Chapter Five
Her Life: A New Beginning

1865

Deaths in Early 1865

In the first four months of 1865, Elizabeth and the entire Edwards-Todd-Stuart clan suffered a series of deaths. The first was Elizabeth’s former husband, Harrison, on January 5, 1865. Two days later Elizabeth’s father, Dr. John Todd, died. Two months later, her mother, Elizabeth, died. Finally, Abraham Lincoln, the man who called her cousin Lizzie, was shot and died on April 15, 1865.

January 5, 1865
Death of Harrison J. Grimsley
(Circa 1818-1865)

On January 5, 1865, Harrison J. Grimsley died of army fever, “acute dysentery” in Georgia and was buried in Beaufort National Cemetery, Beaufort, Beaufort County, South Carolina. No obituary for Harrison Grimsley appeared in either the Journal or Register or Savannah newspapers. He had marched through Georgia to the sea with General Sherman. He left as his only heirs the two sons born to him by Elizabeth namely William “Will” L. and John Todd.

Grave of Harrison J. Grimsley
Beaufort National Cemetery Beaufort, Beaufort County, South Carolina. 327

---

327 U.S. National Cemetery Interment Control Forms, 1928-1962 Record for Harrison J Grimsley. Plot: Section 7, Site 33.
January 7, 1865
Death of Dr. John Todd
(1787-1865)

On January 7, 1865, Dr. John Todd died at the age of 78 of congestion of the lungs. His wife Elizabeth followed him in death just two months later, and they are both buried in Oak Ridge Cemetery, Springfield, Illinois.328

He was noted for his kindness of heart, benevolence and charities to the poor.

Grave of Dr. John Todd at Oak Ridge Cemetery, Springfield, Illinois

328 Probate: January 13, 1865, #1759.
Dr. John Todd was the son of General Levi Todd and the brother of Mrs. John T. Stuart. His brother Robert Todd was the father of Mary Todd Lincoln.

Dr. Todd was a graduate of Transylvania University and the University of Pennsylvania. He took part in the War of 1812, acting as Surgeon General of Kentucky troops. He was at the battle of River Raisin where he was taken prisoner. He was removed to the "Pens of Malden" and in the winter of 1813 was paroled. Dr. Todd returned to Kentucky and resumed his medical practice. In 1817 he moved to Edwardsville, Illinois, and in 1827, moved to Springfield, Illinois, where he remained until his death. He was noted for his kindness of heart, benevolence and charities to the poor. His funeral took place at the First Presbyterian Church with burial in Oak Ridge Cemetery.
Elizabeth Todd Grimsley Brown

Last Will and Testament of Dr. John Todd

See Appendix A for a scan of the original will.

I John Todd of Springfield in the County of Sangamon and State of Illinois do hereby make and declare this my last will and testament in manner and form following, to wit:

First: It is my will that my funeral expenses and all my just debts be fully paid,

Second, After the payment of such funeral expenses and debts I give, devise and bequeath unto my beloved wife Elizabeth B. F. Todd, the following tract or lot of ground situate lying and being in the City of Springfield Sangamon County, Illinois. Known designated and described as follows, to wit, Lot No. Seven (7) and twenty seven (27) feet off of the west end of Lot No. Eight (8) in E. Iles Addition to the City of Springfield (upon which I now reside) during her natural life, --also all the money, and all the household and kitchen furnitures, choses in action, and other articles of personal property not herein enumerated, or otherwise disposed of in this will, and of which I may die possessed; during her natural life, after having disposed of a sufficient amount to pay and discharge the expenses and debts aforesaid; and at her death all the property aforesaid to her bequeathed or so much thereof as may remain unexpended to my daughter Elizabeth J. Grimsley her heirs and assigns forever.

Third: I do hereby authorize and empower my said wife in her discretion to sell and convey the lot of ground above described, and to hold and use the proceeds of the sale of said lot in the same manner as of my other personal property, and at her death I give an bequeath the same to my said daughter Eliazbeth J. Grimsley her heirs and assigns forever as aforesaid.

Testament, in presence of us, who in his presence and in the presence of each other, and at his request
Have subscribed our names as witnesses hereto.

John T. Stuart
C. C. Brown

Spring 1865

In the spring of 1865, winter was waning and the anticipation of returning spring was in the air when three of the most significant events in United States history occurred within a period of 93 days. On March 4, 1865, Abraham Lincoln delivered his Second Inaugural Address, one of the most moving statements of who we are as Americans. On April 9, 1865, General Robert E. Lee, commander of the Confederate forces, surrendered and the north began an unprecedented celebration of the successful end of the Civil War. On the evening of April 14, 1865, Abraham and Mary Lincoln attended My American Cousin at the Ford Theater in Washington, D. C. and the world changed with one shot to Abraham’s head. He died the next morning and there began a 20 day funeral that started in Washington, D. C. and ended after 1,654 mile train journey to Springfield where Abraham Lincoln was buried on May 4, 1865. The funeral was unparalleled in not only American history, but in the history of mankind.

Dr. Samuel H. Melvin Given Documents by Elizabeth Todd Grimsley

In 1865, Elizabeth Todd Grimsley gave Dr. Samuel H. Melvin a manuscript of a lecture given by Abraham Lincoln on February 11, 1859. Lincoln left the manuscripts with Elizabeth Grimsley before departing from Springfield in 1861. Why did she give these to Dr. Melvin? Was she paid?
March 4, 1865

John Todd Stuart and Elizabeth Todd Grimsley Attend Abraham Lincoln’s Second Inaugural

Abraham Lincoln delivered his Second Inaugural address on March 4, 1865. Elizabeth Todd Grimsley and John Todd Stuart were in attendance. They were registered at the Continental Hotel in Philadelphia in early March 1865.

Continental Hotel
Arrivals at hotels
J. T. Stuart, Springfield
Mrs. E. J. Grimsley, do. 332

…my next visit, at the second inauguration, March 4th, 1865. Then Robert had gone into the army, as hundreds of other mother’s sons had done, followed by tears, fears, and prayers of anxious parents. My beautiful rooms were closed, for the angel of death had been there, and borne away the idolized Willie; and with it had gone part of the doting mother’s heart also, which was never more to find peace and comfort, mourning and refusing to be comforted, as only such impassioned natures yield to grief. Mr. Lincoln bowed and furrowed by personal sorrow, and the horrors of a Civil War, struggling manfully to meet all that was before him, yet hoping for a glorious consummation through all these trials. Partings are always sad, yet this was inexpressibly so, and as Mr. Lincoln wrung my hand and watched me as I descended the stairs, where I found all the servants and messengers congregated to be me “farewell”; his sad, prophetic eye seemed to betoken warning of the fate which hovered over them, and wish I could be there to share and help lift the burden. But duty called me to my own western home, and Washington was left behind with all its thousand avenues of joy, sorrow, ambitions, grief’s, perplexities and pleasures, enjoyments and hopes, but alas! How little of anticipated fruition. 333

Elizabeth Todd Grimsley

March 11, 1865

Death of Elizabeth Fisher Blair Todd
(1793-1865)

Elizabeth Fisher Blair Todd, Dr. John Todd’s widow and Elizabeth’s mother, died on March 11, 1865, and was buried in Oak Ridge Cemetery, Springfield, Illinois.

332 Illustrated New Age, Philadelphia, Pennsylvania, Friday, March 10, 1865, p. 3.
333 Six Months, p. 73.
334 Journal, March 15, 1865, p. 3.
335 Journal, March 16, 1865, p. 3. ‘Relict’ is an old legal term meaning the widow of a deceased person (the one left behind). It clarifies that she is not just anyone’s widow but specifically the widow of the deceased person named.
Elizabeth Todd Grimsley Brown

Her Life: A New Beginning

Tuesday, February 18, 2020

150

Elizabeth Fisher Blair Todd

Grave of Elizabeth Fisher Blair Todd,
Oak Ridge Cemetery, Springfield, Illinois

Elizabeth Fisher Blair Todd

Grave of Elizabeth Fisher Blair Todd,
Oak Ridge Cemetery, Springfield, Illinois

The following account of Mrs. Elizabeth Todd, wife of Dr. John Todd, as published in the April 18, 1895, issue of the Springfield Republican, provides insight into her life and legacy:

Mrs. Elizabeth Todd, wife of Dr. John Todd, died at her home in Oak Ridge, Springfield, Illinois, on March 11, 1895. Her funeral was held at the First Presbyterian Church on the 14th inst. The attendance was large, and the services were conducted by the Rev. Dr. Brown of Chicago. The deceased was born in Illinois in 1815, and was the daughter of John and Mary Todd, who were early settlers of that state. She was married to Dr. John Todd in 1837, and they had four children: Elizabeth, Alice, John, and Mary. Her life was marked by piety and industry, and she was beloved by all who knew her. She was a member of the First Presbyterian Church, and was held in high esteem by her family and friends. Her death was a loss to the community, and she will be missed by all who knew her.}

Obituary

Mrs. Elizabeth Todd, wife of Dr. John Todd, died at her home in Oak Ridge, Springfield, Illinois, on March 11, 1895. Her funeral was held at the First Presbyterian Church on the 14th inst. The attendance was large, and the services were conducted by the Rev. Dr. Brown of Chicago. The deceased was born in Illinois in 1815, and was the daughter of John and Mary Todd, who were early settlers of that state. She was married to Dr. John Todd in 1837, and they had four children: Elizabeth, Alice, John, and Mary. Her life was marked by piety and industry, and she was beloved by all who knew her. She was a member of the First Presbyterian Church, and was held in high esteem by her family and friends. Her death was a loss to the community, and she will be missed by all who knew her.}

Obituary

Mrs. Elizabeth Todd, wife of Dr. John Todd, died at her home in Oak Ridge, Springfield, Illinois, on March 11, 1895. Her funeral was held at the First Presbyterian Church on the 14th inst. The attendance was large, and the services were conducted by the Rev. Dr. Brown of Chicago. The deceased was born in Illinois in 1815, and was the daughter of John and Mary Todd, who were early settlers of that state. She was married to Dr. John Todd in 1837, and they had four children: Elizabeth, Alice, John, and Mary. Her life was marked by piety and industry, and she was beloved by all who knew her. She was a member of the First Presbyterian Church, and was held in high esteem by her family and friends. Her death was a loss to the community, and she will be missed by all who knew her.
President Abraham Lincoln died on April 15, 1865, at 7:22 a.m.

General John Blair Smith Todd, Cousin of Mary Lincoln, at Bedside at Lincoln’s Death

The Last Moments of the President.
At about five o’clock this morning I reached the house of Mr. Peterson, where the President lay in his dying agonies. He was lying upon the bed apparently breathing with great difficulty. He was entirely unconscious, as he had been ever since his assassination. His eyes were protruding from their sockets and suffused with blood. In other respects his countenance was unchanged. At his bedside were the Secretary of War, Secretary of the Navy, Secretary of the Interior, Postmaster General and the Attorney General; Senator Sumner, General Farnsworth, General Todd, cousin to Mrs. Lincoln; Major Hay, M. B. Field, General Hallock, Major General Meigs, Rev. Dr. Gurley, Gov. Oglesby, of Illinois; Drs. E. N. Abbott, R. K. Stowe, C. D. Hatch, Neal, Hall and Lieberman. In the adjoining room were Mrs. Lincoln, her son, Captain Robert Lincoln; Miss Harris, who was with Mrs. Lincoln at the time of the assassination of the President; Rufus E. Andrews and two lady friends of Mrs. Lincoln, whose names I did not ascertain.

Salem Register, Salem, Massachusetts, Thursday, April 20, 1865.336

Mary Todd Lincoln Requests Elizabeth Todd Grimsley’s Presence in Washington

On the afternoon of April 15, 1865, John Blair Smith Todd was in the White House. He telegraphed John Todd Stuart, his uncle in Springfield, that Mary Lincoln wanted her cousin and John B. S. Todd’s sister, Elizabeth Jane Todd Grimsley, to come to Washington at once.

John Blair Smith Todd  John Todd Stuart  Elizabeth Todd Grimsley

---

336 Salem Register, Salem, Massachusetts, Thursday, April 20, 1865, p. 1.

Tuesday, February 18, 2020
April 15, 1865

Hon. J. T. Stuart
Springfield
Illinois

Mrs. Lincoln wishes Mrs. Grimsley
to come here at once.

J. B. S. Todd
Ex Man
Recd 5:20 p.
sent 5:40 p.m.

Telegram dated April 15, 1865, from J. B. S. Todd to John Todd Stuart.337

April 17, 1865

Elizabeth Grimsley’s Response to Mary Todd Lincoln’s Requests for Her Presence in Washington

4 9 P Springfield Apl 17 18[65]
Gen J. Todd White House
Dr. H Ewing & cousin John thinks I am unable to travel. Very serious.
E J Grimsley
___ pd339

Telegram dated April 17, 1865, from Elizabeth J. Grimsley to J. B. S. Todd.338

May 1, 1865

Robert Todd Lincoln Notifies Elizabeth Todd Grimsley of His Leaving Washington For Springfield

On May 1, 1865, Robert Todd Lincoln, telegraphed Elizabeth Todd Grimsley that he would leave Washington for Springfield that afternoon and would stay with her while in Springfield.340 Unfortunately, Robert was unable to stay with Elizabeth as her house was full of boarders. He instead stayed with his relative John Todd Stuart at the residence on Fourth Street across from the Governor’s Mansion.

339 National Archives Microfilm Publications, Microcopy BNo. 473, Telegrams Collected by the Office of the Secretary of War (Bound), 1851-1862, Roll 225, Telegrams Received by Government Officials, Mainly of the war and Navy Departments (Press Copies) Volume 464, Washington, D. C. 1963. My thanks to Richard Taylor for finding and sharing this telegram and to James Patton Jr. for transcribing the written telegram.
340 The Abraham Lincoln Presidential Library.
On May 5, 1865, Elizabeth Todd Grimsley rode in the Lincoln funeral procession alongside Robert Lincoln from the State Capitol to Oak Ridge Cemetery.\(^{341}\)

**Mary Lincoln Gives Dresses to Elizabeth Todd Grimsley**

After Abraham Lincoln’s death, Mary Lincoln went into mourning and dressed in widow’s clothes until her own death in 1882.

Mary gave some of her White House finery to family members. Elizabeth Todd Grimsley received the purple velvet ensemble pictured below. In 1916 Grimsley’s son, John, sold the ensemble to Mrs. Julian James for the Smithsonian’s new First Ladies Collection.

---

\(^{341}\) *Blood on The Moon*, Edward Steers Jr., The University of Kentucky, 2001, p. 290.
Mary Lincoln’s purple velvet skirt and daytime bodice are believed to have been made by African American dressmaker Elizabeth Keckly. The first lady wore the gown during the 1861–62 Washington winter social season. Both pieces are piped with white satin, and the bodice is trimmed with mother-of-pearl buttons. An evening bodice was included with the ensemble. The lace collar is of the period, but not original to the dress.

The gown pictured to the left was also given to Elizabeth Grimsley, and came to the Smithsonian in 1964 from the Grimsley descendants. Conservation treatment partially restored the original construction of the bodice, but the neckline and long sleeves could not be restored. John Grimsley attributed this dress to a “seamstress of exceptional ability” who “made nearly all of Mrs. Lincoln’s gowns.” Although he mistook her name as “Ann,” he most likely was referring to Elizabeth Keckly.
Elizabeth Todd Grimsley Applies for Minor’s Pension

On September 7, 1865, Elizabeth J. Grimsley, as guardian, applied for a pension for her minor son, William “Will” Grimsley. The pension was based upon the military service in Company E, 16 Illinois Infantry of Harrison J. Grimsley, her former husband. The pension application may be viewed in Appendix H.

Admitted September 22, 1866 to a Pension of $8.00 per month, commencing January 5, 1865 ending March 17, 1868, and payable to Elizabeth J. Grimsley.

1866

Marriage of Lockwood M. Todd and Emily Husbands

On April 18, 1866, Elizabeth Todd Grimsley’s 40-year-old brother, Lockwood M. Todd, son of the late Dr. John and Elizabeth Smith Todd, married Emily Husbands, in Sangamon County, Illinois.

Advertisement For Sale of Dr. John Todd’s Residence at 73 South Sixth Street

In the spring of 1866, Elizabeth Grimsley was living in her late father’s house on 6th Street. The house had been left to Elizabeth in her father’s will. In May, she listed the house for sale or rent.

Journal, May 3, 1866 Advertisement for Sale or Rent of Dr. John Todd's Late Residence.

John T. Grimsley Works at J. T. Stuart, Jr.’s

The 1866 City of Springfield Directory listed John T. Grimsley as a clerk at J. T. Stuart, Jr.’s. He was living at 73, east side Sixth between Monroe and Market. This would have been the Dr. John Todd house.

1867

January 29, 1867

Elizabeth Todd Grimsley Marries Rev. John H. Brown, D. D.

On January 29, 1867, Elizabeth Todd Grimsley, age 43, married Rev. John H. Brown, D. D., age 61, pastor of the First Presbyterian Church in Springfield and later of the Thirty-first Street Presbyterian Church of Chicago. There was an eighteen-year age difference. With an inheritance from her father and her marriage to Rev. Brown, the wealthiest man in Springfield in 1860, Elizabeth for the first time in her adult life had no financial worries. They were married for five years until the death of Rev. Brown in 1872. Where were they married?

345 National Archives and Records Administration Civil War Pension Index: General Index to Pension Files, 1861-1934 Record for Harrison J. Grimsley.
346 Marriage License # 00001918. Power, pp. 394 and 717.
Elizabeth Jane Todd Grimsley Brown and Rev. John H. Brown

Dr. John Todd’s Former Residence at 73 South Sixth Street Sold at Auction

The effort to sell or rent Dr. John Todd’s late 6th Street residence that began in May 1866 failed. In April 1867, the house was sold at public auction for a little over $8,000.

Death of Dr. William S. Wallace
(1802-1867)

Dr. William S. Wallace, the husband of Francis Todd Wallace, died on May 23, 1867 in Springfield, Illinois. He was buried in Oak Ridge Cemetery, Springfield, Illinois. Dr. Wallace was the Lincoln family doctor. He accompanied his brother-in-law, Abraham Lincoln, to Washington in 1861 and was appointed paymaster for the Army. He was stationed first in Missouri and later in Mississippi, where he contracted dysentery from which he never fully recovered. Dr. Wallace was born on August 10, 1802, in Lancaster, Lancaster County, Pennsylvania.

Children:
Frances Wallace (____ - 1881)*
Mary J. Wallace Baker (1842 - 1911)*
William Fonday Wallace (1845 - 1923)*
Charles Edward Wallace (1858 - 1874)

---

348 At the time of their marriage in 1867, “Aunt Lizzie with gown in which she was married to Dr. Brown” - photograph taken at Central Photographic Gallery, Main Street, opposite the Court House, Lexington, Kentucky.

349 Journal, April 12, 1867, p. 4.

Tuesday, February 18, 2020
Bettie Stuart Brown, daughter of John Todd Stuart and the husband of C. C. Brown, died on March 2, 1869, of dysentery. Her funeral was held the next day at the First Presbyterian Church and she was buried in Oak Ridge Cemetery. She was 30 years old and had been ill for 12 days. Conscious until the very end, she had given directions for her burial and dictated messages to all her friends and relatives. Her last words are etched on her tombstone: “Come, Lord Jesus, come quickly.” Christopher Brown founded the Bettie Stuart Institute, which for 70 years educated the daughters of many of Springfield’s most prominent residents, in his late wife’s honor.\textsuperscript{350}

1870

United States Census

Elizabeth Todd Grimsley Brown was listed in the 1870 United States Census as age 46 and born in about 1824 in Illinois. She was living in Springfield with her husband, John Howe Brown, who was 65 and was born in 1806 in Kentucky.

Rev. John H. Brown and Elizabeth Move to Chicago

In 1870, Rev. John H. Brown moved to Chicago where he was a minister of the Thirty-First Presbyterian Church. Elizabeth also moved with him.

1871

July 15, 1871

Death of Thomas “Tad” Lincoln

\textsuperscript{350} Erika Holst, \textit{The People Lincoln Knew}, a blog by Erika Holst. Reprinted by permission.
By late May, 1871, Thomas “Tad” Lincoln developed difficulty in breathing when lying down and had to sleep sitting up in a chair. By early June, he was dangerously ill. He then rallied for a short time. As July approached he weakened again. Tad’s pain and agony worsened as his face grew thinner.

At about 7:30 on the morning of July 15, after a night spent fighting for breath, he slumped forward in his chair and, under the anguished eyes of his mother and brother, died of what physicians later termed “compression of the heart.” He was only three months past his eighteenth birthday. The cause of death was most likely tuberculosis. Tad’s death occurred in the Clifton House in Chicago.

Simple funeral services were held for Tad the next day in Robert Lincoln’s Chicago home. Mrs. Lincoln somehow managed to attend the short service and to receive callers there, but she was in a stupor compounded of grief and exhaustion.

In many ways Tad Lincoln was the most tragic member of a family marked for tragedy. As a child he had lost a brother who was his closest companion, and then a father he worshipped. His life with his widowed mother seems to have been a hellish existence which bit by bit snuffed out much of what was carefree and spontaneous in his personality.

Robert had been well on his way to manhood at the time of his father’s death and had already enjoyed a certain amount of independence that he was neither inclined nor expected to relinquish. No matter how deep his concern over his mother’s problems, no matter how morbidly sensitive he became as a result of her indiscretions, these things had never been central to his existence. A career, friendships, marriage, and a family of his own provided him with legitimate avenues of escape. Tad never had a taste of true freedom or a chance to involve himself completely with his contemporaries. Circumstance had thrust him early into the role of companion to a sick and troubled woman; trapped first by dependency, then by duty, he had no life of his own. It is probable that Mary Lincoln, beset as she was, never considered that she might have placed her own needs above her son’s or that there was anything in the least unnatural about their situation. She saw only Tad’s sweetness and manliness, his pleasure in caring for her, and believed to the end that he needed only a bit more discipline to make him perfect, the beau ideal of sons.

---

July 15, 1871 — Thomas “Tad” Lincoln died of a respiratory illness in Chicago at the age of eighteen. Tad was the youngest of President Lincoln’s four sons and was named after his grandfather, Thomas Lincoln. Tad was very much a prankster at the White House, as his parents were unwilling to discipline him after the death of Willie.

The funeral was held at the First Presbyterian Church, and from there the rosewood casket was carried to Oak Ridge Cemetery and placed in the vault beside those of his father, Abraham, and two brothers, Eddie and Willie.

---

352 Library of Congress. Prints and Photographs division under the digital ID ppmusca.19226.
353 Turner, pp. 585-586.
Elizabeth Todd Grimsley Brown Cares For Mary Lincoln in Chicago

Mary Lincoln was too overcome to make the trip to Springfield for Tad’s funeral. She remained in Chicago under the care of her cousin, Elizabeth Grimsley Brown, who was then living in Chicago.

December 12, 1871

John Todd Grimsley Marries Cornelia Messler


1872

January 5, 1872

Death of John Blair Smith Todd
(1814-1872)

On January 5, 1872, Elizabeth Todd Grimsley’s brother, John Blair Smith Todd, age 58, died at Yankton, Dakota Territory, now South Dakota. He was buried in Yankton Cemetery.356

---

356 Power, p. 716. He was promoted to captain in 1843. After more than eighteen years active service, during which time he was in almost every frontier fort, and served through the Mexican war, Captain Todd resigned his commission on September 16, 1856, and entered into mercantile business. He was commissioned on September 19, 1861, by President Lincoln, Brigadier General of Volunteers, and in 1862 commanded the 6th Division of the Army of the Tennessee. General J. B. S. Todd, then a Captain in the United States army, was married March 25, 1845, at Fort Smith, Arkansas, to Catharine S. Hoffman, a daughter of Colonel William Hoffman, of the United States army. They had nine children. The second and third both died in infancy. Of the other seven, Kate H., born in 1845, at Fort Gibson, Arkansas, married March, 1869, at Yankton, Dakota to Edward F. Higbee. They have one child, John Todd. Fannie A., born in 1852, at Fort Ripley, Minnesota, was married June, 1873, to J. B. Van Velsor, at Yankton, Dakota. John, born in 1854, at Fort Ripley, Minnesota, married August, 1875, to Mary F. Hughes, at Yankton, Dakota. Dana, born in 1857, at Springfield, Illinois. Mary H., born in 1859, Matilda C., born in 1861, Sophia J., born in 1864, the three latter at Fort Randall, Dakota. Mattison, Ray H., ed. “The Harney Expedition Against The Sioux: The Journal of Capt. John B.S. Todd.” Nebraska History 43, June 1962, pp. 89-130. Wilson, Wesley C. “General John B. S. Todd, First Delegate, Dakota Territory.” North Dakota History 31, July 1964, pp. 189-94. http://bioguide.congress.gov/scripts/biodisplay.pl?index=T000292
in the sixth Infantry on July 1, 1837. After graduating from West Point, Todd fought in the Seminole War (1837-1842) and the Mexican American War (1846-1848). On March 25, 1845 Todd married Catherine S. Hoffman, the daughter of Colonel William Hoffman. They had nine children, two who died in infancy. After the wars, he served at several frontier posts such as Jefferson’s Barracks, Missouri, Fort Snelling and Fort Gaines, Minnesota. (Fort Gaines was later renamed Fort Ripley.) In 1855, Todd served under General Selby Harney in an expedition against the Dakotas. Todd resigned from the military in 1856 and became Post Sutler, a military licensed trader, for Fort Randall, Dakota Territory. After gaining much experience in trade along the Missouri river, Todd and Daniel March Frost, a fur trader from Sioux City, Iowa, formed the trading firm of Frost, Todd and Company in 1857. The company was involved in creating many trading posts along the Missouri River. Some of these posts developed into the towns of Bon Homme, Yankton and Vermillion. Todd was also involved with bringing about the Treaty of 1858, in which the Yankton Sioux Tribe gave up their rights to Eastern Dakota. This Treaty opened Dakota up for settlement. In the summer of 1861 he was elected the first Delegate of Dakota in the United States Congress. He served in Congress until 1865 when his second bid for election was defeated. He was elected in 1867 to the Territorial Legislature of Dakota, and was Speaker of the House at the session of 1867 and ’8. In 1868, he ran again for United States Congress but was defeated. Todd died in Yankton, South Dakota on January 6, 1872.  

Obituary of John Blair Smith Todd

---

Dakota Republican, Vermillion, South Dakota, Thursday, January 11, 1872.