

Westfield has a rich history and a unique connection to Abe Lincoln, from the founding of the Republican Party just up the road in Mayville, a rumor of secret strategy meetings with Abe occurring in a house in the village, to the documented letters from Grace Bedell asking Abe to grow a beard which prompted his inaugural stop at the Westfield Train Station in 1862.

Abe Lincoln is brought to life by Ron Carley, a preeminent reenactor and educator, who has been portraying Lincoln since 2012. He has been featured at many events, colleges, museums and even comic icons across the country. He was almost arrested in Washington, DC when he drew a large crowd while visiting the Lincoln Memorial after the park closed.

“Ron makes the persona of Abe Lincoln come to life, not only because he is tall and looks so much like him, but also because he recants Abe’s history, writings, political positions and beliefs with convincing accuracy. You can easily feel as though you are talking to the great man himself. It’s quite amazing,” says Marilyn Hemmer, chairperson of the Lincoln event. “When asked Ron will tell you he enjoys bringing a smile to people’s faces and helping them to respect and learn about our country’s history. We are thrilled to bring the Lincolns back to Westfield for this year’s celebration. “

The event begins on Friday morning the 9th, when Lincoln visits the students at Westfield Academy and Central School. Later He will attend the Downtown Block Party that evening from 5-8 pm. He will enjoy meeting folks during that jovial event.

On Saturday the 10th, Lincoln and Mary Todd will be Guests on Chautauqua Sunrise with Doc Hamels. Come to Moore Park between 10:30 - 2:30 as he will then tour the Westfield Farmers’ and Artisans’ Market, Flea Market, local downtown shops, ride the carriage, and visit the children at the Patterson Library’s story hour. Abe Lincoln will enjoy shaking your hand, answering questions, and posing for photographs and selfies for Facebook or Instagram.

He will be impossible to miss as he stands six foot four inches tall and wears his signature Stove Pipe Hat.

There will be a reenactment of Abe meeting Grace Bedell on the platform of the Westfield Train Station. This is the scene immortalized by the Bronze Statues at Bedell Park on the corner of Routes 394 and 20.

Abe will visit the troops at the Civil War reenactment in Moore Park to raise morale. Strong debate is expected when he visits the Confederate soldiers.

He will also visit the special Grace Bedell family exhibit at Lake Shore Center for the Arts.

The Lincoln’s will be guests of honor at the Chautauqua County Historical Society’s annual Gala at the McClurg Museum from 6-8. The Gala, appropriately entitled “An Evening with the Lincoln’s” features food and beverages and is a fundraiser for CCHS. One may hear an address from Abe on the steps of the museum, from the curved stairway in the entryway or one might just meet him in the Lincoln Room.

Lincoln merchandise will be on sale at Peaceful Designs Gift Shop on Main Street.

Call Marilyn Hemmer for more information and/or questions (716) 753-6043.

Special thanks to The Brick House B&B, Johnson Estate Winery, Rosie's Workshop, The Westfield Downtown Partnership, CCHS, Jema Matteson (our little Grace Bedell), the Westfield Train Station.