



Lincoln Newsletter

Labor Day Edition, September, 2017

Published by the Old Lincoln Courtroom & Museum Commission

Ladies' Tea Table Returns Home To Beardstown



Once again the Old Lincoln Courtroom and Museum has been the recipient of a valuable artifact with Beardstown connections.

Ms Ginny Towbin of Highland Park, Illinois, has generously gifted the museum with a ladies' tea table given in 1853 by Francis Rearick to his bride, Helen Maria Shaw, the sister of J. Henry Shaw, author of the deed in verse that hangs in the Lincoln Room. Mr. Shaw was an assistant prosecutor in the Almanac Trial and later mayor of Beardstown. The table is in the Lincoln Room under the framed deed.

The table, brought to Beardstown by river boat, has been passed down through the Rearick's daughter Addie Rearick Becker, her son, Edwin Shaw Becker,

to his daughter, Ginny Becker Towbin. Ms. Towbin thought that table should "come home" to Beardstown, a move she believes would delight her father.

The name "Shaw" has been used frequently in the family, reinforcing the connection to J. Henry Shaw. Her reaction when she was told that the table would be placed with the deed was, "I've heard about the deed all my life," but because the deed has never left Beardstown, she has never seen it.

The family history tells that Francis Rearick was born in Prussia, Oct. 12, 1929, into a family of tinsmiths. His family emigrated to the U.S. and he settled in Beardstown, where he and his brother owned a hardware store. He and Helen Maria Shaw, a teacher, met at a dance, according to family legend. The gift of the table must have been a good omen for the success of the Rearick marriage, which lasted for more than fifty years until Mrs. Rearick's death.

A Democrat, active in local politics, in the fall of 1858 Rearick was elected sheriff of Cass County, succeeding James Dick who was sheriff at the time of the Almanac Trial.

In 1861 Rearick was elected Cass County judge, the predecessor of county commissioner. He served four years in this position, and in 1870, with support from both parties, he was again elected county judge to fill an unexpired term. Judge Rearick had a reputation for representing the entire county, not being zealous in his efforts to benefit his own area, as others were.

In 1874 Judge Rearick relocated the family to Galesburg for his children to take advantage of educational opportunities there. He kept his interest in politics, serving on the Knox County board of Supervisors.

– Paula Woods



While not a cup from a tea set that would have been used on the Rearick table, this "Belle of the Bend" mug by Kirby Drannan Pottery will hold tea or coffee and keep it warm.

Park Hotel China Table/Cabinet



Another piece of Beardstown's history returns to Beardstown through the generosity of John Heriford, owner of Sangamon Valley Restoration of Bath, IL.

This china cabinet once rested on a similar glass-doored base on the first floor of the Park Hotel. The flood of 1927, however, damaged the base beyond repair, and the matching walnut table pictured above was used to replace the base. To prevent further floods from damaging the pair, they were moved to the second floor of the hotel.

They can be seen in the Lincoln Room where they display an original Civil War diary and other Lincoln era artifacts.

– Randal Reichert

Letters to the Editor

We welcome your letters. Please react to the Newsletter, tell us what you would like to see in future editions, relate your experiences in the Beardstown area, pass along information you feel we should know. We look forward to hearing from you.

1864 Lincoln Presidential Campaign Medallion/Token



Sometimes called a medallion and other times a token, one of the popular ways for a citizen to display political preference in the 1864 Presidential campaign was to wear the one inch in diameter medallion/token on a string or velvet ribbon around the neck.

On one side is a gem ferrotype image of Abraham Lincoln and on the verso is the image of Andrew Johnson. A brass holder encircles the image with the words "For President 1864" surrounding Lincoln's image, and the words "For Vice President 1864" surrounding Johnson's image.

This item was gifted to the Old Lincoln Courtroom Museum by former Bluff Springs resident Marsha Hutson, now of Glenwood Springs, CO. It belonged to her great grandfather, William Thomas Berry, who was born in Virginia, IL, January 11, 1850. He moved to Arenzville to farm about 1876.

For his wife's health reasons, he moved to West Plains, MO, in 1900, then to Fairmont, NE, and on to Grand Junction, CO, in 1908 where he was a fruit farmer until his death in 1934.

The medallion/token has been passed down through the family, first to a daughter, Lola Berry Schaefer (James), then to her granddaughter, Marsha Hutson.

Marsha graduated from Beardstown High School in 1960, then from Western Illinois University in 1966. An elementary teacher, she taught 3 ½ years in Browning and Astoria and in 1967 moved to teach in Glenwood Springs, CO for three years and 27 years in Boulder. Marsha used the medallion/token in her teaching each year when discussing Abraham Lincoln around the time of the anniversary of his birthday.

- Randal Reichert



On March 31, 2012, Arline raised the flag on the newly installed wooden flag pole at the courthouse.

In Memory of Mary Arline Bley

On July 19, 2017 the Old Lincoln Courtroom and Museum lost one of its founders and stalwart supporters. Mary Arline Miller Bley passed away at the age of 99 ½. Arline was one of the original members of the Old Lincoln Courtroom and Museum Commission. Appointed in 2005, she served until her retirement in 2011. On October 25, 2011, Arline was named Commissioner Emeritus.

Devoted countless hours

The resolution naming her Commissioner Emeritus stated that she “brought. . . a wealth of knowledge and experience, having previously served for many years on the former Museum Committee of the City of Beardstown, [and] played a leading role in the effort to train by example volunteer tour guides for the Old Lincoln Courtroom and Museum. . .with special interest in tours for school children and the reenactment of the Almanac Trial with student participation, . . .[and] devoted countless hours in research . . .by attending Archivist and other seminars and spent many additional hours in research of accurate historical information pertaining to Abraham Lincoln in Beardstown.”

Arline’s stories of her encounters with school children are inspiration for guides showing children around the museum, and marvelous tales to recount to adult visitors!

Her knowledge and guidance will be missed.

Memorials may be made to the OLCM in her honor.

- Paula Woods

Welcome Visitors

During May, June, July, and early August, the Old Lincoln Courtroom and Museum hosted nearly 300 visitors from 17 states, the U. S. Virgin Islands and Puerto Rico.

A number of these visitors had learned about us from Google searches and various web sites. Some were revisiting Beardstown, having grown up here or were visiting relatives. Several happened on the site on their way to the many sites in Springfield, or were intrigued by the sign on the highway, or came to have their National Parks passports stamped while visiting. One commented that he was a jazz fan and had learned of Beardstown through Red Norvo’s biography.

Comments about the museum are highly favorable: “impressive,” “informative,” “interesting,” and an occasional “neat” or “awesome.”

An always surprising number of Beardstown residents come for the first time, not being aware of the treasure in their midst.

- Paula Woods

ALNHA News

The Looking for Lincoln/Abraham Lincoln National Heritage Area Steering Commission met June 30 in Nauvoo. Discussion concerned the dissolution of the Illinois Preservation Agency and the transfer of its sites and staff to the Illinois Department of Natural Resources. This move will affect several of the ALNHA sites, although in what ways is yet to be determined.

Further discussion centered on the Looking for Lincoln Community signs, designed to be placed at entrances to the communities. Beardstown is one of the original communities, designated in 2008, with the installation of the Wayside exhibits.

One of our Commissioners recently returning from a trip to the East noticed the prominent signage at the Illinois state line welcoming visitors to the Abraham Lincoln National Heritage Area. These signs are on major highways around the State of Illinois.

- Paula Woods

Illinois State Fair



Randy Duncan, Lincoln Interpreter, in the Looking for Lincoln/ALNHA tent at the Illinois State Fair. Duncan will be attending the Fall Fun Festival activities Saturday, September 23 in Beardstown.

Looking for Lincoln/ALNHA has once again been a presence at the Illinois State Fair. The front lawn of the Illinois building is devoted to activities designed to educate about the times of Lincoln and include performances, craft demonstrations, and activities designed for children—games, crafts, a Lincoln Logs table, and “training” for Civil War soldiers by a troupe of boys from a Springfield Boys Club.

In addition to children accompanying parents and grandparents to the fair, a number of daycare centers and schools bring groups of young fair goers.

A feature was a display of baseball figures from the Cardinals vs Cubs Exhibit at the Abraham Lincoln Presidential Library and Museum with Lincoln’s head—designed for photo ops!

- Paula Woods

New to Commission



Katie Vitale, the newest member of the Old Lincoln Courtroom and Museum Commission.

Katie is best described as a community activist. She has lived in Beardstown for sixteen years, and is involved in many civic organizations. Currently she is serving as Special Events Coordinator for the Chamber of Commerce and Main Street, working on events such as Blues, Brews, and Barbecue, Taste of Beardstown /Art in the Park, and Fall Fun Festival.

Katie is a member of the Library Board, the Health Care Foundation, Main Street board, and the Zoning Commission. She is a past member of the Beardstown City Council.

A wealth of experience

Her activities bring a wealth of experience to the OLCM Commission, particularly in the area of planning events as we hope to expand the OLCM’s offerings. She is also knowledgeable in grant writing and related activities.

A graduate of University of Illinois Springfield with a major in Political Science and History, she has a keen interest in the OLCM with its dual mission as a Lincoln site and the museum of Beardstown.

And last but not least, Katie’s daughters, Gabby and Izzy, are great fans of the museum, bringing their friends and school classes for tours. They could be called Junior Patrons.

– Paula Woods

OLCM Observes Taste of Beardstown and Art in the Park



This year the Old Lincoln Courtroom and Museum is participating in the Taste of Beardstown/Art in the Park activities.

At Taste of Beardstown/Art in the Park activities, August 26, the museum will be serving Lincoln's favorite drink, lemonade, and "period correct" cookies.

The Old Lincoln Courtroom Museum invites all to take a moment to visit the Museum and enjoy the air conditioning and some refreshments.

- Paula Woods

OLCM Hosts Lincoln at Fall Fun Festival



At the Fall Fun Festival, the OLCM will host a Lincoln interpreter as well as a booth at the museum and games and crafts for children. Lincoln will ride in the parade and later will be discussing his Beardstown activities in the courtroom and "working the crowd" around the square.

Lincoln will also be talking to the visitors from the bandstand in the center of the park and also in the courtroom, where he will be available for photo opportunities.

These events will be opportunities to showcase the museum and to educate people about Lincoln and the history of Beardstown.

- Paula Woods

Historical Trivia

"God willing and the Creek don't rise."

Did you know the saying "God willing and the Creek don't rise" was in reference to the Creek Indians and not a body of water? It was written by Benjamin Hawkins in the late 18th century. He was a politician and Indian diplomat.

While in the south, Hawkins was requested by the President of the U.S. to return to Washington. In his response, he was said to write, "God willing and the Creek don't rise."

Because he capitalized the word "Creek", it is deduced that he was referring to the Creek Indian tribe and not a body of water.

"It'll cost you an arm and a leg."

In George Washington's days, there were no cameras. One's image was either sculpted or painted. Some paintings of George Washington showed him standing behind a desk with one arm behind his back while others showed both legs and both arms.

Prices charged by painters were not based on how many people were to be painted, but by how many limbs were to be painted. Arms and legs are 'limbs,' therefore painting them would cost the buyer more. Hence the expression, 'Okay, but it'll cost you an arm and a leg.'

(Artists know hands and arms are more difficult to paint.)

"Chairman of the Board"

In the late 1700's, many houses consisted of a large room with only one chair. Commonly, a long wide board folded down from the wall, and was used for dining. The 'head of the household' always sat in the chair while everyone else ate sitting on the floor.

Occasionally a guest, who was usually a man, would be invited to sit in this chair during a meal. To sit in the chair meant you were important and in charge. They called the one sitting in the chair the 'chair man.' Today in business, we use the expression or title 'Chairman' or 'Chairman of the Board.'

"Straight Laced"

Ladies wore corsets, which would lace up in the front. A proper and dignified woman, as in 'straight laced' wore a tightly tied lace.

- Submitted by Richard Zillion

We Thank Our 2017 Friends Donors

The adage, 'Everyone Needs a Friend' could not be more true. These Friends annually help us maintain the history of Beardstown and the integrity of the Museum & Courtroom collection. **Have you sent your 2017 membership renewal?** Thank you.

2017-to-Date Friends Contributors

Mr. Lincoln's Friend: Annual Gift \$25- \$49

1. Ann Brewer
2. Tonie Beard Culves
3. Imogene Drawve**
4. Leslie Harris**
5. Doris McKenzie
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Mr. Lincoln's Bar: Annual Gift \$50- \$99

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17. Richard & Laura Zillion
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Mr. Lincoln's Bailiff: Annual Gift \$250- \$499

1. Thomas & Elizabeth Prather

** We welcome these new Friends.

One Time Donations:

1. Dr. and Mrs. Claude Nesser



Yes, I wish to become a Friend as follows:

- Mr. Lincoln's Friend: Annual Gift \$25-\$49
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 Mr. Lincoln's Bailiff: Annual Gift \$250-\$399
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My pledge is in the amount of \$ _____

Name(s): _____

Address: _____

City: _____

State: _____ Zip Code: _____

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This is a _____ new membership.

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Please forward your payment (payable to **Friends of the Museum/Courtroom**) along with this information form to:

Friends of Old Lincoln Courtroom & Museum
PO Box 381
Beardstown, IL 62618

I would like to receive my newsletter in the form of

_____ a paper copy

_____ an e-mail copy

What Does the Commission Really Do?

The Commission meets monthly except for August to monitor the activities of the Old Lincoln Courtroom and Museum. During that time it reviews the financial condition, reports of visitors, activities of volunteers and commissioners, memberships with other associations promoting Lincoln, museums, and tourism, new acquisitions, calendar of events, selects items for new displays, and give tours for visitors and school classes.

This current year alone, we have installed period appropriate lighting in the foyer, given the museum gift shop a facelift, repainted the Lincoln Room, received numerous acquisitions reported in the Newsletter and documented their provenance for display, sponsored a Lincoln birthday party for children of the community, held an Open House for Alumni weekend, and continue to publish the Newsletter.

Ongoing projects include the period appropriate renovation of the foyer and the promotion of more interactive activities in the community.

Gift Shop Undergoing a Facelift



This corner cabinet is part of the new facelift of the Gift Shop and displays the “Belle of the Bend” mugs by Kirby Drannan Pottery.

From our Gift Shop

Book Review of

The Assassin’s Accomplice: Mary Surratt and the Plot to Kill Abraham Lincoln

Author: Kate Clifford Larson

Inspiration for the movie “The Conspirator” directed by Robert Redford

Mary Surratt was a widow from Maryland who lived with her three children. She was a staunch supporter of the Confederate cause. Her husband had owned a tavern on a well-traveled road and when he died, Mary continued to run the tavern with the help of her son John and daughter Anna. Her eldest son served in the Confederate Army. John was the postmaster who operated the post office in the tavern. It was a convenient way to smuggle letters and messages through to Confederate sympathizers.

When they began to experience financial difficulties, Mary and her children moved to Washington, D.C. where she operated a boarding house. Many spies and Confederate sympathizers including John Wilkes Booth stayed there from time to time. Some of the boarders were not involved in the plans to harm Lincoln and were able to testify against the co-conspirators.

A military tribunal was in charge of the trial which lasted seven weeks. Mary’s lawyers were novices and



Additional display shelving allows for a more spacious and appealing look for easy browsing.

The Assassin’s Accomplice, continued

missed some opportunities to support her. Many people testified against her and she was ultimately convicted. Mary and three men were finally hanged. She was the first woman to be executed in the United States.

There are still conflicting opinions as to how much Mary was actually involved in the planning for Lincoln’s assassination, but there is no doubt that she kept “the nest that hatched the egg.” - Kathy Haut

Book Review of

Abraham Lincoln’s Most Famous Case: The Almanac Trial

Author: George R. Dekle, Sr.

George R. Dekle, Sr. analyzes the various reports and myths surrounding the murder trial of Duff Armstrong who was defended pro bono by Abraham Lincoln.

The author examines the reports of the fight at the camp meeting to determine if Preston Metzger was a bully or a victim. He investigates different accounts to discover if weapons were used and, if so, by whom. Mr. Dekle analyzes records of the trial and the testimony of witnesses to determine whether or not the almanac itself was genuine or counterfeit.

The author, himself, is a law professor and assistant prosecuting attorney which lends credence to his theories. His ideas are well-researched and presented in a way that keeps the reader’s attention. The reader is left with a feeling of confidence that he/she understands what took place right here in Beardstown, Illinois.

- Kathy Haut

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The Old Lincoln Courtroom & Museum

Commission

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Calendar of Events

Saturday, August 26:

Taste of Beardstown/Art in the Park

10:00 AM – 4:00 PM

Museum is open for visitors

**Free beverage: Lincoln's favorite lemonade
"Period" cookies for snacks**

Saturday, September 23

Fall Fun Festival

10:00 AM – 4:00 PM

Lincoln rides in the parade,
after which he will mix with the
crowd and the OLCM will host
him in the Museum Courtroom
where he will talk about his time in
Beardstown and answer questions
and be available for photographs.

He will speak from the bandstand in
the Park at 3:00 PM.



