

Decatur and Abraham Lincoln

Decatur, Illinois is the site of many firsts for Abraham Lincoln. In March of 1830, Lincoln and his family came to Decatur and built their first Illinois home here. It was in Decatur that same year when Lincoln mounted a stump by Harrell's Tavern and made his first political speech. In 1860, during the Republican Convention, Mr. Lincoln was nominated by John Palmer as a candidate for the presidency of the United States. At that same event he was given the campaign nickname of "The Rail Splitter" candidate.



Bas-Relief titled "Wake Up, Lincoln!"

John McClarey, Bas-Relief Sculptor

John McClarey of Decatur, Illinois, specializes in the form and thought of Abraham Lincoln. In 1998, he was appointed by the U.S. State Department to act as a "Lincoln Ambassador" to Russia. His commissioned sculpture of Lincoln was dedicated at the Russian State Library of Foreign Literature in Moscow.



He is the recipient of the Richard N. Current Award, the highest award given by the Lincoln Forum meeting in Gettysburg and was inducted into the Lincoln Academy's Order of Lincoln. In 2008, John was inducted into the Hall of Fame College of Arts and Sciences at Illinois State University and presented with the Alumni Merit Award by Millikin University in 2007.

His works have appeared on PBS Illinois Stories, the Journal of the Abraham Lincoln Association, and many Lincoln books and film documentaries.

In 2008, he designed the 23-inch statuette of Lincoln as the official Abraham Lincoln National Agricultural Award, which is presented at the Farm Progress Show, held here in Decatur.



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 **ILLINOIS. MILE AFTER MAGNIFICENT MILE.**

Shadows of Lincoln

Sculptures and Wayside Exhibits



Significant Lincoln sites in and around Decatur, Illinois

Looking for Lincoln

As part of the Looking for Lincoln initiative, wayside exhibits have been produced in cooperation with the State of Illinois to highlight sites related to the life of Abraham Lincoln. Decatur is proud to be the home of 15 wayside exhibits. Each contains text, photos or graphics and a “rubbing medallion” where you can create a paper/crayon rubbing as a souvenir to document your visit.



Downtown Wayside Locations



Map Legend

1. **“Music Please, Maestro!”**
The Macon House • 130 North Franklin
2. **“Lincoln’s Legacy”**
Founding of the GAR • 262 E. South Park Street
3. **“Choosing a President”**
1860 GOP Convention • 231 E. South Park Street
4. **“The Rail-splitter Candidate”**
1860 GOP Convention • 200 E. South Park Street
5. **“Finding the Biggest Man”**
Barnwell Photograph • 126 North Water Street
6. **“Wake Up, Lincoln!”**
1860 GOP Convention • 101 North Water Street
7. **“Lincoln’s First Political Speech”**
The Stump Speech • Corner of Main & Main Streets
8. **“Lincoln On The Circuit”**
The Second Courthouse • Corner of Main & Main Streets
9. **“Coming to Illinois”**
First Night in Decatur • 110 South Main Street
10. **“Let Us All Be United”**
The Cassell House • Corner of Main & Main Streets



Bas-Relief titled
“The Rail-Splitter Candidate.”

Bronze Shadows

Four of the downtown Decatur waysides are further enhanced by original bronze sculptures called Bas-Relief. Similar to a copper penny in color and in style, the single-sided sculptures were designed and created by John McClarey of Decatur. The sculptures are designed so that visitors may “participate” in the event depicted and create a memorable photo.

Other Waysides in Macon County

“Getting There From Here”

The Circuit Rider • 820 West Main Street

“Lincoln’s Decatur Ally”

The Oglesby Mansion • 421 West William Street

“Settling in Illinois”

Site of the Lincoln’s cabin of 1830
on the Sangamon River
2600 South Lincoln Memorial Parkway

“A Favorite Lies Here”

Boiling Springs Cemetery
2418 Boiling Springs Road

“Macon County History Museum”

Log Court House in which Lincoln practiced law
5580 North Fork Road