

Abraham Lincoln Birthplace Community Newsletter

Winter Edition 2021

National Park Service
U.S. Department of the Interior

National Historical Park
Kentucky



KICKING OFF THE NEW YEAR!



A cardinal sitting on top of snowy grass.

Happy New Year from all of us at Abraham Lincoln Birthplace National Historical Park! This exciting time concludes a period of reflection and ushers in a fresh start of new opportunity. What better way to celebrate than with the release of the park's community newsletter first edition? All of us at the park are looking forward to the upcoming year with many exciting projects and events on the horizon. The past year has brought unprecedented challenges for us all, but together we continue to learn and grow to overcome and persevere.

STAYING SAFE THIS SEASON



Snow covered ground along the split rail fence.

Safety is one of the NPS's first priorities for our visitors, staff, and volunteers. The winter season brings colder weather and freezing temperatures that can be problematic and potentially dangerous. Make sure to bundle up and be aware of the weather forecasts and look ahead to see if there is any upcoming inclement weather so that you can avoid prolonged exposure to the cold and icy roads. The colder months also bring higher rates of illness, so make sure to follow CDC guidelines to keep you and your communities healthy!

At the Park

UPDATES FROM IN AND AROUND THE PARK

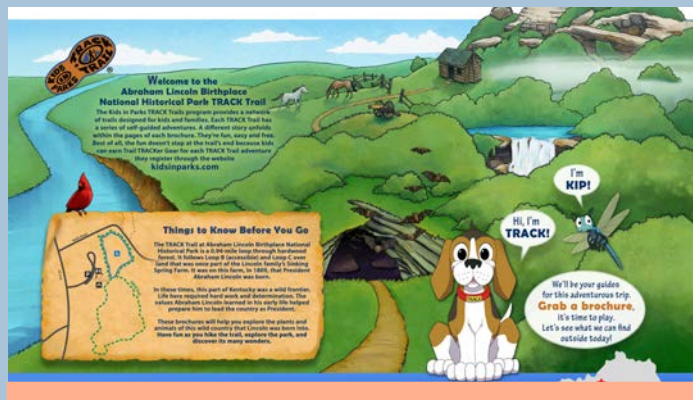
SUPERINTENDENT'S CORNER

Greetings from Abraham Lincoln Birthplace NHP! Sending a Happy New Year with hope that 2021 brings abundant health, joy, and community cheer. Thank you for your warm support in my first year as park superintendent. We are pleased to send you our first park community newsletter. We are very excited about big new beginnings. The work on the Knob Creek Tavern rehabilitation is in full swing and a grand opening is planned in October. We also will soon be sharing news on new partnerships, a re-launched volunteer program, and the first TRACK Trail for Kids program in Kentucky. Stay tuned!



Park superintendent
Catherine Bragaw.

TRACK YOUR TRAILS



Artwork for trailhead from the TRACK trail program.

The park has partnered with Kids in Parks to be added to the national network of TRACK trails. A trailhead sign will be installed later this year and will supply visitors with self guided brochures and information to make their outdoor adventures fun and exciting. Trails and completed activities can be logged [online](#) and visitors can even earn prizes. Our park will be the first TRACK trail in Kentucky and we have had the exciting opportunity to help design the trailhead for the entire state. Keep an eye out for the opening of TRACK trail at the Big Sink Trail over by the picnic area!

WHAT'S THAT NOISE?



Pileated woodpecker perched on tree.

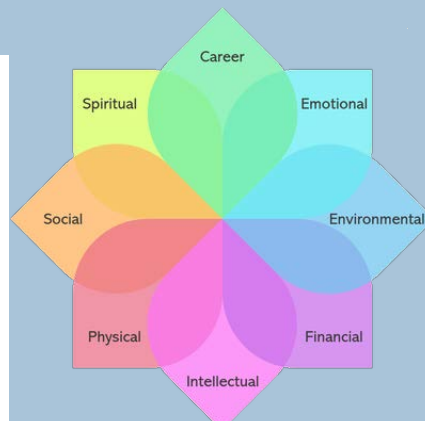
While taking a stroll around the park you may have been startled by the noisy pecking of a woodpecker. Our park is frequented by Pileated woodpeckers and they are this edition's species spotlight. The Pileated woodpecker is the largest in North America (other than the Ivory bill, which is likely extinct). Its diet consists of mostly insects, specifically carpenter ants, but up to a quarter of its diet may be fruit and nuts. This bird leaves distinctive rectangular holes in dead trees from feeding. Keep an eye out for this interesting woodpecker (or the rectangular holes it leaves behind) next time you're at the park!

At the Park

UPDATES FROM IN AND AROUND THE PARK

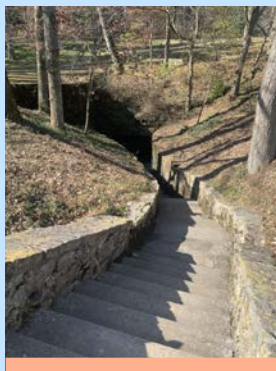
GETTING WELL WITH THE PARKS

The National Park Service established an Employee Wellness Program in 2012 and since then, each park has adapted its own plan in order to foster healthy and meaningful lives of park employees. ABLI has formed a wellness committee that has begun to develop the park's wellness program and look into how the park promotes wellness events and activities. The park has begun an exciting initiative to get employees actively involved in fitness activities by logging them for awards and promoting wellness time during the work day.



Wellness wheel's 8 elements of wellness.

SINKING SPRING GETS A TRIM



Entrance to the Sinking Spring.

The park's maintenance division works tirelessly to keep the grounds safe, healthy, and beautiful. Each day the team tends to important daily maintenance activities like landscaping, repairs, and cleaning. At times, larger projects require more extensive work like our recent sinking spring clean-up. The maintenance division cleaned up the area surrounding the spring, removing any excess brush, debris, and overgrowth. Next time you stop by the park, make sure to stop by the sinking spring and see all the great work this team has done!

UPDATES FROM KNOB CREEK

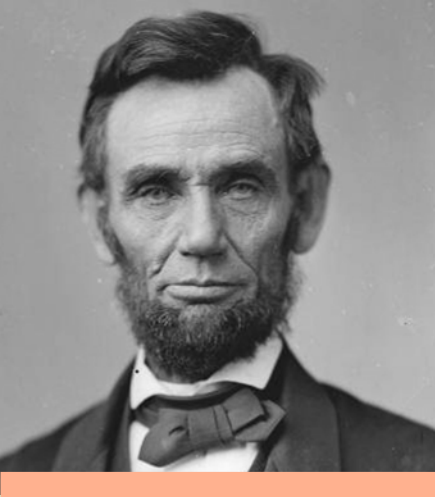
The renovation of the Knob Creek Tavern is well underway and we are making exciting progress. So far, the water chlorination system has been installed, the front wall has been braced, the rear office and front porch have been demolished and the old ranger station removed. Work has begun on the new accessible sidewalk and the second-floor interior walls have been removed. So far, the project is on schedule and progressing as planned. The next step is replacing the deteriorated logs on the exterior. We are excited to see this historic structure restored to its former condition!



Front Porch replacements at the Knob Creek Tavern.



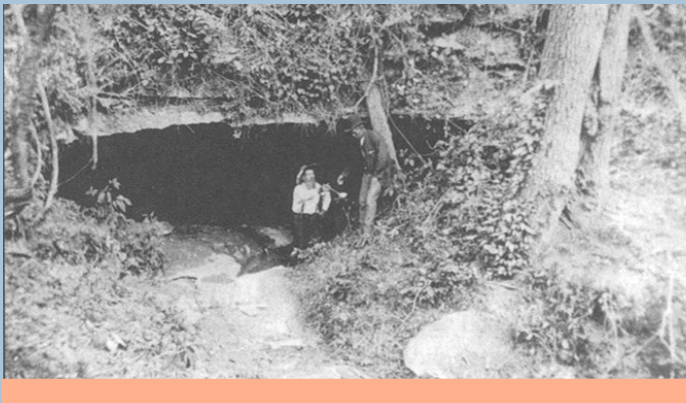
AN ORDINARY MAN'S ROAD TO PRESIDENCY



Portrait of Abraham Lincoln.

Lincoln was not born President, he worked numerous jobs such as a rail-splitter and storekeeper. He came to find he had aspirations to be a legislator and encountering defeat on his first try, he decided to pursue a career in law. He worked hard and became a highly successful and respected lawyer continuing on to be a member of the Illinois State Legislator for four terms between 1834 and 1840 and serving a single term in Congress. He would then run against Stephen A. Douglas for Senate after a brief hiatus from politics, ending in another defeat. This loss, however, gained him national recognition so that he would be considered for the presidency in 1860. Lincoln, amidst all of the strife and turmoil in the nation, won the presidency that year. The path was not clear or easy from the beginning, but Abraham Lincoln overcame the challenges and obstacles he was presented with to serve his country as President.

A WINDOW INTO KARST



Sinking Spring opening. (1880s)

The farm's namesake is a karst window at the base of a hill that would have supplied the Lincoln's with freshwater during their residence here. A karst window is an area where groundwater flow is exposed to an opening causing the water to flow freely at the surface and into the opening below. Karst windows are particularly vulnerable to pollution as there is no natural buffer or soil filtration limiting entry into the water. This natural feature provided invaluable resources to the Lincoln's and are protected as not only an important part of history, but an important part of our environment.

WINTER ON THE FRONTIER



Winter landscape with barren trees and snow

Winter in the 1800s may seem entirely unpleasant even in well developed areas where houses had numerous fireplaces to keep warm and there was readily available heavy winter clothing. Winter on the frontier looked much different. Simple log cabins typically had a single fireplace that helped circulate heat, but cracks and gaps between the logs would have to be fixed quickly as they would let the cold in and heat out. Settlements were sparse and often long distances apart so trading or purchasing goods was more difficult than in a developed city. Living on the frontier brought unique hardships and the winters were often especially difficult.



LOST LINCOLN LOGS

When Lincoln was born, he was simply a normal little boy living on a Kentucky farm. Little did anyone know at the time that he would become the 16th President of the United States. While the original logs of the cabin he was born in are long lost to time, the symbolic birth cabin inside of the memorial building represents the humble start of Lincoln's life as part of a pioneer family. The symbolic cabin is dated to be from roughly the same time period and area, although after Lincoln was born. The simple one room cabin reminds visitors of the contrast in Lincoln's beginnings and the powerful position he held later in life.



Symbolic birth cabin on display in 1909

WHOSE LAND IS IT ANYWAYS?



Visitors at the Knob Creek Tavern.

Many people ask why the Lincoln's ended up leaving the Sinking Spring Farm and later the Knob Creek Farm to go to Indiana. Back in the early 1800s, property titles and boundaries were highly disputed because there weren't thorough records kept. Thomas Lincoln, Abraham's father, had unknowingly purchased the sinking spring farm from the wrong person. The actual owner of the farm and Thomas entered a property dispute battle that would ultimately cause the Lincolns to head to Spencer County, Indiana.

LINCOLN'S BIRTHDAY

On February 12, 1809 a tiny baby was born at a quiet farm that cold morning here in Hodgenville, KY. That baby would be named Abraham Lincoln. Thomas Lincoln excitedly travelled to the cabin of Nancy's aunt and uncle to announce that "Nancy has a boy." They ran back to Nancy and the newborn to find them cuddled up under a bear skin in bed to keep warm. This year will mark 211 years since his birth. Take a moment on February 12 to remember Lincoln's legacy, values and everything he stood for.



Wreath on display for Lincoln's birthday.

UPCOMING EVENTS

Parks & Pages

Join us in reading books on the untold stories of the Civil War and come out to the park for discussion with rangers and other visitors. We will have these meetings once a month and no reservations or fees are necessary. Check the park's [website](#) or [Facebook](#) for the full schedule for the year or contact us.

January 15, 2021 – Within Lincoln's Circle (Behind the Scenes by Elizabeth Keckley)

February 19, 2021- Black History Month (Embattled Freedom: Journeys through the Civil War's Slave Refugee Camps by Amy Murrell Taylor) (in cooperation with Camp Nelson National Monument)

March 19, 2021- Women's History Month (Stealing Secrets: How a Few Daring Women Deceived Generals, Impacted Battles, and Altered the Course of the Civil War by H. Donald Winkler)

Meet the Author



Hi! I'm Crystal Bradley and I'm a park guide intern and the current author of the community newsletter. I am currently finishing my bachelor's in Natural Resources and Environmental Science from the University of Kentucky and I have previously worked as a visitor services intern with the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service. I truly enjoy every second of helping people make the most out of their visits to these truly special places while fostering a responsibility and appreciation for our natural and cultural resources. If you have any questions or comments about the newsletter or park please reach out to us at abli_superintendent@nps.gov.



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WITH OUR FACEBOOK PAGE!

Community Pulse

MEET THE NATIONAL PARKS

The National Park Service is a bureau of the U.S. Department of the Interior. There are seven regional directors that oversee a group of parks. Most parks then have a superintendent who directly manages that park or unit. Park employees are divided into different divisions, each with a designated chief, based on the duties of their position. Often these divisions include the divisions of interpretation, facilities management, resources management, and administration.



Park staff on Memorial Building steps.

LET'S CHAT WITH THE LINCOLN MUSEUM



Student volunteers shelving books, dedication plaque, and shelf installation.

By Rob Thurman and Vanessa Hurst, The Lincoln Museum

The Lincoln Museum is currently engaged in a renovation project of its Lincoln Library and Research Center. The library, which was dedicated in 2009 during the Lincoln Bicentennial Celebration, was a collaborative project between the museum, ABLI, the LaRue County Public Library, and other community partners. The library houses books donated by ABLI, LaRue County Public Library, and the museum's own archives. Wiseman Enterprises, who is also working on the restoration project of Knob Creek, completed the addition of new shelving while students from LaRue County Jr. High School's Beta Club carefully boxed and unboxed the collection and reorganized the new shelves. The collection has expanded this year with a generous donation from Mr. Don Basch, an enthusiastic collector of Lincolniana for more than 50 years. The cataloging process could take several months due to the size of the donation. At this moment, the library is closed during the renovation process. When it reopens, it will be accessible by appointment only. Located in the Downtown Hodgenville Historic District, the museum is open daily. Visit www.lincolnmuseum-ky.org for more information or call (270) 358-3163.

STAY HEALTHY AND WELL

As we are amidst cold and flu season with the additional presence of COVID-19, it is important to practice good hygiene, such as thorough handwashing, to keep yourself and others healthy. Practice healthy habits in general and make sure to prioritize your physical and mental wellbeing.