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Saturday, April 26, 2008: 11:18 am

Readers' Obama stories

H-T Report

April 12, 2008

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EDITOR'S NOTE: Many residents were able to see Sen. Barack Obama in Bloomington Friday. They've shared their photos with us, their commentary and now their stories.

Following are the stories, comments and reflections sent by readers.

To share your stories, photos and videos, follow this link.

Tim Jessen, Bloomington: When I heard Barack Obama might be coming to Bloomington, I tried to track the story down! One needed to be a real detective to figure this one out. The Obama office in town had nothing to tell. I followed the comments on The Herald-Times Web site, including the note that he had left Columbus headed this way. At 4, it was posted that he was at the Stadium for the Little 500 Women's race. I decided to get over there, though my wife assured me (she works nearby) I would find no parking! But I did, walked up the hill, and 10 minutes later (about 5) he walked out. There was no search, no security (except for his Secret Service) and I got amazingly close to the candidate. He seemed totally "laid-back," cool, and eager to shake as many hands as possible. Those who had figured out this mystery story were extremely enthusiastic to see and meet the candidate, and the only rival candidate's signs visible were for... Ron Paul!!! But this was an Obama crowd, and he bowed everyone with his easy-going, friendly style — even while running for President. It was definitely worth the effort to get to see him.

Shawn C. Clements: No one is talking about the strong family roots that Senator Obama has to Indiana. I see in his commercial he talks about being raised by his single mother and grandparents. Obviously these people had a huge impact on his life. Their last name is Dunham. They are from Kansas. I live in Kempton, Indiana, where the Dunhams lived before they moved to Kansas. In fact, Obama's second great, third great, and fourth great grandfathers were either born here, lived here, married here, or are buried here. In fact the original Dunham is buried less than a mile from my home. I own the land that they owned and that was passed from generation to generation and I am currently restoring The Old Dunham house. It was owned by Riley Dunham who was a Democrat in the Indiana general Assembly. Also, There was a Dunham who graduated from Indiana University and was roommates with Earnie Pile and Hogeey Carmichael. I have pictures of Obama's grandfathers and family, copies of deeds with their signatures, newspaper articles, etc. You can even Google search Barack Obama Kempton Indiana and you will see his family tree going through Indiana. Also, the Chicago Sun Times published it as well with pictures on the Dunham family. The house I purchased is going through major restoration. I hope that attention to this story will bring about an interest in saving old homes and buildings. To date I haven't seen anyone ask Senator Obama about his ties to Indiana and yet his ancestors are laid to rest in Indiana soil. This is not some 20th cousin 10 times removed. This is his direct line. I would be happy to speak to someone in regards to this if interested.

'What is Authenticity? (Barack in Bloomington)'
 By Lydia Wilkes, graduate student, Indiana University

The word since Wednesday here was that Obama might make an unscheduled stop in Bloomington on his way from Columbus to Terre Haute. This morning's paper said he'd likely stop by the women's Little 500 race.

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"It's Barack!" she said and pointed to my left. Not a block away on Grant Street was Obama's bus.

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