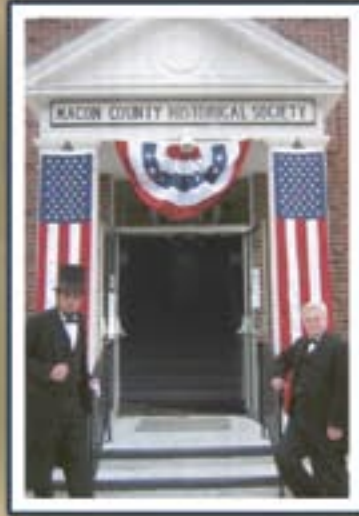


History of the Museum

Abraham Lincoln's First Illinois Home

The Macon County Historical Society had its birth on May 25, 1916, when twelve people met in the Decatur Public Library, adopted a constitution, and elected temporary officers.

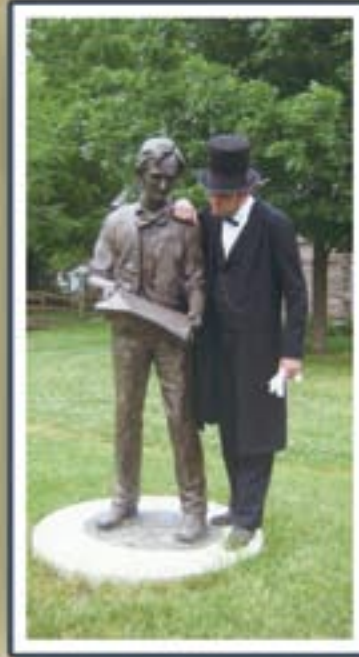


In August, 1916 there was an appeal for members at the Old Settlers' Picnic for any items of historical interest. The Society had plans "to establish a library of local and state history, to maintain a museum, and to cultivate the historic sense and diffuse knowledge upon these subjects by meeting and publications". On more than one occasion over the years the Society became inactive and then reorganized.

In 1962 several local citizens met to discuss the reactivation of the Society, with meetings being held in Decatur's old Carnegie Library until the Society purchased the old North Cumberland Presbyterian Church to establish their new museum and a meeting place.

The current location of the History Museum and Prairie Village complex in the former Excelsior South School was dedicated in 1979 on the 150th anniversary of the founding of both the City of Decatur and Macon County.

Macon County became Abraham Lincoln's first home in Illinois in 1830 when he and his family arrived from Indiana and camped out the first day of their arrival in what is now known as Decatur's Lincoln Square.



Although the Lincolns only lived in the Decatur area for one year, the Decatur area continued to play an important part in Lincoln's life in later years.

Lincoln's political career began in Decatur when he gave his first "political stump speech" in Lincoln Square in 1831. He returned many times over the years as a young lawyer to take part in legal cases in Macon County's first courthouse, which is now located in the Prairie Village of the Macon County History Museum Complex.

Decatur and community residents continued to play important roles in Lincoln's political career. In 1860, he was first mentioned for the United States Presidency at the Illinois State Republican Party convention site called the "Wigwam" that was located across the street from Decatur's Central Park.

The History Museum's permanent exhibit, "The Lincoln Connection," covers Lincoln's arrival in Illinois and delves into his political and legal careers, the Civil War, and the founding of the Grand Army of the Republic in Decatur in 1866.



Macon County History Museum

and Prairie Village
Open Tuesday - Saturday 1-4
and every 4th Sunday 1-4

5580 North Fork Road
Decatur, IL 62521
(217) 422-4919 Fax: (217) 422-4773
e-mail: info@mchsdecatur.org
www.mchsdecatur.org

Decatur Area Convention & Visitors Bureau

www.decaturcvb.com

MACON COUNTY HISTORY MUSEUM DECATUR, ILLINOIS



Preserving our past for the future.



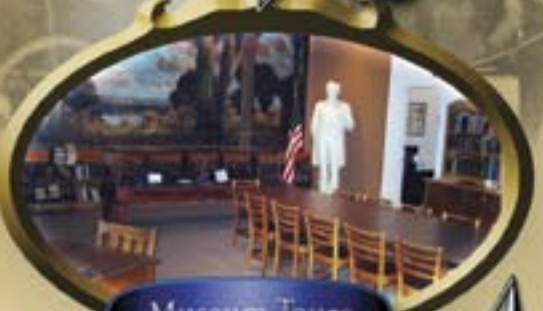
Keeping Traditions Alive



Educational Exhibits



Preserving Our Heritage



Museum Tours



Community Events



Step Into The Past



Learning Opportunities

The Museum offers an opportunity for students of all ages to learn about the history of Macon County and the country through unique exhibits and special educational programs, such as the annual Prairie Life Days held in May. Teachers and leaders of organizations that work with school age students can book tours of the museum all year long.

Exhibits

In keeping with the Museum's Mission of advancing the study of history about Macon County and the nation's history as it relates to the residents of the county, the Museum staff is continuously changing exhibits to feature its extensive collection of historical artifacts and photos.

