



Lincoln-Era Mansion Move ‘Expertly Choreographed’

Somewhere between 1855 and 1865, Abraham Lincoln loaned Isaac Lindsay \$650 to build a house in Springfield, Illinois that became known as the Maisenbacher House.

Considered an extraordinary example of a mid-19th century brick Italianate, the residence is in near-original condition. Only a few of the gracefully designed brick buildings remain in Springfield. This one, dating to about 1860, retains virtually all of its distinctive wood trim, both interior and exterior.

The expansion of a nearby medical clinic threatened the historic mansion's future until a coalition of city and civic leaders and preservationists, along with the building's owners, Court and Karen Conn, reach agreement to share the cost of moving the mansion.

It was moved five blocks to property owned by the Conns at Seventh and Jackson Streets. The Conns also own The Inn, which faces the newly relocated mansion.

The owners chose IASM member **Expert House Movers, Inc.**, of St. Louis, Missouri for the short but challenging move, which took place in mid-November, 2008.



Isaac Lindsay built the house circa 1860 with \$650 borrowed from the future 16th President of the United States.

According to **John Matyiko**, president of Expert House Movers, the building's construction was two bricks thick and very fragile with poor mortar joints (50 x 50) and weighing 295 tons. It took three weeks to get the structure secured for the move.

There were other challenges. The house was a foot wider than the street, power lines had to be lowered and raised, and pre-trimmed trees had to be pruned more drastically for clearance. Utilities coordination involved the Public Works, City Water, Light and Power, AT&T and Comcast Cable Company.

Although a cold and blustery Saturday morning, a crowd gathered to watch the 12-member crew carefully ease the historic mansion from its foundation and then slowly move down the street.

“We had jacked the building up on 10 cribs using three 15-ton jacks per crib,” Matyiko explained. “Eight dollies were than placed under the building (four power dollies) for transport,” he said.

Additionally, the building had been wrapped with three half-inch steel cables to stabilize it which Joe Matyiko “drove”

By **JOHN MATYIKO** (Missouri) and **JACK E. BRYMER, SR.**, Contributing Editor

the house from controls on the backside. "The premise of the moving operation was a low-tech 'chair and come-along'," he said.

"The Expert crew performed like a disciplined marching band but without..."

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