

## **The Evolution of Interpretation in the National Park Service and at the Lincoln Home National Historic Site**

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It has been said that the past is a foreign country. Like a trip to a foreign country, a visit to the past often requires someone to interpret the different thoughts and ideas that the past holds. Interpretation in the sense of a visit to another country might require a person to translate an unfamiliar language or explain unfamiliar customs to a visitor. Interpretation in an historic sense also requires a person who, familiar with the ways of the past, can bridge the gap of understanding and help a person from the present to explore the events that shaped the way that the world is today.

Efforts to interpret various national parks and other important sites began at roughly the same time and continued to change as ideas about the parks and about history changed. Though vastly different in the initial approaches to interpretation, the National Park Service (NPS) now works with a unified structure for interpretation. Using primary and secondary sources concerning the national parks, and primary sources from the archives of the Lincoln Home National Historic Site in Springfield, Illinois, this paper will examine the shifts in thought concerning interpretation in the National Park Service and at the Lincoln Home to explore the evolution of interpretation. Initially, the attempts at interpretation were little more than the exhibition of curiosities. Today, interpretation is the formal process of incorporating historical methods and research in the presentation of the many sites in the National Park Service, including the Lincoln Home.

The NPS maintains hundreds of national parks within the United States. Each of these parks presents a unique part of the story of the country, from military battlefields and cemeteries, to wildlife refuges, to scenic shorelines; the list goes on and on. Even with so many different areas of interest that each park covers, there exist unifying principles that each park abides by.

One of the areas where this unity is apparent is in the principles that guide the interpretation of each park.

The national parks have served at the forefront of innovation of interpretation at historic and natural sites, from their inception with the 1916 National Parks Act to the present. Along the way, innovators such as Freeman Tilden, author of *Interpreting Our Heritage*, have kept the interpretation fresh and relevant as the times and the people who visit the parks have changed. Within this framework, some parks have held places of prominence in the American consciousness, such as the Gettysburg National Battlefield Park, Valley Forge National Battlefield Park, and the Lincoln Home in Springfield, Illinois.

The Lincoln Home, at the corner of Eighth and Jackson Streets in Springfield, Illinois, continues to attract visitors from around the world. First brought into the public eye during the presidential election of 1860, the home served initially as the center of domestic life for the Lincoln family. After the Lincolns left Springfield for Washington, D.C., Lucian Tilton, a railroad man and friend of Mr. Lincoln, rented the home and maintained it for the Lincolns.<sup>1</sup> Tilton and his family resided in the home on the fateful day in April of 1865 when Abraham Lincoln became the first martyred president in the nation's history. The body of the president came back to Springfield. Funeral bunting draped the home during this time. Immediately after the funeral, the home began its development as a shrine. The Tiltons lived in the home until 1869, paying rent to Lincoln's son Robert.

During this time, the nation saw the beginnings of interpretation in what would become the national parks. In the 1830s, George Catlin advocated interpretation of the national and historical treasures of the nation, specifically the cultures of the various Native American peoples he met in his travels west of the Mississippi. Not much work took place to follow up on this initiative until the 1870s, when John Muir and Nathaniel P. Langford advocated the interpretation of the natural wonders of

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<sup>1</sup> Wayne C. Temple, *By Square and Compass: Saga of the Lincoln Home* (Springfield, IL: Ashlar Press, 1984; reprint, Mahomet, IL: Mayhaven Publishing, 2002), 139. Citations refer to the reprint edition.

Yosemite and Yellowstone, respectively.<sup>2</sup> Both of these men recognized the importance of making the wonders of these areas accessible to the public, Muir going so far as to make the first printed reference to “interpretation.” These efforts paved the way for the interpretation revolution that took place during the late-nineteenth and early-twentieth centuries.

The Lincoln Home continued as a renter’s residence into the 1880s. After the Tiltens vacated the home, several other tenants occupied the home, each one more content to live in the home than to make any major efforts towards interpreting the house. This changed in 1883 with the rental of the home by Osborn H. I. Oldroyd. Born in Ohio, and a veteran who fought with an Ohio regiment during the Civil War, Oldroyd began collecting Lincolniana during the 1860 presidential race. Oldroyd, somewhat of an opportunist, recognized the potential of attracting visitors to the home and charging them a small fee (a fact that he later denied) to see the home and his collection of Lincoln items. Oldroyd moved in and set up his collection in the front and back parlors of the home.

Oldroyd made every effort to capitalize on his collection. Due to his desire to make money from his residence, Oldroyd worked through the Illinois Legislature to have the home purchased by the state. Attempts in 1883, 1884, and 1885 all failed, but an attempt in 1887 met with success with the passage of House Bill 848 on May 25, 1887.<sup>3</sup> The management of the home fell to a commission made up of the governor of the state and several other state officers. This commission saw fit to appoint Oldroyd as the first custodian of the home. The legislature voted \$1000 per annum for Osborn’s salary, and allotted \$2800 for repairs to the home.<sup>4</sup> Oldroyd’s occupation of the home appears more a means of increasing his wealth rather than to preserve the integrity of the property. He tore down the original stable on the property in 1887 and even went so far as to sell pieces of the Lincoln Home as souvenirs to people from all over the country. Some oddities came

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<sup>2</sup> C. Frank Brockman, “Park Naturalists and the Evolution of National Park Service Interpretation through World War II,” in *Journal of Forest History* 22, 1 (1978): 26.

<sup>3</sup> Temple, *By Square and Compass*, 205.

<sup>4</sup> *Ibid.*, 208-209.

to the home, including a Civil War era cannon given the moniker of the “Mary Todd Cannon.”

Oldroyd continued exhibiting his collection in the home until a change in gubernatorial administration led to his dismissal in 1893. He removed the collection and took it with him to the Petersen Home in Washington, D.C., where Lincoln died shortly after the assassination attempt at Ford’s Theater. Oldroyd further capitalized on the collection of Lincoln items in 1926 when he sold the collection to the U.S. for \$50,000.<sup>5</sup>

The 1880s through the early 1900s also saw an increase in the amount and style of interpretation in parks across the country. The War Department managed many of the sites that eventually became national parks, and soldiers who served in these parks often filled in as guides. The post commanders, who also served as park superintendents, recognized the need for some kind of programming, and encouraged their soldiers to act in this capacity for the parks’ guests. The beginnings of museums and exhibits accompanied this use of soldiers as guides. “In 1905 Frank Pinkley, then custodian of Casa Grande ruin in Arizona,” according to Brockman, “displayed archaeological artifacts. This was in effect the first museum exhibit in a National Park Service area.”<sup>6</sup> Concurrent with this development of museum exhibits, more parks began to guide visitors around the important sites in their areas. The federal government even got into the act, publishing “a number of booklets concerning some of these areas.”<sup>7</sup> As public recognition of these many areas increased, efforts to interpret these areas increased. This holds true for the Lincoln Home as well.

After Oldroyd left the home, Herman Hofferkamp took over as custodian.<sup>8</sup> Also a Civil War veteran, Hofferkamp worked with what little was in the home to maintain its appearance. With Oldroyd’s collection gone, the state worked to collect new objects connected to the Lincolns, while Hofferkamp hired contractors to repaint and repaper the home. Some changes made to the home affected the integrity of the site, such as when “R.H. Armbruster

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<sup>5</sup> *Ibid.*, 211, 214.

<sup>6</sup> Brockman, “Park Naturalists,” 27.

<sup>7</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>8</sup> Temple, *By Square and Compass*, 211.

installed an awning”<sup>9</sup> over the front door, a feature that the Lincolns never had. Hofferkamp remained custodian until 1896, when the governor’s office changed hands again and he was replaced by Albert S. Edwards, cousin of Robert Lincoln, Albert’s wife, Josephine, and their daughter Mary.

Edwards held the custodian’s position during several special celebrations at the home. On February 12, 1909, the site celebrated the centennial of Lincoln’s birth, and on the 50<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the Lincoln’s trip from Springfield to Washington, then president William Howard Taft paid his respects to Lincoln at the tomb and the home.<sup>10</sup> Other distinguished guests visited the home, and the Edwardses served as gracious hosts to all of these many figures. Edwards passed away in 1915, and his wife Josephine occupied the custodian’s post in his place until her passing in 1918. At this time, the Edwards’s daughter, Mary, took over as custodian of the home, and held the post until 1924. Some changes took place under the custodianship of the Edwardses, such as the removal of an elm tree that Abraham Lincoln planted during his residence in the home. During the tenure of the Edwards family, changes took place in the nation that would eventually affect the Lincoln home.

In 1916, the United States Congress passed an act establishing the National Park Service. With the passage of this act, attitudes towards the parks and interpretation of the parks changed. In 1918, “Mount Rainier National Park established a Bureau of Information, headed by Park Ranger J. B. Flett, to satisfy the growing demand for authentic information on the area’s natural history,” and Mesa Verde National Park saw the establishment of a museum, “the first museum in a Park Service area.”<sup>11</sup>

These steps inaugurated the widespread effort towards professional interpretation in the national parks. In 1919, Horace M. Albright, superintendent of Yellowstone, appointed a park ranger at Yellowstone, Milton P. Skinner, a man who advocated the presence of educational programming at the park. “Skinner,” according to Brockman, “began developing a park museum in the former Bachelor Officers’ Quarters at the park headquarters at Mammoth Hot Springs,” a facility still in use into the 1970s.<sup>12</sup>

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<sup>9</sup> Ibid., 223.

<sup>10</sup> Ibid., 228.

<sup>11</sup> Brockman, “Park Naturalists,” 29.

<sup>12</sup> Ibid., 30.

Yosemite National Park’s interpretive program began the following year. Scholarship accompanied these efforts, with scientists and historians consulted during the development of these programs, and often recruited as the rangers who presented these various programs to the public. Initiation of professional interpretive programs continued at other parks in the system throughout the 1920s. Unfortunately, the Lincoln Home did not parallel these steps.

After Mary E. Brown retired in 1924, Virginia Stuart Brown, granddaughter of Abraham Lincoln’s first law partner, assumed the duties of custodian. Cosmetically, the home changed somewhat, with the removal of the cannon in 1932, and the addition of latticework over the front door around 1932. Brown stayed on until 1953, and saw some of the first major attempts by the state to represent the house as it would have looked when the Lincolns lived there. The house was painted white during Hofferkamp’s custodianship, and remained white for many years. During structural repairs in the 1950s, a brown layer of paint evidenced itself from under many layers of white paint. The state wanted to paint the house to match this brown, but Virginia Stuart Brown spoke out against the change. Fortunately for history, she was overruled and the house was painted brown. It remains that color to this day. In 1953, Brown retired, and Kathleen S. Bradish became custodian of the home. Restoration of the site continued, with archaeological evidence used to reconstruct the outbuildings of the home during the 1950s through the 1970s, and illustrations from *Leslie’s Illustrated Weekly* to refurbish the interior. Visitors to the home now had access to the second floor, which they could not do until the repairs and restoration took place, and Bradish lived in another house in the Lincoln neighborhood. Bradish acted as custodian until 1958, at which time the state began employing curators to maintain the home.

The period of Virginia Stuart Brown’s and Kathleen Bradish’s custodianships saw many changes to interpretation in the National Park Service. In the first week of October 1925, the Eighth National Park Conference was held in Mesa Verde National Park. Brockman called it a “milestone in National Park Service interpretation.”<sup>13</sup> Discussion at this conference focused on

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<sup>13</sup> Ibid., 37.

improving interpretive efforts service-wide, as well as on the importance of informing the public of the benefit of patronizing the national parks. In 1928, the Secretary of the Interior named “a committee of prominent scientists and educators to study and report on the educational possibilities inherent in the national parks.”<sup>14</sup> This group of learned professionals recommended creation of a new office to oversee interpretation service-wide. In 1931, the Park Service began exploring the interpretation of the many historic sites that fell under its jurisdiction. Director Horace M. Albright “appointed Verne E. Chatelain...as the Service’s first chief historian.”<sup>15</sup> Chatelain advocated the selection of historic sites based on their interpretive value, and maintained the historical importance of the sites in the National Park Service.

This emphasis on history in the NPS led to the passage of the Historic Sites Act in 1935, which, according to Barry Mackintosh:

directed the Secretary of the Interior, through the (National Park) Service, to “establish and maintain museums” in connection with historic properties, to “erect and maintain tablets to mark or commemorate historic or prehistoric places and events of national historical or archeological significance,” and to “develop an educational program and service for the purpose of making available to the public facts and information pertaining to American historic and archaeological sites, buildings, and properties of national significance.”<sup>16</sup>

This legislation opened the door for more concerted efforts to interpret and preserve the history of the parks in the National Park Service. The emphasis on history served as a blessing and a curse to the parks. Though they now had the mandate to interpret the history of the many sites in the service, they had the problem that many sites no longer looked as they did when the historic events took place there. Since the passage of the legislation, the NPS has faced the challenge of interpreting sites as they look today while trying to explain the way that the sites have changed from the way they looked in the past. The NPS ran into stumbling blocks, such

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<sup>14</sup> Ibid.

<sup>15</sup> Barry Mackintosh, *Interpretation in the National Park Service: A Historical Perspective* (Washington, DC: National Park Service, 1986). [Online]: [http://www.cr.nps.gov/history/online\\_books/mackintosh2](http://www.cr.nps.gov/history/online_books/mackintosh2).

<sup>16</sup> Ibid.

as poor scholarship, that have forced the NPS to reevaluate the interpretation of some of their sites. But, even with these problems, the Service protects and preserves these many sites well.

The National Park Service continued to utilize new technologies to interpret the parks. The 1930s saw the introduction of guided automobile tours, while the 1940s saw the use of electric maps with colored lights at several battlefield parks. As Mackintosh states, “the Washington Monument had a recorded interpretive message in 1947.”<sup>17</sup> Recorded messages saw wider use in the 1950s, as many more parks began to use visitor-activated messages. Acoustiguides came into vogue at several presidential homes, with Eleanor Roosevelt recording the message for Franklin D. Roosevelt National Historic Site, and Ethel Roosevelt Derby recording the message for the site dedicated to her father, Theodore Roosevelt. 1958 saw the parks interested in “sound and light” systems that were en vogue in Europe. Some of the innovations turned out to be failures, such as the program at Kings Mountain National Military Park in South Carolina. The program presented men from both sides of the battle arrayed in a theater, yelling back and forth at each other across the auditorium in recorded speeches. The system failed, with the program going out of synchronization and confusing more visitors than it helped.<sup>18</sup>

The National Park Service also began living history programs at their sites during the 1930s with a program at Yosemite National Park. More programs sprang up in the 1950s, but did not become popular until the mid-1960s. Living farms started at several parks, and costumed guides portraying period characters staffed several sites. These roots led to the presence of costumed interpreters at many sites, a practice still followed in many of the parks today.

The National Park Service worked hard to professionalize and standardize interpretation. Advocates saw the importance of interpretation as a tool to educate park visitors, with several committees and park employees speaking out for the utilization of interpretation as a means to help visitors understand the parks.

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<sup>17</sup> Ibid.

<sup>18</sup> Ibid.

Steps in the 1950s moved the parks towards standardization, as “between 1953 and 1955 the Service published four booklets on interpretive techniques: *Talks* and *Conducted Trips* by Howard R. Stagner, Chief of Interpretation in the Natural History Division; *Campfire Programs* by H. Raymond Gregg, Chief of Interpretation in the Omaha regional office; and *Information Please*.”<sup>19</sup> These books preceded a monumental work in the practice and principles of interpretation, Freeman Tilden’s *Interpreting Our Heritage*. This book outlined six principles of interpretation that all interpreters should follow in their programs. These principles are:

- I. Any interpretation that does not somehow relate what is being displayed or described to something within the personality or experience of the visitor will be sterile.
- II. Information, as such, is not Interpretation. Interpretation is revelation based upon information. But they are entirely different things. However, all interpretation includes information.
- III. Interpretation is an art, which combines many arts, whether the materials presented are scientific, historical, or architectural. Any art is in some degree teachable.
- IV. The chief aim of Interpretation is not instruction, but provocation.
- V. Interpretation should aim to present a whole rather than a part, and must address itself to the whole (person) rather than any phase.
- VI. Interpretation addresses to children (say, up to the age of twelve) should not be a dilution of the presentation to adults, but should follow a fundamentally different approach. To be at its best it will require a separate program.<sup>20</sup>

A milestone in the standardization of interpretation, Tilden’s book, originally published in 1957, continues to influence and inform interpreters in the tools and techniques of interpretation. Interpretation in the National Park Service continued to develop, with ten interpretive goals adopted in 1962, and the beginning of publication of “NPS Interpreter’s Newsletter” in 1967. These steps

<sup>19</sup> Ibid.

<sup>20</sup> Freeman Tilden, *Interpreting Our Heritage*, 3<sup>rd</sup> ed. (Chapel Hill: The University of North Carolina Press, 1977), 9.

helped in the dissemination of interpretive practices service-wide. The major advances in interpretation came at a time when changes took place for the Lincoln Home as well.

After Kathleen Bradish retired in 1958, the State of Illinois employed professional curators to maintain the house. Concurrently, several legislators in the city of Springfield and the State of Illinois worked to get the home turned over to the federal government in an effort to get better custodianship of the home. Representative Paul Findley from Illinois worked within the U.S. Congress to pass legislation to turn over the home to the federal government. Findley’s efforts led to the NPS studying ways of interpreting the home in 1969. These efforts led to endorsement of the effort to transfer the home from the Secretary of the Interior, and eventual passage of legislation in 1971 to transfer the home to the NPS. The ceremonies to transfer the home took place on October 9, 1972, with President Richard Nixon signing the legislation from the desk Lincoln used while a state legislator. This legislation brought the Lincoln Home into the National Park Service, and brought interpretation of the home into the same system as the other national parks.

After falling under the auspices of the National Park Service, the home received an historic furnishings plan, which outlined the history of the home, and set about to place the house as the Lincoln family had it. Accompanied by period illustrations from *Leslie’s Illustrated Weekly*, this plan provided a road map for the interpretation of the home’s decorative and personal artifacts. In 1976, a final interpretive prospectus for the home was released, outlining the goals for the interpretation of the home. This document explained the importance of the home and the time Lincoln spent in Springfield in molding him into the man who led the country through the Civil War. The prospectus offers an interpretive theme, as well as four interpretive goals for the home. The site interpretation consisted of looking at the ways in which Lincoln changed from a small time country lawyer into a nationally recognized political figure. The prospectus states that “the commonness of Lincoln’s life here...is a veil through which we must look to discern the rather profound personal changes that

must have been taking place in (Lincoln) during these years.”<sup>21</sup> The interpretive prospectus parallels the interpretation principles established service-wide by emphasizing the interpretation of the site and the happenings at the site as they pertain to broader national history.

The National Park Service began to centralize interpretive planning in the 1960s and 1970s, with development dollars going towards interpretive prospecti, such as the one for the Lincoln Home mentioned above. The prospectus “provided excellent direction for the design and production of interpretive facilities and media.”<sup>22</sup> The late 1970s saw budget reductions in the Service, as well as a drive in the Service to get back to basics, with interpreters “challenged by management to show how programs supported basic park goals.”<sup>23</sup> This drive led to the implementation of an *Annual Statement for Interpretation (ASFI)* that each park would generate for itself. A look at the table of contents of several of these *ASFI* shows them to be more concerned with administrative functions and general management practices, and not so much with actual interpretive practices.<sup>24</sup> The outline of interpretive themes encompasses only two out of forty-eight pages in 1983-1984, and two out of forty-three pages in 1985. The lack of budget left interpretation at the home and in the parks stagnant for over a decade. Perusal of the archives of the Lincoln Home National Historic Site gleaned only the above-mentioned *ASFI* from 1983-1984 and 1985 for the decade of the 1980s. Work was done to maintain the integrity of the home, but the interpretation of the home changed little during this time.

The National Park Service began to rethink interpretation in the Service in 1994, when “a team of interpretation managers, supervisors, and planners began work on a new planning chapter

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<sup>21</sup> Department of the Interior, National Park Service, *Final Interpretive Prospectus: Lincoln Home National Historic Site/Illinois* (Washington, DC: GPO, 1976), 3.

<sup>22</sup> Department of the Interior, National Park Service, *Comprehensive Interpretive Planning* (Washington, DC: GPO, 2000).

<sup>23</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>24</sup> Robert F. Holmes, Chief, Interpretation and Visitor Services, Lincoln Home National Historic Site, *Annual Statement for Interpretation* (Springfield, 1983-1984) and Lincoln Home National Historic Site, *Annual Statement for Interpretation* (Springfield, 1985).

for ‘NPS-6: Interpretation and Visitor Service Guidelines.’”<sup>25</sup> This chapter, released the following year, served to consolidate the ideas concerning interpretation in the national parks that developed independently in the different parks. This consolidation produced the idea of *Comprehensive Interpretive Planning (CIP)*, published in 2000 and which serves to help “parks decide what their objectives are, who their audiences are, and what mix of media and personal services to use. The product is not the plan, but an effective and efficient interpretive program that achieves management goals, provides appropriate services for our visitors, and promotes visitor experiences.”<sup>26</sup> The *CIP* gives park superintendents the initiative to actively work to prepare interpretive goals for their parks that fit their own mission while still falling into the accepted practices of the NPS. In order to accomplish the steps outlined in *CIP*, each park is to create its own *Long Range Interpretive Plan (LRIP)*, which “defines the overall vision and long-term (five to ten years) interpretive goals of the park.”<sup>27</sup> The Lincoln Home recently completed writing its *LRIP*, and awaits approval from the NPS in Washington, D.C.<sup>28</sup> The *CIP* outlines how parks such as the Lincoln Home should go about creating their *LRIP*, describing the parts that each *LRIP* should include. The *CIP* also assigns responsibility for the *LRIP* to the Chief of Interpretation and his/her staff, and approval of the *LRIP* to the park Superintendent.

Just prior to the publication of the *CIP*, the Division of Interpretive Planning, Harper’s Ferry Center released *Planning for Interpretation and Visitor Experience*, a comprehensive guide for parks within and without the NPS to follow when creating and implementing an interpretive plan.<sup>29</sup> This publication outlines all of the parts that an interpretive plan should include, and goes into more detail than the *CIP* does. This guide describes the importance of goal-driven planning, and includes descriptions of

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<sup>25</sup> Department of the Interior, National Park Service, *Comprehensive Interpretive Planning* (Washington, DC: GPO, 2000).

<sup>26</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>27</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>28</sup> Susan Haake, Curator of Collections, Lincoln Home National Historic Site, interview by author, 10 April 2003.

<sup>29</sup> Department of the Interior, National Park Service, Harper’s Ferry Center, *Planning for Interpretation and Visitor Experience* (Harper’s Ferry, 1998).

how to create interpretive themes, goals and objectives, as well as how to incorporate visitors into the planning and to utilize site resources when planning. This guide also gives recommendations for different media, facilities, and landscapes that can be used in interpretive planning.

The *2001 National Park Service Management Policies* include a chapter devoted to interpretation and education. The chapter begins by stating that “through interpretive and educational programs, the National Park Service will instill in park visitors an understanding, appreciation, and enjoyment of the significance of parks and their resources. Interpretive and educational programs will encourage the development of a personal stewardship ethic, and broaden public support for preserving park resources.”<sup>30</sup> This chapter outlines the components required for effective park interpretive and educational programs, interpretive planning, access for disabled persons, and partnerships with non-park persons and agencies. This document upholds the practices and procedures outlined in the *CIP* and the large *Planning for Interpretation and Visitor Experience*. The Lincoln Home, as a park in the National Park Service, utilizes these documents when planning for interpretation today.

The evolution of interpretation in the national parks and at the Lincoln Home National Historic Site follows a course that starts out divergent but converges with the introduction of the Lincoln Home into the National Park Service. The Lincoln Home has undergone many transitions to reach its status as an important national park, from Osborn Oldroyd’s capitalization on the site as a means of income, to the first steps towards restoration and the eventual acquisition of the home by the federal government. Interpreted very little at first, the Lincoln Home now falls under the interpretive guidance of the NPS. As custodians came and went at the site, great advances took place in interpretation in the National Parks. From the beginnings of interpretation by George Catlin and John Muir to the current initiative of *Comprehensive and Long Range Interpretive Planning*, the national parks served and continue to serve as the center for innovation in interpretation.

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<sup>30</sup> Department of Interior, National Park Service, *2001 NPS Management Policies: Chapter 7: Interpretation and Education*. [Online]: <http://www.nps.gov/policy/mp/chapter7.htm>.

No longer concerned with capitalizing on the name of the 16<sup>th</sup> president, the Lincoln Home now serves at the forefront of historic interpretation and preservation. By reinventing itself in the 1990s and continuing to grow as the times change, the National Park Service created an approach to interpretation that serves as a model for parks and historic sites around the country and will continue to do so in the future. Parks such as the Lincoln Home National Historic Site serve as the front line of this reinvention and reinterpretation, and continue to explain the importance of the parks in the nation’s history. If what the author saw in touring the home recently holds for the future, and the parks continue to train their interpreters as well as the ones at the Lincoln Home, the parks will continue to set the standard for interpretation for years to come.<sup>31</sup>

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<sup>31</sup> Personal visit to the Lincoln Home National Historic Site, 24 April 2003.