

BETHINKING OF OLDE ORLEANS

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Grace Bedell

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The historic marker shown here has recently been re-erected after its restoration. This is located at 150 W. State St. in Albion, which was as the marker states: "Childhood home of Grace Bedell 1848-1936. In 1860 she wrote A. Lincoln suggesting he would look better with a beard. He responded and took her advice."

However, when Grace wrote the letter in 1860 she and her family were living for a brief time in Westfield. Her father Norman Bedell moved there for a period of a year or so to assist a partner in setting up a foundry. Once this work was completed they returned to their Albion home at 350 W. State St. Because the famous letter was sent from Westfield people there have showcased this facet of American history.

In 1999, the Lincoln-Bedell Statue Park was established in Westfield with statues of both Lincoln and Grace Bedell. A historic marker with those portraits states: "The meeting of President Elect Abraham Lincoln and his famous correspondent twelve-year-old Grace Bedell



took place on February 16, 1861, in Westfield at The Train Station. Prior to this Grace had penned a letter to Lincoln suggesting that whiskers would improve his appearance. At their meeting, Lincoln shook her hand, kissed Grace and asked her how she liked the improvements she had advised."

Our corresponding photo shows the bronze statue of Grace Bedell as she is about to meet Lincoln. Both statues in the Westfield park are life-size images anyone may approach located in this business district of this Chataqua County community.