

The PRAIRIE PICAYUNE

Lincoln's New Salem Newsletter

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WHAT'S NEW AT NEW SALEM?

Help is desperately needed on Fridays and Saturdays in the village. Any time you have, half days 9-1, 1-5 or all day would be great. Also laundry help would be great, washing and drying clothing, ironing, light mending; half day should be sufficient, 9-1.

Please call Mary Ann if you have any time to spare for the site. Hope to hear from you soon!

Mary Ann 217-632-4000 or Maryann.Russell@illinois.gov

The Carding Mill was in operation one Saturday in May and I am pleased to announce it ran PERFECTLY with the help of Neal Norris, Ed Whitcomb, Terry Miller and our volunteer Bill Wolfe. Here's the tentative schedule for the operation throughout the summer. Due to the complexity and the condition of the mill if something should break, we will have re-adjust the schedule. But as of today, we will promote and advertise this schedule.

Without the help and commitment of the four people listed above this could not have been accomplished! They have been instrumental in the repairing, maintaining and operating the Carding Mill. Their efforts and commitment should not be overlooked.

I am also planning on contacting local media, PBS and Mark McDonald at *Illinois Stories* to help with promotion and exposure.

We will be keeping our fingers crossed and with a little luck we should have a great summer and give the visitors to Lincoln's New Salem another dimension of the village!

Tim Guinan

Carding Mill Schedule

Remember, the carding mill at Lincoln's New Salem is the ONLY working one of its kind in the entire United States! This is a truly unique opportunity to see living history!

June - *All in a Days Work*

Saturday June 28 10:00am – 11:30am

1:00pm – 2:30pm

Sunday June 29th 1:00pm – 2:30pm

July Saturday July 5th 10:00am – 11:30am

1:00pm – 2:30pm

Saturday July 19th 1:00pm – 2:30pm

August

Volunteer Training

Saturday August 16th 10:00am – 11:30pm

Saturday August 30th 1:00pm – 2:30pm

Buses are still coming to the site!!! And New Salem could still use YOUR help – almost any time, almost any day! Please call MaryAnn Russell at 217/632-4000 if you can volunteer! Remember you'll be helping others enjoy our favorite historic site.

NAME THE EVENT!

LINCOLN'S 200th BIRTHDAY CELEBRATION

Plans are still ongoing for a special Special Event to celebrate the 200th anniversary of Lincoln's birthday! Currently it looks like we'll be spotlighting the eastern end of the village. That's where New Salem was born and the part of New Salem that Lincoln saw first when he came here.

Specifically, we're hoping to draw attention to the grist/saw mill, Offut's store (which has been recently revitalized!) and our new flatboat (which will be brought out of storage and placed on display).

What can you do to help out? Right now, we're still looking for a name for the event. It should be short and catchy and it should reflect New Salem and its influence on Mr. Lincoln. If you have any ideas for the name or for other ways we can celebrate Lincoln's 200th birthday, please pass them on – either to the *Picayune's* e-mail (cshafer@gcctv.com), Post Office Box (PO Box 471, Athens, IL 62613) or drop it off in the *Picayune's* in-box in the break room at the Visitor Center basement.

JUNE BIRTHDAYS!

Donna Hitchcock	Carlajean Rebbe	Brian Replogle	Lorretta Law
Peggy Meyer	Duane Greenhaigh	Keith Adkins	Katie Grant
Barbara Hazelwood	Mary Ella Allen		

New Salem on the Road **by John Blankenberger**

Mary Disseler, Bob Mueller, Marilyn Osgood and I participated in *National Tourism Week* by welcoming visitors at the Springfield *Lincoln Train Depot* from May 10th through the 18th. Site Manager, Tim Guinan, and Kathleen O'Hara of the Menard County Tourism Council, responding to an invitation from Marge Heissinger, Site Director of the depot, worked together to present a Menard County booth during the week. They agreed that it would draw attention to the Menard County booth if some of us wore our period clothing at the depot. And this is where Mary, Bob, Marilyn and I came in.

We were not overwhelmed with visitors during the week, but we made some friends for Menard County and had some very nice days representing New Salem. One visitor was especially interested in talking about Mr. Lincoln. He was not aware of his years spent in New Salem so we talked for several minutes about those years and more of Lincoln's story before and after New Salem. After we visited he shook my hand and introduced himself as the Consul General of Indonesia and gave me one of his cards. He thanked me very generously for spending time with him. (You never know who those guests might be.)

We had time to visit with the folks who stopped and it did not take long for me to realize that out-of-town folks knew little about Menard County and a surprising number did not know about New Salem. Kathleen and I emailed back and forth about this. She suggested that I might include some information about the Menard County Tourism Council in the *Prairie Picayune*. I agreed that it would be good if we all work together to promote the county and the main attraction, Lincoln's New Salem. I visited the council's Web site and found it to be very user friendly and informative. Go to www.visitmenardcounty.com to learn more about the history of Menard County, the upcoming Abraham Lincoln Bicentennial Celebrations, tours and photos of the county's attractions. Most of you also know about the Menard County radio station, but if you don't, Ben Kenningham is the newscaster on Radio Station Channel 1610 AM, WPQZ702. Spread the word about the place we love.

Historical Trolley Tours

Hop on board Menard County's newest attraction, Stier Trolley Express at Lincoln's New Salem State Historic Site. While leisurely viewing Menard County's historic sites, listen to a narrative by Menard County resident & professional newscaster, Ben Kinningham, describing what life was like during Lincoln's time while he lived and worked at New Salem. Hear why the village of New Salem vanished shortly after Lincoln moved to Springfield and where many of its famous residents re-located.

Learn about Lincoln's flat boat ride on the Sangamon River. Enjoy the trolley ride past the Sangamon River Valley while viewing the site of one of the nation's largest and best-attended Chautauquas. Find-out about Oakland Cemetery where Lincoln's close friend, Anne Rutledge and famous author Edgar Lee Masters are buried.

Nearby, in the historic town of Petersburg, take a look at lovely Victorian homes, including the Hamilton home, the Caleb Barrett Laning home; "Edgewood", home of Thompson Ware McNeely; the boyhood home of Edgar Lee Masters, and many more.

Hear about how the town of Petersburg got its name by playing a game of “Old Sledge” or “Seven Up” and how the Menard County racing quarter horse Peter McCue set a speed record that has never been broken, this, despite suffering an injury while young.

While hearing about the many attractions in Menard County and looking at the attractions through the windows of the trolley, visitors can also view an on-board slide presentation that features many of the other attractions and businesses in and around Menard County.

You may choose to disembark the trolley at the Historic Menard County Courthouse Square to eat at a fine restaurant and shop at the many gift and antique shops. While there, tour the Historic Menard County Courthouse and enjoy the Looking for Lincoln storyboard which describing Lincoln’s job as Land Surveyor. Don’t worry, the trolley will return to pick you up.

Join us. Trolley back in time to experience the nostalgia of historic Menard County during Lincoln’s time and later.

Pick up tickets at the Lincoln League Book Store just east of the New Salem Visitor’s Center.

The trolley’s schedule is Tuesday-Friday – 11am to 4 pm, Saturday 10am-4pm and Sunday 12 noon – 4 pm during June, July, and the first two weeks in August.

***Enjoy the Ride in Menard County!
Discover its History, Experience its Charm***

LINCOLN’S NEW SALEM VILLAGERS!
by John Blankenberger

This month we are going to meet some village “neighbors” who live just a short walk past the Rutledge Tavern. While technically not in the “village,” the *Museum Store* is a vital part of the life of New Salem as is the *Souvenir Shop*. These two entities provide a large part of the revenue that keeps New Salem alive. They are operated through the New Salem Lincoln League and while they support the village, the villagers and friends need to support them. Remember that the money you spend in either place comes right back to keep New Salem alive. I hope that you will think of these stores when you want to buy gifts. Encourage your friends to visit New Salem and then to “shop” with us.

I received three replies to my questionnaires from ladies who work with Donna Hitchcock in the *Museum Store*. These provided a good opportunity to introduce them and to draw attention to the *Museum Store*. **Judy Hurdle, Shirley Stewart and Lynda Beatty** are the Villagers of the Month for June.

Judy Hurdle and her husband, Clint, live in Bath, IL. If there were a DNS (Daughters of New Salem) Judy would qualify. She is a descendant of Jacob and Hardin Bale. She began working as a clerk in 2005 after she retired from teaching and counseling. True to her background in education she sees every visitor as unique, but she says that the school kids are special. The rabbit furs attract the boys especially. One boy

told her he wanted to buy a rabbit skin because he could not kill his own rabbit to get a skin. Another remarked "you sure kill a lot of rabbits around here." Judy said "there are so many (adults) who place Lincoln at the top of their list of great people and a good number of them are from countries other than America. It makes you really understand how universally respected and admired Lincoln is." Judy enjoys the sense of tradition and timelessness that New Salem offers. "You can step back into the 1830's with a few steps and the right state of mind. It is a special place for many people." Judy has tied her hobbies to New Salem. She loves history, genealogy, textiles, and especially enjoys researching Menard County and New Salem.

Shirley Stewart is from Petersburg, IL. She is married and has been a clerk at the store since 2007. Like most of the New Salem volunteers she is retired and has begun volunteering because she loves the park and the history that goes with it. She loves meeting people from all areas of the country and the world. She enjoys talking with people from foreign countries. She said "They know so much about Abraham Lincoln."

Lynda Beatty and her husband, Bill, live in Petersburg, IL. She has been clerking at the store since 2005. She enjoys meeting people from all over the world. One man from Argentina was especially impressive. She said "He was a big Lincoln fan and knew so very much about our President." Lynda has retired and she said "my retirement finally allowed me the time to donate and my friends worked there and I knew it would be fun (It is!)." Her hobbies include crafting, reading, puzzles (crosswords and soduko) and "riding my Harley motorcycle." If you see someone in a period dress popping a wheelie behind the Museum Store, you know it is Lynda!

*******THE NEW SALEM DELI & KALEIDOSCOOPS ICE CREAM PARLOR *******
Will be open many evenings this season! Check out the new look and the new menu items!

2008 SPECIAL EVENTS

Remind your friends and neighbors that all Special Events are FREE

June 28 - All in a Day's Work

Observe cooking on the hearth, washing and mending clothes, spinning, weaving, knitting, butter churning, dipping candles; making baskets, and more. Home health care & home schooling were also part of everyday life as was gardening, tending the animals, chopping wood, toting water & fetching the eggs. The Ann Rutledge Quilters and The New Salem Fiber Guild will also display quilts and textiles at the New Salem Visitors Center. Hours: 9am to 5pm.

July 26 - Morgan Horse Demonstration

The Mississippi Morgan Horse Club will present a daylong exhibit and demonstrate the many uses of Morgan horses. Demonstrations will be held at 10:30am, 1pm, and 3pm.

September 6 & 7 - Traditional Music Festival

Impromptu demonstrations and performances of early 19th century music and dancing will occur throughout the pioneer village of New Salem. Hours: 10am to 5pm both days.

Sept. 20 - Fur, Feather & Fin: Frontier Style

Learn how New Salem's most misunderstood resident, Jack Kelso, made his living hunting, fishing and trapping in Central Illinois during the 1830's. Witness firsthand how early pioneers put food on the table and clothing on their backs. Demonstrations will include hunting with bow and arrow, fishing with nets, the trapping of various animals, & operation of an 1830's smokehouse. Hours: 9am to 5pm.

October 3 & 4 - Candlelight Tour

Bring the family to experience New Salem village after dark. Interpreters in period clothing will welcome you into the reconstructed log homes of the historic village where Abraham Lincoln lived for six years. Hours: 7pm to 9pm both nights.

October 4 & 5 - Historic Surveying

An 1830's surveying party will be viewing (surveying) the road throughout the village using period instruments and interpreting their function. Hours: 9am to 5pm both days.

THEATRE IN THE PARK!

BOX OFFICE HOURS

Box Office opens May 10, 2008

Hours: 9 a.m. - 5 p.m.

Performance Night Hours: 9 a.m. - 8 p.m.

TICKETS (All performances)

\$12 Adult, \$10 Seniors, \$7 Children (under 12)

For reservations and to order,
call 217-632-5440 or 1-800-710-9290.

"Kiss Me Kate"

June 6 - 8, 12 - 15

Songwriters Circle

June 20 & 21, 20

Paul Ingle, Tom Irwin, Ben Bedford and other regional area musician/songwriters sit in a group and take turns singing their original songs. May center around Sangamon/Menard County theme.

"John Brown's Body"

by Stephen Vincent Benet,

June 27 - 29 and July 3 - 6

"Dyed in the Wool"

July 11 & 12

American Folk Music with a Celtic Edge, Dyed in the Wool is a band with a unique mix of American Folk and Celtic traditions. John Devens, Julia Dusek-Devens, Jim White, and Meghan McKown come from a diverse set of backgrounds to form this lively group.

CHECK OU THE WEB!

<http://www.oldandinteresting.com/> has some info on kitchen and wash day "tools" that I thought people might be interested in seeing. Some of the assumptions I always made about laundry day really reflect later times than New Salem, at least according to this website.

There was a mangle that pre-dates New Salem but I don't think it would have ever been found this far west in the 1830s due to the size. I've been hunting for some pictures of one ever since I found a reference in an 1830s article.

I also wondered about clothespins and folding iron boards. Looks like clothespins are possible but they would have been hand carved until the 1850s, with Shakers, peddlers, and Gypsies making most of the early ones. Interesting that a clip clothespin was patented in the 1830s but it wasn't workable and not produced. The folding ironing board is later than New Salem; they would have used a board over the back of two chairs. [*Editor's note: In her book , Christiana Tillson recalled introducing clothes pins to her southern upland neighbors in Hillsboro, Illinois in the 1820s. But she had to convince a neighbor to carve them for her.-CJS*]

Regarding *The Workwoman's Guide* on the Google book site, since it is a later date and was published in London, has anyone compared to the Old Sturbridge reprint? It would be interesting to know what if any differences there were between the two editions.

Besides Google books, I assume (?) everyone knows about www.gutenberg.org -- there are several 1830s books on that site that can be downloaded. Several of these have mention of women's tasks that are worth downloading.

Hope Wright
Springfield IL

BOOK CORNER

House of Abraham: **Lincoln & the Todds, A Family Divided By War** By Stephen Berry

SUBMITTED BY JOHN BLANKENBERGER

Like most of you who read the *Prairie Picayune* I have read many books about Abraham Lincoln and Mary Todd Lincoln. Most fall into a pattern and cover much of the same material. That is not the case with the House of Abraham: Lincoln & The Todds, A Family Divided By War. Stephen Berry takes a unique approach.

I have looked at the genealogy of my own and my wife's families and found that we had family members that fought on both sides in the Civil War. One always reads that "brother fought brother" in this war. I did not fully understand what this meant until I read House of Abraham. Berry takes us inside the Lincoln White House and the reader sees a **home**, not a national monument. One can almost feel the tension that existed as Mary and Abraham Lincoln struggled to respond the Todd family's actions as a result of their decisions to either support "Brother Lincoln" or to join the Confederacy. The reader sees how this family's

struggle brought the human aspects of the war to Mr. Lincoln. Through Mary's family the war became flesh and bone, not just reports and statistics, battles won and battles lost.

Mary Todd Lincoln's father, Robert Smith Todd, had six children by Eliza Parker and eight by Elizabeth Humphreys. All were born in Kentucky. The four girls born to Robert and Eliza moved to Springfield at various times in their lives. One would think that this group would not be a source of concern for Lincoln during the war, but no, Berry tells the story of Elizabeth Todd's husband, Ninian Edwards, and how he was an embarrassment to Lincoln. The two sons born to Robert and Eliza, Levi and George, each had a history of cruelty and difficulties in life. George Rogers Clark Todd served in the Confederate army and became a national story when his abuse of prisoners of war became known.

The eight younger Todds born to Robert and his second wife, Elizabeth Humphrey, are the subjects of most of the book. Samuel, David and Alexander Todd all served in the Confederate army. Samuel and Alexander were killed in the war and David, like George, was accused of prisoner abuse. Berry tells their stories in terms of their activities impact on Lincoln and the national news coverage that often followed them, even though their ranks would not have warranted so much as a mention had they not been related to Lincoln.

I found the stories of the younger Todd women, Margaret, Martha, Emilie, Elodie and Catherine, most compelling. Berry captures the interesting relationships between Mary and her younger sisters, as well as Lincoln's relationships to his sister-in-laws. All of the younger Todd women married men with ties to the Confederacy. Emilie Todd married Benjamin Helm who was killed in the war. Emilie visited the White House after his death, and, because she was the widow of a Confederate officer, this was fodder for anti-Lincoln publicity. Martha Todd White was accused of being a spy and smuggler. Her story is interesting to say the least. Running through all of the accounts of their activities is the story of the struggles of Elizabeth Humphrey Todd, their mother. Her war was one of loss, destruction and separation. Berry brings these to life for the reader.

Something I did not expect as I picked up this book unfolded as I read. I began to see a new Mary Todd Lincoln as I observed her relationships to her siblings and her reactions to the crises of her family. There is a wonderful story I encourage you to read involving Mary, Emilie and Senator Harris. You will find that the Senator met his match in trying to insult the two Todd sisters, one speaking for the North and the other for the South in the White House.

One story Berry tells I would like to share here because it is a perfect example of what this book is about. On page 153 Berry begins a story involving Tad Lincoln and his cousin, Katie Helm. "Tad and Katie were sitting before a fire, looking at old photographs. After showing his little cousin one of himself, Tad picked up one of his father. 'This is the president,' he told her proudly. Katie shook her head: 'That is not the President, Mr. Davis is President.' Tad would not have it. He loved being the president's son. 'Hurrah for Abe Lincoln,' he cried. 'Hurrah for Jeff Davis,' Katie replied. The whole scene was deeply amusing to Lincoln. Determined to pacify the 'little belligerents,' he placed one on each knee. 'Well, Tad,' he said, 'you know who is your President, and I am your little cousin's Uncle Lincoln.'"

While New Salem is mentioned only twice in this book, it is a book that anyone connected with New Salem will enjoy. Lincoln learned much during his time at New Salem and the everyday life taught him

about families. I would have to believe that his observations helped him deal in at least a small way with what the Todd family brought into his life. This book gives us a chance to see New Salem's favorite son deal with the "in-laws" and their difficulties with his being the "enemy President."

WE WANT TO HEAR FROM YOU!

Please e-mail your articles, letters, book reviews, and comments to Carol Shafer at cshafer@gcctv.com or to John Blankenberger at johnblankenberger@sbcglobal.net. Include "Pic" or "New Salem" in the subject line. Or send it to "New Salem Volunteer Newsletter," PO Box 471, Athens, Illinois 62613 c/o Carol Jenkins Shafer. Please include your phone number and/or address in case we have questions or need to clarify something. Please try to plan ahead. We need to have submissions by the 20th to ensure mailing by the 1st of the next month.