



STANISLAUS COUNTY LIBRARY

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PRESS RELEASE

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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE:

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American Life in Lincoln's Time at the Modesto Library

What was life like in the mid-1800s? What is hard tack? On what occasion was it appropriate for a woman to wear short sleeves? What are widow's weeds? These and other questions will be answered at a free family program, "American Life in Lincoln's Time" at the Modesto Library, Saturday, June 5 at 1 p.m.

When Abraham Lincoln was a 34-year-old lawyer, the first large group of pioneers left Independence, Missouri in wagon trains headed for Oregon. They often prepared skillet bread on the trail in a dutch oven or spider (frying pan with legs) over a buffalo chip campfire. Children's cookbook author, Loretta Ichord, will be dressed as a pioneer woman and show various foods common in the mid-1800s. She will describe cooking and baking methods used during this era for skillet bread, election cake and Union Soldier Bean Soup.

Leslie Ackel of the American Civil War Association, will discuss the "look of the day" in Lincoln's time. She and other ACWA members will be dressed in period clothing, explaining what was considered appropriate attire for specific occasions and how each look was achieved, including a minimum of seven layers of undergarments. Other interesting facts will be woven into the presentation, such as how color dyes were made. Arsenic was used to make green dye

for example. The militaristic influence on clothing will be discussed, as well as mourning etiquette and widow's weeds.

Civil War Era music will be presented by Ernie Bucio and the Gottschalk's Music band, with additional information about how music was part of American culture of the mid-1800s.

Immediately following the program, at 2 p.m., there will be a free screening of the 1939 classic film about Abraham Lincoln, starring Henry Fonda, directed by John Ford. In their first collaboration, Fonda gives one of the finest performances of his career, as the young president-to-be, struggling with an incendiary murder case as a novice lawyer.

"American Life in Lincoln's Time" is offered in conjunction with a national exhibit commemorating the bicentennial of Abraham Lincoln's birth. *Abraham Lincoln: A Man of His Time, A Man for All Times* is a national traveling exhibition organized by the Gilder Lehrman Institute of American History. The traveling exhibition has been made possible in part through a major grant from the National Endowment for the Humanities, dedicated to expanding American understanding of human experience and cultural heritage.

This free program will be held in the downstairs auditorium of the Modesto Library, located at 1500 I Street. For more information, please call 558-7810.

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