

Mentor Graham
(teacher - New Salem)

DRAWER 4 EDUCATION

712009.085.03536

Abraham Lincoln and Education

Mentor Graham
(William Mentor Graham)

Excerpts from newspapers and other
sources

From the files of the
Lincoln Financial Foundation Collection

LINCOLN'S EARLY DAYS.

Facts About One of the Preceptors of His Youth.

To the Editor of the Globe-Democrat: 1893

PETERSBURG, ILL., July 5.—About the year 1828 the small village of New Salem was founded, in what became in 1839 Menard County. The little hamlet that to-day is famous as the early home of Lincoln stood on the right bank of the Sangamon River, about two miles south of the county seat, Petersburg. Few traces of the town are left; only here and there the nearly filled cellars, making slight depressions in the ground, show where the buildings once stood that sheltered the 200 or 300 people who lived here when Salem was at its best. An old settler pointed out to me the place where the Rutledge tavern stood when Lincoln did chores for his board when his finances were so low that he could not pay.

Back in the early thirties (so my informant said) Mentor Graham opened a school in a log church on the farm of Thomas Watkins, which adjoined Salem. Here he taught a few of the children of the town and surrounding country for the modest compensation of \$8 per quarter each.

Graham was a very learned man for his day in the pioneer West—a typical pedagogue of the border. He was tall, straight and muscular, and with courage sufficient to hold his own in a country where it took brawn as well as brain to teach school.

The following incident will give an idea as to how the master of that day had to conquer a peace. One day in the little town of Graham he was approached by a strapping youth, who remarked: "When I was a boy I always said that I would thrash you when I was grown, and I am going to do it now." "Try it, young man; but you should have waited until you were older." Thereupon he administered a punishment that taught the youth that he could still take lessons of his former preceptor.

In none of the biographies and sketches of Lincoln that it has been my fortune to read has Graham ever received the credit due him for his patience and care in laying the foundation of Lincoln's education. The teacher was an enthusiast in his calling and he found the mind of young Lincoln rich and virgin soil in which to sow the seeds of knowledge.

One of the brightest students in Graham's now historic country school was Ann Rutledge. With a mind easily trained and a desire to excel she soon acquired a knowledge of the few books that were to be obtained in the settlement. Graham advised her to study grammar, and her father sent to St. Louis by a trader for the book, which is now a highly prized heirloom in her family on account of its association with one whose future greatness lends a charm to the name and memory of the girl. From the time of Lincoln's arrival in Salem (1831) and his acquaintance with Graham he evinced a lively interest in the teacher and the school, and every Friday afternoon, when it was possible, he attended the spelling match which always wound up the exercises for the week. Graham was a good converser, and Lincoln sought his company and enjoyed the long talks in which the master ever dwelt upon the advantages of education. One day Lincoln expressed a desire to study arithmetic, of which he knew but little. Graham, ever ready with encouraging words, immediately proceeded to explain the use of figures and to point out to the ungainly boy their value. From this time on the whole trend of Lincoln's life was changed. The contact with Graham, who was himself a student, turned him from the rough sports of the pioneers, in which he was a master, and created a desire for learning, which would raise him above his companions, who knew and cared little for books. Lincoln, at this time, worked at whatever his hand could find to do, fighting for a living with ax and reaping-hook. His skill with the former made his services in demand for the clearing of the spot for the cabin, and his great strength made him invaluable in piling the huge logs on top of each other in the construction of the house.

When Lincoln was finally employed as clerk in Offut's store he managed to give more time to his books. In the long summer afternoons he would lie on the counter and figure on the wrapping paper, and Graham, coming by from school, would criticize his work and urge him on. He pretty thoroughly mastered the arithmetic, and after the failure of himself and his employer as merchants he devoted still more time to his teacher and his books. His appointment as Deputy Surveyor came, and he immediately applied to his friend Graham, who told me that Lincoln acquired the science of laying out lands and describing them by metes and bounds in the incredibly short space of six weeks. His position of Deputy Surveyor made it possible for him to exist without having to perform the exhaustive labor to which he had been accustomed (except the short time he was clerk and mer-

chant), and gave him time to continue his studies. Graham insisted that he should take up the grammar, but he could not find one. So it was finally arranged by Graham that after school hours he was to have the use of Ann Rutledge's and study in the evenings. As in other pursuits of learning, Lincoln made rapid progress and quickly overtook the prize scholar, who had already evinced a maidenly interest in the struggling young man. Then in the evenings they studied together, and Graham would come in to hear them recite and encourage Abe to push his education. He pointed with prophetic finger to the upward path that lay before the youth if he could but plant his feet firmly upon it. No wonder that in these evenings, with that grammar before him and the brown eyes of the rustic beauty fixed upon him, Lincoln lost his head and dreamed of the time when he as a scholar would make for them both a home amid more congenial surroundings. Graham saw during these studious days that his pupil had a most wonderful faculty for acquiring information, and insisted that he should study law. Lincoln had won quite a reputation among his backwoods friends as a public speaker, but it was not until Graham had insisted again and again that he borrowed from a friend in Springfield some lawbooks and plunged into them with his characteristic energy.

Soon after beginning the study of law he removed to Springfield and started on that upward path—pointed out by Graham—which placed him finally in the highest position accorded to man. Mentor Graham taught long in the neighborhood of Salem, and in later years talked much of the days when President Lincoln was his pupil. Who knows but that for the meeting of these two the brightest star of the nineteenth century might never have arisen?

Certain it is that, while different persons have boasted of having been Lincoln's instructor, Mentor Graham was the earnest, capable man sent by Providence to impart his enthusiasm in education to the man who became the great central figure of our times.

Mentor Graham in his declining years lost his wife, his sons, his home, everything, and, aged, poor, forgotten, he died not long since in an obscure village in Dakota, whither he had gone to avoid the poor house among the acquaintances of his more prosperous days.

JACK D. WRIGHT.

An Early Illinois School Master



MENTOR GRAHAM

Abraham Lincoln's tutor at New Salem

"I know of my own knowledge that Graham did more than all others to educate Lincoln."—R. B. Rutledge.

POST CARD

PLACE
STAMP
HERE

The
Illinois Pupils Reading Circle

has supplied books to the schools
of your county since July 1, 1931.

We thank you most sincerely for your
interest and cooperation as County Man-
ager.

D. F. NICKOLS, Manager.

April 5, 1932.

3

LINCOLN NATIONAL
MAIL DEPARTMENT

Referred to _____

REC'D MAR 11 1940

Answered _____

LIFE INSURANCE CO. D

1617 North Vassar Avenue, Wichita, Kans.
March seven, 1940

Information Bureau,
Lincoln National Life Foundation,
Fort Wayne, Indiana

I have been directed to you as a possible source of assistance in a writing concerning Mentor Graham, schoolmaster of New Salem Illinois from 1828 to 1838(?), and between the years of 1831--and 3 tutor to Abraham Lincoln.

His life while in Illinois is well authenticated for my book, but I find much trouble with his first 28 years which were lived in Kentucky. His father, Jeremiah Graham, was son of William Graham, supposed to have entered Kentucky County of Virginia in the early 1770's--perhaps with Benjamin Lynn, whose sister was William Graham's wife. At any rate, these two, William Graham and his wife, Nancy Lynn Graham, had a large family: ~~Robert (1788)~~ Johnson, Lynn, Jeremiah and Robert--and two daughters.

Jeremiah's children were : Mentor(1800) born near Greensburg, Green County, Ky; Robert, John, Johnson, Nancy and Elizabeth.

If you can direct me to sources of information concerning these Grahams in Kentucky, or their ancestors in the Carolinas(Ky. Historians say they came from South, Illinois historians, from North Carolina), I shall be grateful.

Mentor is said to have taught in Friendship, Brush and Greensburg schools before going to Illinois in 1828.

Thank you,

Kunigunde Duncan

March 13, 1940

Mr. Kunigund Duncan
1617 North Vassar Ave.
Wichita, Kansas

Dear Mr. Duncan:

While in Hodgenville, Kentucky, this last summer, I talked with William Graham about his ancestry, having known that Mentor Graham came from the Lincoln community just across the line in Green County.

Possibly if you will write to Mr. Graham in Hodgenville, he may be able to help you trace the ancestry of Mentor Graham. The records of Green County are attached and I happen to have done some research work there this summer, but I did not pay special attention to the Graham family. Of course, you are familiar with the fact that many of the New Salem people came from Green County, Kentucky, but it seems to me that Mr. William Graham of Hodgenville, Kentucky, would be your best contact.

Very truly yours,

LAW:KS
L.A. Warren

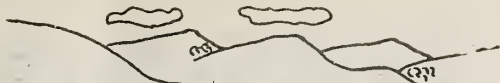
Director



THE WI-IYOHI

(Moon)

(Each)



Monthly Bulletin of the South Dakota Historical Society

Vol. V.

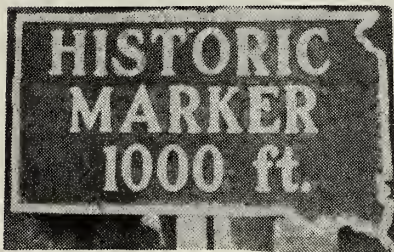
August 1, 1951

No. 5

THE WI-IYOHE

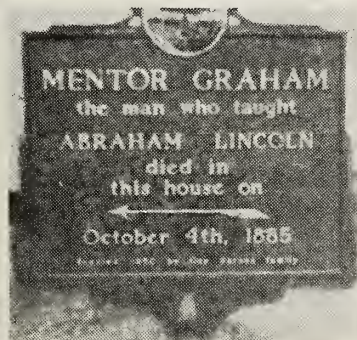
UNDERGOES A CHANGE

For exactly four years and four months the Wi-iyohé has, in form, make up and appearance, been a headache. For the grammarian who dislikes split infinitives it has been much worse no doubt. It seems doubtful that there will be any marked improvement from his standpoint in the immediate future but in form we think it will be a real improvement. To start with, we are using a lightweight book paper instead of mimeograph stuff and the pictures should show a real improvement. Then we are eliminating the "insert" which never had a page continuity. We hope you like the new appearance. We may find it necessary to make a charge to non-member addressees but hope we can avoid that.

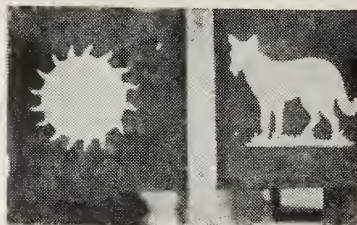


That tells its own story. One of the difficulties about reading the Historic Markers are that you are well by them usually before you know what you have passed. It's dangerous to back up and when you do, frequently there is no TURNOUT at the sign. We want to do something

about it and the above sign is what we have done over at Blunt where we have a sign like the one below on the highway right in town. We hope to have this on a TURNOUT one of these days. Because every sign has a reverse, it seemed like a pious idea to put something on the reverse. We sent a copy for either a Sunshiny SUN or a COYOTE to the sign maker and told them to use the one they liked best. It seems that every sign has to have a support and that it is usually on the back and they solved the difficulty by putting both the Coyote and the Sun on the back. And now we think it is a very good idea indeed. The sign is made of cast aluminum and is 24 x 15 inches overall. The background is brown with the words and figures in yellow and it not only is attractive but also at-



tracts the tourist attention to the fact that 1000 feet in advance is something he may want to stop and take a look at. This is the way the back of the sign looks and now that we have you stopped to read the sign you might as well go in and look the place over. Just to let folks know that it has a historical and patriotic background there is a flag flying from a 30 foot pole which you can see by looking at the picture below rather closely and if you have a reading glass you can see the myriad of apples on the tree east of the house. The Lawn,



planted last Fall as a Community effort by a lot of the good people of Blunt has fared well and by Fall we expect to have a very respectable flower showing also. As can be seen, the whole is enclosed in a substantial fence, so substantial in fact that some of the "kidders" over in Blunt asked if we expected to keep a bull. Right beside the front door is a bronze plaque. We thought we had a suitable picture but the lithographer ruled it out. It however reads:

MENTOR GRAHAM

Died here October 4, 1885. He was Abraham Lincoln's teacher. This house donated 1946 to South Dakota State Historical Society by the following Life Members: Charles L. Hyde, Doane Robinson, Henry M. Reed, Rex Terry, Theodore F. Riggs, Wm. H. Pringle, William Williamson, E. D. Roberts.

The house has been repainted, a shingle roof placed on the main part. The floors in two rooms have been replaced, the plaster repaired all over the house, and the two front rooms have been papered. Electric

lights have been installed and all in all it is quite a comfortable place. We have been fortunate in getting furniture of the period in which it was lived in by Mentor Graham and at long last a chest of drawers that he had in the house. People who were there have advised what sort of an item was in what place in the house and so far as obtainable we have duplicated the item in place. The picture below was taken from the bed room, through the double doors. To be noted are the picture of Mentor in his high hat, the insignia of the learned in-that day. The folding chair and the love seat were donated by Mrs. Robert Ray of Sturgis, the couch was located in an old attic in Blunt and entirely recovered, the table is part of the items contributed by Mr. Harold Fisher, formerly of St. Lawrence, as are the great bed, the dresser and commode in the bed room. We have sought some of the furniture that was there

when lived in by Mentor Graham and last year through the kind offices of Mr. D. F. Nichols, of Lincoln, Ill., co-author of the book "Mentor Graham", we obtained the rocker shown below. This was not the one Graham had at Blunt - but an exact duplicate that had been in the family. This Spring, and thanks again to Mr. Nichols, we obtained the chest of drawers depicted below from Mrs. Sellars of Mt. Pulaski, Ill., distant kin of Graham. By and large, we have the

living room and bed room furnished as we want them. On the walls are pictures, framed items, including the newspaper with his obituary, telling the story of this remarkable man. He

died in this house 66 years ago on the 5th day of October and it is now planned to have a formal Dedication of this house to the Memory of Mentor Graham and his great student. Further announcement of the programme will be given herein and thru

the newspaper. The pictures contained on this and the preceding and following page have been placed on Postcards and



will hereafter be on sale at the House - as well as the Mentor Graham books. It has taken the better part of five years to get this place rehabilitated. It is by no means completed as yet but it is so far along as to make it well worth a short visit. Below are pictures of the front or east wall of the living room and a picture of the SW corner where the organ and an unusual picture of Lincoln are the attractions.



VOLUME XXV HISTORICAL COLLECTIONS

This volume in due course should have been in the hands of our membership prior to December, 1950. Printing costs had so risen that the General Appropriation for printing was exhausted prior to that time and while all copy had been with the printer since July, 1950 the final publication had to await a new fiscal year. We believe NOW, barring some unforeseen difficulty, that this Volume will be mailed out in the next 60 days. It will contain: Donald D. Parker has found some new material which he has added to the History of Early Exploration of South Dakota and the Fur Trade therein, with emphasis on the Missouri River and the area east of it. This fine treatise contains extraordinarily good footnotes and the notes contain copious reference to the sources so that it serves a dual purpose most satisfactorily. Hyman Palais, of Humboldt State College, California, had written a story of early day Stage and Wagon Roads, gleaning his material from newspapers and such sources. To this fine story the Secretary has added a considerable number of footnotes where there was any incompleteness and a series of Maps, covering the exact location of the stage lines and of the Stations. Norman Thomas has written a story of the Hutterian Brethren, tracing their history in Europe briefly and supplying charts and tables showing their goings and comings in America. There are also Maps

STIFF COURSE OF READING PREPARED ABE LINCOLN FOR HIS CAREER AS PUBLIC MAN

William Mentor Graham Had the Future Statesman in His Blab School Only Six Weeks, but Followed Through With Years of Instruction Based on His 200-Book Library, and Including Public Speaking as Well as Study. *Kentucky Star 2-12-52*

The writer of the following article is co-author of the book, "William Mentor Graham, the Man Who Taught Lincoln."

BY KUNIGUNDE DUNCAN.

LIKE the legend of Daniel Boone, the legend of Abraham Lincoln's being a "self-made man" will doubtless never be altered in the popular mind. Yet the truth is that a man named Graham preceded Boone into "Kentucky County of Virginia" and roamed much farther west than Boone; Abraham Lincoln completed what would more than equal a modern college or university course under a man also named Graham, a descendant of the Kentucky trail maker.

Among the recently opened Robert Lincoln papers, now on exhibition at the Library of Congress, are a few in the fading script of William Mentor Graham, New Salem, Ill., school-master at the time Lincoln lived there. They verify, without doubt, the fact that Lincoln was his student, first in blab school and later, for many months, as a private student. A part of this time Lincoln lived in the home of Graham, working for board, room and tutoring.

These statements, written by Graham, are dated Petersburg, Ill., 1884. They are in letters to B. F. Irwin, who was then writing a biography of Lincoln which can be found in any library, as one item of reliable data concerning Lincoln.

Still Farming at 84.

In 1884 Graham was 84 years old, and his script is none too firm. Even at such an age this teacher-farmer was still teaching, still farming, and he apologizes for his poor writing by saying, "My hands are too stiff from plowing to write plainly."

"Lincoln attended my blab school in 1831," Graham wrote, "altogether about six weeks. In the month of February, 1833, he came to live with me. I taught him the rules of surveying. I do not think he was anything of a mathematician—especially in geometry and trigonometry—before he came to my house. I think I may say that he was my scholar and I was his teacher. He commenced the study of grammar with me and would recite to me in the evening. He lived with me about six months."

Graham, Lincoln's senior by only nine years, relates further that he and his scholar became very close friends, and that Lincoln confessed his ambition to

(Ill.) Republican and two small, local papers. "Reading," in Graham's philosophy, meant making a mental digest (to be recited orally) of what each faction stood for. After this, any injustice, illogic, untruth, any undermining immorality, any inadequate English must be pointed out and its correction worded.

Reading Meant Learning.

From 1831 to 1837, under a stern master, Abraham Lincoln read every book in Graham's small but meaty library; this, too, according to Graham's inevitable "sentence by sentence" method, as he read newspapers. In addition, the scholar must restate every sentence in his own words. Since Graham owned 200 volumes, this part of Lincoln's course was, alone, a challenge to anything comparable in today's university courses.

The volumes were philosophy, Bible commentary, history, English masters of poetry, Latin and Greek in translation, natural history, astronomy and files

attended by New Salem children, was down the hill from town, held in the log church house the first settlers had built on Greene's Rocky Branch. Graham had hewn and hand-smoothed all the lumber in his house, and had made most of the furniture.

Finally, Graham guided Lincoln, the man still ambitious for public life, in the matter of speech-making. All during his "reading," Lincoln had also been set to writing and delivering speeches. From being a loutish clown at it, he became an impressive, even moving speaker. Sometimes the pupil rewrote his speech a dozen times.

Hot Subjects for Debate.

Graham had invited the raw Lincoln to become a member of the debating society, for which speeches were properly prepared and frequently given. If no society was meeting, or Lincoln had no part in the current debate, his speechwriting and making went on in private. There were ample topics: slavery, education of women, steamboat river commerce, heaven and hell, and teaching the Negro.

Graham lived to be 86. He died in Blunt, S. D., in the home of his pioneering son. In 1933 the teachers of Illinois returned his body to the Sangamon country. In Kentucky, he and Lincoln had lived nine miles apart in Green County. They now sleep, separated by about the same distance, Lincoln in his rightly honored tomb, Graham in his recently honored, more humble grave that bears the inscription, "William Mentor Graham, the Man Who Taught Lincoln."

That inscription is the title of the biography of Graham which I prepared in collaboration with D. F. Nickols, who died in Lincoln, Ill., last August.



WILLIAM MENTOR GRAHAM . . . HE HAD A LARGE PART IN SHAPING ABE LINCOLN'S SKILL WITH THE ENGLISH LANGUAGE.

of anti-slavery papers. From this the real stature of Lincoln's course of study begins to become apparent. If one had resaid in his own words the sentence-by-sentence accounts in 200 such volumes, he would have mastered an understanding of several 4-year courses.

And, of course, in addition, all of Graham's textbooks were studied the same way. Lincoln was finally permitted to cease studying grammar only when he had successfully parsed every

L . . . Foster Island

st
za
P;
or
sp
lir
tr;
isl
pu
ha
of
th
by
its

Shrine At Blunt Immortalizes Story Of Man Who Influenced Lincoln's Life

(American-News Dakota News Service)

BLUNT — Memories of Abraham Lincoln stirred again with the anniversary of his birth last week and thoughts of Harry Lincoln Graham and Mentor Graham were revived here.

Just how the name Lincoln is connected with Harry Graham is a well-known story in this South Dakota community.

Harry was named after his father's great friend, Abraham, when Lincoln was essentially an unknown. Sarah, the mother, insisted on calling the boy Harry L. Mentor but the father always called Abraham "Big Lincoln" and Harry "Little Lincoln."

Harry's father was Mentor Graham — "the man who taught Lincoln."

Mentor's counsel, advice, friendship and teaching shaped Lincoln's life and thus helped develop the destiny of our nation, according to many present-day Lincoln historians.

SHRINE ESTABLISHED

Today a shrine to Abraham Lincoln and the man who influenced his life has been established at Blunt. It was to Blunt that Mentor and the "Little Lincoln" family moved in 1883. Harry purchased a boarding house here but settlers were establishing themselves so fast then that the business was unprofitable. In November of 1884, Harry bought a house from Reuben and C. C. Norton.

Less than a year later Mentor died in the house at the age of 85. The week he died the Blunt Advocate was established as a daily paper in the then prosperous community. The obituary of Mentor Graham appeared on the front page of the first issue, dated Oct. 7, 1885.

It read as follows: "Mentor Graham died at the residence of his son, H. L. Graham, in this place on Sunday evening last. Mr. Graham was born in Hardin County, Kentucky, in 1802 and in 1822 moved to Illinois. At 17 years of age he engaged in teaching and continued in that profession for 55 years. Abraham Lincoln and Governor Yates were among his pupils. Those who, like the writer, first knew Mr. Graham when the weight of years had destroyed the vigor of manhood, can only appreciate the worth of his character and but faintly conceive the influence he erected in moulding the minds of men who bore so large a part in guiding and preserving our nation during the period of the Rebellion."

INFLUENCE NOTED

Mentor was buried in the little cemetery on the hill about a mile

west of the house in which he died. The cemetery is located beside the road on U. S. 14 and to the north. Some years after the burial, relatives removed the body to a Farmer's Point, Ill. cemetery where it was re-interred.

That Graham played a large part in the development of Lincoln is not doubted for he was the man who taught Lincoln grammar. Prior to the lessons, Lincoln had wanted to give up further study but Mentor sold Abraham on the need of studies for a man who wanted to pursue public life.

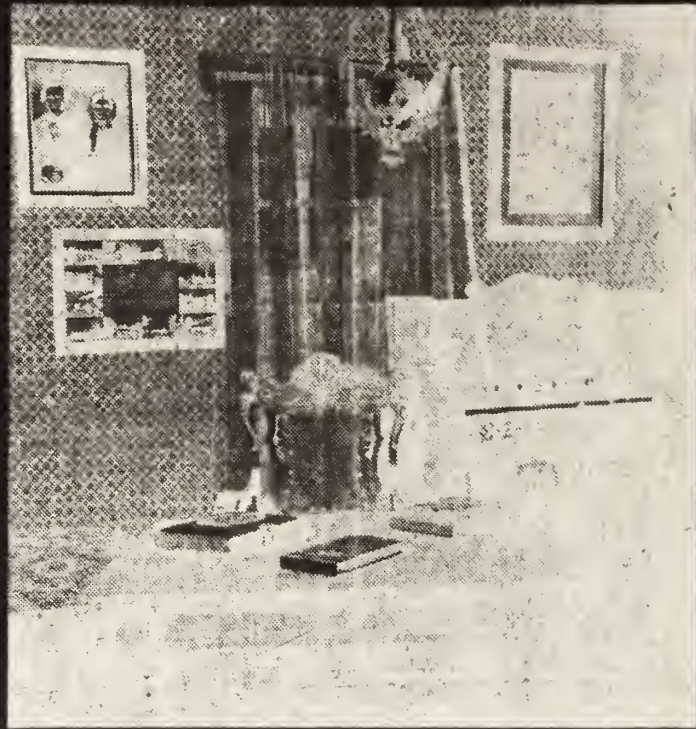
The two men spent 15 years of study and friendship at New Salem, Ill. During six months of the time Lincoln lived at the Graham home. It was during that time that he became engaged to Ann Rutledge.

STORY TOLD

Graham's influence is vividly shown in the book "Mentor Graham, the Man who Taught Lincoln" by Kunigunde Duncan and D. F. Nichols.

To further perpetuate the story of this important but little known American, the South Dakota State Historical Society bought the Harry Lincoln Graham house at Blunt when it was up for tax sale in 1946. The group restored the house from a dilapidated, unpainted and windowless frame to a trim memorial refurnished with fittings entirely appropriate to the period when Graham made the Blunt house his living place.


★ ★ ★ ★ ★



THE INTERIOR OF THE GRAHAM SHRINE at Blunt has been refurnished with fittings and furniture appropriate to the period when Mentor Graham, Abraham Lincoln's teacher, made the house his living place. Pictures of the Graham family and Lincoln dot the walls. Old-style lamps and furniture, including an old-fashioned organ, provide an atmosphere of the 1880s. The house shrine has been restored by the South Dakota Historical Society to spread the important story of "the man who taught Lincoln."



HERE IS THE GRAHAM HOUSE at Blunt that the South Dakota State Historical Society purchased at a tax sale in 1946. The house at that time was dilapidated, without windows and unpainted. The historical group has renovated the house and improved it to the degree noticeable in the above picture. It was in this house that Mentor Graham, "the man who taught Lincoln," died in October of 1885 at the age of 85. The estate is now a shrine to Abraham Lincoln and the man who influenced his life.



**Aberdeen Lodge
No. 38**

F. C. Degree

8:00 P. M.

Tuesday — Lunch

Lincoln-Ann Rutledge Romance Confirmed by Tutor's Report

Yellowed Foolscap Sheets in Library of Congress Bear Mentor Graham's Answers to Questions Regarding Schoolday Sweethearts in Illinois Who Were His Pupils—Betrothal Is Often Disputed.

By Kunigunde Duncan.

RECENTLY one of America's most cherished romances, that of Ann Rutledge and Abraham Lincoln, has fallen prey to that type of literary debunkers who revel in the it-never-happened-at-all technique. And certainly, at no

and the romance as fact. Yellowed and faded, the original manuscript may be seen in the Library of Congress, old-fashioned sheets of lined, foolscap paper, closely covered with the rhythmic script of Mentor Graham. He thus uniquely proves his own existence, another matter

amiable, kind and (—?) a good scholar in all the common branches, including grammar."

In the Congressional Library is to be found the Kirkham's Grammar which Ann studied in Graham's home. On its fly-leaf, in two different scripts, are two names: hers and Lincoln's. As Graham says, she and Abe were both being tutored by him and she was at his house when she was seized with the malarial fever that took her life.

"She was beloved by everybody and she loved everybody," reads the yellowed foolscap sheet.

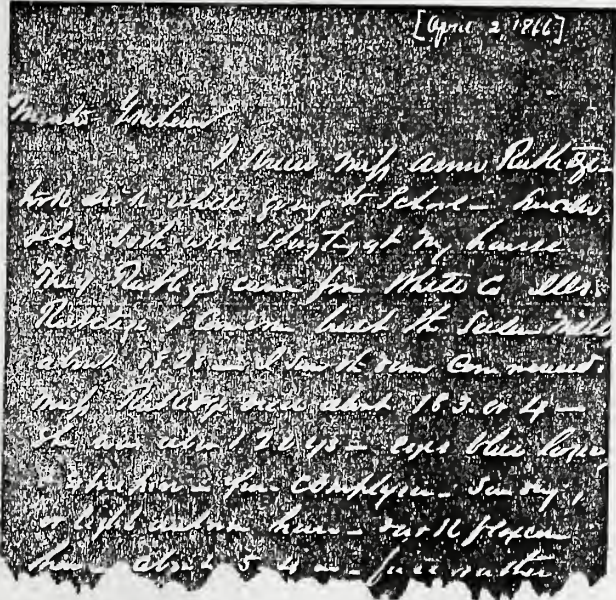
Lincoln Told of Betrothal.

Finally the page closes with answers as definite as they are final to all questioners of the Ann Rutledge-Abraham Lincoln romance:

"Lincoln and she were engaged. Lincoln told me so. She intimated to me the same. He, Lincoln, told me that he felt like committing suicide often (after her death) but I told him of God's higher purpose. He told me he thought so too, somehow, couldn't tell how. He said that my remarks and others' had often done him good."

"Many more sheets of yellowing foolscap in the Library of Congress are of like nature: Graham's personally given information, together with many letters written by him out of pure good will, and because Lincoln was also his well-remembered long-ago pupil.

Most are dated in the year 1865 and all are written from



In His Fine Hand, Mentor Graham Set Down His Personal Knowledge of Ann Rutledge and Her Romance With Abraham Lincoln.

time, have writers who regard her as real agreed as to her personal appearance and abilities.

Yet since the year 1865 a vivid and quite complete description of her, by a man who knew her and tutored her, has been passed over. The man who provided it was making

which the debunkers have attacked with everything from scorn to baseless argument. It is not difficult, from his answers to deduce what Herndon's questions were.

Under date of April 2, 1865, the page concerning Ann Rutledge begins:

"I knew Miss Ann Rutledge.

Shrine At Blunt Immortalizes Story Of Man Who Influenced Lincoln's Life

(American-News Dakota News Service)

BLUNT — Memories of Abraham Lincoln stirred again with the anniversary of his birth last week and thoughts of Harry Lincoln Graham and Mentor Graham were revived here.

Just how the name Lincoln is connected with Harry Graham is a well-known story in this South Dakota community.

Harry was named after his father's great friend, Abraham, when Lincoln was essentially an unknown. Sarah, the mother, insisted on calling the boy Harry L. Mentor but the father always called Abraham "Big Lincoln" and Harry "Little Lincoln."

Harry's father was Mentor Graham — "the man who taught Lincoln."

Mentor's counsel, advice, friendship and teaching shaped Lincoln's life and thus helped develop the destiny of our nation, according to many present-day Lincoln historians.

SHRINE ESTABLISHED

Today a shrine to Abraham Lincoln and the man who influenced his life has been established at Blunt. It was to Blunt that Mentor and the "Little Lincoln" family moved in 1883. Harry purchased a boarding house here but settlers were establishing themselves so fast then that the business was unprofitable. In November of 1884, Harry bought a house from Reuben and C. C. Norton.

Less than a year later Mentor died in the house at the age of 85. The week he died the Blunt Advocate was established as a daily paper in the then prosperous community. The obituary of Mentor Graham appeared on the front page of the first issue, dated Oct. 7, 1885.

It read as follows: "Mentor Graham died at the residence of his son, H. L. Graham, in this place on Sunday evening last. Mr. Graham was born in Hardin County, Kentucky, in 1802 and in 1822 moved to Illinois. At 17 years of age he engaged in teaching and continued in that profession for 55 years. Abraham Lincoln and Governor Yates were among his pupils. Those who, like the writer, first knew Mr. Graham when the weight of years had destroyed the vigor of manhood, can only appreciate the worth of his character and but faintly conceive the influence he erected in moulding the minds of men who bore so large a part in guiding and preserving our nation during the period of the Rebellion."

INFLUENCE NOTED

Mentor was buried in the little cemetery on the hill about a mile

west of the house in which he died. The cemetery is located beside the road on U. S. 14 and to the north. Some years after the burial, relatives removed the body to a Farmer's Point, Ill. cemetery where it was re-interred.

That Graham played a large part in the development of Lincoln is not doubted for he was the man who taught Lincoln grammar. Prior to the lessons, Lincoln had wanted to give up further study but Mentor sold Abraham on the need of studies for a man who wanted to pursue public life.

The two men spent 15 years of study and friendship at New Salem, Ill. During six months of the time Lincoln lived at the Graham home. It was during that time that he became engaged to Ann Rutledge.

STORY TOLD

Graham's influence is vividly shown in the book "Mentor Graham, the Man who Taught Lincoln" by Kunigunde Duncan and D. F. Nichols.

To further perpetuate the story of this important but little known American, the South Dakota State Historical Society bought the Harry Lincoln Graham house at Blunt when it was up for tax sale in 1946. The group restored the house from a dilapidated, unpainted and windowless frame to a trim memorial refurbished with fittings entirely appropriate to the period when Graham made the Blunt house his living place.

★ ★ ★ ★ ★



THE INTERIOR OF THE GRAHAM SHRINE at Blunt has been refurbished with fittings and furniture appropriate to the period when Mentor Graham, Abraham Lincoln's teacher, made the house his living place. Pictures of the Graham family and Lincoln dot the walls. Old-style lamps and furniture, including an old-fashioned organ, provide an atmosphere of the 1880s. The house shrine has been restored by the South Dakota Historical Society to spread the important story of "the man who taught Lincoln."



HERE IS THE GRAHAM HOUSE at Blunt that the South Dakota State Historical Society purchased at a tax sale in 1946. The house at that time was dilapidated, without windows and unpainted. The historical group has renovated the house and improved it to the degree noticeable in the above picture. It was in this house that Mentor Graham, "the man who taught Lincoln," died in October of 1885 at the age of 85. The estate is now a shrine to Abraham Lincoln and the man who influenced his life.

Aberdeen Lodge
No. 38

F. C. Degree

8:00 P. M.

Tuesday — Lunch



Lincoln-Ann Rutledge Romance 2-12-57 Confirmed by Tutor's Report

Yellowed Foolscap Sheets in Library of Congress Bear Mentor Graham's Answers to Questions Regarding Schoolday Sweethearts in Illinois Who Were His Pupils—Betrothal Is Often Disputed.

By Kungunde Duncan.
RECENTLY one of America's most cherished romances, that of Ann Rutledge and Abraham Lincoln, has fallen prey to that type of literary debunkers who revel in the never-happened-at-all technique. And certainly, at no

and the romance as fact. Yellowed and faded, the original manuscript may be seen in the Library of Congress, old-fashioned sheets of lined, foolscap paper, closely covered with the rhythmic script of Mentor Graham. He thus uniquely proves his own existence, another matter

amiable, kind and (—?) a good scholar in all the common branches, including grammar."

In the Congressional Library it is to be found the Kirkham's Grammar which Ann studied in Graham's home. On its fly-leaf, in two different scripts, are two names: hers and Lincoln's. As Graham says, she and Abe were both being tutored by him and she was at his house when she was seized with the malarial fever that took her life.

She was beloved by everybody and she loved everybody," reads the yellowed foolscap sheet.

Lincoln Told of Betrothal
Finally the page clues with answers as definite as they are final in all questioners of the Ann Rutledge-Abraham Lincoln romance:

"Lincoln and she were engaged. Lincoln told me so. She intimated to me the same. He, Lincoln, told me that he felt like committing suicide often after her death but I told him of God's higher purpose. He told me he thought so too, somehow, couldn't tell how. He said that my remarks and hers' had often done him good."

"Many more sheets of yellowed foolscap in the Library of Congress are of like nature. Graham's personally given information, together with many letters written by him out of pure good will, and because Lincoln was also his well-remembered long-ago pupil.

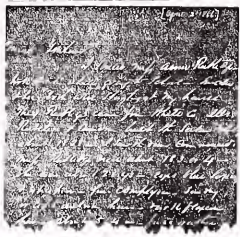
Most are dated in the year 1865 and all are written from Petersburg, his residence then. New Salem, which was not far away, had disappeared; it has been rebuilt in recent years as an Illinois historical site.

The Question Box.

I am seeking a quotation credited to Lincoln, indicating he had no fear of attack from outside the continental United States. Will you print it?

G. M.

In a speech at Springfield



In His Fine Hand, Mentor Graham Set Down His Personal Knowledge of Ann Rutledge and Her Romance With Abraham Lincoln

time, have writers who regard her as real agreed as to her personal appearance and abilities.

Yet since the year 1865 a vivid and quite complete description of her, by a man who knew her and tutored her, has been passed over. The man who provided it was making categorical answers in questions put to him by William Herndon who in 1865, shortly after the assassination of Lincoln, set about gathering material from original sources for a Lincoln biography. So Mentor Graham, tutor and class-school teacher, writing from Petersburg, Ill., gave precise answers to questions in the order asked him, and in doing so left a record that unassail-

ably the debunkers have attacked with everything from scorn to baseless argument. It is not difficult, from his answers to deduce what Herndon's questions were.

Under date of April 2, 1865, the page concerning Ann Rutledge begins:

"I knew Miss Ann Rutledge. She took sick while going to school. Lincoln and she both were studying at my house."

Herndon was Graham's cousin. Like several others, he was working to get his biography of the martyred President out first. Neither man could have possibly foreseen nor twentieth century debunking could any more than they could have been collaborating to concoct a sweet fiction.



Mentor Graham, at About the Time Abraham Lincoln and Ann Rutledge Were His Pupils.

line missing

"They, Rutledges, came from White County, Illinois," the account continues. "Rutledge and Cameron built the New Salem mill about 1828. I saw the same commenced."

"Miss Rutledge died about 1833 or 1834. She was about 20 years old, with blue eyes, large and expressive, fair complexion and sandy or light auburn hair, not flaxen hair."

Thus vanishes the imagined golden-haired Ann. Ann Rutledge was red-haired.

"She was about 5 feet, 4 inches tall," the next line reads. "Face rather round, outlines beautiful. Nervous (one word here underpharable) element predominated. Good teeth. Mouth well made, beautiful. Nervous chin. She weighed about 120-130. She was healthy and vigorous,

"All the armies of Europe, Asia and Africa combined, with all the treasures of the earth in their military chest, with a Bonaparte for a commander, could not by force take a drink from the Ohio or make a track on the Blue Ridge in a trial of a thousand years."

Lincoln, of course, was speaking of the military situation in his own time, not the era of submarines and planes and guided missiles.

Lincoln's Teacher Honored

By WESLEY G. PIPPERT

United Press International

Blunt, S. D., Feb. 12—This small village at the foot of Rattlesnake Butte in South Dakota's prairie country has done its part to commemorate Abraham Lincoln.

It has preserved the house where Abraham Lincoln's teacher, Mentor Graham, lived and died.

Blunt, named for a railroad engineer who used to make water stops there decades and decades ago, is the first town you come to as you swing east on U. S. 14 out of South Dakota's capital city at Pierre.

At the crest of a hill overlooking Blunt from the west lies a little windswept cemetery—where the neighbors prepare the graves. Here Mentor Graham was buried beneath a little wooden cross with the inscription, "The Teacher of Abraham Lincoln."

At the foot of the long descent is the town of Blunt, population 532, where off to the north of the highway is a little white frame house.

Was Native Of Kentucky

Here, Graham, penniless and totally dependent upon his son, spent the last two years of his life, his hopes shattered.

Graham was born in Kentucky near the place where Lincoln was born nine years later. Graham was born to be a teacher—hence the name his parents gave him.

Graham had his first teaching job at the age of 16 in Kentucky.

Later, he moved to New Salem, Ill., and in 1831, young Abraham Lincoln, then 22, and Graham met for the first time. Their friendship lasted the rest of their lives.

Lincoln became a student of Graham, first in the school where Graham was teaching, later in the Graham home. In 1833, Lincoln moved into the Graham home for six months, learning grammar and surveying.

It was during this time that Lincoln met and fell in love with another student of Graham—Anne Rutledge.

Years later, his famed student dead, Mentor Graham, destitute, left Illinois with his son, Harry Lincoln Graham, and his family.

They came to South Dakota and homesteaded near Blunt, hopeful of striking it rich with wheat crops. But the year was 1883 and it was the middle of a drought, and the Grahams met only heartbreak.

Two years later, in the house that remains to this day, Mentor Graham died.

Lincoln Teacher's House Is Preserved

By WESLEY G. PIPPERT
United Press International

Blunt, S. D., Feb. 12—This small village at the foot of Rattlesnake Butte in South Dakota's prairie country has done its part to commemorate Abraham Lincoln.

It has preserved the house where Abraham Lincoln's teacher, Mentor Graham, lived and died.

Blunt, named for a railroad engineer who used to make water stops there decades and decades ago, is the first town you come to as you swing east on U. S. 14 out of South Dakota's capital city at Pierre.

At the crest of a hill overlooking Blunt from the west lies a little windswept cemetery—where the neighbors prepare the graves. Here Mentor Graham was buried beneath a little wooden cross with the inscription, "The Teacher of Abraham Lincoln."

At the foot of the long descent is the town of Blunt, population 532, where off to the north of the highway is a little white frame house.

Was Native Of Kentucky

Here, Graham, penniless and totally dependent upon his son, spent the last two years of his life, his hopes shattered.

Graham was born in Kentucky near the place where Lincoln was born nine years later. Graham was born to be a teacher—hence the name his parents gave him.

Graham had his first teaching job at the age of 16 in Kentucky.

Later, he moved to New Sa-

lem, Ill., and in 1831, young Abraham Lincoln, then 22, and Graham met for the first time. Their friendship lasted the rest of their lives.

Student In Graham Home

Lincoln became a student of Graham, first in the school where Graham was teaching, later in the Graham home. In 1833, Lincoln moved into the Graham home for six months, learning grammar and surveying.

It was during this time that Lincoln met and fell in love with another student of Graham—Anne Rutledge.

Years later, his famed student dead, Mentor Graham, destitute, left Illinois with his son, Harry Lincoln Graham, and his family.

They came to South Dakota and homesteaded near Blunt, hopeful of striking it rich with wheat crops. But the year was 1883 and it was the middle of a drought, and the Grahams met only heartbreak.

Two years later, in the house that remains to this day, Mentor Graham died.

March 11, 1965

Editor, The WI-IYOHI
South Dakota Historical Society
Pierre, South Dakota

Dear Sir:

I have been reading the article "Lincoln Prairie Shrine -
Mentor Graham House" in your February 1, 1965 issue.

I have never before known that

"When Lincoln was inaugurated, Mentor Graham in his
high hat and embroidered vest, the mark of his
profession, was in the crowd and was singled out by
Lincoln, who had him brought to the platform to sit
behind Lincoln as he became President".

Will you please give me your authority for this statement?
I do not believe such a statement to be a fact.

Yours sincerely,

R. Gerald McMurtry

RGM/hcs



SOUTH DAKOTA
STATE HISTORICAL SOCIETY

OFFICE IN SOLDIERS MEMORIAL

PIERRE, SOUTH DAKOTA

57501

March 15, 1965

ADMINISTERS
STATE CENSUS
DEPARTMENT OF HISTORY

Mr. R. Gerald McMurtry
The Lincoln National Life Foundation
Fort Wayne, Indiana

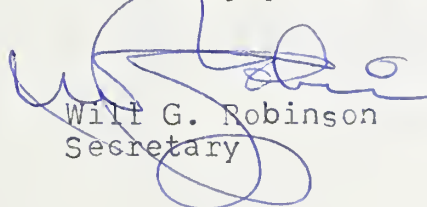
Dear Mr. McMurtry:

I have your letter of the 11th and its contents do not endear you to me by any stretch of the imagination. The source of Mentor Graham's attendance at Lincoln's Inauguration is in the book MENTOR GRAHAM by Duncan and Nichols. Because they had some facts therein pertaining to Mentor Graham's life and death out at Blunt, South Dakota that were not correct according to contemporary records and newspaper stories, I myself questioned some of the facts set out therein.

On the score of his attendance at Lincoln's Inauguration, I talked to a Mrs. Bradley near New Salem in 1951 when obtaining a chest of drawers that the Graham's had used while at Blunt. She, who was then over 80 and had been at Mentor Graham house at Blunt and in whom after a long conversation, I acquired a good deal of faith, told me that Graham had told her of his trip to Washington, the high-light of his life and of his recognition by Lincoln.

You are privileged to have your own ideas about the matter but I certainly had no reason after talking to Mrs. Bradley, who had a remarkable memory for things that had happened and their locale at Blunt and of the house there, after not seeing it for some 65 years, to disbelieve anything that she told me. If you have reason to question the story, I would suggest that you parade your facts.

Sincerely yours,



Will G. Robinson
Secretary

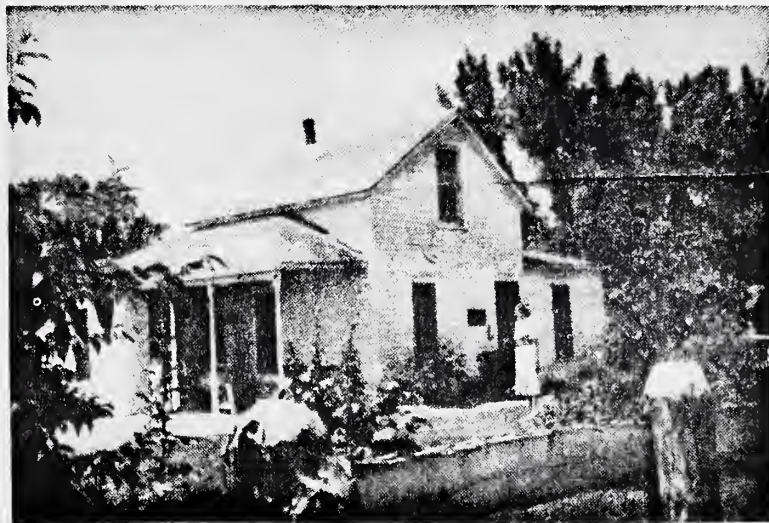
WGR/drf

MENTOR GRAHAM HOUSE, BLUNT Mr. and Mrs. Fred Root are the care-takers at the Mentor Graham house in Blunt. The yard has been for years a floral paradise. But on June 9th a rain of cloud burst proportion struck Blunt, and the north branch of Medicine Knoll River and soon there was a foot of water in the Mentor Graham House and ten foot in the basement. Pumped out, it flowed in again and the water system was knocked out. Thanks to the never tiring efforts of Pierre Barnes with a pump and those of Mrs. Root, who just would not be discouraged, the house is fast becoming normal and nature is taking care of the grounds. Old timers say that the north branch has once before went on a like rampage, but it is quite obvious that the house is subject, it is to be hoped at very long intervals, to flood disturbance of omirous import.



SUB-MUSEUM

At Blunt, twenty-three miles east on U. S. No. 14 the Historical Society maintains the Mentor Graham House - a sort of sub-museum devoted to Abraham Lincoln and this man, his teacher, who came to South Dakota to live and died here in 1885. It is well worth stopping to see. The sign on the Highway directs you to the house which is adjacent thereto.



Copy of house - a historical place to visit

Plain Speech

Sources of Lincoln's Greatness

by D. Elton Trueblood

New Series No. 133

OFTEN I am asked why I have, in late years, devoted so much time to Abraham Lincoln. My answer is that we need the lift which comes from the encounter with undoubted greatness. Herein lies the most potent antidote to our entrenched mediocrity. Since it is generally agreed that Lincoln is the finest product of the American life style, we need no justification for repeated attention to his ideas, his character and his matchless eloquence. Because the greatest American was born in February, the present month is a good time to remember him again.

We never cease to be amazed with the radical contrast between Lincoln's poor start and the magnitude of his final achievement. The formal schooling in southwestern Indiana never amounted to one full year, and the books owned by the Lincoln family were pitifully few. How could greatness emerge from such surroundings? We get some hint of the answer to this difficult question when we note the titles of the few books which were available. On February 21, 1861, addressing the New Jersey Senate, prior to his first Inauguration as President, Abraham Lincoln referred to one of these books. "Away back in my childhood, the earliest days of my being able to read, I got hold," he said, "of a small book, *Weems Life of Washington*." By this experience, as by the constant perusal of the Holy Bible, the works of Shakespeare, and a few other volumes, the tone of the impoverished boy's life was set. The style of the

most famous speeches reflects this background. His own encounter with greatness led to greatness. Consequently, on December 1, 1862, he could write, "We shall nobly save or meanly lose, the last best hope of earth."

As we study Lincoln's life, we soon learn that various modest people played a large part in the lifting of Lincoln's sights when he was young. One of these was a man named Mentor Graham who lived at New Salem, Illinois, during Lincoln's residence in this pioneer village. It was Graham who first guided him into the study of grammar. A thorough knowledge of grammar, Graham told the young man, was indispensable to anyone who wished to advance politically or to appear well in society. A farmer, John Vance, owned a good book of grammar, and Lincoln walked the six miles to the Vance house to borrow it. Soon he knew it by heart. The contemporary traveler on the Lincoln trail sees a statue at the foot of New Salem hill, depicting Lincoln astride a horse, reading his grammar book while the horse stops to eat grass.

Mentor Graham would, of course, be utterly unknown to the present generation apart from the success of the man whom he encouraged. He gave Lincoln some instruction in public speaking and thus set him on the road to the finest eloquence in the modern world. Graham was, therefore, like Barnabas, who is not known as the author of any book of the New Testament, but who took the trouble to hunt for Saul (Acts 11:25), and drew out the powers of one who, when he had become Paul, wrote words of deathless significance. When we honor Lincoln again, it is good also to honor those who helped him on the way. Q

File: Education records
Folder: Mentor Graham

LINCOLN'S TEACHER HONORED

By Wesley G. Pippert
United Press, International

BLUNT, S. Dak. Feb 17, This small village at the foot of Rattlesnake Butte in South Dakota's prairie country has done its part to commemorate Abraham Lincoln.

It has preserved the house where Abraham Lincoln's teacher, Mentor Graham, lived and died.

Blunt, named for a railroad engineer who used to make water stops there decades and decades ago, is the first town you come to as you swing east on U.S. 14 out of South Dakota's capital city of Pierre.

At the crest of the hill overlooking Blunt from the east, lies a little cemetery—where the neighbors prepared the graves where Mentor Graham was buried beneath a little wooden cross with the inscription:— "The teacher of Abraham Lincoln." At the foot of the long descent is the town of Blunt, population 532 while off to the north of the highway is a little frame house.

Here, Mentor Graham, penniless and totally dependent upon his son, spent the last two years of his life, his hopes shattered.

Graham was born in Kentucky near the place where Lincoln was born nine years later. Graham was born to be a teacher—hence the name his parents gave him.

Graham had his first teaching job at the age of 16 in Kentucky. Later, he moved to New Salem, Illinois and in 1831, young Abraham Lincoln, then 22, and Graham met for the first time. Their friendship lasted the rest of their lives.

Abraham became a student of Graham; first in the school where Graham was teaching; later in the Graham home. In 1834 young Abraham moved into the Graham home for 6 months, studying grammar and surveying.

It was during this time that Lincoln met and fell in love with another Graham, Anne Rutledge—Mentor Graham, years later after his famous student died, moved from Illinois, a destitute man, to Illinois with his son, Harry Lincoln Graham and family. They came to South Dakota and homesteaded near Blunt, hopeful of striking it rich with a wheat crop. But the year was 1883 and it was in the middle of a drought and the Grahams met only heartbreak.

Two years later, in this house that remains today, Mentor Graham died.

Jeremiah Graham was the father of Mentor Graham, the person that taught Abraham Lincoln. Jeremiah Graham was a son of William Graham.



MENTOR GRAHAM.

Mentor Graham was the New Salem school-master. He it was who assisted Lincoln in mastering Kirkham's grammar, and later gave him valuable assistance when Lincoln was learning the theory of surveying. He taught in a little log school-house on a hill south of the village, just across Green's Rocky Branch. Among his pupils was Ann Rutledge, and the school was often visited by Lincoln. In 1845, Mentor Graham was defendant in a lawsuit in which Lincoln and Herndon were attorneys for the plaintiff, Nancy Green. It appears from the declaration, written by Lincoln's own hand, that on October 28, 1844, Mentor Graham gave his note to Nancy Green for one hundred dollars, with John Owens and Andrew Becrup as sureties, payable twelve months after date. The note not being paid when due, suit was brought. That Lincoln, even as an attorney, should sue Mentor Graham may seem strange; but it is no surprise when it is explained that the plaintiff was the widow of Bowling Green—the woman who, with her husband, had comforted Lincoln in an hour of grief. Justice, too, in this case, was clearly on her side. The lawsuit seems never to have disturbed the friendly relations between Lincoln and Mentor Graham. The latter's admiration for the former was unbounded to the day of his death. Mentor Graham lived on his farm near the ruins of New Salem until 1860, when he removed to Petersburg. There he lived until 1885, when he removed to Greenview, Illinois. Later he went to South Dakota, where he died about 1892, at the ripe old age of ninety-odd years.



Capital Journal

Phone: 605-224-7301 • 333 W. Dakota, Pierre, SD 57501

Thursday, April 12, 2007

Historic home in jeopardy

Blunt City Council grapples with fate of Mentor Graham residence

By Jane Hinrichs
Capital Journal Staff

Thursday, April 12, 2007

BLUNT - A historical home in Blunt is in serious jeopardy of being torn down.

The home - which belonged to Mentor Graham, who is given credit for having taught Abraham Lincoln whatever higher education he received - has been listed with the National Register of Historic Places since 1976. It qualified to be part of the National Registry because Graham was considered a significant person in our country's history.

Now, the city council is considering tearing it down due to damage it sustained from flooding in the late 1990s.

Karen Harsin, who has been on the council for nearly two decades said Graham's home was not a priority at that time.

"It has to be a priority before things get done," Harsin said. "Everyone was busy fixing their own homes. The flood came so suddenly real early on Labor Day back in 1997."

Harsin said the furniture was saved and has been in storage since.

Joe Dromey, a Pierre resident who lived in Blunt at the time of the flood, remembered the flood damage Graham's house sustained.

"I got it put on the Neglected Places list," Dromey said. "I'd like to see it restored as a museum like it was before. I'm not in favor of tearing it down."

Most do not want to see the historic home demolished.

"I would hate to see it torn down," said Dolly Christensen, a Blunt resident. "It's history. I don't think it would take much to repair it."

Blunt's Twila Reding said every year one of the classes from Blunt Elementary would take a field trip to Mentor's home.

"We talked about the man, how he was Abe Lincoln's teacher, the furniture, how they lived back then, books," she said.

The Mentor Graham home is situated on U.S. Highway 14 across from Oahe Electric Cooperative's headquarters in Blunt.

Graham, regarded by many as the greatest influence on Lincoln, lived the latter part of his life in Blunt and was buried in the small Hughes County community following his death in 1885. Later, his remains were moved back to Illinois.

Graham came to South Dakota from Illinois in 1883. The home in Blunt where he lived with his son, Harry, was open to the public in late 1950. In 1987, sponsorship of the house was turned over to the city of Blunt by the state historical society.

City council members spoke extensively at the April 2 meeting about the home.

"Well, it needs a lot of repair," said Blunt Mayor Swede Larson. "The roof's falling in."

Larson said the council has been talking about doing something to the house for the last three years, however, nothing has been accomplished.

"We've tried to rejuvenate it," Larson said. "It'd be nice to get it fixed up. It's quite an honor to have had Abraham Lincoln's teacher living in our town."

The council hasn't officially decided to tear the house down.

"We've got to get the movers and shakers and save the main part of the house," Larson said. "With some money and some labor, we'd get it running. We stirred up a hornet's nest talking about it."

City councilman Ron Crain said the repair work would be at least \$40,000 and maybe closer to \$60,000.

"The city didn't pump out the basement when it was flooded," Crain said.

Now, it not only needs a new roof, but also the wood is rotting where it touches the dirt. There are holes in the floor boards. The original wallpaper is falling off. Crain doesn't know how that could be replaced.

"The city just doesn't have the money," he added.

Larson would like to see it restored so that the furniture could be moved back in and again opened to the public.

Related Links

Content © 2007 Capital Journal
Software © 1998-2007 1up! Software, All Rights Reserved

in Menard Cemetery With Simple Rites

State Register Special Service

GREENVIEW, Ill., July 22—The body of Mentor Graham, school master at Old Salem who taught Abraham Lincoln English, grammar and surveying, and in whose home Lincoln lived, has been disinterred and brought here from Blunt, S. D., and will be re-buried at Farmer's Point cemetery, in this county, Sunday afternoon. Mrs. Henry Bradley, of this city, a granddaughter of Mentor Graham, accompanied by her daughter, Mrs. Elton D. Ennis of this city, Edward Graham, of Mt. Pulaski, a grandson of Graham, and E. D. Ennis, of this city, returned here, with the body Wednesday.

The body will be re-interred at the side of his wife, in Farmer's Point cemetery, where several sons and daughters of Graham are also buried. The cemetery lies two miles south of Old Salem State park on the Lincoln National Memorial highway.

The memorial services at 3 p.m. will be conducted by Rev. Jerry Wallace, pastor of Christ church, Springfield, a grand nephew. E. M. Augsberger, superintendent of schools of Menard county, will pay a tribute on behalf of Menard county teachers and Mr. Nichols, superintendent of Lincoln schools, will speak on behalf of the Illinois Teachers' association. Mrs. Carol Propst Barnett will sing "A Perfect Day" to close the brief service.

Mentor Graham was born in Kentucky in 1800 and after his marriage to Miss Sarah Rafferty came to Men-

ard county and took up his residence at Old Salem where he was employed as a school teacher. Among the pupils who attended his school was Ann Rutledge. When Abraham Lincoln came to Old Salem, he lived with the Graham family and was taught English, grammar and surveying by Mentor Graham. It was during his spare time, while employed as a clerk in the store of Denton Offutt, that Lincoln pursued his studies under Graham, and later when he became the partner of William Berry in a general store. Although Berry died a few months after the opening of the store, leaving Lincoln to continue the business, Lincoln kept up his studies under the guidance of Graham.

Under the tutelage of Graham, Lincoln was enabled to pass the examination for surveyor and became the deputy of T. M. Heale. Much of the land in Menard county was located by Lincoln. One of Lincoln's last operations as a surveyor was the laying out of the present city of Petersburg.

Mentor Graham died in 1886 at the home of a son, Harry, in Blunt, S. D., with whom he had lived for two years previous to his death. He was buried there in a small cemetery which became abandoned and neglected. It was through the efforts of Mrs. Bradley, that the body was removed.

The following grandchildren of Graham survive: Fred Graham of Springfield; Edward Graham, of Mt. Pulaski; Mrs. Henry Bradley, of Greenview; Mrs. Flora Zeller, of Lincoln; Mrs. Kitty Duff, of Mt. Pulaski.

