

METAMORA ASSOCIATION FOR HISTORIC PRESERVATION

Newsletter
December 2025



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www.historicmetamora.org

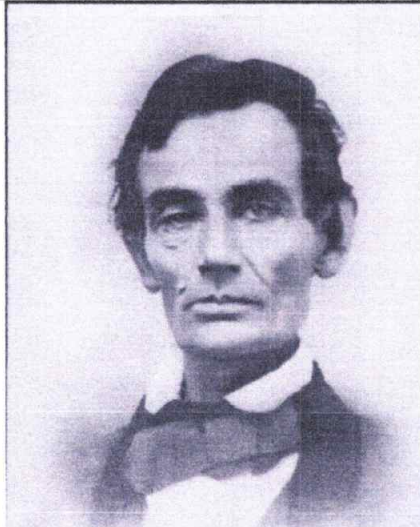
Where Can I See the Underground Railroad in Metamora Movie? The next showing is at Snyder Village SV Center on December 8 at 6:00. And, if you have a group of 18 or fewer and would like to set up a showing, just let us know the "who, when, group size" etc. We can show at the Stevenson House or at your meeting. **BIG NEWS – STREAMING STARTS DECEMBER 12.** Link information to follow...

Lincoln: The Everyday Life of a Remarkable Man

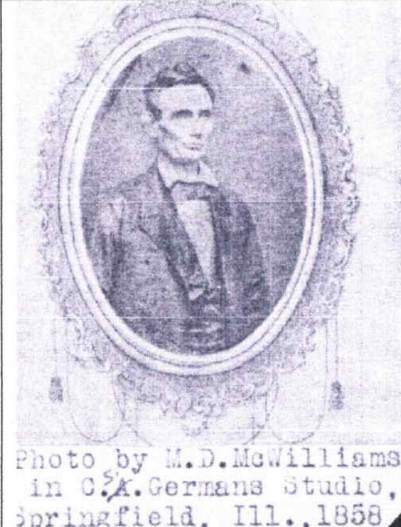
We often picture Abraham Lincoln as a solemn figure carved in marble—presiding over a divided nation, delivering immortal speeches, and signing historic documents. But behind the legend was a man who lived a daily life filled with routines, relationships, and quiet moments. The following excerpts are from the 1914 Metamora Herald. The pictures are from the archived Pictures of Lincoln website. Hope you enjoy this newsletter focused on our most brilliant, most famous, most renowned visitor.



1846 – Lincoln first came to the Metamora Courthouse in 1845



1850 – he continued to try cases in Metamora until 1857



1858 – he was back for the L/D debates and cleared the Melissa Goings charges

The Personal Side of Lincoln – excerpts from the the 1914 Metamora Herald

Lincoln generally got in the office in the morning at 9:00 a.m. When it was later, Herndon, his partner, knew there had been trouble at home. Lincoln then had no cheerful morning greetings - only a grunt as he fell wolfishly upon the morning mail. He might have lunched easily enough at home but he preferred crackers and cheese at the office and often stayed there until after dark. Sometimes he would knock off in the late afternoon and clean out the stable, saw wood, feed the horse, and milk the cow. He had a passion for chores of his boyhood days on his father's pitiful acres. He was his own hired man until even after his election as president.

Lincoln's favorite outer garb as he sallied forth in the winter for his office was an ancient gray shawl. He took particular pains never to have his hat brushed or his shoes blackened; his carpetbag threatened at the seams to disgorge its burden of legal documents; his green cotton Umbrella had no handle to speak of and inside there was the legend "A Lincoln," the letters cut out of white muslin and sewed to the faded cloth. In 1856 a pair of spectacles cost him 37- and one-half cents.

The accounts of the firm never bothered him. He left all that to her Herndon He never disfigured the account book he never disfigured the account book himself with a reckoning. When anybody gave him money for legal services he would divide with Herndon even if the latter was in the office and when Herndon was not there he would wrap the money in a piece of paper and mark it in pencil "case of Smith versus Jones Herndon's half" and leave it in the drawer of his partner's desk When they made him president he was just about to take the train to Washington he went to the old office for the last time and found Herndon. "Billy," he said "you and I have been together for more than 20 years and in all that time we've never had a hard word. Will you let my name stay on the old sign till I get back from Washington?" The tears came to Herndon's eyes. He took a bony hand of the rails splitter in his own a be said, "I'll never have another partner while you live" and until the day of Lincoln's assassination the dingy shingle before the office bore the name Lincoln and Herndon. *Continued below...*



Mary, Robert, Abe, Tad



Mary - 1861 (Mathew Brady) (1818-1882)



Mary in mourning dress

Continued... He had a passion for probing into the mysteries of anything mechanical and if he were alive today the automobile would have been a great joy. When circuit riding in the ante-railroad days he would utilize the rest of the noon hour after luncheon at some wayside farmhouse in crawling under and prowling over the harvest machinery as full of questions as the schoolboy more insatiably curious. As he walked the streets of Springfield every vehicle he saw interested him and the interior economy of the kitchen clock pleased him unutterably. *Continued below*



Willie - 1850-1862



Abe (1809-1865) and Tad (1853-1871)



Robert Todd Lincoln - 1843-1926

Continued... In the house he spent most of his time indulging his children playing with the cat or lying sprawled out on the floor of the hall reading. He didn't like the parlor because the haircloth chairs and marble table, the wax flowers under the glass bell, the portrait album and the family bible with their huge glass clasp represent Mrs. Lincoln's ideas of magnificence and not his own notion of solid comfort. He would be in his shirt sleeves and if loud knocking at the front door disturbed his elegant leisure, he would go to the door just as he had and promised to trot the women folks out without delay. Mrs. Lincoln never forgave him for helping himself to butter at the table with his own knife.

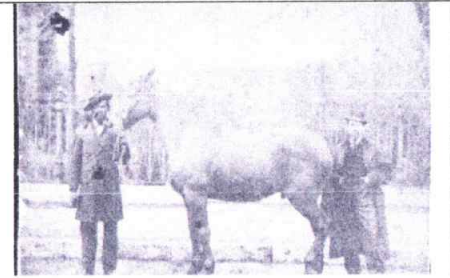
In August the same year the month after his surrender at Vicksburg we find Lincoln writing to his wife "Tell dear Tad poor Nanny Goat is lost and Mrs. Cuthbert and I are in distress about it. The day you left, Nanny was found resting herself and chewing her little cud on the middle of Tad's bed but now she's gone. The gardener kept complaining that she destroyed the flowers till it was concluded to bring her down to the White House. This was done and the second day she disappeared and has not been heard of since. This is the last we know of poor Nanny." The next year were there was two goats and Lincoln incurred the cordial displeasure of his entourage by his fondness for the society of these animals. It seemed to be Lincoln's peculiar misfortune to be surrounded most of the time by people who knew not the meaning of the expression "the saving sense of humor." *Continued below...*



Last Portrait – April 10, 1865 (shot April 14, 1865 and died 7:22 a.m., April 15, 1865)

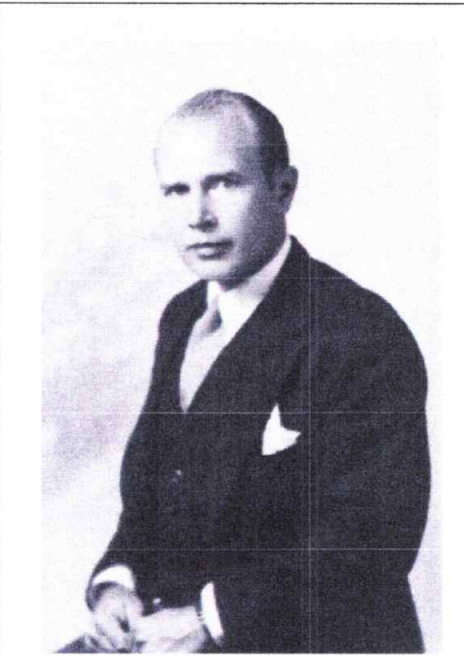


Last Photo – April 10, 1865 with Tad

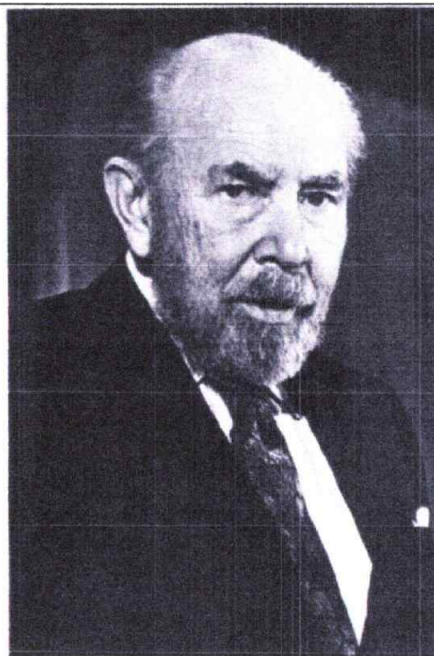


Abe's horse – Old Bob. when sold in 1860-61 (above) and at funeral (below)

Continued... Lincoln's favorite outer garb as he sallied forth in the winter for his office was an ancient gray shawl. He took particular pains never to have his hat brushed or his shoes blackened; his carpetbag threatened at the seams to disgorge its burden of legal documents; his green cotton Umbrella had no handle to speak of and inside there was the legend "A Lincoln," the letters cut out of white muslin and sewed to the faded cloth. In 1856 a pair of spectacles cost him 37- and one-half cents. *Continued below...*



Robert Todd Lincoln Beckwith – great grandson – last living descendant – 1904-1985



Mr. Beckwith older portrait – son of Lincoln's granddaughter (Robert's daughter)



Sarah Bush Lincoln – Abe's stepmother – died 1864 Charleston, IL (1809-1865)

Continued... When Lincoln went into court there was none of the "see-the-conquering hero" swagger about him. He would say "well here I am - ain't you glad to see me?" And if the course of the argument it was necessarily for him to concede a point to the other side he would remark "I reckon it would be fair to let in" that and when overruled by the court would laugh and say "well I reckon I must be wrong." When a lawyer asked him if an attachment had the force of a summons his confession of ignorance was cheerfully frank "damfino." On a long palavering letter requested his legal service he wrote laconically "count me in A Lincoln."

Contact Us Questions, ideas - Love to hear from you

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