Lincoln Home National Historic Site

National Park Service

Department of the Interior

A Walk Through Mr. Lincoln’s Home
**Rules**

There are a few rules that must be followed while in Mr. Lincoln’s Home to help protect it for future visitors:

Stay on the blue carpet as we walk through the home

Do not lean against the walls or door frames

Carry all bags, backpacks, and purses in front of you

Please turn off cell phones

Do not bring any food, gum, candy, or drinks into the home

Strollers are not allowed inside the home

Please do not touch anything inside the home

You can take pictures inside, but please stay up with the group
Welcome to Lincoln Home National Historic Site. Today you will be touring the only home Abraham Lincoln ever owned. He and his family lived here from 1844 to 1861. This home embodies how far Mr. Lincoln had come from a one-room log cabin in Kentucky.

He had a wonderful family, a rising career and a nice home. Through hard work and determination, Mr. Lincoln lived what we call today the American Dream. Just as he was able to follow his own dreams, Mr. Lincoln, as President of the United States of America, wanted to make it possible for all Americans to follow their dreams.
Formal Parlors

These are the nicest rooms in the Lincoln Home and were used for entertaining guests. On May 19, 1860, delegates from the Republican National Convention came here to formally offer Mr. Lincoln the Republican nomination for president. Propelled by his belief in freedom and democracy, Mr. Lincoln’s own journey to greatness began here in the rear parlor.

Mrs. Lincoln was waiting for the delegates with refreshments in the sitting room, where we will go next. To get there, walk through the dining room into the sitting room.

Black Horsehair Sofa
“The Whatnot Shelf”

Mrs. Lincoln displayed her nicest things here

**Sitting Room**

The sitting room is where the Lincolns relaxed and spent their evenings. Mrs. Lincoln sewed or watched William (Willie) and Thomas (Tad), who often played games in front of the fire. Many evenings Mr. Lincoln could be found reading out loud to his family or wrestling with the boys.

The relaxing evenings would come to an end when Mr. Lincoln was elected President in November 1860. The burden of the Presidency would weigh heavily on his mind and must have caused Mr. Lincoln to have many sleepless nights. We will see the bedrooms next.
**Stereoscope**

This was one of Willie and Tad Lincoln’s favorite toys. They placed special photographic cards into a holder inside and saw the images in 3-D. Their favorite images were Niagara Falls and the Taj Mahal.

Please watch your step on the steep stairs and use the handrail for your safety. When using the handrail you will be touching something Mr. Lincoln himself once used.

**Sewing Area**

This area may have been used by Mrs. Lincoln while she sewed. She made the majority of her family’s clothing here in Springfield.
Guest Bedroom

The Guest Room was used by overnight visitors. Mrs. Lincoln put some of her nicest things in here. The bed you see in this room is the only original Lincoln family bed inside the home.

Take a quick look, then head into the Lincoln Bedroom; please remember to stay on the blue carpet.

Mr. Lincoln’s Bedroom

Welcome to Mr. Lincoln’s half of the two-room master suite. This room gave Mr. Lincoln something he did not have when he was growing up: privacy. Privacy is something not all families could afford in the 1860’s.

Mr. Lincoln may have spent many sleepless nights in this room after he was elected President. Just over a month after his election, South Carolina seceded from the United States, and the country began to tear itself apart.
**Writing Desk**

This small desk stood in the Lincoln Home for many years. Mr. Lincoln probably wrote some of his political speeches and letters here.

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**Mrs. Lincoln’s Bedroom**

When Mr. Lincoln was working in his half of the room, Mrs. Lincoln could retire to this part of the suite. Mrs. Lincoln shared this room with her sons, Willie and Tad prior to 1860. This area provided Mrs. Lincoln with a space to relax and get ready for the day.
Chest of Drawers

Mrs. Lincoln brought this piece of furniture with her from her childhood home in Lexington, Kentucky. It predates the house and has a cherry wood veneer.

Boys’ Room

The boys’ room was first occupied by the oldest Lincoln son, Robert, who attended Harvard College in 1860. Mr. Lincoln was able to give his sons opportunities that he did not have. Since Mr. Lincoln had about one year of formal schooling, Robert’s move to college was a sign that his son would have an even better chance of pursuing his dreams. By 1860 this room was shared by Willie and Tad, the two youngest Lincoln Boys.
Game Table

Willie and Tad probably played dominoes or blocks here.

Robert Lincoln (1861)  Willie Lincoln (1861)  Tad Lincoln (1861)
Hired Girl’s Room

In 1860 Miss Johnson lived in this room. She was employed as a hired girl by the Lincolns. She helped Mrs. Lincoln clean and take care of the children.

The Lincolns employed several young ladies over the years who received free room and board as well as a small weekly wage. A Hired Girl (maid) position was one of the few acceptable jobs women were allowed to have during this time.

Even though the rights of women at this time were limited, they did have a chance to receive pay for their hard work and a chance to prepare for having a family of their own. This was something which a slave could not have hoped for.

Blanket Chest

A Basic chest for holding blankets was connected to a base with a drawer, making it easier to use and providing more storage space.

Please watch your step as we head downstairs to the kitchen.
Welcome to the kitchen, where you can see Mrs. Lincoln’s cast iron wood burning cook stove. This stove made cooking much easier, safer, and cleaner than just an open fireplace.

While the stove shows yet another luxury the Lincoln’s could afford, the kitchen itself demonstrates how far Mr. Lincoln had come in his life. He rose from a one room log cabin (about the size of this kitchen) to this very comfortable home, and then on to the White House.

While he was President he did his best to change the United States of America so that one day everyone would be able to follow their dream, just as he had followed his. Thank you for visiting the only home that Abraham Lincoln ever owned and where he lived for 17 years.
Please watch your step as you head out the door. Once outside you will go to your left and exit the yard by the carriage house.

**Frequently Asked Questions about the Lincoln Home:**

Q. When did Mr. Lincoln buy the home, and how much did he pay for it?
A. The home was purchased in 1844 by Mr. Lincoln for $1,500.

Q. What did the home look like when Mr. Lincoln bought it?
A. When the Lincolns first bought the home, it was a one-and-a-half-story cottage. Over the next few years, the Lincoln’s remodeled the cottage into the large, two-story home you see today.

Q. How long did Mr. Lincoln live in the home?
A. He lived in the home for 17 years, from 1844 to 1861.

Q. What happened to the home after Mr. Lincoln left?
A. Mr. Lincoln rented out his home while he was in the White House. Robert Lincoln continued to rent out the home until 1887 when he sold the home to the State of Illinois. In 1972 the Lincoln Home National Historic Site was established and the National Park Service began operations at the home.

Q. Is this the original color of the home?
A. Yes, in 1860 the home was originally painted shades of Quaker Brown.

Q. Is the bed in Mr. Lincoln’s room big enough for him to sleep in?
A. Yes, although the bed is not original, it is 6’9”, long enough for Mr. Lincoln who was 6’4”.
Q. Are the wallpapers and carpets original?
A. The wallpapers and carpets throughout the home are reproductions of popular patterns from the time period. One exception to this is the wallpaper in the Lincoln Master Bedroom which is an exact reproduction of what the Lincolns had.

Q. How big is the home?
A. The home is approximately 3,100 square feet.

**Frequently Asked Questions about the Lincoln Neighborhood:**

Q. Are any of the homes in the neighborhood original?
A. All of the homes but the Robinson House (1863), the Conference Center (circa 1960s), and the Stuve House (circa 1870s) were here in 1860.

Q. Did they have wooden sidewalks in Mr. Lincoln’s time?
A. Yes, the boardwalks you see today are very similar to what they had back then.

Q. Did they have street lights?
A. No, when Mr. Lincoln lived here gas lights had not yet made it to this section of Springfield.

Q. What were the streets made of in Lincoln’s time?
A. The streets in 1860 were dirt.
Frequently Asked Questions about the Lincoln Family:

Q. What happened to Robert Lincoln?
A. Robert became a very successful lawyer in Chicago, a Secretary of War under Presidents Garfield and Arthur and a Minister to Great Britain. He lived to the age of 82. Robert is buried in Arlington National Cemetery.

Q. Are there any Lincoln descendants alive today?
A. Robert Todd Lincoln Beckwith was the last Lincoln descendent. He passed away in 1985.

Q. What happened to Mary Lincoln?
A. After Mr. Lincoln’s assassination Mrs. Lincoln and Tad moved to Europe for a few years before eventually returning to America. After Tad’s death Mrs. Lincoln traveled throughout America and Canada. She did spend a few months in a sanitarium at Batavia, Illinois in 1875. She then returned to Europe for a few more years. Due to declining health Mrs. Lincoln returned to Springfield and lived out her life at her sister’s (Elizabeth Edwards) home.

Q. Did any Lincoln descendant return to live in the home?
A. No Lincoln ever returned to live in the home.

Q. What did the boys die of?
A. Eddie Lincoln died of Consumption at age 3 (1846-1850)
Willie Lincoln died of Typhoid Fever at age 11 (1850-1862)
Tad Lincoln died of Pneumonia at age 18 (1853-1871)

Q. Did the Lincoln’s have a dog?
A. Yes, the Lincoln’s had a yellow dog named Fido.
Thank you for visiting the Lincoln Home National Historic Site