The Ford’s Theatre Experience

Inspiring generations of visitors to embrace and learn from Lincoln’s presidency, the history of the Civil War and its aftermath.

Ford’s Theatre gives visitors a first-hand look at Civil War history in Washington and the impact of Lincoln’s words and actions on our country today. To ensure everyone has an opportunity to visit Ford’s, we offer free tickets to the historic site.

Ford’s Theatre Campus

Ford’s Theatre is the site of President Abraham Lincoln’s assassination and is maintained as a National Historic Site. The campus includes the Museum, historic Ford’s Theatre, the Petersen House and the Aftermath Exhibits in the Center for Education and Leadership.

Historical Programming

In addition to the four mainstage theatre productions, Ford’s offers seasonal daytime programming that integrates the history of Ford’s Theatre with live theatrical performance.

One Destiny

written by Richard Hellesen; directed by Mark Ramont

Attendance: 38,250

Commissioned by Ford’s Theatre, this one-act play tells the story of Lincoln’s assassination through the eyes of two men who were present that night, actor Harry Hawk and Ford’s Theatre co-owner John T. Ford. The 35-minute play, performed twice a day from March to June, explores key facts of the assassination while capturing the emotions of that fateful night.

Investigation: Detective McDevitt

written by Richard Hellesen; directed by Mark Ramont

Attendance: 2,503

 Visitors follow an actor playing the real-life Detective James McDevitt on a walking tour of downtown Washington, D.C., as he investigates the Lincoln assassination conspiracy. The tour is performed March through October by a rotating cast of local actors.

Ford’s Theatre welcomed 542,123 visitors to the historic site last year.

“Ford’s Theatre provides the deputy badges, but be sure to bring your imagination, sense of adventure, and historical curiosity about the Lincoln Assassination Conspiracy. It was so much more than just John Wilkes Booth ... the History on Foot tour - and Detective McDevitt - help bring it all back to life.”

-Local Parenting Blog
Increasing Access: Morning at the Museum

On August 4, 2018, Ford’s Theatre hosted its first museum event in partnership with the Smithsonian for individuals on the autism spectrum: Morning at the Museum. Our visitors included families with young children, teens and adults with cognitive disabilities. Ford’s Theatre staff offered special programming including story-time sessions, Lincoln-themed crafts and period-style clothing for guests to try on. Ford’s provided a stress-free experience to families who benefit from an adjusted museum environment, and are eager to learn about the story of President Lincoln and explore the Ford’s Theatre historic site. Morning at the Museum was a huge success. We ultimately hosted more than 150 visitors, many of whom indicated an enthusiasm for similar programs in the future.

Launching Generation Abe, a Ford’s Initiative for Young Professionals

For the second year, Ford’s Theatre hosted an after-hours museum night for young professionals. More than 100 patrons came to Ford’s Theatre to explore the museum and historic site in a social setting. The ongoing success of this programming has led to the creation of Generation Abe, a Ford’s Theatre initiative for patrons ages 35 and under. Generation Abe will feature special events and promotions to encourage young adults to visit and explore the historic site, see performances and foster a community of Lincoln enthusiasts.

Online Exhibitions

153,907 visitors explored the stories of the night of April 14, 1865, through the assassination section of the website. The updated online exhibitions now feature eye-witness testimonies from people who attended the Ford’s Theatre performance and tended to Lincoln throughout that fateful night. By having first-person accounts guide the storytelling, the website helps bring the Ford’s Theatre historic site to life.

Cultivating Community Through Social Media

Ford’s Theatre Society reached more than 55,000 people digitally through our social media channels, including Facebook, Twitter and Instagram.

137,000 people “checked-in” to the Ford’s Theatre historic site on Facebook.

In celebration of Lincoln’s Birthday, we encouraged our Twitter followers to share Lincoln-themed comments using #LincolnBday. During its week-long run, the promotion garnered more than 67,000 impressions.