



The Mary Lincoln Enigma: Historians on America's Most Controversial First Lady

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Mary Lincoln is a lightning rod for controversy. Stories reveal widely different interpretations, and it is impossible to write a definitive version of her life that will suit everyone. The thirteen engaging essays in this collection introduce Mary Lincoln's complex nature and show how she is viewed today.

The authors' explanations of her personal and private image stem from a variety of backgrounds, and through these lenses—history, theater, graphic arts, and psychiatry—they present their latest research and assessments. Here they reveal the effects of familial culture and society on her life and give a broader assessment of Mary Lincoln as a woman, wife, and mother. Topics include Mary's childhood in Kentucky, the early years of her marriage to Abraham, Mary's love of travel and fashion, the presidential couple's political partnership, and Mary's relationship with her son Robert.

The fascinating epilogue meditates on Mary Lincoln's universal appeal and her enigmatic personality, showcasing the dramatic differences in interpretations. With gripping prose and in-depth documentation, this anthology will capture the imagination of all readers.

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