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Daily News-Record

HARRISONBURG, VIRGINIA  
Monday, February 13th 2012

currently

**30°F**  
Clear

tomorrow

High **32°F**  
Low **25°F**

forecast provided by wunderground.com

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## Lincoln Revisted

### Annual Rite Marks 16th President's Ties To County

Posted: February 13, 2012  
By EMILY SHARRER

EDOM — On a hillside six miles north of Harrisonburg, five generations of Lincolns are buried, including the great-grandparents of President Abraham Lincoln.

Lincoln's Rockingham County roots can be traced back to 1768 when Lincoln's great-grandparents settled near Linville Creek in Rockingham County.

The sixteenth president's ties to the county are a topic that Lincoln expert and former Bridgewater College president Phillip Stone continues to spread each year with the Lincoln Cemetery Ceremony, now in its 37th year.

The event at the cemetery, which lies on the Lincoln homestead, was borne of a conversation with another local history enthusiast, according to Stone.

"[We said], 'It's a real shame we don't do something to acknowledge this history,'" said Stone, who has shown up at the cemetery for the event's entire run, regardless of the weather.

"I've done it here in snow so deep when me and my St. Bernard dog were the only ones," said Stone. "We've had all kinds of



Phillip Stone, president of the Lincoln Society of Virginia, addresses those gathered on Sunday for the 37th annual Lincoln Cemetery Ceremony, held each year on the former president's birthday. (Photos by Michael Reilly / DN-R)

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interesting things happen.”

A group gathered Sunday, as they do every year on Lincoln’s birthday, to hear Stone talk about the Virginia Lincolns. This year is the 203rd anniversary of Lincoln’s birth in 1809. People who came to hear Stone speak about the president’s ties to Virginia hailed from as close as Linville to as far away as New York, Delaware and Arizona.



*Lincoln history buff Benjamin Kimble tries to ward off Sunday morning’s bone-chilling cold by bundling up against a cemetery marker.*

“We learn something new every year,” said Judy Riley, 65, of Luray who attended the event for the fifth time this year with her husband Frank Riley, who said he drove past the cemetery numerous times, never knowing about the homestead or its history.

“Discovering it was here was wonderful,” he said.

From the twisted tree that sits beside the Lincoln Cemetery, one can almost see the home, situated between two hills, where a local Lincoln with his own claim to fame lives.

Ernest Erdine Lincoln III, who attended Sunday’s commemoration, is the President Lincoln’s sixth cousin — and the last living descendant of “Virginia John” Lincoln to carry the Lincoln name and live near Linville.

“When I die, that’s going to be the end,” said Lincoln, who has two daughters, but no sons to carry the Lincoln name.

Abraham Lincoln’s grandfather, Capt. Abraham Lincoln, and Ernest Lincoln’s fourth great grandfather, Lt. Capt. Jacob Lincoln Sr., were brothers.

Despite familial ties to the area, Abraham Lincoln never lived in Virginia. His father, Thomas Lincoln was born in Rockingham County, but Thomas’s father relocated the family to Kentucky prior to Abraham Lincoln’s birth in the Bluegrass State.

One other, not-so-small thing separates Abraham Lincoln from the Virginia Lincolns: Political philosophy.

Stone said the Lincolns living in the Linville area were most definitely not Union sympathizers.

Ernest Erdine Lincoln III recalls hearing a quote attributed to one of his descendants who sat up on a chimney in Lacey Spring during the Civil War and shot at Union officers as they came by.

“[He said] he’d ‘shoot the union officers as long as cousin Abe sends them down here,’” said

Ernest Lincoln.

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