

'Lincoln's Footsteps' kick starts revitalization

By Tom Fontana For the Gettysburg Times | Posted: Monday, May 16, 2016 12:05 am

After arriving in Gettysburg on Nov. 18, 1863, and a night's rest at the home of David Wills on 'The Diamond,' the next day President Abraham Lincoln was followed by a crowd of citizens down Baltimore Street to the Evergreen Cemetery.

That path was followed again on Saturday, when citizens went "Steppin' Out in Lincoln's Footsteps" to support the revitalization of the street Lincoln traveled to dedicate the Soldier's National Cemetery.

The event, sponsored by Main Street Gettysburg and supported my merchants and residents along Baltimore Street, was an effort to begin fundraising for revitalizing the neighborhood to attract visitors.

"This day has come together so well," commented Main Street director Deb Adamik. "Everything has gone as planned, and the participation is so encouraging. We are very pleased."

The highlight of the day was a stroll from the Wills House on Lincoln Square to the Soldiers' National Cemetery by President Abraham Lincoln, as portrayed by Rich Neely.

A crowd gathered around Lincoln, who was accompanied by a Union soldier and drummer. A steady rum-tum-tum cadence kept everyone in step in Lincoln's footsteps, as they passed a number of history displays and activities along the route.

At each stop, a donation can was available, offering the public the opportunity to deposit a "Lincoln for a Lincoln," suggesting that every penny counts in raising money to formulate a master plan for new sidewalks, Victorian streetlamps, and other improvements to a street that bears the history of Lincoln's presence.



FOOTSTEPS

FOOTSTEPS - President Abraham Lincoln, portrayed by Rich Neely, greeted participants in "Steppin' Out In Lincoln's Footsteps" on his walk from the Wills House to the Soldiers' National Cemetery on Saturday, May 14. (Tom Fontana/Gettysburg Times)

Lots of refreshments and nibbles were free, along with history tours, carriage rides, and hospitality. At the Land of Lincoln on Lefever Street, children played music using gadgets constructed of household items, such as washboards, wooden spoons, and string. Tom Jolin created the Civil War era toys, and accompanied the children on his antique accordion tune box.

Although most of the morning was filled with sunshine, Lincoln and his followers made it to the cemetery as wind and rain slightly dampened his presentation there.

The enthusiasm of the merchants and living historians in period costumes along Baltimore Street made the day memorably festive, a positive beginning to the future enhancement of one of the few byways where we the people can walk in Lincoln's footsteps.