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Lincoln's Life Chronicled on Stamps *Set of four stamps commemorate 200th Birthday*

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WASHINGTON — The U.S. Postal Service commemorates the 200th anniversary of the birth of Abraham Lincoln (1809-1865), who rose from humble, frontier origins to become a prominent lawyer and politician and ultimately President of the United States. The four First-Class commemorative 42-cent stamps, available nationwide today, were dedicated at the Old State Capitol in Springfield, IL, by Postmaster General John Potter and Assistant Majority Leader Senator Richard J. Durbin (D-IL).

"When Americans are asked to pick our greatest president, two names are always at the top of the list: George Washington and Abraham Lincoln," explained Potter. "In Washington, DC, that opinion is carved in stone. The Lincoln Memorial, the Washington Monument and the United States Capitol stand out in single file along the National Mall. They are enduring symbols of the power of the people and of the two leaders who first protected that power and then perfected it. Abraham Lincoln's greatest desire was to earn the respect and esteem of his fellow man. In fact, he has earned the esteem of all mankind. Now it is our privilege to show our respect."

Joining Potter and Durbin in dedicating the stamps were Representative Aaron Schock (R-IL); Springfield Mayor Tim Davlin, Illinois State Historian Thomas Schwartz, Illinois Historic Preservation Agency Director Jan Grimes and U.S. Postal Service Great Lakes Area Operations Vice President Jo Ann Feindt.

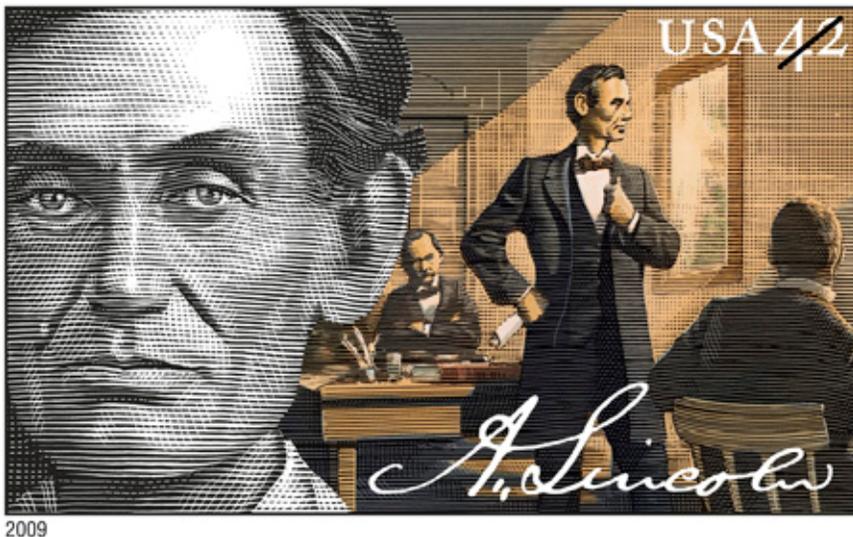
"From modest Midwestern roots, Abraham Lincoln rose to the presidency through his intelligence, integrity and commitment to the nation that he loved," said Durbin. "He is a true American hero whose enormous courage and strength of character during some of our nation's most tumultuous times have been sources of inspiration for generations of Americans. As we approach the bicentennial of Lincoln's birth, these postage stamps will play an important role in this year long tribute to his life and legacy."

The 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.



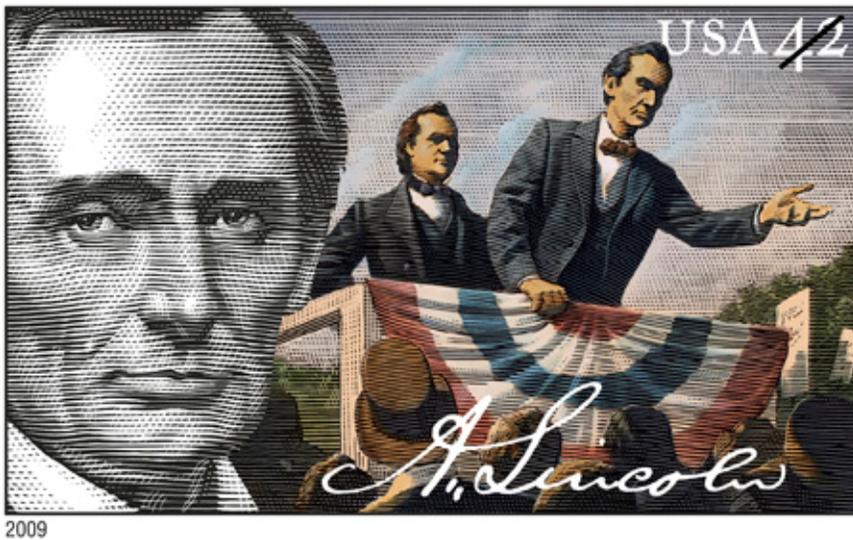
Rail-Splitter

The stamp showing Lincoln as a rail-splitter includes the earliest-known photograph of Lincoln, dated 1846, by N. H. Shepherd, and depicts Lincoln as a youth splitting a log for a rail fence on what was then the American frontier. When he was a candidate for president in 1860, the Republican Party used the image of Lincoln as a “rail-splitter” to enhance his appeal to the working man.



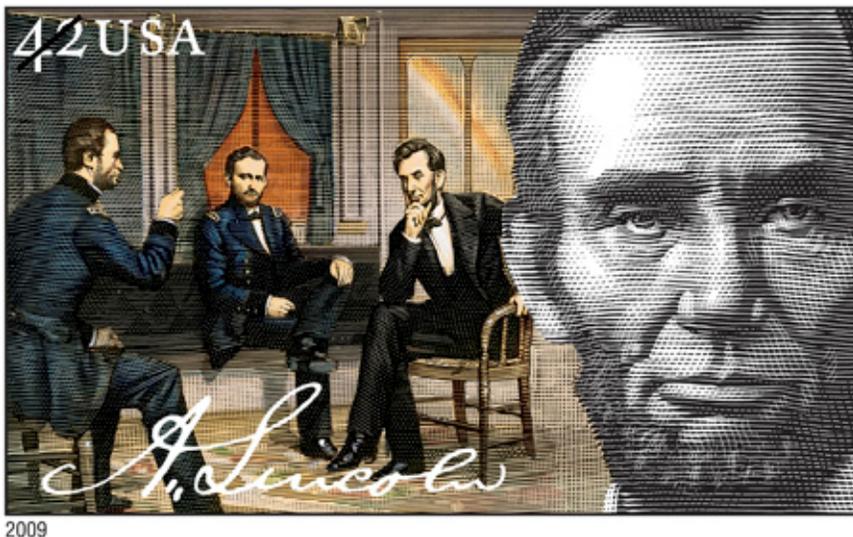
Lawyer

The stamp featuring Lincoln as a lawyer includes a photograph of Lincoln, dated May 7, 1858, by Abraham Byers, and shows Lincoln in a courtroom in Illinois, the state where he was a practicing attorney for nearly 25 years.



Politician

The stamp of Lincoln as a politician includes a Mathew Brady photograph of Lincoln dated Feb. 27, 1860, and shows Lincoln debating Stephen A. Douglas during their 1858 campaign for a U.S. Senate seat from Illinois.



President

The stamp featuring Lincoln as president includes an Alexander Gardner photograph of Lincoln, dated Nov. 8, 1863, and depicts Lincoln conferring with generals Ulysses S. Grant and William T. Sherman toward the end of the Civil War. The depiction is based on “The Peacemakers” (1868), a painting by George P. A. Healy.

National Postal Museum Lincoln Stamps Exhibit

The Smithsonian’s National Postal Museum in Washington, DC, maintains the world’s largest collection of stamp images online through its Arago website <http://www.arago.si.edu/>. Since 1866, 74 stamps have been issued in Lincoln’s honor, including these stamps to honor his 200th birthday.

From the Post Office Department’s 1775 inception, postage was based on distance and the number of pages mailed. Prepayment of postage was not required. In 1847 stamps were introduced — the five-cent

Benjamin Franklin stamp (\$1.33 in 2008 dollars), good for mailing ½ ounce letters up to 300 miles, and the 10-cent George Washington stamp for mailing ½ ounce letters beyond 300 miles (\$2.66 in 2008 dollars).

In 1866 the Post Office Department issued what is considered to be the nation's first commemorative stamp — the 15-cent Lincoln. It was the first stamp of that denomination issued by the United States and Lincoln was the first person pictured on a postage stamp since stamps were first issued in 1847. The 15-cent Lincoln stamp denomination (\$2.25 in 2008 dollars) paid the single-weight rate to France, or in combination with other denominations, greater weight and foreign destination rates. After Jan. 1, 1869, it could have paid the registered mail fee. More than 2.1 million Lincoln stamps were printed by the National Bank Note Company. A stamp commemorating the Lincoln Memorial has also been issued. To see all of the Lincoln stamps visit the National Postal Museum's Arago website:

http://www.arago.si.edu/index.asp?con=5&cmd=2&c=&chk=10&ct=&d_all=&d_end=2009&d_start=1861&f=1&l=&lf=3&o=&pg=1&q=Lincoln&r=&s=&set=&start=1&t=423

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Please Note: For broadcast quality video and audio, photo stills and other media resources, visit the USPS Newsroom at www.usps.com/communications/newsroom/welcome.htm.

An independent federal agency, the U.S. Postal Service is the only delivery service that reaches 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, not tax dollars, to pay for operating expenses. The Postal Service has annual revenue of \$75 billion and delivers nearly half the world's mail. To learn about the history of the Postal Service visit the Smithsonian's National Postal Museum: www.postalmuseum.si.edu.

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."

How to obtain the First-Day-of-Issue Postmark

Customers have 60-days to obtain the first-day-of-issue postmark by mail. They may purchase new stamps at their local Post Office, or at the Postal Store website 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 Stamp
Philatelic Clerk
U.S. Postal Service
2105 Cook Street
Springfield, IL 62703-9998

After applying the first-day-of-issue 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.

How to Order First-Day-Covers

Stamp Fulfillment Services also offers first-day covers for new stamp issues and Postal Service stationery items postmarked with the official first-day-of-issue cancellation. Each item has an individual catalog number and is offered in the quarterly *USA Philatelic* catalog. Customers may request a free catalog by calling 800-STAMP-24 or writing to:

Information Fulfillment
Dept. 6270
U.S. Postal Service
P.O. Box 219014
Kansas City, MO 64121-9014

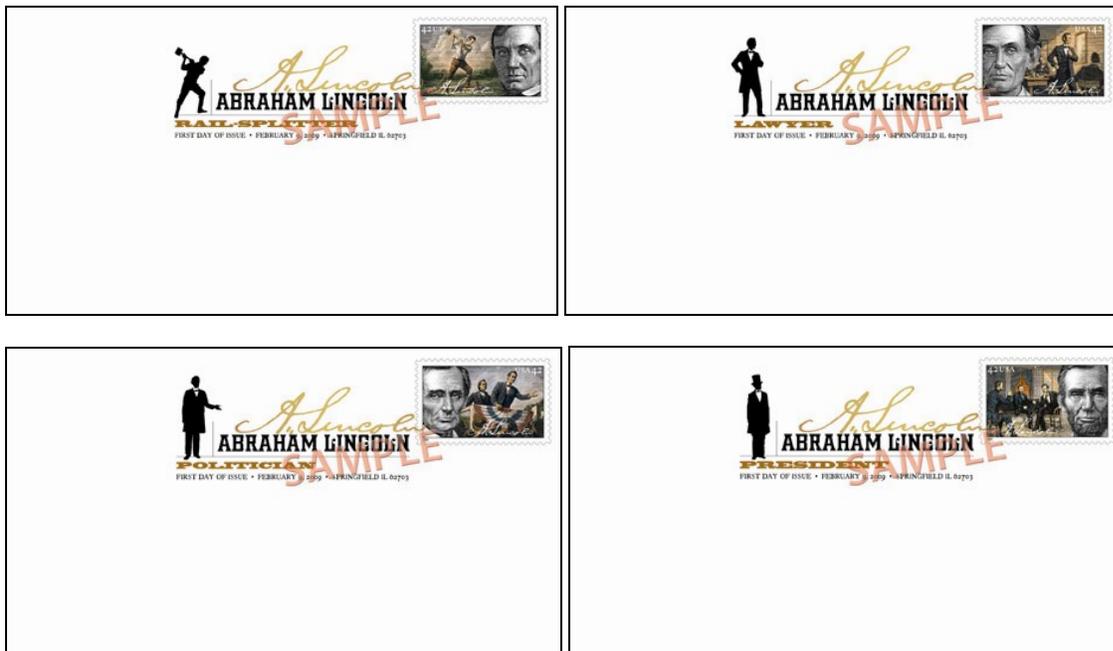
Philatelic Products

There are also six other philatelic products available for this stamp issue:



Item 464774, \$16.95 - *Abraham Lincoln Commemorative Stamp Folio* – Celebrate the 200th anniversary of the birth of Abraham Lincoln with this unique commemorative folio honoring his life and presidency. It includes a period-inspired broadside of the Gettysburg Address, four biographical cards with placeholders for mounting stamps, a timeline of the major events in Lincoln’s life and a pane of 20 *Abraham Lincoln* stamps with four mounts for preserving the stamps.

464763, First-Day Cover Set of four, \$3.20



464768, Digital Color Postmark Set of four, \$6.00
464784, Uncut Press Sheet, \$50.40
464791, Ceremony Program, \$6.95
464799, Digital Color Postmark Keepsake (4 DCP w/pane), \$14.40