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***The Ohio Statehouse celebrates its Sesquicentennial  
and its Connection to Abraham Lincoln  
150 years of serving as the heart of Ohio democracy!***



By Gregg Dodd, Deputy Director Communications  
Marketing and Events  
Capitol Square Review and Advisory Board  
OhioStatehouse

### **About the Ohio Statehouse Sesquicentennial**

The people of Ohio will celebrate the sesquicentennial of the Ohio Statehouse throughout 2011. The Ohio Statehouse has served as the heart of Ohio democracy for the last 150 years. Throughout the state, the Ohio Statehouse stands as a symbol of the legislative and

executive branches of state government and the people of Ohio.

After 22 years of construction, the Ohio Statehouse was completed in 1861 at the beginning of the American Civil War. One hundred and fifty years later, the Ohio Statehouse continues to serve as the heart of Ohio democracy.

The Statehouse is considered to be one of the most significant architectural accomplishments of the early republic. Its Greek Revival Doric architectural details and proportions give the impression of permanence, elegance and grandeur deserved by the original State Legislature who passed a law on January 26, 1838 to build the new Statehouse. Restored to its 1861 appearance, the Ohio Statehouse maintains its historic character as it continues to function as the center of state government in Ohio.

Frank Lloyd Wright described the Ohio Capitol Building by saying, "*The most honest of state capitols, sincere and forthright.*"

Throughout 2011, the Ohio Statehouse will host a variety of special events, reenactments and exhibits to celebrate the sesquicentennial of our great Capitol Building. The events will commemorate the lasting legacy and history of the Ohio Statehouse. Through educational programs, public forums, arts projects and special events, the Ohio Statehouse Sesquicentennial will provide an opportunity for all Ohioans to learn about the history of the building, events and the people who have come to serve.

### **Abraham Lincoln at the Ohio Statehouse**

Because of the state's political stature, during the last century and a half, the Ohio Statehouse has been visited by a number of dignitaries, including Abraham Lincoln. Lincoln visited the Ohio Statehouse three times: in 1859, 1861 and 1865.

#### *Lincoln's First Ohio Statehouse Visit*

In 1859, Abraham Lincoln spoke to a small crowd on the east terrace of the Statehouse. Only about fifty people came to hear him speak, though he went on for more than two hours on the subject that would grip the entire nation: the slavery question and the preservation of the Union. Such a small crowd seems unusual, but it is important to recall that Lincoln at this time was not well known and had not become

"Lincoln the Legend," the historical icon that we are aware of today. Clean shaven, and not yet wearing the mourning black that he would take up as President, the Abraham Lincoln who visited Columbus in 1859 was just becoming more well known outside of his home state of Illinois.



### *Lincoln's Second Ohio Statehouse Visit*

Lincoln was making his way to Washington, DC to be sworn in as President when he stopped in Columbus on February 13, 1861. While at the Statehouse, Lincoln visited with Governor William Dennison and then spoke to a joint session of the 54th Ohio General Assembly. During his conversation with Governor Dennison, Lincoln received a telegram informing him that the election results had been duly certified and he was indeed President-Elect. In contrast to the small crowd that had greeted him two years earlier, a newspaper account stated that the welcoming crowd around the Statehouse was "packed together like pickles in a jar" and that

the uniformed members of the honor guard had to open a path into the Capitol building.

### *Lincoln's Third Ohio Statehouse Visit*

Less than four years later, an even larger crowd would witness the arrival of Lincoln to the Statehouse, but the jubilant welcome given the President-Elect would be replaced by grim sadness as Ohio joined the rest of the nation in mourning a fallen leader. On April 29, 1865, President Lincoln, the first President to be assassinated, lay in state in the Rotunda for six and a half hours. As his casket was being transported from Washington, DC to its final resting place in Illinois, more than 50,000 people came to Columbus to pay their respects to the President, walking past his open casket. This is one of the busiest days at the Ohio Capitol to date, especially considering that central Ohio only had a population of 31,000 residents at the time.

### *Celebrating the 150<sup>th</sup> Anniversary of Abraham Lincoln's Inaugural Trip from Springfield to Washington*

The year-long Ohio Statehouse Sesquicentennial celebration continues with a visit from "Abraham Lincoln" to the Ohio Statehouse 150 years to the day after his February 13, 1861 visit. The special visit by "Lincoln" took place on Sunday, February 13 from 2 to 3:30 p.m. at the Ohio Statehouse. [View video recording from Abraham Lincoln's Journey to Greatness.](#)

Fritz Klein, a nationally-renowned Lincoln presenter, will deliver a one hour living history program portraying Lincoln during the tumultuous time of his February, 1861 inaugural journey. The Ohio Statehouse program is part of the National Park Service's Civil War to Civil Rights program. The program is retracing Lincoln's journey from Illinois to the nation's capital for his inauguration a century and a half ago.

For more information about this event and the Ohio Statehouse Sesquicentennial celebration, visit [www.OhioStatehouse.org](http://www.OhioStatehouse.org).

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## **Greek Revival Style**

The Ohio Statehouse is built in the Greek Revival style, a type of design based on the buildings of Ancient Greece and very popular in the U.S. during the early and mid-1800s. Because the city-states of Ancient Greece were the birthplace of democracy, the style had great meaning in the young American nation.

Greek Revival was simple and straightforward and looked nothing like the Gothic Revival buildings popular in Europe during the same period. The broad horizontal mass of the Statehouse and the even and regular rows of columns resemble such buildings as the Parthenon in Athens. It is a masonry building, consisting largely of Columbus limestone. The limestone was taken from a quarry on the west banks of the Scioto River.

## Timeline of Events

1816: The seat of state government moves from Chillicothe to its new home in Columbus.

1839: Construction of our Statehouse begins.

1840 to 1848: No work on the new Statehouse takes place. It takes 22 years to complete due to political wrangling, cholera epidemics and lack of funding.

1843: Columbus is declared Ohio's permanent state capitol.

1852: The original 1816 Statehouse burns, and work on the current Statehouse proceeds more earnestly/

1857: Governor Salmon P. Chase and the Ohio Legislature move into the new Statehouse.

1859: Abraham Lincoln speaks to a small crowd from the east terrace of the Statehouse.

1861: Abraham Lincoln visits the Ohio Statehouse on his way to Washington, DC. While in the Governor's Office, Lincoln received a telegram informing him that the election results had been duly certified by the electoral college and he was indeed the President-Elect/

1861: On November 15, the Statehouse is deemed complete. It is considered one of the country's finest examples of Greek Revival architecture.

1865: First work of art commissioned by the Ohio Legislature is installed in the Rotunda; Perry's Victory has resided in the building ever since.

1865: President Abraham Lincoln lay in state in the Ohio Statehouse Rotunda on April 29. More than 50,000 mourners pass by his open casket.

1867: Governor Rutherford B. Hayes begins the important tradition of having an official portrait made of all the state's Governors. All the Ohio Governors' portraits continue to reside in the Ohio Statehouse.

1880: Early telephone communications begin with service to the House Chamber.

1880: George Washington Williams serves in the Ohio House of Representatives and is the state's first African-American legislator.

1888: The state places electric lights in the Supreme Court room in the Statehouse and the entire building is wired for electricity by 1892.

1912: More than 5,000 Ohio women march for suffrage at the Ohio Statehouse. Seven years later, Ohio votes in favor of the 19<sup>th</sup> amendment.

1922: The first women state senators, Nettie Longhead and Maude C. Waitt, and the first women state representatives, Nettie MacKenzie Clapp, Lulu T. Gleason, May Van Wyn and Adelaide Sterling Ott, are elected.

1960: Ohio House of Representatives and Ohio Senate sessions are televised for the first time.

1964: Construction on the Ohio Statehouse underground parking garage is completed.

1989: Restoration of the Ohio Statehouse begins.

1996: Restoration of the Ohio Statehouse deemed complete.

2009: Ohio Statehouse Museum opens to the public on June 9.

2011: Ohio Statehouse celebrates its 150<sup>th</sup> anniversary.

## Resources

Lincoln educational materials are available online at:

<http://www.ohiostatehouse.org/Education/Lincoln/KidActivities.aspx>.

To view the complete text of Abraham Lincoln's Ohio Statehouse speech on February 13, 1861, visit:

<http://www.ohiostatehouse.org/Education/Lincoln/LincolnsStatehouseSpeeches.aspx>.

View this article online at:

<http://library.ohio.gov/marketing/Newsletters/TheNews/2011/February/StatehouseCelebrates>