A Mary Todd Lincoln House Guide for Kids

A HOUSE DIVIDED

Discover the stories of Abraham Lincoln’s southern relatives—the Todds of Kentucky!
It was a cold winter day in 1863. The Lincolns were entertaining relatives from Kentucky at the White house.

Tad Lincoln and Katherine Helm were looking at pictures.

Here's a picture of my father. He's the president.

He is not! Jefferson Davis is just a rebel. Abraham Lincoln is the president!

President
The elected or appointed leader of a country

Rebel
Another name for supporters of the Confederacy

Confederate States of America
The eleven states that left the United States in 1861
What do you say, Mr. Lincoln?

Come here, children.

Tad is right that I'm the president of the United States of America.

But Katherine's family supports the Confederate States of America. Jefferson Davis is her president.

For Katherine, I'll just be Uncle Lincoln.

What do you think? Who was right about who was president, Tad or Katherine? Why?

What do you think of Abraham Lincoln's solution?
The comic shows a problem faced by many Kentucky families during the Civil War. The war started in 1861, after states in the South tried to form their own country, the Confederate States of America. They chose Jefferson Davis to be the president of the Confederacy.

Abraham Lincoln was the president of the United States. He wanted to keep the U. S., or Union, together. He also wanted to end slavery. Most people living in Confederate states believed in slavery. They felt that each state should decide what to do about slavery.

Kentucky was a border state located between the North and the South. When the war began, some Kentuckians sided with the Union. Others sided with the Confederacy. Sometimes members of the same family took opposite sides.

**Civil War**
A conflict between the United States and the Confederate States from 1861 to 1865

**Confederacy**
Another name for the Confederate States of America

**Union**
Another name for the United States

**Slavery**
A system in which people can own other people, or slaves, who work for no pay and are not free

**Border States**
States located between the North and South that remained in the Union but had slavery

**North**
A region made up of states in the northern U. S. that sided with the Union and usually opposed slavery

**South**
A region made up of states in the southern U. S. that sided with the Confederacy and had slavery
President Lincoln used the phrase “a house divided” to describe the nation. But he could have been talking about the family of his wife, Mary Todd Lincoln. Mary was one of the fourteen children of Robert Todd of Lexington, Kentucky. When the Civil War began, the Todds were living all over the U.S. Some backed the Union and some sided with the Confederacy.

The Todd brothers and sisters are listed below with the states they were in when the Civil War began. Write each person’s initials on the correct line on the map.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Family Member</th>
<th>State</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Elizabeth Todd Edwards</td>
<td>Illinois</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Francis Todd Wallace</td>
<td>Illinois</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Levi Todd</td>
<td>Kentucky</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mary Todd Lincoln</td>
<td>Washington, D.C.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ann Todd Smith</td>
<td>Illinois</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>George Todd</td>
<td>Kentucky</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Margaret Todd Kellogg</td>
<td>Ohio</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Samuel Todd</td>
<td>Louisiana</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>David Todd</td>
<td>Louisiana</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Martha Todd White</td>
<td>Alabama</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Emilie Todd Helm</td>
<td>Kentucky</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Alec Todd</td>
<td>Kentucky</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Elodie Todd</td>
<td>Alabama</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Kitty Todd</td>
<td>Kentucky</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

What do you think?

Based on where they lived, which side did each brother and sister support?
First Family of the Union

When Abraham Lincoln became the president, he and his wife Mary had three sons. Robert was eighteen, Willie was ten, and Tad was seven. When the Civil War started, Lincoln became the leader of the Union. People expected a lot of the First Family.

Mary Todd Lincoln backed the Union, but she had many critics. Some complained about her spending habits. Others were suspicious of her because she had Confederate relatives.

President Lincoln made decisions with care, but people didn’t always agree with him. Some Unionists (including many in Kentucky) fought his move to free the slaves in Confederate states.

What do you think?

Why are people so interested in the things famous people say and do? Is it possible to please all of the people all of the time?

After reading this page, decide what the other two people might be saying. Write their comments in the balloons.
Brothers in Battle

Around three million men fought in the Civil War. The Union had more men and more supplies, but Confederate forces had good leaders and determination. There were five sons in the Todd family. Only Levi supported the Union. The other four joined the Confederate Army.

In April 1862, Sam died from a wound at the Battle of Shiloh. Aleck died a few months later in Louisiana when Confederate soldiers shot some of their own men by mistake.

Newspapers in the North and South reported Sam and Aleck’s deaths. Many people felt sorry for Mary Lincoln. Others were angry that the First Lady’s brothers were fighting against the Union.

George was a doctor. He worked in hospitals in the South and at the Battle of Gettysburg in Pennsylvania.

David ran a prison early in the war and later fought in the Battle of Vicksburg in Mississippi.

Sam joined the army in Louisiana and fought in only one major battle.

Aleck was an aide to his sister’s husband, Benjamin Hardin Helm, who led a Kentucky unit.

About one of every five Civil War soldiers died from a wound or disease. Color this circle to show how many Todd brothers died while fighting in the war.

The correct answer is on Page 11.
Women supported the war in many ways. They worked in hospitals and sent letters and supplies to the troops. Some ran farms and businesses while the men were away.

There were nine Todd sisters. Elizabeth, Frances, Mary, Ann, and Margaret supported the Union. Martha, Emilie, Elodie, and Kitty backed the Confederacy. But they were all involved in wartime activities.

Elodie Todd wrote long letters to her sweetheart while he was serving in the army.

Mary Todd Lincoln took food to soldiers in the hospital.

Martha Todd White sewed a flag and helped raise money for a local army unit.

Emilie Todd Helm tried to sell cotton to make money for her family after her husband died.

Resistant Rebel?
Emilie Helm was in the South when her husband died in battle. She ran into trouble when she tried to return to Kentucky. During the war people traveling from the South to the North had to stop on the border and take an oath that they were loyal to the Union.

Emilie refused! She was loyal to the Confederacy, and her husband had just died fighting for it. Emilie was lucky that her brother-in-law was the president. Lincoln told the soldiers at the border to send her to the White House. It was during this visit that Katherine Helm argued with Tad Lincoln about who the president was.

What do you think?
Was Emilie right or wrong to refuse to take the oath? Why or why not?
Rebel Spy?
In 1863 Martha Todd White traveled to Washington. When she returned to the South, there were different stories about what she took back with her.

Story 1: Some newspapers said Martha was sneaking supplies and medicine for the South. One paper claimed she brought home $30,000 disguised as gold buttons on a uniform. Another paper called Martha a “rebel spy.”

Story 2: The Union officer in charge of searching Martha’s trunks said they contained wedding gifts for a friend. A Confederate officer said the trunks held clothing and kegs of liquor.

Which story do you believe?
After you decide, see how many highlighted words from that story you can fit in the boxes in the trunk.

Then fill in the empty boxes with other letters to create a word search puzzle. Challenge a friend to find the words!

Cruel Commander?
In 1861 David Todd ran a prison for Union soldiers. Some prisoners said David did some terrible things. Reports said he stabbed a prisoner and ordered the guards to shoot anyone who put their heads or arms out windows.

The army removed David from command, but newspapers still covered his bad deeds. One paper called him a “sneaking, savage, cowardly scoundrel.” Imagine how the Lincolns felt!
Actions and Reactions

Having Confederate relatives affected the Lincolns in many ways. Newspapers printed all kinds of stories about Todd family members. People in the North and the South criticized the First Lady. The Lincolns had to be very careful about what they said and did.

Try to answer the questions below. You might be surprised which are correct!

1. What did Mary Lincoln do when her brothers died while serving in the Confederate Army?
   - [ ] She attended their funerals to show her grief.
   - [ ] She mourned in private.

2. What did people say about the Lincolns when Emilie Todd Helm visited them?
   - [ ] They criticized the president for entertaining a rebel in the White House.
   - [ ] They praised the Lincolns for being good hosts.

3. How did Mary Lincoln react to reports that her brother David was a cruel prison commander?
   - [ ] She said that David should be punished.
   - [ ] She begged Union prisoners to forgive David.

4. How did Abraham Lincoln deal with stories that Martha Todd White hid money for the Confederacy in her trunk?
   - [ ] He ignored the stories and hoped the public would forget them.
   - [ ] He told a staff member to find out what really happened.

5. What was Mary Lincoln’s relationship with her Confederate relatives after the Civil War?
   - [ ] She had a warm reunion with them in Kentucky.
   - [ ] She did not speak with them again.

The correct answers are on Page 11.
Try a Civil War activity!

- Try hands-on activities in books like *Great Civil War Projects You Can Build Yourself* by Maxine Anderson and *The Civil War for Kids* by Janice Herbert.

- Write a letter to an elected official asking for action on a cause that matters to you.

- Support an American soldier by sending a card or care package.

Learn more!

- Visit the Mary Todd Lincoln House in person or online to learn more about the Lincolns and the Todds ([www.mtlhouse.org](http://www.mtlhouse.org)).

- Look through pictures, letters, and other sources in *The Lincolns: A Scrapbook Look at Abraham and Mary* by Candace Fleming.

- Learn more about the battles where the Todd brothers served in *Cobblestone* magazine issues on “The Battle of Gettysburg” (July 1988) and “The Battle of Vicksburg” (December 1998).

- Imagine the choices faced by Kentuckians at the beginning of the war by reading *Joseph’s Choice 1861*, a fiction book by Bonnie Pryor.

- Discover women’s roles in the war in *Cobblestone* history magazine’s issue on “Women in the Civil War” (February 2005).

Answers

Page 7:

1—She mourned in private.  
2—They criticized the president for entertaining a rebel in the White House.  
3—She said that David should be punished.  
4—He told a staff member to find out what really happened.  
5—She did not speak with them again.

Page 10:

Answers

Page 10:

This booklet is a publication of the Mary Todd Lincoln House in Lexington, Kentucky. Visit the house to learn more about the Lincolns and the Todds.

**Location**
578 West Main Street
Lexington, KY  40507

**Hours**
Mid-March—November 30
Monday—Saturday (closed on Sundays)
10 a.m.—4 p.m., last tour 3 p.m.

**Cost**
Admission charged. Please call or check our website for current rates.
School tours, including homeschoolers, are available for K-12 by appointment year-round.
Discounts available for school tours.

**Contact**
Phone: (859) 233-9999
Web: www.mtlhouse.org

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