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November 9, 1993

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE:

R & R SERIES HIGHLIGHTS LIFE OF THOMAS LINCOLN, LOCAL HISTORY

CHARLESTON, IL--Three Eastern Illinois University faculty members and the son of a widely acclaimed Lincoln scholar have contributed to Volume IV of the Research and Review Series, focusing on the life of Thomas Lincoln, the father of the nation's sixteenth president, and the early settlers of Coles and Edgar counties.

The Research and Review Series was established in 1988 by Chenault Kelly, English professor emeritus, and EIU to provide alumni and faculty an opportunity to publish works of research.

Dan Hockman, professor of history at Eastern and chair of the Research and Review Series Committee, edited the 44-page monograph on Thomas Lincoln, which traces the Lincoln family from their origin in Massachusetts to their migration to Pennsylvania and later to Virginia, Kentucky, Indiana and finally Illinois.

"I believe anyone interested in the Lincoln family and Illinois history in general will find this monograph particularly interesting. It is written in simple, straightforward language which makes for easy, but interesting reading," Hockman said.

The first half of the monograph is devoted to a chapter on

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"Thomas Lincoln: Father of the Nation's Sixteenth President," edited by EIU history Professor Robert Sterling, and an essay prepared by Val Coleman as a tribute to his father, Charles Coleman, an EIU professor of history, who, before his death, had finished two decades of research and started the writing of a Thomas Lincoln biography.

The first chapter on Thomas Lincoln originally was prepared largely from the notes of Charles Coleman, by 11 graduate students under the supervision of EIU history Professors Lavern Hamand and Donald Tingley in the 1970s.

It details the early years of Thomas Lincoln growing up in Kentucky and Virginia (1778-1816), the death of his father, his accomplishments as a laborer, blacksmith and carpenter, his marriage to Nancy Hanks, his legal battles over land titles and the birth of his famous son, Abraham. It also covers "The Indiana Years (1816-1830)" through "The Illinois Years (1830-1851)" and the relationship between Thomas and Abraham Lincoln.

"In Memory of Charles Coleman" was prepared largely from Charles Coleman's notes. Coleman was a professor of history at Eastern from 1926 to 1960 and was a widely acclaimed Lincoln scholar who published a number of works on the Lincoln family. An excerpt from that chapter reads: "'The conventional wisdom (pre-Charlie Coleman) was that Tom Lincoln was a loser, a failed farmer and a bankrupt who was chased out of Kentucky and Indiana by the sheriff...The truth, once it was uncovered in a dozen

courthouse basements and other archives by my father, was that Tom Lincoln was a hardworking and successful farmer, a fine carpenter and a brave and industrious father."

The final pages of the monograph are devoted to a poem, "At the Grave of Thomas Lincoln," written by EIU English Professor and 1992-93 Board of Governors Universities Distinguished Professor Bruce Guernsey, and a sketch of what life was like in Coles and Edgar counties in the 1830s and 1840s, written by Calvin Smith, EIU speech communication professor. Smith also has authored four chapters in the forthcoming book, Abraham Lincoln and the Western Territories, to be published later this year.

Besides Hockman, others serving on the current Research and Review Series Committee are James Quivey, chair and professor of English; Roger Whitlow, professor of English; Jerry Ellis, professor of chemistry; Michael Leyden, professor of elementary and junior high education; and Daniel Thornburgh, ex-officio, emeritus professor of journalism.

Copies of the Thomas Lincoln monograph are available upon request from Hockman or from the University Union Bookstore.