



**T**oss those full-color travel brochures and enticing magazine ads aside. A romantic weekend getaway or a quiet overnight escape is as close as Lincoln's historic Near South neighborhood.

Nestled among the Redbud trees on the corner of 22nd and B streets, the Rogers House Bed & Breakfast Inn has become as popular with weary Lincolniters as it has with weary travelers since opening in 1984, said innkeeper Nora Houtsma.

With a fireplace in the Banker's Suite and a private sunroom in the Doctor's Retreat, a mini-vacation can break the daily routines anytime of the year. Of course, breakfast in bed is an option in any of the eight guest rooms, Houtsma said, and the library is always open.

The inn's guest list reads like a combination international phonebook and local who's who: Soviet filmmakers and humorists; African diplomats; tourists from Australia, England, Japan, Vietnam, Germany, Canada, South America and Pakistan; 92 weddings and three "Murder Mystery Nights."

Made of deep red brick, the now ivy-covered, three-story house was built as the retirement home for Minden banker Noyes C. Rogers in 1914. Rogers' son-in-law and his family

lived in the house from 1929-1965, after which it housed the Pi Kappa Alpha fraternity and later became a group home for the mentally retarded.

Houtsma and two partners bought the house and began renovation in 1983. The first two floors took six months of replacing light fixtures, tearing up old green shag carpet, stripping wallpaper and installing showers, Houtsma said. The third floor, which once was a ballroom, needed another year of restoration before the inn opened, she said.

The history within the house has gradually unfolded since opening, Houtsma said.

The Martinson Room is named after Nettie Martinson, the Rogers maid, who was born in a sod house on the prairie. Her photograph hangs on the wall, and was recognized by a grandson who lived two blocks from the inn.

A Rogers greatgrandson was located in Lincoln by studying obituaries, Houtsma said.

The inn was named a local historic landmark in 1983 because of its post-Victorian, Jacobethan Revival architecture. Although all of the furnishings closely reflect the era of the early 1900s, Houtsma said, the house is decorated to feel comfortable and to not feel like a museum.



Story and photos by Robin Trimarchi

**Top:** Built in 1914, initial renovation included uncovering a hidden door and hidden windows, installing showers in old closets and converting a third-floor ballroom into three state-of-the-era bedrooms.

**Above:** Former Lincolnite Kathleen Etchison, now of Westchester, Pa., prefers the coziness of a bed and breakfast while on out-of-town business. Etchison is the magazine editor for Smith Kline Beecham Animal Health/Norden.

**Right:** A brass peacock adorns the living room fireplace.

