



In Lincoln's Shadow

Abraham Lincoln spent nearly twenty years of his life practicing law here, making friends and gaining political allies. This is not a tour of sites that he visited, but rather a look at the connections between the Urbana of Lincoln's era and the historic buildings of today's downtown.

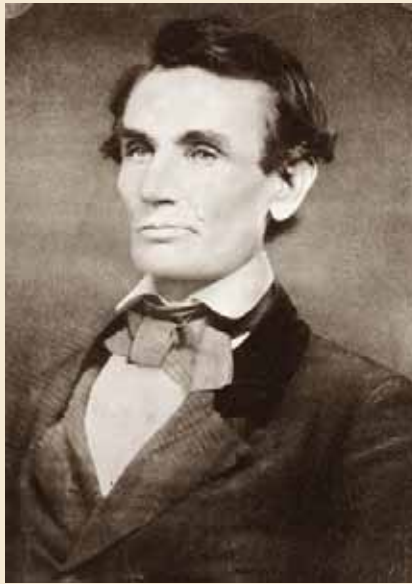
- Visit the Champaign County Courthouse and learn about Lincoln's legal career in Urbana.
- Find out about the connection between Lincoln and the University of Illinois at the Griggs House.
- Compare the accommodations of the 1850s with the Tudor-style hotel named after the 16th president, built in 1924.

About the Pastcast Tour

Pastcasting brings story and place together, using new technology to offer on-demand, self-guided video

walking tours to visitors at historic sites. Now you can see images and hear sounds from the past on the actual spot where history was made. The pastcasts are available to download as audio or video to your personal device. MP3 video players are

also available for loan. For more information, visit www.urbanaininois.us/pastcast.



The shadow of Abraham Lincoln still lingers over downtown Urbana, Illinois.

On this informative walking tour, you'll find the connections between our sixteenth president and the historic buildings found in today's city.



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In Lincoln's Shadow

*A Walking Tour of
Historic Urbana, Illinois*



Lincoln & Urbana

The shadow of Abraham Lincoln still lingers over downtown Urbana, Illinois. He visited this city often from 1841 to his last visit in October 1859, only eight months before his nomination for President. In the 1850s he attended every court session of the Circuit Court, absent only during the fall of 1858, at the peak of his senatorial campaign against Stephen Douglas.

As in other counties, Lincoln most often represented ordinary citizens with their divorces, land title disputes, and contested debts. He worked with local attorneys like Henry Clay



Abraham Lincoln
Taken by Samuel Alschuler
in Urbana in 1858.



Champaign County
Courthouse
1841–1858



Whitney (a Lincoln biographer) and Joseph Cunningham (later a Champaign County Judge and historian). His clients included some of the wealthy and influential citizens of the community, and he served as an attorney for the Illinois Central Railroad, the state's largest corporation.

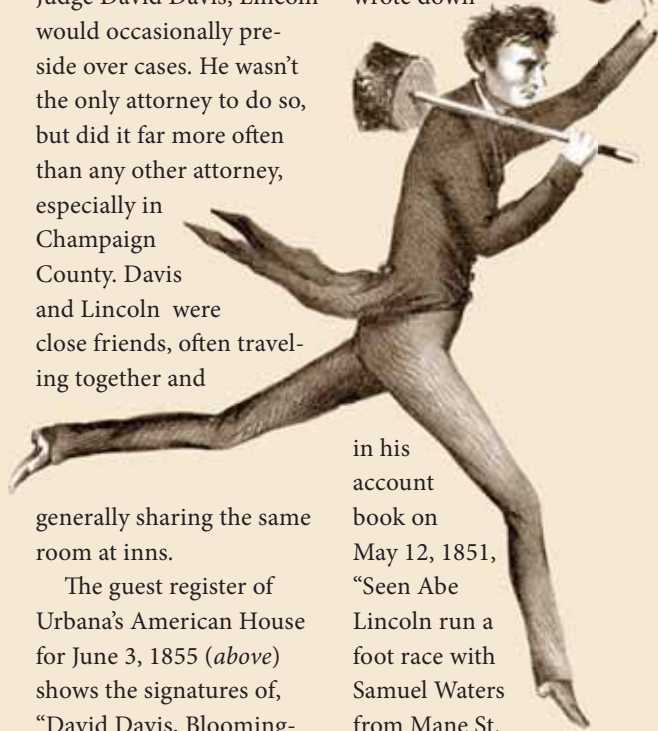
In the absence of Circuit Judge David Davis, Lincoln would occasionally preside over cases. He wasn't the only attorney to do so, but did it far more often than any other attorney, especially in Champaign County. Davis and Lincoln were close friends, often traveling together and

generally sharing the same room at inns.

The guest register of Urbana's American House for June 3, 1855 (*above*) shows the signatures of, "David Davis, Bloomington, Illinois," "A. Lincoln, Springfield, Illinois," and

"Henry Clay Whitney, West Urbana, Illinois" registered as guests. When Lincoln became President, he appointed Judge Davis to the U. S. Supreme Court.

But it was not all work. Lincoln enjoyed the company of his companions and friends in Urbana. Moses Harvey, a local contractor, wrote down



in his account book on May 12, 1851, "Seen Abe Lincoln run a foot race with Samuel Waters from Mane St. to Walnut St. in front of the courthouse. Abe beat."

Lincoln was welcomed into many homes in Urbana during the twenty years that he traveled here. In 1859, the editor of the

Central Illinois Gazette described one such visit, saying: "We had the pleasure of introducing to the hospitalities of our sanctum, a few days since, the Honorable Abraham Lincoln. Few men can make an hour pass away more agreeably."

He also found time for politics, often speaking at campaign rallies in Champaign County. While in town for a special court session in 1856, he received word that he had come in second on an informal ballot for Vice-President at the Republican National Convention. That same year, after a speech for the Republican ticket, the *Urbana Union* declared, "Before him the sophistic 'little giant' Douglas quaked and others of his party fly like a flock of birds."

Lincoln's impact on Urbana continued well past his Illinois years. You could make a strong case that Abraham Lincoln made the city what it is today. As



President, Lincoln signed the Morrill Act on July 2, 1862, opening the door for state land grant schools, including the University of Illinois.

Following his inauguration, Lincoln kept in touch with his associates in Urbana. If there was one person who kept alive the special relationship between Urbana and our sixteenth president, it was Joseph Cunningham (*below*).



He spoke often about his friendship with Lincoln, and his estate provided funds for Lorado Taft's statue, Lincoln the Lawyer, that stands today in Carle Park.

In Lincoln's Shadow: Historic Urbana, Illinois

1 The Urbana Free Library 210 W. Green Street

The Urbana Free Library was founded in 1874. Needing a permanent home, the city turned to Mary E. Busey, who donated \$35,000 for the construction of the library as a memorial to her late husband, Samuel Busey. This outstanding Neoclassical building, built of Bedford limestone, was designed by local architect Joseph Royer. Dedicated in 1918, the building was expanded in 1974-75, and again in 2003-05.



2 Griggs House 505 W. Main Street

Businessman and civic leader Clark Robinson Griggs built this home in 1871 as a wedding gift for his son. While serving in the state legislature, Griggs' efforts helped to secure the University of Illinois for his hometown. The house is a fine example of Italianate architecture, with its paired brackets, wide eaves, and tall windows.



3 Marriott, Yearsley, and Wahl Houses 506-508-510 W. Main Street

These three homes were built in 1892 on property formerly owned by Samuel Busey. Louis Wahl (510 W. Main) was a local saloon owner, while brothers-in-law Emmett Yearsley (508

W. Main, left) and Frank Marriott (506 W. Main) were farmers and real estate speculators.



completed, the *Champaign County Herald* proudly declared, "On West Main Street are three homes that would do honor to Chicago or any other city."

4 First Christian Church 404 W. Main Street

The First Christian Church, organized in 1883, decided to build a new sanctuary in 1909, hiring Joseph Royer as architect. His striking Prairie School design was one of the first local buildings to use concrete block. In 1978, it became the home of Canaan Baptist Church.



5 Courier Building 111 N. Race Street

The *Urbana Courier* newspaper was founded in 1897. Twelve years later, Alvin Burrows stepped into the position of part-owner and managing editor of the newspaper and ran it for more than thirty years. This building was erected in 1916 and a substantial addition was built on the back in 1919. The *Courier* ceased publishing in 1979.



6 Big Four Depot 223 N. Broadway Avenue

In 1889, the Cleveland, Cincinnati, Chicago and St. Louis Railroad, better known as the "Big Four," emerged after consolidation. Their rail car repair shops became a major employer in the city. In 1917, this brick depot opened, providing "handsome new quarters" for the railroad. With the advent of the automobile, however, the use of the station diminished and this building was last used as a passenger station in 1957.



7 Busey's Hall/ Princess Theatre 120 W. Main Street

Busey's Hall was built in 1870 by brothers Samuel T. and Simeon Busey. Their bank offices were on the main floor, while the second floor had a large hall used for lectures, balls, plays, and concerts. In 1915, it was converted into a movie theater, then transformed into the Princess Theatre in 1934, with a superb Art Deco front. The theatre closed in 1994.



8 Champaign County Courthouse 101 E. Main Street

Champaign County built a new courthouse — its fifth — in 1900 and hired twenty-seven year-old Joseph Royer to design the new building. Completed for \$150,000, it was done in the Richardsonian Romanesque style that was popular for public buildings at the time. Hallmarks of the style include the rusticated red sandstone and mottled brick exterior, the tall clock tower, and the arched windows. The clock tower and Seth Thomas clock works were restored in recent years.



9 Urbana Lincoln Hotel 209 S. Broadway Avenue

In an effort to boost local tourism and attract conventions, a group of local businessmen invested in a new hotel for downtown Urbana. They rejected architect Joseph Royer's first plans as "bordering on the commonplace" and he came back with a superb Tudor Revival design. The hotel opened its doors during the 1923 University of Illinois Homecoming Weekend.



Podcast Stop

Other Historic Sites



10a First Methodist Church 304 S. Race Street

The current First Methodist Church is the third building on the site and was completed in 1927. Designed by local architect Wymer W. Maxwell, it captured the Collegiate Gothic style that became associated with churches of the era. After construction, a local newspaper wrote: "The new edifice is a beautiful, commanding, utilitarian structure."



10b First Baptist Church 202 W. Illinois Street

The First Baptist Church is the oldest church building in the city. It was erected in 1896, and designed by architect Emery Stanford Hall. Hall was an Urbana native who moved to Chicago and had a prominent career, serving as the first secretary of the National Council of Architectural Registration Boards. It is now the home of the Korean New Life Church.



A Lincoln and Photography Marker Race Street near Main Street

During the Spring term of the Circuit Court in 1858, Abraham Lincoln sat for a portrait with photographer Samuel Alschuler. Alschuler's studio was on the second floor of the

Lowenstern Building, at the southwest corner of Main and Race streets, where the Busey Bank stands today.

B Tiernan's Block 115 W. Main Street

This block was constructed in 1871 by Frank Tiernan as a three-story brick building. Sold to the local Masonic lodge in 1889 and used for their meetings, they hired Joseph Royer to design "an entire new modern front" with a white-glazed terra cotta facade in 1914.



C Knowlton & Bennett Building 130 W. Main Street

Beginning in 1871, this corner was used for a drugstore. In 1926, following the death of his brother-in-law and business partner Everett Knowlton, George M. Bennett erected this building to expand their drug and bookstore. Designed by Joseph Royer in the Collegiate Gothic style, it features wire-cut buff bricks (later painted brown), terra cotta ornaments, and polychrome shields.



D Lincoln Square 201 Lincoln Square

Lincoln Square was one of the first downtown fully-enclosed malls in the United States, built in 1964. It was designed from plans by Victor Gruen, one of America's most influential architects of the mid-20th century. One key element was the incorporation of the Urbana Lincoln Hotel into the overall plan for the mall.



E Leal Park University Avenue

Leal Park became an Urbana City Park in 1903. The Greek Revival Cottage, built around 1854, was originally located somewhere in the vicinity of Broadway in Urbana, where there are similar cottages. The owner came from Urbana in Champaign County, Ohio, as did many other local settlers. In the 1980s, after the University of Illinois purchased the lot, the Urbana Park District offered it a home at Leal Park.



F Lindley House 312 W. Green

The Lindley House is one of Urbana's finest examples of the Queen Anne style architecture. It was designed by Rudolph Zachariah Gill, an 1887 graduate of the University of Illinois in architecture and engineering, and was built in 1895 for Dr. Austin Lindley, a prominent physician and surgeon for the Big Four Railroad in Urbana.



G Lincoln Statue 1007 S. Race Street

One of the most famous Lincoln statues in the United States is found in Carle Park, established in 1909 just south of downtown. Lincoln the Lawyer, a sculpture by Lorado Taft, is located opposite the entrance to Urbana High School. The statue was dedicated by Taft on July 3, 1927, and placed in the park six months later. In recent years, the statue has undergone careful restoration.



H Boyden House 404 W. Illinois Street

Abraham Lincoln stayed overnight as a guest in the house of Ezekiel Boyden, a two-time mayor of Urbana, on September 24, 1858. Boyden owned a successful plow and wagon factory in Urbana on Main Street. The house, built around 1850, was located at 303 W. Elm Street when Lincoln visited.

