

LINCARNATIONS

The Newsletter of the ASSOCIATION OF LINCOLN PRESENTERS

Number 15

Now He Belongs to the Stages

Summer 1999

Walking in Lincoln's Footsteps

Without Abraham Lincoln, West Virginia might not have become the Union's 35th state in 1863. Without a West Virginia, no WVU. People in the Mountain State and beyond owe a lot to the 16th president of the United States.

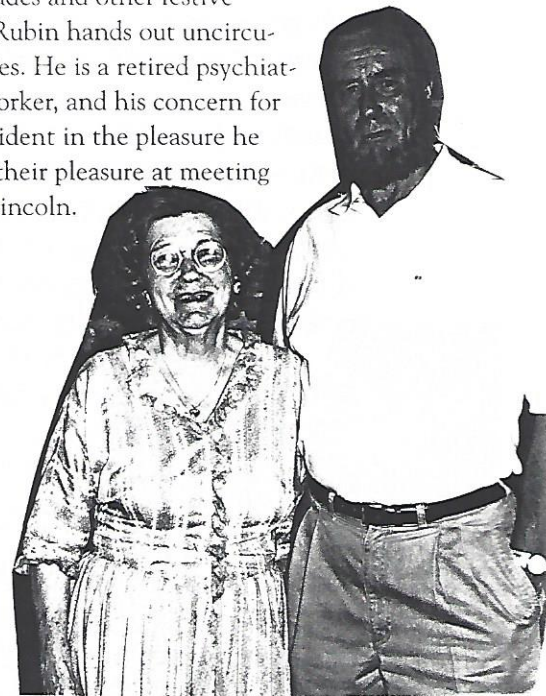
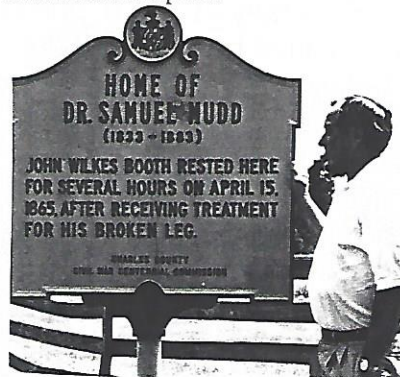
Jim Rubin, a WVU alumnus who lives in Prosperity, was always told that he looked a lot like Lincoln. Rubin, who has a well developed sense of history, felt that obligated him in some way. He felt he should remind people of the greatness of the man he resembles so closely.

And it is a remarkable resemblance. Standing before you in his authentically tailored dark suit and top hat, perhaps reciting Lincoln's Gettysburg Address, the six-foot three-inch, bearded Jim Rubin strikes an impressive figure of the man. He makes you feel the presence of history.

Rubin, like others who belong to the 100-member Association of Lincoln Presenters, views his hobby seriously. Indeed, many of the places he goes and events he attends in the role of Lincoln are quite serious: anniversaries of Civil War battles, the inauguration of Governor Underwood, the WVU Children's Hospital.

The Coal City native whose father was an immigrant miner says he feels a connection to Lincoln that goes beyond physical appearance: "I lived my early life similar to his. No indoor plumbing. No electricity. I ran around barefoot in the summer. I didn't live in a log cabin, but I did live in a house made of unfinished lumber."

At parades and other festive occasions, Rubin hands out uncirculated pennies. He is a retired psychiatric social worker, and his concern for others is evident in the pleasure he takes from their pleasure at meeting Abraham Lincoln.



HIS NAME IS MUDD AND MINE IS ABE
by Jim R. Rubin

As an ongoing student of Lincoln history, I continue down the road with a mission and a commission to the motto "Now he belongs to the stages." In May of 1998, I visited the Samuel Mudd House located in Maryland. When I arrived the tour had begun, so I went around the back to the gift shop, run by Louise, the granddaughter of Doctor Mudd who had treated John Wilkes Booth for the broken leg after he shot President Lincoln. As I walked in, Louise commented, "Well, how nice it is to have a visit by the president. This is uncanny, I wish I had brought my camera." I took some snapshots and told her that I would send her a copy. She later responded, "I've shown them to many folks here and they say you must be related to Mr. Lincoln, and I'm sure that Grandpa would love to see them." In September, she requested that I come to the Mudd House the day two tour buses were coming from Ford's Theater. Her plan was to take the visitors by surprise, so she hid me behind the door before their arrival. She met the visitors on the lawn and told them "I had a visitor stop by and I know that Grandpa Mudd will be smiling down from heaven as they witness what you are about to see." She gave me the cue and I walked out. It is difficult to describe the expressions on the faces of the visitors who had just come from Ford's Theater where they had relived that terrible night when our 16th president's life was taken. A lady later told me that after the folks boarded the bus, "there was plenty of comments about the surprise."

REFLECTIONS OF JOHN VOEHL – LINCOLN OF LITTLETON, COLORADO

I received a note in the mail from Dan Bassuk and phoned him to speak of ALP and Columbine. Thanks for this forum to share THE TRAGEDY AT COLUMBINE HIGH SCHOOL.

The Harris family lived on our cul-de-sac for about 3 years. I am not proud that I didn't know them personally. They were as friendly to us as we were to them. They always greeted me with a wave when we saw one another outside. Eric was never a problem to our neighborhood. Besides greetings and waves, I recall only one short conversation with him. I think it was in Feb. 1998, concerning the Columbine basketball team. His response was typical of any kid rooting for his school's team. If he had a covert plan at that time to kill such jocks, he had it masterfully masked. In hindsight, I did see him wearing a black trench coat, but it looked more like a western duster. Now we believe that the sounds which were heard on Sunday and Monday before the shooting were of power tools cutting metal and glass to make shrapnel for the bombs. How could we have known?

Tuesday, April 28 – I did a Lincoln Presentation for 5th graders in Castle Rock. What a privilege we have to share the compassion and greatness of Lincoln, Especially in crisis times like this when people thirst for a wholesome hero.

Thursday, April 30 – I did a Lincoln presentation for a cub scout group. Again, Columbine was not directly mentioned. However, I fielded a question about Lincoln's gun. It was privileged to share Abe's aversion to any violence, his distress after having shot the wild turkey at age 9, and his strong motivation to help and comfort any person or animal he saw in need.

It's still hard for me to believe that it happened. We all need to take the time to know and care for our neighbors and those we contact at work and school. We need to communicate our love to our children, esteem them highly and give them the time and nurturing which they so desperately need, just like Lincoln and Jesus would have done.

ANNOUNCEMENTS

1. July issue of AMERICAN HERITAGE MAGAZINE will have photo of ALP Lincolns at Charleston, Illinois convention on back cover.
2. Videotape of ALP California Convention available for \$12 (includes shipping) from John Kemple, phone (570) 622- 7226.
3. ALP members unanimously approved a new motto for ALP beginning in 2,000 "WOULD I MIGHT ROUSE THE LINCOLN IN YOU ALL" from Vachel Lindsay's poem "Litany of the Heroes."
4. LOREN RATZLOFF – new member of ALP is the 1999 winner of the Lincoln look-alike contest in Lincoln, Kansas. Welcome Loren.
5. REED CARLSON – new member of ALP and principal of Kenny Lake School in rural Alaska, portrayed Abraham Lincoln in his school's play, "Abraham Lincoln: More than just our 16th President," on Horatio Alger Day in February, 1999.

FUTURE CONVENTIONS OF ALP

Year 2000, April 14-16 – HODGENVILLE, KENTUCKY – Lincoln's birthplace
Year 2001, April 20-22 – BECKLEY, WEST VIRGINIA – the making of the 35th state by President Lincoln.

"AN EVENING WITH THE LINCOLNS"

Macon Ray and Donna Bowen

Two ALP members, Macon Ray and Donna McCreary-Bowen, both of Indiana, team up to present the 16th President and The First Lady on April 14th, 1865 as they prepare to go to Ford's Theater. This historical drama has been a big success in 1997 & 1998 at Spring Mill Inn in Mitchell, Indiana. Ray & Bowen collaborated on the script which is based on factual documents and letters. The plot revolves around conversations between President and Mrs. Lincoln that reveal interesting details of their courtship, marriage, and life together.

Macon Ray has been portraying Lincoln for eleven years and has been Lincoln in the outdoor musical drama, "Young Abe Lincoln," since 1988 at Lincoln State Park in Lincoln City, IN. At 72, Ray truly looks the part, finds satisfaction in portraying Lincoln, and brings Lincoln to life for his audience.

Donna McCreary-Bowen has been portraying Mary Todd Lincoln since 1992, and has been researching and writing about Mary and her family for 7 years. She won the ALP award for most noteworthy Mary Todd Lincoln in 1997. Previous to the performance, the 14th Indiana regimental string band in period costume performed Civil War music. After the show attendees sampled some of the Lincoln's favorite desserts, while the actors answered many questions and posed for pictures.

The ALP wishes to thank patron Robert Henderson of the Spring Mill Inn for hosting this event, and we hope that it shall become an annual event, as well as an inspiration to other Lincolns.



Macon Ray, left, and Donna Bowen portray Abraham and Mary Todd Lincoln in "An Evening with the Lincolns."

LINCOLN'S TRADING POST

Beginning with this issue of LINCARNATIONS, we will have a Trading Post section, for members who have Lincoln books, costumes, or related items that they wish to buy, sell, or trade. For members who have published books or pamphlets, you may advertise them here. For all information about the Trading Post contact Murray Cox, 3979 South Bailey Rd., Wabash, IN 46992. Phone: (219) 563-7126 or e-mail mcoxo-netusa1.net

TO SELL

1. *Lincoln's Youth, Indiana Years* by Louis Warren (hardback) \$30
Contact Murray Cox
2. *Lincoln's Herndon*, a biography by David Donald, With dust jacket, \$5
3. *The Humorous Mr. Lincoln* by Keith Jennison, paperback \$3
Contact Dan Bassuk (postage extra)

WANTED TO BUY

1. *Collected Works* of Abraham Lincoln
2. *Behind the Scenes* by Elizabeth Keckley
3. *Lincoln as a Lawyer* by John Frank
Contact Murray Cox
4. original copy of *Lincoln Herald* magazine, Spring, 1984
Contact Dan Bassuk

IN MEMORIAM

The ALP mourns the loss of member JERRY LARSEN on October 20, 1998, age 38. Jerry was the resident Abraham Lincoln of Lincoln, Kansas, for eight years, and won their Lincoln look-alike contest in 1992 and 1993. In 1994 he joined the ALP. Diagnosed with brain cancer in 1984, Jerry was given 18 months, but lived 14 years. It can be said that Lincoln ran in the Larsen family, for Jerry's grandfather, Ed Larsen, was also a "Lincoln," winning the look-alike contest in 1939, and the ALP has a photo of Ed to prove it.

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

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