

OCTOBER 15, 1976

Office of the White House Press Secretary

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NOTICE TO THE PRESSABE LINCOLN IN THE ILLINOIS CITIES ON WHISTLESTOP

1. JOLIET. On October 8, 1856 Lincoln addressed a Republican rally in Joliet, urging support for John C. Fremont, the first presidential candidate of the Republican Party.
2. PONTIAC. Lyceums were a popular feature, and Lincoln, himself, took to the lecture circuit for a short time. Even his oratory was sometimes subject to criticism. One of those who heard him speak in Pontiac in January 1860, wrote a friend that while Lincoln was a "big gun" politically, the "people...were disappointed" by his performance.
3. BLOOMINGTON. The Illinois Republican Party was organized here on May 29, 1856 at an Anti-Nebraska convention which heard Lincoln's "Lost Speech". Speaking extempore, he declared that those who deny freedom to others cannot hope to retain it for themselves. The reporters present became so involved in the speech that they neglected to take notes. Thus, no verbatim account survives.
4. LINCOLN. This city is the only one of 24 cities in the U. S. named for Lincoln which received its name before he became famous. Lincoln had assisted with the planning of the city, did the legal work necessary for its incorporation, and officially christened it with a watermelon in 1853, a fact commemorated by a monument in Centennial Park which is adjacent to the railroad station.
5. SPRINGFIELD. The capital city is rich in sites associated with Lincoln who lived, practiced law, and was married here. Lincoln's law offices, the old state house where he delivered his "house divided" speech, and the only house he ever owned are all open to the public. The old state capitol building is only two blocks from the Antrak station.
6. CARLINVILLE. In 1858, Lincoln, while contesting the Senatorial election with Stephen A. Douglas, addressed an audience composed mostly of Douglas supporters in Carlinville. Seventy-one years later, in 1929, during the city's centennial celebration, a monument commemorating Lincoln's speech was unveiled.
7. ALTON. Here, on October 15, 1858, Stephen A. Douglas and Abraham Lincoln met in the seventh and final Lincoln-Douglas debate. The election was to come on Tuesday, November 2. Here, Lincoln defended again his house-divided declaration and declared slavery a "moral, social, and political wrong".