

NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES  
INVENTORY - NOMINATION FORM

(Type all entries - complete applicable sections)

STATE:  
COUNTY:  
FOR NPS USE ONLY  
ENTRY DATE:

**1. NAME**  
COMMON: The Vermillion County Museum  
AND/OR HISTORIC: The Fithian Home

**2. LOCATION**  
STREET AND NUMBER: 116 North Gilbert Street  
CITY OR TOWN: Danville  
CONGRESSIONAL DISTRICT:  
STATE: Illinois CODE: 61832 COUNTY: Vermillion CODE:

**3. CLASSIFICATION**

CATEGORY (Check One)	OWNERSHIP	STATUS	ACCESSIBLE TO THE PUBLIC
<input type="checkbox"/> District <input type="checkbox"/> Site <input type="checkbox"/> Object <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Building <input type="checkbox"/> Structure <input type="checkbox"/> Object	<input type="checkbox"/> Public <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Private <input type="checkbox"/> Both	Public Acquisition: <input type="checkbox"/> In Process <input type="checkbox"/> Being Considered <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Occupied <input type="checkbox"/> Unoccupied <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Preservation work in progress	Yes: <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Restricted <input type="checkbox"/> Unrestricted <input type="checkbox"/> No

PRESENT USE (Check One or More as Appropriate)

<input type="checkbox"/> Agricultural	<input type="checkbox"/> Government	<input type="checkbox"/> Park	<input type="checkbox"/> Transportation	<input type="checkbox"/> Comments
<input type="checkbox"/> Commercial	<input type="checkbox"/> Industrial	<input type="checkbox"/> Private Residence	<input type="checkbox"/> Other (Specify)	
<input type="checkbox"/> Educational	<input type="checkbox"/> Military	<input type="checkbox"/> Religious		
<input type="checkbox"/> Entertainment	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Museum	<input type="checkbox"/> Scientific		

**4. OWNER OF PROPERTY**  
OWNER'S NAME: Vermillion County Museum Society  
STREET AND NUMBER: 116 North Gilbert Street  
CITY OR TOWN: Danville STATE: Illinois CODE:

**5. LOCATION OF LEGAL DESCRIPTION**  
COURTHOUSE, REGISTRY OF DEEDS, ETC.: Vermillion County Courthouse  
STREET AND NUMBER:  
CITY OR TOWN: Danville STATE: Illinois CODE:

**6. REPRESENTATION IN EXISTING SURVEYS**  
TITLE OF SURVEY:  
DATE OF SURVEY:  Federal  State  County  Local  
DEPOSITORY FOR SURVEY RECORDS:  
STREET AND NUMBER:  
CITY OR TOWN: STATE: CODE:

SEE INSTRUCTIONS

STATE  
COUNTY  
FOR NPS USE ONLY  
ENTRY NUMBER  
DATE

7. DESCRIPTION

CONDITION	(Check One)					
	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Excellent	<input type="checkbox"/> Good	<input type="checkbox"/> Fair	<input type="checkbox"/> Deteriorated	<input type="checkbox"/> Ruins	<input type="checkbox"/> Unexposed
	(Check One)			(Check One)		
	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Altered	<input type="checkbox"/> Unaltered	<input type="checkbox"/> Moved	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Original Site		

DESCRIBE THE PRESENT AND ORIGINAL (if known) PHYSICAL APPEARANCE

The Vermillion County Museum, formerly the William Fithian home, was built in 1855 and is representative of early Italianate style architecture. The 14-room, 2-story painted brick structure, built upon a cut sandstone foundation, remains fundamentally unaltered since it was occupied by the Fithian family. Minor structural additions were made in the late 19th Century by Charles Feldcamp. Included were a stone front porch having Doric columns and a porte cochere above the drive on the north side of the house. In addition, electricity and plumbing were installed, as well as decorative oak woodwork on the first floor.

The Vermillion County Museum Society has restored and furnished several rooms representative of the 19th Century. Several such rooms honor prominent individuals associated with the house and the city of Danville, including Joseph Cannon, Captain Holloway, Abraham Lincoln, and William Fithian himself. Other rooms have been adapted to museum exhibits illustrating industry, agriculture, and natural history of Vermillion County, as well as offices of the Museum Society.

SEE INSTRUCTIONS

**8. SIGNIFICANCE**

PERIOD (Check One or More as Appropriate)

<input type="checkbox"/> Pre-Columbian	<input type="checkbox"/> 16th Century	<input type="checkbox"/> 18th Century	<input type="checkbox"/> 20th Century
<input type="checkbox"/> 15th Century	<input type="checkbox"/> 17th Century	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> 19th Century	

SPECIFIC DATE(S) (If Applicable and Known)

AREAS OF SIGNIFICANCE (Check One or More as Appropriate)

<input type="checkbox"/> Aboriginal	<input type="checkbox"/> Education	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Political	<input type="checkbox"/> Urban Planning
<input type="checkbox"/> Prehistoric	<input type="checkbox"/> Engineering	<input type="checkbox"/> Religion/Philosophy	<input type="checkbox"/> Other (Specify)
<input type="checkbox"/> Historic	<input type="checkbox"/> Industry	<input type="checkbox"/> Science	_____
<input type="checkbox"/> Agriculture	<input type="checkbox"/> Invention	<input type="checkbox"/> Sculpture	_____
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Architecture	<input type="checkbox"/> Landscape Architecture	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Social-Humanitarian	_____
<input type="checkbox"/> Art	<input type="checkbox"/> Literature	<input type="checkbox"/> Theater	_____
<input type="checkbox"/> Commerce	<input type="checkbox"/> Military	<input type="checkbox"/> Transportation	_____
<input type="checkbox"/> Communications	<input type="checkbox"/> Music		
<input type="checkbox"/> Conservation			

STATEMENT OF SIGNIFICANCE

SEE INSTRUCTIONS

The primary significance of the Fithian home rests upon its associations with Dr. William Fithian and Abraham Lincoln. Having arrived in Danville in 1830, William Fithian began his noteworthy career as a physician, not only in Danville, but in rural Vermillion County. William Fithian also distinguished himself in politics, having served as a member of the Illinois House of Representatives between 1834 and 1836, as a state Senator between 1840 and 1846, and as a presidential elector in 1848. The town of Fithian is named after him to honor his donation of land for the town.

Abraham Lincoln was a close friend of William Fithian, having served with him in the state legislature. On many occasions Abraham Lincoln was a guest in Dr. Fithian's home, and the bedroom in which he stayed has since been restored to its original appearance by the Museum Society. While in Danville during his campaign for the U.S. Senate, Abraham Lincoln was a guest at the Fithian home, and on September 21, 1858 spoke to an enthusiastic audience from the second floor balcony of the house.

9. MAJOR BIBLIOGRAPHICAL REFERENCES

1. The Heritage of Vermillion County, Vol. 2, No. 1, Winter 1965-1966.
2. The Heritage of Vermillion County, Vol. 1, No. 1, Winter, 1965.
3. "Vermillion County Museum", Brochure published by the Tourism Council, Region No. 5, Division of Tourism, State of Illinois, 1973.

10. GEOGRAPHICAL DATA

LATITUDE AND LONGITUDE COORDINATES DEFINING A RECTANGLE LOCATING THE PROPERTY				LATITUDE AND LONGITUDE COORDINATES DEFINING THE CENTER POINT OF A PROPERTY OF LESS THAN TEN ACRES														
CORNER	LATITUDE			LONGITUDE			LATITUDE			LONGITUDE								
	Degrees	Minutes	Seconds	Degrees	Minutes	Seconds	Degrees	Minutes	Seconds	Degrees	Minutes	Seconds						
NW	0	.	"	0	.	"	40	"	7	"	20	"	87	"	38	"	12	"
NE	0	.	"	0	.	"												
SE	0	.	"	0	.	"												
SW	0	.	"	0	.	"												

APPROXIMATE ACREAGE OF NOMINATED PROPERTY: 1/4 acre

LIST ALL STATES AND COUNTIES FOR PROPERTIES OVERLAPPING STATE OR COUNTY BOUNDARIES			
STATE:	CODE	COUNTY	CODE

11. FORM PREPARED BY

NAME AND TITLE: <b>John E. Collison</b>		DATE: <b>July, 1974</b>
ORGANIZATION: <b>Dept. of Geography, U. of Illinois</b>		
STREET AND NUMBER: <b>Davenport Hall</b>		
CITY OR TOWN: <b>Urbana</b>		STATE: <b>Illinois 61801</b>

12. STATE LIAISON OFFICER CERTIFICATION

As the designated State Liaison Officer for the National Historic Preservation Act of 1966 (Public Law 80-665), I hereby nominate this property for inclusion in the National Register and certify that it has been evaluated according to the criteria and procedures set forth by the National Park Service. The recommended level of significance of this nomination is:

National  State  Local

Name \_\_\_\_\_

Title \_\_\_\_\_

Date \_\_\_\_\_

NATIONAL REGISTER VERIFICATION

I hereby certify that this property is included in the National Register.

\_\_\_\_\_  
*Director, Office of Archeology and Historic Preservation*

Date \_\_\_\_\_

ATTEST:

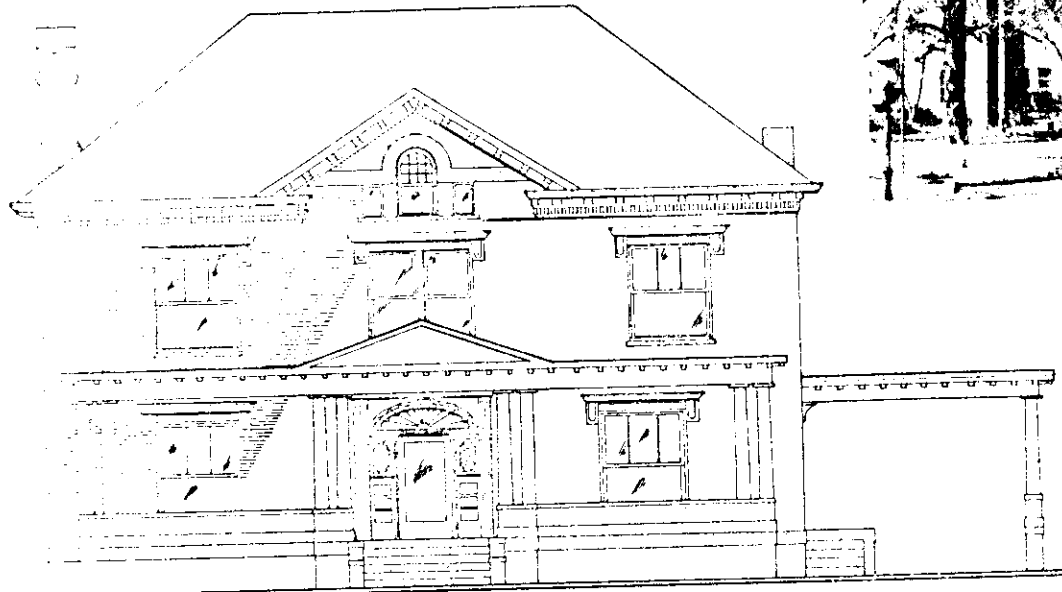
\_\_\_\_\_  
*Keeper of The National Register*

Date \_\_\_\_\_

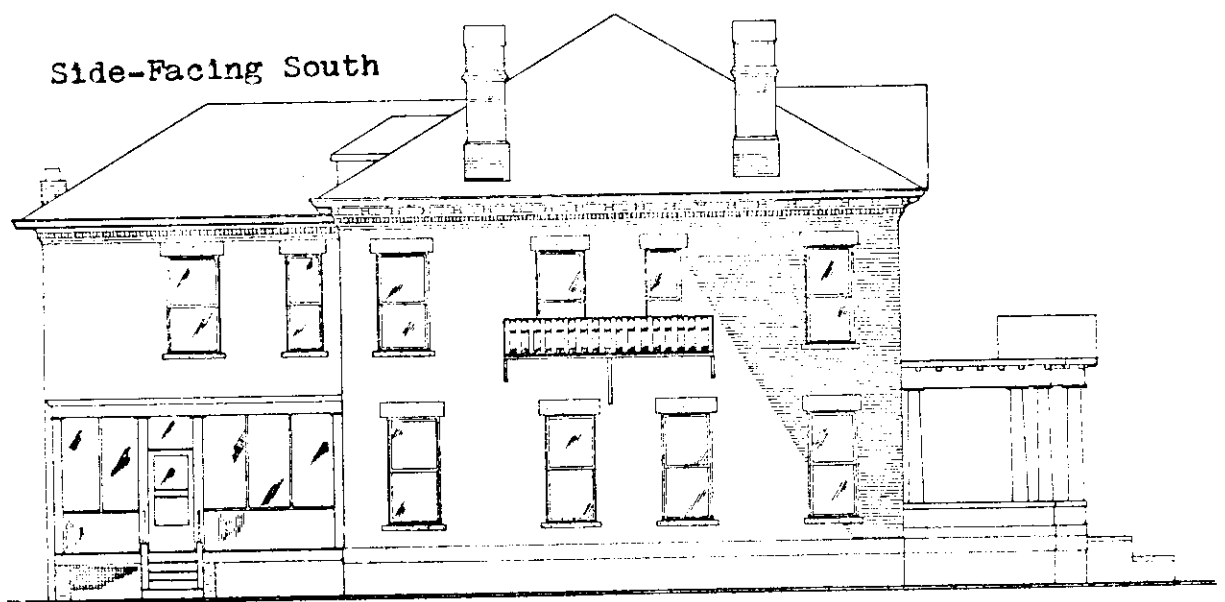
SEE INSTRUCTIONS

The photograph below is published in a brochure entitled, "Vermillion County Museum", by the Tourism Council of the State of Illinois.

The original architects' drawings, reproduced below, are held by Skadden and Sheehan, 210 N. Walnut Street, Danville, Ill.



Front-Facing East



Side-Facing South

ILLINOIS HISTORIC SITES SURVEY INVENTORY

V-H-20

200669

1. Name of Site:

Common Vermilion County Museum  
Historic William Fithian Home

2. Location:

<u>Street and Number</u>	<u>Township</u>	<u>Section</u>
116 North Gilbert		
<u>City or Town</u>	<u>Zip Code</u>	<u>Range</u>
Danville		
<u>County</u>		<u>1/2 Section</u>
Vermilion		

3. Classification:

Category (check one)		Integrity (check one)	
<input type="checkbox"/> District	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Building	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Altered	<input type="checkbox"/> Unaltered
<input type="checkbox"/> Site	<input type="checkbox"/> Structure	<input type="checkbox"/> Moved	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Original Site

4. Ownership:

<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Private	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Occupied
<input type="checkbox"/> Public	<input type="checkbox"/> Unoccupied
	<input type="checkbox"/> Preservation work in progress

Access to Public

Yes     Restricted     Unrestricted     No

Present Use (check one or more)

<input type="checkbox"/> Agricultural	<input type="checkbox"/> Industrial	<input type="checkbox"/> Religious
<input type="checkbox"/> Commercial	<input type="checkbox"/> Military	<input type="checkbox"/> Scientific
<input type="checkbox"/> Educational	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Museum	<input type="checkbox"/> Transportation
<input type="checkbox"/> Entertainment	<input type="checkbox"/> Park	<input type="checkbox"/> Other
<input type="checkbox"/> Government	<input type="checkbox"/> Private Residence	

5. Ownership of Property:

<u>Owner's Name</u>	<u>Phone Number</u>
<u>Street and Number</u>	
<u>City or Town</u>	
<u>State</u>	<u>County</u>
	<u>Zip Code</u>

6. Description:

Excellent     Good     Fair     Deteriorated  
 Ruins     Unexposed

Is there a program of preservation underway?     Yes     No

MEDICINE

7. Historical Themes: (check one or more of the following)

- |   |                          |
|---|--------------------------|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Archeological Site         | (Pre-Columbian)          |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Archeological Site         | (Post-Columbian to 1673) |
| <input type="checkbox"/> French Influence           | (1673-1780)              |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Illinois Frontier          | (1780-1818)              |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Illinois Early             | (1818-1850)              |
| <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Illinois Middle | (1850-1900)              |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Illinois Late              | (1900-present)           |
| <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Famous People   | (give names & dates)     |
- A. Lincoln (1809-1865)

8. Specific Date: 1855 constructed

Areas of significance (check one or more of the following)

- |  |   |
|--|---|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Aboriginal (historic)     | <input type="checkbox"/> Literature           |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Aboriginal (pre-historic) | <input type="checkbox"/> Military             |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Agriculture               | <input type="checkbox"/> Music                |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Architecture              | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Political |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Art                       | <input type="checkbox"/> Religion/Philosophy  |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Commerce                  | <input type="checkbox"/> Science              |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Communication             | <input type="checkbox"/> Sculpture            |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Conservation              | <input type="checkbox"/> Social/Humanitarian  |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Education                 | <input type="checkbox"/> Theater              |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Engineering               | <input type="checkbox"/> Transportation       |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Industry                  | <input type="checkbox"/> Urban Planning       |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Invention                 | <input type="checkbox"/> Other (specify)      |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Landscape Architecture    |   |

Brief statement of significance: (include all names and dates)

Use additional sheets if necessary. Fithian, prominent in development of Danville & area; Lincoln spoke from balcony (1858); 1 room contains most of what left.

9. Form prepared by: from Joseph Cannon's home (now razed); remodeled in 1890s; weakness in site interpretation.

Name and Title: \_\_\_\_\_

Date: \_\_\_\_\_

Organization: \_\_\_\_\_

Phone: \_\_\_\_\_

Street and Number: \_\_\_\_\_

City or Town: \_\_\_\_\_

County: \_\_\_\_\_

Zip Code \_\_\_\_\_

During the course of the Survey we often find it necessary to search for a particular site. When filling out the Survey form, please list according to the following example, published references to the site for which forms are being completed. If a bibliography can be compiled, it will greatly deduct from the Survey's task.

Bibliography

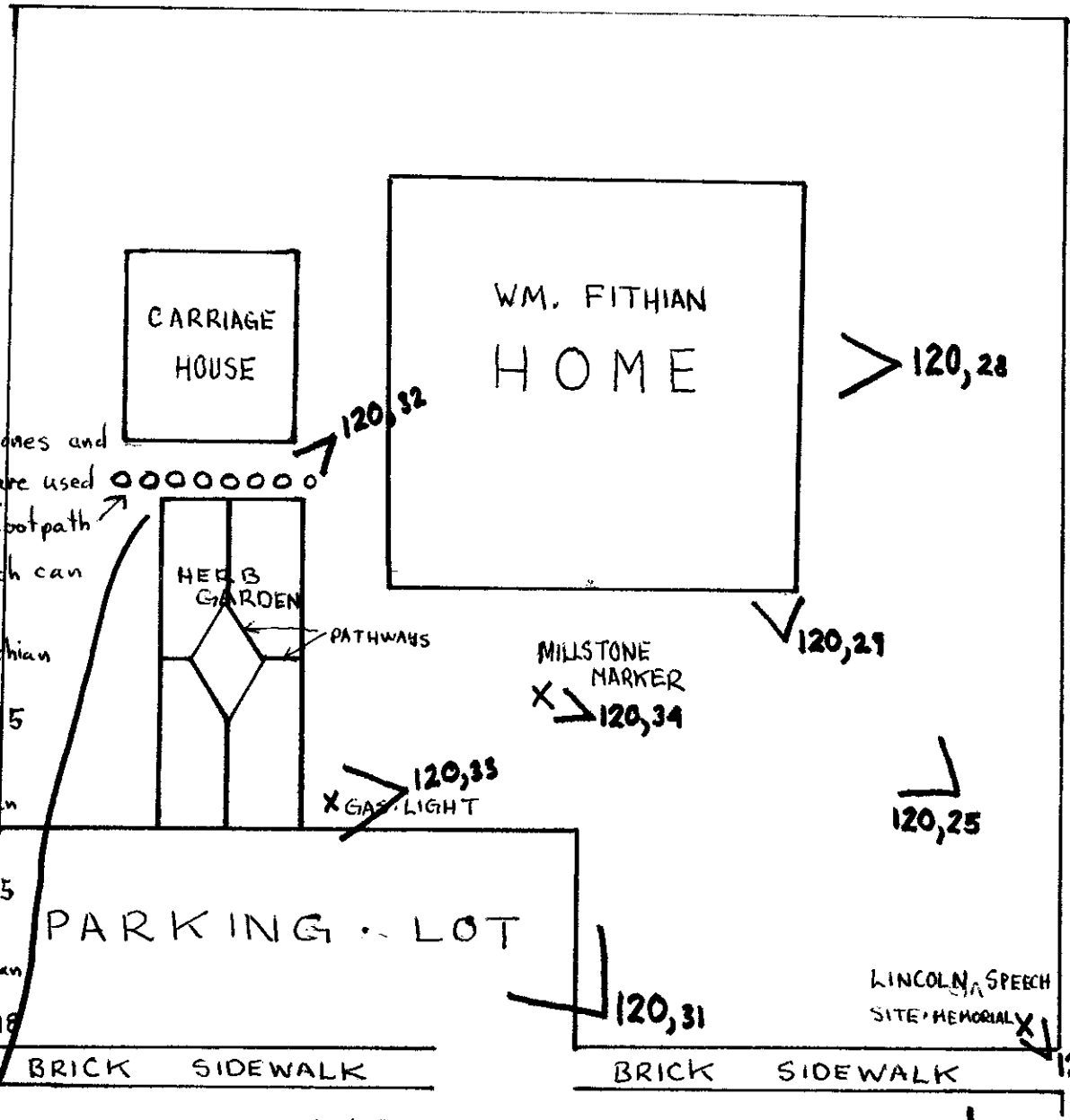
Robertson, Robert, Of Whales and Men. New York, Alfred K. Knopf, Inc., 1954.

WN  
SE

120,2

VERMILION ST.

CONCRETE SIDEWALK



24 tombstones and fragments are used for this footpath  
Those which can be read:

- 1) Oslethy J. Fithian  
Died Mar. 21, 1845  
Aged
- 2) Edw'n Fithian  
Died Mar. 31, 1845  
Aged
- 3) Amos W. Fithian  
Died Apr. 24, 1848  
Aged 11m's + 26d's

120, 30

# Wm. Fithian Home

Q = area in photos of Roll 120





*Vermilion*

## A Famous Balcony

IN THE YEARS immediately before he was elected President, Abraham Lincoln was a guest in many homes throughout the central part of Illinois. When he became a candidate for United States Senator opposing Stephen A. Douglas, it was natural that, while visiting these homes, he should be prevailed upon to speak a few words to the townspeople who usually gathered before the house where he was stopping as a guest. Generally these talks were made from a front porch or from a second-floor balcony. As a result of these brief, informal speeches, the houses where they were made—that is, those which survive—have become objects of veneration to Lincoln devotees and historic landmarks in their communities.

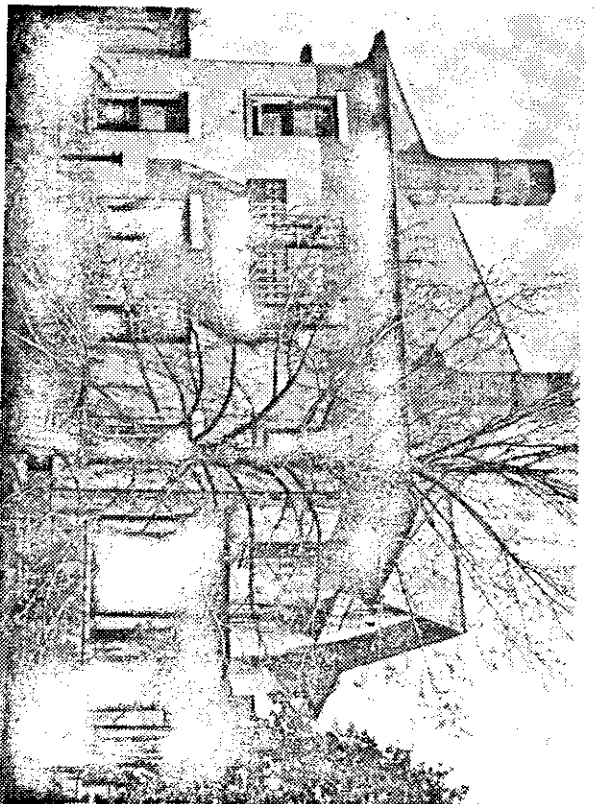
An outstanding house of this type in eastern Illinois, and one that is noteworthy in itself as the dwelling of a well-known pioneer of the region, is the Fithian residence at 116 Gilbert Street in Danville. A large boulder on the lawn in front of the house contains a historical marker bearing the words: "Abraham Lincoln delivered an impromptu address from the balcony of this house while a guest here in 1858. Placed by the Governor Bradford Chapter, D. A. R., 1926."

In this two-story brick house lived Dr. William Fithian, one of the first settlers of Danville and a pioneer physician in that part of Illinois. He was a close friend of Lincoln's. In fact, the "Rail Splitter" served as Dr. Fithian's attorney for a number of years, representing him in several legal cases and advising him as a counselor and mentor. The two maintained their close friendship even after Lincoln became President.

When the Civil War broke out, President Lincoln, busy as he was, did not forget his friend in Danville. He appointed Dr. Fithian provost marshal of what was then the Seventh Congressional District, a district embracing most of the east-central part of the state. Dr. Fithian served honorably and competently in this capacity. After the war, he retired to his Gilbert Street home, being then in his sixties, and there held forth as one of the leading citizens of Danville.

From available data, Dr. Fithian built his house some time in the 1830's. It is of record that he came to Danville in 1830 when the city was nothing more than a settlement of frame and log houses, with a few grist mills and general stores.

In addition to his association with Lincoln and the early history of Illinois, Dr. Fithian enjoys another distinction. He is recorded as being the first white child born in Cincinnati, Ohio. His natal day was April



Top Wright

*Dr. William Fithian House, Danville, Built 1830's.*

7, 1799. When William Fithian was thirteen, he served in the "home guard" during the War of 1812. Upon reaching maturity, he set out for himself, came west to Indiana, and finally settled at Danville.

As Danville grew, Dr. Fithian's practice expanded and in time he began acquiring tracts of land in the county. He entered other fields—the mercantile business, banking, politics. He served one term as state senator and two terms as state representative. When railroads appeared, he was instrumental in getting several of the leading roads to pass through Danville and Vermillion County. The town of Fithian, west of Danville, is named after him.

Dr. Fithian died April 5, 1890. Since then his house has been changed only slightly. A new roof has been added, as well as a new and larger front porch. But the ornamental, cast-iron balcony at the south end remains as it was when Lincoln stood on it almost a hundred years ago and addressed the crowd in the yard.

For more than fifty years after Dr. Fithian's death the house was occupied by Charles Feldkamp, a leading Danville confectioner, and his family. The present occupants are Mr. and Mrs. Joseph H. Barnhart and their son-in-law and daughter, Mr. and Mrs. George E. Hoffman.

