



Foundation Document Overview

Lincoln Home National Historic Site

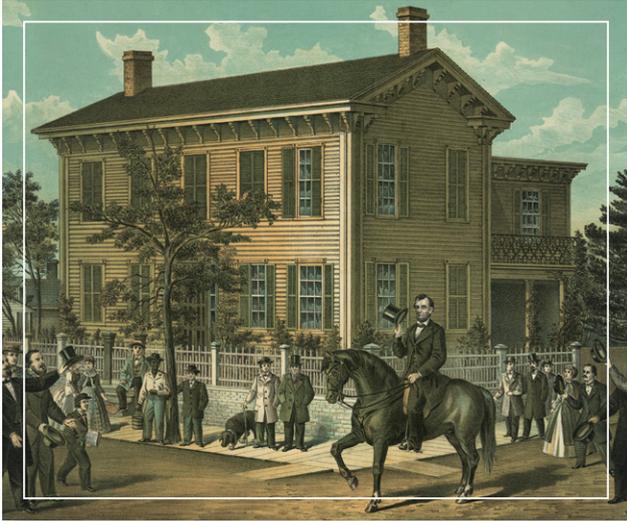
Illinois



Contact Information

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Purpose



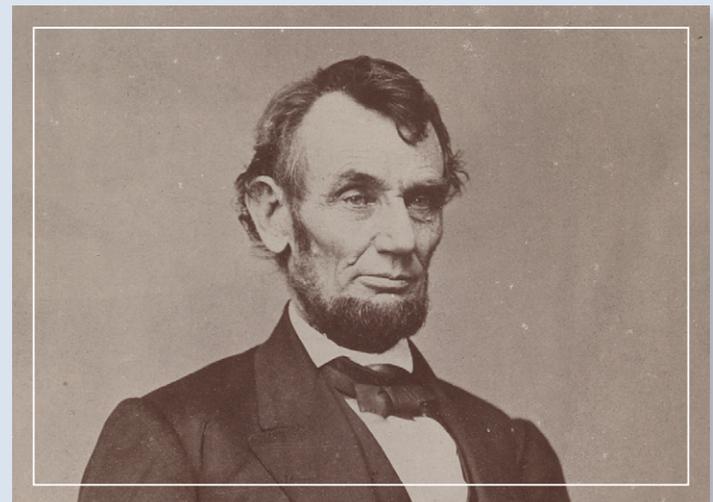
The purpose of LINCOLN HOME NATIONAL HISTORIC SITE is to protect and preserve the Springfield home of Abraham Lincoln and the surrounding Lincoln-era neighborhood as a meaningful setting for visitor understanding and appreciation; and to interpret Abraham Lincoln and the significant impact his 17-year residency in Springfield had on his emergence as a transcendent national and international figure, for the benefit of present and future generations.



Significance

Significance statements express why Lincoln Home National Historic Site resources and values are important enough to merit national park unit designation. Statements of significance describe why an area is important within a global, national, regional, and systemwide context. These statements are linked to the purpose of the park unit, and are supported by data, research, and consensus. Significance statements describe the distinctive nature of the park and inform management decisions, focusing efforts on preserving and protecting the most important resources and values of the park unit.

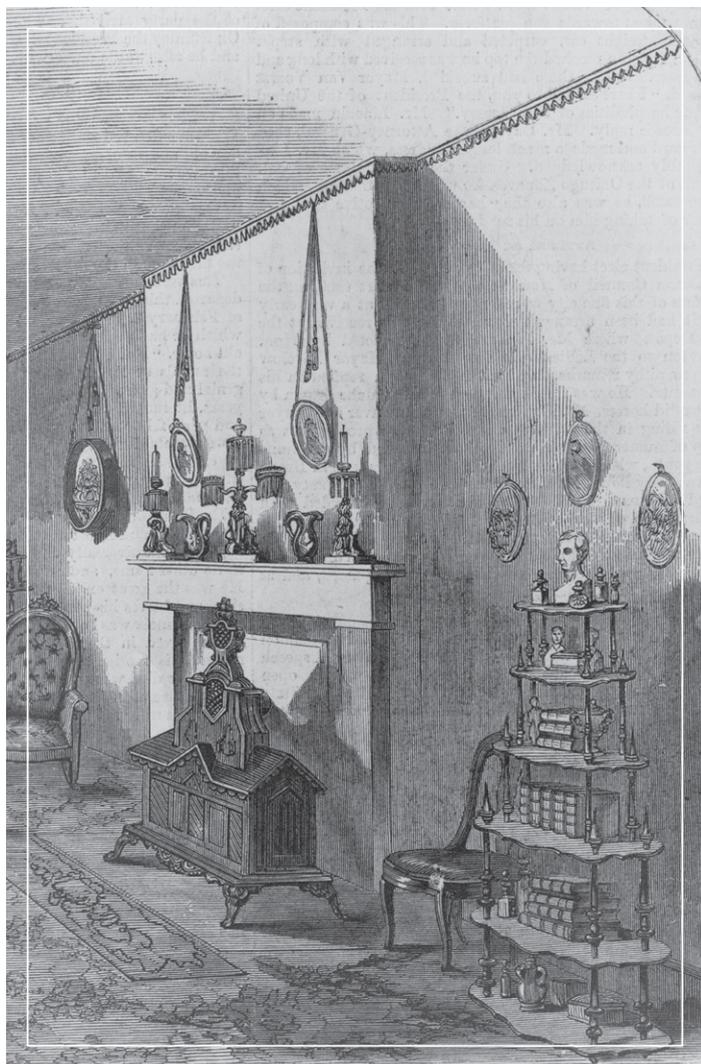
- Abraham Lincoln and his family lived in this, the only house they would ever own, for 17 years that were critical in his personal, professional, and political development.
- During these years Abraham Lincoln's legal career evolved from a small town law practice to a high level of sophistication—he developed a prosperous law practice; he served one term in the U.S. House of Representatives; and he ran for the U.S. Senate and became a major force in the new Republican Party and its presidential nominee in 1860.
- The home was the setting for many significant events associated with Abraham Lincoln's political career, including his preparation for the Lincoln-Douglas debates, his formal receiving of the Republican nomination for president, the writing of at least part of his first inaugural address, and other events.
- In 1861 he left this house and Springfield, Illinois, to become the 16th president of the United States.



Fundamental Resources and Values

Fundamental resources and values are those features, systems, processes, experiences, stories, scenes, sounds, smells, or other attributes determined to merit primary consideration during planning and management processes because they are essential to achieving the purpose of the park and maintaining its significance.

- The Lincoln Home and Lot
- The View of the Neighborhood from the Lincoln Home
- The Historic Landscape of the Lincoln Neighborhood
- Views of the Lincoln Home
- Collection Items with Documented Lincoln Home Provenance, 1844–1861



Interpretive Themes

Interpretive themes are often described as the key stories or concepts that visitors should understand after visiting a park—they define the most important ideas or concepts communicated to visitors about a park unit. Themes are derived from—and should reflect—park purpose, significance, resources, and values. The set of interpretive themes is complete when it provides the structure necessary for park staff to develop opportunities for visitors to explore and relate to all of the park significances and fundamental resources and values.

- Abraham Lincoln believed in the ideal that everyone in America should have the opportunity to improve his/her economic and social condition. Lincoln's life was the embodiment of that ideal.
- Abraham Lincoln was a spouse, parent, and neighbor who experienced the same hopes, dreams, and challenges of life that are still experienced by many people.
- Many of Abraham Lincoln's social and political beliefs concerning equality, freedom, and opportunity came into focus while he lived in Springfield. We as a nation strive to fulfill Lincoln's legacy of national and individual ideals.
- People today—as they have since the time of Abraham Lincoln's death—visit his home as a place to memorialize his life, seek meaning from his struggles and achievements, and find inspiration for their own lives.



Description

Lincoln Home National Historic Site in Springfield, Illinois, was established in 1972 to protect and interpret the home where Abraham Lincoln lived with his family from 1844 to 1861. The downtown Springfield site covers 12 acres over four square blocks.

Lincoln Home National Historic Site preserves 14 houses that date from the Lincoln era, including the Lincoln Home. Through neighborhood preservation and interpretive activities, the National Park Service seeks to recreate a vivid sense of the relationship of the Lincoln family to their neighbors and the broader Springfield community, enriching the experience of visitors to Lincoln Home National Historic Site.

In 1844, Lincoln and his wife, Mary Todd Lincoln, bought the home on the corner of Eighth and Jackson Streets. The young family, which now included Robert, born in 1843, continued to grow during the course of the 17 years that they lived there. Their second son Edward was born in 1846, but died just short of his fourth birthday. Their third son William was born in 1850, followed by Thomas in 1853.

Lincoln made a name for himself as an attorney traveling central Illinois' Eighth Judicial Circuit. In 1846 he won election to the U.S. House of Representatives as a Whig. He served in Congress from 1847 to 1849, and when the session was over, returned to Springfield. With a growing family and prosperous legal career, the Lincolns expanded their house by adding a full second floor by 1856.

In May 1860, Abraham Lincoln was nominated as the Republican candidate for president. At the time, custom dictated that presidential candidates did not do much formal campaigning, so Mr. Lincoln spent most of the time between his nomination and election in Springfield.

During the years Lincoln was still in Springfield he developed his social and political beliefs about opportunity, freedom, and equality. These ideals

influenced his decisions as president-elect, and then president. From November 1860 to February 1861, while President-Elect Lincoln lived in Springfield, seven states seceded from the United States. This troubling situation, along with Lincoln's picks for his cabinet, weighed on his mind as he prepared for leading a fractured country.

On April 15, 1865, an assassin's bullet took the life of President Lincoln. The assassination of Abraham Lincoln caused a national outpouring of grief. His home became the focus for mourners and the photographers who recorded these early visitors. By the late 19th century, Lincoln's home became a popular destination for tourists.

Lincoln's son, Robert, donated the home to the State of Illinois in 1887 to be protected and preserved for future generations. Robert Lincoln did so with the condition that the home remain well maintained and available to the public free of charge. The home was designated a national historic landmark in 1960, and it remained the property of the State of Illinois until 1972, when it was transferred to the National Park Service.

