

NEWSLETTER

October 2022



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Event at Morsetown Cemetery Honors Underground Railroad Conductors. On a perfect fall day, September 25, 2022, the Metamora Association for Historic Preservation met at the Morsetown Cemetery to honor the six Underground Railroad conductors who are buried there. Special markers were placed on their graves. (See the plaque below for details.)



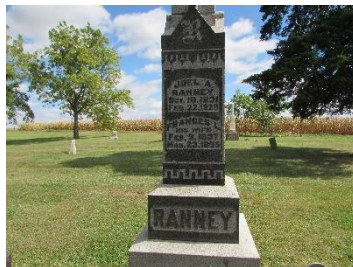
6th Generation - Todd, Christy, and Clark Ranney. Joel Ranney and his son, Joel A. Ranney were vigorous conductors, as was Joel A.'s grandfather, Captain Parker Morse. All are buried in Morsetown Cemetery.



Jack Voelker whose family has owned the old Morse farm since 1895 discusses its history with President Laure Aadms and guests.



Joel Ranney



Joel A. Ranney (his son)



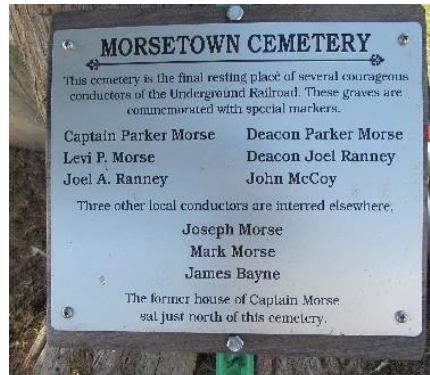
Captain Parker Morse



Deacon Parker Morse Jr.



This is the grave of John McCoy, conductor who lived about two miles north of the Morses.



List of the conductors



The remaining foundation of the Morse home, an important stop on the UGRR.

UNDERGROUND RAILROAD BOOK IN METAMORA AVAILABLE – It's a fascinating account – and little known - that details the significant participation of Metamora area abolitionists in the Underground Railroad – in their own words!! You can pick up a copy (\$10) at Commerce Bank, the Metamora Library, Timeless Treasures (east side of the Square) – or we'll send you one if you send your name and mailing address to Metamora Association for Historic Preservation, PO Box 264, Metamora 61548. Be sure to include your name, mailing address, and a check payable to Metamora Association for Historic Preservation for \$15. Thanks!



4 H Club

These young ladies were members of the Metamora 4-H club – sometime around 1949.

The names have faded a bit, so if you recognize anyone, please let us know. Here's who we do know...

First Row: Last girl with the sweet smile – Elaine Alig (Kapuraun – “I think”)

Second Row: Audrey Bride, ?, ?, ?, ?, Dorothy Janssen (Hohulin, ?), Patty Barclay (Hoffman), ?, Janie Lancaster (Hieb), ?, Linda Kern Moore, ?, ?

Thanks to Linda Kern Moore for sharing this picture. Help us out with anyone you recognize!

Kern Ancestry – From the history of Anna Kern Shelly, George Kern’s half sister. The Kern family originally came from around Greenburg, PA where “our” UGRR conductor,. George Kern married Charlotte Devinney. Over the years, several family members migrated to Washington and Illinois. Anna moved to Washington in 1837, taking a 14-day boat trip from Pittsburg to Wesley City in Tazewell County, where brother William picked her up and took her to Washington. She and her husband were active in many business ventures around Peoria and central Illinois until his death in 1872. Anna’s brother, William, was in charge of the wagon bridge the winter of 1850-51. In 1851 he moved to Portland Oregon in a journey that lasted 5 months and 3 weeks.

STEVENSON HOUSE OPEN HOUSE -mark your calendar for October 9 and 23, for the last open houses of the year at the Stevenson House (104 W Walnut) from 1pm-3pm.!

Tidbits – ace Newsletter reporter Larry has informed the Newsletter that his gg grandfather fought in the Civil War battle of Gettysburg at Culp’s Hill. And what surprised us was two unexpected **Tidbits** – first, his ancestor was from Virginia and fought for the South (and eventually settled in Morgan County Illinois) and second, Larry still has his gg grandfather’s rifle from that battle!!! For Civil War enthusiasts, it’s a full stock percussion Kentucky rifle, 36 caliber. He also has his ball mold and the powder horn. Amazing!!

WAS STEVENSON A COPPERHEAD?



Stevenson Around Age 30

“It was reported one day during the meeting of the Democratic convention which nominated Grover Cleveland for the second term that his running mate was a man by the name of Adlai E. Stephenson from Bloomington. Several of the older inhabitants recalled that Stephenson had practiced law in Metamora during the Civil War. Sure enough when our weekly paper arrived a few days later, there was a picture of Stephenson, which Aunt Mary said “looks just like him,” and an account of his early law practice in our town.

“Sometime later in the campaign the paper, which was a staunch Republican paper, printed a long article charging Stephenson with Pro-Southern sympathies during the war. The article included an interview with a number of our Republican citizens who testified that the vice-presidential candidate had been a copperhead in those trying times, and that he even organized a company of copperheads in the community. One of the men testified that on the day following the assassination of President Lincoln, Stephenson, coming into Rohman’s grocery store, remarked that the death of Lincoln was the most fortunate event for the country since the war begun.

“The attempt of Stephenson's former townsmen to discredit him eventually had little effect, for he easily elected vice president on the Cleveland ticket. If he ever saw the newspaper article, and likely he did, he must soon have forgotten it; for some years later, after he had become known to fame, he honored the scene of his maiden efforts as a struggling lawyer with a visit, as an orator of the day and the honored the guest of the village.”

Excerpt from the C. Henry Smith book, *Mennonite Country Boy*. Future Newsletter issues will “book report” more on this fascinating book.

Contact Us

Questions, Ideas - Love to hear from you

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