

Lincoln, Illinois History

Lincoln, Illinois, the first of many towns named for Abraham Lincoln, is famous for the “watermelon baptism” during its naming ceremony in 1853 and offers much for today’s visitors to enjoy. Watch for the watermelon statue near the train station.

Abraham Lincoln was working as a lawyer in the 1840s and 1850s in central Illinois, and serving as counsel for the newly laid railroad, which led to the founding of the town. Lincoln had assisted in mapping plots of land for sale and was asked to be present at the community’s naming ceremony. On August 27, 1853, a sale of lots was held and the town was officially named. Lincoln chose a ripe watermelon from a nearby wagon, broke it open, and squeezed the juice on the grounds, as a “baptism.”

The town of Lincoln, Illinois is the only city in the United States to be named for Abraham Lincoln before he was President. It lies 30 miles east of Lincoln’s birthplace in New Salem, and about 30 miles from Springfield, the capitol city where Lincoln began his political life. Although Abraham Lincoln was one of the few U.S. Presidents without a college degree, his namesake town is home to three colleges: Lincoln College, Lincoln Christian University, and Heartland Community College. It is also the home of the world’s largest covered wagon, a historic courthouse, museums, and Old Route 66.

Come to Lincoln and enjoy the Art and Balloon Festival, which consists of art displays, hot air balloons, Illinois wine tastings, food and drinks, live entertainment, family activities, and an 1800s craft fair. The event draws hundreds of visitors each year. Lincoln Illinois, is rich in history and offers much to see and experience, including juicy watermelons which you can choose to eat or use for a reenactment of Lincoln’s town baptism.

Source(s):

Amtrak’s Texas Eagle. (2010). Route Guide to Train 421. Retrieved May 21, 2010 from <http://www.texaseagle.com/guide.htm> .

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Wikipedia. (2010). Lincoln, Illinois. Retrieved January 5, 2011 from http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Lincoln,_Illinois.

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