



# Mary's Velvet Rose

## Todd Family Column

### George R. C. Todd

Born on July 4, 1825, George was the youngest child of Robert and Eliza Parker Todd. George received his medical education from Transylvania Medical School in Lexington, Ky. There are stories that Mary hid in the attic and listened to lectures while her brothers attended classes at Transylvania. However, George is the only one who actually went there. He enrolled in 1846; Mary was a wife and mother in Springfield. The stories are doubtful. After finishing his medical thesis in 1848, he remained in Lexington and married Miss Ann Curry. They had one daughter, Mattie. After a short marriage, Ann left George and received a divorce on the grounds of cruelty.

With the outbreak of the Civil War, George sided with the Confederacy. He joined his half-brother, David, who was in charge of prison camps. Both George and David were known to be brutal in their treatment of Union prisoners. It was reported that George would kick the bodies of dead Union soldiers and curse them. After several complaints about George's cruelty, he was assigned to a unit in Georgia. Several soldiers recorded the medical skills and talent of Dr. Todd.

In September 1863, George was transferred to South Carolina and placed in charge of a hospital in Rikersville. The stories of his abuse toward Union prisoners continued to grow. Once, a Union lieutenant from Kentucky infuriated George to the point that he picked him up from his hospital bunk and ordered him bucked and gagged for more than an hour. The lieutenant died the next day.

Soon, George was transferred to a wayside hospital in Camden. There, he met Martha "Mattie" Lyles. George was in Camden during General Sherman's "March to the Sea." It was reported on April 15, 1865, that the rebel sick and wounded were captured, but there is no mention as to the whereabouts of Dr. Todd.

After the war, George married Mattie. They lived in South Carolina, first in Camden, and later in Barnwell. George practiced medicine for the rest of his life, and followed in the footsteps of his father by raising a spectacular rose garden.

George despised Abraham Lincoln for several reasons. Politically they disagreed. There had been lawsuits within the family where George and Abraham were aligned on different sides. George thought Mary was "weak-minded" for marrying someone like Lincoln. However, his son, George Jr., felt differently about descendants of the Lincoln family. He accepted a job with the Pullman Car Company from Robert Todd Lincoln. When George Jr. was injured, Robert came to his aid. Out of respect and admiration

for his cousin, George Jr. named his son Robert Lincoln Todd. There is no record as to whether or not Dr. George Todd had any comments about this.

**Samuel Brown Todd (*Mary's half-brother*):** Sam was the eldest of Mary's half-brothers to live to adulthood. He was a Confederate officer, and was shot in the abdomen at the battle of Shiloh. He died en route to the hospital in Corinth, and was buried alongside the road. Some historians have mistakenly written that Samuel was shot in the head; however, letters from his officers and other men in his unit to Todd family members describe Sam's wounds in detail.

**Alexander Humphreys Todd (*Mary's youngest half-brother*):** Alex was a 19-year-old, red-haired lad when he was killed by friendly fire. His commander was his brother-in-law, Benjamin Hardin Helm. There were some horses traveling down the road, a confused moment of shooting, and before the men realized they were shooting their own men, Alex and a few others were dead.

**David Humphreys Todd (*Mary's half-brother*):** David is sometimes referred to as the black sheep, or the rebel of the family. At one time early in the war, he was in charge at Libby Prison. David was relieved from his duty -- some say due to his inhumane treatment of Union prisoners. David was shot through the lung at the Battle of Vicksburg. He survived the battle and the war. He died in 1871 from complications from this wound.

### News

Charles Franzen of Georgia writes that "Regretfully, I have been forced to retire from active participation in the ALP because of declining health. I have been a life member since the first ALP convention in Lexington, and have enjoyed my association with the organization tremendously. My best regards to the current members."

Mr. Franzen may be contacted at 988 Viscount Court, Avondale Estates, Georgia 30002; (404) 299-1772; [ckf2@mindspring.com](mailto:ckf2@mindspring.com).

Bryce O. Stenzel has a new book, "Lincoln for the Stages," published by Minnesota Heritage Publishing. It is a collection of four plays about "the life and legacy of America's Civil War President." These plays are age-appropriate for middle school, high school, and community drama organizations. More information is available at <http://www.mnheritage.com/>.

**The 34<sup>th</sup> annual Lincoln Days Celebration**, scheduled to take place Oct. 14 and 15, 2006, in Hodgenville, Ky., will again include a Lincoln Oratory Contest, in addition to the popular Abraham Lincoln and Mary Todd Lincoln Look-Alike Contests. Both events take place Saturday, Oct. 14. Orations -- composed and memorized by the contestants -- should be no longer than four minutes and must fall within one of four categories: "*I, too, am a Kentuckian...*," Kentucky family, friends and associates who influenced Lincoln's personal development; "*His was the only line of salvation for our country*," Lincoln's mentors and/or Kentucky's role in developing Lincoln's character, politics and ideals; "*I hope to have God on my side, but I must have Kentucky*," Lincoln and the Civil War (the effect of Lincoln's policies on Kentucky before, during and after the Civil War); and "*Now he belongs to the ages*," the legacy of Lincoln's actions for today's world.

Anyone interested in getting a full set of rules and/or registration forms for any or all contests should contact ALP Secretary Vicki Woodard, 602 N. Pine St., Hazel Dell, Ill. 62428; (217) 932-5378; [vwoodard@eiu.edu](mailto:vwoodard@eiu.edu). She can forward information sent to her by the contest organizers, who would like to have registrations by Oct. 5, if possible. Information can also be obtained by contacting Iris LaRue, The Lincoln Museum, (270) 358-3163, [abe@lincolnmuseum-ky.org](mailto:abe@lincolnmuseum-ky.org).