Collection #
M 1544

JOSEPHINE OWENS TAYLOR
NANCY HANKS LINCOLN MEMORIAL COLLECTION, 1924-1946

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COLLECTION INFORMATION

VOLUME OF COLLECTION:	One half-sized manuscript box, four folders of photographs, three envelopes of 4”x 5” acetate negatives.
COLLECTION DATES:	1924-1946
PROVENANCE:	John P. Raibley, 2014
RESTRICTIONS:	None
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REPRODUCTION RIGHTS:	Permission to reproduce or publish material in this collection must be obtained from the Indiana Historical Society.
ALTERNATE FORMATS:	
RELATED HOLDINGS:	Abraham Lincoln-Related Pictures (P0452)
ACCESSION NUMBER:	2014.0123
NOTES:	

BIOGRAPHICAL SKETCH

Josephine Taylor was born Anna Josaphin Owens on 24 April 1909 in Boon Township, Warrick County, Indiana. Her parents were H. Edward Owens and Nellie [Harrison] Owens. She attended local schools, including Boonville High School, where she played violin in the school orchestra. In 1930 she married Pervis E. Taylor, a furniture salesman and skeet shooting enthusiast. The couple operated several businesses together, including Taylor's Tax Service, Taylor's Drug Store, and the Hall & Taylor Furniture Store.

Josephine also wrote articles for the *Boonville Enquirer*. In late 1923, the paper's editor and other local newspapermen and women formed the Writer's Club of Boonville. A few months later they changed the name to the Boonville Press Club. Josephine served as the club's treasurer. In July of 1924, the group held a picnic at Nancy Hanks Lincoln Park, near Abraham Lincoln's boyhood home and the gravesite of his mother, Nancy Hanks Lincoln. Forty people attended.

The Boonville Press Club decided to make the picnic an annual event and stated their purpose to "make the Nancy Hanks Lincoln Park a National Shrine."

The annual picnic occurred on the second Sunday of July. It began with a Sunday School class taught by Judge Roscoe Kiper. A musical program followed, and then the group marched to the gravesite of Nancy Hanks Lincoln at the Pioneer Cemetery. There they held a memorial service, followed by a basket dinner of fried chicken. The Boonville Press Club provided free coffee to all attendees, donated by area businesses. After another music concert, the selected speaker for that year gave an address on a Lincoln-related subject. The event grew year by year, and in 1935 an estimated 16,000 people attended.

Throughout the 1930s, the Boonville Press Club also organized a gathering at the gravesite on February 12, Lincoln's birthdate. And in 1936, the club instituted a play writing contest, offering a cash prize to the writer of the best one-act play about Abraham Lincoln's boyhood days in Indiana.

At the same time, the Civilian Conservation Corps was working to restore the area surrounding the old Lincoln homestead. They planted trees, located the site of the Lincoln's cabin, and excavated the hearthstones. Then in 1945 a memorial building was constructed at the park, housing a small museum. Finally, in 1962, the Indiana legislature added another 114 acres to the site, and the U.S. Congress authorized the formation of the Lincoln Boyhood National Memorial.

In addition to her businesses and Lincoln interest, Josephine was president of the Boonville Philharmonic Club. She was also a member of the Boonville Women's Club, Order of the Eastern Star, Daughters of the American Revolution, and Boonville Garden Club. Though she had no children of her own, she was a constant presence in the lives of her sister's six sons and one daughter.

Josephine died in 1988 at the age of 79.

Sources:

Ancestrylibrary.com: Indiana, US, Birth Certificates, 1907-1944; Death Certificates, 1899-2017; US School yearbooks, 1900-2016.

Boonville Standard, 25 August 1930; 18 May 1988.

Evansville Courier & Press, 15 May 1932.

"Lincoln Boyhood National Memorial," Wikipedia.org.

"Press Club Started over Challenge to Pres. Owen to Throw Meal to Writers," *Boonville Enquirer*, 10 July 1936.

SCOPE AND CONTENT NOTE

This collection consists of material created or collected by Josephine Taylor in relation to the Boonville Press Club's annual pilgrimage to Abraham Lincoln's boyhood home and their efforts towards National recognition of the site. The manuscript portion contains typed speeches, press releases, and some correspondence. Visuals include photographic prints and acetate negatives. While a few of the negatives are represented in the prints, the majority of them depict scenes and people unique within the collection.

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