

LINCOLN HOME NEWS

In observance of Women's History Month, the Lincoln Home National Historic Site has planned several programs during March concerning the interest and social roles of women in American history. These programs will be presented at the Visitor Center, 426 S. Seventh St.

- Sat., Mar. 9 - 2:00 P.M. "Mary Todd Lincoln and the Victorian Ideal" - by Jane Lowder who has presented a number of programs about the Lincoln family and neighborhood.
- Sat., Mar. 16 - 2:00 P.M. "The Victorian Lady and Her Clothing" - by Kathy Pauly, an educator who works with elementary school children.
- Sat., Mar. 23 - 2:00 P.M. "Ladies of the Lincoln Era" - by Linda Morrison, who has guided many tours of the Lincoln neighborhood.
- Fri., Mar. 29, Sat., Mar. 30 and Sun., Mar. 31 - 2:00 P.M. "Granny Foster Remembers" - by Ajena Cason Hakeem of Roanoke, Va., dramatizing the story of a Black woman's transition from slavery to freedom. Ms. Hakeem developed this program while working for the National Park Service at the Blue Ridge Parkway, Virginia.
- Sat., Mar. 30 - 1:00 P.M. "Contemporary Women's Issues" - by Laura Meyers, president of the Springfield Education Association.

These programs at the Lincoln Home Site also are part of the observance of the 75th anniversary of the National Park Service.

LINCOLN ESSAY

Jeffrey J. Warren, an 8th grade student at Casey Junior High School in Mt. Vernon, IL., was the second place winner of the annual Lincoln Essay contest sponsored by the Lincoln Home National Historic Site. (The first place essay appeared in the February HISTORICO.) The prize-winning essays were selected by George L. Painter, Historian of the Lincoln Home National Historic Site, and Dr. Wayne C. Temple, Chief Deputy Director of the Illinois State Archives.

LINCOLN AS PRESIDENT
Jeffrey J. Warren
Casey Junior High School
Mt. Vernon, IL

Abraham Lincoln was the sixteenth President of the United States. Lincoln thought the presidency was the highest goal an American citizen could have. The Civil War destroyed any hope he may have had for happiness in the White House. Aside from directing military affairs and stiffening the will of the North, he carried an enormous burden of administrative routine. His office staff was small. He wrote most of his own letters and all his speeches. He made decisions on thousands of political and military appointments. For hours each day, he saw everyone who wanted to see him. During all his years in office, Lincoln was away from the capitol less than a month.

Lincoln found some relaxation in taking carriage drives, and he enjoyed the theater. He regarded White House receptions and dinners more as duties than as pleasures. Lincoln's frequent visits to army hospitals tore his gentle heart. Late at night he sometime found comfort by reading Shakespeare or the Bible. But his official duties left little time for anything besides work.

By late summer of 1862, Lincoln was convinced the time had come for a change in policy toward slavery. Several foreign governments sympathized with the South. But they condemned slavery as evil, and did not dare support the Confederacy. Freed slaves could serve as Union soldiers. Besides, many Northerners who had been indifferent to slavery now believed that it had to be stopped. Lincoln decided to issue a proclamation freeing the slaves. He did not ask the advice of his Cabinet, but he did tell the members what he wanted to do. He withheld the proclamation until a Northern victory created the right circumstances. "Gradual and not sudden emancipation," sent in a later message, "is better for all." (Charwood, p. 344) The Battle of Antietam, fought on Sept. 17, 1862, served Lincoln's purpose. He issued a preliminary proclamation five days later. Lincoln declared that all slaves in states, or parts of states, that were in rebellion on Jan. 1, 1863, would be free. He issued the final proclamation on January 1. Lincoln named the states and parts of states in rebellion, and declared that the slaves held there "are, and hence-forward shall be, free." (World Book, Inc., p. 284)

The Emancipation Proclamation actually freed no slaves. The proclamation did not affect slavery in the loyal border states, and could not be enforced in the Confederate territory. Lincoln urged those states to free their slaves. The failure of the states to do as he advised was one of his great disappointments.

The Emancipation Proclamation did have a great long-range effect. In the eyes of other nations, it gave a new character to the war. In the North, it paved the way for Amendment 13 to the Constitution. This amendment, adopted in December, 1865, ended slavery in all parts of the United States. Lincoln's presidency has had a great impact on the way we think of each other.

HISTORIC SITE VOLUNTEERS

Volunteers are invited to serve as guides and interpreters at the Old State Capitol and the Lincoln-Herndon Law Offices. A series of three training sessions for volunteers will be held on Thursday nights, March 7, 14 and 21, from 6:00 to 9:00 P.M. at the Old State Capitol. (For those who are interested and do not receive this notice in time for the first session, there will be another session on Sat., Mar. 16.) Upon completion of the training program volunteers are asked to work a minimum of 8 hours a month. After a period of service, volunteers also have an opportunity to take part in the award-winning interpretive program, "Mr. Lincoln's World," portraying real characters from Lincoln's time, dressed in authentic period clothing.

To register for the training or for further information, please call Karen Anderson at (217) 785-7961. Both the Old Capitol and the Law Office are open from 9:00 A.M. to 5:00 P.M. seven days a week.

"AT HOME IN THE HEARTLAND"

The Illinois State Museum has received a \$375,000 grant from the National Endowment for the Humanities for its new major exhibit, "At Home in the Heartland," slated to open in May, 1992. It will be an exhibit, in six sections, of the choices in home life styles and equipment made by Illinois residents from our area's early days in the 18th century to the present time.

Some articles, purchased and used in Illinois and in good condition, are still being sought. They include some pieces of Danish Modern and Early American furniture, typical wedding gifts in 1875 (silver, pewter, cut glass and crystal items), a 1926 crystal radio and 1880's iron cook stove. If you have any of these items you are invited to call the State Museum at (217) 782-7152 for more information.