



Voices of Jacksonville

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Beecher Hall – Illinois College Campus

Introduction

Announcer: Step back in time to the 1850s here at Beecher Hall, the first college building in Illinois. Bordered by prairie grass to the east and a huge virgin timber to the west, Beecher Hall was the center of the college and of intellectual discourse in this region. Oh, here come the students, faculty and others making their way to the hall for a debate on the topic of slavery. Let's join them.



John: Hello there! I'm John... and welcome to Beecher Hall at Illinois College! ...home of the Sigma Pi Literary Society.

Jack: ...and the Phi Alpha society! Just in case you're not familiar with literary societies, our members have weekly meetings for orations, readings, and for giving speeches. We also discuss and debate the current events of the day. Of course, since this is a college campus, there is a social aspect as well!

John: The literary societies at Illinois College began well over ten years ago... back in the 1840's. The societies really contribute to the intellectual atmosphere of Jacksonville. That's important because we are still part of the western frontier.

Jack: Beecher Hall, the structure before you, is like an outpost of education. It was the first college building erected in the state of Illinois. Construction began in 1829. The activities of this college, and some of the things that have happened in this building, have helped to shape the attitudes in this area against slavery.

John: In fact, we're just getting ready to have a debate on the subject of slavery.

Jack: Illinois College is quite the haven of activity for anti-slavery. Most of us think its time for it to end. (pause) I understand you're interested in Mr. Lincoln and his connection with us.

John: You probably know that Abraham Lincoln never went to college, but he is a friend of this school. As a young man, Lincoln worked for a Mrs. Greene over in New Salem. Mrs. Greene's sons attended Illinois College. When they returned home on breaks, Lincoln would read their textbooks. Lincoln has often said that he learned grammar from the textbooks of those Greene boys. Remember that the next time you see a picture of Lincoln reading under a tree or by candlelight... you can bet that the book he's reading probably came from Illinois College!

Jack: Not only did Lincoln learn the basics of grammar through us, but I'd say the ideas of Illinois College have influenced him as well. He's accepted invitations to speak in Jacksonville several times. In fact, earlier this year Phi Alpha sponsored the lecture Mr. Lincoln delivered at the Congregational Church title "Discoveries and Inventions."

John: While innovation was the topic of that address, Lincoln's visits to Jacksonville surely included discussions of slavery as it is the living issue of the day. Many at this college supports ending slavery. The halls of this very building are filled with debate on the topic.

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Jack: We like to think maybe we've helped shape Mr. Lincoln's thoughts on the topic. In fact, we've made Mr. Lincoln an honorary member of both literary societies.

(Sounds: Roar from crowd, clapping)

John: Hey, we gotta go! The debate is about to start. You there! Thanks for visiting us here in Beecher hall, and come back again sometime. Maybe we'll have a chance to tell you more about Lincoln's visits to Jacksonville.

(Sounds: Rowdy crowd, Gavel sounding, voice of men: "Gentlemen! It's time we get started!" fade to silence)

Lincoln: Abraham Lincoln here. I have many fond memories of the people of Illinois College. Besides learning a great deal from the textbooks of the Greene boys, my ideas of anti-slavery were influenced by my discussions with the students and professors.

Illinois College was one of the state's prime intellectual centers. Its influence can never be adequately calculated. Suffice it to say, we all owe it a debt of gratitude for the strong moral influence it exercised in the days leading up to the Civil War.

David A. Smith House – 1061 Grove Street

Introduction

Narrator: In its early years, Illinois College was on the edge of a growing city. The busy neighborhood you see around you today hadn't yet developed. In 1852, a lawyer named David A. Smith decided to build his home near the campus of Illinois College. Years earlier, Mr. Smith had freed his slaves, an action which made his further residence in Alabama impossible. So he moved his family to Illinois, eventually landing in Jacksonville.



David Smith opened a law practice and through that practice became associated with Abraham Lincoln. They served as co-counsels or opposing counsels on 68 cases.

Imagine yourself standing on the prairie in 1853 watching the construction of this large home when Mr. Smith stops by to check on the progress.

Sounds: Hammering, talking, outdoors

Smith: eh...Mr. Taggart! (louder) Mr. Taggart!

Taggart: Oh, Mr. Smith! Glad you stopped by today! (aside) Gentlemen, gentlemen. Rest yourselves! (hammering stops... back to Smith) We're making good progress on the house. I think if the weather holds, we're on schedule to have things completed by Spring!

Smith: That's good to hear! I'm afraid I haven't had the time to check on things as much as I would have liked. My case load has been rather heavy this year.

Taggart: Been working on any interesting cases recently?

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Smith: As a matter of fact, yes. I've been representing Dr Higgins, superintendent at the State Hospital for the Insane, and the case of his dismissal which he thought unfair. It's given me the opportunity to work with Lincoln again."

Taggart: Lincoln? Abraham Lincoln? I've heard about him.

Smith: Yes, he's making quite a name for himself, isn't he? Actually, I've worked with him on a number of cases now. In fact, when he comes to Jacksonville, I let him use space in my office. That man always has an interesting story to tell. He'll lean back in his chair, stretch out those long legs of his and entertain me with tales of his years in New Salem, and his family back in Indiana and Kentucky.

Taggart: Aren't you from down south yourself, Mr. Smith.

Smith: Yes, yes I am. Born and raised in the South but decided to move to the North. Never did feel right about owning slaves so I granted them their freedom and we moved to Illinois. I've found there are many people at Illinois College who share my views against slavery. Unfortunately, I think we abolitionists are often times misunderstood. The other day the Editor of the Democratic paper in town even referred to me as a "wooly-headed abolitionist."

Taggart: Does Mr. Lincoln ever comment on your abolitionist views?

Smith: Well, my sense is he admires my distaste of the institution and respects my desire for its demise.

Worker: Mr. Taggart! Where do you want these bricks?!

Taggart: (to worker) I'll be there in a moment! (back to Smith) I suppose I should get back to work. I need to keep things on schedule. By the way, your workers here have been very helpful.

Smith: Good. We were really pleased most of the folks decided to move with us after we granted them their freedom. Their loyalty has been appreciated by me and my family.

Noise: bricks falling, crash

Taggart: Dag nabbit! I've have to keep an eye on my men! (running off into distance) Good-day, Mr. Smith.

Smith: (shouting) Good-day to you, Mr. Taggart! I'll be back tomorrow!

Lincoln: A Lincoln here... as a lawyer traveling throughout central Illinois, I often came to Jacksonville. I tried many cases in the courthouse and became acquainted with the local attorneys, one of the best of whom was David A Smith. He even allowed me to use his office while I was in town. I cherish the long discussions we had. Mr. Smith was a man of strong convictions. That's why he left the slave state of Alabama and moved to the free state of Illinois. It's men like Mr Smith who helped shape our world for the better.

Governor Duncan Mansion – 4 Duncan Place

Introduction

Announcer: Before you stands the grand home Joseph Duncan, who in 1834 was sworn in as Illinois' 6th governor. In the same election, Abraham Lincoln won a seat in the Illinois Legislature. While Governor Duncan was considerably older than Lincoln, 15 years his senior, the two men were political contemporaries and friends.



This home was the official governor's mansion during the 1830s. It is the only remaining governor's mansion in Illinois other than the current one in Springfield. Let's step back in time to the 1830s and take a walk up to the house to meet with the Duncan gardener. He is quite busy with all of the work around the mansion but maybe he can spare a few moments to enlighten us on what life was like for the Duncan family out here on the prairie.

English Gardener: Hello! Welcome to the home of Governor Joseph Duncan. I'm the gardener here at the mansion. Sorry about all the leaves; I've been working on raking them for the last week or more. I'll walk you up to the house.

Nice of you to come visit us all the way out here in the country, we're over a mile from downtown. We've got lots of space out here by ourselves, and a lot of land, which gives me a lot of work to do. Some Indians stopped by again yesterday- they're through here a lot, it seems. This grand house out here on the prairie must be very intriguing to them!

Mr. Duncan built the house in 1834, and since he's been elected governor, it's been the official governor's mansion. I've got my hands full keeping this property looking ship shape for all the important visitors coming by, conducting the business of the state.

Scottish Tutor: Good Afternoon Mr. Smith! I see you have a guest with you today! Welcome to the Duncan Mansion! I'm a tutor for the Duncan children. Let me take you into the house and show you around. Mr. Duncan is away right now, he's at a Whig meeting with that young lawyer who was elected to the state legislature - Abraham Lincoln. I've always thought Whig was a funny name for a political party! And you Yanks think we Scots have odd words!

Mr. Duncan is away quite often for political meetings. The capital is in Vandalia, but there's talk of it moving to Springfield or Jacksonville. Mr. Duncan is a big proponent of public education- trying to get it established in our state. As an educator, that sounds like a good idea to me.

Have a seat here in the parlor, and I'll ring for some tea. (lowered voice) I'll tell you a secret... See that high mantle above the fireplace. Sometimes, when Mr. Duncan comes home, he'll scoop up his wife, give her a kiss, and plop her up on that mantle. She's too short to get down on her own, and he'll leave her up there while she pleads for someone to help her! I think I've had to rescue her a dozen times or more!

Woman's Voice from Kitchen: Help!!! They're back! Come here quick!

Scottish Tutor: Wait here while I help in the kitchen.. we've been having trouble with wolves going after the cakes we have cooling on the back porch! I knew living out here on the prairie would have its challenges, but never imagined one of them would be wolves with a sweet tooth! I'll be back soon.

Lincoln: A Lincoln here... Governor Duncan was a colleague of mine, and political ally. I served under him for my first 4 state legislative years. I voted for him for governor in 1834, and again in 1842. We spent a good deal of time together in the fall of 1840 campaigning in the southern counties and discussing the principles of our party. My service with him for the state of Illinois and the Whig party taught me many valuable lessons that I took with me when I served our country in Washington.

The Newton Bateman Home – 907 W. State

Introduction

Announcer: Welcome to the former home of Dr. Newton Bateman. He and his family lived here throughout the 1850s and into the 1860s. It was while Dr. Bateman was a student at Illinois College in 1842 that he first met Abraham Lincoln. He and Mr. Lincoln continued their acquaintance from that point on but it was in the months prior to Lincoln's departure for Washington to assume the Presidency that the two became particularly close. You see, Dr. Bateman occupied the statehouse office adjoining the room Mr. Lincoln used for the eight months between his nomination for the presidency and his departure from Springfield. Dr. Bateman, who later became president of Knox College, gave a lecture on his remembrances of those seven months. Let's listen to some excerpts from his lecture.



Bateman: I do not need to say to you that there was, in Mr. Lincoln, a quiet but keen sense of humor. No reference to him would be complete that it should omit this characteristic. "The little story," of which he was so fond, and which he often turned to such good account, is blended with all our notions of the man. He was himself a capital story-teller – an artist indeed in that line.

After his election to the presidency, he became at once the central figure in the nation, and for seven months his reception-room in the old State House was daily thronged with visitors, including large numbers of the most distinguished men of the country.

One day, when his room filled with an unusual number of distinguished people, a visitor was announced. The visitor was an elderly lady in homespun, with a large, red motherly face hidden in the recesses of an old-fashioned sunbonnet, holding in her hand a parcel done up in coarse brown paper and tied with a cotton string. Mr. Lincoln recognized her at once as an old friend and handed her a chair and sat down by her side.

After pleasantries, with some shyness, the woman untied the parcel and handed Mr. Lincoln the contents – an immense pair of woolen stockings. Tears came into his eyes as he gratefully took them, assuring her that he should take them with him to Washington where he was sure none such could be obtained. And then he took the articles by the tops one in each hand and held them up in triumph before his guests who joined in the merriment. Remarked one senator, "The lady had a correct apprehension of your longitude and latitude, Mr. Lincoln."

It is startling to us who knew him so long and so well to think of one so near and yet so far – of one so long beside us in the common and familiar walks of life, now thrown so high amid the everlasting lights of the moral and historic arena. I was the last of his Springfield friends to press his hand as the train moved off on the eleventh of February, 1861. That hand, that good right hand, that had ever been lifted for the defense of the poor and needy, that afterwards held the pen and wrote the words that enfranchised a race. I was never to take that hand again.

Lincoln: A. Lincoln here. How well I remember the many months spent at the State House in the Executive Chamber next to the office of my dear friend, Newton Bateman. Prior to assuming the Chamber, Mr. Bateman feared that I and my visitors might be interrupted by the loud talking of the folks who would be calling him on school business nearly every hour of the day but I told him, never mind about that. If you can stand my noise, I can stand yours. During those months, the opportunity to introduce Mr. Bateman to one of my many visitors arose frequently. I always enjoyed introducing him as "my little friend, the big schoolmaster of Illinois."

Lincoln Mural – South Sandy Street



Introduction

Announcer: In 1856 on the Jacksonville square, Abraham Lincoln gave a speech in which he made a strong statement against the proposed extension of slavery into the American West. Envision yourself in a local dry goods store later that day. This is a conversation you might have overheard:

Noise: Jingle of bell on merchant door

Man/Shop Owner: Hello Mrs. Johnson! Hope you're having a good day! What can I help with?

Mrs. Johnson: Oh, Good afternoon! It's such an exciting day! I came downtown to the courthouse square earlier to get some shopping done. While I was here, I had some business I needed to take care of over at the courthouse.

Shop Owner: I noticed a commotion over there a while ago? What was going on?

Mrs. Johnson: Well, as I was leaving, that tall lawyer from Springfield was there, and he was giving a speech. What's his name again?...

Shop Owner: You mean Lincoln. Abraham Lincoln. Odd looking fellow, but I hear he's got a good head on his tall shoulders.

Mrs. Johnson: Yes! That's him! He gave a speech condemning the spread of slavery to the new territories! Right there in the middle of town, right on the square! I think some of those rabble-rousers at Illinois College have been talking to him.

He was so impassioned, that the crowd became excited too! Mr King was there, standing right near me. He threw his hat in the air, and yelled "Abraham Lincoln for President of the United States!" Can you believe that! Who would have thought anyone from 'round here could be president!

Shop Owner: That Lincoln has lots of good ideas. He may make a good president!

Mrs. Johnson: Well, if I could vote, he'd get mine! It's time for slavery to end!

Well, enough about that for right now; I need to get my shopping done. I need a sack of flour, and I'm looking for some fabric for a new dress for my daughter.... (talking fades away)

Lincoln: A. Lincoln here. Yes, slavery became a contentious issue here in Illinois. I traveled around the state working cases in various county courthouses, including Jacksonville. The people in Jacksonville had many good ideas. One day in 1856, I gave a speech and shared my views against the extension slavery. When I finished, to my surprise a fellow in the crowd threw his hat in the air and shouted "Lincoln for President!" That was an idea whose story was yet to be written, but I think we know where my path did lead. Amazing journeys can begin in the most unexpected of places, including the downtowns, courthouses, and log cabins of Central Illinois.

James Jaquess House – 339 E. State

Introduction

Announcer: Welcome to MacMurray College, originally named the Illinois Conference Female Academy. The house before you, now the President's House, is where James Jaquess, an early president of the college, and his family lived from 1848-1855. James Jaquess was another of Abraham Lincoln's Jacksonville associates.



If you are thinking college presidents are mild mannered scholars, spending their time buried in books, then think again! This college president was a secret 'personal agent' for Abraham Lincoln during the Civil War, and even helped sabotage bombs built in the south during the conflict. Let's listen in on a conversation that might have occurred in front of the house during the college's 50th anniversary back in 1897.

Sounds: Street sounds... horses, clanging church bell.

Minerva: (shouting) Sophie! (loudly and screeching) Sophie!? Is that you?

Sophronia: Minnie?

Minerva: Oh Sophie! (hesitatingly) How wonderful to see you! I'd wondered if you'd be here for our college reunion! How long has it been? 40 years?!?! I can hardly believe it! (tone change) By the way, you look great!

Sophronia: Oh thanks! (snidely) You too. I've been walking around the neighborhood, just taking it all in! So many changes in the past 40 years! Isn't this the house where President Jaquess lived with his family?

Minerva: Haven't you heard!? We should call him COLONEL Jaquess now.

Sophronia: Heard what?

Minerva: (sighs) He's a Colonel. He had his own regiment, the 73rd Illinois, during the Civil War. And he carried out special missions for President Lincoln. Who'd have known at the time that our campus president would work for the PRESIDENT of the United States!

Sophronia: Jaquess worked for Lincoln?!?!?

Minerva: Yes. He was one of Lincoln's 'Private Agents' during the war, which in my opinion is just a polite word for SPY. He went on several peace missions, even in the south, and would bring back information to help end the war. He reported directly to Lincoln!

Sophronia: Imagine that! Jaquess was a spy for President Lincoln, (quietly) er.. I mean "Private Agent"

Minerva: Also, during the war, he met up in the South with a bomb maker who was commissioned to help destroy northern cities and ships. Well, the bomb maker was sympathetic to the North, so TOGETHER they devised bombs that would blow up with lots of noise and flash, but would then immediately extinguish themselves. A southern spy tried them in New York City, but they didn't work. BOOOM!

Sophronia: Ahhhh!

continued...

Minerva: Lots of noise and flash, but nothing behind it.

Sophronia: (Aside) Sounds like someone I know. Who would have thought our college president was involved in such intrigue!

Sound: Church Bells ringing

Minerva: Oh, hear that! It's time for us to head over to Main Hall for our reunion lunch. If Jaquess is there, we can ask him all about it. BOOOM!

Sophronia: (jokingly) Stop it!

Sounds fading out: You always were such a joker.... BOOM! Ahhh! I said Stop it!! I'm hungry... Boom!

Lincoln: A. Lincoln here... When James Jaquess and I first met in Petersburg IL, he was a Methodist preacher and I was a country lawyer. Who would have guessed that I would become President of the United States and he would become president of a college, and later my private agent during our nation's most trying time.

Jaquess was a political ally, as well as one of the many people who did important work during the Civil War. He made several trips, sometimes venturing behind enemy lines in the South, to establish relationships and bring back vital information. And, as you heard, he even used his Chemistry background to sabotage bombs destined for destruction in the North.

Minister, Scholar, Leader, ally, and so much more. James Jaquess lived the kind of life of which legends are made.

General Benjamin Grierson Mansion – 852 East State

Introduction

Announcer: This stately mansion was home to one of Jacksonville's most notable citizens, General Benjamin Grierson. Grierson was a musician, soldier, father, and Civil War hero. Let's listen in on a conversation with his children on a day back in 1863.



Sounds: Street noise of carriages, horse hoofs, whinny, children laughing & playing

Louder sounds: carriage/horse hoofs, coming to a stop

Man: (talking to horse) Whoa! Stop. Good girl, Maggie. It's our last stop of the afternoon, here at the Grierson home.

Kids: Hi Mr. Johnson!

Man: Howdy boys... Charles, John! I've got my last delivery of the day. Is your mother at home?

Charles: Mom's out back, getting ready for dinner. She's been awful busy, so she sent us out front to play.

John: (interrupting) ...she said we was like a bunch of flies, and should quit buzzing around her!

Man: (laughing) Well, I'm sure she's been busy with lots of visitors since your father's raid in the South.

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Charles: (excitedly) Oh yeah! People been stopping by all week, calling to say congratulations. Did you see Pa's picture on the front of the Harper's Weekly? He's famous now, just like President Lincoln!

John: Dad took his troops straight down through the South to Baton Rouge, cutting the South in half! The people who came by today said he was a HERO! Do you think he's a hero?

Man: (Laughing) Well.... yes. Yes I do. Your dad is a great man. He led his men through a great campaign, which helped General Grant capture Vicksburg. People are saying it is a turning point. Yes, I think your dad is a hero!

Charles: Grandma said she was surprised a musician like Dad had it in 'em!

John: I bet Grandma coulda been in charge of those men! Do this! Do that! And no back talk! And Grandma isn't nervous around horses like Pa. He's been kicked in the head ya know!

Man: Yeah, your grandma is pretty tough too. But your dad has lots of talents - writing songs, and being a good Pa to you and your brothers. I don't think old Maggie here would kick anyone. Even she knows now not to mess with your Pa!

Charles: Do you think Pa could be a General someday?

Man: You never know! President Lincoln and the people in Washington seem to like him a lot! Maybe you'll grow up to be a famous general.

We'd better get this delivery to your Mother before she wonders where I am. Wanna help me carry these crates out back? (dialog fades out, music fades up) Here you go. You take this, and I'll get the heavy one. There you go. thanks...

Lincoln: A. Lincoln here. And yes, I did make Benjamin Grierson a general. His leadership of Union troops into the South broke the southern strength, and allowed Grant to take Vicksburg. General Sherman said it was the most brilliant expedition of the war. I appreciated having the support of friends from Central Illinois during our nation's Civil War.

Not only was General Grierson a great military man, but an excellent musician as well. He even wrote some of the music used in my first campaign for president. General Grierson has my admiration, as an excellent military man, musician, and citizen of this great country.