

Abraham Lincoln in Logan County, Illinois 1834 - 1860

My earliest interest in the history of Logan County began when I was a boy living in our old, two-story brick farmhouse in Corwin Township. I found a trunk stored away in a dusty, hot-attic area. In the trunk were several Civil War era letters written to my great grandfather, James Beaver. The letters told about family happenings and deaths during the war. Later, when I was a student at Lincoln College, a truly great history professor, Onalee Balof, set me on the course of making the study of history my life's profession. Dr. Raymond Dooley brought me back to Lincoln College in 1966, where I taught for the rest of my professional career. I wasn't at Lincoln College very long before being introduced to a large and masterful work by longtime Logan County Judge, Lawrence B. Stringer. Entitled *History of Logan County, Illinois* and published in 1911, it remains to this day, perhaps, the best example of any county history written in the state of Illinois or elsewhere.

This extensive work was always used as the definitive source for the early happenings in Logan County and especially on the activities of Abraham Lincoln. I hoped to condense much of Stringer's extensive writings and add newly found historical discoveries which would once again make the heart of his great work accessible to anyone who was interested in our county's history.

The Ostendorf illustrations languished for four decades until Main Street Lincoln's director, Wanda Lee Rohlf, wrote a grant to The Illinois Bi-Centennial Commission. The grant received one of the top awards, which allowed for the Ostendorf pictures to have a color treatment.

A special thank you is owed to Dean Williams Photography of Springfield for the photos he took of our historic sites while filming in Logan County. Thanks must go to Lincoln College Curator Ron Keller for providing photos from the great Lincoln Heritage Museum collection of Lincoln College. A thank you goes to Mt. Pulaski's Phil Bertoni for his fine camera work and also to Charlotte Key of Elkhart and to Phil Wagner of Springfield for providing needed prints. Thanks to Adam May and Jennifer Brickey for all their camera and photo work.

No undertaking of this kind could have been completed without the help of some great people. Ron Keller, Lincoln College Lincoln Heritage Museum Curator, wrote an outstanding Chapter 5 on Lincoln's political career. Mt. Pulaski's Phil Bertoni thoroughly covered Lincoln's court days in the Mt. Pulaski Courthouse, including information on his fellowship with its town-folks in Chapter 3. Phil also did the large task of formatting the book for printing. Added to this was Phil's extensive photography work for the book, which was indispensable.

Richard Sumrall, director of Lincoln Public Library District (Lincoln, Illinois), deserves a big thank you for his help in the areas of construction, printing and in the general area of how a book should be assembled. We appreciate our friend Louise Taper's interest and the foreword she wrote for the book.

A very special thank you is in order for Jacquelyn (Jackie) Baker and Theresa Richert who have helped in the organizing of this book from the very beginning. We had all worked together as “grant

administrators” on the grant that Wanda Lee Rohlf, director of Main Street Lincoln, wrote and received from the Illinois Bi-Centennial Commission. Both Theresa and Jackie said they would like to volunteer to work on the book committee and their help has been invaluable. As typing to me has always been somewhat of an adventure, Patty Guzouskis again came to my rescue and spent a good many hours “word processing” my hand written pages.

My longtime colleague on the faculty at Lincoln College, Lynn Spellman, lent her considerable expertise in the area of grammar and sentence structure to shape this book into its “publication” form. Lynn’s assistance in the preparation of this treatise was simply priceless. All the writers agree that “we could not have done it without Lynn.”

A very special thank you goes to my very patient wife, Sue. Despite my taking over a part of our living room as a “writing studio” she has always been very supportive. She has had to pay heed on numerous occasions to me saying, “Listen to this!” and “How does this sound?” I have appreciated her help and support very much—she has always known this—now all of you know how important she is to my research and writing efforts and to my speaking and traveling engagements.

Paul J. Beaver Lincoln, IL 2010

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