

ChicagoHistoryMuseum

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ABRAHAM LINCOLN TREASURES REVEALED

Lincoln Bicentennial Year kicks off with an exhibition, activities, and penny admission all weekend long.

CHICAGO (January 26, 2009) – The Chicago History Museum is celebrating the 200th anniversary of Abraham Lincoln’s birth all year long, with festivities that kick off on his birthday, Thursday, February 12, and continue through President’s Day, Monday, February 16. In honor of the kick-off festivities, general admission will be just a penny from Thursday through Sunday. President’s Day is free general admission as the Museum is free every Monday.

The *Lincoln Treasures* exhibition, opening on Thursday, February 12, highlights key artifacts and documents from the Museum’s collection that commemorate the life and tragic death of Abraham Lincoln, the nation’s most accomplished and celebrated president. This family-friendly exhibition will help visitors see Abraham Lincoln not only as an iconic American, but also as a real person. The exhibition begins with Lincoln’s early political career and then moves into the White House years and his role in the Civil War. Key artifacts on display include a desk Lincoln used when studying the law as an Illinois state representative, the family’s piano used in the White House, and the bed on which Lincoln died. A copy of the **Gettysburg Address** will be on display from April 1 through May 3. This is only one of five copies of the Address written in Lincoln’s hand, on loan from the Abraham Lincoln Presidential Library and Museum. Also, on display will be a Bible from 1852, which is believed to have been used at the 1860 Republican National Convention in Chicago where Lincoln was nominated to be the party’s presidential candidate.

The exhibition will include interactive elements to help make personal connections for the visitor. Varied sizes of pennies hanging on the wall will ask visitors questions relating to key artifacts and about Lincoln’s leadership. This will prompt dialogue between younger visitors and adults to aid in understanding the historical significance of these pieces. Visitors will also hear Lincoln’s favorite song, *Home Sweet Home*, sung by a popular opera singer of the day, recorded in the early 19th century. Visitors will be able to compare a life mask from when the president took office and another made approximately one month before he died documenting how Lincoln aged due to the pressures of the job. Also, an annotated Gettysburg Address

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explaining what the words of the famous speech mean and where he drew his inspiration from will be displayed. The exhibition concludes with a painting featuring all the individuals that visited Lincoln on his death bed. A flip book will allow for visitors to locate several of the individuals in the painting and learn a little more about them and their relationship to Lincoln.

Activities and performances for the whole family will occur on February 12 from 10:00 a.m. to 2:00 p.m. Meet President Lincoln, listen to a Civil War era band, and enjoy a piece of birthday cake while learning about America's 16th president. On President's Day, the celebration continues from 10:00 a.m. to 2:00 p.m. Visitors will be able to listen to the four presidents depicted on Mount Rushmore as they discuss historical events and themes in a discussion moderated by Abigail Adams.

An activity on the Museum's website, *Everybody's Lincoln*, is launching on February 12. Visitors to the Museum's website can "Lincolnize" themselves and see what they would look like behind one of 13 illustrated likenesses of President Lincoln. When visitors submit their Lincolnized image to the Museum they have the chance of being featured in a summer advertising campaign promoting the Lincoln Bicentennial. Visit www.chicagohistory/getlincolnized for more information.

The Museum has also partnered with the Abraham Lincoln Bicentennial Commission and the Newberry Library to host a Lincoln website launching on February 12, featuring two Web exhibitions on Lincoln and more than 200 images from the Museum's collection. *The Fiery Trial: Abraham Lincoln and the Civil War* and *Abraham Lincoln and the West, 1809–1860* can be found at www.lincolnat200.org. The Institute for Museum and Library Services has generously provided funding for these Web exhibitions as part of a series of initiatives to commemorate the Lincoln Bicentennial.

The exhibitions and programming for the Lincoln Bicentennial would not be possible without the following supporters. Exelon is the presenting sponsor of the Lincoln Bicentennial. Lincoln Treasures is funded by JPMorgan Chase & Co. Additional support for the Lincoln Bicentennial celebration is provided by the Crown Family and Gordon and Carole Segal. The official hotel partner for the Lincoln Bicentennial is the Palmer House Hilton.

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The Chicago History Museum, a major museum and research center for Chicago and American history, is located at 1601 N. Clark Street. The Museum can be reached by CTA buses 11, 22, 36, 72, 151, and 156. Parking is conveniently located one block north of the Museum at Clark and LaSalle Streets (enter on Stockton Drive). Admission to the Museum is \$14 adults with audio tour, \$12 seniors/students with audio tour, free for children 12 years and younger. General Admission is free on Mondays. Please call 312.642.4600 or visit us at www.chicagohistory.org. The Chicago History Museum is affiliated with the Chicago Historical Society and acknowledges the Chicago Park District's generous support of all the Museum's activities.