



**Ann Rutledge
(1813-1835)**

Remembered as Abraham Lincoln’s first love, Ann Rutledge was born in western Kentucky on January 7, 1813. The Rutledge family relocated to Sangamon County, Illinois, in the mid to late 1820s, where Ann’s father aided in the building of the Salem Mill and operated Rutledge Tavern.

Abraham and Ann first met in the early 1830s, as he boarded at the tavern while he was postmaster of New Salem and a new member of the Illinois legislature. They both attended Mentor Graham’s New Salem school during the same period, and tradition says that Abraham won over Ann’s heart, following the collapse of her first engagement. Mentor Graham later related to Lincoln’s last law partner, William Herndon, in a letter, that, “Lincoln and she were engaged – Lincoln told me so – she intimated to me the same.” In the summer of 1835, Ann became ill and died on August 25, 1835. Lincoln suffered a bout of melancholy following this event; some historians argue that he never recovered from her passing, probably the most notable being William Herndon who had an intense hatred for Mary Todd Lincoln.

Rutledge Tavern by Bernhardt Wall, 1931
Bernhardt Wall, Following Abraham Lincoln 1809-1865, Subscription series, Private printing 1931, Courtesy of the Abraham Lincoln Library and Museum of Lincoln Memorial University, Harrogate, Tennessee