



# Introduction

Shelby County became part of the Eighth Judicial Circuit Court system in 1841. City natives can be proud that one of the circuit travelers was Abraham Lincoln, who went from town to town for 25 years, including four years to Shelbyville.

Lincoln never complained about the squalid taverns or impassable roads. Rather, it seemed that he thrived in harsh conditions, and his stamina would later support him during the Civil War. Every spring and fall he would start the circuit in a westerly direction. He would leave from Paris, 55 miles from Shelbyville. The trip would take him two or three days. He would spend nights at wayside inns or homes of settlers.

The State of Illinois is renowned as the Land of Lincoln. In Shelby County, finding Lincoln is no problem. This tour features significant Lincoln landmarks in Shelbyville, the Shelby County seat. Please visit the **Shelby County Tourism Office** (Hrs: Mon.-Fri., 9am-4pm) or call 217-774-2244 to learn more about Lincoln landmarks around the county.



CityWalk is Shelbyville's first self-guided tour series, and was inspired by Anthony Rubano, Project Designer for the Illinois Historic Preservation Agency. Each tour is aimed at showcasing the rich architectural, cultural and historical resources around town.

# Timeline

## Abraham Lincoln in Shelby County & Illinois

**1840's - 1850's** Lincoln practices law in the 8th Judicial Circuit, visiting Shelbyville in spring and fall. **May 29, 1856** Lincoln joins the new Republican Party. **August 9, 1856** Lincoln comes to Shelbyville to debate Anthony Thornton, as they campaign for John C. Fremont and James Buchanan, respectively. **1858** Lincoln and Stephen A. Douglas debate in seven cities as they compete for the Illinois United States Senate seat. Douglas defeats Lincoln. **1860** Abraham Lincoln is elected 16th President of the U.S. **1865** President Lincoln's funeral train brings the slain President home to Springfield, Illinois.

# Wayside Exhibit

With storyboards located throughout Central IL, the Looking for Lincoln Wayside Exhibit Program helps bring each of Shelbyville's unique Lincoln stories to life. Abraham Lincoln spoke in Shelby County (one of his 50+ speaking engagements) in 1856, debating his friend, attorney Anthony Thornton of Shelbyville. While less famous than the later Lincoln-Douglas debates, the Lincoln-Thornton meeting is significant because it marked one of Lincoln's first public speaking engagements as a Republican. It was also the first time he argued the anti-slavery cause as being divisive to the country.

See the painting by renowned local artist, Robert M. Root, of the Lincoln-Thornton debate at:  
**Shelby County Courthouse**  
 (Hrs: Mon.-Fri., 8am-4pm. Closed on holidays)  
 and visit the Lincoln Room at:  
**Shelby County Historical & Genealogical Society**  
 (Hrs: Tues. 5-7pm, Wed. & Sat. 9am-12pm)



For details go to [shelbyvilleillinois.net/downtown-city-walk-lincoln-memorial-history-tour](http://shelbyvilleillinois.net/downtown-city-walk-lincoln-memorial-history-tour).

# CityWalk Series

**Historic Downtown Lincoln Memorial Painted Figures Victorian Homes**

Located in central Illinois, Shelbyville is home to scenic Lake Shelbyville, the historic Boorman's Roxy Theater, and much more. Shelbyville is easily accessible from US-51 and I-57. It is just 23 miles from Mattoon, 32 miles from Decatur and 59 miles from Springfield. There is also free [Wi-Fi](#) access in the downtown Main Street area.

To learn more about other CityWalk tours, visit:

- Lake Shelbyville Visitor Center**  
Rt 4, Box 128B, Shelbyville, IL 62565  
Hrs: 8:30 am-4:30 pm  
(217) 774-3951  
[lakeshelbyville@usace.army.mil](mailto:lakeshelbyville@usace.army.mil)
  - Shelby County Tourism**  
315 E Main Street, Shelbyville, IL 62565  
Hrs: 9 am-4 pm  
(217) 774-2244  
[info@lakeshelbyville.com](mailto:info@lakeshelbyville.com)
  - Shelby County Historical and Genealogical Society**  
151 S Washington Street, Shelbyville, IL 62565  
Hrs: Tue 5-7 pm, Wed & Sat 9 am-12 pm  
(217) 774-2260  
[shelbycounty@consolidated.net](mailto:shelbycounty@consolidated.net)
- Special Thanks to:**  
 City of Shelbyville, USACE Lake Shelbyville, Shelby County Tourism, Greater Shelbyville Chamber of Commerce, Economic Development Council of Shelby County, Shelbyville High School Welding Team, Corner Copy, Shelby County Historical and Genealogical Society, ShelbyvilleWorks!, Illinois Historic Preservation Agency, Lake Land College and IIRA: Western Illinois University.



Photos courtesy of Donna Lupton, SCHGS  
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# Lincoln Memorial



A self-guided family fun Abraham Lincoln tour made possible by:  
 Looking for Lincoln Heritage Coalition Grant  
 Abraham Lincoln National Heritage Area  
 Shelby County Tourism  
 Shelby County Lincoln Heritage, Inc.  
 The City and residents of Shelbyville, IL

## Courthouse & Square

### A. "Shelby County Courthouse" - 301 E Main St

You will find the first stop of this tour at the magnificent Shelby County Courthouse. This is the 3rd county courthouse. It was dedicated April 3, 1883 - when the first court session was held. Judges Anthony Thornton and Samuel Moulton were speakers on that day. The Courthouse has a spire-like tower that rises 50' above the roof and Grecian Statues, representing the Goddesses of Liberty & Justice.

### B. "Lincoln-Thornton Statuary - Let's Debate"

You will find this statuary in front of the Courthouse. The statues were dedicated August 9, 2009. According to artist and sculptor, John McClarey, "'Let's Debate' plays to both the historic debate in Shelbyville on August 9, 1856 between two political rivals, Abraham Lincoln and Anthony Thornton, and to the need for all of us to work together in a civil manner to find solutions to local, state, and national problems."

### C. "Lincoln-Thornton Debate Wayside Exhibit"

You will find this Wayside story board right by the Lincoln-Thornton Statuary. It illustrates one of Lincoln's first public speeches after leaving the Whig Party to join the New Republican party. It also highlights the painting, by local artist Robert M. Root, that memorialized the famous Lincoln-Thornton Debate.

### D. "Lincoln-Thornton Debate Painting"

Enter Courtroom A when Court is not in session (Hrs: see back) to view this historic painting by renowned local artist Robert M. Root. The 6' x 8' oil painting was completed in 1917 after 14 years of research and labor. 53 of the 60 men in the painting were painted from actual photos. Root's connection to Lincoln became well-known through his painting of the 1858 Lincoln-Douglas Debate in Charleston, now in the IL state Capital. Critics have declared that Root's portraits of Lincoln as shown in these two paintings are the best that have ever been painted.

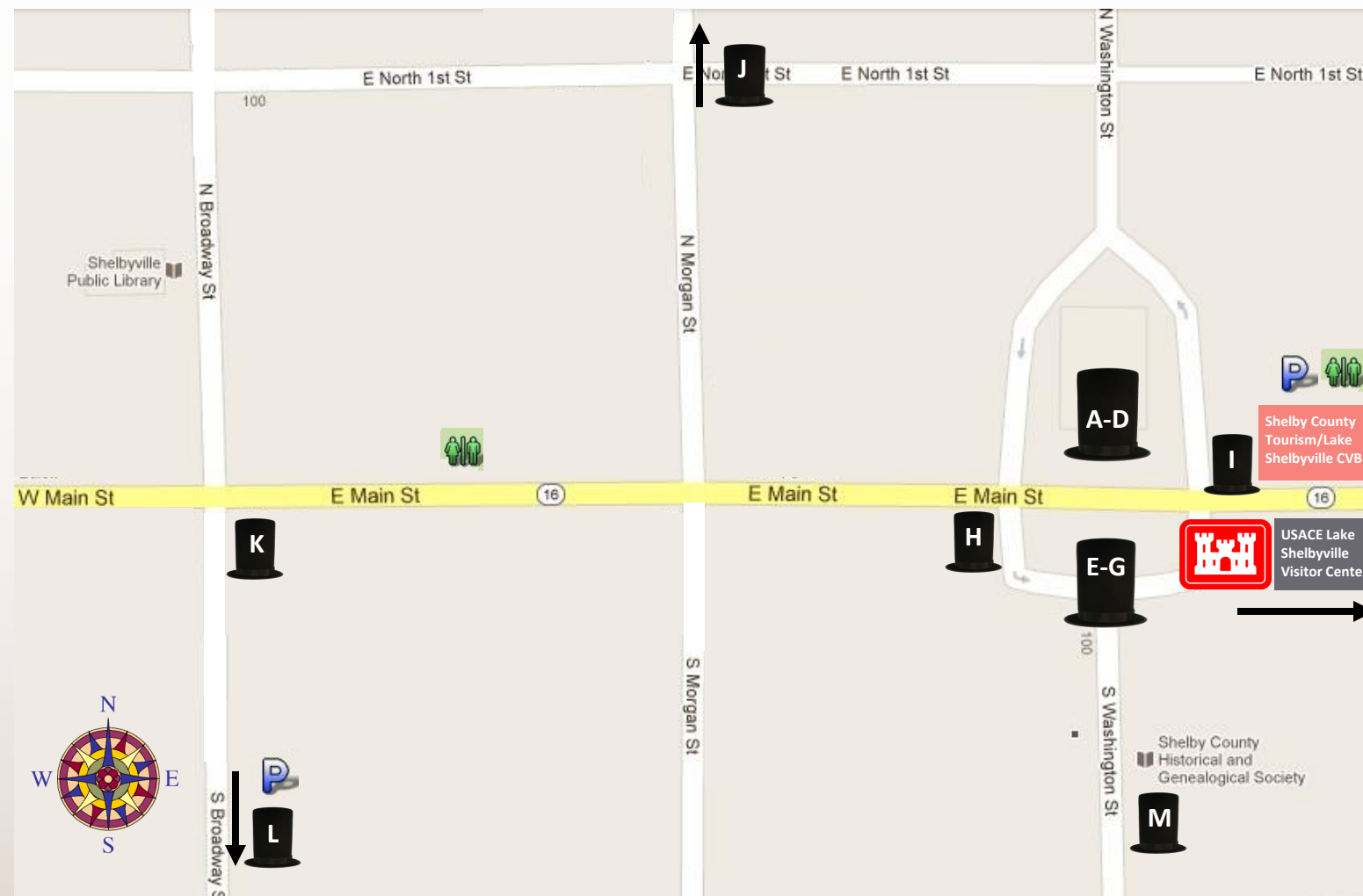
### E. "Lincoln Public Square"

The Public Square was created for the purpose of erecting the Monument to Soldiers and Sailors, designed by local artist Robert M. Root. Dedicated in 1908, it was renamed Lincoln Square in 1922. You will also find the Eternal Flame honoring all who fought in war: a Monument to the world's first automated hay-baler invented and produced in Shelbyville: and a Time Capsule dedicated in 1987.

### F. "8th Judicial Circuit Marker"

On the NW corner of the square, you will find a granite slab with Lincoln's profile and a bronze plaque marking the route Abraham Lincoln traveled as he rode the Circuit of the 8th Judicial District. Erected in 1921, the plaque marks the Lincoln Trail that is found in all county seats where Lincoln practiced law in his early days. The marker was presented to Shelby County by the Kuilka Chapter of the D.A.R.

# Tour Directions & Map



\*Wayside Exhibits J & L will be placed at the homes, Wayside Exhibit K will be installed upon completion of the Sister City Mini Park.



### G. "Shelby County Second Courthouse Marker"

You will find this historic marker on the SE corner of the square, on a large rock, called the Lincoln Boulder. It was dedicated February 12, 1923. It marks the spot where the 2nd Shelby County Courthouse stood from 1832-1881. It was here on August 9, 1856 that Lincoln and Thornton held their debate, for and against freedom in new territories.

## Around Shelbyville

### H. "Abe at the Inn"

- Corner of Washington St & 260 E Main St

You will find this painted figure by local artist Carol Kessler around the corner across from the Lincoln Public Square. The artwork portrays Abraham Lincoln taking time from his busy day to read a book to a young boy in Shelbyville. This painted figure was donated by Martha Mars in 2007.

### I. "Traveling the Circuit Wayside Exhibit"

- Shelby County Office of Tourism, 315 E Main St

Lincoln traveled 600 miles twice a year on the 8th Judicial Circuit to 16 counties, bordered by Pontiac, Springfield, Danville, and Shelbyville. While you're here, visit the office to learn more about Lincoln's history in Shelby County (Hrs: see back).

### J. "Anthony Thornton Wayside Exhibit\* & Home"

- 315 E Main St (exhibit) 321 N Morgan St (home)

Built by attorney Anthony Thornton, this Early Classic Revival house is one of the oldest homes in Shelbyville. Mr. Thornton debated Lincoln, and served in the State Legislature, Congress, and the Illinois Supreme Court. He was also a founding member and the first President of the Illinois State Bar Association. Current owner: Sarah Bitzer.

### K. "Lincoln's Court Cases Wayside Exhibit\* "

- Will be at Sister City Mini Park, Downtown

Lincoln handled 35 cases in Shelby County between 1849 & 1853. This exhibit has the history of a murder case against John Crockett, great-nephew of Frontiersman and Alamo Hero, Davy Crockett. Built in 1993, this park honors IHI Turbo America plant and its "Sister City" in Okuwa Village, Japan.

### L. "Samuel W. Moulton Wayside Exhibit\* & Home"

- 315 E Main St (exhibit) 607 S Broadway St (home)

This Italianate house was built before 1875, and was home to "the Father of Education" in Illinois, Mr. Samuel Moulton. As a Legislator, Mr. Moulton authored the bill to establish free public schools in Illinois. He also introduced Lincoln while promoting the cause of his Democratic Party at the 1856 Lincoln-Thornton Debate in Shelbyville.

### M. "Lincoln Room" - 151 S Washington St (SCHGS)

Dedicated to Rebecca W. Freeman in 2009, this is one of several "theme" rooms at the Shelby County Historical & Genealogical Society. Come and learn about Lincoln's influence in Shelby County as he traveled the Circuit, applying his legal expertise and making friends with local citizens (Hrs: see back).