

NEWSLETTER

June 2023



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Surprise Package. The Metamora Association for Historic Preservation recently received an unexpected surprise package in the mail from the Joliet Historic Association. The enclosed letter said their association was cleaning out and updating some of their content. As such, they sent us these 15 pictures of old Metamora. How they came into possession of the pictures is completely unknown. But we are ecstatic to get them.

You may have seen some of these before. The writing is difficult at best. And some of the descriptions seem questionable. So please help us orient the pics regarding the locations, etc. You may notice that some of the buildings appear in more than picture which might offer some clues. So put your detective glasses and hat on and let us know what you think.



Street Scene Metamora 1864. East side park looking north; Ingersol Law office (Note the similarity of the large white building with the 2-level porches with the pic on the right)



Metamora 1868 Ingersol and Cassel Law office xx x Bank Wikoff Drug Store and Livery Stable East side of park looking north. (We assume this might be the intersection of N Davenport and Partridge. Could the livery stable be the one owned by Underground Railroad conductor George Kern?)



Street scene looking south from bank 1867 (Help! Can't figure this one out!)



First Brass Band Metamora 1866 Lt Right JC Irving Milt Graham Ed Neve TA Causey Jos Lineweber Gord. Wilson N Portman TD Walden JM Ellis Newt. Fordyce Chas Crane A Kohl absent



Metamora Court House 1868



Lincoln Memorial Bldg, Metamora, Ill.

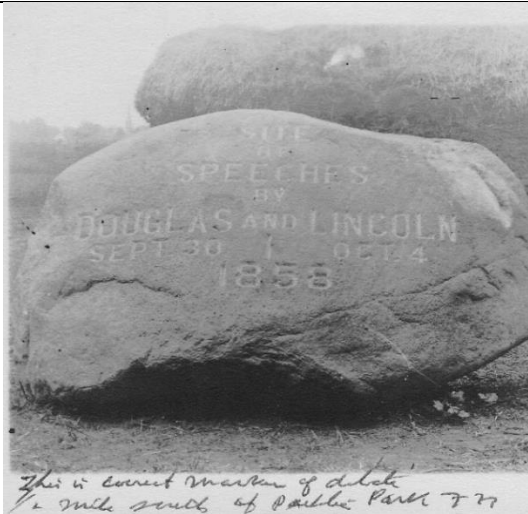
One of the tree planters is purported to be Adlai Stevenson



This is room where Lincoln used large poster to shut B. D. Silver years - 1846-1857 when he was a lawyer teaching on Handcock



Maria Spiers



Mrs. Maria Spiers
 Owner of Metamora House
 owned and occupied
 Metamora House from
 "FO-DAX"
 PEORIA
 ILL.
 1858 until her death
 Dec 20 - 1913

2004.70.74

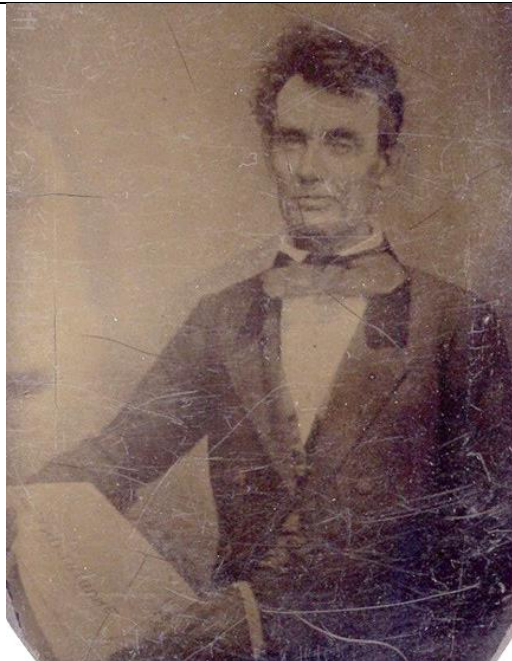


Debate took place 1/2 mile south of this square - 787

Public Square - 1858 - Metamora - Ill. Site of Lincoln - Douglass Debate



Probably Old Settlers... year unknown



Abe 1854 (How he would have looked when practicing law in Metamora)



Old Court House - Metamora, Built 1845

(After the wings were added.)



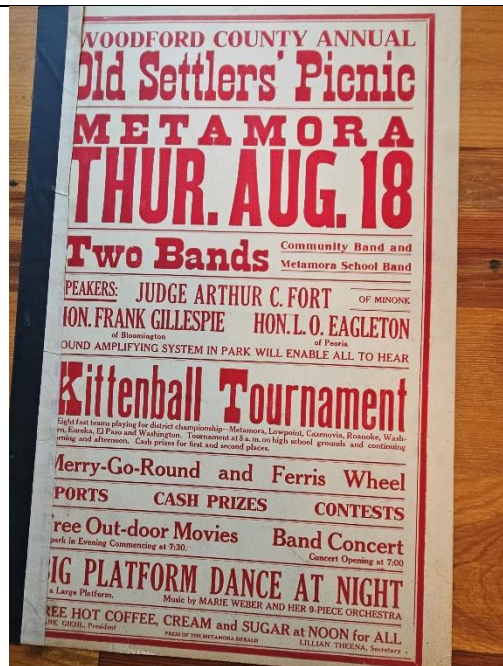
Marker on the Lincoln Trail on the county line



Debate took place 1/2 mile south of Metamora way to this marker found at

Site of the Historical Lincoln-Douglas Debate - 1858

Note that the picture was taken when before the old wooden bandstand was replaced by the cobblestone stand



1921 Old Settlers Events

This poster was found tucked inside some old Heralds!

What in the World is Kittenball?

Surely it wasn't a kitten used (sorry cat lovers) instead of a ball? Here's a little history about the sport...

Kitten ball is another name for softball. Softball was invented in 1887 and was designed to be an indoor sport.

Kittenball was introduced in 1895 by Lewis Rober, a Minneapolis fireman as a recreational game for crews to play between fire runs. It was a variant of baseball with a larger softer ball, a smaller diamond and underhand pitch.

Yet another version... Softball began in 1887 when George Hancock, a reporter for the Chicago Board of Trade, invented "indoor baseball". By the spring of 1888, the game had spread outdoors. It was originally called either mushball, kittenball or indoor baseball, but by the 1920s it had acquired the name of softball.



OLD METAMORA BASEBALL TEAM

Top row, left to right. J. C. Irving, pitcher; A. H. Wilson, P. B. Irving, James Baker. Second row Tom Speirs, R. T. Perry, W. L. Ellwood Bottom row: Henry Earl, Col. Fair and, Ed. B. Whitmire. The team was organized in 1873 and played successfully for several seasons. The pitcher was required to throw underhanded and to deliver the kind of ball asked for by the batter. The more husky batters, we are told, fully equaled the longest hits of Babe Ruth, present day idol, and the hit and run game played often ran the "tally" up into the seventies and eighties on one side in a single game. Of this old-time team only four members are living- Atty W L Ellwood of Peoria, Ed B. Whitmire of Murphysboro, and J. C Irving and Tom Speirs of Metamora.

This old picture was printed in the August 26, 1921 Herald. It tied the kittenball tournament to Metamora's historic team.

The Most Common Jobs in Illinois 150 Years Ago. Here are the top 10 jobs in Illinois plus some miscellaneous rankings that might surprise you. A lot has changed!

1. Farmers 35.0%, 2. Ag labors 19.5%, 3. Laborers 9.2%, 4. Domestic servants 6.5%, 5. Carpenters and joiners 3.4%, 6. Railroad employees 2.2%, 7. Clerks in stores 2.0%, 8. Blacksmiths 1.4%, 9. Teachers 1.3%, 10. Tailors 1.2%, 14. Boot and shoe makers .9%, 21. Coopers .5%, 22. Carriage and wagon makers .5%, 23. Government officials .5%, 29. Dealers in dry goods .4%, 30. Lawyers .4%, 31. Harness and saddle makers .4%, 39. Tinnners .3%, 48. Barbers and hairdressers .2%.

UNDERGROUND RAILROAD BOOK IN METAMORA AVAILABLE – It's a fascinating account – and little known - that details the significant participation of Metamora area abolitionists in the Underground Railroad – in their own words!! You can pick up a copy (\$10) at Commerce Bank, the Metamora Library, Timeless Treasures (east side of the Square) – or we'll send you one if you send your name and mailing address to Metamora Association for Historic Preservation, PO Box 264, Metamora 61548. Be sure to include your name, mailing address, and a check payable to Metamora Association for Historic Preservation for \$15. Thanks!

Contact Us

Questions, ideas - Love to hear from you

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