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To Obama, it's Sweet Home Indiana

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Posted by: Caren Bohan
Tags: Tales from the Trail: 2008, Ann Dunham, Barack Obama, campaign, illinois senator, Indiana, primary

KEMPTON, Indiana - Barack Obama, vying for support from Hoosiers before Indiana's Tuesday primary, reconnected with his roots in the state with a visit to a farmhouse owned by his family for generations.

The white Victorian home in rural Kempton sits on land owned by Obama's fourth great-grandfather, who passed it down several generations within the family of Obama's mother, Ann Dunham. Ann Dunham was from Kansas but she later moved to Hawaii, where Obama was raised.



The Kempton farmhouse was built by William Riley Dunham, a great uncle of Obama. After the Dunham family gave it up, it was used at one stage as a funeral home and was recently purchased by Sean Clements, who plans to spruce it.

As part of an effort to show a folksier side of the Illinois senator, the campaign planned the visit to the house as an outdoor potluck dinner with Clements and his family and friends.

But the weather didn't cooperate. It was chilly with big gusts of wind that toppled the foldup tables set up in the back yard. So the tables had to be taken down and the dinner was scrapped in favor of a walk-around tour by Obama, his wife, Michelle, and their two daughters, Sasha, 6, and Malia, 9.

But there were no shortages of other opportunities to show the "regular guy" side of Obama, who has said he is determined to counter efforts by his opponents to portray him and his wife as "elitist, pointy-headed intellectual types."

The Obamas visited a picnic gathering in Noblesville at lunchtime. In the evening, they stopped by a roller-skating rink for an "ice cream social" with supporters. Obama did not skate, though his daughters did.

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Photo: Reuters/Jason Reed

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