Missouri. Approximately 5,000 students traveled to Jefferson City for these presentations. We are currently working on a contract for next Spring also.

Lincoln and his Presidency, in Chronological Order

I have been keeping up with the war, etc, mainly as it relates to Pres. Lincoln, since March of 1861, with almost daily entries into docx-word from various sources. I have used this for reference while speaking as Pres. Lincoln. I would be glad to forward the information I have (to date) to you via email if you make the request. It is organized 1st year, 2nd year, 3rd year, and 4th year, so let me know what year you would like. Gerald Payn, <gmpayn@sssnet.com>

2015 ALP CONFERENCE, VANDALIA, IL, SUBMITTED BY "ABE" CLYMER

The ALP is returning to Vandalia, Illinois in 2015! Plans are being made for what promises to be an incredible convention. The entire community is working hard to welcome you. The City of Vandalia, including the mayor, the Tourism Commission, and several other civic and service organizations are joining together to make sure the attendees have the best experience possible. Vandalia has the honor of being where Abraham Lincoln received his license to practice law and gave his first official speeches against slavery. It is home of the oldest State Capitol Building in Illinois, which is where the business meeting will take place, as well as a Lincoln Symposium. Several events are being planned in and around the Capitol Building lawn, including a Lincoln Parade, Lincoln Wayside exhibits featuring actors portraying period citizens, live music, a Strawberry Social for the Mary Todd ladies, and much more. Ingram's Pioneer cabins, Fayette County Museum, the National Road Interpretive center, and other historic sites are all must-see stops. Saturday night will feature a banquet and period Presidential Ball open to the public. We will have great food and entertainment, fun social activities and educational opportunities, as well as time to relax and re-group. The Holiday Inn Express hotel has a complimentary hot breakfast and all the amenities one could ask for, all for an exceptionally low rate of \$72 available to the ALP attendees Thursday through Sunday April 16-19, 2015. So please mark your calendars now and make plans to attend. This is one you WON'T want to miss!

PRAYER BEFORE THE BUSINESS MEETING DURING THE ALP CONFERENCE IN COLUMBUS, OHIO - APRIL 13, 2013 BY JOE WOODARD

*Editor's note - I was so impressed with Joe's prayer that I asked him for a copy to be included in a future issue of "Lincarnations"!

O Lord God Almighty, we acknowledge you as the one who made all and who is the source of all good things. We thank you this morning for the many blessings you have bestowed upon us. We thank you for giving us a place in this great country. We thank you for bringing forth on this continent a nation dedicated to the proposition that the rights of every man to life, liberty, and the pursuit of happiness came from you. We thank you for letting our nation grow and preserving its existence through foreign wars and civil war. We pray that you continue to bless our nation.

Lord, we beg you to bless our work as historical character presenters. We pray that we may not only interest our fellow citizens in Abraham Lincoln and the other men who were your instruments in ending slavery and bringing our nation through the fiery trial of the civil war, but we pray that we may provoke today's people to emulate the good qualities of those men of the past and to shun their errors.

Heavenly Father, we thank you for the founder of our organization, Dan Bassuk. We thank you for the association he founded and for the help and sense of fellowship it has given us over the years. We thank you for giving those here a sufficient measure of health and strength to gather here this morning. We beg you to bless this association and this meeting. We pray for wisdom in making our decisions. We pray that in this meeting and for the rest of our lives we show malice toward none and charity for all. The favors and blessings we ask in Jesus' name. Amen

"Lincarnations"

Association of Lincoln Presenters

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Diary of Gideon Welles, Sec. of Navy;

(from "Daily Observations of the Civil War" <mpgoad@gmail.com>)

June 3, 1864 - For several days the delegates to the National Convention have been coming in. Had a call from several. Met a number at the President's. All favor the President. There is a spirit of discontent among the Members of Congress, stirred up, I think, by the Treasury Department. Chase has his flings and insinuations against the President's policy, or want of policy. Nothing suits him. There seems some difference among the delegates about the Vice-Presidency, but they will be likely to renominate Hannibal Hamlin, though he has not much personal strength and has not the mind and temperament to build up a party for the country. There is an impression here that he has great strength in New England, but that is not my opinion. He has party cunning and management but not breadth and strength and is but little cared for there; is not offensive or obnoxious, but there is no zeal for him.

June 9, 1864 - There seems to be general satisfaction with the nominations made at Baltimore, and with the resolutions adopted. Except the nomination for Vice-President, the whole proceedings were a matter of course. It was the wish of Seward that Hamlin should again be the Vice, and the President himself was inclined to the same policy, though personally his choice is Johnson. This, I think, was the current Administration opinion, though with no particular zeal or feeling. Blair inclined to the policy of taking Hamlin, though partial to Johnson. I took no part and could not well take any. Yet today from several quarters it is said to me that Connecticut overthrew Hamlin, and that it was my doings which led to it. While this is not correct, I am nowise disposed to be dissatisfied with the change that has been made.