

STATE QUARTERS

“New Salem” Lincoln for Illinois

Beginning this month, Americans will find another portrait of Lincoln in their pocket change.

by Marilyn A. Reback [ANA129422](#)

ON THE CENT since 1909, Abraham Lincoln now will be seen on another U.S. coin. Scheduled to enter the money supply this month is the Illinois State quarter, 21st in the series. The new design, submitted by artist Thom Cicchelli of Chicago, combines a farm scene, a lakefront view of Chicago, an outline of the state and a portrait of our 16th President.

What to Choose?

Governor George Ryan's design contest attracted more than 6,000 ideas that ranged from prairies and tractors to state symbols and the Sears Tower. Helping sort and narrow the choices was the Illinois Commemorative Quarter Committee, composed of educators, state officials and private citizens (including Chicago numismatist Harlan J. ©

► On the Illinois quarter, rural and urban vistas define the state, as does its pride in its most famous citizen. Lincoln's portrait is adapted from a statue in New Salem.



PHOTO: IMAGE BANK/TIM BIEBER



PHOTO: COURTESY EUGENE FAIRBANKS



PHOTO: UNITED STATES MINT



▲ Sculptor Avard Fairbanks nears completion of his Lincoln statue, assisted by sons Justin (front) and Elliott (right).

Avard Tennyson Fairbanks (1897-1987)

Born in Provo, Utah, Avard Fairbanks received scholarships in 1910 and 1911 to study at the Art Students League in New York under James Earle Fraser (designer of the Buffalo nickel). The young Fairbanks traveled to Paris in 1913 to continue his training at the École des Beaux Arts.

In addition to earning degrees in fine arts, Fairbanks broadened his background with master's and doctoral degrees in anatomy. He received the National Sculpture Society's Herbert Adams Memorial Medal for distinguished service to American sculpture.

Fairbanks' work was displayed in the rotunda of the Palace of Fine Arts at the 1915 Panama-Pacific Exposition. Among his major sculptural works are four busts of Lincoln in the Ford Theater Museum in Washington, D.C., three figures in the U.S. Capitol's Statuary Hall and *The Pioneer Family* at the North Dakota State Capitol. His medallic works include an Old Oregon Trail piece and the National Mineralogical Society's Washington Roebling Medal. The average American of his day was familiar with the original radiator ornaments he created for the Dodge Motor Company, a winged mermaid for the Plymouth (1930) and a griffin for the Hudson (1933).

Berk and Illinois Numismatic Association President Jack D. Huggins). Not surprisingly for the state that holds the copyright on the slogan "Land of Lincoln," its favorite son came out on top. "It's a good choice," agrees Berk. "Only Illinois has Lincoln."

The man portrayed on the new quarter is unlike Victor David Brenner's interpretation on the cent. It is a young, determined Lincoln envisioned by sculptor Avard Fairbanks for his statue in the New Salem State Historic Site.

The "New Salem" Lincoln

Lincoln called New Salem home for four years, from age 22. Here he made choices that led to a life of greatness. In a February 11, 1954, article in the *Michigan Christian Advocate*, scholar Thomas Starr described the significance of this time and place:

It was in New Salem that Lincoln established a reputation as a grocery clerk, a wrestler, a storyteller, an avid reader of every available printed word. . . . Here also he established himself as an honest man. . . . It was in New Salem that Lincoln cast his first vote in an election. It was there that he became a soldier. . . . In New Salem he decided to become a lawyer; also to enter politics. . . .

The New Salem statue was the second monument Fairbanks made to

Lincoln. In 1954 he shared his feelings about this particular rendering:

. . . it was a challenging opportunity to bring to the people of America this phase of the determining years of his life. . . . To symbolize it I chose to compose Lincoln with the implement of his past activities, an ax (in his left hand), showing him as a capable stalwart man of the frontier, and a law book (in his right hand), portraying him also as a man of mental pursuits and capabilities. . . .

The sculpture of the New Salem Lincoln portrays him as tall, broad-shouldered, and courageous, with the strength and spirit of young manhood. His eyes are deep and far-seeing. There is vision and anticipation in his entire countenance. His whole attitude of mind and body looks outward and forward, as if clearly foreseeing a significant destiny for himself and his fellow men.

As for the choice of the "Resolute Lincoln" of New Salem for the quarter, Governor Ryan said, "I am proud that Lincoln is standing boldly in the center of the design. His resolve and example mean a great deal to people in Illinois and throughout the world." Sculptor Fairbanks likely would agree. ◎

Learn More . . .

www.avardfairbanks.com
www.lincolnsnewsalem.com



▲ George T. Morgan (of silver dollar fame) created Lincoln's portrait on the 1918 Illinois Centennial commemorative half dollar.

2003 State Quarters

- Illinois • Alabama • Maine
- Arkansas • Missouri