

Abraham Lincoln official Bicentennial Publication State Participation: Virginia

1. **Name of state:** Virginia
2. **State motto:** "Sic Semper Tyrannis" (Thus Always to Tyrants)



3. **Governor's message:**

On behalf of the citizens of the Commonwealth of Virginia, I am honored to pay tribute to one of America's greatest leaders. Our nation's proud history serves as an enduring testament to the fortitude and resolve of Abraham Lincoln.

The experiment of American democracy faced a vital test as Abraham Lincoln took the oath of office as its sixteenth president. No American leader since Virginia's own George Washington had taken the helm of the United States with such a challenge, as Lincoln would phrase it: such a "house divided." Yet as his term and his brief life came to a close, Lincoln wiped the injustice of slavery from American society, restored the Union and brought us one step closer to the realization of the ideals upon which the country was founded.

Although Lincoln is a son of Illinois, we in Virginia claim him as a brother.

Lincoln has extensive family ties to the Commonwealth – his great-grandparents and grandparents lived in Virginia and his parents met, married, and lived for a time in the Shenandoah Valley.

In Virginia, we claim Lincoln as a brother not just because his roots here run deep. Throughout his life, Lincoln exhibited the best qualities of Virginians. He embodied the courage of the Jamestown settlers and of two of his predecessors, Washington and Jefferson. Lincoln devoted himself to breaking the bonds that divided communities and his influence echoed in the twentieth century through the life of legal pioneer Oliver Hill. With the hospitality of Chief Powhatan and the compassion of Pocahontas, Lincoln welcomed Americans, regardless of race, to the freedom promised in our Declaration. With these profound contributions in mind, the people of the Commonwealth are proud to honor this celebrated American in every corner of a nation so marked by his greatness.

4. **List of Events:**

- The Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. Memorial Commission, through its Abraham Lincoln Bicentennial Subcommittee and in collaboration with the faith community, state legislative groups, and community, business, educational, professional, and advocacy organizations throughout the Commonwealth, will present the Emancipation Proclamation Jubilee on January 1, 2013, to recognize the sesquicentennial of the Emancipation Proclamation and its legacy.
- The Lincoln Society of Virginia will hold the Annual Lincoln Day Ceremony at the Lincoln Homestead Cemetery in Rockingham County on February 12, 2009 and 2010.
- Legislative members of the Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. Memorial Commission will introduce legislation recognizing the 200th anniversary of Lincoln's birth in the 2009 Session of the Virginia General Assembly, and deliver Morning Hour Floor Speeches in the Virginia House of Delegates and the Senate of Virginia on February 12, 2009, to commemorate the anniversary of his birth.

- Vernon Burton, author of *The Age of Lincoln*, has been invited to lecture at Washington and Lee University in December 2008.
- The City of Petersburg will commemorate President Lincoln's April 7, 1865 visit to the city.
- The Planning Committee on "Steps Towards Freedom," will commemorate President Lincoln's April 4-5, 1865 with lectures and a walking tour to retrace Lincoln's steps and sites that he visited.
- Public and private schools in the Commonwealth will be encouraged to become a "Lincoln Bicentennial School."
- The Abraham Lincoln Bicentennial Subcommittee of the Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. Memorial Commission will host local reading clubs, musical tributes to Lincoln, and a gala reception in February 2009.
- The Lincoln Society of Virginia will present the Fifth Annual Lincoln Symposium on April 21, 2009, at 7:30 p.m., Bridgewater College, Bridgewater, VA. The guest speaker, Dr. James I. (Bud) Robertson, Jr., will address the topic "Lincoln, the Man."

5. **Five Key Facts:**

- Lincoln's great-grandparents, grandparents and his father lived in Virginia; his parents married in Virginia and his father was born in the Commonwealth.
- Lincoln's great-grandparents and multiple relatives are buried in Virginia in the Lincoln Cemetery.
- While in Congress, Lincoln wrote letters to a cousin in Virginia acknowledging his Virginia ancestry and asking for more information about his Virginia family.
- During the Civil War, Lincoln had cousins in Virginia who were slave owners and Confederates.
- Lincoln came to Virginia during the war to visit troops and was in Richmond, the Confederate capitol, just a few days prior to his death.
- The Lincoln Society of Virginia, the only such group in the former Confederacy, honors Lincoln; an event has been held in the local Lincoln family cemetery for each of the past 33 years.

6. **Official Website:** <http://dls.state.va.us/GROUPS/MLK/Lincoln.htm>

