

**Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. Memorial Commission
Virginia General Assembly**

Bicentennial of Abraham Lincoln

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MEDIA ADVISORY

For Immediate Release

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The Honorable Henry L. Marsh, III, Chairman, and the Honorable Jennifer L. McClellan, Vice Chairwoman, of the Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. Memorial Commission, today announced the Annual Lincoln Cemetery Ceremony which will be held on **Friday, February 12, 2009, at 2:00 p.m. by the Lincoln Society of Virginia at the Lincoln Family Homestead and Cemetery in Rockingham County. The Lincoln Cemetery is located approximately 6 miles north of Harrisonburg on Route 42.** This event is a collaborative effort of the King Commission and the Society and is also one of the many programs and events that will be held in Virginia as a part of the national ***Abraham Lincoln Bicentennial*** during 2009-2010.

The Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. Memorial Commission's *Abraham Lincoln Bicentennial Subcommittee*, which is chaired by Dr. Robert C. Vaughan, III, President of the Virginia Foundation for the Humanities and Public Policy, and a member of the Commission, is leading the bicentennial commemoration in the Commonwealth. Other Subcommittee members include current and former members of the King Commission, eminent historians and Lincoln scholars, and representatives of the National Abraham Lincoln Bicentennial Commission, the Military Order of the Loyal Legion of the United States, the Lincoln Society of Virginia, Department of Education, public schools, institutions of higher education, business and industry, local elected officials, and other interested persons.

The Lincoln Society of Virginia's 34-year tradition of honoring Lincoln on his birthday at the Lincoln Family Homestead in Rockingham County was started by Phillip C. Stone, President of Bridgewater College. The Lincoln family moved to Rockingham County from Pennsylvania in 1768. The President's great grandparents and his grandfather were among the Shenandoah Valley's early pioneers. While living there, Lincoln's grandfather married a Rockingham native and built a home near his parents. All their children were born in Rockingham County, including Tom Lincoln, father of the future President. After his grandfather moved to Kentucky, several of Lincoln's cousins remained and some still live in the area. The Lincoln family cemetery is the resting place of five generations of Lincolns, including the President's great grandparents, many Lincoln family members, and two Lincoln slaves. Visitors to the cemetery over the years have included the President's son, Robert Todd Lincoln, Carl Sandburg, Ida Tarbell, and other Lincoln biographers.

The Lincoln Society of Virginia was founded in 2004 to commemorate and disseminate information about Lincoln Family connections in the Shenandoah Valley of Virginia, to acquire, protect, and preserve Lincoln landmarks in the Shenandoah Valley, including the Lincoln Homestead residence and the Lincoln Cemetery in Rockingham County, and to support efforts to interpret Abraham Lincoln, his life, work, and legacy, particularly in Virginia. The Lincoln Society of Virginia has recently obtained an option on the Lincoln property in Rockingham County and is engaged in fundraising to acquire and preserve the property. This preservation project is one of the many commemorative activities supported by the Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. Memorial Commission.

The outdoor ceremony *is never cancelled or delayed because of weather.* The public is invited and encouraged to participate in the Annual Lincoln Day Ceremony, a Lincoln Bicentennial program. Directions to the Lincoln Family Homestead and Cemetery may be found on the Lincoln Society's website at <http://www.lincolnva.org/>. Persons desiring further information concerning this program should contact Dr. Phillip Stone at (540) 828-5620.