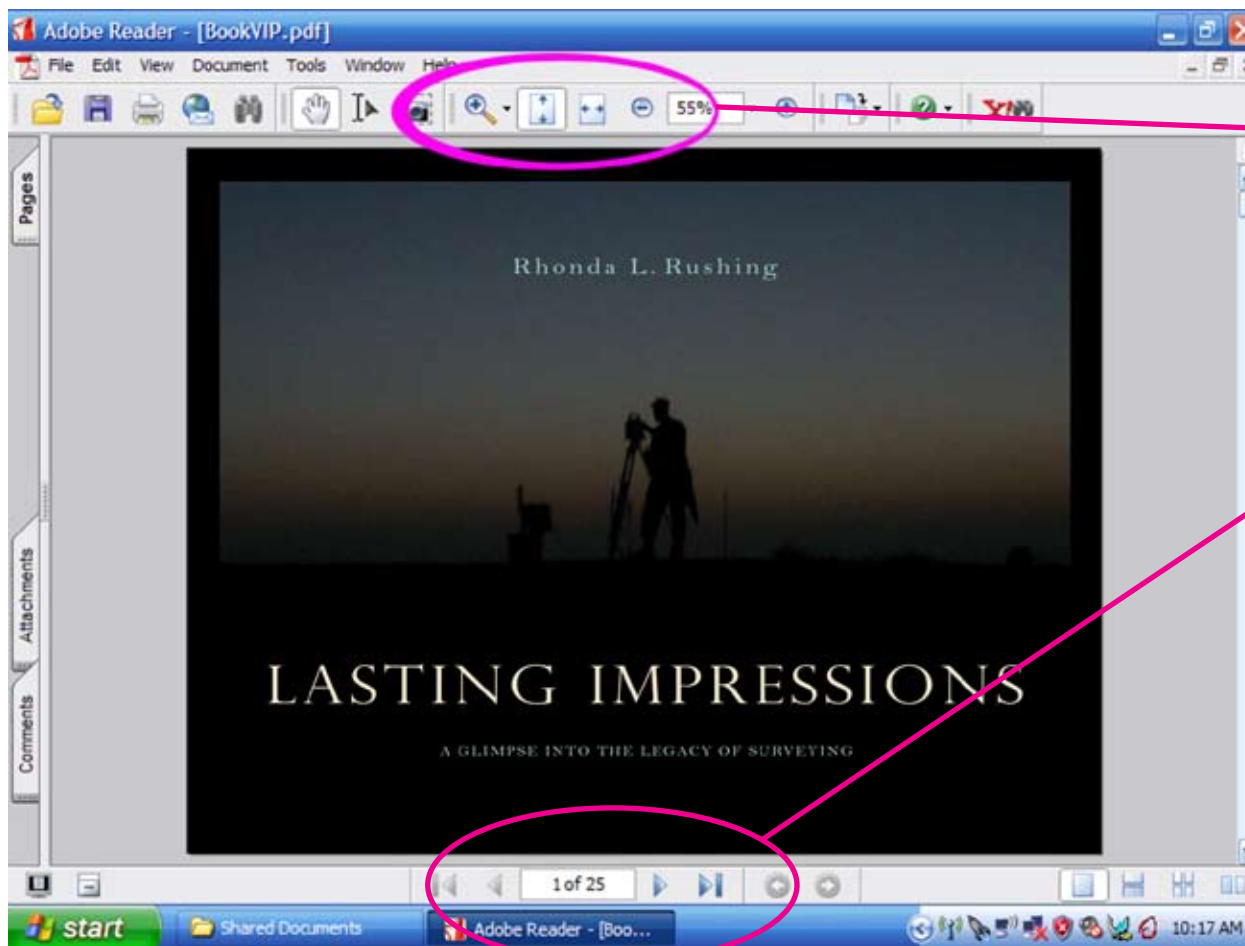


LASTING IMPRESSIONS

A SAMPLE OF THE ABRAHAM LINCOLN SURVEY MONUMENT



Instructions for Viewing

Zooming:

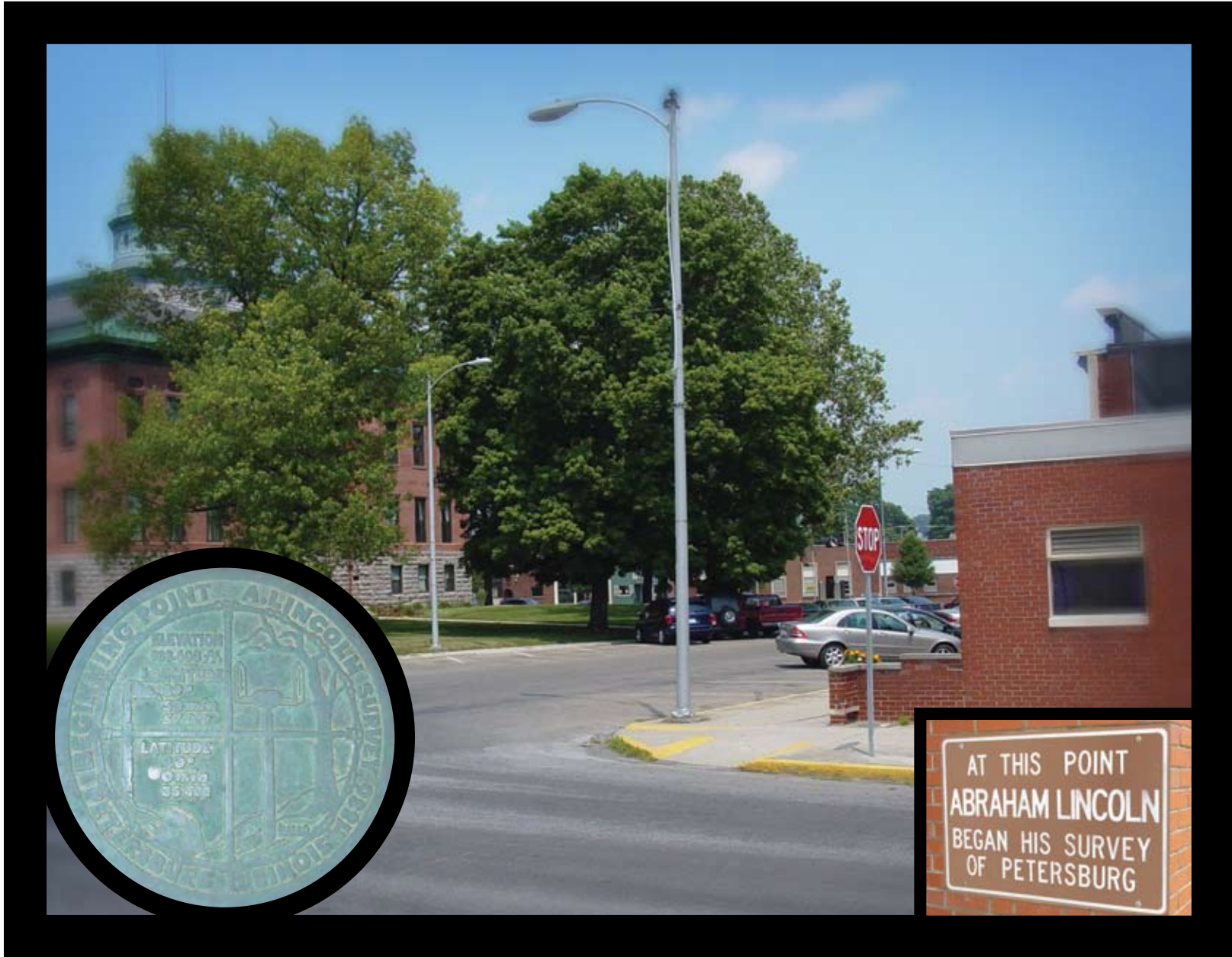
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ABRAHAM LINCOLN SURVEY MONUMENT

A B R A H A M L i n c o l n was a deputy surveyor of Sangamon County, Illinois, from 1833 to 1837, while living in the Central Illinois village of New Salem. He performed about 33 land surveys, and laid out three roads and five towns. One of the most important surveys he completed was laying out the town of Petersburg, Illinois in 1836.

Lincoln would start his town surveys by setting a stone in what would be the southwest corner of the public square. To mark that point, the town of Petersburg had a bronze marker installed over the stone so that visitors would be able to see the point of beginning of the Petersburg survey. While performing the survey, Lincoln stayed at John Bennett's new hotel where he drew the survey plat and used his room as an office. Lincoln signed the plat on February 17, 1836, six days after his 27th birthday.

There is an interesting story told about the Petersburg survey. The story is that Lincoln "skewed" the line. Some 25 years after the town was platted, several property owners along one side of an outlying street had trouble establishing their property line. They consulted Lincoln's original

plat but got no relief. A committee was sent to Springfield, the county seat of Sangamon County, to consult with a distinguished surveyor. He could not offer an answer.

The problem eventually went to court. While the trial was pending, an old Irishman named McGuire, who had returned to Petersburg for the winter, heard about the problem. "I can tell you about that," he said. He went on, "I helped carry the chain when Lincoln did the survey. Over there where they are having the problem over the lines when Lincoln was locating the street he straightened up from his instrument and said, 'If I run the street right through it will cut four feet off of [so and so's] house. That house is all he has in the world and could never get another one. I reckon it won't hurt anything out here if I skew the line a little and miss his house.'"

Later, when Mr. Bennett became a developer, Lincoln would survey what became Bennett's Addition. He signed the plat on June 6, 1836. The survey marker is located diagonally across the street from the new Illinois Professional Land Surveyors Association Museum of Surveying.
 - Robert E. Church, Executive Director, I.P.L.S.A.

It's interesting to note that 25 years later Lincoln was not only President, but the Civil War was just getting underway. Even if the President's mistake was obvious, who would want to be the Illinois surveyor pointing out the mistake of the state's favorite son?



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