



ABRAHAM LINCOLN PRESIDENTIAL LIBRARY & MUSEUM

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New Abraham Lincoln Presidential Museum Marries Traditional Scholarship With 21st Century Showmanship

Interactive, state-of-the art technology brings Lincoln and his legacy brilliantly to life

SPRINGFIELD, IL., - On April 19, 2005, Illinois Gov. Rod Blagojevich will officially open the Abraham Lincoln Presidential Museum, which reinvents the concept of the presidential museum with state-of-the-art, immersive exhibits that create history that feels like real life. With 40,000 square feet of permanent exhibits—double the size of any existing presidential museum—the museum offers a fitting tribute to the man most consider to be America's greatest president. The museum joins the already-open Abraham Lincoln Presidential Library as part of the Abraham Lincoln Presidential Library and Museum complex in Springfield.

The governor invites the public to celebrate the museum's arrival by attending a series of opening events beginning April 16 and culminating in a public dedication ceremony on Tuesday, April 19 at 11 a.m., which will be led by the governor and attended by other prominent state and national leaders.

"This world-class institution will help us all learn about and appreciate Illinois' most famous son and our shared national history," said Blagojevich. "The new museum will inform, engage, and inspire the state's residents and visitors alike—and raise the national profile of both Springfield and Illinois."

To ensure that Lincoln's life and teachings remain a part of our lives, the Illinois Historic Preservation Agency (IHPA) teamed with design firm BRC Imagination Arts and a distinguished panel of renowned historians to develop the new 100,000-square-foot museum. Employing 21st-century technology to make the 19th century live again, the museum design combines scholarship with showmanship that will both inform and astound.

THE NEW MUSEUM EXPERIENCE

Visitors to the museum complex will enter the museum's two state-of-the-art "exhibit journeys" off a 4,700-square-foot central plaza. Each journey makes a different time and aspect of Lincoln's life come alive, from his modest beginnings to his assassination and funeral, deepening our appreciation and understanding for the man Henry Cabot Lodge called one of the "best great men and the greatest good men whom history can show."

Journey One portrays Lincoln's childhood up to his election as 16th president. It re-creates his boyhood home as well as a harrowing New Orleans slave auction, his Springfield law office, the fiery Lincoln-Douglas debates and his departure for Washington in February, 1861.

Journey Two begins in a towering reproduction of the White House as Lincoln would have known it. It includes scenes depicting Lincoln and First Lady Mary Todd at the deathbed of their son, Willie; Lincoln in the War Department Telegraph Office as he receives the daily casualty counts of the Civil War; the White House Kitchen where black servants are gossiping about the possibility of emancipation; the presidential box at Ford's Theater; and, finally, a 95 percent scale reproduction of the House Chamber in the Old State Capitol where Lincoln's ornately draped casket lay in state before his interment in Springfield.

This is more than you-are-there-history, experiences include:

- **Ghosts of the Library**, This spectacular Holavision[®] show weaves an enchanting tale about the mystery and discovery awaiting the scholar in a great historical archive such as the Abraham Lincoln Presidential Library. During the presentation, high-tech special effects create misty, ghost-like visions of historical figures that share the stage with a live actor as viewers become part of a detective's journey into the past.
- **Campaign 1860**, This contemporary portrayal of the presidential race of 1860 features 30-second campaign commercials promoting each of that year's four candidates.
- **The Whispering Gallery**, Negative campaigning is nothing new! This is a twisted, unsettling hallway

where visitors hear brutally unkind things said about Mr. and Mrs. Lincoln during their early months in Washington. Cruel caricatures and harsh political cartoons attacking the presidential couple cover the walls of the gallery.

- **The Emancipation Proclamation** , A special effects "illusion corridor," this exhibit features a gauntlet of dream-like images of people telling Lincoln what he should do. The compilation of varying, sometimes racist, opinions reminds visitors that Lincoln was leading a deeply divided nation. It also showcases the extraordinary courage it took to issue the Proclamation.
- **Treasures Gallery** , A soaring exhibit space that showcases many actual items that were a part of Lincoln's life; the gallery offers visitors close-up views of Lincoln's original handwritten Gettysburg Address, a signed copy of the Emancipation Proclamation, and personal effects such as Lincoln's shaving mirror, Mary Todd's music box and a recently donated presidential "briefcase," among other treasures.
- **Lincoln's Eyes** ,In this dazzling special-effects theater presentation, an artist commissioned to create a portrait of Lincoln struggles to understand all the things he sees in Lincoln's eyes , sorrow, resolve, hope, vision, forgiveness and more. The presentation wraps around the audience with special effects and multiple layered screens of digital projection.
- **Ask Mr. Lincoln** , This unique interactive theater is a chance to ask our 16th president a question and receive the answer in his own words.

In addition to these permanent exhibits, 3,000 square feet of temporary exhibit space will feature Smithsonian-caliber changing exhibits on topics as diverse as America's First Ladies, Chicago's gangster era, the architectural genius of Frank Lloyd Wright and other topics illustrating the rich history of Illinois and America. The first temporary exhibit, "Blood on the Moon," commemorates the 140th anniversary of Lincoln's assassination. "Blood on the Moon" will be at the museum April 19 through October 16 and will feature Lincoln artifacts such as the bed he died in, which is on loan from the Chicago Historical Society; the carriage in which Abraham and Mary Lincoln rode to Ford's Theater, courtesy of the Studebaker National Museum; pieces of Lincoln's jacket, blood-stained shirt and gloves, Mary's dress and a fan from Ford's Theater, courtesy of Louise and Barry Taper; plus dozens of other historic artifacts, documents and images.

Elsewhere in the museum visitors will find a children's area called "Mrs. Lincoln's Attic," a restaurant, museum store and administrative offices. Both the library and museum have space available to rent for public or private events.

For more information, visit alplm.org.

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