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## **Mr. Lincoln of Illinois**

Written By: Harry Gribnitz

*Do you remember your school graduation trips? Did you go to the State Capital, Washington D. C. or a more exotic location? I have heard that some high schools have even flown to Hawaii!!!! Growing up in the western suburbs of Chicago, our 8th grade graduation trip was to Springfield and New Salem. For those of you less familiar with Illinois history and geography, the Springfield area is where Mr. Lincoln spent much of his adult life. He lived in New Salem, practice law and served his state in Springfield, and finally was buried just outside the City.*

*Our trip gave us the opportunity to "walk where he walked". When visiting New Salem, you could picture him with his long legs stretched before him reading by the fire. We were able to visit the Lincoln-Herndon Law Offices where he practiced law and served as his base for "riding the circuit". We visited the Old State Capital, where he served in the legislature and Lincoln Tomb, his final resting-place.*

*A visit to the Lincoln exhibit at the Gerald Ford Presidential Museum in Grand Rapids triggered many of these fond memories. It also reminded me of his words at Gettysburg, Pennsylvania at the dedication of the Gettysburg National Cemetery. With a little modification, they would serve well at a similar event in New York City. I can picture Mr. Lincoln raising to his feet, removing his hat and stepping to the podium to honor the brave members of the NYPD, NYFD and the rescue teams that struggled and sacrificed at the Trade Center.*

*"Our Fathers brought forth on this continent, a new nation, conceived in Liberty, and dedicated to the proposition that all men are created equal.*

*"Now we are engaged in a Great War, testing whether that nation or any nation so conceived and so dedicated, can long endure. We are met on a great battlefield of that war. We have come to dedicate a portion of that field.... for those who here gave their lives that that nation might live...*

*" But, in a larger sense, we cannot dedicate – we cannot consecrate – we cannot hollow – this ground. The brave men and women, living and dead, who struggled here to save the lives of others have concentrated it, far above our poor power to add or detract. The world, will little note, nor long remember what we say here, but it can never forget what they did here. It is for us the living; rather to be dedicated here to the unfinished work which they who served here have thus far so nobly advanced. It is rather for us to be dedicated to the great task remaining before us –*

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*that from these honored dead we take increased devotion to the cause for which they gave the last full measure of devotion - that we here highly resolve that these dead shall not have died in vain - that this nation, under God, shall have a new birth of freedom - and the government of the people, by the people, for the people, shall not perish from the earth."*

*Thank you Mr. Lincoln for words and principles that endure.*

*Thank you,*

*Harry Gribnitz*

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