

MARY EUNICE HARLAN LINCOLN

Mary Eunice Harlan (1846-1937) was the firstborn child of James Harlan and Ann Eliza Peck Harlan of Iowa City, Iowa. Her father was an educator, surveyor and lawyer and joined the Republican Party in 1854. The family moved to Mount Pleasant, Iowa, and James became president of Iowa Wesleyan College. James represented Iowa as Senator in 1855 until he was appointed Secretary of the Interior by President Abraham Lincoln in 1865. He later resigned the Cabinet position and re-entered the Senate in 1867, serving until 1873.

Around 1865, the eldest son of Abraham and Mary Lincoln and the oldest child of James and Ann Eliza Harlan met, and at Lincoln's second inauguration celebration, Mary Eunice Harlan was escorted by Robert Todd Lincoln. They married three years later. Mary's life revolved around her husband and family.

Mary Eunice Harlan and Robert Todd Lincoln had three children: Mary (1869-1938), Abraham II "Jack" (1873-1890) and Jessie (1875-1948). There are no known descendants of the family.

James Harlan served as President of Iowa Wesleyan University in Mount Pleasant from 1853 to 1855 and from 1869 to 1870. In 1876, he built a house which stands on the college campus and is where he and Ann Eliza lived until 1899. Mary Harlan Lincoln and her children spent summers in Mount Pleasant in the 1870s and 1880s but lived in Chicago and Washington D.C. at other times where Robert Todd Lincoln practiced law and served as a Cabinet member under two presidents.

Later Mary Harlan Lincoln donated the James Harlan house to the college in 1907 as a memorial to her father. It is now called the Harlan-Lincoln House.