

METAMORA ASSOCIATION FOR HISTORIC PRESERVATION

NEWSLETTER

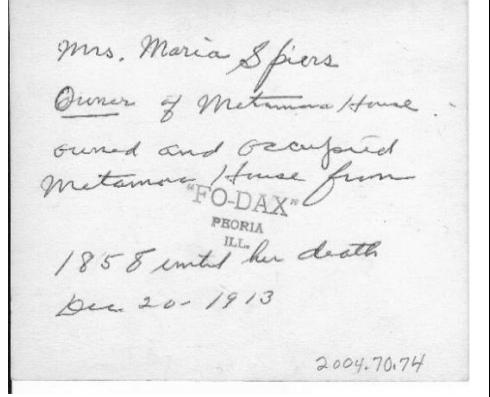
October 2023



Like us on [Facebook](#) (Ctrl+click here)

Visit our [Website](#) at
www.historicmetamora.com

One Thing Often Leads to Another...



THE SEARCH FOR MARIE SPEIRS

While doing research for the Walking/Biking Tour, we wondered what ever happened to Marie Speirs, the kind proprietor of the Metamora House. She knew Lincoln well as well as other famous persons who attended court in the 8th Judicial District.

What we found was surprising. Mrs. Speirs, who died while still living in the Metamora House in 1913, was, according to her obit, buried in Oakwood Cemetery in Metamora. OK, let's hit Find-A-Grave and see what we can find out.

What we found was that we couldn't find her. But when we searched for husband Thomas Speirs, who died in 1867, he didn't show up either. Hmm! He has to be out there, somewhere!

To make a long story short – or maybe a short story long – FAG had misspelled Speirs as SPEER. And even more confusing, two young daughters (7 years old and an infant) were buried there but spelled SPEERS.

So off to Oakwood we went to try to find out more. Who we did find was Thomas, the two daughters, Marie's parents from England, and her nephew (son of her sister, Mrs. Ellsworth, who had lived in Metamora for several years. The son was a prominent Peoria attorney.) But no Marie.

However, buried between Thomas and the girls is a very, very small marker without any inscriptions. (Follow the arrow above.) Marie? Could be... If anyone has a link to a burial map, we'd sure like to hear from you.



Thomas, Marie?, daughters



Daughters



Margaret Hugill – Marie's Mother



Charles Hugill – Marie's Father. Marie was born in England

THE SEARCH FOR DR. GEORGE CLINTON LEMON

The other question that came up was "what happened to Dr. Lemon?" You may recall that Dr. Lemon owned the house that Adlai Stevenson and wife Letitia rented in 1867-1869.

What we found is that Dr. Lemon and his wife Anna Wing Lemon were married in Woodford County in 1824. Dr. Lemon died in 1871. Anna died in 1862 in Muncie, Indiana. Both are buried in Oakwood (picture on right). But here's where it gets interesting... Their daughter Rebecca was born in 1828 in Indiana. She too is buried at Oakwood. Her sister Persis was born in 1840, also in Indiana. So the girls very probably have lived in the house.



The question is how and when and why did the Lemon family move back and forth from Indiana and Metamora, and still have strong enough ties to end up at Oakwood? Any ideas?? MAHP doesn't know the actual age of the "Stevenson House" but is believed to been built in the 1840's. Dr. Lemon also owned all the lots south of his home along Menard Street.

LEMON FACT 2 – MRS. CHARLES CHITTY

Dr. Lemon's daughter, Rebecca, married Charles Holiday Chitty July 4, 1846 (Rebecca's 18th birthday). Chitty was a prominent Metamora attorney whose law office included L.F. Feilitzsch, S.S. Page, J. Cassell, and Walter Gibson. Chitty became the County Judge in 1860.

Rebecca died in 1909 in Washington D.C. and is buried at Oakwood, surrounded by the stones of her 7 children (many of whom died in childhood.)

Charles died in 1897 in Wichita, Kansas.

(Sidenote – Charles Holiday Chitty had a brother named Charles Carrollton Chitty.)



Charles and Rebecca Chitty



Ellsworth – Marie's Nephew

Other Folks in Oakwood – Oakwood is the final resting place for many Metamora pioneers. Among the well-known, you'll find the proprietor of the Bosworth House, Mr. Delph (the owner of the gun shop next to Eli's), E.N. Farnsworth – the owner of the purported UGRR stop on Banta Road, and others (Snyders, Bakers, Bantas, Whitmires, Tantons, Kelloggs, etc.)



Joseph Bosworth –
Bosworth Hotel



Delph – early railroad
engineer (lived next to Eli's)



E.N. Farnsworth (owned the
UGRR "ship" house on Banta
Road)



Master Taphophile Lee
Gets into his search



Joseph Villiger and Henry Waldschmidt admire the new fifth wheel for which a patent has been issued to Joe Villiger and Edward Schierer.

This device was attached to the front end of a wagon to allow the front wheels to pivot.

One More Thing – On October 14 at the Courthouse, MAHP is helping the State with a program "Lincoln the Lawyer" presented by Lincoln impersonator Kevin Wood. More details later...

TAKE THE WALKING/BIKING TOUR OF HISTORIC METAMORA!



The *Metamora Association for Historic Preservation* has just released a YouTube video of a Walking/Biking Tour of Historic Metamora.

Our goal is to acquaint people with the rich history of Metamora – and to maybe even help get a little exercise in the process!

The tour is 2 to 2½ miles long – all within the village limits.

The video is self-paced and contains only video – no audio. Each slide lasts 8 seconds. But the slides have various amounts of content. So a viewer can move as quickly as they like or linger to really study a site by starting and stopping the video at their leisure. Take the entire tour in one trip or just break it down into segments that you're comfortable with.

You'll learn more about Metamora's many fascinating historic sites, including the Metamora Courthouse, the Square, the Metamora House, the Stevenson House, the site of the Lincoln/Douglas 1858 Senate debate. You'll also see and learn about the home of a Metamora doctor who helped hide runaway slaves, the site that was the home of lavish entertainment when dignitaries came to town, and what was the most popular business around the Square in 1893. Plus much, much more!

Here's How to Watch -

Where to Find the Video: it's on YouTube. You can either type in Metamora Association of Historic Preservation and click on Walking/Biking Tour of Historic Metamora Illinois or type in: <https://youtu.be/FHW52EaLLOE> (Other videos about Metamora history are also on this site.)

Best Way to View: Use the landscape mode of your phone to get the largest, most easily read screen.

Groups: because the video is designed to be self-paced, there is no audio. A group might designate one person to read each slide to their group.

And Maybe: with enough advance notice, it might be possible to open some of the sites for a guided tour.



Contact Us

Questions, ideas - Love to hear from you

Laure Adams, President, 369-2353 or jfarmer@mtco.com; Dave Pohlman, Vice President 369-3290; pohlman46@yahoo.com 367-4426; Jim Efaw, Secretary, 367-6099 or jimefaw-mahp@eggroll.com; Jack Weddle, Treasurer, 645-0963, jweddle@mtco.com; Board members: Lee Summer, 367-4059, 635-0259, lsummer@mtco.com Mary Curry, 367-2185, curry@mtco.com; Rick Lotz, 648-2010, lots@mtco.com