

## NEWS RELEASE

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Metamora Association for Historic Preservation  
April 25, 2022

***For immediate release***

### **Local Events Honor Underground Railroad Conductors** *Metamora's Significant, But Little-Known, Connection to the Underground Railroad*

Please join the Metamora and Woodford County historical societies in honoring the local conductors of the underground railroad with 2 special events.

**WOODFORD COUNTY HISTORICAL AND GENEALOGICAL SOCIETY** On Thursday, May 12, 2022 Linda Kern Moore will give a presentation on the role her great-great grandfathers, George Kern and Norman Dutton, played in the Underground Railroad. The meeting will be held at 7pm at the Roanoke Park Building on Victory Street in Roanoke, IL.

Mr. Dutton and Mr. Kern both lived south of Metamora and moved “freight” from Deacon Street in Tazewell County in a double bottomed wagon covered with grain sacks or even pigs. They delivered their “freight” to Morsetown or a Magnolia depot. Mr. Kern was arrested and was defended by Abraham Lincoln.

**METAMORA ASSOCIATION FOR HISTORIC PRESERVATION** The second event will be held at the Oakwood Cemetery, 701 Coal Bank Road, Metamora, IL on Sunday, May 15, 2022 beginning at 1pm, weather permitting. Special grave markers will be unveiled at the resting places of George Kern and Norman Dutton.

A primary route of the UGRR was the old Springfield to Chicago stage coach route that ran through Metamora. Several local citizens who lived on or close to the route were very actively involved. Their experiences are a gripping part of Metamora's rich history that is generally not well known.

The Metamora Association has also recently released an in-depth book *The Underground Railroad in Metamora*. It chronicles the significant – but little known – UGRR activity in and around Metamora. It is a fascinating account of the actual experiences of local “conductors” and sympathizers in their own unedited words.

The Underground Railroad (UGRR) was neither underground nor a railroad, but a system of loosely connected safe havens where those escaping the brutal conditions of slavery were sheltered, fed, clothed, nursed, concealed, disguised, and instructed during their journey to freedom. Although this movement was one of American's greatest social, moral, and humanitarian endeavors, the details about it were often cloaked in in secrecy to protect those involved from the retribution of civil law and slave-catchers.



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