

HIGHTSTOWN

NEW



JERSEY

EAST WINDSOR

HISTORICAL SOCIETY NEWS

MARCH-APRIL 2006

Abraham Lincoln and his Hightstown Connections

By Richard S. Hutchinson

CONTINUED FROM THE JANUARY - FEBRUARY 2006 ISSUE

Book H2-Pg 155. 10 May 1743. William Talman, yeoman, & Anne, his wife, and Francis Yarnell, cordwainer, & Mary, his wife, all of Amity Twp., Philadelphia Co., PA, of the one part sell to Capt. Samuel Leonard, of Perth Amboy, Middlesex Co., East NJ, of the other part, for £80, all the tr. of land & meadow, at Matcheponix, Middlesex Co., East NJ. The first tr. bnd. by Matcheponix River on s. by Pine Brook, on e. & w. by lands late of William Estill and on the n. by vacant lands. Also, a tr. bnd. w. by Gravell Brook, s. by William Estill's lands from mouth of long meadow on Long Meadow Run, bnd. w. by the last mentioned tr. and on all other sides in unsurveyed

land, being in total 400 a., and which were taken up & surveyed by John Reid, Jr. & recorded in Monmouth Co. records, & sold by John Reid, Jr. and conveyed amongst other lands to his Father, John Reid, Esqr., as by deed dated 4 Aug 1715, & sold by sd. Reid to Richard Saltar by deed, dated 27 Nov 1717, & then sold by sd. Saltar to Mordecai Lincon, by deed dated 2 Feb 1720 & given by sd. Lincon by Deed of Gift to his daus., Hannah & Mary, now wives of Joseph Millard & Francis Yarnell, which is likewise expressed & given by sd. Lincon, by his will, recorded in Philadelphia; and one moiety of the same was sold by Joseph Millard & Hannah, his wife, to William Talman by deed dated 15 Dec 1742. Signed: William Talman, Ann Talman, Francis Yarnall, Mary Yernnall. Wits.: Edmund Bainbridge, Peter Bainbridge, Janos Abraham made his mark. Ackn.: 19 Aug 1743, Janos Abrahams apprd. bef. John Hamilton, Esqr., Majesty's Council. Recr'd & Exam.: Thomas Bartow.

Benthal, n. by land form. of sd. Burnet, e. by land form. belonging to Herricon, and s. by Cranberry Brook., being 300 a. Signed: John Lincon. Wits.: John Brainerd, Ebenezer Hayward. Ackn.: 24 May 1750, John Lincon apprd. bef. Andrew Johnston, Majesty's Council. Recr'd & Exam.: Tho. Bartow, Sec.

However, the main connection of Abraham Lincoln to this area involves the future President's legal representation of a former Hightstown resident, Theodore Anderson, who was arrested for murder near Springfield, Illinois, after the death of his uncle [or cousin as was also reported], George Anderson, as was reported in the *Village Record*, of Hightstown, NJ, on 20 June 1856:

"Mr. Jesse Anderson, living near this place, received a dispatch from Springfield, Illinois, a day or two since, stating that his son Theodore Anderson, about 22 years of age, who recently removed from this neighborhood to the aforementioned place, had been arrested for murder - the name of the unfortunate man we have not learned. There are several reports in regard to the affair. One is that Theodore had been taking improper liberties with the wife of the deceased, and a few nights since, the husband attacked him with a club, and in the struggle that ensued the injured husband lost his life."

On June 27 1856, the following was reported in the *Village Record*:

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MARCH - APRIL 2006



CALENDAR OF EVENTS

MARCH

- 6 Business Meeting, 7:30 p.m., Sara Hutchinson West Educational Center
- 21 Caning & Rushing Classes, 7:00-9:00 p.m., Sara Hutchinson West Educational Center

APRIL

- 3 Business Meeting, 7:30 p.m., Sara Hutchinson West Educational Center

Book H2-Pg 437. 8 Nov 1748. John Lincon, of Carnarvin Twp., in Lancaster Co., PA, weaver, son and heir of Mordecai Lincon, dec'd, sells to William Dye, of Middlesex Co, [NJ], yeoman, for £200, a tr. of landing Middlesex Co., by where the land, form. of Walter Benthal's crosses Cranberry Brook and along Benthal's line towards the Post Road to land form. of Robert Burnet and along his line and several courses to and down Cranberry Brook, bnd. w. by land form. of sd.

"A report reached us late ... just before going to press, concerning the arrest of Mr. Theodore Anderson, at Springfield, Ill., for killing a man and we gave the report to our readers precisely as it was given to us, and that too without asking the consent of the windbags and fault mongers with which our town abounds. We supposed the report to be true or certainly we should not have given it a place in our columns. Since then an article has been handed to us, which originally appeared in a Springfield paper, directly after the arrest of Mr. A., some three weeks ago, and which throws an entirely different light upon the affair. It is as follows: One night about 11 o'clock, an inoffensive man, named Geo. Anderson, a blacksmith, went into his back yard, and in an hour afterwards was found dead, with the back part of his head crushed Next day an inquest was held on the body, and the just jury returned that he came to death by violence, but in what way not known to them. Soon after his nephew, Theodore Anderson, was arrested on suspicion. The body of the deceased was opened before interment, and traces of poison found in his stomach. His wife was then arrested, and it was attempted to be proven that a criminal intimacy existed between herself and the nephew. It was proven that a bottle of strychnine was found in the trunk of the nephew after the murder, and a daguerreotype of the wife. The prosecuting attorney argued that the poison was administered by the wife, but not taking effect soon enough, the nephew did the deed in a more summary manner. The defense proved that the wife had hitherto borne a good character, that she was affectionate, & c., and the examination closed with her discharge. The examination of the nephew has not concluded, but as there is no more against him than against the wife, he will no doubt be also discharged. Thus far the whole affair remains a mystery. Many conjectures exist as to whom did the murder, and why it was done."

"While here [Hightstown], Theodore bore an excellent character, and no one ever dreamed that he was capable of committing such a crime as that from all we can learn in regard to this affair, we are inclined to believe that the murderer of old Mr. A. is as likely to be some other person as Theodore."

Time Line

30 Jan 1834 - Theodore Anderson is born in East Windsor Twp., 30 Jan 1834, the son of Jesse and Anne E. Anderson.

1850 Federal Census, East Windsor Twp., household #741 - Jesse Anderson, 47, mason with the following household: Anna E - 39, Sylvanus - 18, Theodore - 16, Mary A. - 14, Kate - 9, Cornelia - 7.

29 July 1855 - James Paxton of Monroe Twp., Middlesex Co., married Miss Ann Allen, of Hightstown, by Rev. John Seger.

16 May 1856 - The murder of George Anderson, in a community near Springfield, Illinois, is reported by the *Illinois State Journal*, and indicated that Theodore Anderson was a cousin of the victim. Theodore was boarding with the victim and his wife, Jane, and was arrested. The victim was found on the ground with a hole in the back of his skull near the privy, wearing a coat, undershirt, his "drawers," and socks. It was later learned that the victim was also carrying a loaded pistol that he had borrowed from a friend a few days earlier, which was found in his coat pocket.

17 May 1856 - Theodore Anderson is now identified as a nephew of the murder victim, George Anderson. [most of the testimony refers to him as a cousin of the victim.]

22 May 1856 - Jane Anderson, the victim's wife, was also arrested on suspicion of murder. It was reported that

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HIGHTSTOWN EAST WINDSOR **HISTORICAL SOCIETY**

*Hightstown, New Jersey
founded 1971*

609-371-9580

**To educate, while preserving for
future generations, our people
and our community's history.**

Editor, Richard S. Hutchinson

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Lincoln

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an autopsy of the victim was performed on his kitchen table and they also examined the contents of his stomach and bowels. **Although he died from the blow inflicted upon his head, there appeared to be poison (strychnine) in his stomach.**

[This was a huge event in the lives of the people in the area and the local press covered it daily with the testimony of every person examined in the coroner's inquest and other examinations, which are too long to quote here. Unfortunately, the photocopies being used for this piece were not complete copies or not copied at all. However, some interesting things were found in the testimony that was readable.] George Anderson, the deceased, was 35-40 years old, and his wife, Jane Anderson was 35. A search of Theodore Anderson's trunk found a small bottle of strychnine, a recent daguerreotype of Mrs. Jane Anderson, and a packet of love letters. Dr. J.L. White of Jerseyville, testified that he knew Theodore Anderson, who was in Jerseyville for about 2 weeks. White had a small bottle of strychnine in his office and it was the same kind that was found in Theodore's trunk. White had lost his, had noticed it gone about four weeks after Theodore left town and White was satisfied that it had been stolen. Testimony also showed that it is openly sold and used as a stimulant for medical treatment. Mrs. Anderson always administered medication to her husband. Both of the accused were seen sitting in the grass and bushes talking together in a park that "was a place of resort by the boys of the town." They were often seen together. Theodore Anderson began boarding with the deceased last winter. Theodore was seen talking by the gate of the yard with Mrs. Anderson and "the children; one of the children was about fourteen years of age." A friend of the deceased said the deceased borrowed a pistol from him for his own protection about a month before his murder, being he feared for his life as an unknown man had been seen about the house at

night. At some point, Theodore had quit boarding with the deceased. The stomach of the deceased was under the control of Dr. Fowler and Dr. Lord. A Charles Anderson stated the deceased was his uncle, and he had met the accused and his brother Abijah, and that Theodore quit boarding with the deceased about the 25th of March because the deceased was expecting friends from New Jersey and he wanted more room in the house. [Living within two homes from Jesse Anderson, in the 1850 Census of East Windsor Twp, is an Ann Anderson, aged 49, a probable widow, who has a son Charles, aged 21, and a son Abijah, aged 15, and other Anderson relations living with her.] Willis C. Johnson was a brother-in-law of the deceased as Mrs. Jane Anderson and his wife, were sisters. The doctors were operating on the head of the deceased when he arrived at the house and stated the deceased was involved in a quarrel between Geo. K. Johnson and Mr. Bean about a business transaction and that all three were business partners. Wm. Anderson, brother of Geo. Anderson, the deceased, told Mr. Bean that Geo. K. Johnson was the cause of the deceased's death. Dr. Lord testified that the deceased told him he was carrying a pistol because he had been given a large sum of money by his nephew to invest and that he was afraid that the person lurking about at night was intending to rob him. **Dr. Lord, Dr. Ryan and Dr. Fowler testified about putting live frogs into the victim's stomach to test for strychnine.** Dr. Lord spoke of his examination of the stomach and the tests he ran with the frogs and cats and spoke of their spasms. [With forensic science in its infancy, the court disregards the "Frog Test," which was then the modern test for poison in this period. If the frogs died and/or had spasms, then there was strychnine but also other things could cause their death. However, one of the frogs used in the test and in the deceased stomach, was alive the next day.] Dr. Lord was the physician of the deceased. The deceased began complaining of a burning pain in

his stomach in April and he had violent spasms after taking the medicine his wife fixed for him each night. The doctor stated that if he wasn't confident in her, he would suspect that she was giving the deceased strychnine. One witness who worked for the deceased, stated that Theodore and the deceased had a "fuss" over something and heard Theodore tell George that "he was very sorry he did it" and he then heard the deceased say "he had done the same thing when a boy," and Theodore went to Jerseyville that evening. The deceased's daughter, Mary, was 13 or 14 but he knew of no love making going on between Theodore or Mary. Moses Pilcher stated that Mrs. Jane Anderson was his wife's sister. Henry Vaughn was called and he stated that he knew Theodore in his boyhood back in New Jersey. One of the main witnesses for Theodore, was the deceased's daughter, Mary, aged 13 or 14, who testified that the letters found in Theodore's trunk were from her and that she and Theodore were lovers!

13 June 1856 - Both Mrs. Jane Anderson and Theodore Anderson were indicted for murder by the Grand Jury at the Sagaman Court House.

19 Nov 1856 - Murder case comes to trial. Logan, Lincoln and Rosette represent Theodore Anderson; Stuart and Edward, Lewis, and Campbell appear for Mrs. Anderson. [*Lincoln Day by Day: A Chronology 1809-1865*, by Earl Schenck Miers, Editor-in-Chief, Washington: 1960.]

20 Nov 1856 - Murder trial begins. [*Lincoln Day by Day: A Chronology 1809-1865*, by Earl Schenck Miers, Editor-in-Chief, Washington: 1960.]

21 Nov 1856 - Witnesses are examined with reference to the bottle of strychnine found in Theodore Anderson's trunk, and relations between Theodore and Mrs. Anderson. [*Lincoln Day by Day: A Chronology 1809-*

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1865, by Earl Schenck Miers, Editor-in-Chief, Washington: 1960.]

22 Nov 1856 – Jury and counsel visit Anderson home and view spot where Anderson was found dead. Examination of witnesses resumes. Prosecution tries to bring out improper relations between Theodore and Mrs. Anderson but without success. [*Lincoln Day by Day: A Chronology 1809-1865*, by Earl Schenck Miers, Editor-in-Chief, Washington: 1960.]

24 Nov 1856 – Linder joins prosecution of Anderson case. Most of day is taken up with examination of Doctors Lord and Fowler, physicians, who attended Anderson before his death, and conducted post mortem examination. They testify that they found strychnine in stomach of deceased, but give their opinion that death was caused by blow on head. [*Lincoln Day by Day: A Chronology 1809-1865*, by Earl Schenck Miers, Editor-in-Chief, Washington: 1960.]

25 Nov 1856 – Doctors Ryan and Bell testify that Anderson died of strychnine poisoning. Defense witnesses testify to good character of both defendants, and establish alibi for Theodore. Others testify that Anderson's death was caused by blow on back of head as he emerged from privy. [*Lincoln Day by Day: A Chronology 1809-1865*, by Earl Schenck Miers, Editor-in-Chief, Washington: 1960.]

26 Nov 1856 – **Phebe Todd**, is a star witness for defense, as she is the sister of the deceased. [One has to wonder, if Phebe Todd is also any relation to Attorney Abraham Lincoln's family?] In addition to supporting Theodore's alibi, she testifies that on one night during Anderson's illness, she – not Mrs. Anderson – gave him his medicine. Doctors Wallace and Goltra testify that Anderson was killed by the blow. Testimony closes at noon. Mc Williams makes opening speech for prosecution. "Son" [Lincoln's?] takes home "Glass Lantern," and Lincoln's account with

John Williams & Co. is charged \$1. [*Lincoln Day by Day: A Chronology 1809-1865*, by Earl Schenck Miers, Editor-in-Chief, Washington: 1960.]

27 Nov 1856 – Arguments in Anderson case continue. Stuart takes up morning and Edwards afternoon, for defense. [*Lincoln Day by Day: A Chronology 1809-1865*, by Earl Schenck Miers, Editor-in-Chief, Washington: 1960.]

28 Nov 1856 – Mr. Mc Williams opening for the State and **Lincoln** for defense take up entire day in Anderson Case. [*Lincoln Day by Day: A Chronology 1809-1865*, by Earl Schenck Miers, Editor-in-Chief, Washington: 1960.]

29 Nov 1856 – Not until 9:00PM are arguments in Anderson trial concluded. Logan closes for defense, Linder for prosecution. After deliberating several hours, jury brings in verdict of "Not Guilty." [*Lincoln Day by Day: A Chronology 1809-1865*, by Earl Schenck Miers, Editor-in-Chief, Washington: 1960.]

1 Dec 1856 – **The murder trial of Mrs. Jane Anderson and Theodore Anderson concluded** and it was submitted to the jury. After some hours of delay, **the jury returned a verdict of "Not Guilty"** and the prisoners were released from custody. [*Illinois State Journal*]

1860 Federal Census, East Windsor Twp., household #204 - Jesse Anderson, 56, farmer, with the following household: Ann E. 49, **Theodore** - 26 - **Master Mason**, Catharine - 20, Cornelia - 17.

1860 Federal Census, Hightstown, household # 77, - **James Paxton**, 43, merchant, Anna F. - 30, Mary A. - 4, Lewis S. - 1

19 Dec 1861, *Village Record*, marriage announcement: "On the 11th inst., by Rev. L. Smith, **Theodore Anderson** to Miss Sarah M. Chamberlin."

22 July 1863 – **Theodore Anderson enlisted in Co. E, 2nd NJ Calvary, at Bordentown, NJ.** He stated that he was from East Windsor and was born in Hightstown. He was 28 and a butcher. His enlistment papers describe him as 5 foot 11 inches, and having blue eyes, light hair, and light complexion. His military records show him as Commissary Sgt in Sept & Oct. 1863, but being reduced in rank in Nov & Dec 1863. In Jan & Feb 1864, they show that he deserted on Feb 15, 1864 "near Albany, Miss." In May of 1864, the charge of desertion was removed and they stated that he had been **captured by the enemy, Feb. 15, 1864, and died of dysentery at Andersonville, GA, on Aug. 28, 1864.** Prison records from Andersonville, show that he was buried there in grave # 7138. The official records for NJ Cavalry Troops, for Co. E & Co. I, show that his unit was stationed at Camp Grierson near Memphis, Tennessee, during January & February 1864. [research of Christina Lowden, an Anderson family descendant thru Theodore's brother, Sylvanus Anderson.]

29 Feb 1864 - **Theodore Anderson** captured by Rebels in Tennessee per the monument erected in Cedar Hill Cemetery by his father, Jesse Anderson, and Abijah Anderson. However, the prison's records show him being captured at Gunstown, Miss., on 10 Jun 1864.

28 Aug 1864 – **Theodore Anderson** dies in prison, at Andersonville, GA, where he was buried.

1 June 1867 – **Abijah Anderson, of Illinois, sued Jesse Anderson, of East Windsor Twp., [Theodore's father] in Mercer Co. NJ Court, for recovery of \$420, which he paid as Abraham Lincoln's fee for defending Theodore Anderson, in Springfield, Illinois.** He also testified that he had received a letter from Jesse Anderson pleading that

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Underground Railroad Quilt

Carole Nelson, with the help of Fran Cook, Sally Grover, Dilly Henninger and Shirley Olson, have recently pieced together and sewn a quilt to commemorate the Underground Railroad.

The quilt is composed of many blocks with bits of fabric organized into recognizable patterns which were "signals" to slaves escaping along the Underground Railroad. Friendly homeowners or their servants, who lived along the path of the railroad, would hang quilts containing one or more of these blocks on porch rails, clothes lines or other spots where they might be seen by the fleeing slaves. The slaves understood the secret language of these designs and blocks, which confirmed to them the direction they should go or simply offered encouragement to them. With this language known only to those who participated in the Underground Railroad, this type of communication went unnoticed by officials, slave masters and other unsympathetic persons.

Members of the Middleton family and those in the Crosswicks area were involved in the railroad and Allentown has been said to have been a stop on the line. It has been rumored for many years that a house in Hightstown provided refuge to those traveling on the Underground Railroad no one knows of it. It may be that this referred to the general area of Hightstown rather than a specific house being a stop in Hightstown proper.

"It's exciting to think that Hightstown might have been on the railroad," said Mrs. Nelson. "I hope this quilt reminds visitors to the Historical Society that caring people have always lived in this town, people who tried hard to help others."

With Hightstown being well known for its past connection with the Camden & Amboy Railroad and the John Bull which ran on it, the Historical Society would like to explore the area's association with the Underground Railroad, which is being uncovered bit by bit as researchers seek to chart its many stops.

Mrs. Nelson spoke on the Underground Railroad at the Society on Feb 16th but the announcement of her talk did not coincide with the newsletter's publication dates.



Carole Nelson holds the quilt showing some of the "signals" of the Underground Railroad.

Join today, become a member!

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\$20.00

Family Membership
\$25.00

Booster/Patron
Membership
\$40.00

Sustaining Membership
\$50.00

Life (individual) Membership
\$200.00

Life (married) Membership
\$275.00

Annual Membership Application (January - December)

- | | | |
|-------------------------------------|--|---|
| ☐ Individual | ☐ Family | ☐ Booster/Patron |
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Name: _____

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City: _____ State: _____ Zip: _____

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Please mail the completed application, along with a check made payable to the Hightstown-East Windsor Historical Society to:

Membership Committee
Hightstown-East Windsor Historical Society
164 North Main Street
Hightstown, NJ 08520

Lincoln

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he do all in his power for his son. A receipt for fees in Mr. Lincoln's own handwriting was exhibited to the Court.

18 April 1869 - **Ann T. Paxton, wife of James Paxton**, died; born 16 Dec 1829 - Cedar Hill Cemetery.

9 June 1870, *Hightstown Gazette*, marriage announcement: "On Thursday, June 9th, by Rev. J.B. Davis, **James Paxton to Mrs. Sarah M. Anderson**, all of Hightstown."

1870 Federal Census, East Windsor Twp., Theodore Anderson's daughter, Ella Anderson, age 7, was residing with her mother and James Paxton. [research of Christina Lowden, an Anderson family descendant thru Theodore's brother, Sylvanus Anderson.]

1880 - **The Paxton/Anderson family had moved to Millstone, NJ.** [research of Christina Lowden, an Anderson family descendant thru Theodore's brother, Sylvanus Anderson.]

Caning & Rushing Classes Return

Back by popular request, the Hightstown-East Windsor Historical Society is again offering Caning & Rushing Classes, on Tuesday evenings, beginning March 21 from 7-9 PM at the Society's Sara Hutchinson West Educational Center in the freight station, next to Borough Hall.

John LaSelle will be instructing the classes for 5 weeks. Class size is limited, so one must call early and make a reservation with Jane Cox at 609-448-0037. Get out that chair you wanted to bring back to life and join what has always been a satisfying experience.

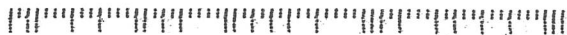
Civil War Orphans - 1865-1871

East Windsor Township [1865 register; loose original unsigned, 1865]

Father: James Appleget, Co. A, 38th Reg., died 17. November 1864; mother: Sarah; children: John (8), Frank (6), Charles (3), James (8 mos.). "Widow Entirely dependent on her own Energies. Has loaned about 70 dollars of money received from her

husband and is unable to obtain it for present necessity. There is also a prospect that she may be unable to obtain a pension, her husband having been consumptive when he re-enlisted."

[*The Genealogical Magazine of New Jersey*, May 2005, Vol. 80, Number 2, Whole No. 275, Page 84.]



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