



Obama's mom has Tipton County ties

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Sen. [Barack Obama](#) has some little-known Hoosier roots, according to state historians.

His mother, Ann Dunham, was born in Kansas. But if you go back a few generations, you'll find her family includes Hoosier farmers, doctors and teachers. One of his great-uncles, William Riley Dunham, was even a member of the state legislature. And, yes, he was a [Democrat](#).

The Dunhams moved to [Indiana](#) in the 1840s when the area was "nothing but wilderness and swamp," according to Carolyn Etchison, director of the Heritage Center at the Tipton County Historical Society.

One side of the family moved to Kansas sometime between 1880 and 1900.

Another part of the family stayed in Tipton County, where a few descendants still live. They've learned about the [Obama](#) connection recently and are choosing to keep a low profile. The Dunham name has mostly vanished from Kempton, and the descendants have chosen to remain unidentified, Etchison said.

"They are very proud of it and everything, but they prefer to remain anonymous because they have nothing to add."

The man restoring the Dunhams' ancestral home is happy to share its history, though.

Shawn Clements, who has restored several historic homes, purchased the house that William Riley Dunham built in the late 1800s, unaware of its Obama connection. Now he's considering scheduling a few tours after work is finished on the 12-room home, possibly this summer.

Clements, 40, has been researching its history and chatting with local residents who enjoy sharing their stories with him.

"I'm getting a lot of people who want to walk through," he said.



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