

Lincoln Newsletter

A publication of the Old Lincoln Courtroom & Museum Commission

Beardstown, Illinois
Second Quarter 2010

Happy birthday, Mr. President

Sure, Abraham Lincoln was born in a log cabin near Elizabethtown, Ky., moved to Indiana when he was 7 and didn't arrive in Illinois until he was 20.

However, Illinois is the place Lincoln grew from a young backwoodsman into a great leader. Lincoln always considered Illinois his true home and we, in turn, have proudly claimed him as a true son of the Prairie State.

Little wonder then that the 16th president's birthday continues to be a big deal in Illinois, including at the Old Lincoln Courtroom & Museum.

On Feb. 13, the Courtroom & Museum hosted a birthday party in honor of Lincoln's 201st birthday. The event proved to be popular, with many children from the community and surrounding areas participating. The young folks enjoyed games, refreshments, art activities and story time.

People from the community volunteered their Saturday afternoon, including Ann Chelette, Dottie Gholson, Melanie Schroll, Pam DeSollar, Randy and Sue Reichert, Ross and Connie Foley, Dale Robertson, Paula Woods, JoAnn Surber, Lisa Evenson and Carnell Korsmeyer.

A number of Beardstown businesses, organizations and individuals donated items or loaned materials to make the afternoon a success, including DeSollar and Wessler Bros. Agency, Wal-Mart, First United Methodist Church, St. John's Lutheran Church, McDonald's, Canter Family Dental, JoAnn Surber and Pam DeSollar.

Also, the *Cass County Star-Gazette* took photos of the children



Maddux Wydell (aka "Young Mr. Lincoln") adjusts his stovepipe hat while taking a break from coloring during the Old Lincoln Courtroom & Museum's Abraham Lincoln Birthday celebration on Feb. 13. Wydell took first place in Lincoln Look-a-Like Contest, ages 1-6 category.

during the different activities.

A high point of the afternoon was the Lincoln Look-a-Like contest and the winners were:

Maddux Wydel 1 - 1st place – ages 1-6 category.

Briana Costello - 1st place – ages 7-12.

Maddy Wydell - 2nd place – ages 7-12.

The children were awarded very

generous gift cards from Wal-Mart.

We are planning to make this an annual event and will keep you informed of our planning efforts.

Mark Your Calendar
Annual Trivia Nite
Sept. 18
Get your team together...
now!

New look for our 'old' museum

Chair Suzanne McClure declared March 5-7 as "Moving Days," and move we did!

The idea came about when it was determined that the Beardstown Room had far too many items, while the Dish Room had too few items for so large an area.

This set into motion an exchange plan, and during the process of planning the move, the River Room was added to the project.

Things began rolling on March 5, when Connie Foley, Alice Gramann, Richard "Corky" Kinstle, Suzanne McClure, Dale Robertson, Melanie Schroll and Paula Woods divided into three teams.

All items from the Beardstown Room, River Room and the Dish Room were inventoried, boxed and placed in designated areas for placement later in their appropriate location.

On March 6, Jim and Linda Crum, Ross and Connie Foley, Dottie Gohlsong, Corky Kinstle, Eleanor "Ellie" Meyer, Suzanne McClure, Dale Robertson, Rev. Bob Schoolcraft and Melanie Schroll arrived for work.

The men set about moving furnishings into appropriate rooms, hanging canoes from the ceiling and general "tool-related" tasks.

Meanwhile, the ladies began carrying the displays to the various rooms and setting or hanging them in place. Everyone worked so hard on Friday and Saturday that it was decided to forego the March 7 work day.

The commission thanks each volunteer who gave up the weekend to help accomplish a vital portion of the task.

The on-going process has volunteers still at work, organizing the museum displays and placing interpretations that tell the story of



Briana Costello won first place in Lincoln Look-a-Like Contest, ages 7-12 category.

Beardstown, Cass County and the river.

Our thanks goes to Valerie Bushy, Ann and Jess Chelette, Ross and Connie Foley, Dottie Gohlsong, Suzanne McClure, Dale Robertson, Melanie Schroll and Paula Woods for nearly daily visits to the site to research, hang pictures and design displays.

Now, it is your turn.

If you haven't been to the museum since we made all of these changes, we invite you to visit and let us know what you think.

And while you are at it, bring along some friends who have not yet seen our museum.

Most Valuable Volunteer Award

The one-time Most Valuable Volunteer Award is given to a volunteer who can do it all.

One particular item caused much consternation during the course of "Moving Days." The River Room capstand was too heavy to be moved. Enter Jess Chelette, indus-

trial engineer and husband of Commission Treasurer Ann Chelette.

With the help of a portable crane, ingenuity and brute strength, he and Dale Robertson accomplished the impossible. The capstand is safely placed in the River Room.

Meanwhile, Jess has been in the museum several days each week, hanging difficult and heavy items, making interactive displays and generally figuring out how to accomplish the display of complicated exhibits in a safe and secure manner.

Without his expertise, the commission would have been forced to have paid to accomplish these tasks that he did voluntarily and willingly.

Thank you, Jess.

And just what is a capstand? Stop in and find out!

Museum Hours

**10 a.m. - 4 p.m.
Monday through Saturday**

**Visit the Gift Shop.
Many new and sale items.**

A. Lincoln ~ in his own words

(Editor's note: The following is excerpted from the book, *Lincoln, Addresses and Letters*, originally published in 1914 by American Book Co. Since this is in Lincoln's words, no corrections have been made to grammar or punctuation.)

Autobiography, compiled for the "Dictionary of Congress," June, 1858

Born, February 12, 1809, in Hardin County, Kentucky.

Education defective.

Profession, a lawyer.

Have been a captain of volunteers in Black Hawk war.

Postmaster at a very small office.

Four times a member of the Illinois Legislature, and was a member of the lower house of Congress.

Yours, etc.,

Lincoln

Autobiography written for Jesse W. Fell, Dec. 20. 1859

I was born February 12, 1809, in Hardin County, Kentucky. My parents were both born in Virginia, of undistinguished families – second families, perhaps I should say. My mother, who died in my tenth year, was of a family of the name of Hanks, some of whom now reside in Adams, and Abraham Lincoln, emigrated from Rockingham County, Virginia, to Kentucky about 1781 or 1782, where a year or two later he was killed by the Indians, not in battle, but by stealth, when he was laboring to open a farm in the forest. His ancestors, who were Quakers, went to Virginia from Berks County, Pennsylvania. An effort to identify them with the New England family of the same name ended in nothing more definite than a similarity of Christian names in both families, such as Enoch, Levi, Mordecai, Solomon, Abraham, and the like.

My father, at the death of his father, was but six years of age, and he grew up literally without education. He removed from Kentucky to what is now Spencer County, Indiana, in my eighth year. We reached our new home about the time the state came into the Union. It was a wild region, with many bears and other wild animals still in the woods. There I grew up. There were some schools, so called, but no qualification was ever required of a teacher beyond "readin', writin', and cipherin'" to the rule of three. If a straggler supposed to understand Latin happen to sojourn in the neighborhood, he was looked upon as a wizard. There was absolutely nothing to excite ambition for education. Of course, when I came of age I did not know much. Still, somehow, I could read, write, and cipher to the rule of three, but that was all. I have not been to school since. The little advance I now have upon this store of education I have picked up from time to time under the pressure of necessity.

I was raised to farm work, which I continued till I was twenty-two. At twenty-one I came to Illinois, Macon County. Then I got to New Salem, at that time in Sangamon, now in Menard County, where I remained a year as a sort of clerk in a store.

Then came the Black Hawk war, and I was elected a captain of volunteers, a success which gave me more pleasure than any I have had since. I went the campaign, was elated, ran for the legislature the same year (1832), and was beaten – the only time I ever have been beaten by the people. The next and three succeeding biennial elections I was elected to the legislature. I was not a candidate afterward. During the legislative period I had studied law, and removed to Springfield to practice it. In 1846 I was once elected to the lower House of Con-



Abraham Lincoln, 1858.

gress. Was not a candidate for reelection. From 1849 to 1854, both inclusive, practiced law more assiduously than ever before. Always a Whig in politics, and generally on the Whig electoral tickets, making active canvasses. I was losing interest in politics when the repeal of the Missouri Compromise aroused me again. What I have done since then is pretty well known.

If any personal description of me is thought desirable, it may be said I am, in height, six feet four inches, nearly; lean in flesh, weighing on an average one hundred and eighty pounds; dark complexion, with

coarse black hair and gray eyes. No other marks or brands recollected.

Letter to Richard P. Morgan

This is an application for his renewal of his pass as local attorney for the Chicago, Alton, & St. Louis – now Chicago & Alton Railway. In his practice at the bar, Lincoln was regularly retained by the corporation. He was also employed by the Illinois Central, the Atlantic, Tunica and Petersburg railway companies.

“Chalked hat” was a colloquial term for a railway pass.

Richard P. Morgan was then the general superintendent of the railway company. The employment by Mr. Morgan is said to have grown out of a friendship that sprang up between the men while Lincoln was “traveling the circuit” as the result of a little act of hospitality on Mr. Morgan’s part at a country boarding place where Lincoln, unable to secure quarters for the night, was asked to share Mr. Morgan’s room and bed. He was a delegate to the state convention in 1860 where Lincoln’s name was first proposed for President. Mr. Morgan later is said to have designed and planned the elevated railroads for the New York Rapid Transit Commission.

Springfield, February 13, 1856

Dear Sir: Says Tom to John: “Here’s your old rotten wheelbarrow. I’ve broke it, usin’ on it. I wish you would mend it, in case I shall want to borrow it this arter-noon.”

Acting on this as a precedent, I say, “Here’s your old chalked hat.” I wish you would take it, and send me anew one; case I shall want to use it the first of March.”

Yours truly,
Lincoln

Letter to James T. Thornton

James T. Thornton was in politics, serving later through three sessions of the legislature as represen-

tative from Purnam County. Lincoln’s absences were due to the fact that he had a large trial practice and was trying cases in every part of Illinois and in other states. The significant phrase in the letter is “still keep reading.”

Springfield, December 2, 1858

Dear Sir: Yours of the 29th written in behalf of Mr. John H. Widner, is received. I am absent altogether too much to be a suitable instructor for a law student. When a man has reached the age that Mr. Widner has, and had already been doing for himself, my judgment is, that he reads the books for himself without an instructor. That is precisely the way I came to the law. Let Mr. Widner read Blackstone’s Commentaries, Chitty’s Pleadings, Greenleaf’s Evidence, Story’s Equity, and Story’s Equity Pleadings, get a license, and go to the practice, and still keep reading. That is my judgment of the cheapest, quickest, and best way for Mr. Widner to make a lawyer of himself.

Yours truly,
Lincoln

Commissioners

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Lincoln’s prayer for peace

Fondly do we hope, fervently do we pray, that this mighty scourge of war may speedily pass away. Yet if God wills that it continue until all the wealth piled by the bondsman’s two hundred and fifty years of unrequited toil shall be sunk, and every drop of blood drawn with the lash shall be paid another drawn with the sword, as was said three thousand years ago, so still it must be said, “The judgments of the Lord are true and righteous altogether.”

With malice toward none, with charity for all, with firmness in the right as God gives us to see the right, let us finish the work we are in, to bind up the nation’s wounds, to care for him who shall have borne the battle, and for his widow and for his orphans, to do all which may achieve and cherish a just and a lasting peace among ourselves and with all nations

Second Inaugural Address,
March 4, 1865

A special thanks...

The Old Lincoln Courtroom and Museum would like to thank Millard Florist for the beautiful silk fern arrangement they donated to the Founder’s Room. We greatly appreciate their generosity.

See the Waysides

Have you visited all of the Lincoln Wayside Exhibits in Beardstown?

If not, this is a great time to do so. And be sure to stop by the museum before you begin your tour.

Pam Brown as Mary Todd Lincoln ~ 'Taking Leave'

On April 10, a Beardstown audience was treated to Pam Brown's stellar performance as Mary Todd Lincoln in *Taking Leave*.



As this photo clearly shows, Mary Todd Lincoln was a woman of striking beauty.

The one-woman monologue, written by Ken Bradbury, is based on the life of Abraham Lincoln's wife.

The setting of this mini-drama is Mrs. Lincoln's last moments in the White House. As she finishes her packing, she recalls times in the life she shared with Lincoln.

Before and after her performance, Brown, in a full mourning costume designed by Debbie Iams, entertained questions from the audience. She shared her interest in Mrs. Lincoln and discussed how she came to that interest.

After performing in *The Last of Mrs. Lincoln* at the Abraham Lincoln Presidential Museum and Library in Springfield, she found that she was not willing to give up her association with a woman she found so fascinating.

She approached Bradbury, know-



Mrs. Lincoln in her inaugural gown.

ing his interest in Lincoln, to request that he author a piece that would present a different picture of the much maligned first lady.

Bradbury, a guest for the performance, related to the audience that he was nearly burned out on Lincoln when Brown presented him with the challenge. Because he had been so impressed with Brown's performance in *The Last of Mrs. Lincoln*, he agreed to undertake the task, employing materials from Brown's research.

The result of this collaboration was *Taking Leave*, a powerful look into the life of Mary Todd Lincoln, perhaps the most famous first lady before Eleanor Roosevelt.

Although a Southerner by birth, a fact that was used to revile her, Mary Todd was opposed to slavery. Interested in politics, she used the entertainments held at the White House to learn from the men who were involved in the issues of the day.

Her extravagance were widely

criticized, but little has been made of the fact that she used the Lincolns' money to pay for many improvements made to the White House.

The Old Lincoln Courtroom & Museum Commission is grateful to Brown and Bradbury for creating *Taking Leave*.

It is hoped the commission will be able to present other such entertainments in the future. If you have suggestions, please do not hesitate to contact us.

For those who wish to learn more about Mary Todd Lincoln, the following books may be of interest:

Mrs. Lincoln: a Life by Catherine Clinton. New York: Harper Collins.

The Madness of Mary Lincoln by Jason Emerson. Carbondale: Southern Illinois University Press.

Behind the Scenes: or, Thirty Years a Slave, and Four Years in the White House by Elizabeth Keckley. New York: Penguin Books. (Keckley was Mrs. Lincoln's dress-maker and confidant)

A request of our readers

Due to the cost of printing and postage, the commission is requesting e-mail addresses.

Currently, our newsletter goes to some 100 e-mail addresses, while nearly 375 copies are sent by mail. To help offset these costs, we are requesting e-mail address from those who receive this newsletter by mail. Of course, we will continue to send copies by mail to those prefer a printed copy.

Please send your address to mcclure4@casscomm.com. Please advise us if distribution list.

You may also view the newsletter at any time online at: www.lincolninbeardstown.org.

Welcome, to our new Friends

Though we have just entered the second quarter of the new year, The Old Lincoln Courtroom & Museum has added six new Friends of the Courtroom.

A hearty welcome is extended to: Richard & Robin Hanks from Riverside, Calif.

The Delphos Herald, Inc. – Murray Cohen, president from Delphos, Ohio.

Doris Edwards from Beardstown.
Dorothy Lamb from Frederick.
Carolyn A. Ryan from Beardstown.

Robert & Eleanor Talkemeyer from Arenzville.

John Winston from Beardstown.

We also have had two of our Friends increase their donation within the past year: Mr. & Mrs. Ross Foley and Mr. & Mrs. Willard Korsmeyer.

Currently, the Friends of the Courtroom donations come not only from Beardstown, but also from the Illinois towns of Arenzville, Ashland, Bluff Springs, Champaign, Frederick, Jacksonville, Macomb, Mt. Sterling, Pekin, Pleasant Plains, Rushville, Springfield, Urbana, and Virginia.

From outside Illinois the towns of Newport Beach, Calif.; Riverside, Calif., Sacramento, Calif.; Boca Raton, Fla.; Hagerstown, Md.; Lutherville, Md.; Muskegon, Mich.; Delphos, Ohio; Lacey, Wash., and Ridgefield, Wash., are represented by donors to Friends of the Courtroom.

Thank you to the following Friends of the Courtroom who have mailed their annual donation for 2010:

Tom and Leigh Ann Allen
Bob and Carol Burget
Murray Cohen
Jane Fearnelyhough
Donna Finney
Mr. and Mrs. Ross Foley
Mr. and Mrs. Roy L. French

Mr. and Mrs. Jack Gist
Glenn and Patricia Hankins,
Richard and Robin Hanks
Illinois Forest Products / Kevin & Chris Massie

Robert & Rebecca Jones
Mr. and Mrs. Willard J. Korsmeyer

Dorothy Lamb

Irene Lamkin

Fairy Launer

Mr. and Mrs. L. Milton McClure

Steve and Cathy Megginson

Leigh and Norma Morris

Mike and Cristy Nordsiek

Dale Robertson

Steve and Cathy Rolf

Caroline Ryan

Robert and Eleanor Talkemeyer

Virginia Turner

Walker Nursing Home

John Winston.

To join the Friends of the Court-

room, please fill in the attached form and mail it along with your annual donation to Suzanne McClure, 1 Pine Lane, Beardstown, IL 62618.

Help

Empty space is so very sad, but you can help stamp it out by joining the Friends of the Courtroom – or renewing your membership. And then we'll be able to fill this space with your name.

Do it today and help us stamp our empty space!

Friends of the Old Lincoln Courtroom & Museum

Yes, I wish to become a Friend as follows:

- | | |
|---|----------------------|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Mr. Lincoln's Friend: | Annual Gift \$25.00 |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Mr. Lincoln's Bar: | Annual Gift \$50.00 |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Mr. Lincoln's Barristers: | Annual Gift \$100.00 |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Mr. Lincoln's Judges Chambers: | Annual Gift \$500.00 |

I would prefer to become a lifetime member of Mr. Lincoln's Supreme Court.
My pledge is in the amount of \$_____.

Method of Contribution

My Annual Gift is enclosed: Amount: \$_____

I'd like to make my annual gift in two equal installments.

[Mr. Lincoln's Barristers; Mr. Lincoln's Judges Chambers;
Mr. Lincoln's Supreme Court only]

Installments will be due March 1 and September 1

I'd like to make my annual gift in four equal quarterly installments.

[Mr. Lincoln's Supreme Court only]

Installments will be due March 1, June 1, September 1, and December 1

Name: _____

Name: _____

Address: _____

City: _____ State: _____ Zip: _____

E-mail: _____

Please forward your payment to:

Friends of the Old Lincoln Courtroom and Museum
1 Pine Lane
Beardstown, IL 62618

Check here if this is a renewal of your membership _____

Beardstown was ‘cooking with gas’

Beginning in the 1850s, Midwestern cities sought to have manufactured gas plants (MGPs) as way to enhance their economic competitiveness.

Though eager for an MGP, Beardstown leaders could only watch and wait as MGPs came to Quincy, Macomb, Canton, Jacksonville and Springfield.

Around 1890, the Beardstown Electric Light and Power Company (BELP) selected a 10.8-acre site bounded by East Main Street and the Illinois River for its new electric generating facilities.

This property had been the location of the Dearing & Lyons Machine Shop and Foundry. The Crystal Rock Bath House also occupied a portion of the site between 1890 and 1900.

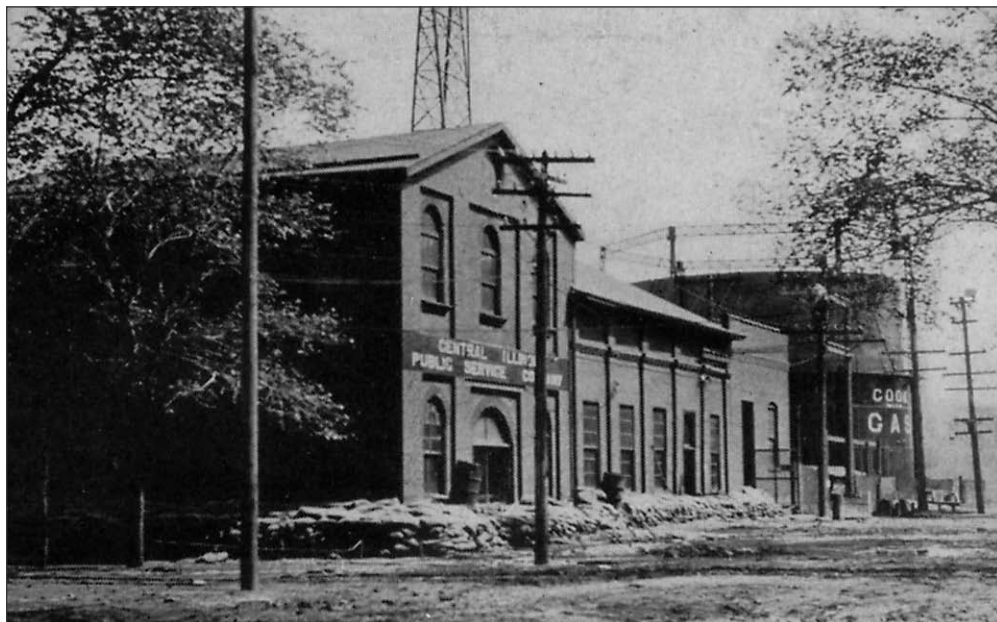
Having attained success with electricity, the power company entered the gas business on Oct. 16, 1907, with the opening of an MGP on East Main Street. Initially, the plant could produce 3 million cubic feet of gas annually.

Since electricity had proved to be superior for lighting, the Beardstown MGP focused on other opportunities.

In 1907, coal and wood were the fuels used to heat homes and businesses. In the kitchen, women had to deal with dirty, hot and dangerous wood, coal, kerosene and even gasoline stoves.

Representatives of the new manufactured gas plant lost no time in promoting the benefits of manufactured gas for heating and cooking. Prospective customers were told gas was clean, safe and economical. The expression “I’m cooking with gas” meant a person was quite progressive.

The first major change came in 1912 when BELP was sold to Cen-



Beardstown’s manufactured gas plant once stood on East Main Street.

tral Illinois Public Service (CIPS).

For unknown reasons, the gas plant switched from coal gas to Tenney Process water gas around 1915. Water gas was produced by forcing high pressure steam over hot coke. This produced a gas that consisted of carbon monoxide and hydrogen. Since it had a lower heating value than coal gas, oil was often sprayed into it to raise the heating value. This was known as carburetted gas.

The water gas experiment was a failure and the plant had returned to coal gas production by 1918. Annual gas production had reached 24 million cubic feet in 1919.

MGPs in most Central Illinois cities began to close in the 1920s and 1930s when interstate pipelines brought natural gas to the state. However, the Beardstown MGP continued to produce coal gas until November 1946.

Rather than switch to natural gas, the Beardstown plant switched to propane-air gas production – a process that converted liquid propane into a gas. The propane was shipped to Beardstown in railroad tank cars, usually by the Baltimore & Ohio Railroad.

At long last, CIPS began construction of a natural gas pipeline to Beardstown in 1961. All propane-

air gas production ended in 1963 and with it the end of an era that had begun in 1907.

Lincoln note: Though few realize it, Abraham Lincoln was very familiar with manufactured gas as gas plants opened in both Quincy and Springfield in 1854, while the plant in Jacksonville opened in 1856. It is likely the future 16th president visited all three facilities. Furthermore, Lincoln’s home featured gas lighting.

Additional note: Coal gasification continues to be a popular topic within the energy industry. For example, there are plans to build an electric generating plant at Taylorville that would burn gas produced by an onsite gasification plant. The coal would come from an onsite mine.

Coal gasification also is touted as a way to use America’s vast coal supply in a “clean” way. Not only do proponents see it as a source of generation fuel, but believe it could supplement natural gas supply.

No doubt, Lincoln would have been keenly interested in modern coal gasification efforts.

***Be sure to visit the
Museum Gift Shop***



Melanie Schroll was one of the hardworking volunteers who helped make the Feb. 13 Abraham Lincoln Birthday Party a success. No, she is not coloring, but getting things ready for the young folks.

Old Lincoln Courtroom & Museum Commission
Suzanne McClure, Chair
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