



LINCARNATIONS

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July 2019

“Would I might rouse the Lincoln in you all”

Association of Lincoln Presenters



Dan Bassuk,
ALP Founder

Mark Your Calendars:

Lincoln Days. Oct. 5 and 6, 2019, Hodgenville, Ky.

Mary Lincoln and Abraham Look-Alike Contests, 11 a.m. (EST), Saturday, Oct. 5 (<http://www.lincolndays.org/events/look-a-likes/>)

2020 ALP Conference – April 16-19, 2020, Springfield, Illinois

(See <http://www.lincolnpresenters.com/2020-conference/> for details.)

2021 ALP Conference – April 15-18, 2021, Leavenworth, Kansas

(From our host-to-be, Murray Cox of Indiana: If you were not able to attend our conference in Georgia in April, you will want to know that Leavenworth, Kansas, was chosen for the site of our 2021 gathering. As I write this, I am there to make hotel arrangements and to meet with some of those who we hope will be a part of that conference. There is much to hear of, from Kansas' own civil war prior to statehood, the roles some Kansans played leading up to and during the crisis, as well as Lincoln's visit to Kansas in December of 1859. As time goes on, and decisions are made, I will be teasing you with our plans, but for now, mark your 2021 calendars: Thursday, April 15, registration; Friday and Saturday, April 16 and 17, programming; and Sunday, April 18, departure.)

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ASSOCIATION OF LINCOLN PRESENTERS

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July 2019

Greetings, Members!

Our Silver Anniversary Conference in Amicalola Falls, Ga., was educational and relaxing. The planning by Homer Sewell and Joan Britton, along with cooperative weather (for the most part), made for enjoyable experiences. Many thanks to them for providing a memorable event for those in attendance. To our many members not present, you were in our thoughts; you were missed. Joe Woodard and Susan Miller report highlights of the conference elsewhere in this issue of *Lincarnations*.

Our 2020 conference, to be held in Springfield, Ill., promises to be another opportunity to walk where Lincoln walked and visit sites important in his life. Randy Duncan (*Carlinville, Ill.*) and Caitlin Justice (*Springfield Convention Bureau member*) are working to make this conference meaningful to attendees. Please watch our website to see available opportunities in Springfield, and remain up-to-date on the plans as our host and hostess post them. Our headquarters will be the Wyndham Hotel in Springfield.

Much of the annual meeting business was routine. Murray Cox (*Wabash, Ind.*), treasurer, reported our financial condition. We are spending more than our income; conference activities have made up the shortfall. The reason income is low is that most of our 162 members are life members. Our expenses are insurance, State of Delaware Incorporation and Attorney fees, *Lincarnations* printing and mailing costs for members who do not have email, and web domain and maintenance fees.

In elections, Murray Cox and John King (*Ashtabula, Ohio*) were reelected to the ALP Board. All Board officers were also reelected. Your ALP Board is: Stan Wernz, president; John Cooper (*Baltimore, Ohio*), first vice president; Susan Miller (*Nicholasville, Ky.*), second vice president; Sue Wright (*Oak Ridge, Tenn.*), secretary; Murray Cox, (*Wabash, Indiana*) treasurer; and members Robert Broski (*Covina, Calif.*), John King (*Ashtabula, Ohio*), Homer Sewell (*Jasper, Ga.*), and Kevin Wood (*Oak Park, Ill.*). The Board expresses appreciation for the trust you place in us, and for the vote of approval on our work!

We received a donation request from the Lincoln Society of Dayton and the American Heritage Veterans Center at Dayton for a plaque acknowledging Lincoln's commitment to "those who shall have born the battle." The Board chose to not allocate funds for this venture, but to propose the membership make donations to the cause. It was reported that the donations were \$500.

Jim Sayre (*Lawrenceburg, Ky.*) was presented with our Distinguished Service Award for his many years of service to the ALP; Kevin Wood was presented with a writing excellence award; and Stan Wernz was presented an award for his work on the new website and his years of service as ALP president.

Going about the ALP business is a labor of love. We all know the rewards from preserving the legacy of Abraham Lincoln when we share his words with our audiences. I receive similar rewards when working with our Board and members conducting ALP business. Please accept my gratitude for this opportunity to further serve you in our mission!

Stan

Meet Your Fellow Lincoln Sue Wright

Submitted by John Cooper, Baltimore, Ohio

Not only was Abraham Lincoln born near Hodgenville, Ky., but so was ALP member Sue Wright, who portrays Mary Lincoln along with her husband, Tom Wright as Abraham Lincoln. Because of her birthplace, Sue has always had an affinity for Abraham Lincoln. Although Sue and Tom live near Oak Ridge, Tenn., they travel to Hodgenville every year for Lincoln Days (even before they portrayed Abraham and Mary). It was because they enjoyed the Lincoln Day festivities that they decided to become an Abraham and Mary Lincoln couple themselves.

Sue and Tom have been married for 49 years (“Happy Fiftieth” in advance!) and have two sons and three grandchildren. She is retired after a 40-plus-year career with an international engineering management firm called Bechtel. She made her first Mary appearance (along with Tom as Abraham) in 2009 at her grandson's class in honor of Lincoln's 200th birthday. She averages about two appearances per month, almost always as a couple with her favorite Abraham, Tom. However, she had a great honor last year, when she was invited to step out alone as the official Mary Lincoln at the Abraham Lincoln Library and Museum in Cumberland Gap, Tenn., in honor of Mary's 200th birthday.

Sue really enjoys her membership in ALP and attending the conferences. She attended her first conference in Greenville, Tenn., in 2011 (before she became a member). She joined ALP the next year in 2012. She and Tom have not missed a conference since! She enjoys ALP so much that she decided to run for the ALP board and is in her second term on the board and currently serves as the ALP secretary. Her favorite conference was Natchez, Miss., especially walking around the town, taking a horse-drawn carriage tour and the bus tour of the Vicksburg battlefield.

She greatly enjoys portraying Mary, especially presenting Mary as the wife and mother she was before all of the tragedies of the war, which caused so much pain and grief. She has even made the Civil War period into her hobby



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Conference Talk

Riding the Rails (and Buses) in Georgia – April 2019

Submitted by Joseph Woodard, Hazel Dell, Illinois

The 25th annual conference of the Association of Lincoln Presenters, hosted by Joan Britton and Homer Sewell, began on Thursday, April 11, 2019, at the Amicalola State Park and Lodge in Georgia.

Two events were scheduled simultaneously for 4:30 to 5:30 p.m. -- a question-and-answer session for men led by Sewell and Tom Wright (*Oak Ridge, Tenn.*), and a workshop on period accessories for women led by Susan Miller (*Nicholasville, Ky.*). Sewell and Wright reported that a “lively discussion” took place amongst those who attended their session, which included “a wide range of things Lincoln.”

“We passed around an Etiquette for Gentlemen; we also talked about how some of us deliver the Gettysburg Address and how we return a salute to a soldier who salutes you,” according to Wright.

(Please see addendum to this report for account of women’s activities.)

A buffet supper was later served in the lower level of the lodge.

In the lower lobby of the lodge, a bright young employee of the state of Georgia introduced us to live examples of three birds native to Georgia -- a screech owl, a red-tailed hawk and a black vulture -- and related facts about the individual birds and those species in a program lasting about one hour.

Many took advantage of the time following the presentation and prior to bedtime to mix, mingle and converse.

On Friday morning, buses belonging to the Jasper (Ga.) United Methodist Church left the lodge at 9 a.m., traveling in heavy fog at first; the weather cleared as we went along. We arrived at Blue Ridge, Ga., and got off near the depot of the Blue Ridge Scenic Railway. We posed for official group photos and then boarded the train for a ride of about an hour alongside the Toccoa River on tracks once part of the *Louisville & Nashville* system. A guide in the rail car provided insights and commentary on what we saw along the way. At our destination -- the twin towns of McCaysville, Ga., and Copperhill, Tenn. -- the temperature was 66 degrees and drizzle was falling, but the drizzle stopped within a half-hour after we arrived.

The train passengers had about two hours for sight-seeing and lunch. Our male members were on their own for lunch, but the ladies held their Mary Lincoln Luncheon in McCaysville. The train departed McCaysville at 2 p.m., arriving back at Blue Ridge an hour later. We had about an hour-and-a-half to take in the sights there before our supper was served at the Southern Charm restaurant across the street from the train depot. Our return bus left Blue Ridge, getting us back to Amicalola Lodge, our day’s starting point, at 6:45 p.m.

Shortly thereafter, author Ann K. Gunnin began her presentation based on her book “Letters to Virtue,” which features the letters of her great-great-grandfather written while he was a soldier in the Union Army during the Civil War. Many were written to his wife who bore the first name “Virtue” (hence the title). The speaker related some incidents of her ancestor’s life and career and explained how his letters came to survive and be featured in her book.

The annual business meeting of the ALP followed, with attendees meeting from about 8 to 9:45 p.m. The highlights of the business meeting are included in the President’s Report found elsewhere in this issue of *Lincarnations*.

On Saturday, the 13th, buses left the lodge at 8 a.m. At our first stop -- the Tate Marble Quarry -- we viewed the works (an opportunity seldom afforded visitors) and heard a talk on the history of marble in Georgia, the Tate Company, and of Colonel Tate, who headed the company in the 1920s and ‘30s.

From the quarry we rode the buses for about an hour to Kennesaw, Ga., and paid a visit of about three-quarters of an hour to the Kennesaw Southern Museum, home to the “General,” the locomotive stolen by Union raiders in the Civil War. From there we went to the Ben Roberts Community Center,

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also in Kennesaw, for lunch. The Atlanta History Center was our first stop of the afternoon, and we immediately proceeded to the Battle of Atlanta Cyclorama within the center. We had about an hour-and-a-half to enjoy the history center, including the “Texas” locomotive, which successfully chased the “General.”

We next traveled to Jasper, Ga., where we paid about a 20-minute visit to the old Pickens county jail. We then returned to the lodge, arriving about 6 p.m.

There we heard Gerald Flinchum, author of “The Civil War in Pickens County,” speak on his findings. The evening concluded with supper, followed by musical entertainment, drawings for door prizes and the conclusion of the silent auction.

The conference officially ended with a worship service at the Amicalola Falls Lodge at 10 a.m. Sunday, April 14, 2019. It was led by Max Caylor, retired clergyman of the United Methodist Church.

Petals and Period Accessories: Mary Lincoln Events

Submitted by Susan Miller of Nicholasville, Ky.

Mary Lincoln members of the ALP enjoyed a Period Accessory Workshop on Thursday afternoon at the conference. Ladies made a Victorian ribbon chatelaine. All the supplies were available, including ribbon, lanyard hooks and skeleton keys to hang off of the chatelaine. Members made two items that would have been in a lady’s sewing basket -- an embroidered felt scissor case and pin cushion. Also, some members made a lacy hair piece using “Goodwill” doilies, flowers and ribbon.

The Mary Lincolns enjoyed a special luncheon at Pat’s Kountry Kitchen while in McCaysville. A private area of the restaurant was decorated and participants took home a rose hair wreath and Easter egg with treats. Eighteen ladies attended.

The theme of the 2019 conference luncheon was “A Rose for Mrs. Lincoln.” Participants received a booklet with information about the Victorian Language of the Flowers, what different colors of roses symbolize, plus research concerning the roses that Mary Lincoln could have worn and with several pages titled “Flowers in Mary Lincoln’s Life.”

We had a local florist speak on the history of the language of flowers and made a tussie-mussie out of many different flowers explaining what the meaning of each flower was.

This was our annual business meeting and Susan Miller, ML chair, reported that three new Mary members had joined the ALP this year. She also noted the loss of Bonnie Priebe (*Belleville, Mich.*), who passed away in January. Joan Howard (*Frankfort, Ky.*) spoke about the history of the ALP in celebration of our 25th anniversary.

A year in review included information about the Mary Lincoln Coterie in Springfield, Ill., and Lincoln Days in Hodgenville, Ky. The Association of Lincoln Presenters donated \$1,000 to support the Mary Lincoln Bicentennial Symposium held at the University of Kentucky. Ten ALP members attended the Nov. 2, 2018, symposium. ALP also hosted the Bicentennial luncheon.

One More Conference Note

From ALP Treasurer Murray Cox, Indiana:

I would like to talk numbers, but not numbers that begin with a \$. I’m talking about numbers that begin with an area code -- phone numbers. Did you attend the recent conference in Georgia and notice someone missing? Get their phone number from the presenters list on the website (<http://www.lincolnpresenters.com/>) and call them; tell them they were missed. Find out how they are, if they are keeping busy with Lincoln or the character they present.

“Our Members Take the Floor...”

How do you respond to someone who asks you (as Mary or Abraham) about the Lincoln marriage, such as "Did they love each other," "Was it a marriage of convenience," "Was Abraham a battered husband," or "Was Mary a mean wife?"



John Cooper of Ohio writes, “As Lincoln, I have several stories I share regarding the marriage. I mention the statement Mary made late into their marriage when she showed someone the two photos (first known photos of each) taken in 1846 and remarked, ‘These are photos of us when we were both so very young and so very much in love.’ This testifies to the marriage being based on love, not convenience. Regarding the durability of that love, I testify to what Lincoln said late in his presidency at a social function when he was talking to some members of Congress and saw Mary about 50 feet away talking to some ladies: ‘There is the little lady that, some 25 years ago, I fell so deeply in love with and I have never fallen out of love.’ And regarding her presumed ‘meanness,’ I use Lincoln's own self-deprecating humor by telling the firewood story. ‘I was sprawled on the floor, reading a book by the fireplace one evening and the fire was going low. Mary called out, “Put a log on the fire.” My selective hearing did not register the comment and I continued reading. A few moments later, she called again. “Put a log on the fire.” And I still did nothing. After three or four attempts to get me to put a log on the fire, she picked up one and chucked it at me, hitting me upside the head. I finally got up and put another log on the fire.’ I conclude by saying, ‘This was an isolated incident, but what husband has not earned the ire of his wife occasionally with his “selective” hearing.’”



According to **Angle Marie Davis of Alabama**, Mary Lincoln's ring was engraved with the words "Love is eternal." Had life been kinder to the couple and if they had been able to finish that last "date night," Davis believes Abraham would have continued to love Mary for many years after leaving the presidency.



Richard “Rick” Miller of Pennsylvania writes, “I mention the engraving on the wedding band and the fact that they had lots of common interests and the shared trauma of the early loss of their mother.

“Mary was the ‘belle of the ball’ in Springfield so she was a catch.

“Some of the friction in the marriage arose from Abe's willingness to carry on intelligent conversation with younger attractive women (e.g., Kate Chase, Mrs. Ord).”



Janet Myer of Indiana believes “Mary and Mr. Lincoln were made for each other. Both had suffered trauma in their young lives, which would have given them

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empathy for each other. They both loved and spoiled their children. They both suffered with each child's death. Mary tried and succeeded in many opportunities to advance her husband's career, and I believe that Mr. Lincoln, although maybe a bit embarrassed by that, actually admired her for doing that. Re(garding) the letters written to the newspaper which he took the blame for (*the "Rebecca Letters"*)... What Mary did was for the betterment of her husband. Yes, she did have some compulsive, destructive habits, but with all the illnesses she had, maybe it was a desire to fulfill herself. I have loved Mary for a long time and one of my goals is to let people see that Mary was just as human as anyone; she was witty and funny, sociable, and desiring a splendid life for her husband. Life had tragedies for Mary and Mr. Lincoln.

"There is no need to make up any (incidents) as the family is entertaining, as well. I try to inspire people with my one-woman play "The Tragic Mrs. Lincoln," because that is the way I see her.

"I think she actually had PTSD and I think President Lincoln had it, too."



And from **Stan Wernz of Ohio**, "Whenever I get questions about the relationship between Mary and Abe, I remind folks that she helped him with grammar and syntax as they studied Shakespeare in the evenings. And as far as the mood swings go, 'Look who she put up with all these years!'"

*Thanks to those ALP members who took the time to respond to this issue's "Our Members Take the Floor..." question. If you have a question or idea for which you'd like the membership's feedback, please send it to Vicki Woodard (vwoodard@eiu.edu; 602 N. Pine Street, Hazel Dell, IL 62428) for consideration in a future issue of *Lincarnations*.*

Lincoln on Film Questionnaires

We are conducting studies on Abraham Lincoln and Mary Lincoln as portrayed on film (not television or stage play). These questionnaires are being used to gather opinions about these film portrayals, their usefulness for portraying and understanding the Lincolns, and evaluating a few film portrayals. Information gathered will be held confidential and deleted after publication. These questionnaires can be taken online, or a hard copy with a DVD can be provided by request. Please email us at history_ferret@yahoo.com.

Very Respectfully,

John and Jane McKee

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by learning about Civil War fashions, bonnet-making, and using 19th-century sewing techniques to make some of her clothing and accessories. She also enjoys attending 1860s baseball games played with Civil War-era equipment under Civil War rules.

Sue recommends that other Mary Lincolns (and Abrahams) may enjoy two of her favorite books -- *Mary Lincoln: Southern Girl, Northern Woman* by Stacy Pratt McDermott and *Mary Lincoln: Biography of a Marriage* by Ruth Painter Randall. She is already looking forward to next year's conference in Springfield, Ill., and encourages everyone to join ALP there, especially some of you who have not been to a conference in a while. What better place to gather than in Springfield?

Additional information can be found in the May 2019 issue of Mary's Velvet Rose -- <http://www.lincolnpresenters.com/wp-content/uploads/Marys-Velvet-Rose/2019-May-Marys-Velvet-Rose.pdf>