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For IMMEDIATE RELEASE

**Article on Abe's 1858 Namesake Town Rally-Speech Published in the  
Lincoln Bicentennial Issue of the *Journal of the Illinois State Historical Society***

The Lincoln Bicentennial issue of the *Journal of the Illinois State Historical Society* has recently been released. The Society's *Journal* publishes only those articles recommended by professional historians, and typically they are distinguished professors in four-year colleges and universities. This special issue includes native Lincolnite Darold Leigh Henson's article titled "Lincoln at Lincoln: Abraham Lincoln Rallies Logan County, Illinois, in His First Namesake Town on October 16, 1858." Henson earned a Ph.D. in English Studies from Illinois State University in 1982 and is professor emeritus of English at Missouri State University, Springfield.

Henson's article explains his research process that led to the discovery of previously unidentified newspaper (primary) sources about this event, which took place on the day after the last Lincoln-Douglas Debate in Alton (primary sources are contemporary with a given event). Henson used numerous primary sources, including the texts of the Lincoln-Douglas Debates, in the composition of the play script that was adapted for the re-enactment of this historic event in Lincoln, Illinois, on October 16, 2008. The article includes historic photos and a summary of the play with excerpts demonstrating Lincoln's arguments against slavery and his humorous jabs at Stephen A. Douglas, his opponent in the 1858 Senate race.

This double, book-length issue of the *Journal* (213 pages) features nine articles, and most of them are about Mr. Lincoln's various career-related experiences in Illinois. Also included in this issue are reviews of twenty-five books: new and recent as well as collections, reprints, and picture books relating to Mr. Lincoln. These reviews are the work of Dr. Robert McColley, professor emeritus of history at the University of Illinois, Champaign-Urbana. On the cover of this *Journal's* issue is the famous photo of Mr. Lincoln taken by Alexander Hesler on Sunday, June 3, 1860, in Springfield, soon after Mr. Lincoln became the Republican Presidential nominee. The Society owns the only two surviving glass-plate positive images of this treasured photo.

The articles in this issue reflect the diversity of Lincoln's career-related experiences in Illinois. One article focuses on Lincoln in Mercer County (western Illinois), where he spent time as a soldier during the Black Hawk War and later worked as a surveyor. Another article explains one of Lincoln's little-known Illinois Supreme Court cases (1841), *Bailey v. Cromwell*, in which he successfully defended a young black woman in her efforts to gain her freedom. This case became an important legal precedent as well as early evidence of Lincoln's life-long, anti-slavery views.

In another article, Dr. Daniel W. Stowell, director and editor of the Papers of Abraham Lincoln, begins by discussing the peculiar social phenomenon of 19<sup>th</sup>-century camp meetings, which attracted hucksters and rowdies as well as the religious faithful. Next, Dr. Stowell describes the 1857 Methodist camp meeting in Mason County that was the setting for the murder of James Preston Metzger, and this murder led to Lincoln's most famous case--the almanac trial at Beardstown the following summer in which Lincoln successfully defended Duff Armstrong. Other articles of significance explore Lincoln's political relationships with the Mormons and Germans.

Henson's article on the research for the 1858 Abe rally-speech re-enactment is the only article in this special issue with a direct connection to the Lincoln Bicentennial Celebration. The rally-speech re-enactment last fall--on the sesquicentennial anniversary of the original event--exemplifies the mission of the Illinois Abraham Lincoln Bicentennial Commission's mission that "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."

Thus, in the future when people look back to see how the Lincoln Bicentennial was celebrated, they will discover from this article that his first namesake town commemorated its unique Lincoln heritage with a truly original and spectacular event. For that reason, everyone associated with Lincoln, Illinois, can be proud and grateful to city's Lincoln Bicentennial Commission for producing the re-enactment. Special thanks are due Ron Keller, Paul Beaver, Wanda Lee Rohlf, and Sean Patrick Leonard, who portrayed an impassioned Mr. Lincoln.

According to the Web site of the state's historical society (founded, 1899), its mission is to foster research, preservation, and recognition of history in Illinois. This non-profit organization depends solely on membership dues, gifts, bequests, and foundation grants.

Henson plans to purchase copies of this special issue and donate some to the Lincoln Public Library, the libraries of Lincoln Christian College and Seminary and Lincoln College, as well as to Main Street Lincoln and the Logan County Genealogical and Historical Society.

Individual copies of this Lincoln Bicentennial issue (and copies in bulk suitable for classrooms) may be purchased from the Illinois State Historical Society, PO Box 1800, Springfield, IL 62701-1503 (phone 217/525-2781). Access a link to the cover of this issue, the table of contents, the editor's page, biographical sketches of the authors, the first two pages of Henson's article, and more information about the Society (PDF):

<http://www.geocities.com/findinglincolnilinois/abes200th-lincolnil.html#review>. Access the Society's Web site at <http://www.historyillinois.org/>.

Additionally, Henson recently published a video of the re-enactment on the Internet. This video was produced by his sister-in-law and former student at Pekin Community High School, Caryl Schlicher. Another video version of this event--shot with higher resolution, showing more scenes, and providing more production information--is available for purchase at Main Street Lincoln, 109 South Kickapoo Street, Lincoln, Illinois. Access the [Google video publication of the 2008 re-enactment of Abraham Lincoln's political rally and speech in his first namesake town on October 16, 1858](#).

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