

## FIRST LADY MARY TODD LINCOLN



Mary Todd Lincoln. Wikipedia. 18 July 2008. [http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Image:Mt\\_lincoln.jpg](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Image:Mt_lincoln.jpg)

### Timeline of the Life of Mary Todd Lincoln

- December 12, 1818** Mary Todd is born to a Robert Smith Todd and Eliza Parker Todd, prosperous, pioneering couple living in Lexington, Kentucky
- 1825** Mary's mother dies
- 1826** Mary's father weds Elizabeth Humphreys with whom Mary did not get along well
- 1839** Mary moves to Springfield, Illinois, to live with her sister Elizabeth (one of 15 siblings)
- December 16, 1839** Elizabeth introduces Mary to Abraham Lincoln
- 1840** Lincoln proposes to Mary
- January 1, 1841** Lincoln and Mary Todd break off their engagement.
- November 4, 1842** Mary weds Abraham Lincoln (though she had been courted by Stephen Douglas before meeting Lincoln)
- August 1, 1843** Robert Todd Lincoln, their first son, is born
- March 10, 1846** Edward Baker Lincoln, their second son, is born
- February 1, 1850** Edward "Eddie" Lincoln, their third son, dies a month before his third birthday
- December 21, 1850** William Wallace Lincoln, their third son, is born

<b>April 4, 1853</b>	Thomas (Tad) Lincoln, their fourth son, is born
<b>February 20, 1862</b>	William "Willie" Lincoln dies of typhus, a blow that troubles Mary for the rest of her life
<b>May 1865</b>	Her son Robert finally persuades Mrs. Lincoln to leave the White House and return to Springfield.
<b>April 14, 1865</b>	President Lincoln is assassinated while holding Mary Lincoln's hand as they both watch <i>Our American Cousin</i> at Ford's Theatre
<b>October 1, 1868</b>	Mary takes Tad with her to live in Europe where they until May of 1871
<b>July 14, 1870</b>	Congress grants Mary Todd Lincoln a \$3000 a year pension
<b>1875</b>	Her son Robert has her committed to Bellevue Place, a mental hospital in Batavia, Illinois, where she remains for three months. Following her release, she moves to France where she lives for four years.
<b>1879</b>	Mary returns to Springfield to live with her sister Elizabeth
<b>July 16, 1882</b>	Mary Todd Lincoln dies in her sister's home in Springfield and is buried with her husband and sons in Oak Ridge Cemetery

- Mary Todd, born into a prosperous and prestigious family, was herself an attractive and well-educated woman.
- She suffered from an almost pathological insecurity and suffered depression throughout her life.
- The deaths of three of her children and the assassination of her husband at which she was present exacerbated her natural emotional condition.
- Almost from the time they met, Mary believed Abraham Lincoln was destined for greatness, despite the financial struggles of their earliest married years.
- As First Lady, Mary Lincoln was under constant criticism for her expenditures of public funds to restore the White House after years of neglect, for her personal expenditures on dresses and other apparel, and for her perceived haughtiness.
- Because her family was from and still resided in Kentucky, a slave state – though not a part of the Confederacy, some even accused her of treason, resulting in a Congressional inquiry.
- President Lincoln's aide, John Hay, was particularly critical of the First Lady.
- Ironically, she was also criticized for a failure to appreciate and reflect the gravity of the times when she held social functions at the White House and for a failure to try to lift the spirits of those in the capital when she declined to hold the same sort of functions.
- Not widely reported at the time were her frequent visits to wounded Union soldiers.
- In a striking departure from her upbringing in a slave state, First Lady Mary Lincoln developed a remarkably close relationship with Elizabeth Keckly, a dressmaker to Washington's elite and a former slave. (Keckly's writings are the chief primary source of information on Mrs. Lincoln's life during and after the White House years.)

- Her son Willie's death left her so distraught that her husband warned that he might have to have her placed in a sanitarium.
- Willie's death launched her engagement of spiritualists to contact her lost son – and later her husband.
- Following the President's assassination, her emotional stability further declined.
- After Elizabeth Keckly publishes *Behind the Scenes, or, Thirty Years a Slave, and Four Years in the White House*, Mrs. Lincoln feels betrayed by her confidante and withdraws further from social contact.
- After her son Tad died of typhoid, she developed paranoia and was even committed to sanitarium by her son Robert for three months. His reasons included her extravagant spending of money on items she neither needed nor used.
- Mary never forgave her son Robert.
- For the rest of her life she feared poverty.

For more information, read *Mary Todd Lincoln, A Biography* by Jean Harvey Baker

Or click on <http://www.whitehouse.gov/history/firstladies/ml16.html>