

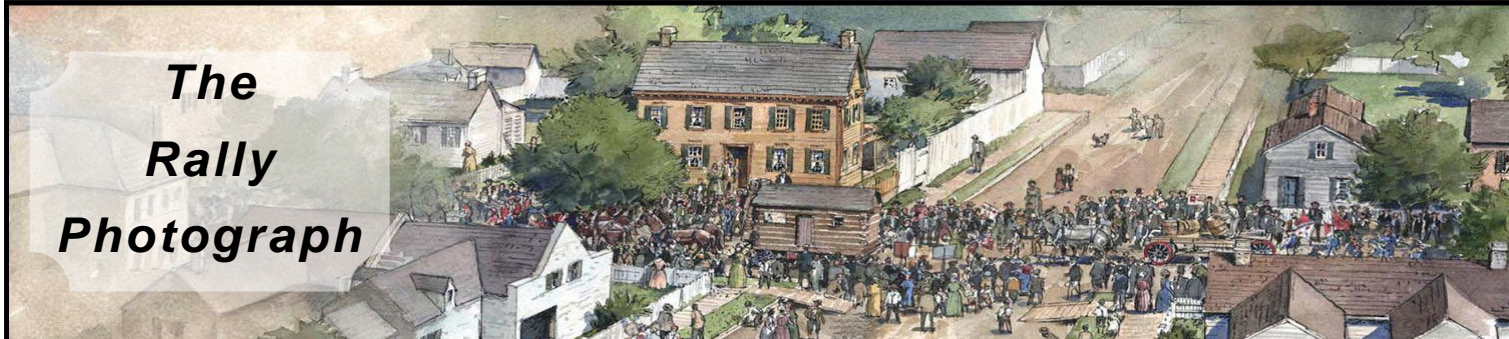
Lincoln Home

National Park Service
U.S. Department of the Interior

National Historic Site



The Rally Photograph



A memorable day.

August 8, 1860 was a memorable day in Springfield, Illinois. The *Springfield Journal* reported that 80,000 people crowded the state capital for a political rally and parade. These people were here to show support for Presidential candidate Abraham Lincoln and the Republican Party. At 10:00 am that morning, a massive parade began at the state capitol and wound through the city. Bands, political clubs, and floats were part of the parade. The “Rally Photograph” (printed on back) captured the feeling of excitement and energy that was in the air that day.

Won't you let me in?



The Rally Photograph shows a parade float carrying thirty- three young women, dressed in white, passing the Lincoln home. These women represent the thirty- three states of the Union in 1860. Behind the float is a buggy carrying one young woman, also dressed in white. She represents the territory of Kansas, and the sign by her buggy says, “Won't you let me in?”

One of the biggest political topics of 1860 was the question of whether the new territories west of the Mississippi should enter the nation as slave or free states. On this issue, some people sided with Stephen A. Douglas, who said that the people moving to those territories should be able to vote on whether to allow slavery. He called that process “Popular Sovereignty.”

Republican nominee Lincoln maintained that the Founding Fathers intended for slavery to eventually disappear. He wanted all territories to be admitted as free states. This debate is what precluded Kansas' bid for statehood during this time.

A few months earlier, on February 27, 1860, Mr. Lincoln made a speech that stirred his New York City audience and still inspires us today. He was discussing the issue of territories being admitted as slave or free states. He said, “Do not give in; do not compromise. Do not choose some middle ground between right and wrong. Let us have faith that right makes might, and in that faith let us dare to do our duty.”

Who is in the picture?



The Rally Photograph features Mr. Lincoln watching the parade, surrounded by his family and many other supporters. Lincoln is dressed in a white suit and is standing by the front door. Mary, in an elegant bonnet and fashionable dress, watches from the left first floor window. Willie Lincoln is on the second floor, leaning out of the second window from the left.

The people in the crowd represent what Mr. Lincoln envisioned for America. People from a variety of social backgrounds, including members of Springfield's African American community, took part in the rally. Lincoln believed that all Americans were entitled to enjoy the rewards of their hard work. He wanted America to be a place where everyone would have a fair chance in life.

A photo lab in the Lincoln home?

The man who took this picture was William A. Shaw, a professional photographer from Chicago. Mr. Shaw had come to Springfield to cover the huge Republican rally. Shaw took the Rally Photograph from the second floor of the Brown family home, across Eighth Street from the Lincoln Home. He had no studio or dark room in Springfield, and after Shaw took the picture he mentioned this to Mr. Lincoln.

According to the photographer, the nominee offered his root cellar as a darkroom and helped set it up. Lincoln had a great interest in science and new technologies, and stayed in the cellar while the picture was developed. Shaw said that Lincoln asked many questions during this process. While President, Mr. Lincoln continued to show interest in the latest inventions.

Who lived in Mr. Lincoln's neighborhood?

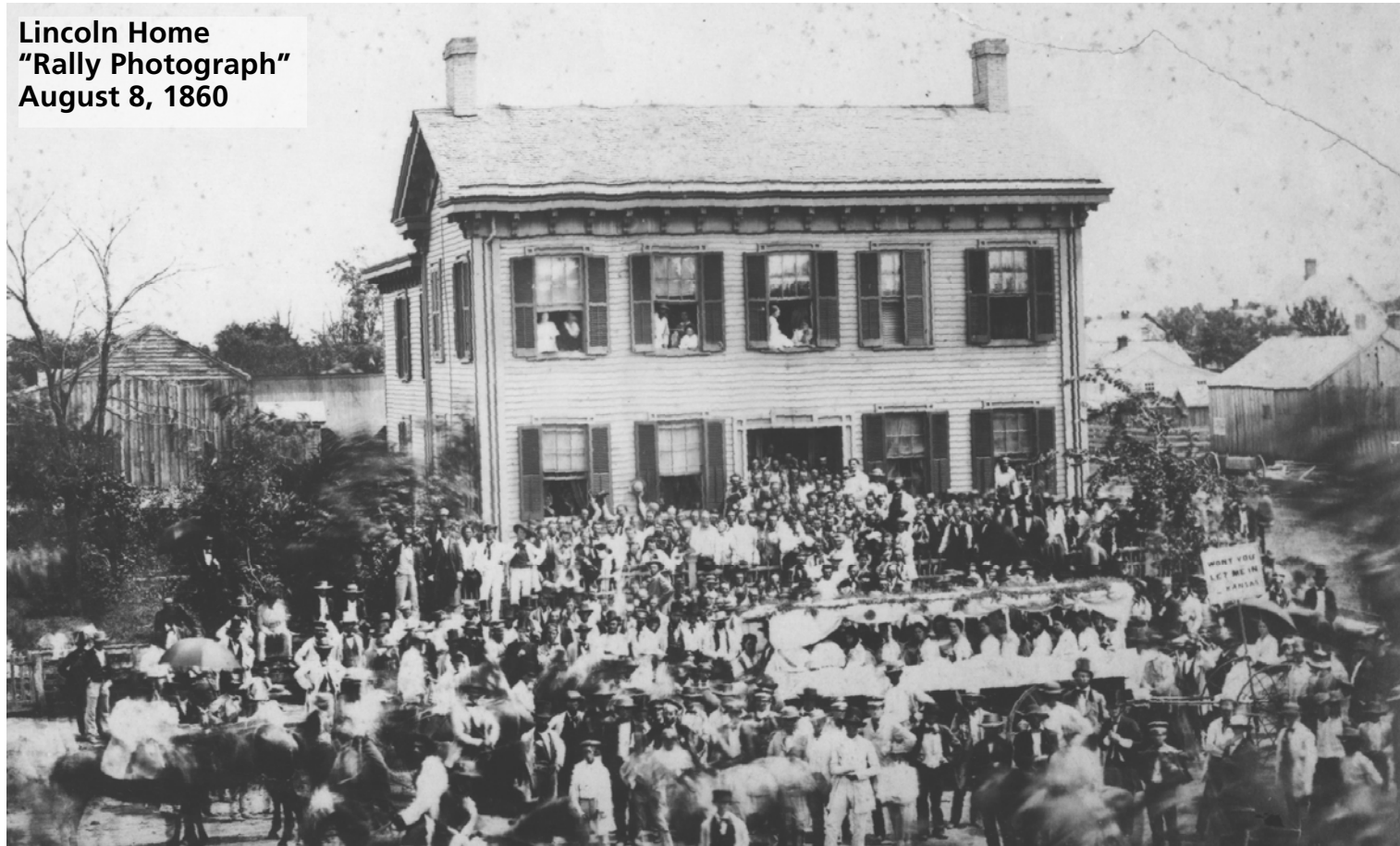
Mr. Lincoln lived at the corner of Eighth and Jackson for seventeen years. Like the rest of Springfield, Lincoln's neighborhood had the diversity that he thought should be representative of the nation. Mr. Lincoln was a neighbor to families of Irish immigrants, including the Burch family and the Carrigan

family. Mrs. Julia Sprigg, born in Baden-Baden (Germany), was also a neighbor of the Lincolns. There were twenty-one African Americans living within a three block radius of the Lincoln home in 1860. This number represented 10% of the African American population living in Springfield.

A picture of politics in the past

1. In Mr. Lincoln's time, presidential candidates did not campaign personally. They stayed home and others made speeches for them and their party.
 2. Mr. Lincoln thought that the issue of territories becoming free or slave states was crucial. Posing for this picture publicly showed his dedication to the restriction of slavery.
 3. Politics were very important to a variety of people in Mr. Lincoln's time.
 4. The Lincoln home was once much more than a historical site. The neighborhood was much more than a place for tourists to visit. It was also a lively, vibrant place where people lived and where issues important to the country were discussed.
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Lincoln Home
"Rally Photograph"
August 8, 1860



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