



POSTAL NEWS

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Abraham Lincoln Stamps to Debut at Nebraska State Capital *Governor and Mayor to Participate*

The Lincoln Post Office will celebrate the 200th anniversary of the birth of Abraham Lincoln (1809-1865), with an event that will feature the unveiling of four new postage stamps commemorating his life.

The event is scheduled to begin at 10 a.m. on Feb. 9, in the Governor's Holding Room at the State Capital. Joining Lincoln Postmaster Kerry Kowalski in unveiling the stamps will be Governor Dave Heineman, Mayor Chris Beutler, City Councilman Doug Emery, USPS Stamp Services Manager David Failor, and Alan Anderson representing the Lincoln Stamp Club.

Governor Heineman will deliver a proclamation for all Nebraska residents to **"CELEBRATE ABRAHAM LINCOLN DAYS"**.

Lincoln Mayor Chris Beutler will invite the public to the City's annual Abraham Lincoln Birthday Celebration, which is expanding to five days in 2009 to mark President Lincoln's 200th birthday. "As the largest city in the world to be named for this beloved leader, Lincoln, Nebraska is proud to present '10 Score,' a once-in-a-lifetime festival," Beutler said.

The four First-Class commemorative 42-cent stamps, which go on sale nationwide Feb. 9, depict Lincoln as a rail-splitter, lawyer, politician, and president. The stamps and a special First Day of Sales Postmark will be available for a short time following the unveiling or at the Main Post Office, 700 R Street. The Postmark is free, and may be applied to virtually anything with First-Class postage attached. Abraham Lincoln First Day envelopes will also be available.

"We encourage all to come down to the Post Office and celebrate our city's namesake, who rose from humble, frontier origins to become a prominent lawyer and politician and ultimately President of the United States," said Kowalski. "The stamps and special postmark make great souvenirs."

The First-Day-of-Sale Postmark is also available by mail. Customers may purchase new stamps at any of the Lincoln Post Offices, or at the Postal Store Web site at www.usps.com/shop or by calling 800 STAMP-24. They should affix the stamps to envelopes of their choice, address the envelopes, to themselves or others, and place them in a larger envelope addressed to:

Abraham Lincoln Postmark
U.S. Postal Service
700 R ST
Lincoln NE 68501-9998

After applying the first-day-of-sale postmark, the Postal Service will return the envelopes through the mail. There is no charge for the postmark. All orders must be postmarked by April 10, 2009.

The Lincoln stamp art was created by Mark Summers under the direction of art director Richard Sheaff. Summers is noted for his scratchboard technique, a style distinguished by a dense network of lines etched with exquisite precision. Each stamp features a different aspect of Lincoln's life.

Abraham Lincoln Background Information

Rail-splitter

The Republican Party promoted the image of Lincoln as a “rail-splitter” during his run for the presidency in 1860. This image — designed to evoke Lincoln’s frontier origins and enhance his appeal to the workingman — had some basis in fact. He was born on Feb. 12, 1809, in a one-room log cabin in Hardin County (now LaRue County), KY. As a youth in Indiana, he helped clear forests and spent most of his days doing farm chores, leaving little time or opportunity for formal schooling. His father hired him out to other farmers to split rails, plow fields, and slaughter hogs. When the family moved to central Illinois in 1830, Lincoln split rails to build a fence for his father’s new farm. Thirty years later, when the Illinois Republican state convention met to nominate a candidate for President, a state politician found what he believed to be the fence that Lincoln had helped build and had two of the rails brought onto the convention floor with a label that read, “Abraham Lincoln, the Rail Candidate.”

Although the label conveyed the notion that Lincoln had achieved success by the sweat of his brow, in fact his rise from manual laborer to lawyer and political leader had more to do with his love of learning and his determination to progress beyond his rural roots. During his youth, he had stolen many moments from work to read books and educate himself, risking and sometimes incurring the disapproval of his father and neighboring farmers. But, as one friend later said, Lincoln’s ambition was “a little engine that knew no rest.” He was not content with the life of a small farmer and worried about how hard it would be “to die and leave one’s Country no better than if one had never lived.”

Lawyer

When Lincoln left his father’s household to make his way in the world, he was, by his own later account, a “friendless, uneducated, penniless boy.” But his outgoing personality, sense of humor, and storytelling ability won him many friends in the small, frontier village of New Salem, IL, where he began his working life. While earning a living as a store clerk, he participated in a debating society and attended sessions of the local court. Some residents took note of his intelligence and urged him to run for the state legislature. After being elected to represent his district in 1834, Lincoln began to study the law on his own. In 1837, he became a law partner to a legislator in the town of Springfield, the new state capital. He practiced law there for nearly 25 years.

Lincoln’s law practice in Springfield provided him with enough income to marry, raise a family, and eventually prosper. It also proved an asset to his political career. Lincoln learned the art of addressing juries as well as the skill of researching and preparing written arguments before the state supreme court. By riding the judicial circuit of central Illinois, he visited dozens of small towns, got to know thousands of people by name, and learned the concerns of citizens from all walks of life. Many knew him by the nickname “Honest Abe.” Both clients and fellow attorneys became some of his strongest political supporters. In the 1850s, with the surge in railroad construction, Lincoln represented railroad companies (as well as people suing railroads) and secured out-of-state business clients. By then he was one of the most prominent attorneys in the state.

Politician

Prior to becoming President, Lincoln served four terms in the state legislature of Illinois, but only one brief term in the United States Congress, from 1847 to 1849. He was little known on the national scene in 1858, when he ran against Illinois political rival and Democrat Stephen A. Douglas for a Senate seat. While launching his campaign as the Republican nominee for the seat, Lincoln delivered his historic “House Divided” speech at Springfield on June 16, 1858, in which he contended the government could not remain half slave and half free. “It will become *all* one thing, or *all* the other.”

Lincoln challenged the incumbent Douglas to a series of debates, in which a major point of contention was the institution of slavery and its future in the republic. Held in seven Illinois congressional districts over a period of almost two months, the open-air debates drew unprecedented press coverage for a local contest and brought Lincoln national recognition. Although he failed to wrest the Senate seat from Douglas, he continued to voice his opinions on the major issues of the day. Two years later Lincoln was invited to address a sophisticated, eastern audience at Cooper Union in Manhattan. His well-researched speech, on Feb. 27, 1860, which marshaled historical evidence to support his argument that the federal government could legally restrict the spread of slavery, “erased the impression of a crude frontiersman” and paved the way to his nomination as the Republican candidate for President three months later.

President

When Lincoln was elected President in November 1860 with less than 40 percent of the popular vote, few could have foreseen that the former one-term congressman from Illinois would achieve lasting fame as one of the nation's greatest leaders. But after the South's secession plunged the nation into civil war, Lincoln revealed remarkable political genius and strength of character in confronting the crisis. Assuming the burdens of commander in chief, he called for a massive army of volunteers, chose and guided military leaders, and made critical decisions on war tactics and strategies. He also shaped the American people's understanding of the meaning of the war and the basic ideals that were at stake. By issuing the Emancipation Proclamation on Jan. 1, 1863, he made the struggle to end slavery an important dimension of the war. With the Gettysburg Address of Nov. 19, 1863, he eloquently called for "a new birth of freedom," and for renewed dedication to the task of ensuring that "government of the people, by the people, for the people, shall not perish from the earth."

After Lincoln appointed Ulysses S. Grant general-in-chief of the Union armies in March 1864, Grant battled Confederate forces until compelling Robert E. Lee to surrender at Appomattox Court House on April 9, 1865. On the evening of April 14, in the wake of victory celebrations, Lincoln was shot by John Wilkes Booth while attending a play at Ford's Theatre in Washington. He died the following morning. Despite Lincoln's brief time as a major figure on the national scene, he left an invaluable legacy. Largely because of Lincoln, in the concise words of historian James McPherson, "the republic endured, and slavery perished."

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An independent federal agency, the U.S. Postal Service is the only delivery service that visits every address in the nation, 146 million homes and businesses, six days a week. It has 37,000 retail locations and relies on the sale of postage, products and services to pay for operating expenses, not tax dollars. The Postal Service has annual revenues of \$75 billion and delivers nearly half the world's mail.