

THE EXPONENT

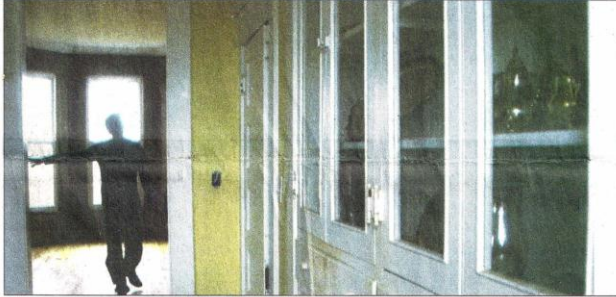
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PURDUE'S INDEPENDENT DAILY STUDENT NEWSPAPER

CANDIDATE ANCESTRY



Brandi Reis | Photo Editor

Shawn Clements, the owner of the historical farmhouse, has restored it as a project. While researching the original builders, he recently came across Democratic presidential candidate Barack Obama's ties to the family that built the house in the 1880s.

Homeowner traces Obama's line back to Tipton County farmhouse

By Kaye Maloney
Assistant Features Editor

Two of Sen. Barack Obama's relatives graduated from Purdue University in 1906.

They were the sons of William Riley Dunham, who built the family home in Kempton, Ind. Dunham is the great-uncle of Obama.

More than a century later, the 12 room house built in the late 1800s is still standing. The house remained untouched for 20 years until Shawn Clements of Tipton County decided to buy and restore it a few years ago. Clements' interest in preservation work stems from growing up in an old home and learning about his family's history.

After buying the farmhouse, Clements looked into the Dunham family history and found the Dunham name is the maiden name of Obama's

mother. It wasn't until six months ago he discovered the connection between Obama and the Dunham family.

"The whole Barack Obama thing, to me, is very interesting but there's a ton of history before that," Clements said.

The Dunham family was well-known in Tipton County. William worked as a school teacher and his sons Wilbur and Grover practiced medicine in the county for many years. All three men were also loyal members of the Democratic party.

The Dunham's Democratic influence may have made an impact on Obama's party choice, but the influence is intertwined with history.

"There's a lot of history out here, but a lot of people don't know it cause it's just little Kempton, Ind.," Clements said.

Jeff Freeman, who has done work with Clements on the house, remembers the Dunham family while he was growing up. Freeman, of Kempton, Ind., knew Parker Dunham, who worked as a teacher, a photographer and a journalist at different times throughout his life.

Freeman is glad to be a part of the restoration process.

"It's been a pleasure and an honor to work on a house like that," he said. "I'm very proud to be a part of it."

The remodeling of the Dunham home started four years ago and still has a long way to go. But the long process has not stopped Clements from his work; he is inspired by his interest in history to keep working.

"Even if the people aren't famous, there's usually great stories behind these old houses," Clements said. "It's the people who lived there and what they did with their lives that make that house a home and the memories of it."

Clements also said he wants to make sure the generations to come do not stop remembering their past, which helps them to understand who they are and where they came from.

"It's got to be passed on," he said. "If I quit caring about it or get too old to care about it and your generation doesn't care about it, these things disappear — they're gone."

>> GIFT

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center," said Joseph Hornett, senior vice president of Purdue Research Park.

Kurz said she donated the money to the Research Park because her late husband had a strong interest in business.

"He wanted to see more universities connected with businesses and this park is a big contribution to that," she said.

Purdue University president France Córdova said the contributions from alumni and the

University's success. Córdova also said the Research Park is used as a role model for scientists across the country.

John Dennis, West Lafayette mayor, said the combined vision of Purdue and West Lafayette will provide many advantages for the Purdue Research Park, West Lafayette and Indiana. The city approved a 10-year tax abatement worth \$1.5 million for the new facility.

The gift is one of several donations being announced during the week, leading up to