



# Mr. Lincoln's Neighborhood News

Summer 2008 Vol. 1 No. 1

## Long Train Coming

### The Designation of the Jameson Jenkins Lot into the National Underground Railroad Network to Freedom

Just five lots south of the Lincoln Home lies a lush, grassy area, set apart from the neighboring empty lot by a partial fence. Within stands an exhibit, signifying the designation of said lot into the National Underground Railroad Network to Freedom. What used to occupy this empty space? What story does this rich ground have to offer? Who was this land's previous owner? What have they to do with the secret system which helped bring freedom to thousands of runaway slaves? And how do we remember the man who risked his life, and his family's livelihood, for the sake of others?

Jameson Jenkins is that man who owned the home just south of Abraham Lincoln's: a home long since lost to the ages. Jenkins was a neighbor, a local dray man, and a conductor on the Underground

Railroad. He lived a remarkable life, which included safely making his way into the free states of Indiana and Illinois from North Carolina. In February 2008, his work on the Underground Railroad was formally announced at our Visitor Center after a summer intern, Ebony Jenkins, authored the nomination.

Jenkins started his life in North Carolina, 1808. Whether or not he was born a free African American may never be discovered, however, in 1835 he requested a certificate indicating his status as a freeman; allowing him to travel from his birthplace to Indiana. Yet even with certification, safe passage was not guaranteed for any African American. Due to the Fugitive Slave Act of 1793, many free black men and women had been thrown into slavery: traveling without an escort left Jenkins open to the same risk.

Like many runaway slaves, he may have found "safe" passage through the Underground Railroad, finally setting foot upon free land in Indiana.

While living in Indiana, Jenkins married Elizabeth Pelham. The couple had a daughter in 1844, Nancy, and made their way to Illinois by 1846. In 1848, Jenkins and his family purchased a small two-storey home from Elizabeth's brother-in-law and moved into the humble home on Eighth Street—five lots away from the Prairie Lawyer, Abraham Lincoln.

Understanding the struggle of his fellow man, Jenkins found a way to help those being robbed of their freedom. As a local dray man, he carted various goods around town and outside of Springfield.

("Jenkins" continued on page 6...)

## 2 A Word from the Superintendent

Greetings and invitations: An extension to all to come visit the Lincoln Home National Historic Site from Superintendent James Sanders.

## 5 Unveiling the New Film

The Lincoln Home prepares many events for the Bicentennial. Part of these special events include the release of a new film for visitors to enjoy.

- Seventeen Years...2
- Safety Considerations...3
- A Walk Through the Park...4
- "Growing Forward in 2008" ...5
- Up-Coming Events...6
- Site Map...7
- Accessibility Information...7
- Mission Statement...8
- Editor's Note...8

# Seventeen Years...

On May 2, 1844, Rev. Charles Dresser handed Abraham and Mary Lincoln the deed to their new home on the corner of 8th and Jackson streets. The Greek Revival cottage provided just enough space for the couple and their infant son, Robert. With a parlor, sitting room, kitchen, and half storey sleeping loft, the small family found themselves in what would become their home for the next seventeen years.

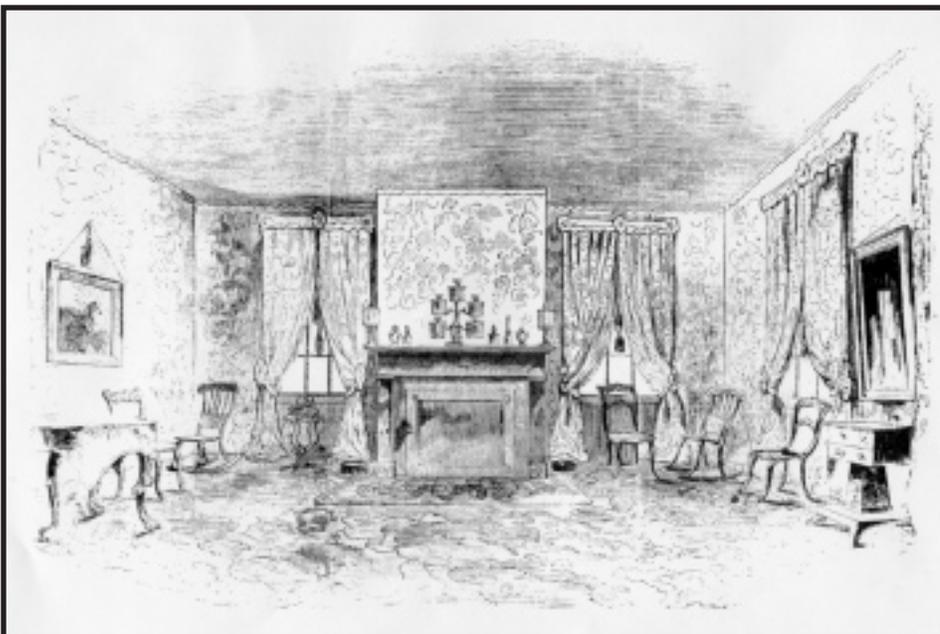
The family experienced both happiness and sorrow as the tiny house expanded from cottage to two-story home. As the family grew, the Lincolns felt the need for space expansion. Talks of construction began as early as 1848. Although the home was reconfigured to include a small dining room and bedroom (which later became a “study”) on the first floor, development of the second did not commence until spring of 1856. The completion of the second floor allowed the bedroom to be moved back upstairs, giving the Lincolns more space to entertain guests on the ground floor.

By the time 1860 arrived, the home was an essential part of the Lincoln story. It had seen the start of a loving family, the loss of a beloved son, and

the strengthening of bonds between the surviving members and new arrivals. The oldest son departed for college after attending prep school in 1859, while the younger boys remained at home playing with their father and the pets, gaining an education, and spending time with their mother. When the pivotal year of 1860 came upon them, their home became the location of their father’s greatest political success yet: in the home’s parlor Lincoln received his formal nomination to run for presidency under the Republican ticket.

During Lincoln’s campaign, his home was the site of many social gatherings, including a campaign parade on August 8, 1860. Hundreds crowded before the residence to be photographed, including Lincoln’s family who managed to stay near the home. Even so, the “Rally Photograph” only gives glimpses into the number of parade attendees: an astounding 80,000 were reported to have arrived in the capitol city for the Lincoln Campaign. November brought with it good news for the Lincolns. After a long, anxious wait at the State Capitol and Telegraph

(“Seventeen Years” continued on page 3...)



Sketch of the Lincoln's Sitting Room from *Frank Leslie's Illustrated Journal*, 1860.

## From the Superintendent

I'd like to invite you to visit this nationally significant historic site. It includes the Home of Abraham and Mary Lincoln and the restored 1860 period neighborhood they knew. A new orientation film describing Mr. Lincoln's life in Springfield will be available in the Visitor Center soon. A large model of downtown Springfield, as it appeared in 1860, with audio stories of his life, await you in the Visitor Center.

Once in the Lincoln-era neighborhood, there are wayside exhibits you'll want to visit which describe the relationships the Lincolns had with their neighbors; a typical day in the life of an 1860 Springfield resident; Lincoln's campaign for the presidency; audio conversations between Mrs. Lincoln and a neighbor through correspondence from the White House; the diverse population of Springfield; a conductor on the Underground Railroad; and the history of photography and visitation to the Lincoln Home throughout the years.

Park Rangers are always available to answer your questions and provide tours of the Lincoln Home. All of these are free to those who visit here.

James A. Sanders  
Superintendent

## ...Seventeen Years

(continued from page 2...)

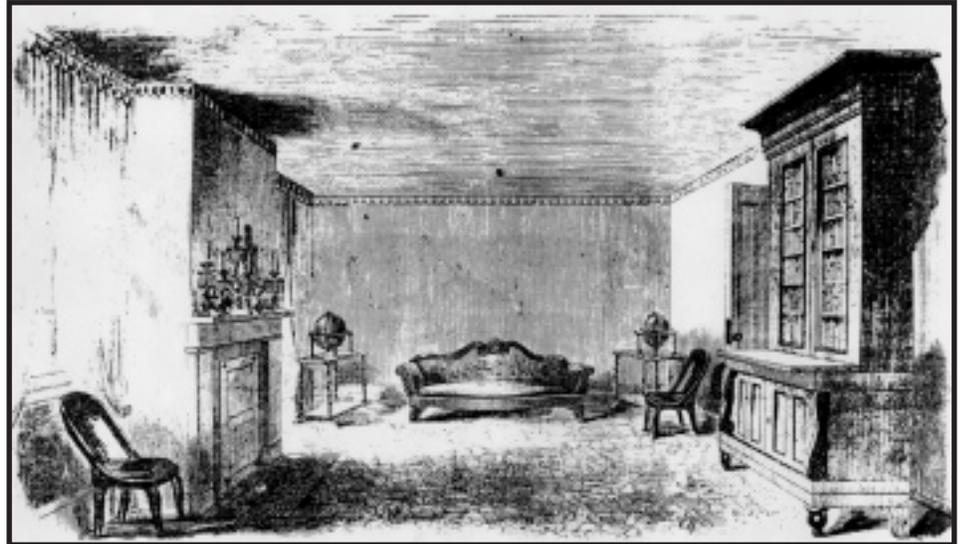
Office in the late evening of November 6 and early morning November 7, Abraham was informed of his success at the polls. Rejoicing echoed throughout the Lincoln Home, as he immediately informed his wife of their victory in the election. This triumph marked Lincoln's first step on his journey to national greatness.

Yet once more, misfortune befell the Lincolns as Abraham was informed the United States began to divide on December 20, 1860. The secession of South Carolina foreshadowed the struggle which lay ahead, as the nation battled over unity or separation. While still at home, Lincoln determined not to compromise on the Slavery issue, nor allow the country he loved to split and disprove the people's ability to

rule a nation.

The Lincolns shared many memories with each other in this home; through hardship, they endured and through success, they grew. Through it all, their home anchored them as a safe haven in times of distress and a place of love and companionship in times of stability. The events

taking place in the Lincoln Home helped shape the man who led the Nation through civil war and unrest. Visitors to this National Historic Site have the opportunity to walk in the footsteps of one of America's greatest leaders: to learn about the husband, father, lawyer, politician, and 16th President-Elect.



Sketch of the Lincoln's Back Parlor from *Frank Leslie's Illustrated Journal*, 1860.

## Safety Considerations

We want you to have a safe, memorable visit to the Lincoln Home National Historic Site. Remember to keep these precautions in mind while visiting!

- Take care around construction areas: please keep your distance
- Irregular boardwalks, loose stones, and narrow, steep steps were part of the 19th Century way of life. Please watch your step.
- The park is designed for pedestrian traffic. Only authorized vehicles are allowed on site. Bikes are permitted on the street, not on sidewalks. Skates and skateboards are prohibited.

- For animal and visitor safety, please keep all pets on a leash no longer than 6 feet.
- Collecting relics, plants and wildlife is prohibited. Metal detectors are not allowed on site.
- Please make sure to lock your vehicle door and keep valuables out of sight.
- Personal belongings may not be left unattended on sight and may be subject to search.



Be safe around construction.



Defibrillator in Visitor Center.

- Solicitation is prohibited. Please report panhandlers to a Ranger.
- Please report injuries or illness to a Park Ranger immediately. A defibrillator is located in the Visitor Center for cardiac emergencies.

Thank you for your consideration! We hope you enjoy your visit!

# A Walk Through the Park

## Restoration & “Greening” in the Lincoln Neighborhood

Summer unfolds into a flourish of people traveling to see the home of President-Elect Lincoln. Families stopping by during their vacation, members of the work force finding respite from their daily toils, and students freed from the dredging confines of school, all come to relax and learn in their National Park.

With the Bicentennial of Lincoln’s birth peering over the horizon in 2009, visitation is predicted to rise in the Lincoln Neighborhood. To prepare for up-coming events, and to better serve our visitors, the Lincoln Home National Historic Site staff has undertaken numerous restoration projects this summer. Staff is working to help enhance everyone’s National Park experience.

So just what does the Lincoln Home National Historic Site have in store for this season? Over ten restoration projects are currently planned for the hot summer months. These projects vary from large scale restorations, as seen with the Morse

house, to smaller on going upkeep, such as fence repair, tree pruning, and painting.

In addition to preserving the Lincoln Neighborhood, our staff is also working to protect the environment for generations to come. The Morse Home is scheduled to receive geothermal heating and cooling systems: installation for the Morse house will commence this August. Geothermal systems utilize the earth’s natural constant temperature, estimated 55° F, to both cool in summer and heat in winter: helping to reduce the use of fossil fuels and remove all natural gas from the homes (a safety precaution, as well as a Green step.) Plans also call for installation of Geothermal systems in the Lincoln Home at a later time.

We’ve taken many other precautions during our restoration to protect our visitors, the neighborhood, and the ecosystem. All paints used are water-based and

water-soluble; all batteries, motor oil, paint thinners, Freons, fluorescent light bulbs, copper wiring, aluminum, paper, and cardboard are recycled.

During your visit, you will see our staff hard at work to ensure your experience is a memorable one. You will bear witness to the changes taking place in the neighborhood, and in our interpretation throughout the 2008 summer season. While awaiting these modifications to reach completion, there’s plenty for visitors to do in the neighborhood! For a full list of summer projects, please refer to the guide located below this column.



Roof work on the Arnold Barn, June 2008.

Scheduled Projects	June	July	August
Morse House			
Tree Pruning			
Re-paint Corneau House			
Dean Barn Construction			
Beedle, Robinson, Cook House, & Allen Barn Tuck-Pointing			
Robinson & Cook House, & Allen Barn Roof Replacement			
Miller House Siding			
Fence Repair and Painting			
Painting of many Houses			
Dean House Roof Repair			

Summer repair schedule.

# New Lincoln Home Film helps kick-off Bicentennial Events

The Bicentennial is just around the corner, and the Lincoln Home National Historic Site is preparing new programs and events for those coming to visit during 2008-2009 (and beyond.) We've set in motion plans for a new film scheduled for

release the end of August, 2008. This narrated, live-action movie, *Abraham Lincoln: A Journey to Greatness*, follows Lincoln's life from the time of his arrival in Springfield, 1837, to the gray February morning of his departure in 1861. The movie

runs for 26 minutes and will have closed captioning and hearing assistance systems for those who request them.

In addition to the new High Definition film, we have installed High Definition movie screens and projection equipment in the theatres, LCDs (liquid crystal displays) outside our theatres displaying movie times and site information, and a new DVD for visitors to purchase and take home.

The Eastern National Museum Shop has also been refurbished and expanded to help accommodate guests wishing to purchase souvenirs at the Lincoln Home National Historic Site Visitor Center. They are one of the best sources for books on Lincoln and the Civil War with over 300 titles, as well as a great selection of films and souvenirs relating to the National Park Service. Eastern National donates a portion of each purchase to the National Park Service (over \$89 million since 1947.)

For more information on the Bicentennial, see page 6 or visit our website at [www.nps.gov/liho](http://www.nps.gov/liho).



Production photo taken during filming, May 2007.

## “Growing Forward in 2008” a Success

In preparation for the Lincoln Bicentennial, the Lincoln Home National Historic Site headed a volunteer project designed to promote out-reach and interaction with the local Springfield community. “Growing Forward in 2008” had two main goals in mind when the program was initiated: to provide volunteer opportunities to under-served parts of the Springfield community and to improve planting areas around the visitor center.

At 8:30 a.m. on June 20, volunteers gathered in the Visitor Center to meet each other, get their name tags, work gloves, safety glasses and to receive a briefing on what their tasks would be. Plants and materials were acquired thanks to a grant from the National Park Service Midwest Regional Office.

Led by Park Ranger Mike McPeck, all tasks were able to be completed before noon. After the work was completed volunteers enjoyed a catered lunch which was paid for in part by a donation from Eastern National.



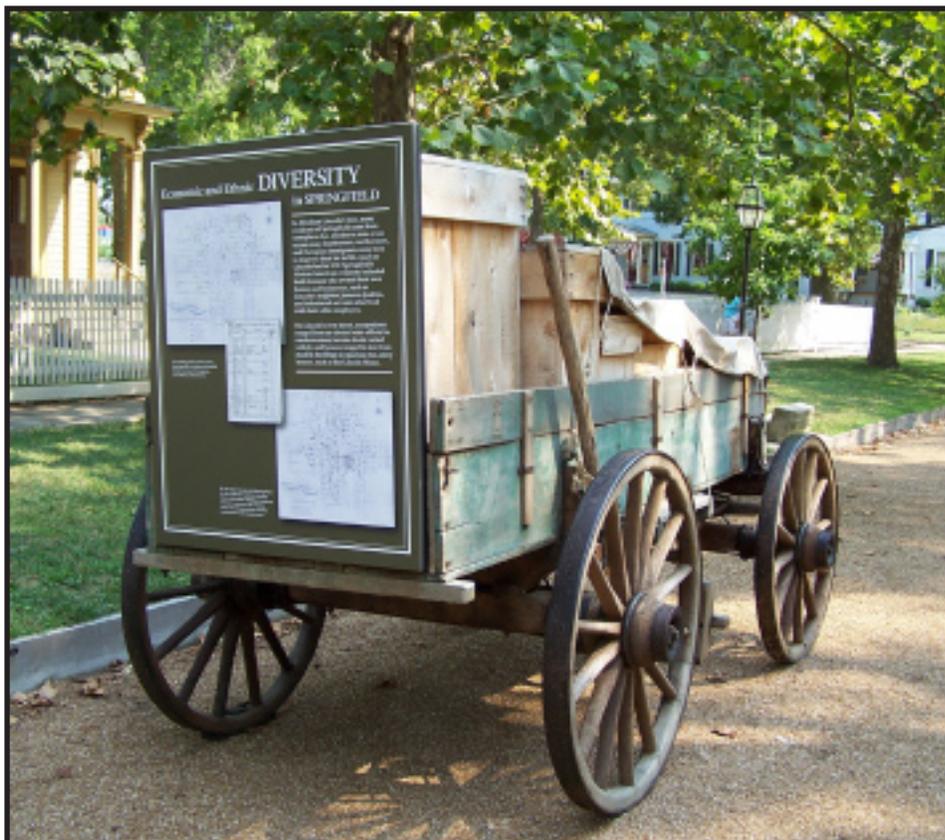
Growing forward, one plant at a time.

## ...Jenkins

(continued from page 1...)

He also occasionally offered rides to customers and took Lincoln to the Great Western Depot on February 11, 1861. Paid clients were not Jenkins' only patrons: he also provided runaway slaves with a route further north on the Underground Railroad. Springfield was a hub for different routes on this network to freedom. Slaves would come to Springfield from cities on the Mississippi River: Alton, Chester, and Quincy. As a dray man, Jenkins could easily hide people beneath his cargo and supply plausible explanations for his trips out of town. A recorded account where we believe Jenkins was associated with the escape of several slaves appeared in Springfield newspaper articles January 1850. Some suggested Jenkins was involved in the transport of slaves in their escape to Bloomington (one man was caught and later released by writ of habeas corpus.)

In addition to helping runaway slaves, Jenkins was also able to successfully support his family in Springfield. His wife and daughter became washerwomen, while he secured a wage with what is believed to be his own dray: as opposed to many who would work wagons owned by another proprietor. He would eventually become a messenger at the Sangamon County Court House, and moved to another



Lincoln Neighborhood diversity exhibit set in front of the Jenkins Lot.

part of town in 1865. He passed away in his seventy-third year in the same city in which he'd made a name for himself.

Jenkins, like Lincoln, achieved what many in America dream of: he rose to economic stability, raised a family, and made a positive difference in his and others' lives. In the neighborhood of the Great Emancipator, Jenkins did what he could to help emancipate many run-

away slaves. In doing so, he made it possible for others to attempt what he achieved in his life: to live free and prosper. Although they took different routes, President Lincoln and Jameson Jenkins both traveled, and guided, the train to freedom. Lincoln Home National Historic Site and the National Underground Railroad Network to Freedom are proud to designate the Jenkins lot as part of the Underground Railroad.

## Up-Coming Events

July 3-27

*History Live!* Springfield site events & performances.

Contact our Visitor Center for information.

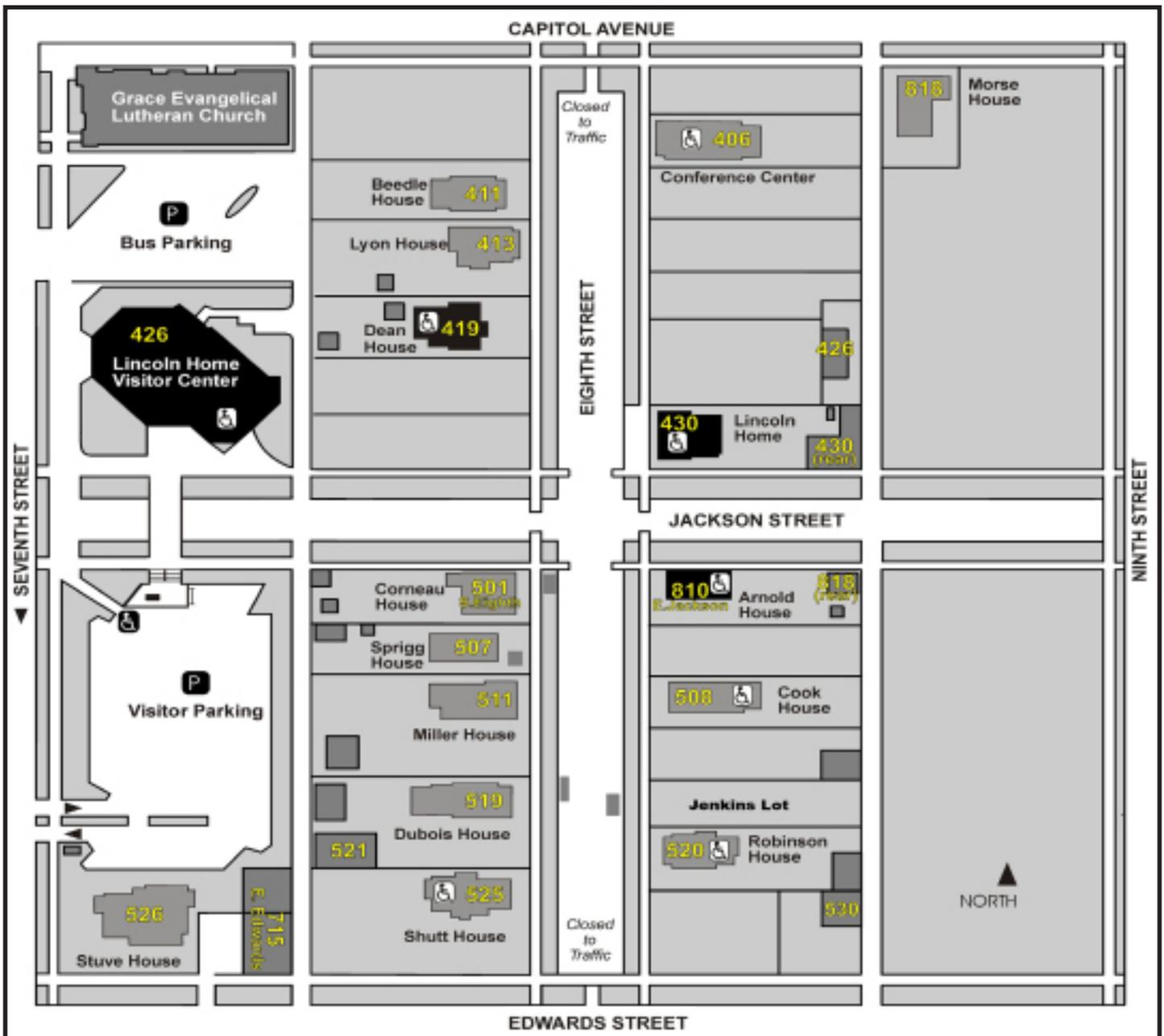
August 2

*Fabric of Life in a Country at War.* Exhibit at the Old State Capitol.

9:00-5:00

*Line of Stitching* at Lincoln Home NHS. 10:00

*How the War Changed Women's Roles in Society.* at the Lincoln Home NHS. 2:00



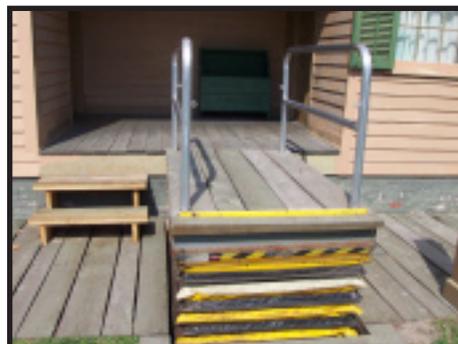
Park site map: The Lincoln Home National Historic Site encompasses four city blocks.

## Accessibility Information

The Lincoln Home National Historic Site provides many services for persons with special needs. The Lincoln Home and Dean Home exhibit have wheelchair lifts allowing access to the first floor. The Arnold Home also provides access via a ramp in back of the home.

The Visitor Center has access to wheelchairs, as well as films with

captioning and assisted listening devices. These devices help with hearing, but also give detailed



Lincoln Home wheelchair lift.

description of the films for the vision impaired.

Upon request, your tour guide has access to a transmitter which will relay the tour for those using the assisted listening devices. A Braille map and informative guide can be requested at the front desk for those wishing to read more about Lincoln and the National Historic Site.

Free wheelchair rental for use on the Historic Site is available.



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## Editor's Note

The Lincoln Bicentennial is a big event for all Lincoln Sites: local, State and Federal. To help you get better acquainted with the Lincoln Home NHS in 2009-and beyond-this Park Newsletter will be published quarterly.

We would like to know what you wish to see; what will help you learn more about Lincoln. Feel free to contact us through postal mail, e-mail, or telephone, and we will try our best to accommodate! Please tell us what you like and what you want to know!

We hope you've enjoyed our first newsletter! Your visit and comments will help the Park, and the newsletter, become a success! Thank you!

## Mission Statement

The mission of the National Park Service at Lincoln Home National Historic Site is to conserve unimpaired, for the enjoyment, education and inspiration of present and future generations, the Lincoln Home and its associated cultural resources and values that were critical to the emergence of Abraham Lincoln as both a national leader and international symbol of democracy.

This mission is rooted in and evolves from the park's legislative mandate found in the Act of Congress of August 18, 1971 (85 Stat. 347) as amended.