

New First Ladies - Mary Todd Lincoln and Michelle Obama

by Melvin Morris

While preparing the "Newer New Issues" column (see page 8) I came across a couple of issues picturing the First Ladies of Presidents Abraham Lincoln and Barack Obama. Since I am presently working on a **FIRST LADIES ON WORLD-WIDE STAMPS HANDBOOK**, I immediately placed these releases into the **HANDBOOK**. Then, in checking over the listings for both First Lady Mary Todd Lincoln and First Lady Michelle Obama, an idea for a short article on these two Ladies popped into my head.

Both are in sharp contrast to each other!

In July 2007, the African nation of Gambia issued 3 sheets of 15 D10 stamps on each sheet picturing all of the First Ladies from Martha Washington to Laura Bush. Obama, of course would not be elected until November 2008. A little later in the year, Gambia also released ss of 1 stamp for each of the First Ladies. For most of the First Ladies, this was the **FIRST**, and **ONLY**, time they have appeared on a stamp or ss.

For Mary Todd Lincoln (Gambia S3076a-o, b) it was the 2nd appearance. The first was from Honduras in February 1959 for the 150th anniversary of Lincoln's birth. Several stamps (SC293, C299, C300A, CO102, CO108, CO108Ba, C329, C330a, C330b, C363) picture her witnessing her husband's murder by John Wilkes Booth. Palau, in August 2009, honored Lincoln's Bicentennial with a sheet of 4 44c stamps with his portrait. The upper right hand margin has her portrait while the lower right hand margin has her witnessing his murder (see p.13). These are the only 3 nations to depict First Lady Mary Todd Lincoln.

In sharp contrast, First Lady Michelle Obama has already appeared – in a little over half a year – on the stamps of some 11 countries. They are: 1) Gambia, 2) Guinea, 3) Guinea Bissau, 4) Malawi, 5) Maldives, 6) Mozambique, 7) St. Thomas & Principe, 8) Sierra Leone, 9) Tanzania, 10) Tuvalu, and 11) Uganda. Only Eleanor Roosevelt, Jackie Kennedy, and Hillary Rodham Clinton have more but each of them have had years to gain their philatelic tributes.

Tuvalu's August 2009 sheet of 4 \$1.30 stamps (see page 13) pictures the Obama Family (President Barack Obama, First Lady Michelle, daughters Malia Ann and Natasha "Shasha" and "First Dog" "Bo" In addition, The Gambia issued a sheet of 3 D25 stamps picturing President Obama and First Lady Michelle meeting Britain's Queen Elizabeth II at the recent Summit of World Economic Leaders.

The numbers seem to pile up very fast in the 21st Century!



New First Ladies (continued)

200TH ANNIVERSARY OF THE BIRTH OF
ABRAHAM LINCOLN

1809-2009

1809
Abraham Lincoln, born February 12, 1809, Hardin County, Kentucky

1816
Lincoln's family moves to southern Indiana and carves out a farm near Little Pigeon Creek.

1830
The Lincolns move to land along the Sangamon River near Decatur in central Illinois.

1842
On November 4, Lincoln marries Mary Todd

1860
Lincoln is elected as 16th U.S. President

1865
Lincoln is shot by actor John Wilkes Booth while attending the play "Our American Cousin" at Fords Theater.

1833
Lincoln is appointed Postmaster of New Salem.
In Autumn, Lincoln is appointed Deputy County Surveyor.

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THE FIRST FAMILY OF THE UNITED STATES

Tuvalu \$1.30 Michelle Obama

Tuvalu \$1.30 Barack Obama

Tuvalu \$1.30 Barack Obama Bo, the First Dog

Tuvalu \$1.30 The Obama Family with Bo