



The former Nachusa Hotel, now an apartment building in Dixon, Illinois

in 1894 as a lasting tribute to the area's early settlers. In 1969, permission was granted to relocate the cabin to state-owned property that was formerly the site of Fort Dixon. The cabin is owned and maintained by the Lee County Historical Society, 815-288-1840.

Gary also relates that Lincoln passed back through Dixon after being mustered out of the militia in Wisconsin in July 1832:

His horse had been stolen or lost...By the time he got here his shoes were worn out and he was barefoot. One morning here he complained about his feet being cold, and someone told him, "No wonder, there's so much of you on the ground."

Lincoln came again to Dixon to give a political speech on July 17, 1856 in support of the presidential campaign of John C. Fremont. There is a stone on the **Courthouse lawn** commemorating the spot on which he spoke. **112 E. 2nd Street** (IL State Highway 2), just east of the

Lincoln Highway. The current courthouse was built in 1901 on the site of the original structure.

It is assumed that he spent the night after the speech at the **Nachusa Hotel, 215 S. Galena Street** (IL 2/Lincoln Highway). The Hotel is now part of an apartment complex, but it was a lodging house from 1853 until 1988. Presidents Lincoln, Grant, Theodore Roosevelt, Taft, and Reagan all stayed here at various times.

During this visit of 1856, Lincoln is supposed to have visited the home of Joseph Crawford, "located on a bend in the river east of town." James Charter's home at Brinton and Everett Streets, and he also visited a home by the name of Hazelwood.

Lincoln spoke briefly at the Illinois Central Rail Depot in Dixon on August 27, 1858 on his way to the Freeport debate, and then may have come to town again in mid-July 1859 as part of a group of state officers and appraisal experts that made a nine-day tour of the Illinois Central Railroad. The train stopped at all of the stations along the route, and while in Dixon he likely stayed at the Nachusa Hotel once more.

More information about Dixon's historical sites is available at the Dixon Welcome Center, 106 W. River Street, 815-284-3496, www.discoverdixon.org.

3 Batavia

On May 19, 1875, Mary Todd Lincoln was found insane in a jury trial in Chicago. That night, she attempted suicide by drinking what she thought was a deadly

concentration of laudanum, but was actually caramelized sugar in water. The next day she was committed to **Bellevue Place** in Batavia, Illinois. She remained there until September 11, 1875, and then was released into the custody of her sister, Elizabeth Edwards, in Springfield.

Bellevue Place was a private sanitarium that could accommodate 25 to 30 female patients. According to Mark E. Neely, Jr.



and R. Gerald McMurtry in *The Insanity File: The Case of Mary Todd Lincoln*.

The asylum catered to women from the upper crust of Chicago society. Dr. Patterson advertised Bellevue place...as a "Hospital for the Insane of the Private Class" and...admitted "only a select class of lady patients of quiet unexceptionable habits." In other words, they were probably rich and were supposed to be only moderately troubled. Avoiding the furiously insane made it easier for him to practice "the modern management of mental



disease by rest, diet, baths, fresh air, occupation, diversion, change of scene, no more medicine than...absolutely necessary, and the least restraint possible." The building that was **Bellevue Place** (above) is located at **333 S. Jefferson Street**, just off of U.S. 31 (Lincoln Highway) in Batavia. There is a historical marker in front of the building, but it has been converted into apartments and is not open for tours.

The bed and dresser used by Mary at Bellevue (above left) is on display at the **Batavia Depot Museum**. This is the building that had been the Chicago, Burlington & Quincy Railroad, relocated to its current location at 155 Houston Street, 630-406-5274.

www.bataviainhistoricalsociety.org/depot_museum.htm.

4 Aurora

Local stories indicate that Lincoln came through Aurora many times and stayed at 36ca3 36dging houses and residences, however few documents of these visits survive. According to Ralph Gary:

In 1851, a ten-year-old girl met him in Hoyt's Store on the east side of River

Street. Someone remarked that she could sing in French, and Lincoln requested a sample. She performed to his delights. He asked what kind of candy she liked best, and then bought her a pound of horehound [a mint candy].

River Street is west of the Fox River in the center of Aurora. If Lincoln indeed visited as early as 1851, it was likely by steamboat, since the railroads were in their infancy in Illinois at that time.