

Lincoln Newsletter

Memorial Day Edition, May, 2018

Published by the Old Lincoln Courtroom & Museum Commission



Welcome Home BHS Alumni

A special weekend is planned for your enjoyment. In addition to your usual activities, the Old Lincoln Courtroom and Museum will be open 10:00 – 4:00 on Friday and Saturday and from 1:00 – 4:00 Sunday. We invite everyone to stop by the museum to **MEET OUR NEW EXHIBITS.**

Meet Our New Exhibits Civil War Campaign Desk



This campaign desk belonged to Captain Alpheus Conover, great uncle of William Yapple, Virginia, IL. It was used during Captain Conover's enlistment as a cavalry officer in the Union Army during the Civil War. Records in

the desk indicate Conover enlisted in 1861 as a first sergeant and was later promoted to Lieutenant and ultimately Captain. The unit was the 3rd Cavalry, Illinois Volunteers.

The journals in the desk are records of the orders, daily reports, and even the clothing sizes of the soldiers and all the items they received upon

enlistment. Most of these soldiers enlisted from their homes in Cass County, Illinois.



The journals on the right side of the open desk contain the records listed above. They are in extremely fragile condition and will be digitalized to allow visitor access to the information they contain. Many residents of Cass County can find records of their ancestors here.

The Third Cavalry initially trained at Camp Butler in Springfield, Illinois, before being sent to St. Louis, Missouri. From there, the Cavalry served throughout Missouri and Arkansas as well as raids into Tennessee and assistance with the defense of Memphis. Their next destination was the Battle of Vicksburg.

Following Vicksburg, the war was almost over, and the Cavalry was sent to Springfield for a brief rest and then on a tour of Minnesota, South Dakota, and Iowa, to fight in the Indian Wars. Ultimately it returned to Springfield where it was mustered out of service October 10, 1865.

The hand-painted inscription on the front of the desk reads "Capt. Adolphus Conover, 3th Regt. Ill. Caval. Voll., Comp G". "Adolphus" is misspelled and should read "Alpheus". "3th" should read "3rd".

This valuable addition to our collection was donated by Jean Yapple. - Photos by Brian DeLoche
- Randy Reichert

Letters to the Editor

We welcome your letters. Please react to the Newsletter: tell us what you would like to see in future editions, relate your experiences in the Beardstown area, pass along information you feel we should know. We look forward to hearing from you.

Naval Officer's Hat



-Photo by Brian DeLoche

This Civil War Naval Officer's Hat and metal carrying case were also donated by Jean Yaple. The identity of the officer who wore the hat is unknown, but research continues with hopes of identifying the original owner who is believed to have been a member of the extended family.

The flask/canteen is a glass bottle with a leather case and stopper that was in the campaign desk and believed to have been used by Captain Conover during his tenure with the Third Cavalry. - Randy Reichert

Three Books Help Document the Civil War

Three books donated by Jean Yaple help to document the Civil War.

The *Report of the Adjutant General of the State of Illinois, Vol. VII, 1861-1866*, was revised by Brigadier General J. N. Reece, Adjutant General, and contains the enlistment, promotions, and muster out records of all Illinois Army and Cavalry units from 1861 – 1866. It was published in Springfield, IL, by the Journal Company, Printers and Binders in 1900.

This book details dates of enlistments, re-enlistments, promotions, deaths, musters out, and other pertinent information about each soldier who belonged to the Illinois units from 1861 – 1866.

Mr. Lincoln's Camera Man, Matthew B. Brady

Written by Roy Meredith, this volume compiles the numerous Civil War photographs by Matthew Brady, the man who proved photography could record history as it happened. Textual explanations add to the interest and understanding of the photographs.

The book was published by Charles Scribner's Sons, New York, in 1946.

Under Both Flags: by Celebrities of Both Sides

C. R. Graham compiled this interesting collection of stories and memories of the veterans of both sides under the admonition that members of both sides are Americans and should take part in the healing. Over 250 illustrations and photographs help the reader visualize the events as told by the authors.

The book was published by the R. H. Woodward Company, Baltimore, Maryland, in 1896. A handwritten inscription on the inner leaf indicates the book was a Christmas present in 1896. - Randy Reichert

Six Generation Blanket Chest



Originally used to store blankets and later to hold the family records and photographs, this chest first belonged to Elizabeth Henderson

Thompson, 1813 -1894. It was then passed along the generations to Mary Jane Thompson Skiles Black, 1833-1917; Harriet Skiles Yaple, 1862 – 1937; Ignatius Skiles Yaple, 1885 – 1948; William Matt Yaple, 1925 – 2017; and Matt Knight Yaple, 1950 - . The names are wood-burned into the underside of the lid of the chest.

The chest itself is made of pine with dove-tailed corners, and the legs and bottom, made of oak, were added at a later time.

This unique piece displays old quilts in the Vintage Clothing Room. It was donated by Jean Yaple.

- Randy Reichert

1917 Beaded Dance Dress



It's Time to Party

Donated by Bettejane Herzberger, Bluff Springs, this beaded chiffon dress was worn in 1917 by her mother, Mabelle Rexroat Naumann, age 19, of Virginia, Illinois, when she attended a dance at Illinois College for Women (now MacMurray College) in Jacksonville, Illinois.

Mohlmann Mortuary Embalming Table



This slate mortuary embalming table top originally resided in the basement of what was most recently known as the R & S Auto Supply on the corner of Main and Jefferson Streets. When the fire destroyed the current business, the building was demolished and the

top was removed and donated to the OLCM by Steve Schnake. The display also contains an empty bottle of embalming fluid and pictures of nineteenth century embalming tools and machines.

William G. Mohlmann, proprietor of the furniture and undertaking establishment at the corner of Main and Jefferson streets, was born in the city of Beardstown, July 10, 1866. His father, William F., was born in Prussia, the son of Henry, who was also a Prussian. He grew up there and learned the trade of cabinet maker, moving with his wife and most of his children to the United States in 1849.

Henry established a cabinet and furniture business and managed it until his death in 1881, at the age of 78 years. William F. carried on until his death in 1891. William G. learned his business by growing up in it. He took a course in the College of Embalming in Chicago.

The building in use at that time was built by William G. and was completed in July, 1891. It consisted of a double store, basement and 1st and 2nd floors, 50 x 80 feet, all stocked with goods.

William G. married Miss Rose Leggett of North Carolina in Virginia, February 18, 1892. He was a member of the blue lodge and chapter, A.F. & A.M. of Beardstown and Rushville, and Commandery No. 56, and Senior Deacon in blue lodge and Royal Arch Captain in chapter.

At the conclusion of William G, Mohlmann's career, the business was sold to Fred I. Cline.

– Randy Reichert

Original Watercolor of Lincoln Courthouse & Beardstown Library



Rachel Mills and United States District Judge Richard Mills present an Edward Walaitis original watercolor of the Lincoln Courthouse and the Beardstown Public Library to the Old Lincoln Courtroom and Museum.

“Rachel and I are pleased to present the watercolor picture of your Lincoln Courthouse and the Beardstown Library by the Chicago Tribune artist, from whom I purchased it.” Judge Mills further explained that the donated picture has hung in every office he’s held: States Attorney, private practice, Circuit Judge, Appellate Court Justice, and U.S. District Judge.

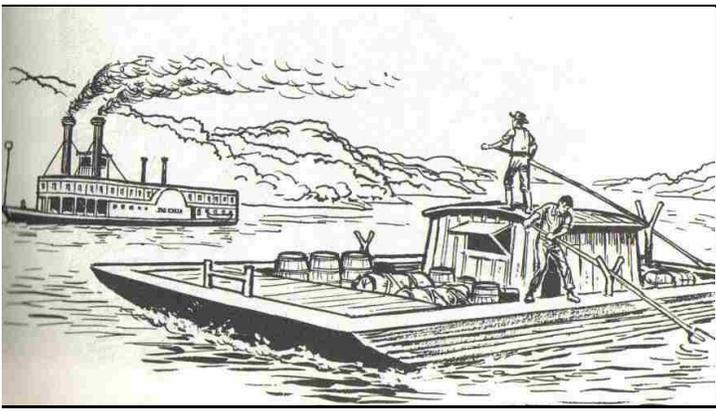
The artist, Edward Walaitis directed the *Chicago Tribune's* advertising art department. In 1968 he painted three watercolors for the *Chicago Tribune Magazine* article “A River Town, A Lincoln Place: the Legends of Beardstown” by Anthony Monahau.

Those three paintings were sold to private individuals, and when Judge Mills inquired of the artist about purchasing this particular painting, he was told it was not available, but that the artist would paint another original for the Judge. This is that painting. The other two paintings about Beardstown now hang in the Beardstown Public Library and the third remains in the possession of a private individual.

The OLCM is honored to have the addition of this original watercolor which will hang in the Judges’ Chambers adjacent to the Lincoln Courtroom.

Photo by Brian DeLoche

- Randy Reichert



From Flatboat to Patent

By Judy Hager Carlsen, BHS Class of 1959

The river flatboat was a rectangular construction with square ends usually no more than twenty feet wide but ranging as long as 100 feet used to transport goods by means of river currents southwards to the port of New Orleans. A flatboat was a one-way vessel which was dismantled for lumber at the end of the journey. It was one of the most important means of shipping in antebellum America.

The Life of a Flatboatman

Flatboatmen transported a huge variety of goods including farm crops, cattle, chickens, lumber, iron, and whiskey. Once they completed the trip they were obliged to make their way home again by foot, an arduous three-month endeavor. Young men hired out for the job which often included construction of the vessel. The trip exposed them to plantation life in the South as well as Cajun culture, and even such exotic finds as bananas and parrots.

Abraham Lincoln twice hired on as a flatboatman, first in his late teens in 1828. From his home in Indiana he worked with the son of the boat owner to take a flatboat along the Ohio River and then down the Mississippi to New Orleans.

Again in 1831 he and two other young men contracted to leave Springfield to travel to Beardstown by way of the Sangamon River. In Springfield they worked for the sum of \$12.00 a month to construct a flatboat. Unfortunately, the boat got caught on a milldam near Old Sangamon Town (about 15 miles northwest of Springfield) and started to sink.

Lincoln's Ingenuity

Lincoln unloaded some of the cargo, and with an auger, drilled a hole in the bow of the boat and drained out the flooding water. He plugged the hole and portaged the empty flatboat over the dam and went on to New Orleans. Here he witnessed first-hand a slave auction which he later said helped shape his personal views on slavery and the slave trade.

The near catastrophe on the Sangamon along with another incident recorded by his law partner William Herndon where Lincoln's vessel was stranded on a sandbar and required heavy manual effort to dislodge, turned Lincoln's mind to improving navigation. He invented a device to lift boats over shoals and obstructions in rivers, a bellows with waterproof bladders that could be inflated to give clearance over the water.

Drawings were submitted for a patent which was registered in 1849 while Lincoln was serving in Congress (Patent #6469). He is the only U.S. President to ever have a patent registered. Lincoln had a scale model of a ship outfitted with the device constructed (now in the Smithsonian) and took his son Robert Todd to see the model at the Patent Office, a day the younger Lincoln proudly remembered in later years.

Lincoln a patent lawyer

Lincoln was a patent lawyer, interested, he said, in the..."discovery and production of new and useful things." He described the discovery of America as the most important event in the history of the world, followed second by the invention of printing, and third by patent laws.

Some of his largest professional fees came from patent infringement cases. Once he worked as co-counsel with Edwin Stanton (who later served in his Cabinet as Secretary of War) on a case for which he was well prepared and well paid, but his co-counsel deemed him "too ungainly and unpresentable" to present the argument at the trial.

Abraham Lincoln drew on his early flatboat experiences to help shape his viewpoint on slavery and to formulate ideas to improve riverboat navigation. From flatboat to patent is another link to Lincoln in central Illinois.

(We welcome contributions from other BHS alumni and Cass County residents to help document this area's rich history.)

Lincoln in Beardstown

Abraham Lincoln was active in Beardstown in the 1830s as a river man, soldier and new lawyer. He also filed a bill in the state legislature for a state road from Beardstown to Petersburg. The 1840s were less active regarding Beardstown connections. On August 9, 1841, he acted as attorney for the plaintiff in a lawsuit which was transferred to the Cass County Circuit Court. This is the only time Beardstown played a part in Lincoln's legal activities for the decade.

Lincoln in Beardstown, continued

On October 19, 1848, Lincoln delivered a speech concerning the upcoming presidential election. Zachary Taylor (Whig) defeated Lewis Cass (Democratic). Also-rans were Martin van Buren (Free Soil) and Gerrit Smith (Liberty).

It was not until 1853 that Lincoln once again was involved in matters legal in Beardstown. On November 15, he came to get a deposition of H. E. Dummer for a lawsuit. The case dated back to 1841, when R. S. Todd retained Dummer to collect a debt owed to Oldham, Todd, & Co., a Kentucky law firm, by Robert Lindsey. Dummer was able to collect only part of the debt (in 1845), which Todd gave to Lincoln, his son-in-law.

Four years later, November 20, 1857, Lincoln represented Jonathan Gill, the defendant in a divorce case; the jury found for the complainant.

The following day he and Dummer filed an appeal in the case of Sprague vs. Illinois River Railroad. On August 8, 1857, Charles Sprague had filed an injunction to prevent Cass County from paying the Illinois River Railroad \$50,000 in stock subscriptions that had been approved by voters. On November 21, the court ordered the injunction dissolved, but, "by agreement," the injunction was retained until the decision would be reviewed at the next term of the Supreme Court. February 6, 1858, the Supreme Court upheld the decision of the Cass County Circuit Court.

Also, on November 21, 1857, Lincoln joined the defense of Duff Armstrong and moved that Armstrong be admitted to bail. The motion was denied.

1858 an Important Year in Beardstown

For Beardstown, 1858 is a most important year. On May 6 and 7 Lincoln defended William Duff Armstrong on a charge of murder, and on August 29 he spoke in the city park during the campaign for the Senate against Stephen A. Douglas.

Known as the Almanac Trial, Lincoln's defense of Armstrong is considered his most famous trial. Certainly, it is the trial most often cited when Lincoln's legal career is discussed.

On August 12, 1857, at a camp meeting in Mason County, Duff Armstrong and James Norris were involved in a fight with Preston Metzger. They had been drinking at a "whiskey wagon" set up on the perimeter of the meeting. Metzger was sent home where he took to his bed and died from head injuries three days later. Norris and Armstrong were indicted for murder. Norris was tried soon after the incident at Havana, found guilty of manslaughter and sentenced to eight years in the prison at Alton.

Because of "high feelings" in Mason County, there was a change of venue to Cass County for Armstrong's trial. On November 21, Lincoln's attempt to get bail for Armstrong failed and he was incarcerated in the county jail until the trial in May 1858.

Hanna Armstrong, Duff's mother, appealed to Lincoln, a friend from New Salem days, offering to mortgage the family farm to pay him. Lincoln would have none of that and represented Duff *pro bono*. May 6 was jury selection day, and the trial itself took place May 7.

Lincoln's skills as a lawyer were displayed through his defense. He chose a jury carefully: young men close to Armstrong's age. Then he presented a physician who cast doubt on the testimony of the prosecution's medical witness. After questioning Charles Allen, the prosecution's chief witness who swore that he had witnessed Armstrong strike Metzger with a slung shot by the light of the full moon, Lincoln produced an 1857 almanac. It showed that the moon on August 29 was not full and at the time of the altercation was low in the sky, meaning that Allen was lying about what he had witnessed.

Finally, Lincoln presented an impassioned closing argument, citing the kindness that the Armstrong family had shown to him when he was a struggling young man in New Salem. According to witnesses at the trial, it was this argument rather than the almanac that swayed the jury, which returned a verdict of not guilty.

Shortly after the trial, Lincoln accepted the Republican nomination for U. S. Senate against Stephen A. Douglas, a well-known politician. Reported in Springfield papers, the Almanac Trial gave Lincoln publicity.

On August 11 Douglas spoke in Beardstown's city square. The following day, August 12, Lincoln spoke to a crowd estimated in excess of two thousand persons. Douglas supporters had sabotaged the cannon in the square so that it could not be fired as part of the celebration by Lincoln's supporters. Lincoln spoke for two hours without notes. It is often called the "Lost Speech" or the "House Divided" speech, although Lincoln had used the "house divided" reference in his acceptance for the nomination.

The Beardstown appearances were not one of the famous debates of the campaign; nevertheless some historians consider this event the real beginning of the campaign.

August 12, 1858, was Lincoln's final visit to Beardstown.

- Paula Woods

ALNHA Events

Since the last newsletter, the Steering Council of the Abraham Lincoln National Heritage Area has met twice, in Taylorville January 24 and Paris April 16. Much of the discussion at both meetings concerned Looking for Lincoln and ALNHA's participation in Illinois bicentennial activities. Looking for Lincoln has set aside \$10,000 for bicentennial projects. Communities may submit one application for funds for "education projects that will have lasting impact."

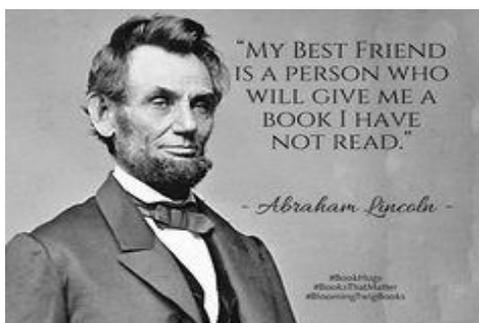
Other matters regarded the 10th anniversary of ALNHA. Projects celebrating the anniversary include birthday video messages from the various sites; Beardstown is considering how best to present the Old Lincoln Courtroom in a very brief video.

Another anniversary project is the Looking for Lincoln "Pollinator Project." ALNHA is partnering with the National Park Service to promote the conservation of pollinators, an effort to restore and maintain the environment that Lincoln would have known. There are two "pollinator pledges": one for the Looking for Lincoln site (OLCM) and another for other community organizations interested in preserving pollinators.

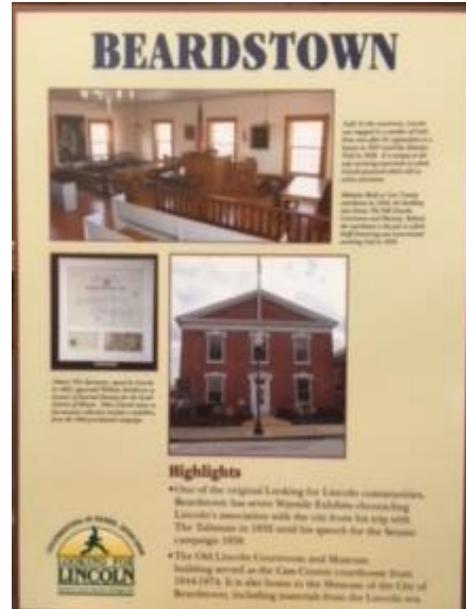
Looking for Lincoln and ALNHA have sponsored several training workshops in the past months. Dick Zillion attended "Tips for Fundraising and Grant Writing."

Looking for Lincoln will host the Alliance of National Heritage Areas fall meeting, in Springfield in October. Another meeting of national importance for members of ALNHA is the American Association of State & Local History Conference in Kansas City, MO in September.

On April 28, a gala "birthday" celebration for the 10th anniversary of ALNHA was held at the Abraham Lincoln Presidential Museum and Library. In attendance were past executive directors and several legislators and others instrumental in developing the Looking for Lincoln Heritage Coalition, the parent organization of ALNHA. - Paula Woods



Community Board



The OLCM prepared this community board as part of the ALNHA 10th anniversary celebration. Representing the Looking for Lincoln communities, the boards were presented at the ALNHA birthday party

April 28 and will be used at the State Fair in August and the National Heritage Areas conference in October.

- Photography by Brian DeLoche

Our Visitors & Tours

So far this calendar year more than 100 visitors have come in. This includes a number that visited before OLCM officially opened April 2. Already, we have had one tour, a group led by Maricella Chavez who conducts an orientation class for second language residents of Beardstown.

Special events included a reception for Friends of the Courtroom on March 24, and on April 26 the Beardstown Ladies participation in CNBC's "stock draft" was taped in the courtroom. On May 4, 105 fourth graders from Beardstown's Gard school visited on their annual field trip.

Multiple inquiries about tours for this summer seem to indicate we will have a busy year. - Paula Woods

Eco Rocks a Big Hit



Our visiting children are fascinated with and are taking home an eco rock from the many on display in the gift shop. The smooth rocks each feature a design hollowed out of the center of the rock, from dinosaurs to Civil War soldiers.

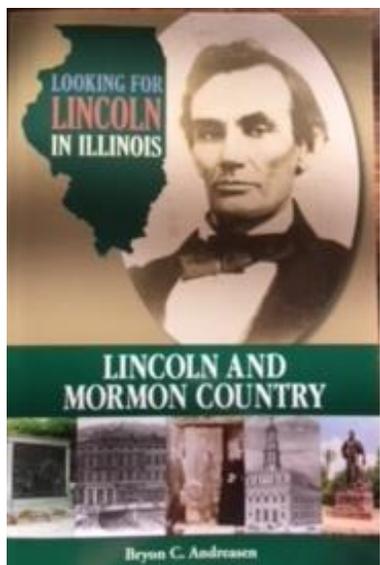
New Books in Gift Shop

The Old Lincoln Courtroom and Museum is fortunate to have three books which are a part of the Looking for Lincoln series printed by the Southern Illinois University Press.



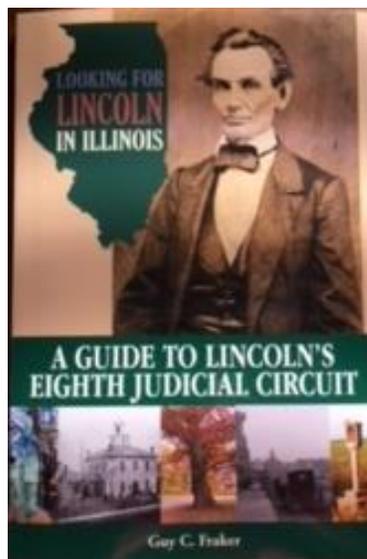
Lincoln's Springfield, written by Bryon C. Andreasen includes photos and anecdotes of places and people in Springfield from the time Lincoln arrived there at age 28 until he left for Washington, D.C. when he was almost 52 years old. The book contains information about the young

Lincoln children, Lincoln's barber, his dentist, the jeweler who made Mrs. Lincoln's wedding band, colleagues, and neighbors. Each one had a special connection with Mr. Lincoln.



Lincoln and Mormon Country was also written by Mr. Andreasen. This book examines places and events where the lives of Abraham Lincoln and Joseph Smith may have crossed. Although they were not intimate acquaintances, both men traversed the western Illinois

area that includes Nauvoo, Carthage, Hancock County, and Schuyler County at the same time in history. Like the other books in the series this is a collection of stories and characterizations that can be read individually and not necessarily in order.

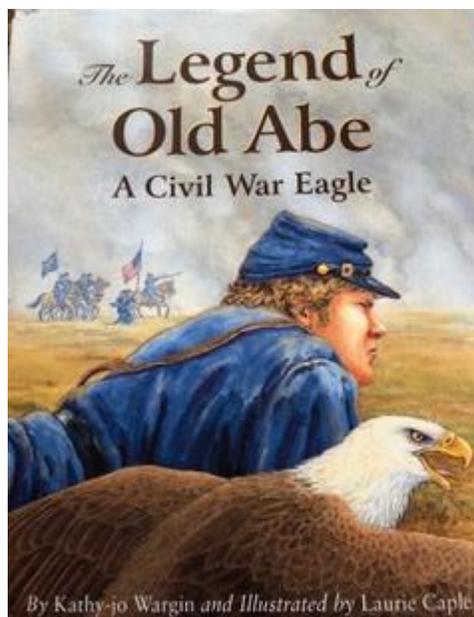


A Guide to Lincoln's Eighth Judicial Circuit was written by Guy C. Fraker. Mr. Fraker describes the travels of Abraham Lincoln along with other members of the judicial team that made a bi-annual trip around the circuit to conduct court business in the 17 counties that made up

the district, originally not including Beardstown.

Along the way the officials shared stories, meals, and lodging so they knew each other well by the time they convened in the courtrooms of the various counties. Such travels required Mr. Lincoln to be away from home a great deal of the year leaving his wife to take care of the children and any domestic issues. Lincoln gained knowledge and experience in these situations that helped him tremendously as he campaigned for the Presidency and later in that office.

- Kathy Haut



The Legend of Old Abe: A Civil War Eagle, a children's book by Kathy jo Wargin tells the legend of an heroic Civil War Eagle, who fought in battles as the mascot for the Eighth

Regiment of Wisconsin Volunteer Infantry. Nicknamed "Old Abe" to honor President Lincoln, this feisty raptor not only led the troops into battle while tethered to a wooden pole, but he also inspired the men with daring and humorous antics, such as stealing the officers' chickens, shaking hands, and always answering the bugle call.

Today, a replica of Old Abe is on display at the Wisconsin State Capitol.

- Sue Reichert



All I have learned, I have learned from books. A. L.

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Chris Vallillo entertained at the OLCM reception for Friends of the Museum at a Meet Our New Exhibits Event just prior to the reopening of the OLCM in April. Chris featured Lincoln era music choices, especially those telling stories of the period.

COMING EVENTS

Look for the ALNHA and Looking for Lincoln displays and activities in the Illinois Building and on the Illinois Building lawn during the Illinois State Fair. Many activities interest youth.