

History at Ford's Theatre

Reimagining and reinvigorating the way our patrons and the broader D.C. community engage with history.

Historic Site

Ford's Theatre welcomed **484,274** visitors to the historic site last year.



Photo © Maxwell MacKenzie.

Online Exhibitions

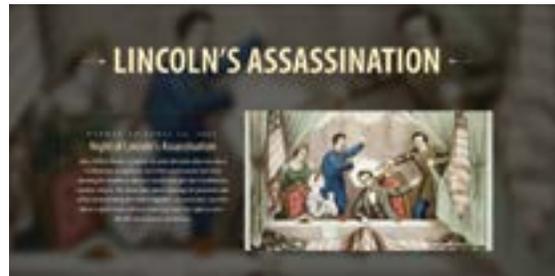
153,872 visitors explored the stories of the night of April 14, 1865, through the assassination pages on the Ford's website (www.fords.org/lincolns-assassination). The updated online exhibitions now feature eyewitness testimonies from people who attended the Ford's Theatre performance and tended to Lincoln throughout that fateful night. By allowing first-person accounts to guide the story-telling, the website helps bring the Ford's Theatre historic site to life.

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I grew up in rural southern Virginia in a county that was 82% African American, surrounded by old plantation homes and land. I always wondered where I fit in amidst it all. That's why, when I went off to college, I chose to major in history. Later, when I first became a member of the Ford's Theatre Advisory Council, I felt somewhat hesitant to express my views. There are few African Americans and few women—especially African-American women—involved in the study of Lincoln. Yet the more I worked with Ford's, I realized that they really did want to hear my perspective. I consider it my responsibility as a scholar, as a student of history, to show how complex Lincoln was—and Ford's is willing to reflect that complexity in its exhibits and programming.

- Dr. Edna Greene Medford, Professor of History and Interim Dean, College of Arts and Sciences at Howard University and Ford's Theatre Advisory Council Member

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www.fords.org

Student Engagement Story Cards



Over the past year, Ford's Theatre has been working to more effectively engage with students during their visit. Now through a new interactive element of our museum, students can follow the footsteps of four young people whose lives were forever changed on the night of April 14, 1865. When students arrive on site, they are greeted at the box office and given one of four character cards, in the style of trading cards, with pictures of young historical figures. As students explore the museum, they can find sliding door stations that share stories about each of the figures on their cards. By learning how the events described in our museum affected people personally, we hope to help students better imagine and connect to what life was like in Washington during the Civil War and the time of President Lincoln's assassination.

Increasing Accessibility Ford's for Me

In August, Ford's Theatre hosted its second sensory-friendly museum event, a program originally developed in partnership with the Smithsonian for individuals on the autism spectrum or with cognitive and developmental disabilities. As a part of this event, the historic site opened two hours early for guests to freely explore both the museum and historic theatre. The event included hands-on activities in the lobby, a take-a-break space in the backstage area, a story-time session in the theatre, and period-style clothing for guests to try on. Through programs like this, we are working to make Ford's Theatre a more accessible place for all to experience, learn and enjoy.

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Staff was absolutely amazing!! It is nice to know that everything is thought of for a calm, educational and enjoyable event.

- Attendee, Ford's for Me

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Photo by Gary Erskine.

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Thank you to the staff at the event. We really appreciate that people get there so early on a Saturday morning so that my family can experience the museum in a setting that works for my son with autism. Thank you for giving us an amazing family experience other typical families might take for granted.

- Attendee, Ford's for Me

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Photo by Kendra Scott.

Ford's Theatre Society reached more than **61,000** people digitally through our social media channels, including Facebook, Twitter and Instagram.

Wikipedia Edit-A-Thon at Ford's Theatre

In April, Ford's Theatre and Wikimedia DC hosted a Wikipedia Edit-A-Thon. These events are specifically designed to bring museums and historical institutions together with the online Wikipedia community to share and increase access to a myriad of resources. During the event 15 pages were edited, one page was created, and four images were uploaded to Wikimedia Commons. The event allowed Ford's to participate in this very 21st-century mode of civic engagement. The more people who edit Wikipedia, the stronger a source it becomes, the more voices are represented and the more it reflects the world of people who use it.



April 2019 Wikimedia Edit-A-Thon attendees.

History on Foot with Generation Abe



Photo by Heather Cipu.

In August, our Generation Abe group hosted a special *Investigation: Detective McDevitt*, a walking tour of downtown Washington, D.C., that revisits the sites and reexamines the clues from the investigation into the Lincoln assassination conspiracy. While traditionally ending by the White House, this special edition for Generation Abe featured an after-tour Meet and Mingle Happy Hour hosted at the Round Robin Bar at the Willard InterContinental with Lincoln-inspired cocktails. Generation Abe is a community of theatre and history lovers, ages 21-35. Joining this group gives members access to programming developed specifically for their interests and theatre ticket discounts. It's an opportunity to not only gain exclusive access to the Ford's Theatre historic site, but also to network with other young professionals.

1,432 young professionals have joined Generation Abe.