



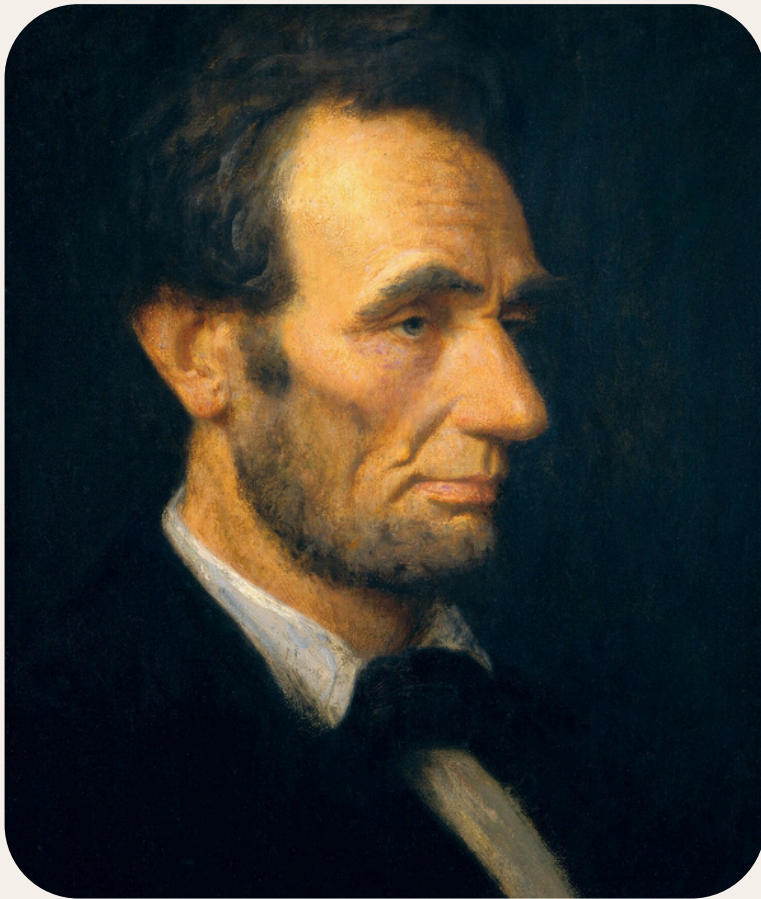
Abraham Lincoln Presidential Library and Museum

Annual Report
Fiscal Year 2025

JB Pritzker, governor
Christina Shutt, executive director



Abraham Lincoln
PRESIDENTIAL LIBRARY AND MUSEUM



Our Mission

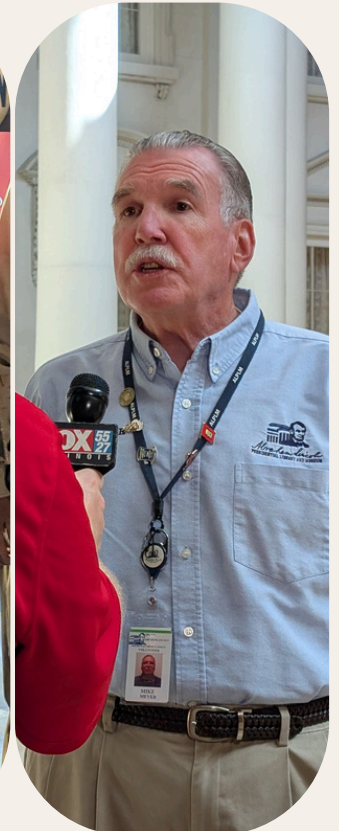
To inspire civic engagement through the diverse lens of Illinois history and sharing with the world the life and legacy of Abraham Lincoln.

Our Values

- Honesty and Integrity
- Intentional Leadership
- Equitable Collaboration
- Learning-Centered
- Transparent Accountability

Our Team

Nearly 100 people working together to collect and preserve historic materials, share knowledge through library services and museum exhibits, and invite visitors to learn while having fun. The team includes historians who study Lincoln and librarians who organize our collection, but also designers, carpenters, teachers, writers, custodians, accountants, lawyers, event organizers and more.





Creative times

Gary Johnson
Board of Trustees chair

These are highly creative times at the Abraham Lincoln Presidential Library and Museum.

The ALPLM commemorated Lincoln's birthday by officially launching Lincoln Unlocked, an augmented reality tool that gives visitors exciting new ways to explore Lincoln's legacy, see rare items from the library's collection and even connect with family and friends to play games. It is also an accessibility aide, offering content in six languages and enriching visits for people who are deaf or visually impaired.

We celebrated the work of renowned sculptor Richard Hunt with a special exhibition that showcased his groundbreaking art and explored the history that inspired him. "Freedom in Form: Richard Hunt" was the first major Hunt exhibition since the death of the Chicago-based artist, who produced more public sculptures than any other artist in American history. His abstract art gave form to the pain and the hopes of African Americans striving for true equality.

A new "Picturing Lincoln" initiative by the Abraham Lincoln Presidential Library and Museum means 1,500 high-resolution photos – many of which have never been online before – are now available to people around the world, with thousands more to come.

A new garden honoring Mary Lincoln has been opened at Union Square Park, with more than 9,000 plants, flowers and trees that are representative of the flora of Lincoln's time in Springfield. The garden

features native prairie grasses, wildflowers, and ornamental trees. Visitors can expect to see period-appropriate blooms such as black-eyed Susans, bluebells, and coneflowers. The selection is based on research conducted by the University of Illinois Extension Office and a Lincoln historian, who studied what was native to Illinois and which plants were introduced to the area during Lincoln's time.

We are grateful for the leadership of our director, Christina Shutt, as well for the work of ALPLM's professional staff and its many, many volunteers, all of whom are dedicated to our mission "to inspire civic engagement through the diverse lens of Illinois history and sharing with the world the life and legacy of Abraham Lincoln."



This mission will be more important than ever in the anniversary to come next year. After twelve score and ten years, we will be reminded of the unfinished work remaining before us as a state and a nation. The Abraham Lincoln Presidential Library and Museum is ready, willing, and able to play a leading role.



The whole truth

Christina Shutt
ALPLM executive director

In an era when facts and history are under attack, I am immensely proud of the Abraham Lincoln Presidential Library and Museum for remaining true to its mission of sharing history in all its complex, diverse glory.

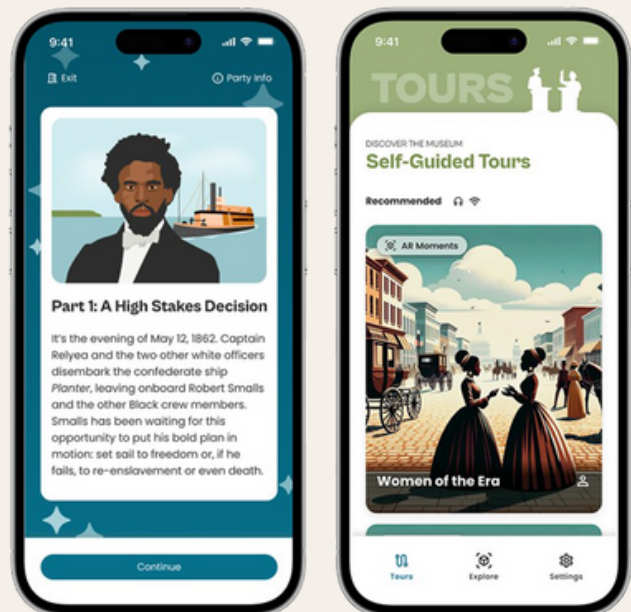
Fully understanding Lincoln means understanding the world he lived in and the people who influenced him. Famous politicians and generals were part of that world, but so were struggling immigrants, formerly enslaved people, and poor farmers. The ALPLM must explore their connections to Lincoln. How much did he know about their struggles? Did they influence his thinking? Were their lives bettered by the decisions he made?

The same principle applies to the broader history of Illinois. As the state's official historical library, the ALPLM embraces the full Illinois story. Doing any less would be dishonest. That will often mean sharing moments of inspiration and progress. Sometimes, though, it will involve failure and setbacks. We cannot learn from the past without including both.

How do we apply this principle? By including stories of women and African Americans in our new digital tool, Lincoln Unlocked. By looking at how history inspired the art of Richard Hunt. By exploring the stories of common people connected to Lincoln in our "Lincoln: A Life and Legacy" book and exhibition. By celebrating a broad spectrum of Illinoisans

on our social media platforms.

The library celebrated its 20th anniversary in late 2024. The museum's 20th followed a few months later. As you'll see in this report, we had a lot to celebrate on these anniversaries. I am immensely grateful to everyone on the ALPLM team – and that includes visitors and members as well as our staff and volunteers – who made this institution what it is today.



Fiscal 2025 was a year of achievements. But to me, the biggest achievement was rededicating ourselves to offering the most complete picture of history we possibly can.



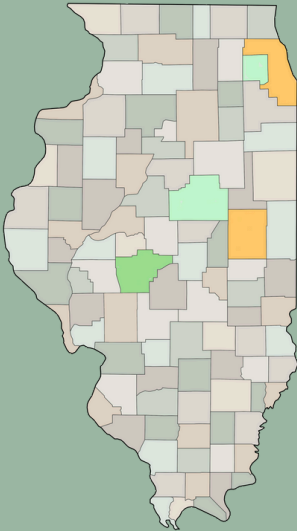
Celebrating 20 Years!



ALPLM Impact!

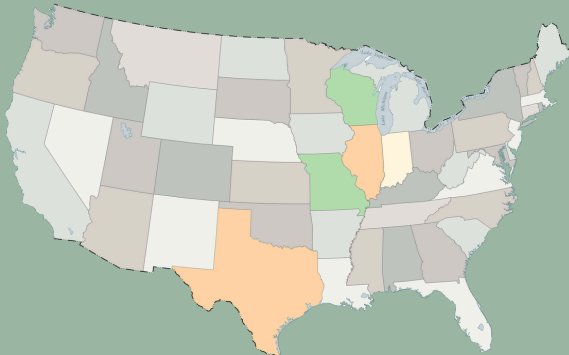
148,819 visitors!

26%
students



The Illinois counties that sent us the most visitors were:

- Sangamon
- Cook
- DuPage
- Champaign
- McLean



The states that sent us the most visitors were:

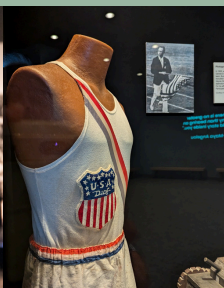
- Illinois
- Missouri
- Wisconsin
- Texas
- Indiana



It was simply phenomenal!
The entire experience and
interactives were wonderful.
Volunteers super!

– A visitor

Exhibits



Solidarity Now

Looking back at the Poor People's Campaign, a historic 1968 protest against poverty and economic inequality.

Freedom in Form

Exploring the powerful sculpture of Richard Hunt, one of America's most influential artists.

Schools of Hope

Celebrating the legacy of Illinois schools for the deaf and visually impaired.

Sight, Sound, Touch

Examining Lincoln's legacy in ads and popular culture, with help from new tech for the visually impaired.

Armbruster

Remembering a central Illinois business that reached across America for decades.



Community Outreach

24,159

The ALPLM connected with people at fairs, concerts, parades and civic events – all part of our effort to share Abraham Lincoln and Illinois history with as many people as possible.

11,005

Thousands of people joined us for special events where we explored history, dived deep into the ALPLM's collections, and encouraged appreciation of art and music.



The ALPLM strives to be a good neighbor by working with other organizations that serve the public. Our partners during FY25 included:

- Illinois Public Media
- Compass for Kids
- Loyola University Museum of Art
- Downtown Springfield Inc.
- Springfield Area Arts Council
- Visit Springfield
- Illinois School for the Visually Impaired
- Department of Central Management Services
- University of Illinois Springfield



Our volunteers reached a 20-year total of **700,000 hours** donated, worth more than **\$23 million!**

Financials

Fund	FY24 Budget	FY25 Budget	FY26 Budget
General Revenue	\$11,328,400	\$11,672,200	\$12,190,000
Tourism Promotion	\$9,683,400	\$10,123,000	\$9,989,000
ALPLM Operating	\$5,139,000	\$5,492,100	\$5,617,000
King Hostick Trust	\$142,500	\$142,500	\$147,500
ALPLM Public Trust	\$180,000	\$180,000	\$357,000
Totals	\$26,437,800	\$27,609,800	\$28,300,500

Examples of how the money is used



Lincoln Unlocked

A new tool letting visitors dig deeper into Lincoln's life and the ALPLM collections

Nearly 6,000 people have downloaded this cutting-edge digital tool

Artifact Acquisitions

Buying historic items that help tell the full Lincoln story

Acquisitions include a poster urging African Americans to fight in the Civil War and a tag worn by enslaved people in Charleston, SC



Sustainability

Strategically updating aging systems with up-to-date energy efficient alternatives

Updated lighting and maintenance equipment; planning underway for solar power and EV charging stations.



Engaging children and assisting educators is integral to the ALPLM's mission.

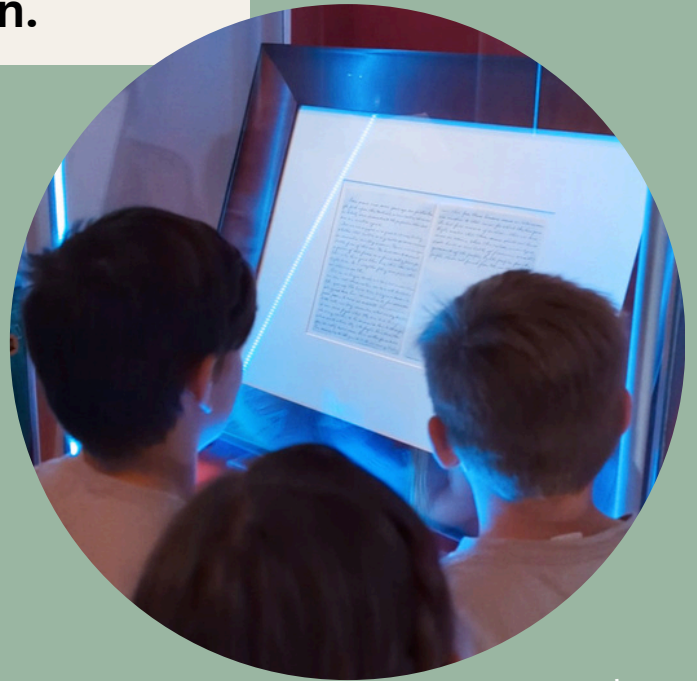


17
professional
development
events

758
teachers

2,130
CPDUs
awarded

7,040
students
benefitting



We welcomed every fourth-
grader in Springfield public
schools – 887 students in all!



Library Power!

★ 4,564 requests fielded
by the Reading Room

★ 1,500 high-res photos
shared online

★ 92,047 frames of
microfilm created

★ 849 treatments to
conserve artifacts and
documents

The year in review

Welcoming Visitors

Fiscal 2025 brought a wealth of initiatives and experiments in new ways of connecting with our visitors. The techniques involved art, technology, staff and more.

The biggest new offering was Lincoln Unlocked, a digital tool that lets visitors use their cell phones to enrich their museum experience. The app, which was developed in cooperation with Google Public Sector and ThoughtWorks, offers themed tours on topics such as women and African Americans during Lincoln's life. It offers the chance to hear "Lincoln" deliver the Gettysburg Address or listen to a music box owned by Mary Lincoln and lets visitors examine 3-D scans of artifacts or dig deeper into a historical topic.

Exhibits and Access

The most ambitious exhibit of the year was the ALPLM's first major art exhibition, "Freedom in Form: Richard Hunt." It included sculptures from throughout the



Highlights from "Freedom in Form: Richard Hunt."

Chicago artist's seven-decade career, from his breakthrough piece, "Hero's Head," to a model of his final monumental sculpture.

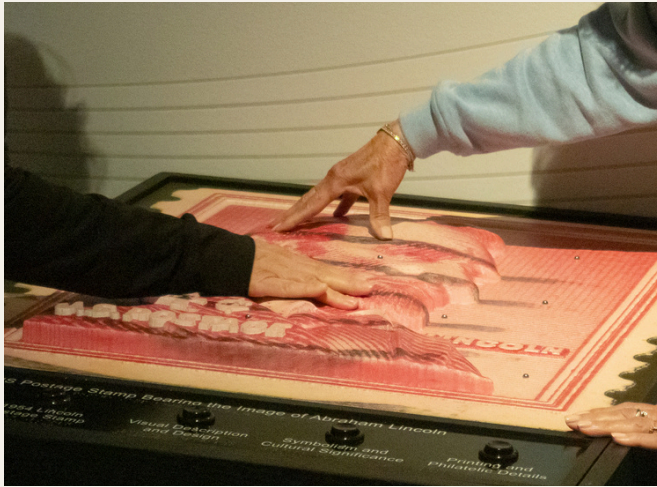
The exhibition mixed art and history by examining Hunt's artistic process and the American moments that influenced his sculptures. Visitors got to see examples of the tools Hunt used, examine hundreds of the books he devoured, and hear music inspired by the music he listened to while working.

After its run at the ALPLM, "Freedom in Form" moved to Chicago for installation at the Loyola University Museum of Art.

We tested new ways of making the museum more accessible to people with hearing or vision impairments. The Treasures Gallery was updated with digital panels that display additional information, language translations, and QR codes that



Making an invisible artifact appear with Lincoln Unlocked.



Enjoying a display designed for touch.

let people call up written or spoken information on their cell phones. An exhibit about the Illinois School for the Deaf and the Illinois School for the Visually Impaired included accessibility tools that may be incorporated into future exhibits.

We also brought in an exhibit we called "Lincoln: Sight, Sound & Touch" that was especially designed for people with visual difficulties. It transformed images from Lincoln's life into three-dimensional objects that visitors could touch while listening to audio presentations.

Serving people of all economic levels is an important part of the ALPLM's mission. The regular admission price is low by the standards of most presidential libraries and major museums, but we also offer free or reduced admission in many situations – on Juneteenth and the anniversary of the Gettysburg Address, for instance. In all, 2,575 people used our free admission opportunities and 2,265 bought \$3 tickets through the Museums for All program.

Theater

The ALPLM enriched its array of theatrical presentations with a new short play entitled "Private Albert." It tells the story of Albert Cashier, who was born Jennie Hodgers but fought in the Civil War as Albert and lived the rest of his life in that identity. The play deftly and empathetically tells the story of one person facing one set of circumstances,

leaving the audience to consider the story's relevance to other people in other eras.

Two long-running presentations at the museum, "Ghosts of the Library" and "Lincoln's Eyes," are must-sees for our visitors. But the additional short plays we offer add new voices and perspectives. Together, "Private Albert," Lilacs and Letters" and "Small Beginnings were performed 37 times for 3,189 people.

"This museum is absolutely spectacular! Thank you so very much. The entry fee (being low cost) is appreciated and helpful for families. I truly enjoyed my visit!"

– A visitor



Actor Mary Young in "Private Albert."



"So impressive! A must-visit when you're in Springfield. You can tell they put a lot of effort into keeping this museum clean and informative."

- a visitor

The ALPLM continued its outreach to new generations with the full implementation of its VolunTEEN program for students from 13 to 15 years old. The 50 students get to volunteer in a professional environment and participate in educational presentations and special tours that highlight career opportunities.

Working with Nature

A new feature enriches the experience for visitors while also helping the environment. The landscaping in Union Square Park has been overhauled to feature native flowers and grasses that might have greeted Abraham Lincoln when he came to the prairie state.

The project (installed by a veteran-owned Illinois company) added more than 9,000 botanicals that support bio-diversity and require less water to thrive. At its heart is *Mary Lincoln's Garden*, a tribute to the former first lady around the park's pergola.

Spotlight

unique venues'
**planner's
choice**
AWARDS
2024

WINNER

**Tripadvisor
Travelers'
Choice Awards**



The ALPLM was again honored as a favorite among travelers around the world and as America's best small-market venue to hold special events.



Studying the Past

Part of studying our past is taking stock of the physical objects in the ALPLM collection and ensuring they are in good condition. This sometimes means doing conservation work to clean, repair, or strengthen artifacts. FY2025 was a big year for that.

Conservation work was completed on a recently acquired artifact, a 21-star flag marking Illinois' admission as America's 21st state in 1818. This is an incredibly rare flag because America had 21 states for a very short period.

Its delicate fabric has been carefully cleaned and attached to a linen backing. Light netting was placed over the red and blue sections to hold them safely in place. The entire flag was then put under conservation-grade Plexiglass to protect it from ultraviolet radiation.

A few long-time treasures underwent special repairs and cleaning, too. They include a leather portfolio in which President Lincoln carried important papers, a photograph of a train named in Lincoln's honor, and a copy of the U.S. Agriculture Department's very first annual report, prepared especially for Lincoln.



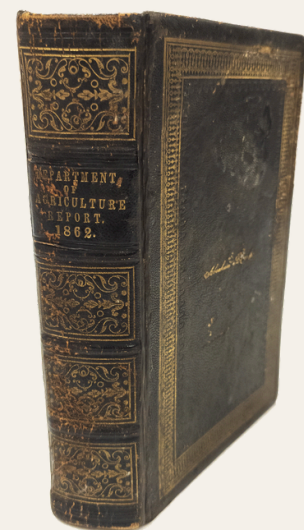
Getting a close look at a historic flag.

This important work was done with funds given to the ALPLM and the state of Illinois, which underlines the importance of donor support for the presidential library and its mission.

Donations, particularly the King Hostick Fund that was set up for the state decades ago, also allowed the ALPLM to acquire some fascinating artifacts, including Lincoln's signature on a document releasing a disabled teen from Army service and a copper token advertising a trader of enslaved Black people.



Staff examine historic treasures after cleaning and repairs.



Other generous people donated historic treasures – in some cases, treasures that had been in their families for generations. Their selflessness means the ALPLM is now home to an elegant dish from the family of Adlai Stevenson, a yearbook from the first Yale student to enlist when the Civil War broke out, and records and artifacts from a historic tent-making company.



Equipment from Armbruster Manufacturing.

Spotlight



ALPLM conservator Bonnie Parr marked 40 years with the state of Illinois. That's four decades of meticulous care for historic documents and artifacts, ensuring they will be around for future generations.

Sharing Knowledge



The ALPLM launched a new tool for exploring Lincoln photos and illustrations online. *Picturing Lincoln* debuted in the summer of 2024 with about 1,000 high-resolution Lincoln-related images anyone, anywhere could download free. Another wave of about 500 images was added in 2025.

Hosted by the Illinois secretary of state's office, the collection will be updated with more and more images from the ALPLM's files.

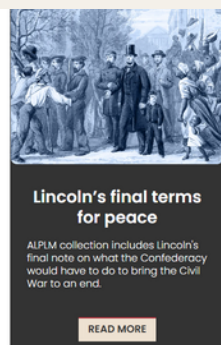
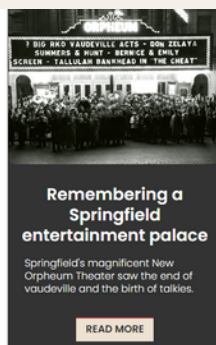
The images go far beyond familiar portraits of Lincoln. They include photos of his funeral and the construction of his tomb,

rare pictures of his descendants, and editorial cartoons lampooning Lincoln or his opponents.

ALPLM also provides negatives from its huge collection of microfilmed newspapers so they can be digitized for the Illinois Digital Newspaper Collection. This makes some of the rarest newspapers in Illinois history available to researchers worldwide.

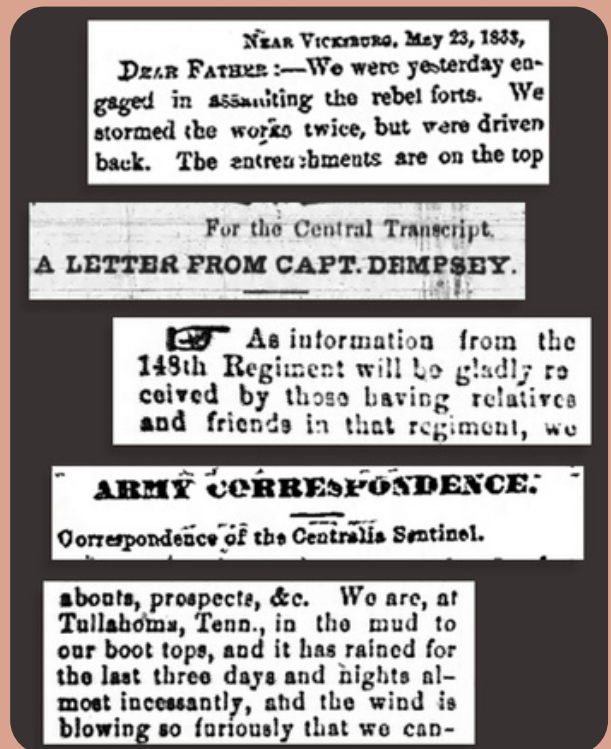
The team continues to share information through the annual Conference on Illinois History and public presentations on everything from Civil War letters to the actress who was on stage during Lincoln's assassination to the art of sculptor Richard Hunt.

Staff experts also contribute to blog posts and social media videos that offer short lessons in history. Our followers on social media could learn about Lincoln's terms for ending the Civil War, his fraught relationship with his father, the delicate work of repairing documents, and the amazing life of Elizabeth Keckly.



A public presentation and a selection of blog articles.

Spotlight



After years of exacting work, the ALPLM completed an index of letters from Civil War soldiers published in Illinois papers. The index tells researchers where they can find more than 7,000 letters in 57 newspapers. It includes the author's name, location, military unit and more. This makes it a simple matter to track down these glimpses into the lives of men on the front lines. The ALPLM appears to be the only institution in America with this kind of resource.

Many members of the ALPLM team also share their personal knowledge and expertise by working with educational groups and professional organizations. Our education team, for instance, has spoken at the annual conference of the National Council for the Social Studies. Our newspaper librarian serves on the board of the Illinois Newspaper Project. Our conservator served on the preservation committee of the Consortium for Academic and Research Libraries in Illinois.

Serving the Community



Learning about science at the Back to School Bash.

Being a good neighbor is fundamental to the ALPLM's mission as a library, a museum, and a state agency. That means taking part in community events, offering our assistance whenever possible, and making Lincoln's legacy available to all.

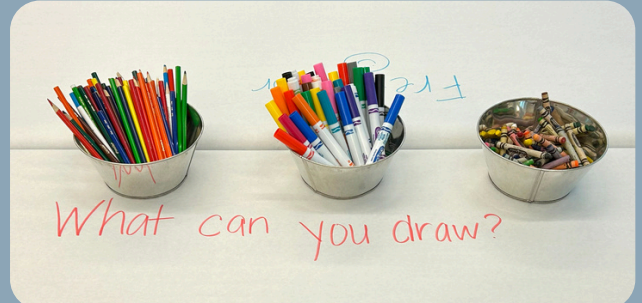
In fiscal 2025, the ALPLM offered free admission on two days to celebrate Lincoln's birthday, as well as on June 19 to mark Juneteenth and Nov. 19 for the anniversary of the Gettysburg Address. We also offered free admission to military veterans and, for the first time, to Gold Star families – that is, families who lost a loved one serving in the military. Low-cost tickets were available year-round to people in the SNAP food-assistance program.

Given Lincoln's love of reading, we work hard to help families and teachers who try to instill a love of books in children. The ALPLM offers the free Little Lincoln's Fireside Tales reading program, holds a "literacy jam" around the time of Lincoln's birthday, and offers story time at an array of local events. The annual "Back to School

Bash" also promotes education and connects families with valuable resources for the school year ahead.

The ALPLM team could be found at local concerts, Juneteenth celebrations, parades, and school events. We also hosted a blood drive, offered free musical performances, and hosted community events.

Spotlight



Our Education Division rejuvenated the Little Lincoln's Fireside Tales program, which provides free story-times and games for young children. With new activities, songs, and accommodations for crafts, average attendance reached 15 children, up 43 percent from the year before.

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