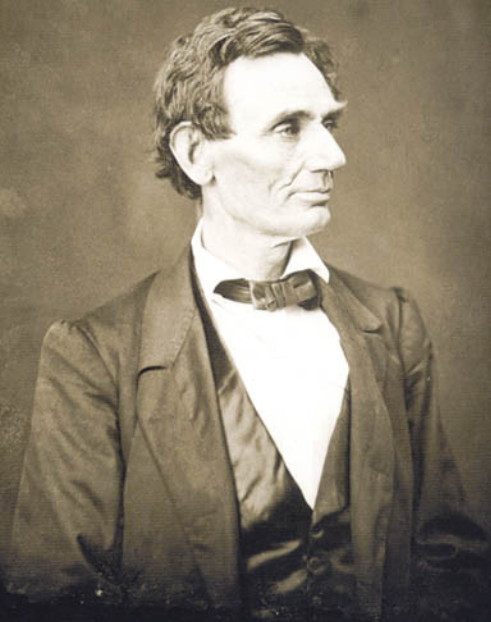




Journal
of the Illinois State
Historical Society

Lincoln Bicentennial Issue
1809-2009



The Illinois State Historical Society

The mission of The Illinois State Historical Society, founded in 1899, is to publish the *Journal of the Illinois State Historical Society* and through this journal, other publications, services, and programs to promote the preservation, writing, publishing, teaching, understanding, and awareness of Illinois history.

The Illinois State Historical Society provides the *Journal* to its members. Membership is open to anyone interested in Illinois history. Dues are \$30 for Students (with copy of current, valid i.d., max. age 21), \$50 General (combines the former Individual, Teacher, Library and AIMHS categories), \$60 Families, \$75 Sustaining, \$250-499 Donor, \$500 Patron, \$1,000 Lincoln Silver. Single issues, when available, are \$10.00 each plus tax and postage for non-members, and \$8.00 each for members postpaid. Selected back issues may be available. Correspondence concerning membership, orders for current or back issues of the *Journal*, and all other business matters should be sent to: Membership Secretary, Illinois State Historical Society; P.O. Box 1800; Springfield, Illinois 62701-1503; telephone: 217/525-2781; fax: 217/525-2783; e-mail: <marylouishs@sbcglobal.net>; homepage: www.historyillinois.org.

We welcome essays, articles, and documents about Illinois, or its Midwest region. Studies about literature, art, technology, law, or other subjects are also welcome. Please send two hard copies and one electronic copy (3-1/2 inch disk, CD-ROM, or e-mail). Authors should follow *The Chicago Manual of Style*, 14th ed. (University of Chicago Press) or imitate notes in this journal; use endnotes. Authors who desire illustrations should supply them. Articles average 12,000 words (including notes) but we have accepted articles from 4,000 to 15,000 words. Send manuscripts, disks, and inquiries to Send proposals, manuscripts, and inquiries to Dr. Eileen McMahon, Editor, JISHS, History Department, Lewis University, One University Parkway, Romeoville, Illinois 60446-2200; e-mail: mcmahoei@lewisu.edu. Send books for review to Christopher Manning, Book Review Editor, JISHS, History Department, Loyola University, Chicago, 6525 N. Sheridan Road, Chicago, IL 60626; e-mail: cmannin@luc.edu.

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The Editor's Page

This double issue of the *Journal of the Illinois State Historical Society* commemorates the two-hundredth anniversary of Abraham Lincoln's birth. It is an honor for the Society and the State of Illinois to pay tribute to its most prominent citizen and our most distinguished president. No one in our nation's history has been written about more than Abraham Lincoln. One might therefore ask, "What more is there to write?" Our contributors have managed to find some new information as well as provide the always needed reflection of Lincoln's contribution to our shared national history and the unique freedoms Americans owe to him.

In "Lincoln's First Freed Slave" Carl Adams has unearthed an obscure case Lincoln tried before the Illinois Supreme Court in 1841 called *Bailey v. Cromwell*. A Negro girl named Nance courageously came forward to sue for her freedom in the highest court in Illinois. Lincoln's arguments convinced the Court to free her. The case illustrates that the legal groundwork for Lincoln's views of slavery was laid much earlier than many scholars have assumed. In "Abraham Lincoln and the Mormons: Another Legacy of Limited Freedom," Gary Vitale provides an alternative legal examination into Lincoln's and the Republican Party's views on slavery by looking at it through the lens of polygamy and popular sovereignty. Before he ever issued the Emancipation Proclamation, Lincoln signed into law the Morrill Anti-bigamy Act in July 1862. The close connection between Illinois history and the Mormons encourage Republican Party leaders to ask Lincoln to define their party's position on the issue in 1857. Once again, Lincoln used the opportunity to define a basic principle of American freedom that transcended states rights and singular religious beliefs.

"Murder at a Methodist Camp Meeting," also deals with a legal case that became Lincoln's most famous. He successfully defended the son of a friend accused of murder during a Methodist camp revival in central Illinois in the summer of 1857. Lincoln took the case because of deep affection for the boy's family, and he clearly demonstrated the legal acumen, oratorical skills, and nimble thinking that would serve him well in the coming years.

Patricia Bauer Burnette presents in "Jaquess and the Lincoln Connection," the espionage activities of James Frazier Jaquess during the Civil War. Lincoln had recruited him as a private agent. His mission took him to the Confederacy, Canada, and even Nicaragua in order to gain intelligence on alleged Confederate interest in peace. This was critical information for Lincoln who faced enormous pressure from New York newspaperman Horace Greeley and others who wanted an end to the bloody war and peace on any terms. The South's disingenuous peace "feelers" fortified Lincoln's resolve to continue the war on his terms.

Lincoln's political acumen is again demonstrated through his recognition of the political importance of German Americans in Illinois. Raymond Lohne, in "Team of Friends," argues that Lincoln courted this population, even secretly purchasing a German newspaper, to gain access to their support. German Americans were among his official mourners through their glee clubs in Chicago. Their public prominence, politically and culturally, allowed Lincoln, in return, to bolster their status in the city well into the twentieth century.

Jason Emerson has actually uncovered a previously unknown letter of Mary Todd Lincoln found in a steamer trunk owned by the children of Robert Lincoln's private attorney. This small bit of information helps piece together events of her life after the death of her husband. While admittedly containing no major revelations, Emerson claims this new bit of information adds to the complexity of her relationship with Robert and her life as the national widow.

William Ives's essay, "Abraham Lincoln in Mercer County, Illinois, 1832, 1834, 1858" explores Lincoln's days in this section of Illinois during these years. Lincoln the land surveyor left behind town plats that still bear his imprint today. Through his time in the county as a Black Hawk War captain, the future president learned about the need for improvisation in warfare that served him well in the White House.

Wayne Temple, one of our most prolific Lincoln scholars, continues to add to the historical record biographical sketches of individuals whose lives intersected with Abraham Lincoln. Senator William Ferguson of California began his career in Illinois and by happens stance his portrait is now hangs in the Law Library of the Old State Capitol in Springfield.

Finally, in "Lincoln in Lincoln," Darold Leigh Henson explains his adventure in writing a street play about a speech Lincoln gave in his first namesake town of Lincoln, Illinois. While there is no actual record of what Lincoln actually said there on October 16, 1858, Henson does a credible job of piecing together through various primary sources, a sense of the drama of the times and Lincoln the man.

Through all these articles, Lincoln's intelligence, political savvy, as well as his deep sense of humanity comes through and reaffirms, in these times of troubles and flawed leaders, why he is the Prairie State's most beloved son.

Contributors

Daniel Stowell is the director and editor of *The Papers of Abraham Lincoln*. He received his Ph.D. in 1994 in history from the University of Florida. He is also the author of numerous books and articles including: *Balancing Evils Judiciously: The Proslavery Writings of Zephaniah Kingsley*, ed. (Gainesville: University Press of Florida, 2000); *In Tender Consideration: Women, Families, and the Law in Abraham Lincoln's Illinois*, ed. (Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 2002). "Introduction," 1-13; "Femes UnCovert: Women's Encounters with the Law," 17-45; "Her Day in Court: The Legal Odyssey of Clarissa Wren," 204-27; with Susan Karuse and Kelley A. Boston, *Now They Belong to the Ages: Abraham Lincoln and His Contemporaries in Oak Ridge Cemetery*. (Springfield: Illinois Historic Preservation Agency, 2005); *The Papers of Abraham Lincoln: Legal Documents and Cases*, 4 vols., ed. (Charlottesville: University of Virginia Press, 2008); and *Samuel H. Treat: Prairie Justice* (Springfield: Illinois Historic Preservation Agency, 2005).

Carl Adams earned a B.A. in Broadcast Journalism from Southern Illinois University at Edwardsville in 1979. He served as a captain and training officer in both the Marines and the Army and included military history lessons in his military classes. Adams has worked on a case study for over twelve years on every aspect of Nance Legins-Costley case.

Gary C. Vitale has a graduate degree in literature from the University of Illinois—Springfield. He has taught speech, Shakespeare, English literature, humanities, and film courses at Springfield College in Illinois since 1974. He is the author of *Letters to Mollie from Her Mormon Past: 1860 -1912* (Mill Creek Press, 2003), and he has presented several papers at ISHS Annual Symposia. His paper, "Zenas Hovey Gurley, Jr., and His Fight Against Polygamy and Mormon Zion," was presented at the 2005 Symposium, and it was also presented at the John Whitmer Historical Association Conference in Independence, Missouri. In 2007, it was published in *The John Whitmer Historical Association Journal*. Vitale is a member of the Advisory Board of the Illinois State Historical Society, and a member of the Sangamon County Historical Society.

Jason Emerson is an independent historian and freelance writer. His first book, *The Madness of Mary Lincoln* (Southern Illinois University Press, 2007), was named "Book of the Year" by the Illinois State Historical Society. He is currently writing a biography of Robert T. Lincoln.

Raymond Lohne was born in Frankfurt, Germany in 1956 and immigrated to the US in 1964. German-American subjects came natural to him and after earning his B.A. and M.A. in History he began researching the Germans of Chicago for his Ph.D. at the University of Illinois at Chicago, which he completed in July 2007. Since 2002 he has been an Adjunct Instructor in the Department of History, Humanities, and Social Sciences at Columbia College Chicago. He has published three books on the Germans of Chicago, and is currently preparing his dissertation, *Founded at the Bier of Lincoln: A History of the Germania Club of Chicago 1865-1986* for publication.

Patricia B. Burnette received her Ph.D. from Indiana University in English and American Literature and Comparative Drama. She has taught at Carthage College and MacMurray College, Illinois College, and Lincoln Land Community College. She lives in Jacksonville, Illinois.

Darold Leigh Henson received his Ph.D. in 1982 in English Studies from Illinois State University. Since 1994 he has been a member of the Professional/Technological Writing Program of the Department of English at Missouri State University. He is the author of a book-length website called, *Mr. Lincoln, Route 66, and Other Highlights of Lincoln, Illinois*. The Illinois State Historical Society voted it Best Web Site in 2004.

William Ives was reared in Aledo, Illinois and educated in its schools. A graduate of Knox College and Harvard Law School, he practiced law in Chicago for nearly five decades after serving for two years as a U.S. Army counter Intelligence Officer in Germany. Ives was Chairman of the Illinois Fair Employment Practices Commission under Governor Richard B. Ogilvie and was three times a Presidential Elector. He has held other government and Republican Party positions and served as an officer and director of various non-profit and public service organizations. He and his wife, Virginia, live in Chapel Hill, North Carolina. His three children and seven grandchildren reside in Chicago's suburbs.

Dr. Wayne C. Temple is Chief Deputy Director of the Illinois State Archives and the author of more than eight books about Abraham Lincoln. He is currently on the Advisory Board for the Abraham Lincoln Bicentennial Commission.

Cover

Chicago photographer Alexander Hesler took at least three glass-plate photographs of Abraham Lincoln on Sunday, June 3, 1860, at the state capitol in Springfield, shortly after Lincoln received the Republican nomination for President. All three of the original images were destroyed in 1871 during the Great Chicago Fire. Fortuitously, Hesler had glass positives made of the images, which were saved from destruction by his successor George Ayres and eventually purchased by Springfield Lincoln collector King V. Hostick. Upon his death in 1993, Hostick bequeathed the two surviving glass-plate positive images to the Illinois State Historical Society.

"This special double issue of *The Journal of the Illinois State Historical Society* was made possible by a generous gift from the Benjamin Shapell Family Manuscript Foundation."

Lincoln at Lincoln:

Abraham Lincoln Rallies Logan County, Illinois, in His First Namesake Town on October 16, 1858

Darold Leigh Henson

"In making a speech, Mr. Lincoln was the plainest man I ever heard. He was not a speaker but a talker. He talked to jurors and to political gatherings plain, sensible, candid talk, almost as in conversation, no effort whatever in oratory. But his talking had wonderful effects. Honesty, candor, fairness, everything that was convincing, were in his manner and expressions."

John Hill, quoted by Ida M. Tarbell in *The Life of Abraham Lincoln*

"What thrilled the people who stood before Abraham Lincoln . . . was the sight of a being who, in all his actions and habits, resembled themselves, gentle as he was strong, fearless as he was honest, who towered above them all in that psychic radiance that penetrates in some mysterious way every fiber of the hearer's consciousness."

Francis Grierson, *The Valley of Shadows*
(recalling Lincoln at the Alton debate)

Introduction

In 1853, real estate speculators John D. Gillett, Virgil Hickox, and Robert B. Latham planned to develop a town about thirty miles north of the state capital on the alignment of the Chicago & Mississippi Railroad (soon to be the Chicago & Alton) as it extended toward Bloomington. The speculators hired Abraham Lincoln as their attorney, and they obtained his permission to name the new town after him.¹ On August 27 of that year, Abraham Lincoln, according to local legend, christened the town in his name with watermelon juice.² This town thus became the first Lincoln namesake town several years before he gained national fame. Here, Mr. Lincoln practiced law, owned a lot on the Logan County Courthouse square (from 1858 till his death in 1865), and engaged in politics.³ His most noteworthy namesake town political experience was a speech he gave during a county-wide rally on October 16, 1858, the day after the last Lincoln-Douglas debate in Alton, Illinois.⁴



*The founding fathers of Lincoln, Illinois. From left to right: Robert B. Latham, John D. Gillett, and Virgil Hickox. Source: Raymond N. Dooley, ed., **The Namesake Town: A Centennial History of Lincoln, Illinois** (Lincoln, Illinois: Feldman's Print Shop, 1953), 11.*

In January of 2008, the Abraham Lincoln Bicentennial Commission of Lincoln, Illinois, decided to erect an historical marker for this 1858 political rally and speech on the Logan County Courthouse lawn and to re-enact this event on its sesquicentennial anniversary (October 16, 2008).⁵ Honoring Abraham Lincoln in these ways would exemplify the mission of the Illinois Abraham Lincoln Bicentennial Commission, which “encourages every community and citizen to become involved. Communities are encouraged to learn about their Lincoln stories and explore ways to relate their Lincoln heritage in public events and commemorative activities.”⁶ A central problem in re-enacting this event, however, is that no copy of this speech has ever been found, and newspaper accounts of the event do not report anything he said. As a native Lincolnite and honorary member of this Commission with an academic background in English studies and history, I offered to research and compose a complete play script for this re-enactment, and the Commission accepted this offer.

This historical play titled “Mr. Lincoln Rallies Logan County, Illinois, 1858” has multiple purposes. First, it attempts to educate: the speakers make ample references to local, state, and national history; and the figure of Mr. Lincoln expresses the key ideas he used to oppose slavery and his rival for the U.S. Senate, Stephen A. Douglas. Second, the play attempts to entertain by including a generous amount of the kind of humor that was

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