

Of all our thirty-eight First Ladies, none lived a more tragic life than Mary Todd Lincoln. Born on December 13, 1818, Mary lost her mother, Eliza Parker Todd, during childbirth, when Mary was not yet seven. Her relationship with her stepmother, Elizabeth “Betsy” Humphreys Todd, was less than happy, and Mary sadly described her childhood as “desolate.” Her marriage to aspiring attorney, Abraham Lincoln, on November 4, 1842, lasted until his assassination twenty-three years later, a tragedy she witnessed from its ugly beginning to its end some nine hours later.

As a mother she produced four children, all sons, with only one surviving to adulthood. Edward died of diphtheria a month before his fourth birthday on February 1, 1850. Mary and Abraham nursed Edward for 52 days and nights, until he was beyond their help. When he died, Mary collapsed in grief and shock, unable to stop weeping. Only her husband could persuade her to take an occasional bite of food. Making matters worse, her father, Robert, had died of cholera only seven months earlier. Then shortly afterward, her beloved grandmother, Elizabeth Porter Parker, passed away. Her 11-year-old son, Willie, died on February 20, 1862, of malarial fever. The President and First Lady were inconsolable. For three months following the funeral, Mary lay lost in abject misery, wild grief alternating with periods of paralyzing depression. She was unable to function, or write her family or friends. Thomas (“Tad”) lived until three months past his eighteenth birthday, dying on July 15, 1871, of pneumonia. Returning from England with his mother, Tad aggravated a congenital weakness in his lungs. On June 8, Mary wrote a friend that Tad was “*very very dangerously ill.*” He had to sleep sitting up in a chair. On July 15, after a night spent fighting for breath, he slumped forward in his chair before the anguished eyes of his mother, and died of what physicians termed “*compression of the heart.*”

During the Civil War, Mary’s family remained loyal to the Confederacy, and Mary herself was accused by many of being a “*traitor.*” Four of her half-brothers died during the war—Samuel Briggs Todd was killed at Shiloh; David H. Todd died from wounds incurred at Vicksburg; Alexander H. Todd was killed at Baton Rouge; and General Benjamin Helm (husband of Mary’s half-sister) was killed at Chickamauga.

Following the war, Mary’s only living son, Robert, accused her of insanity and had her committed to Bellevue Place Sanatorium at Batavia, Illinois from May 20 to September 10, 1875. Mary died on July 16, 1882, at age 63. She is buried alongside her husband and all her sons (except Robert) at Oak Grove Cemetery in Springfield, Illinois.

The Michigan Regimental proudly announces that our guest speaker for this month—the beginning of our 42nd year—is member Dr. Weldon Petz, presenting “*Mary Lincoln: Wife, Mother, and First Lady.*” Weldon is a nationally acclaimed speaker, author, and recognized expert on Abraham Lincoln. His highly impressive research and oratorical skills have wowed thousands of audiences over the past decades, so you’ll want to be in attendance for this special program—**MONDAY, JANUARY 28.**

ODDS & ENDS:

- On Sunday, February 3, Al Oakes will again hold the “Annual History and Military Memorabilia Show” at the Knights of Columbus Hall in Clawson (870 N. Main Street). Featured items will include antique arms, Civil War paraphernalia, battlefield finds, Indian artifacts, antique knives and swords, and much more. Al will provide further details at this month’s meeting. If you are interested in your own table for displays, contact Al at 248-541-8037.
- Yearly dues: We still have the best bargain in town--\$15 regular, \$10 for retirees and students. Make your checks payable to Carroll Tietz.
- Congratulations to our officers—President Gary Pike, Vice President Mark Farrell, Secretary Bea Friedlander, and Treasurer Carroll Tietz—for a terrific year and for a unanimous renewal of another year of service.



The MRRT offers its appreciation to our own **Ken Baumann** for his excellent November presentation, “*Lincoln and Logan County, Illinois.*” Great job, Ken!

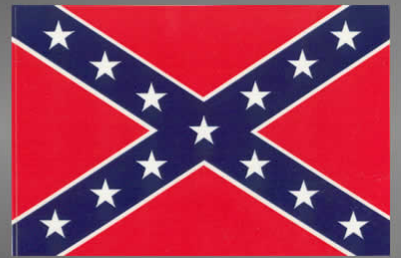
QUIZ: The following are Lincoln quotes (Part III). Identify the person to whom he was speaking to or referring to....

1. “He agreed with us in thinking slavery wrong....It could avail him nothing that he might think himself right.”
2. “Although you were not successful, the attempt was not an error, nor the failure other than accident.”
3. “I would press closely to [Lee], fight him if a favorable opportunity should present, and, at least, try to beat him....I say ‘try’; if we never try, we shall never succeed.”
4. “I understand you are troubled with some report that [your] Corps has sustained a disaster or repulse....I have heard of no such disaster, or repulse. I add that I do not believe there has been any such.”
5. “I have not lost a particle of confidence in you.”
6. “I think it is best for you to know that there are some things in regard to which I am not quite satisfied with you....I have heard....of your recently saying that both the army and the Government needed a dictator....Beware of rashness, but with energy and sleepless vigilance go forward and give us victories.”
7. “Mr____avows his hostility to the war on the part of the Union; and his arrest was made because he was laboring....to prevent the raising of troops, to encourage desertions....and to leave the rebellion without an adequate military force to suppress it....He was warring upon the military; and this gave the military constitutional jurisdiction to lay hands upon him.”
8. “In the untimely loss of your noble son, our affliction here, is scarcely less than your own. So much of promised usefulness to one’s country, and of bright hopes for one’s self and friends, have rarely been so suddenly dashed, as in his fall.”
9. “With this high honor devolves upon you also a corresponding responsibility. As the country herein trusts you, so under God it will sustain you.”
10. “His cardinal mistake is that he isolates himself, and allows nobody to see him; and by which he does not know what is going on in the very matter he is dealing with.”

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A tale of two valiant men at Antietam.....

Thirty-four year old Colonel Charles Courtenay Tew led the 2nd North Carolina Infantry which was located directly in the middle of “*Bloody Lane.*” Tew had graduated with first honors from South Carolina Military Academy in 1846 and remained there as a professor for eleven years. He then established Hillsboro Military Academy in North Carolina in 1858 and toured many European battle sites. General Daniel Harvey Hill regarded Tew as “one of the most finished scholars on the continent” with “*no superior in the field.*” At Antietam he had taken command of the North Carolina regiment under unusual circumstances. Originally the regiment was under the leadership of General George B. Anderson, but Anderson suffered an ankle wound from a rifle bullet. At first the wound did not appear serious, but infection set in and the leg was amputated. (Anderson died on October 16, one month after the battle and one day after his wife gave birth to a daughter.) Now, with Anderson down, Tew must be notified of his elevation to head the regiment. At first in the smoke and debris of the battle, Tew could not be found. A courier, Fred Philips, was sent to deliver the message to Tew personally. Several bullets tore through Philips’ uniform before he saw Tew in the distance. Shouting his message, Philips yelled to ask if Tew understood what he was saying. “*Tew, who was standing erect, lifted his hat and made....a polite bow, and fell immediately from a wound in the head.*”

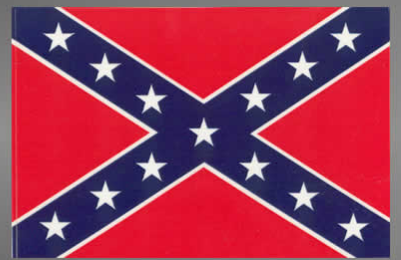
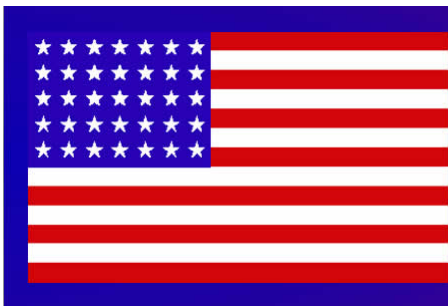


The bullet that hit Tew entered his left temple, dislodged both eyes, and exited through his right temple—yet, for the moment Tew remained alive. Friends pulled him to safety. An hour later Federals moved forward and found Tew still breathing and clutching his inscribed sword with both hands. Tew died shortly afterward, and an Ohio soldier pulled the sword free and carried it off as a souvenir. His family would be notified of his death, but their ordeal would not end for a dozen years. Following the war, a nefarious Yankee appeared in Hillsboro, North Carolina and told a disturbing and horrible story. According to his tale, Tew survived his wound and was now a prisoner at Fort Jefferson in Dry Tortugas, Florida, arrested for killing a colonel of an Illinois regiment. Alarmed by this news, Tew's elderly father made the trip to Fort Jefferson only to find the tale untrue, but the story kept the family *"for years vibrating between hope and despair."* In 1874, a former Federal officer returned an inscribed silver cup from Tew's possessions to his family. He further described burying Tew shortly after the Battle of Antietam. Tew's sword, however, was never returned; it disappeared from a Masonic Lodge in Ohio.

Scholarly Henry Walter Kingsbury, a New Englander, graduated #4 in the West Point Class of May, 1861. Although he fought for the Union forces, his sister Mary had prior to the war married Simon Bolivar Buckner, a future Confederate general. On December 4, 1861, Henry married Eva Taylor, whose sister was married to South Carolinian, David R. Jones. Jones had graduated from West Point in 1846 and was now a general in the Confederate Army of Northern Virginia. Now at Antietam, 26-year-old Colonel Henry Kingsbury stood at the front of the 11th Connecticut Infantry, poised to spearhead the attack on Burnside Bridge. High above on the ridge opposite the creek, Kingsbury's brother-in-law, David R. Jones, commanded the Confederate forces that awaited the attack. When the assault commenced, Kingsbury and his men surged forward in an attempt to reach the bridge. One third of his men fell dead or wounded. Kingsbury was hit four times—the first bullet broke his leg, a second struck his foot. As his men lifted him on a stretcher, a third penetrated his shoulder. The last ripped open his abdomen. His near-lifeless body was carried to the Rohrbach house, where he died the following day. David R. Jones died of a heart attack at age 37 only four months later on January 15, 1863. Some speculate that Jones' death was caused by the extreme grief of knowing his men had gunned down Kingsbury. James Longstreet called the circumstances of Kingsbury's mortal wounding *"one of those peculiarly painful experiences"* he had observed in his long experience as a soldier. Kingsbury's death *"was a severe blow to Jones,"* wrote Longstreet, *"and one from which he never recovered."* When Federal General Marsena Patrick, a close friend of Kingsbury's, learned of his death, he lamented, *"The loss of no one has affected me so deeply. He was a noble fellow! His poor Mother will feel that life is now valueless."* Three months after Kingsbury's death, his wife, Eva, bore him a son, Henry Walter Kingsbury, Jr., in December of 1862.

QUIZ ANSWERS:

1. John Brown
2. Ambrose Burnside
3. George McClellan
4. Dan Sickles
5. Irvin McDowell
6. Joseph Hooker
7. Clement Vallandigham
8. Elmer Ellsworth
9. Ulysses S. Grant
10. John Charles Fremont



Reminder of our meeting on **MONDAY, JANUARY 28**—Dr. Weldon Petz will present “Mary Lincoln: Wife, Mother, and First Lady”—at the downtown Farmington Public Library at Grand River and Farmington Road. The meeting starts at 7:30 P.M. You won’t want to miss this one. See you there.....