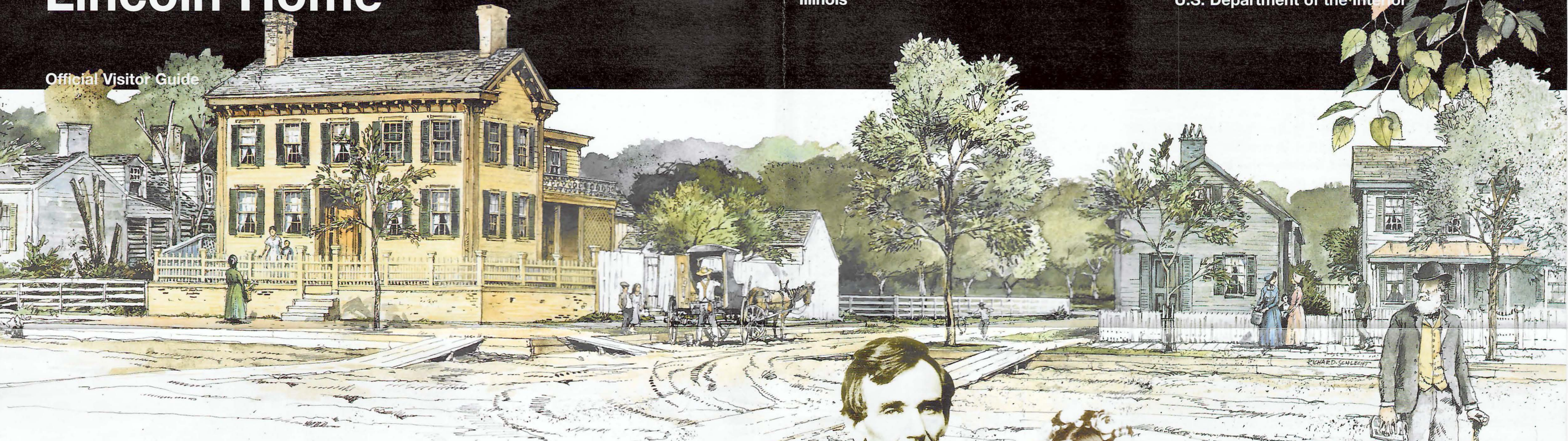


Lincoln Home

Official Visitor Guide

Lincoln Home National Historic Site
Illinois

National Park Service
U.S. Department of the Interior



Abraham Lincoln

A self-taught lawyer with only one year of frontier schooling, Abraham Lincoln rode his horse into Springfield in 1837 with all his belongings in two saddlebags. Mary Todd, who arrived two years later, was well educated and from a prominent Kentucky family. Despite their contrasting backgrounds, they were wed on November 4, 1842. In 1844 the young couple bought a small cottage at the corner of Eighth and Jackson streets. Here, three of their four children were born, and one died. While living in this house Lincoln enjoyed great success as a lawyer and was considered one of the state's best courtroom attorneys. His legal practice regularly took Lincoln away from Springfield up to three months at a

time in spring and fall. Their children certainly made the house a lively place, but Mary often felt alone without her husband present.

Lincoln began his political career by serving eight years in the Illinois House of Representatives between 1834 and 1842. He was elected to the U.S. House of Representatives in 1846, where he served one term. He was nominated in June 1858 to run for the U.S. Senate, a race he lost to Stephen Douglas. But this campaign, with its Lincoln-Douglas debates, set the stage for his ultimate achievement—election as 16th President of the United States.



Before leaving for Washington, D.C., the Lincolns rented out the house and sold most of their household furnishings, storing a few in anticipation of their return to Springfield. On February 11, 1861, the Lincolns left Springfield by train. Lincoln summed up his life in Springfield to the crowd gathered at the station with these simple words:

"... To this place, and the kindness of these people, I owe everything. ..."

Illustration: Richard Schlecht
Abraham Lincoln: Library of Congress
Mary Todd Lincoln: Illinois State Historical Library

At Home With the Lincolns



The Lincolns entertained their guests in the **parlor**, the most formal and public room. This was the setting for an important event in the future President's political life. The 1860 Republican Party convention, held in Chicago, chose Lincoln as its candidate for President. The next day a committee traveled to Springfield, and, in this room, they formally notified him of his nomination.



Mary largely devoted herself to managing the household and raising their children. Much of this domestic and private side of the home centered on the **kitchen**. Here Mary oversaw the activities that made this a well-run and inviting home, allowing Lincoln to devote his time and energy to the practice of law and politics.



Lincoln frequently worked at home on both his legal and political careers. Although the parents' **bedroom suite** was in the private part of the house and seen by few outside the family, Mary chose the furnishings with care to reflect the tastes of a prosperous family.



Robert Todd (1843-1926) Born at the Globe Tavern hotel, Robert was named for Mary's father. He was the only Lincoln son who grew to adulthood and had children of his own.

Illinois State Historical Library



Edward Baker (1846-1850) Nicknamed Eddie, he died at home five weeks short of his fourth birthday. No photograph of Eddie is known to exist.

William Wallace (1850-1862) Loved by the Lincolns for his bright and inquisitive nature, Willie died in the White House, plunging the Lincolns into profound grief.

The Lincoln Museum



Thomas (1853-1871) Mary's "troublesome little sunshine" was nicknamed Tad by his father, who said he looked like a tadpole. Tad's death at 17 left his widowed mother desolate.

Ostendorf Collection



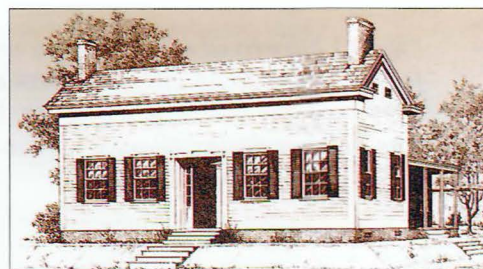
By 1860 the oldest son Robert was away at school. The two younger, mischievous boys, Willie and Tad, shared this **bedroom**. Law partner William Herndon said that Lincoln "worshipped his children and what they worshipped; he loved what they loved and hated what they hated."

Fido, the family dog, was left with friends when the Lincolns moved to Washington, D.C. Illinois State Historical Library



Lincoln Home Through the Years

By May 1844 Abraham and Mary Lincoln needed more living space for their young family and decided to buy a home. They selected a Greek Revival-style cottage (drawing at right) at the corner of Eighth and Jackson streets owned by the Reverend Charles Dresser, who had married the Lincolns in 1842. Lincoln paid \$1,500 for the home the family would occupy for the next 17 years.



Over the years the Lincolns enlarged the house to accommodate their growing family. In 1846 they added a downstairs bedroom. Most dramatic were improvements in 1855-56, when the Lincolns expanded the story-and-a-half cottage to a full two-story house. Their now substantial home became the center of national attention during Lincoln's 1860 presi-



Library of Congress

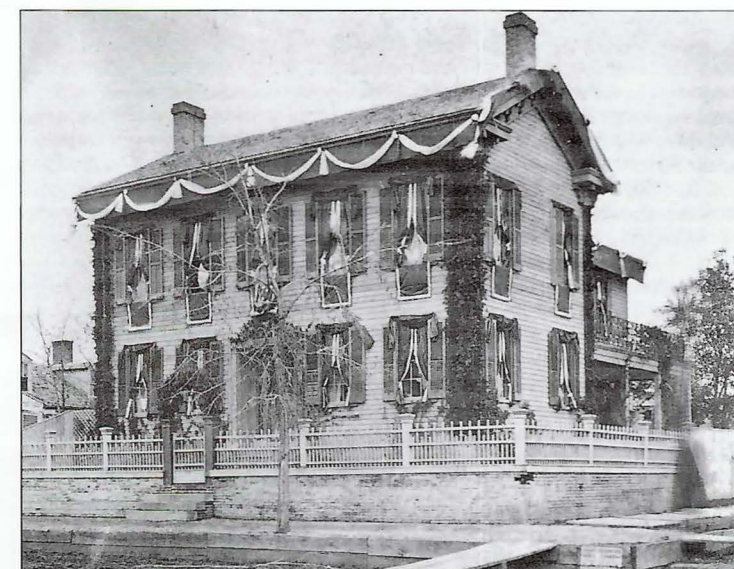


Library of Congress

dential campaign. Only a simple nameplate on the front door reading "A. LINCOLN" told the many visitors they had arrived at the home of the future President. After the election the Lincolns gave away or sold most of their furnishings and arranged to rent out the house to Lucian Tilton, president of the Great Western Railroad. The Tilttons regularly indulged the curious with tours of President Lincoln's home.

Following Lincoln's assassination in 1865, thousands of grieving citizens descended on Springfield. The house became a focus of mourning for a stunned nation.

The Lincolns sat for these photographs in 1846, their earliest known portraits.



Illinois State Historical Library

The Lincoln home (left) was draped for mourning as President Lincoln's body was returned to Springfield for burial in Oak Ridge Cemetery after he was assassinated in April 1865. Below is the nameplate that identified the Lincoln home during the family's residency.



On May 4, 1865, Lincoln's somber yet grand funeral procession passed in front of the Lincoln home on its way to Oak Ridge Cemetery. Eventually Lincoln's only surviving son Robert became sole owner of the Lincoln family home and maintained it as rental property. In 1887 he donated the home to the people of Illinois, who preserved it as a memorial to the martyred President for 85 years. The State of Illinois donated the home to the United States of America in 1972.

Today the home continues to draw visitors from around the world who are eager to learn about Abraham Lincoln—an international symbol of freedom and democracy.

The Springfield Lincoln Knew

Abraham Lincoln moved to Springfield in 1837, the year it became the state capital. A promising town of 2,500 people then, Springfield became the focal point of law, politics, and state government, yet livestock freely roamed its muddy streets. When Lincoln was elected to the presidency in 1860, the hogs were gone from its streets, and its population had more than tripled. In a new neighborhood at the edge of this bustling capital city, the Lincoln home was only a few blocks from Lincoln's law office at the town square, near the State House, courts, stores, and businesses. Their neighbors represented a cross-section of society, from laborers to elected officials. All in all, this was an excellent location for a promising young Springfield attorney and his growing family.

While no one knows exactly what Springfield was like in 1860, this carefully researched illustration suggests its appearance then. The Lincoln home was nestled in a heavily developed neighborhood. By the time the Lincolns left Springfield, there were houses all along Eighth Street, and the yards were filled with barns, sheds, privies, and gardens. Today the remaining houses and outbuildings offer only a glimpse of what this lively neighborhood was like when the Lincolns lived here.

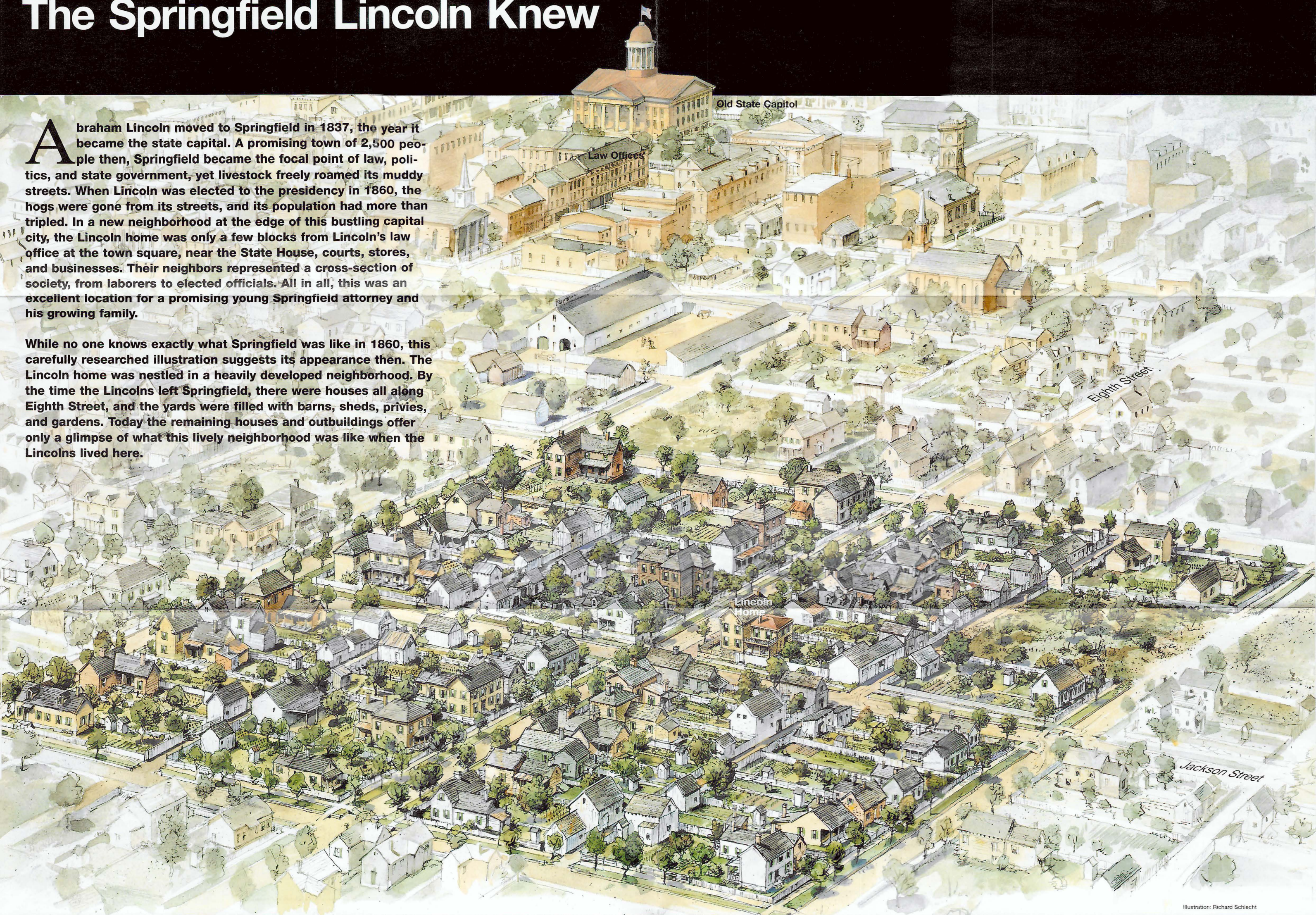


Illustration: Richard Schlecht

Information, Tours and Tickets

Visiting the Site

The site is open 8:30 a.m. to 5 p.m. year-round, with extended hours in spring, summer, and fall. It is closed on Thanksgiving day, December 25, and January 1.

Touring and Ticket Information

To tour the Lincoln Home, begin at the visitor center at 426 South Seventh Street. Parking is available for a fee on Seventh Street south of the visitor center. Free tour tickets for a specific tour time are provided first-come, first-served. Arrive early

in the day to get tickets to avoid long waits for tours. No pets are permitted in the Lincoln Home.

For information about group tours of both the Lincoln Home and other Springfield sites, call the Springfield Convention and Visitors Bureau, 800-545-7300.

The visitor center offers information, exhibits, orientation films, restrooms, and a bookstore. You may walk through the historic neighborhood and view exhibits in two of the houses.

Access The visitor center, exhibits, and first floor of the Lincoln Home are accessible. Call 217-492-4241 before your visit for more accessibility information or a sign-language interpreter.

Safety Visitors will encounter conditions that were part of everyday, nineteenth-century life. Irregular boardwalks, surfaces with loose stones, and narrow and steep staircases are part of the historic scene. Please watch your step to make your visit a safe one.

For More Information Contact: Superintendent, Lincoln Home National Historic Site, 413 South Eighth Street, Springfield, IL 62701-1905; www.nps.gov/liho; or 217-492-4241.

Lincoln Home National Historic Site is part of the National Park System, one of more than 370 parks that are important examples of our nation's natural and cultural heritage.

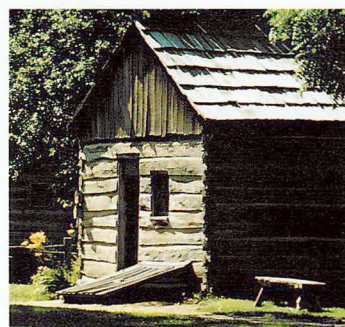
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Nearby Lincoln Sites

Related Sites Several state historic sites are within walking distance or a short drive of the Lincoln Home: the Old State Capitol, Lincoln-Herndon Law

Offices, Lincoln's Tomb, and Lincoln's New Salem. Within walking distance, too, is the Lincoln Depot, owned by The State Journal-Register. For information on these

and other attractions, contact: the Springfield Convention and Visitors Bureau at 800-545-7300.



Lincoln's New Salem



Lincoln-Herndon Law Offices



Old State Capitol



Lincoln Depot



Lincoln Tomb

"Here I have lived a quarter of a century, and have passed from a young to an old man. Here my children have been born, and one is buried. I now leave, not knowing when, or whether ever, I may return. . . ." —A. Lincoln, Farewell Address, 1861