A Timeline of Significant Events in the Life of Abraham Lincoln

February 12, 1809  Abraham Lincoln is born in Hardin County, Kentucky.

April-July, 1831  Lincoln pilots a flatboat to New Orleans for Denton Offutt and returns to New Salem, 18 miles northwest of Springfield.

September 1831  Lincoln clerks in Denton Offutt’s store in New Salem.

March 9, 1832  Lincoln becomes a legislature candidate.

January 15, 1833  Lincoln and William F. Berry purchase a store in New Salem.

March 7, 1833  President Jackson appoints Lincoln as New Salem postmaster.

August 4, 1834  Lincoln wins his second bid for election to the Illinois House of Representatives.

February 24, 1837  Lincoln and eight friends are successful in passing a bill to move the state capital from Vandalia to Springfield.

April 15, 1837  Lincoln moves to Springfield, rooms with Joshua F. Speed, and becomes the law partner of John T. Stuart.

November 4, 1842  Lincoln and Mary Todd are married by the Rev. Charles Dresser in the home of her brother-in-law Ninian W. Edwards.

August 1, 1843  Robert Todd Lincoln, the Lincoln’s first child, is born at the Globe Tavern.

January 16, 1844  The Lincoln’s purchase a home from Reverend Dresser for the price of $1,200.00.

March 10, 1846  The Lincoln’s second child, Edward Baker, is born.

August 3, 1846  With an unprecedented majority of 1,511 votes over his Democratic opponent Rev. Peter Cartwright, Lincoln is the only Whig among seven congressmen elected from Illinois.

February 1, 1850  Edward Baker Lincoln dies after a 52-day illness.

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December 21, 1850  Lincoln’s third son, William Wallace (Willie), is born.

April 4, 1853  Thomas (Tad), the Lincoln’s fourth son, is born.

Spring 1856  Contractors Hannan and Ragsdale enlarge the Lincoln’s family home from one and half stories to two full stories at a cost of $1,300.00.

June 16, 1858  Lincoln is chosen by Illinois Republicans to run for the U.S. Senate. In accepting, Lincoln gives his “House Divided” speech.

November 2, 1858  Although Lincoln gets a majority of the votes in the election, Stephen Douglas is re-elected because of gerrymandered legislative districts.

May 18, 1860  Lincoln is nominated for President on the third ballot by the Republican National Convention in Chicago.

November 6, 1860  Lincoln becomes the first Republican to be elected President of the United States.

February 11, 1861  President-elect Lincoln delivers his farewell speech to the people of Springfield from the rear of a train car at the Great Western Railroad Station.

March 4, 1861  Lincoln is inaugurated as the 16th President of the United States.

February 20, 1862  William (Willie) Wallace Lincoln dies. He is the second son the Lincolns have lost.

April 14, 1865  Actor John Wilkes Booth shoots Lincoln in Ford’s Theatre.

April 15, 1865  Abraham Lincoln is pronounced dead at 7:22 a.m. in the home of William Petersen.

May 3, 1865  The funeral train reaches its destination in Springfield at 9:00 a.m. The body is escorted to the Illinois State Capitol building.

May 4, 1865  Lincoln is buried in Oak Ridge Cemetery, Springfield.

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Source: Highlights from the Illinois State Historical Library’s “Abraham Lincoln Chronology” 1990