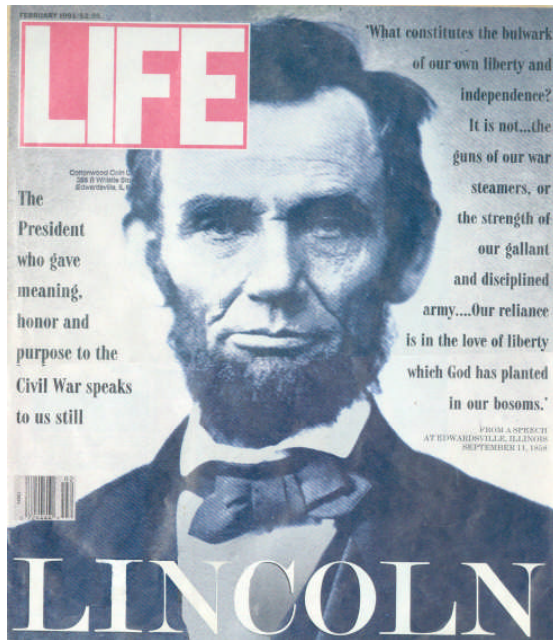


Lincoln Events....

In 1858, two years before he became president, Lincoln campaigned throughout the state as a candidate for U. S. Senator. He had already served an earlier term in Congress but was not then incumbent. He was running against "The Little Giant", Stephen Douglas, then an Illinois Supreme Court Judge. There were these three campaign events in southwestern Illinois during that 1858 campaign that are noteworthy:



On Sunday September 11, 1858, Lincoln spoke in Edwardsville. He scheduled his appearance just a short time after the appearance of Stephen Douglas, in order to take advantage of the larger crowds that Douglas was generating. The main argument between the two candidates you might have known was slavery. Lincoln had stayed all night in the home of an old friend, and had scheduled a parade down North Main Street to the site of the present courthouse square where the first courthouse on that site had just been finished. Many Edwardsville residents were reluctant to be seen marching with Lincoln so the parade was a big bust, but the speech endured. On the cover of the February, 1991 issue of Life, Lincoln's picture appeared along with a quotation from that speech. And note the date, September 11th...143 years before our more recent tragic experience memorializing the date.

The next day, in Highland, Lincoln was wildly cheered. The German and Swiss population there hated the idea of slavery and roundly cheered Lincoln, buoying his spirit.

A few days later, in Belleville, he spoke from an iron balcony that is still a local feature of honor, passed even recently between collectors, and long separated from its original setting. The memorable event here also involved the mostly German populace. Cheering him wildly, Lincoln fell into the exciting resonance generated and spontaneously shouted out a memorable phrase, "God Bless the Dutch!" Germans of course were "Deutsch," not "Dutch," but that day, Lincoln helped popularize the title of "Dutch" relating to all Germans which carries over to this day.

One month after the Edwardsville event, the last of 7 famous Lincoln-Douglas debates was held in Alton. Both participants had just appeared in Quincy, and both took the same packet steamboat from Quincy to Alton the day before the debate. The modest population of Alton was quadrupled as people came from far and wide. Imagine no amplification, no running water, no modern restaurants. The debate lasted 3 hours and in a cumulative switch of public opinion between the first and last "debates," Lincoln was ultimately viewed as the overall winner of the debates. However, he lost the election.

These stories have more detail on our websites, along with some incredible circumstances of Lincoln's successful run for the presidency just 2 years later.

On all web sites, see For Families/Calendar/September. Don't miss the new Lincoln Library in Springfield.

