

Joan Cummins: Every day at President Lincoln's Cottage, we engage with visitors in conversation on difficult topics, from slavery, to grief, to immigration. Visitors, young and old alike, come here from next door and from around the globe.

Callie Hawkins: And occasionally, we get asked a question on a tour that stops us in our tracks, one we wish we could spend a half hour answering. Some of these questions, on their face, were innocent or simple, but on a second look, they contain a level of complexity that leaves us wanting to know more. Each episode we'll investigate a single real question a visitor has asked us here.

JC: At President Lincoln's Cottage, we're storytellers, historians, and truth seekers, so we called on people whose expertise could speak to all the facets of these questions.

CH: I'm Callie Hawkins.

JC: And I'm Joan Cummins. This is Q & Abe. Come on down the rabbit hole with us.

CH: Let's take that half hour now.

JC: For this episode, we're exploring the question: Is it okay to call her Aunt Mary?

CH: Truth be told, we've heard this question, or something similar, many times since opening to the public, and it comes in different forms, from, "Aunt Mary, who is she related to?" or "Why was she called aunt?" something of that nature. Few people probe deeper than that, to be honest. But one day a visitor wanted to know more, and so after asking why she was called that they said, "Was that okay for President Lincoln to refer to an African American woman who was not related to him as aunt?"

JC: A quick note before we jump in: I will be saying AH-nt Mary and Callie says AN-nt Mary throughout this episode. Please know that the inconsistency between us does not reflect any historical arguments, it is just our personal speech patterns. There're actually two women who were part of President Lincoln's orbit during this time who were known as Aunt Mary. One of them is Mary Dines, who escaped slavery to live in the contraband camps on the outskirts of DC. She became a leader in her community there and met Lincoln when he stopped to sing with the folks in the camp on one of his commutes to and from the Cottage. The other woman is Mary Williams, a free African American woman who worked as a cook for the Lincolns while they were staying at the Cottage.

CH: And because they were both called Aunt Mary in many of the primary sources that reference them, in the initial research on the Cottage during the first phase of preservation at the site, that led to some confusion about their identity. Additional research provided much more detail on both Marys, but there's still relatively little we know about each woman.

JC: This meant we had a lot of questions. What kinds of relationships did these women have with the people around them who were calling them "Aunt"? Would either woman have wanted to be called this, or would she have preferred something else?

CH: We started by looking for more details on Mary Dines' life. We went to speak to Kate Masur, a historian who edited and re-released a book called *They Knew Lincoln*, in which John E. Washington collected all kinds of stories about the African Americans living in DC who encountered Lincoln while he was in town. It's a fantastic book, and it's been relatively hard to find until very recently. It's one of the main sources of information we have about Mary Dines.

Kate Masur: It's a book in which he talks about African Americans who knew Abraham Lincoln, and he is not focusing on people like Frederick Douglass or Sojourner Truth, whose kind of interactions with Lincoln are better known, and instead he's talking about people who might have crossed paths with Lincoln in Washington DC during the Civil War, and so in that context, Washington talks a lot, or he wrote a lot, about this group of friends of his grandmother's. Now - so let me backtrack for a second - he was born in 1880, and his grandmother had been a younger woman when the Civil War began, and she was now raising him in Washington DC right near Ford's Theater. And she ran a boarding house - the boarding house was for white patrons, but she had enough kind of, autonomy in her job that she was able to use some of the kitchen and sort of lower spaces in the boarding house as places where she could have friends over and so she was really, uh, hosted people who came over, and Washington grew up hearing the stories of older African Americans, many of whom had lived in slavery before the Civil War, some of them had escaped to Washington DC during the war, some of them had crossed paths with Lincoln. So these were elderly people in his community whose stories he loved to listen to, and some - and he really admired that generation, and, and was fascinated by what they had lived through, and so in the book he often refers to his grandmother's friends as - by the terms "aunt" and "uncle." And those are terms - you know, I see them as terms of kind of, of endearment, of suggesting his admiration for them - suggesting that he felt like they were important parts of his life and his community when he was growing up. And terms of respect also, they, they suggest, these are older people who are, you know, sort of elders of the community who he really wants to listen to and wants to think about what they have to say.

JC: That gave us some sense that, among the community of African Americans in DC, being called Aunt could be positive and respectful, a term of address to an elder. We also heard about positive uses of the term from one of our other guests, art curator Catherine McKinley, who worked on an exhibit called "Aunty" highlighting images of African and African American women.

Catherine McKinley: Well "aunt" is more of a, the proper term, a familial term that you see throughout the culture here, and it's really about familial bonds, but "aunty," again it comes out of that notion of an honorific but it also comes out of the notion of women belonging to a wider community. So if I call a woman "Aunty," as a fifty-something-year-old woman myself, it's a kind of respect for somebody who may have - who's most likely older, who has a particular kind of knowledge and wisdom, and who I am hoping to convey respect to. With younger women, in their twenties, people who may or may not have children, you hear it used a lot, you know it's common now to hear it used in a playful way maybe, a flirtatious way, as a suggestion that somebody touches in some way on a kind of status in the community. And, different from U. S. society, in, women in Africa who are middle aged really hold the power, because they've, they've had this longevity, they have status within their household and their families, they usually have older children and they, they've earned money, and they have real financial control.

JC: It became clear that this was one possible set of meanings for the term, especially among members of African-descendant communities when they were addressing each other.

CH: But, what about when the term was coming from outside the community, when white people address black women this way? That creates different dynamics, and as Catherine said:

CMcK: I mean I think race is kind of the, the bottom line on this, you know?

JC: Sure.

CMcK: I think, I think it is the bottom line I mean it's, it's just, it's still so - there's so many ways in which the term is complicated, and it, I think from one situation to the next it reveals like, different tensions, different issues of power.

CH: We needed to know more about the situations in which either of these women might have been called Aunt Mary. We spoke to Chandra Manning, a historian who works on contraband camps, about how white people - mostly soldiers - interacted with African Americans fleeing slavery and living in these contraband camps, which were essentially refugee camps. She says the war meant a different demographic of enslaved people were taking the opportunity to flee.

Chandra Manning: One of the big differences between the flight of slaves, fugitive slaves, before the war, and slaves who run to the Union Army during the war, is both age and gender. Because former slaves running away before the war are overwhelmingly male; women don't run nearly as often, and a big part of the reason is, is they have children to care for. Once you don't have to make it all the way to Ohio or to Canada, it's a lot easier to run with children. It's not easy - I do not mean to suggest that at all, it's an enormously dangerous and risky proposition, but at least the mileage is lower. And so women picking up their children and running is, is really a war phenomenon.

JC: As you might imagine, all of these women and children arriving at Union troop lines created a crisis point for the soldiers that was really different from what they'd imagined when they had signed up to join the army and fight. So how were they reacting to the refugees from slavery? Chandra gave us a fascinating example of one soldier's reaction.

CM: I think you have another soldier, Constant Hanks is his name, and he is an older man, older than most, so you, older than needed to be in the army, a family man himself, his mother's still alive but his children are coming into adulthood so he really sort of spans the generations himself, and he is struck again and again by children in Washington DC, not least because they remind him of his own, and that sense of, a former abstraction - or even an object, a slave, as having some relationship to oneself - that's a transformation. But the most affecting moment for him I think is, he and his regiment are out by Fredericksburg, Virginia and it's a brutally hot, not a stick of shade day, and he and his fellow soldiers are just wilting - and then all of a sudden this long line, this train of almost exclusively women and children make their way into Union lines. And he is especially moved by an older enslaved woman, bent, just can't even stand up straight, and her granddaughter, who's probably about three. And the daughter of

the older woman is the mother of the granddaughter, and the mother had just been sold, and so the granddaughter at that - or, the grandmother, pardon me, picked up her granddaughter and ran, cause she's all that the grand daughter has left, and Hanks, is so moved by that that he, possibly for the first time, is seeing himself and his loved ones in these enslaved people - he writes about, I could only say to myself, what if that was my mother, what if that, what if that was my little one, it started the apple sauce out of my eyes. And that kind of connection is that's, that's a transformation, and it most often happens specifically at these sites of family.

JC: Because this is an opportunity for soldiers to imagine them as human as well.

CM: Yes! Yes, a human and having something in common –

JC: Right.

CM: Sort of sharing, sharing priorities, sharing things they care about, all of a sudden that kinda shrinks the distance.

JC: Yeah! Yea...

CM: Now, I don't want to overplay it, I don't wanna say that every single soldier has a, you know, an epiphany, because plenty don't, plenty see the women and children as an encumbrance, as another problem to solve - and, and there are many problems to solve - it is when they think of slaves, former slaves, in the context of families that they begin to feel any sense of common bond, and so the use of familial language seems to me to be speaking in part to the shrinking of distance between soldiers and former slaves. At the same time, there's also an air of condescension about it, it is both at once. And that is the sort of devilishly infuriating thing about this war is, that it is so often that things are both opposite and true at the same time, and I think that family language is, is one of those places. I really do think it's telling us both responsiveness to another human who has family relationships that are like family relationships I have, I think it's that, and I also think it's a re assertion of hierarchy, a reassertion of condescending expectations, at the exact same time.

CH: Soldiers got some practice imagining African Americans as fully realized humans, but still saw them as inherently different from themselves. Kate Masur explained how those mindsets influenced forms of address, some of which had their roots in slavery.

KM: When, when somebody like Lincoln referred to African American adults as aunt or uncle, it was following certain conventions of that time period, which were to - for white people to refer to black people, or older black adults, using those terms, but in a way that wasn't obviously suggesting that they were kin, or like kin, the way that a black person would, but rather in a way that - on the one hand it recognized their seniority, like it recognized that they were sort of older, and maybe worthy of a level of kind of respect, in that sense, but it also did complicated work I think by suggesting that - a level of familiarity that was what, what we would now consider the very problematic, like often white people would say, "Oh well we treat black people who work for us, or who are our slaves, just like family." Just, in quotes, like, in like family, "they're just like our family," when we know that they were not "like" their

family, right? When push came to shove, they would sell them away, or they wouldn't pay them their wages, or they wouldn't give them days off to take care of their children, right? And, and so, that kind of a loose allusion to family in a black white context, where a black - a white person is calling a black person as if they're family, really breaks down barriers that should not have been broken down. Another thing to be said about this is, that you'll notice that when somebody calls somebody Aunt So-and-so they're using their first name, right? So they would say Aunt Vina or Aunty Sojourner. That - what is another option for how an, a white adult could call black adult? By their name, right? They could say Mrs Truth. And those two things that I just mentioned I think go together, that over familiarity of sort of making them into family, fake family, while at the same time not acknowledging that they are entitled to the kind of respect of calling them Mister So-and-so or Miss So-and-so, and so it's really a gesture that every time I think a white person used it, they sort of re-inscribed the hierarchy of race that allowed white people to kind of make that presumptuous connection to black people that would have, if it were a truly respectful relationship, they would have called the Mr. or Mrs., by their last name, right? And that's not what they were doing.

JC: Our next guest agreed with Kate's assessment.

Adena Spingarn: In the 19th century, and before then too obviously, we had a very hierarchical racial system in this country, and most if not all white Americans would have felt really uncomfortable calling an African American person Miss or Mister or Mrs, those were honorific titles that were reserved for white people basically, but they wanted some way to address African Americans that wasn't, you know, "boy," or "girl," or "you." I mean because there, even, even if there was racial prejudice there was still some sense of, okay here are people who I value in particular and so familial terms, you know, like Aunt Chloe or Uncle Tom, were a way to give some kind of respect and familiarity to African Americans by a white person without actually saying Mrs or Mr, which would have been sort of crossing the line, too much respect.

JC: That's Adena Spingarn, who wrote a book about the evolution of the term Uncle Tom and its shifting perceptions of that landmark character. She says the book Uncle Tom's Cabin served, especially in the North but also around the world, as a first encounter for many white people with an image of African Americans in the full spectrum of humanity. Of course, it got more complicated after that.

AS: The book asks this question of how a character from an anti-slavery novel who is really a martyr, very loyal to the other people who are enslaved with him, how does this Christ figure become such a terrible thing - nobody wants to be called an Uncle Tom now. So for a long time scholars thought that the Uncle Tom figure while it sort of recognized the character as a good guy early on, this character, when Uncle Tom's Cabin was staged on the 19th century stage, became this blackface minstrel figure, and that character must've been where the slur came from. What I found, at least in the, in the reception history, is that even though stage adaptations of Uncle Tom's Cabin did use blackface, which was basically how almost all black characters on the stage were, were played, those plays, Uncle Tom's Cabin plays, were received as actually very different from minstrel stage conventions because Uncle Tom was not a comic figure, he was actually a figure of pathos, and a figure of dignity. So, while I'm sure that if we saw any of these shows today we would be totally offended by them, at the time and they were actually a lot more, sort of progressive and respectful and humanizing than other representations

of blackness on the American stage. So I started looking at uses of the Uncle Tom figure, and what I found is that the place that this figure really changes meaning is not on stage, but in black political rhetoric.

JC: Adena says that Uncle Tom became a figure representing blackness, specifically in the enslaved past. Immediately after the Civil War, rising black leaders saw him as well-meaning but uneducated. Then, as folks became dissatisfied with the lack of progress on civil rights, things changed.

AS: The generation after this post-bellum generation, they look back at these people who'd called themselves New Negroes and they say, oh no no no, you're not actually new, you're old, we're the New Negro, you're the old one, in fact, you're no different from Uncle Tom. At this point, this is in the 1910s, Uncle Tom is not just a figure of the past, it also becomes a figure of complicity, and so there's a sense that the people who have been speaking for the race as leaders are, are complicit in the lack of progress, and are happy with their own progress, and so there's a way that Uncle Tom is not just ignorant, as the first generation of New Negroes would have said, but he - he knows better, but he's still sort of playing this, he's still kind of doing a Jim Crow dance in order to make progress individually.

CH: Both "uncle" and "aunt" were used in the time of the Civil War, but Uncle Tom has become an immediately recognizable slur in a way that "aunt" hasn't. We were struck that there could be such a stark difference in the gender aspect of this and wondered if there was more to it.

JC: There are still enduring images of minstrelsy in everyday life in America. You can think of Uncle Ben's rice or Aunt Jemima pancakes if you're looking for advertising that has its roots in images of happy black people content to serve delicious things in the home.

CH: So, given all this, we needed to really get specific about how and when Lincoln and others were calling these women Aunt. We went back to the primary sources, which we share with visitors regularly through recorded audio as part of the Cottage tour experience. The first is a letter from one of the soldiers stationed at the Cottage to guard the Lincolns, in which he says, quote, "Aunt Mary the colored cook often came out on cold mornings after Mr L. had breakfasted and gave boys near house a cup of coffee and biscuit," end quote. This seemed like it fit within what we know about soldiers encountering black women in a domestic capacity, and is full of all of those complications of simultaneous respect and condescension.

JC: The other source also refers to Mary Williams and comes from Lincoln himself. He wrote to his wife saying, quote, "Mrs Cuthbert and Aunt Mary want to move to the White House because it has grown so cold at Soldier's Home. Shall they?" end quote. In this moment, Lincoln uses as an honorific for Mary Ann Cuthbert, the white housekeeper, but the more complicated term Aunt for Mary Williams, the black cook. Getting into the nitty gritty of the language, it seems like there's a clear difference in the terminology between the two. To get some context for how to think about language and how to grapple with this as a museum, we went to talk to Dina Bailey, who works with the International Coalition of Sites of Conscience and works with museums on this kind of thing all the time.

Dina Bailey: I encour- I would encourage people to try to see it from as many different perspectives as possible and so one of the things that I really talk about with staff members that I'm training is, the difference between intention and impact. And so for a lot of people, the intention to call her Aunt Mary may have been a place of familiarity, or a place of respect, that may or may not have actually been the impact in the moment, and may or may not be the impact when visitors hear that contemporarily. And so I think my gut reaction upon hearing the question is really to come at the question, and the person who was asking that question, from a place of empathy.

CH: We use both of these sources on our tour, and visitors hear them every day. We realized we actually had two questions: was it okay for Lincoln to call her Aunt Mary?

JC: And, was it okay for us to call her that, as a historical site? As we were trying to figure out our own thoughts, we asked our guests what they thought. Adena had this to say about using the term in the past.

AS: I think though that we don't have to shy away from a term like Aunt Mary in the way that we would shy away from like the n-word or something like that, because it did in its time confer some kind of respect, and affection, and was a label that some African Americans took on without issue. I mean I guess, one of my pet peeves in terms of the way that we think about race in the past, and especially sort of, oppressed groups in the past, is that we think that everything that we would now consider terrible and disrespectful must've meant the same thing to those people then and so they had absolutely no sense of agency or dignity or power. And I think that sometimes when we when we say, oh that was completely, you know, demeaning to not to call her Mrs. Williams, we're sort of taking away what might have given her a sense of dignity at the time. So I, I don't think we should rush to say it's awful to call someone Aunt Mary because they should have been calling her Mrs Williams - we can acknowledge that that was what she was called, that that - that that may not have been a problem to her, that may have been something that she felt good about at the time, even if now it's not okay.

CH: Kate Masur, as a historian, had insight on the difficulty of these kinds of language choices, which are coming directly from primary sources.

KM: I think historians tend to be very kind of, literal in terms of sources, so if you, if you come across somebody and, and all you know is that her name was Mary, and you don't know her last name, or maybe she didn't really have a last name, that you can write that into the text by saying, you know, and so I'm gonna, I'm talking about a person who we know only as Mary, and then you would proceed to refer to her as Mary because that's the only information that you have, and, and so I think historians in general try to be very, very honest with the sources that we have and to also sometimes try to write about the power relations in the past that lead us to only have certain kinds of relationsh - certain kinds of information about some people, whereas we have much say, fuller information about other people. That that is - what we know now stems from inequality in the past and that's perpetual, that's never absent, that kind of inequality in the past that leads to inequality in the historical record, and so what we I think historians who write about this kind of thing are always trying to do is acknowledge that and still find ways of saying something meaningful and important, particularly about the lives of people who were on the less powerful side of that equation in the past.

JC: So, what do you think, was it okay for Lincoln to call her that?

CH: You know, this is really truly one of those moments I wish I could sit down to dinner with Abraham Lincoln, I think the questions that really remain for me, the ones that are nagging at me the most, are answers only Lincoln himself could give me. You know, questions like, did she invite him to call her that? Was Mary Ann Cuthbert, as the housekeeper, at the top of the household, and so he was obliging Mrs Cuthbert by using her honorific and referring to the others in service by a more familiar term? Did he not understand the complicated social norms he was reinforcing by using that term, and did he think that he was close enough to her to call her that? I, I have so many questions for him.

JC: Yeah, I think I lean towards this being something that would have been unconscious, but still reinforces those power dynamics in a way that I wish he had thought more about before using that kind of terminology.

CH: Yeah and I, I think for me you know as, as I've, I've worked here for ten years now, and until the moment that visitor asked the question, I'd never thought about it in that way, and, yeah, it's, it's, it's - I'm struggling with my own privilege, or what that says about me, and the fact that I had never thought about it this way before, and you know, maybe my colleagues had at some point, but it had never really occurred to me. I thought that the most remarkable thing about this story with the, the soldier who was camped out here at the Soldier's Home was that he got breakfast off of Lincoln's plate and he thought that was worth writing home about. You know and it, it just had not occurred to me how complicated this, this really is.

JC: And that can be really jarring, to sort of confront something that you hadn't thought about before that makes everything you were doing with it seem different in retrospect, you know?

CH: Yeah and for me it, it really just underscores this - really wanting to be able to ask Lincoln those questions.

JC: Yeah, I find myself wanting to hear from Mary Williams, right? Yeah... You're like, what a, what do you think about this? Is this something you want, right? Like that's my question from the beginning, you know, because if she's like, "please call me this," then even by contemporary standards that's perfectly legitimate.

CH: Well and then there's the story of, of Sojourner Truth who, you know, Lincoln referred to as Aunty Sojourner and to the public she was very enthusiastic about, about that, but there are suggestions that privately, she was very upset by it.

JC: Right, like whether Mary Williams or anybody would have felt comfortable saying "please don't call me that."

CH: Right, and, and the, the dynamics of any white man, you know, let alone the President of the United States, but any white man, referring to an African American woman in those terms. I, I do think it's interesting the, the role that gender also plays in this.

JC: That there are multiple power dynamics happening.

CH: Right.

JC: And I think it can be easy for this to be one of the things we don't think about because so many of us have aunts, or we have people in our own life that we respect and call aunt for one reason or another. This was something Dina Bailey mentioned also, that it can seem kind of easy and nonchalant, but that learning more about underlying factors can help us think differently about how we use these every day terms.

DB: I think that, while people get nervous, and say, well we can't put on our modern values with the values historically, right, we can't make those comparisons, that there are universal values, there are human attributes that continue from generation to generation, and acknowledging that is really important. One, in terms of the context of individual people and their decision making but two, in also recognizing some of the universality, or some of the legacies, or some of the things that we naturally struggle with that they were struggling with as well. In terms of President Lincoln and others in particular, I would draw to this idea of privilege. That he didn't necessarily have to think about how his words were impacting others, and so he may have just been less aware of that. Similarly, the idea of whiteness, that there is a dominant culture, or a normative culture perhaps is a better way to say it, and so people who are living within that normative culture often are invisible to aspects of that culture that that the people who are not within that normative group can see very clearly, and I think that calling someone Aunt Mary is part of that invisibility, that structure. I also think that some of these structures that we have begun to talk about in the podcast, about whiteness, about structural racism, about implicit bias, really understanding those structures helps people to be more empathetic and to understand why they can't just call someone by the same term that someone historically did, right? Just because it was accepted historically in some avenues, doesn't mean it automatically should be accepted contemporarily.

JC: So now that we've learned so much more about the complexities of this question, where are we on whether it's okay for us now, in the 21st century, to be calling these women Aunt Mary?

CH: To me, we absolutely need to be using their full names. We know them –

JC: No yeah, for me, because we know their names, we need to be using both parts of their names, in the same way that we would use both parts of Lincoln's name, right? Also, none of us have a familial or even familiar relationship with either of these women, we've never met them, we don't you know, we have no permission from them to call them that, so I think we very much, in speaking about them, need to, as we have been doing, call them Mary Williams and Mary Dines. I'm trying to work through now why I don't call them Mrs Williams, but the name that I use for her in my head, and when I speak to visitors is Mary Williams.

CH: That's really interesting. I refer to her, or think of her in my head, as Mrs Williams, kind of in much the same way that I almost exclusively refer to her as Mrs Lincoln, instead of Mary Lincoln, I mean we know she preferred to be called Mrs Lincoln anyway, so that's really interesting.

JC: Yeah and I, honestly it makes everything less confusing, because there were three women named Mary living in the house, and so we just need to know who is who, and to give all three of those women, to say this is Mary Lincoln, Mary Ann Cuthbert, and Mary Williams, all of those pieces of their name, I think is helpful in imagining them as three people who were living in the same place together.

CH: Yeah, I think it's an important distinction. And I think that they, you know, their stories certainly deserve more attention and more dimensionality to them, and I think that's what you get when you, when you take the time to refer to them by their first and last name.

JC: And this is an ongoing process of learning more about all the pieces of each of these three people's stories, these four people's stories.

DB: This work is really hard, and we can only push ourselves along on the journey individually, as well as through organizations, just continue to push ourselves to become more aware, and as we become more aware, then we become more aware of the similarities and differences in perspectives, and as we come, become more aware of the similarities and differences, then we can change our minds. But so often, you know, the, the quote is true, we don't know what we don't know, and so I think, give yourself a little grace, and just as we would want to give our visitors a little bit of grace in saying, they just haven't thought about that yet, they haven't been on that part of their journey. And so I think that is really important as you move forward with any of these conversations.

CH: It became clear that even a small thing like a term of address could bear multiple meanings at once and carry several complicated histories along with it. Once again, Dina put it perfectly.

DV: I think that history is more beautiful in its complication.

CH: We began to rethink how we approach this and the responsibility we have to Mrs Williams and to Abraham Lincoln via the stories we tell about them. I think acknowledging the complicated aspects certainly helps us to know more about Mary Williams, but it also helps us understand more about Abraham Lincoln. We have an important role to play in helping the public know more, think critically, and really question these long held notions.

DB: I have always considered connecting the past to the present, the present to the future, to be essential for organizations in terms of their, their purpose and their relevance. I think it's, it's really, really important to make those connections - because people can learn about history, but if they are not so inclined, they don't make the connection to what's happening today, and some people can make the connection between the past and what's happening today, they can see those legacies, but they don't necessarily think about their responsibility and helping to change the future. And so for me, I think it is not just a responsibility, but it is a core purpose for museums to provide opportunities, but to help

facilitate the, the consideration of how the past, the present, and the future are all connected, because it's in those connections that I think people really learn their lessons.

JC: For me, that's what's so exciting about history, that it can help you understand where you want to go in the future, and I'm gonna think and talk differently about Mary Williams, who I've thought of as a side bar in the past, but I need to practice imagining her as the center of her own story, and I hope if I get more practice I can help visitors get more practice doing the same thing.

CH: We want to encourage you to think about, what ordinary things that you say or do might reflect more complicated histories? Which people from the past that are usually overlooked do you want to know more about?

JC: This episode was produced by me, Joan Cummins, and Callie Hawkins. Music for Q & Abe was written, performed, and is copyrighted by, Clancy Newman. If you like the show, please subscribe on Apple Podcasts or whatever your podcatcher of choices is. You can also leave us a review to help others find us.

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JC: To the curious visitors who asked the question behind this episode, thanks for giving us the opportunity to truly get complicated with the history of our site.

CH: Comments? Questions? Write to us at podcast@lincolncottage.org

JC: President Lincoln's Cottage is a home for brave ideas. Stay curious!