

METAMORA ASSOCIATION FOR HISTORIC PRESERVATION

NEWSLETTER

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Facts About Lincoln You May Not Know

With Mr. Lincoln's 212th birthday coming up, here are some facts about Illinois' favorite son that you might not know.

Grandfather Abraham. Lincoln's grandfather, also named Abraham, was killed by an Indian while working in his field. Lincoln's father, Thomas, only eight at the time, remained by his father's body. Two older brothers, Morecai, 15, and Josiah, 13, witnessed the murder. Morecai ran back to their cabin, picked up a rifle, and killed the Indian, who was getting ready to scalp the elder Lincoln and possibly kidnap Thomas.

Thomas was Fairly Successful. Thomas and Nancy bought a 300-acre farm on the South Fork of the Nolin for \$200. This is where Lincoln was born. They were not squatters, as some historians claim. This farm was not isolated but a rather prominent site on the Old Cumberland Road. Thomas later lost the farm because of land title litigation. Bad land titles were not uncommon in those days.

Thanksgiving and Tad. Lincoln observed the first White House Thanksgiving in 1863. Besides friends and family, a detachment of Union soldiers who were camped out in the East Room of the White House to guard the president joined the Lincolns. A local farmer brought the Lincolns a plump turkey. However, Tad became fond of the bird, built a pen on the White House lawn, and cared for it almost hourly. When it came time to kill the turkey, Tad threw his arms around it and howled. Abe was so touched that he allowed the turkey to live. Chicken was served that Thanksgiving.

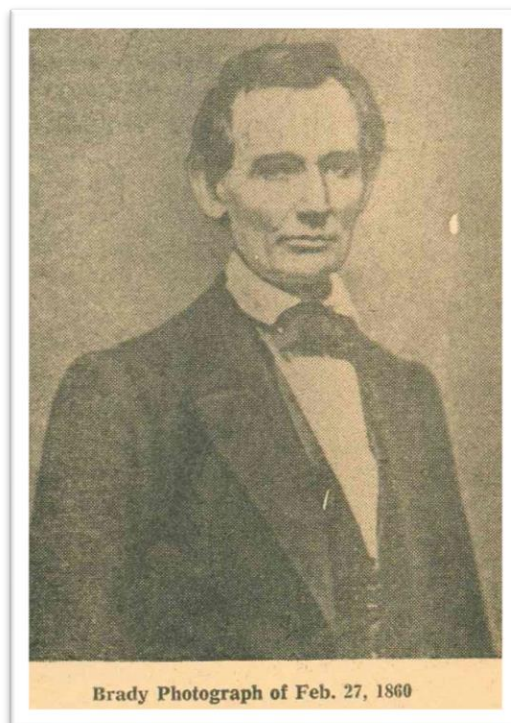
Cousin Tom. Actor Tom Hanks is a distant cousin to Abe's mother, Nancy Hanks.

Lincoln Loves. There is little written evidence of Lincoln's love for Ann Rutledge, but an abundance of evidence for his love for Mary Owens a year after Ann's death in 1835. Lincoln met Mary when she came from Kentucky to New Salem to visit her sister. After Mary's return to Kentucky, Lincoln told her sister that if she ever returned, he would "catch, tie, and marry her." She did return, they courted for four months, and AL offered to marry her. But the offer wasn't too enthusiastic and their ardor cooled. In his last letter to Mary, he wrote that further meetings "would contribute nothing to your happiness, I am sure not to mine. If it suits you best, not to answer this, farewell."

Don't Call Me Abe. Abe did not like to be called "Abe." Many people just called him "Mr. Lincoln."

New Salem. In 1906 William Randolph Hearst came to the New Salem Chautauqua and delivered a lecture. He became interested in the site of New Salem and purchased the sixty acres for \$11,000. In 1918 he deeded the site to the state for the restoration of New Salem. Descendants of each family were traced and histories were taken. Original pieces of furniture and belongings were obtained. The village was laid out exactly as it was when Lincoln lived there, many foundations and some chimneys, along with wells and storm cellars still existed. New Salem was on the stage coach route, with many passengers putting up for the night at the Rutledge Tavern. Lincoln lived in New Salem from age 21 to 27, but never had a permanent home there. New Salem's population was around 300.

Lincoln's Springfield home becomes a 2-story house. When the Lincolns bought the home at Eighth and Jackson for \$1,500, it was a one-story home. When Mary's relative died and left her \$1,300, they added a second story. Edward (1840-1850), Tad (1853-1871), and Willie (1850-1862) were born in the house. Robert (1843-1926) was born before the parents moved into the home at 413 S Eighth in 1844. This is the only house the Lincolns ever owned.



Thanks to Linda and John for their many contributions to the Metamora Association for Historic Preservation and this content.

CONSTRUCTION OF THE COURTHOUSE USED LOCAL MATERIALS.

A contract was made by the county commissioners for the courthouse with William Rockwell and Samuel S. Parke on June 4, 1844, who sublet the contract to David Irving for \$4,400 and who with Denzil Holland, a carpenter, erected the building. Parke was operating a steam saw mill one mile north of the village, in what was then know as the Theena Pasture and the lumber for the building was sawed there.

A brickyard existed just northwest of Oakwood cemetery and was conducted by "Captain Wilson," but was not of sufficient capacity o supply all the brick, and Irving and Holland purchased 40 acres of timber a half mile east of the other yard (on the farm now owned by John Schrepfer) and there burned the remainder of the brick required. They also burned a part, if not all, the lime required at the "Old Stone Quarry", near the abandoned coal mine, northwest of Metamora. A large portion of the lumber was black walnut and today stands as verifying evidence of its stability.

Source: Metamora Herald, August 26, 1921. Research by board member Lee.



Adlai Stevenson often told with pride that he assisted with his own hand in planting the trees in the park. Some believe that one of these men is Adlai.

EARLY POST OFFICES.

Partridge Point. The very early postal route originated in Tremont. The first known post office in in the Metamora area was know as Black Partridge. It was located on the James Boys farm three miles north of present Metamora and was established February 4, 1836 with Mr. Boys as postmaster. Its name was changed to Partridge Point on June 7, 1837. The post office was kept here until August 23, 1845, when it was again changed to Metamora, which up to that time was known as Hanover so the writer (Harry Spooner) assumes it was moved into the village at that time.

It was at the post office that was at Partridge Point that the information about the route from Tremont was found. The contractor was George W. Parke (Samuel's brother) and he received \$175 a year. Service was from June 2, 1840 to June 30, 1842.



Boys Home - Partridge Point Post Office

West Brittain Post office. A Woodford County post office that has been forgotten is that of West Brittain. This was located on the old Chauncy Baker farm in Partridge township. The Bakers were the grandparents of John C and the late Simeon M. Snyder of Metamora.

One of the old histories of Woodford County states that an "accommodation" post office was located on the Baker place, explaining that it was not a legal post office but a place where anyone in the neighborhood who happened to be in Chillicothe brought back the mail for all persons living in the locality and left it at the Baker place where the residents picked it up. Of course, such a "accommodation" post office had no name. The writer later discovered there had been a regular legal post office there. Wes Brittain was the name given to the post office, with Chancy Baker as postmaster.

The writer found that, while the post office may have first been in the home, Mr. Baker had built a small square building directly across the road from his home for the post office. After for some time, the writer located the building on the next farm north of the Baker place, where it was being used as a storage house. The roof projected beyond the walls. This was a partial protection for the name of the post office. It was very dim but was still readable, having been painted in black with the name "West Brittain." The writer believes the building has now been destroyed.

The old Baker home was remodeled some years ago and a beautiful colonial home takes the place of the old weather-beaten Baker home, but some of the inside construction was left to perpetuate pioneer features. For instance, the original upright hewn timbers at the corners still extend inside and the hewn timers supporting the floor of the second story are still intact. The old home had two fireplaces. These were relined and still exist.

Source: May 18, 1956 Metamora Herald. Research by board member Lee.

Contact Us

Questions, Ideas - Love to hear from you

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