

MEET MARY LINCOLN

BIOGRAPHICAL NARRATIVE & CHRONOLOGY

Abraham Lincoln Presidential Library and Museum

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MARY TODD'S EARLY LIFE

Mary Todd was born into a prominent Lexington, Kentucky family. Her parents, Eliza Ann Parker and Robert Smith Todd were second cousins, a common occurrence in the early eighteen hundreds. Mary was not yet seven when her mother died of a bacterial infection after delivering a son in 1825. Within six months Mary's father began courting Elizabeth "Betsey" Humphreys and they were married November 1, 1826. The six surviving children of Eliza and Robert Todd did not take kindly to their new step-mother. Adding fuel to the fire was Betsey's tendency of using shame, embarrassment, and humiliation in raising her step-children.

As a girl, Mary was a tomboy, who enjoyed playing pranks on people, such as putting salt or pepper in the coffee of her black nurse, Mammy Sally. She loved horseback riding and would gad about on her sidesaddle outfitted in a plumed hat that reached her shoulders and long flowing skirts. Her quieter side found enjoyment in reciting poetry, sewing, and studying. Mary was said to be "highly strung, nervous, impulsive, excitable, having an emotional temperament much like an April day, sunning all over with laughter one moment, the next crying as though her heart would break." Not only was Mary mischievous, but willful as well. Because Mary's father was prosperous, she enjoyed

the finer things in life that money bought, among them were beautiful clothes, imported French shoes, elegant dinners, a home library and, private carriages.

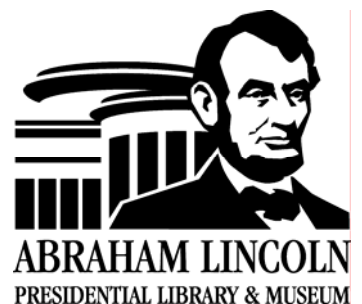
Mary was almost nine years old when she entered the Shelby Female Academy, otherwise known as Ward's. School began at 5:00 am, and Mary and Elizabeth "Lizzie" Humphreys walked the three blocks to the co-ed academy. Mary was an excellent student and excelled in reading, writing, grammar, arithmetic, history, geography, natural science, French, religion, painting, and sewing. Mary's education cost her father \$44 per year; French lessons were extra.

Robert Smith Todd entertained politicians, diplomats, and scholars in his home while Mary was young and she was allowed to listen to conversations after the dinner hour. Unlike most girls of her time, Mary loved to discuss and argue politics. Mary's fascination with politics set her apart from her peers and contributed to her reputation as an oddity. By the time she was fourteen, Mary considered herself an ardent Whig. Mary's father, whose family were founders of Transylvania University, did not believe in raising uneducated children, and as a result, Mary received an atypical education.

Mary's education was unusual because she was

allowed to continue her studies at the Mentelle's for Young Ladies School. Beginning in 1832, Mary boarded at Mentelle's Monday through Friday and went home on the weekend even though the school was only one and a half miles from her home. Every week, Mary was brought to and from school in a coach driven by a family slave, Nelson. The cost of room and board for one year at this exclusive finishing school was \$120. For four years, Mary received instruction in English literature, etiquette, conversation, letter writing, and dancing. All of her lessons and conversations throughout the week were conducted in French.

Known as vivacious and impulsive, Mary was also "one of the brightest girls of the school who had the highest marks and took the biggest prizes." Mary was considered "a merry, companionable girl with a smile for everybody," and "the life of the school, always ready for a good time and willing to contribute even more than her own share in promoting it." But Mary also had another side to her personality, and she became known for her biting wit, sharp tongue, haughty manner and sarcastic comments. Her ability to mimic people, developed through her participation in school plays, brought great fun to her and her friends, although, sometimes causing hard feelings and embarrass-



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ment.

When Mary was twenty-one she moved to Springfield, Illinois. While in Springfield, Mary was the belle of the ball and lived with her eldest sister, Elizabeth, who, at the age of sixteen, had married Ninian Wirt Edwards, son of Illinois' third governor. Although Mary heard talk of an up-and-coming young lawyer named Abraham Lincoln during her visit to Springfield, she did not meet him. Having promised her father the journey to Springfield was strictly a visit, Mary returned to Lexington that autumn.

Eventually Mary returned to Springfield and took up residence with her sister Elizabeth. Mary's sister liked to entertain and the Edwards' home was a frequent gathering spot for important and stylish people of the town.

Included in this group were some of the brightest names in Springfield: Stephen A. Douglas, Lyman Trumbull, James C. Conkling, James Shields, Joshua Speed, and Abraham Lincoln. Mercy Levering, Caroline Lamb, Julia Jayne, Matilda Edwards, and other eligible young women from town rounded out the group of like-minded young people who discussed art and politics while having fun attending parties, sleigh rides, and political rallies. Mary was in her element within this group, but oftentimes, Lincoln had to be persuaded to join in the festivities. His manner was awkward, his nature moody, and he was prone to depression.

Mary along with several other young ladies belonged to the "Pedestrian Club." They met every day at

4:00 p.m. to stroll, gather wild flowers, strawberries, blackberries, and nuts. When night fell, the girls were escorted home by Springfield's most eligible bachelors.

Although their backgrounds were completely different, Mary and Lincoln were drawn to each other by common interests. Both loved to discuss politics, books, Shakespeare, the theater, and poetry. After courting for two years, Lincoln and Mary reached an understanding they would marry, much to the dismay of her family, who thought she was too good for him.

Mary Todd and Abraham Lincoln were married on the morning of November 4, 1842, in the home of Mary's guardians, Elizabeth and Ninian Edwards. After the

wedding, Mary and Lincoln set up housekeeping at the Globe Tavern living in one room on the second floor.

The tavern/boardinghouse was very different than the elegant Edwards' home. Stagecoaches and carriages arrived several times a day and were accompanied by the ringing of a loud bell indicating horses needed to be tended. Boarders came and went regularly and meals were eaten in a communal dining room—a far cry from what Mary was used to. The Lincolns were charged \$4 per week for their accommodations and meals. When her husband was not working the young couple attended plays, concerts, and the circus. Lincoln called Mary "Molly," and she referred to him as "Mr. Lincoln."



MARY LINCOLN'S LIFE AS YOUNG WIFE AND MOTHER

While living at the Globe Tavern Mary found herself with time on her hands, but that ended on August 1, 1843 with the birth of her first son, Robert. In the winter of 1843, the Lincolns moved out of the Globe and into a small rental cottage at 214 South Fourth Street. The following spring they purchased their first home at Eighth and Jackson Streets from Dr. Charles Dresser, the Episcopal minister who married them. The Lincolns paid Dr. Dresser \$1,200 for the six room house and also gave him a small piece of property worth \$300.

Constructed in a Greek Revival style, the home was a typical farm house of the time. The neighborhood had no sidewalks, curbs, or

gutters, and although it was situated on the outskirts of town, it was only a short walk to the center of the city. Houses of the day had no plumbing, so people used outhouses and carried water from an outside pump when they wanted to cook or bathe. There was no electricity, therefore oil lamps and candles were used to light homes. Rooms were kept warm by fireplaces and oftentimes houses were drafty and cold.

Newly married, Mary had little knowledge of how to run a household. After her sons were born, Mary hired servants to help with the heavy chores of washing and ironing and housecleaning. For the most part Mary hired native-born

girls to help around the house, but they proved to be inefficient and in constant need of supervision. Mary had very high standards and believed she could perform the work better. Her philosophy was why part with hard-earned money when she could perform the work far better and for free?

In the autumn of 1846 Lincoln was elected to Congress. The family made preparations to move to Washington, D.C. by renting their home for \$90 a year. Mary, Robert and a second son, Edward Baker, who had been born March 10, 1846, went with Lincoln in the fall of 1847. Robert was four years old and Eddie was one-and-a-half. In Washington the Lincoln family lived at a boarding-



house, but a boardinghouse was no place for a young family, so in the spring of 1848, Mary and the boys left Washington to visit her family in Lexington, Kentucky.

Mary's life was full of grief between the summer of 1849 and the winter of 1850. Her father, Robert died of cholera in July of 1849 and her much-loved grandmother Parker followed six months later. Edward "Eddie" Lincoln was three and a half when he became sick with an illness that lasted fifty-two days. Both Mary and Lincoln nursed their son with the accepted treatments of the day, including Wistor's Balsam of Wildcherry, an opium-based cough suppressant. The inadequate medicine was not enough to save Eddie who died of pulmonary tuberculosis on February 1, 1850. Mary was distraught and took to her bed as she would with future bereavements. Mary did not attend the burial of her son in Hutchison's Cemetery as it was not the custom of the time. Women were expected to stay home and grieve.

The third child of Mary and Abraham Lincoln, "Willie," was born December 21, 1850, in the family home

in Springfield. He was named for William Wallace, who was married to Mary Lincoln's sister, Frances. Willie was a handsome, smart, serious and thoughtful child who became the favorite of his parents.

In the beginning of their marriage while Robert was still young, the Lincolns made some attempt at discipline. Robert was punished with spankings when he ran away. The discipline was short-lived though, and by the time their second son, Eddie, was born, the children were allowed to do as they pleased; neither Mr. nor Mrs. Lincoln had the heart to make their children unhappy. This philosophy of child rearing ran contrary to public opinion that expected children to be obedient. Children were to be raised with a firm hand and the use of corporal punishment was expected and encouraged.

The lack of parental discipline led many people to consider the Lincoln boys brats, but Lincoln fondly called them the "codgers." Mary, raised by a stepmother who used shame and humiliation to control her children, referred to her sons as "precious, dear boys, darlings, and angel boys." The Lincoln boys were indulged and loved; in Lincoln's words, "we never controlled our children much."

Thomas Lincoln "Tad" was the fourth and last child of Abraham and Mary. Born April 4, 1853, Tad was named after Thomas Lincoln, Abraham's father who had died in 1851. Tad's head was unusually large at birth and Lincoln, thinking he resembled a tadpole, called him Tad—a nickname that stuck with the baby for the rest of his life.

Neighbor children had a friend in Mary Lincoln who invited them into her home and served them gingerbread and macaroons. Once, in celebration of Willie's ninth birthday, she hosted a birthday party and invited between fifty and sixty children by sending them hand-written invitations.

Cooking and cleaning took up a large part of Mary's day. Mary's housework increased considerably when in 1856 the Lincoln's renovated their home by adding a second story and an addition onto the rear of their house. Now, Mary had even more rooms to clean. By selling a parcel of land given to her by her father, Mary was able to afford the \$1300 improvements.

When Lincoln decided to run for the United States Senate in 1858, Mary campaigned for him in Springfield. In mid-October Mary was able to attend the last debate in Alton. Lincoln lost the election, but his performance during the Lincoln-Douglas debates brought him into the public eye and impressed the Republican Party leaders.

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MARY LINCOLN'S LIFE AS FIRST LADY

In the winter of 1861, after Abraham Lincoln was elected President, Mary traveled to New York City to purchase a wardrobe befitting her new position as First Lady. Even as a girl Mary loved clothes and with the credit extended by New York merchants, she began the first of her notorious shopping sprees, all the while keeping her debts secret from her husband. As wife of the President-elect, people were eager to make her acquaintance and fawn over her. When Mary returned to Springfield, preparations were made to move the family to Washington.

Before Lincoln and his family arrived in the Capitol there was much gossip regarding their uncouth and rustic western habits. Mary, who was always susceptible to gossip, was determined to make an impact on her detractors. But Mary was not greeted with open arms when she arrived in Washington as First Lady. Rather, she was met with contempt and hostility by the city's prominent southern-bred females. The teas, balls and levees she hosted were boycotted by the social elite of Washington which hurt her feelings and caused resentment. Mary became a target of the Washington press, and while there were journalists who supported Mary and wrote kindly about her, just as many were disparaging.

When the Lincolns took up residence in the White House, it was in poor condition. Any citizen was allowed to enter the White House and wander around the public rooms where they frequently helped themselves to souvenirs and pieces of the

presidential draperies. Wallpaper was peeling, furniture was broken and the carpet was threadbare. The state dining room only had ten matching place settings of china.

With a four-year redecorating stipend of \$20,000 and an annual budget of \$6,000, Mary arranged buying trips to Philadelphia and New York to purchase items for herself as well as her new home. Rosewood furniture, bell pulls, washstands, footbaths, French fabrics and wallpaper, a 190 piece set of Haviland china worth \$3,195, and Dorflinger glassware were some of the items she purchased. In Washington, she contracted for services to clean, wax floors, wash windows, and paint walls. New carpeting and books for the library's collection were added.

Mary prided herself on her fine taste, but her efforts to remodel the White House were met with stinging criticism and she soon found herself in the public eye. Over the course of four years, Mary made eleven buying trips to New York in an effort to re-furnish the White House, never hesitating when told there was not enough money. When Lincoln learned of Mary's over expenditures he became furious, especially when it became known that she had ordered wallpaper from France for \$6,800. Eventually Mary's bills were padded into other appropriations but not before she became the source of additional gossip, disapproval, and scorn.

As First Lady, Mary also made many trips to hospitals, taking food and flowers

to injured soldiers. She read to the soldiers, wrote letters for them, and once raised \$1,000 for a Christmas dinner at a military hospital. Tad often accompanied her on these visits. Additionally, Mary provided support for the Contraband Relief Association which helped blacks who escaped to the North during the Civil War. As First Lady, Mary came into contact with Elizabeth Keckly, a former slave who became Mary's dressmaker, confidante, and her close friend.



Life as First Lady was not easy for Mary. She was the target of unceasing criticism. Her family's ties to the Confederacy led people to call her a traitor. When she held White House receptions, she was criticized for her inappropriate frivolity during a national crisis. If she chose not to host social functions, she was attacked for adding to the dark mood of the day.

Left alone much of the time, Mary formed a salon where she hosted reputable as well as disreputable men. The ability to flatter Mary was enough to gain admittance to the Blue Room where her coterie met. Here, they discussed literature, politics, and gossip. A few women attended but many of the men were considered unsuitable company for well-bred women, but Mary didn't care.

Early in 1862, Mary Lincoln decided to hold a lavish party at the White House. Her favorite son, Willie, was in bed with a fever that got worse as the evening wore on. Both parents spent much of the evening sitting by Willie's bedside. Willie never recovered but died on Febru-

ary 20, 1862 of a typhoid-like disease. His death was traumatic for the entire family and was probably caused by the contaminated water that flowed through a nearby canal and provided water for the White House and a place for children to play. Mrs. Lincoln "did all a mother ought or could during Willie's sickness—she never left his side at all after he became dangerous, & almost wore herself out with watching, and she mourns as no one but a mother can at her son's death," reported Benjamin B. French. "It is hard, hard, hard

to have him die!" said his father after Willie's death.

In the summer of 1863, while driving from the White House to the Soldier's Home, Mary was thrown from her carriage and suffered a head injury that took three weeks to heal. While she was recuperating the Battle of Gettysburg was being fought. After Mary recovered, she took a two month trip to the White Mountains in Vermont with Tad.

On April 14, 1865, the Lincolns attended a per-

formance of "Our American Cousin" at Ford's Theatre. That night, as Mary held her husband's hand, John Wilkes Booth shot the President. Lincoln died the next morning. It was a tragedy from which Mary would never recover.

MARY LINCOLN'S LATER YEARS

On May 23, 1865, Mary Lincoln left Washington, D.C. on a private railroad car accompanied by Robert and Tad and several close friends. In a daze, Mary spent most of the fifty-two hour journey weeping. When they arrived in Chicago, the Lincoln family took up residence at the Tremont Hotel; but, soon moved to the less-expensive Hyde Park Hotel, where they stayed for two and a half months.

In the spring of 1866, Mary enlisted Simon Cameron's help in raising money so she could purchase a house. Anticipating that enough money would be raised on her behalf, Mary purchased a home at 375 West Washington Street, near Union Park, in Chicago. Within one year she was forced to move because she could not afford the upkeep.

After the assassination of her husband, Mary's creditors began sending her the bills for her purchases. With no income and living only on the interest generated

by her husband's estate, she had no way to pay her debts. Mary came up with several plans to raise money. First, she attempted to return the extravagant jewelry and clothing purchased while her husband was living. Another unsuccessful endeavor dubbed "the Old Clothes Scandal," was an attempt to sell her unused wardrobe of party clothes, furs, and jewelry to the general public.

Hoping to ease her embarrassment and live more cheaply, Mary Lincoln, accompanied by Tad, left the United States for Germany in October, 1868. Mrs. Lincoln enrolled Tad in a boarding school and took up residence in Frankfurt, Germany where she lived for the next two years. Mary spent her time strolling the city's streets, visiting museums, taking the mineral waters in various health spas, having tea with other expatriates, shopping for her daughter-in-law and new grand-daughter, reading newspapers, and writing letters. Using Frankfurt as a

home base, Mary traveled through Europe visiting France, Scotland, and Austria. When the Franco-Prussian War began in 1870, Mary and Tad left Germany and headed for England. Mary and Tad finally returned to the United States in 1871.

Mary and Tad returned to Chicago and stayed at the home of Robert Lincoln, but soon took up residence at the Clifton House. During the trip home, Tad developed a cold which steadily got worse and settled in his lungs. Three months past his eighteenth birthday, on July 15, 1871, Tad Lincoln died of pleurisy. Funeral services were held for Tad the next day in his brother's Chicago home. Mary was in a stupor of grief and was unable to make the trip to Springfield where more formal funeral services were held at the First Presbyterian Church. Tad's remains were transported to Oak Ridge Cemetery and placed with his father, and two brothers, Eddie and Willie.



After the death of Tad, Mary spent time traveling to various health spas. Increasingly prone to illness and erratic behavior, she sought warmer weather for health reasons and traveled to Florida to spend the winter of 1874. In the spring of 1875, Mary had a premonition that Robert was deathly ill and returned to Chicago.

In Chicago, Mary spent her days shopping and purchasing items she did not need, including ten pairs of gloves, three watches for her son, and one dozen pairs of curtains that were never opened. Whenever she went out she was dressed in heavy mourning attire and soon became a recognizable figure throughout the city. Her behavior was strange; she engaged store clerks and hotel employees in unnecessary conversation, paid hotel maids to sleep in her room, was nervous and excitable and carelessly dressed, spoke of hearing voices through the walls, and believed she was being watched while in the washroom. Mary also habitually carried sums of money as large as \$57,000, sewn into a pocket in her petticoat.

On the morning of May 19, 1875, Mary Lincoln answered the door of her hotel room and found two uniformed policemen who escorted her to an insanity hearing at the Cook County courthouse. Seventeen wit-

nesses, including five doctors, gave evidence. Four of the doctors had never met Mary Lincoln and based their testimony on information received from her son.

Isaac Arnold, an old friend of Abraham Lincoln's, was Mary's defense lawyer. He provided very little in the way of defense and called no witnesses on Mary's behalf. It took the jury only ten minutes to reach a verdict of insanity and recommend Mary be committed to a private asylum.

On May 20, 1875, Mary Lincoln was taken to Bellevue Place sanatorium in Batavia, Illinois. She was given a sentence that allowed her to remain a patient for as long as the doctors, and her son, thought she needed treatment. Several months later, Robert Lincoln became the conservator of his mother's estate. Mary's stay at Bellevue lasted almost four months. Mary was allowed to leave Batavia on September 10, 1875 to live with her sister, Elizabeth Edwards in Springfield, Illinois.

In June, 1876, Mary Lincoln appeared at another insanity hearing in Chicago—one that declared her sane and restored her estate. Several months after regaining her property she broke all contact with Robert and went into self-exile in Europe, but not before traveling with her nephew, Lewis Baker to Lex-

ington, Kentucky, Philadelphia, and New York City. She spent the next four years seeking anonymity and traveling the European continent visiting the cities of Rome, Naples, Sorrento, Marseilles, Avignon, and Paris, while based in Pau, France, a popular health resort at the foot of the Pyrénées.

Mary Lincoln returned from Europe in October 1880 in deteriorating health and lived with her sister; spending most of her time sitting in a room lit by a single candle. Traveling to New York City in 1881, Mary Lincoln spent her last winter living in a medical hotel ailing from cataracts, chronic spinal inflammation, and kidney disease.

Mary Lincoln died in her sister's home on July 16, 1882, at the age of 64, most likely of complications from diabetes. She left no will. Her estate was valued at \$84,035 and was left to her only heir, Robert Lincoln.



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MARY TODD LINCOLN CHRONOLOGY

1818

On December 13, Mary Ann Todd was born in Lexington, Kentucky. Her parents, Eliza and Robert Smith Todd, were members of a socially and economically prominent Kentucky family. Robert Smith Todd had sixteen children; seven with his first wife, Eliza Parker, and nine with his second wife, Elizabeth Humphreys.

1825

Mary's mother, Eliza, passed away on July 5.

1826

On November 1, Robert Todd married Betsy Humphreys. Mary Todd entered Shelby Female Academy (John Ward's) located in Lexington.

1832

Mary entered Madame Mentelle's school for girls. There she lived at school during the week and at home on weekends. Mary excelled in school and was considered one of the very best students in the class.

1837

Mary spent three months in the summer visiting her sister Elizabeth in Springfield. In the fall, Mary returned to Ward's, as an apprentice teacher.

1839

Mary went to Springfield, Illinois, to live with the Edwards family and soon became prominent in society. She met a rising lawyer/politician named Abraham Lincoln.

1840

Mary became engaged to Abraham Lincoln.

1841

Mary and Abraham broke up on January 1st.

1842

Mary and Abraham renewed their relationship and were married on November 4, by the Reverend Charles Dresser in the Edwards home. At first, the Lincolns boarded at the Globe Tavern in Springfield for \$4.00 a week.

1843

Robert Todd Lincoln, the couple's first child, was born August 1st at the Globe Tavern. He was named after Mary's father. Late in the year the family moved and rented a three room frame cottage at 214 South Fourth Street in Springfield.

1844

The Lincolns purchased, from Dr. Charles Dresser, a home in Springfield for \$1500. It was located at the corner of Eighth and Jackson Streets. This was the only home the Lincolns ever purchased.

1846

On March 10, the Lincolns' second child, Edward "Eddie," was born.

1847

Mary and the children went to Washington, D.C. with Abraham who had been elected to the House of Representatives. In Washington the Lincolns lived at Mrs. Ann Sprigg's boardinghouse.

1848

During the summer, Mary, Abraham, Robert, and Eddie traveled through New York State, visited Niagara Falls, and took a steamer from Buffalo across the Great Lakes. Mary did not return with Abraham to Washington for the 2nd session of the Thirtieth Congress. She and the boys stayed in Springfield.

1849

Lincoln's term in the House ended, and his political career stalled. The Lincolns once again were together in Springfield. Mary's father, Robert Smith Todd, died July 16 of cholera.

1850

In January, Mrs. Eliza Parker, Mary's grandmother, passed away. The Lincoln's son, Eddie, died on February 1. The Lincoln's third child, William "Willie" Wallace was born December 21.

1851

Thomas Lincoln, Abraham's father, passed away.

1853

The Lincoln's last child, Thomas "Tad" was born April 4.

1857

In September, the Lincolns traveled to New York. They toured New York City and revisited Niagara Falls.

1858

During the Lincoln-Douglas Debates, Mary did her own "campaigning" in Springfield. In mid-October Mary traveled to Alton, Illinois to hear the last of the debates—the only one of the seven she attended.

1860

Lincoln was elected President in the fall election.

1861

The Lincoln family traveled to Washington, D.C., and took up residence in the White House. Mary refurbished the White House but overspent the money Congress had appropriated for this task.

1862

Willie Lincoln died in the White House on February 20.





Mary ceased social activities until the next year and never again entered the room in which Willie died. Mary's half brother, Sam Todd, was killed fighting for the Confederacy in the Battle of Shiloh. Oftentimes with Tad at her side, Mary visited wounded soldiers in hospitals.

1863

On July 2, 1863, Mary was involved in a carriage accident in which she was thrown to the ground hitting her head on a rock. The wound became infected and she required nursing care for three weeks. At the urging of Elizabeth Keckly, the First Lady's dressmaker and a former slave, Mary assisted in raising funds for the Contraband Relief Association.

1864

Mary began showing increasing signs of irrationality, especially in matters concerning money. She worried that if Lincoln lost the Election of 1864, her excessive spending would be discovered. In an effort to alleviate her grief over the death of her son Willie, Mary spent more time participating in séances with mediums and clairvoyants.

1865

Mary and Abraham attended the play "Our American Cousin" at Ford's Theatre on April 14, where Lincoln was shot by John Wilkes Booth. Mary entered a period of extreme grief.

1866

In January the Congressional Committee on House Appropriations began investigating whether Mary had taken White House property such as bedding, utensils, china, table linen, etc. The investiga-

tion was terminated when no wrongdoing was discovered. In the spring, Mary purchased a home in Chicago located at 375 West Washington Street, near Union Park, in Chicago. Within one year she was forced to move because she could not afford the upkeep.

1867

Mary attempted to raise \$100,000 by selling clothing she could not wear anymore. Dubbed "The Old Clothes Scandal," the plan backfired and Mary gave permission to exhibit and sell her clothes to the general public. Mary was ridiculed by the press.

1868

Mary and Tad traveled to Europe and spent much of the next three years in Frankfurt, Germany. On September 24, 1868, Robert Lincoln married Mary Eunice Harlan.

1869

Mrs. Lincoln vacationed in Scotland during July and August.

1870

On July 14, Congress passed a bill granting Mary a \$3,000 annual lifetime pension.

1871

Mary and Tad returned to the United States. In Chicago on July 15, Tad died of complications resulting from fluid in the lungs.

1875

Mary's only surviving son, Robert, instigated a hearing in which his mother was declared insane by a jury of twelve men. Mary spent several months in a private asylum in Batavia, Illinois, but she was released with the help of Myra Bradwell, an attorney, and Bradwell's husband.

1876

After her release from Bellevue, Mary went to Springfield to live with her sister, Elizabeth Edwards. On June 15th, a second court hearing reversed the early court's insanity ruling. Mary traveled to Europe and spent much of the next four years living in Pau, France.

1877

Mary visited Marseilles, Naples, and Sorrento.

1879

At the age of 60, in Pau, Mary took a fall from a stepladder injuring her spinal cord. In pain she traveled to Nice, France.

1880

On October 16, Mary boarded a ship bound for New York City. Mary returned to Springfield to live with her older sister, Elizabeth.

1881

Kidney and eye problems and spinal sclerosis caused Mary's health to decline rapidly.

1882

In January, Congress raised Mary's annual pension from \$3000 to \$5000, and also voted her a donation of \$15,000. On July 15, the anniversary of Tad's death, Mary collapsed in her bedroom perhaps from a stroke. The next day, Mary passed away at 8:15 p.m. Her estate, mostly in bonds, was valued at \$84,035. Services were held at the First Presbyterian Church at 10:00 a.m. on Wednesday, July 19, with Reverend Dr. James Armstrong Reed presiding. Mary was buried in Oak Ridge Cemetery in Springfield, Illinois along with her sons and husband.