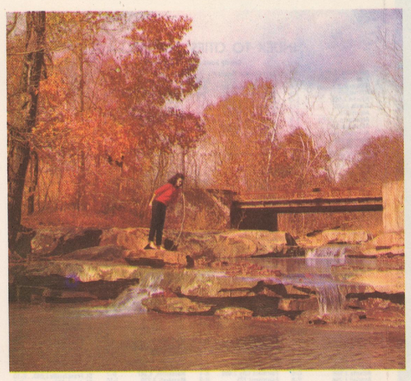
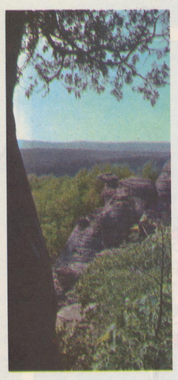


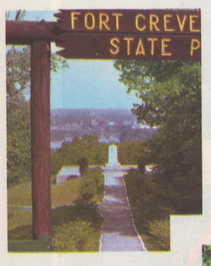


1818

ILLINOIS

1968

sesquicentennial



Earliest Illinois spoke French

Were they singing, that late summer day in 1673? One wonders. The **voyageurs** often sang as they paddled, and it must have lightened the spirits of Father Jacques Marquette, Louis Jolliet and their French companions to know they were homeward-bound from the wilderness via an easier route than the way they had come.

Likely as not, the weather was gloriously sunny. Then as now, fish would have jumped across the bows of the canoes. Waterfowl, taking alarm, would have ruffled the water with pattering feet and straining wings.

Thus the Illinois country entered history.

The explorers had learned from the Indians how to return from the Mississippi to the Great Lakes by paddling up the Illinois River to its tributary, the Des Plaines. A short portage across a low ridge would bring them to the south fork of the Chicago River, which flowed into Lake Michigan.

Part of the portage remains for visitors to see, much as it was in 1673, at the Chicago Portage National Historic Site in the Cook County Forest Preserves.

Jolliet predicted that some day a canal across this portage would allow boats to travel from the Great Lakes to the Gulf. He was right, and the Illinois Waterway combined with the St. Lawrence Seaway has made Chicago one of the world's great ports. Ships from many nations dock on Chicago's waterfront.

Settlement of the Illinois country began when La Salle, whose dreams of a great French midcontinental empire were to be realized by Americans, built two forts along the Illinois River. Their sites are preserved in Fort Creve Coeur and Starved Rock state parks. La Salle's lieutenant, Henri de Tonti, built more forts and encouraged French settlements on the Mississippi. At Cahokia, the oldest house in Illinois, built by Jean Baptiste Saucier in 1737, still stands.

The French settlements came under the control of Britain at the end of the French and Indian War. Fort de Chartres, once the mightiest of the French forts in the Mississippi Valley, was surrendered in 1765. Today, it has been partly reconstructed in Fort Chartres State Park.

After the Revolution, American settlers poured into Illinois along the Ohio. By 1818 the population of the territory exceeded 40,000, and on Dec. 3 of that year Illinois became the 21st state.

The first capital of Illinois was at Kaskaskia, an old French town on the Mississippi. The capricious river has since swept away the site of the town and most of its buildings. Fortunately, a French colonial mansion survived and has been restored to keep alive for the people of Illinois and their Sesquicentennial guests memories of the state's earliest days.

New Salem preserves memory of frontier

Waist-high grass rippled in the wind all the way to the horizon, background for a tapestry of prairie flowers—pale-blue pasqueflowers; bright pink prairie phlox; evening primroses of pale yellow, pink and white; compass plant, tall and golden yellow; crimson milkweed. The flute-like songs of meadowlarks and the booming sounds of courting prairie chickens filled the air.

These were new experiences for the pioneers who emerged from the eastern forests to discover the edge of the great American prairie in Illinois. They admired the profusion of wildflowers and feasted on the game the tall grass sheltered, but the prairie overawed them. They didn't know how to farm it. So they settled in the forest areas covering 42 per cent of the state or around the shady groves that lined the creeks, building their homes of logs.

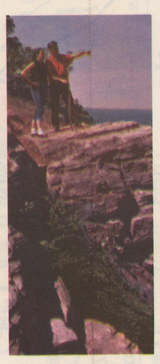
In 1828, settlers erected a little log town on the banks of the Sangamon River and called it New Salem. There Abraham Lincoln came in 1831 at the age of 22, striking out to seek his fortune.

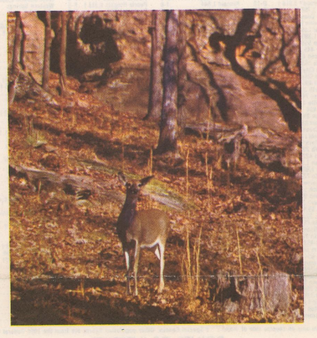
This village has been completely restored, with each log building reconstructed on the exact site of the original. Visitors to New Salem State Park find the village just as Lincoln knew it. The cabins are authentically furnished, from clocks and furniture of the period to boot-jacks, potato mashers and butter molds.

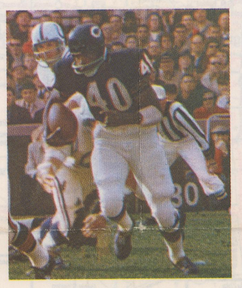
A different kind of frontier town is preserved in the old section of Galena. Near Galena, lead deposits were mined by the French in the early 1700s. Opening of steamboat transportation on the nearby Mississippi brought settlers swarming in during the 1820s. Galena was a prosperous town, not a backwoods settlement, with mansions of stone and brick blending Greek Revival influences with French Colonial. Many of these early buildings are well preserved in Galena today, including the graceful house of native limestone built by John Dowling in 1826.

The prosperous citizens of Galena, as well as the isolated settlers in the backwoods clearings, received a severe fright in 1832 when Black Hawk, war chief of the Sauk Indians, decided to resist white encroachments on Indian land. Through a misunderstanding, American troops fired on Indian truce bearers. The Americans were routed in the ensuing battle. Indian guerilla tactics terrorized Illinois during the summer of 1832, but on Aug. 2 the Sauk tribe was nearly wiped out while trying to flee across the Mississippi. A state park and museum now stand on the bluff above the site of Black Hawk's village.

The defeat of Black Hawk ended forever Indian resistance to white settlement of Illinois. Among those who now came were the Mormons, who settled at Nauvoo in 1839 and built a city exceeding Chicago or Galena in population and industry. Conflicts between Mormons and neighbors resulted in the arrest of Mormon leader Joseph Smith and his brother, and their murder by a mob while awaiting trial. Violence flared, almost amounting to civil war, but the Mormons realized they could not prevail. They began their incredible trek to Utah. Many Mormon buildings and relics remain at Nauvoo to recall this period of Illinois history.







Land of Lincoln —vast civil war "museum"

Banners and flags fluttered in the brisk autumn breeze. Stores and public buildings were gaily decorated. Everybody in town had gathered in the Statehouse square and farmers from all the country around Springfield were still driving up behind their teams. Smoke-belching, rattling trains disgorged citizens from other towns—10,000 in all to hear Abraham Lincoln, in the last speech of his campaign for the U.S. Senate, sum up his position on the issues he had debated all around the state against his opponent, Stephen A. Douglas.

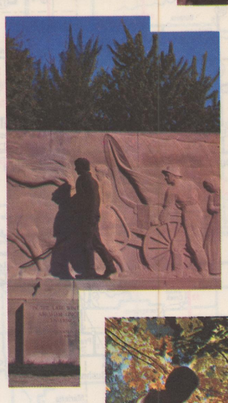
On the immediate issue, the election, Lincoln lost. Douglas was sent to Washington by the gerrymandered legislature. But the real issue of the debates and the campaign was slavery. Lincoln enjoyed the last word when, as President, he signed the Emancipation Proclamation.

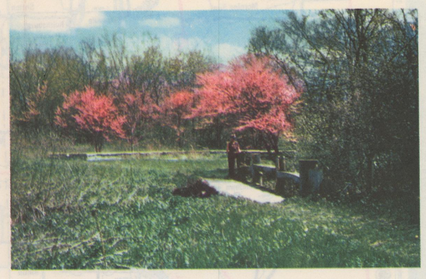
During the Civil War period, Illinois produced both the President and the winning general, Ulysses S. Grant, although sympathies on the slavery question were divided in the state. In 1837 at Alton a mob murdered an abolitionist editor, Elijah P. Lovejoy. His brother, Owen Lovejoy, continued to preach against slavery and smuggled Negroes to freedom along the Underground Railway through his home, which can still be seen at Princeton.

Divided loyalties stemmed from the tendency of Yankees to settle in the northern part of the state while Southerners filled up the region around Cairo at the junction of the Ohio and the Mississippi. Cairo is farther south than Richmond, Virginia. A typical southern steamboat port before the Civil War, it was seized by Union troops a jump ahead of the Confederates and became a staging area for the Army of the West. Supplies came in not only by water but also via the newly completed Illinois Central Railroad from Chicago.

The nation's Civil War leader, Lincoln, had been born in Kentucky. With his family he had followed the population trend of the times, moving westward in stages, first to Indiana, then to Illinois. He became one of the state's leading lawyers and served in the legislature and Congress. (His house in Springfield has been preserved.) His debates with Douglas in 1858 made him a national figure, and in 1860 he was nominated for the Presidency by the Republicans.

Ulysses S. Grant, a West Point graduate who had resigned his commission, was working in a leather store in Galena when the war broke out. The Governor of Illinois commissioned him as colonel of the 21st Illinois Volunteers, which turned out to be the first step in his rise to command of the Union forces. Upon his return to Galena after the war, the citizens presented him with a fine home on a hill. The house and its furnishings, maintained by the state, can still be visited.





Where ancient hills rise from the prairie

Twenty-five thousand years ago the Illinois sun shone on the soggy edge of the last glacier. Near the top, a chunk of ice cracked loose, slid down the face of the glacier, hit the ground—**splat**—and cracked into fragments, which soon melted.

Day by day the glacier receded northward, with a torrent of icy water springing from its base to collect in pools behind some of the largest terminal moraines known to geologists. Finally, if there had been a state government in those days, someone could have said smugly that the glacier problem belonged to Wisconsin instead of Illinois.

But Illinois owes much to the repeated visits of glaciers, which have at times covered as much as 90 per cent of the state, penetrating farther south than anywhere else in North America.

Like giant bulldozers, the glaciers flattened out the land and buried it under an average of 75 feet of glacial drift, full of a variety of mineral fragments to enrich the soil. The glaciers dropped their heavy boulders farther north, reserving for Illinois only the loess—fine particles of glacier chewed rock which could be spread evenly across the land by the wind.

Prairie grasses grew, died and decayed over thousands of years, turning the loess into a deep, rich soil, especially well suited to mechanical cultivation.

The last of the glaciers (a puny one which covered only a portion of the state) also gave Illinois its lake district northwest of Chicago. Many of these warm, shallow lakes are connected to the Fox River or to each other by channels—a paradise for boating fans who can voyage for miles from lake to lake, often returning by a different route. Chain O' Lakes and McHenry Dam state parks give public access to these fish-filled waters.

In contrast to the rolling prairie terrain of most of the state are the areas untouched by the glaciers. In the extreme northwest, rugged hills as high as 1,241 feet sweep down to the palisades of the Mississippi. In the south, an extension of the Ozark Mountains crosses the state. The Shawnee National Forest protects the high country.

Illinois has conserved its most scenic areas in an extensive state park system. At White Pines State Park is a stand of virgin white pine so tall it suggests to Midwestern eyes the giant trees of the West Coast. Illinois Beach State Park offers a magnificent beach and dunes, with their unusual flora and fauna. At Starved Rock State Park can be seen high bluffs carved by the Illinois River, typical of the landscape along many of the state's rivers.

Waterways— once for travel, now for fun

An easterly wind is building up the waves. You run across the hot sand and plunge into the water just as a breaker explodes into white foam in your face. Tumbling in the surf, you find the water warm and clean. No salt taste, since it's a beach in Illinois rather than on the East Coast.

The state is almost surrounded by water—Lake Michigan to the northeast, the Wabash and Ohio rivers to the southeast, the Mississippi to the west. Internally there are seven basins, the largest belonging to the Illinois River, which drains 43 per cent of the land.

Run-off is retained in more than 900 lakes and reservoirs, many of which are used for recreation.

In the past, Illinois has been more active than other states in combating water pollution. Lake Michigan beaches, for example, are still in use all along Chicago's shore line. But, looking to the future, the state government will call upon Illinois voters during the Sequicentennial year to vote approval of a billion dollar bond issue to preserve and develop Illinois' water resources.

For instance, there is the Illinois-Mississippi Canal, built in 1907 and now abandoned. It stretches across the state, offering 100 miles of hiking trail and a waterway for canoes and small power boats. Illinois planners envision a chain of parks, nature areas, game refuges, and camping and picnic sites from one end to the other.

Illinois possesses 1,277 miles of major rivers and 3,000 miles of smaller rivers. More than 100 streams are suitable for canoeing. (Three of them have been recommended for preservation as free-flowing streams by the National Park Service.)

The Illinois River Corridor, 327 miles—mostly scenic—from metropolitan Chicago to metropolitan St. Louis—is already a commercial waterway. Planners use hiking trails and bridal paths along the banks the entire distance, with improved facilities for pleasure boats using the waterway.

Lake Michigan is one of the world's finest cruising grounds for sailboats and larger power craft. The Illinois plan would provide for expansion of harbor facilities and creation of new harbors of refuge between Chicago and Milwaukee.

The Illinois state government has officially subscribed to the words of President Johnson:

"We must make a massive effort to save the countryside and establish—as a green legacy for tomorrow—more large and small parks, more seashores and open spaces than have been created during any period in our history."

Meanwhile, come on in—the water's fine.

Center of innovation and culture —Chicago

In the early days, folks in Chicago couldn't get a loan from the bank at Shawneetown on the Ohio because the bankers thought Chicago would never amount to anything. It was too far from Shawneetown!

Chicago wasn't incorporated as a town until 1833, when the population was 200. By 1847, when Cyrus Hall McCormick moved to Chicago to manufacture his mechanical reaper the population was 16,859 and still zooming.

Bustle and excitement have been the dominant mood of Chicago ever since. Chicago, the youngest of the world's great cities, has ever been impatient for accomplishment.

Perhaps this is why the atmosphere in Chicago seems so conducive to innovations—the railway sleeping car, the skyscraper, atomic energy, **Poetry** magazine, and Jane Addam's Hull House, to name a few.

Although in the center of the continent, Chicago has long been a cosmopolitan city. In 1869, the 13,730 ship arrivals at Chicago Harbor exceeded the number of ships arriving at New York, Philadelphia, Baltimore, Charleston, Mobile and San Francisco **combined**! Today, O'Hare International Airport is the world's busiest. One fifth of all persons entering the United States through customs enter at Chicago.

The Chicago area is the home of a host of entertainment enterprises for all tastes: Chicago Symphony Orchestra, Chicago Bears, Lyric Opera, Chicago Cubs, Ravinia Festival, Chicago White Sox, two great zoos—Lincoln Park and Brookfield, which even has trained porpoises.

Although Chicago's museums are world-famous—Adler Planetarium, Art Institute, Field Museum of Natural History, Shedd Aquarium, Museum of Science and Industry, Oriental Institute—they are only part of a state-wide network of 100 museums reaching all the way down to the Cairo Historical Association at the southern tip.

In any year, a state with the myriad attractions of Illinois—interesting historical sites, scenic outdoor playgrounds, vast water resources for recreation, and unexcelled educational, cultural and entertainment facilities—enjoys visitors from the ends of the earth. But 1968 will be an especially good time to visit Illinois.

We don't celebrate a Sesquicentennial every year.

ILLINOIS *the Jubilee State for '68*

we're having a party a year long and a state wide

When a hostess gives a dinner party, she straightens up the house, gets out her best tableware and prepares her most successful recipes. She wants to make her guests feel truly welcome.

That's how it's going to be in Illinois during 1968. We'll be celebrating 150 years of the good life in Illinois, recalling our progress from the backwoods to the forefront in industry, agriculture, the arts—and hospitality. Throughout the state, the Sesquicentennial year will be observed with pageantry and festivity that will make visiting our historical sites, outdoor playgrounds, museums and cosmopolitan cultural centers more enjoyable than ever.

As governor, I extend to you an official invitation to participate in the Sesquicentennial fun. When you come to Illinois, you'll be truly welcome.

Otto Kerner
Governor

Paul Powell
Secretary of State

Elias Kane
Secretary of State 1818

Paul Powell
Secretary of State 1968

Variety Show

During the Sesquicentennial year, hundreds of different events are planned throughout Illinois. Their imaginative variety is evidence that all work and no play is as unpopular in the Land of Lincoln as anywhere else.