

# INDIANA MAGAZINE OF HISTORY

Vol. XIII

DECEMBER, 1917

No. 4

## Lincoln in Indiana

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### INDIANA UNCLE AND COUSINS

"When I send a man to buy a horse for me I expect him to tell me his points, and not the number of hairs in his tail."

The removal of Josiah Lincoln, uncle of the President, to Indiana was some four years prior to the admission of the State into the Union. It appears that he, like many others who lived in slave territory, hearing of the fine prospects in the "Indian country to the north," joined the tide of emigrants coming up from the south, and with no particular objective in view journeyed out into this wilderness, not knowing whither he went save that, in common with substantially all of the pioneers, he did not stop until the great oak forests in the hills were reached, where there was abundant, ever-flowing springs of clear water.

The location chosen was in Harrison county, where, at the little town of Corydon, was then located the seat of government of the territory, which four years after his arrival became the capital of the State. The land which he selected was originally covered with a heavy growth of timber, was well watered and doubtless was considered a good location by the pioneer; but it is now largely barren and comparatively valueless.

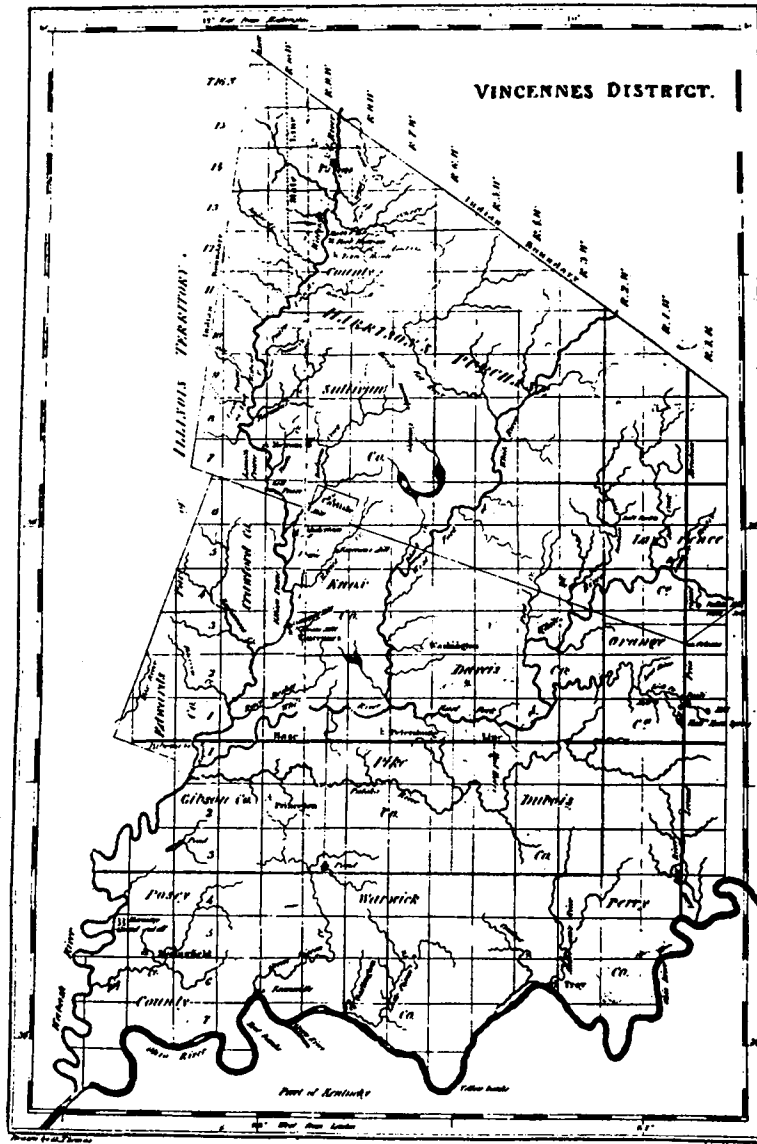
Thomas Lincoln, the father of the President and younger brother of Josiah, came on a visit to this section of the State

a short while prior to his own removal from Kentucky to Spencer county, Indiana. The inhabitants of the territory at the time of Thomas Lincoln's visit were looking forward to its early admission into the Union. It was while visiting his brother that Thomas Lincoln decided to seek a home in the wilderness of Indiana, making choice of a place a few miles farther west.

Comparatively little is known of Josiah Lincoln. However, what is remembered possesses at least some value as setting forth certain family traits. In personal appearance he somewhat resembled his brother Thomas, being rather rugged, compactly built, of dark complexion—as were all of his descendants. Moreover, he had a broad, hearty laugh and was given to story telling. The writer personally knew the older descendants of Josiah Lincoln, as well as those of the generation following.

All of the Lincolns in Indiana during the campaign of 1860 were Democrats and voted for Judge Douglas for President in preference to their illustrious kinsman, with the single exception of Benjamin. He was early influenced politically and otherwise by his mother's relatives, who were Republicans, and this accounts for the support given to his relative rather than any ties of consanguinity or mere family loyalty. Moreover, the larger portion of the younger Lincolns have ever been and are now Democrats. Only one of this branch of the family became a Civil war soldier, and he, Warden Lincoln, having volunteered and been mustered into the ranks under the excitement of the times, found occasion later, as claimed by some of his relatives, to express regret at having enlisted, but he made a good soldier, serving as a private. He had the misfortune of being taken prisoner and for a time was in Libby prison, but being later placed on Belle Isle, was exchanged and reached home. Doubtless, had it been known by those in authority at the prison that he was a cousin of the Abolitionist in the White House, he would not have been granted his freedom.

Mordecai and Joseph, brothers of Warden, were drafted. Mordecai, not desirous of personally serving, sent a substitute, while Joseph, entertaining the same attitude in the



INDIANA IN 1816.—From Thomas' *Travels*

matter, and not being possessed of sufficient means to obtain a substitute, took French leave, so his relatives assert, of Indiana and succeeded in eluding the authorities by repairing to the State of Illinois until after the close of hostilities. The political attitude of these Lincolns toward their kinsman in the White House, and their criticism of the conduct of the war by the administration, were in keeping with the attitude of many of their neighbors in southern Indiana, and indeed of many throughout the entire North.

Southern Indiana and southern Illinois, both having been very largely peopled from the South, it was not strange that there was a large element whose sympathies were favorable to the Southern Confederacy. But there were large numbers in both States, many of them friends and supporters of Judge Douglas, who were intensely loyal to the Union.

Illinois, however, was more fortunate than was Indiana in one very important particular, in that General John A. Logan, a Democrat up to the fall of Fort Sumter and for some time thereafter, resided in that section of the State, and being loyal to the flag wielded a salutary influence over his followers.

The southern portion of Indiana did not possess a leader of the prominence of Logan to turn the tide in favor of the Union in this crisis. There is small wonder that the Knights of the Golden Circle and kindred disloyal organizations flourished. But notwithstanding this, the majority of the soldiers who went out from first to last during the great war from southern Indiana were Democrats.

The writer's father was a Douglas Democrat, casting his vote for the "Little Giant" in preference to the "Railsplitter," and never manifested at any time any partiality for Lincoln. While he saw no military service, being an invalid, three of his brothers served the Union.

Practically all of the numerous descendants of Josiah Lincoln were and are rather short of stature, maintaining to the latest generation those characteristics manifested in their progenitor and which may be said to be distinctively Lincoln traits.

They almost uniformly have coarse black hair, dark eyes,

and somewhat given to humor which in certain instances has been quite marked. For the most part they have been small farmers, the exception being that two of them for a time, like their cousin Abraham, attempted to keep a general store, and it was attended with about as much success as was his venture—"it winked out." One of the younger generation, Joseph, the son of Mordecai, is an auctioneer, and he especially possesses some degree of wit and humor.

This branch of the President's family have always been regarded by their neighbors as good citizens, possessing splendid neighborly qualities. All of them have been, and are poor, yet honesty has ever characterized them. They have always had the reputation of being peaceful and inoffensive, possessing in substantially every instance a high sense of honor; and if any liberties were attempted with this, or intentional provocation in any form given, it was met with a challenge to a personal encounter. The absence of personal fear or cowardice is very marked among them and in certain ones there was a venturesome spirit. The writer well recalls hearing "Mord" Lincoln say: "My rule for fording Big Blue when she's on a tear is: watch for the hosses' ears and as long as I c'n see 'em I'm all right."

While none of the Indiana Lincolns possessed unusual physical strength or marked mental ability, yet they were generally hardy and rugged, and occasionally there was one who in the common schools gave evidence of possessing more than ordinary ability. However, their schooling has been confined to the grades in substantially every case.

They have maintained certain family names, such as Mordecai, Joseph, Thomas and Benjamin, but there has never been an Abraham among them, and it is highly probable that there never will be. It should be stated, however, that one son of Warden, who served in the Union army during the Civil war, is called "Abe," not by the family, but by his school-mates and others merely as a nickname.

During the Civil war when there were those in this section of the State accustomed to indulge in caustic criticism of the administration at Washington in conducting the war and of Mr. Lincoln in particular, calling him "the Black Abolitionist,"

etc., none of his Indiana relatives resented this, and while they did not agree with their kinsman in the White House politically, they refrained from indulging in the use of severe and clearly objectionable personal remarks themselves. Yet they were pleased rather than not when others pointed out mistakes of the administration.

After the close of the war they assumed an attitude of silence to the rising fame of the President, neither manifesting pleasure nor indicating any displeasure, and this attitude has been kept up to the present time; so much so, in fact, that in almost every instance when approached and engaged in conversation concerning the Great Emancipator they assume a listening attitude, apparently proud of the great fame of their kinsman Abraham, but loath to say anything themselves. The writer does not recall ever hearing an Indiana Lincoln indulge in any language that could by any possible construction be construed to mean a boast of his relationship to the President.

It may be said, therefore, that the attitude of this branch of the Lincolns toward the President is that they are proud of the fact that their kinsman became illustrious and made for himself a great name, but they are in every case quite content to look upon this in common with the millions, not desirous at all of receiving any notoriety by reason of their kinship to him. This rather exceptional disposition is not due to any petty jealousy, certainly not attributable to ignorance or any remnant of ante-bellum political prejudice, but is rather due to a distinctive family trait so remarkable as to be true of all of them; that is, they possess a mingled modesty and honesty which forbids undue personal exaltation or any disposition whatever to reap where they have not sown.

The political predilections of the Indiana Lincolns is not a thing to be regarded as at all strange or such as to occasion wonder, since the earlier members of the family, including Thomas, the father of the President, and even the President himself, were all Democrats in politics originally. Before his leaving Indiana for Illinois Abraham was a pronounced Jacksonian Democrat, priding himself in this, and John Hanks is the authority for saying that he offered to whip a man in Illinois soon after their arrival in that State who was speaking

rather disparagingly of Jackson. So pronounced was Lincoln's attitude during the Adams and Jackson campaign that some of the old pioneer friends recalled a couplet or two of a song that "Abe" and Dennis Hanks were in the habit of singing:

"Let auld acquaintance be forgot.  
And never brought to mind,  
And Jackson be our President  
And Adams left behind."

The manner of life of the older members of the Indiana Lincolns, their personal appearance, their contentment and indeed joy amid struggles with poverty, bear a marked similarity to that of Thomas, the father of the President, so that it may be said that their life was lived on a somewhat similar plane to his. Although the location of the President's boyhood home in Spencer county is but a few miles from where Josiah Lincoln settled and where may still be found many of his descendants, yet none of these has ever visited this section, and not one of them was present on the occasion of the unveiling of the Nancy Hanks Lincoln monument in the year 1902. Likewise, none of these Indiana relatives has ever made a pilgrimage to Springfield to see the grave of the President, or gone to the nation's capitol.

If there is discerned in the President's paternal relatives a reticence somewhat exceptional, as well as a disposition to avoid any accusation of desiring to take advantage of or in any way profit by the good fortune of a kinsman, it certainly stands out in bold contrast to the behavior of all of his maternal relatives, the Hankses, who straightway importuned Mr. Lincoln to befriend them on his accession to the presidency, a thing, however, which he failed to do. The Indiana branch of the President's family never so much as wrote him a letter or in any other way attempted to communicate with him for any assistance looking to the liberation of Warden Lincoln from a southern prison, where he was known to be undergoing all of the usual discomforts of prison life, perhaps suffering some indignities by reason of his name and blood.

In seeking to account for Mr. Lincoln's greatness it is therefore not at all necessary to resort to certain doubt-

ful expedients or envelop his fame in mystery, as some have been disposed to do. Such persons have gone to the extreme of lightly esteeming both his maternal and paternal ancestry, and have attributed his uncommon endowment to the example and influence of his stepmother, Mrs. Sally Bush Lincoln. Others, by reason of the obscure origin of his mother, Nancy Hanks, have supposed that his greatness is traceable to this source, and yet still others, going on the theory that it was necessary to have a great ancestry in order to account for such a remarkable man as was Mr. Lincoln, eagerly sought to trace some connection with the noted Lincoln family of the East, and when it became apparent that they were of common origin this was seized upon and became all that in their estimation had hitherto been found wanting.

The proper attitude concerning the matter, it seems, would be that Mr. Lincoln was indebted equally to both the Lincolns and the Hankses for certain well-known traits of his character, but since the Lincoln traits unquestionably predominated in him and his connection with the Massachusetts Lincolns has been established, the historian is relieved from the temptation of overshadowing his life with certain elements of mystery. For no matter what currents swept into his blood, and whatever in his character may be attributable to these, the fact remains that the President possessed those well-marked family characteristics, both physical and mental, so peculiar to the Lincolns.

#### LINCOLN'S POVERTY

A friend came to him to borrow a "biled" shirt. "I have only two," said Lincoln; "the one I have just taken off and the one I have on. Which will you take?"

The elder Abraham Lincoln, father of Thomas, appears to have been a man of passing wealth for that day. On his reaching Kentucky from Virginia in the year 1780, he entered on large tracts of land, and was apparently destined to prosper; but subjected as the pioneers were to the depredations of marauding Indians, he fell a victim to these vindictive and merciless foes in the year 1788. The story of the manner of his death and some of the attendant circumstances have often been related by biographers of his grandson.



This story was one of the legacies of pioneer days bequeathed to his sons by Josiah Lincoln. This and other stories, they allege, were often related by him about the fire-side on winter evenings, describing somewhat in detail this particularly tragic scene. He told of the father being shot and killed from ambush by the bloodthirsty savages while he was laboring in a clearing a short distance from the house, accompanied by his three sons, Mordecai, himself, and Thomas, the father of the President. When the shot was fired and the father fell, both Mord and Josiah immediately fled, Mord going to the house to secure a gun. Taking deliberate aim at an ornament on the breast of an Indian brave, who, with uplifted tomahawk, was in the act of dispatching his baby brother Thomas, he fired, killing him instantly. Josiah having left his brother Mord to the protection of the two sisters and his mother, ran for neighborly aid, which he straightway procured, and on their return all the Indians had departed, save a wounded one, who had crawled into the top of a fallen tree. No quarter was shown to this unfortunate, and while the circumstance produced in Mord such ungovernable hatred for the redskins as to cause him to slay them on the least provocation, or no provocation at all, ever afterward, yet it does not appear that it so affected either Thomas or Josiah.

Although the elder Lincoln possessed large tracts of land, yet the old law of primogeniture caused his entire estate to pass into the hands of his eldest son, Mord, who, it appears, did not in any way aid his brothers. He managed so poorly as to possess but little more than either Josiah or Thomas on the occasion of his removal from Kentucky, which date is not certain, but is known to have been after approaching old age.

At the time of the father's death in the year 1788, Thomas, the fourth child and youngest son, was ten years of age. Thus left fatherless at the same age that his illustrious son was bereft of a mother, he led a somewhat checkered career. He became more or less a wanderer, for we catch glimpses of him visiting and laboring as a "hired man" for his uncle Jacob on a tributary of the Holston river in Tennessee; then in Breckenridge county, Kentucky, where at one time he whipped

a noted bully in "just three minutes," coming out of the encounter without a scratch. In 1803, at the age of twenty-five, he purchased a farm, and in the year 1806 he was in Hardin county, learning the carpenter's trade with Joseph Hanks. His vagrant and wandering career had given him a plentiful supply of anecdotes and yarns, which it is said he could tell very cleverly, and which was perhaps one of the best, if not the only, trait ever certainly bequeathed by him to his son Abraham.

The father of the President has been described by numerous writers as being in person comparatively short and stout, standing five feet, ten inches in his shoes. His hair was dark and coarse, complexion brown, his face round and full, his eyes gray, and his nose large and prominent. He weighed at different times from one hundred and seventy to one hundred and ninety-six pounds. He was so "tight and compact" that Dennis Hanks declared, "he never could find the points of separation between his ribs, though he felt for them often." He was a little stoop-shouldered, and walked with a slow, halting step. He was sinewy and brave, but his habitually peaceable disposition once fairly overborne, he became a tremendous man in a rough-and-tumble fight.

At the time of his marriage to Nancy Hanks, June 12th, 1806, Thomas Lincoln could neither read nor write, an accomplishment that his wife possessed, thereby causing her to be esteemed and looked upon with more or less wonder by the illiterate pioneers. This circumstance, by way of contrast with her husband's deficiency in this and certain other things, unfortunately caused many of her son's biographers, in attempting to eulogize the wife and mother, to esteem lightly whatever of excellence Thomas Lincoln possessed.

It has been the fashion of many of these biographers of President Lincoln to speak disparagingly of his father, and no word in any caricature of his supposed shortcomings has been used more often than that of "shiftless." They have accused him of improvidence; made the occasion of his learning the carpenter's trade a mere pretext; and refused to allow that he was anything more than a pretender with tools after actually learning the trade and doing more or less work. They

have found fault with his lack of ambition. They charge him with inability to pay for a farm of some two hundred acres which he purchased at the age of twenty-five years, three years prior to his marriage. They have professed to see in his three removals in Kentucky, his going from that State to Indiana, thence to Illinois, and two or three changes of location in that State, nothing but evidence of a confirmed nomadic wanderer. These and many similar accusations against him have been made from the first biography of his son to the last.

When the governor of a certain State on one occasion expostulated with his aged mother for granting certain indulgencies to his little son, she straightway admonished him by saying: "When you, sir, shall have reared as good and great a son as I have, then you may come to me with your theories and they shall receive due and proper consideration, but not before." So in like manner, when these ruthless, not to say heartless, critics of Thomas Lincoln, the father of the President, shall take into consideration the fact that while he did have certain defects of character, even to the point of being actually shiftless, yet be it said to his everlasting credit that no man since the world began has ever been father of such a son.

It is submitted that for a boy fatherless at ten, "kicked and cuffed about from pillar to post", with no money nor influential friends, with absolutely no school advantages—certainly not having the chance that his son had, and yet accomplishing certain things—he deserves some credit at least. He appears to have been steady enough and sufficiently settled in life not only to learn a trade, but to become the owner of a farm at twenty-five, which fact alone indicates at least that he had some native ability and force of character. It is related that he possessed the best kit of carpenter's tools in his county. He was regarded as a man possessed of sufficient ability to warrant the civil authorities in appointing him road surveyor or supervisor, which, while a position of no great moment, meant something in the way of leadership and responsibility. When all these facts are taken into consideration it must be said that Thomas Lincoln was a man of some

ability, and certainly not deserving the treatment that he has received at the hands of the biographers of his son.

Some time during the late summer of the year 1816 Thomas Lincoln built a raft on Rolling Fork of Salt river, on which he loaded most of his effects, consisting of a tool chest, a number of barrels of whiskey, and such other things as he possessed, save a few lighter and more needful household articles which his family would make use of in his absence. He proceeded to make a journey down Salt river to the Ohio and thence to Indiana, where he had decided to seek his fortunes in an effort to better his condition.

That the elder Lincoln was of a restless and roving disposition is beyond dispute, and his repeated removals "to better his condition" to some extent justify the many charges of his biographers of his being a mere wanderer and squatter. In spite of the apparent justness of these accusations, most of these proposed ventures promised well, and certainly in some one or two instances there was abundant excuse for the venture made. We have the best of authority—his illustrious son—for believing that he was actuated by good and sufficient motives for his removal from Kentucky to Indiana; and it appears that no better reasons were ever offered by any pioneer for a change of location than those in favor of Lincoln's removal from Indiana to Illinois in 1830. President Lincoln, in discussing the reasons for their leaving the State of Kentucky, said that it was "partly on account of slavery, but chiefly on account of the difficulty in land titles in Kentucky." It should be remembered also that for some seven generations the family had been pioneers in as many States or counties, and Thomas Lincoln was but manifesting the same disposition that appears to have possessed his forbears.

Being a carpenter, it is to be presumed that the elder Lincoln had no difficulty in constructing a craft that under ordinary circumstances would prove seaworthy. It is believed that in view of the fact that he had made at least two flat-boat trips down the Mississippi river to New Orleans, he was a fairly good waterman. On this trip soon after entering the Ohio from the mouth of Salt river his boat or raft capsized, causing the loss of the larger part of his cargo. We are told,

however, that he succeeded in righting the raft, fishing up some of the whisky and tools, and contenting himself as best he could with the loss of the remainder, he continued his journey, finally docking at Thompson's, now called Gage's Landing, a short distance below the town of Troy, Indiana. His reason for choosing Spencer county rather than settling near his brother Josiah in Harrison county was largely due to the fact that he was dependent upon the river for conveyance of his effects to a new location, and having "run the river" he had some knowledge of this region where he eventually located.

After making his lonely journey and effecting a safe landing at Thompson's, he placed his cargo under the care of a settler by the name of Posey. Since this man preferred the river front to the interior, and could make use of the boat, it was sold to him, and the pioneer "struck out on foot" in the wilderness in search of a new home. After going inland some fifteen miles he met with a man by the name of Carter, with whom he had more or less acquaintance. (Lincoln City is in Carter township.) This circumstance seems to have largely determined his choice of the location which he made in the "midst of the bush". There were seven families residing in this region when Thomas Lincoln made choice of his future home.

The site chosen by Thomas Lincoln was admirable from every standpoint save one, and that defect outweighed all of the splendid advantages it otherwise possessed. It did not have a never-failing spring; in fact, there was not at that time any water on it. Later, as Dennis Hanks stated, "Tom Lincoln riddled his land like a honey comb for water, but did not succeed in finding it."

Although Lincoln proceeded to take possession of the quarter section of land in true pioneer fashion by cutting and piling brush at the corners, he became in fact a squatter until the month of October, 1817, when he journeyed to Vincennes and formally entered the land, although the patent was not issued until June, 1827.

The site chosen for his "camp" was on a rather high knoll sloping in every direction. In ten days after landing his craft

at Posey's he announced that his "half faced camp" was ready for occupancy, having in that time cut the poles or logs and notched them, doubtless being assisted by Carter and others. Crossing the Ohio, he walked back to the old home in Kentucky—a distance of about one hundred miles—and securing the friendly aid of his brother-in-law, who supplied him with two horses, he took his little family, consisting of his wife, his daughter Sarah, aged nine, and son Abraham, aged seven, and "packed through to Posey's".

The town of Troy was at this time a place of some importance; indeed, of all those towns in the southern and western portion of the State, it was second only to Vincennes in size. In the year prior to the coming of the Lincolns a settler by the name of Hoskins had been employed to blaze a trail from Troy to the village of Darlington, the county-seat town to the west, in order that "the mail carrier might not get lost". This blazed trail passed through the region where Gentryville was a little later laid out, and it was over this trail, a "bridle path", that Thomas Lincoln moved his family and household effects to his new home. A wagon had in some manner been procured for this purpose, although such vehicles were not at all common, for the first wagon brought to this part of the State was by one John Small, a Kentuckian, in the year 1814.

After encountering considerable difficulty on account of felling trees and the removal of logs, making their comparatively short journey of fifteen miles a very tedious and trying one, they at length reached the half-faced camp. The time of the arrival of the new "settlers" was during the last half of the summer of 1816. At any rate, it appears that sufficient time was left after their arrival to enable them to cultivate "a few vegetables and a little corn."

The new home to which Thomas Lincoln took his little family was a singular one indeed. As has been indicated, it was made of small sapling logs or poles and had but three sides closed, the fourth being left open, where a bonfire or log heap was kept burning during cold weather, and not only served to ward off the wintry blasts, but afforded the only means they had for cooking. The little, one-room, pole cabin was fourteen feet square, without windows, ceiling or floor,

and of course there was no necessity for a door. The household and kitchen furniture was only such in name. Aside from a small amount of bedding, a Dutch oven, skillet and some tinware, there was at first nothing with which to furnish the home. A rude bedstead was constructed in one corner, and in another corner a pile of leaves gathered from the surrounding forest constituted the couch of the future President.

The woods surrounding the cabin furnished an abundant harvest of wild grapes, crab apples (Johnny Appleseed had unfortunately never reached this section), service (sarvis), black and strawberries were quite plentiful.

The writer recalls hearing his grandmother (who came from the South a short while after the coming of the Lincolns) tell of the abundance of wild strawberries in this region. They drove through acres of these berries, and so luxuriant were the vines and so plentiful the harvest that the limbs and even portions of the body of a white horse were discolored, as if the animal had waded in blood. There were nuts of various sorts to be had in the forest, such as hickory, pecan, hazel, and the white and black walnut. Moreover, the virgin forest was a hunter's paradise, there being bears, deer and choice wild fowls, such as turkeys, geese and ducks. In addition to these, there were the smaller game birds and animals. Any undue amount of pity and sympathy bestowed on pioneers dwelling in such a land of plenty is wasted. While not perhaps flowing with milk and honey, yet in so far as the mere matter of supplying the larder was concerned it could scarcely have been more highly favored. There is small wonder that Dennis Hanks was moved to exclaim in his old age, when recalling these years spent in Indiana: "I enjoyed myself then more than I ever have since."

The first winter spent in Indiana was, so far as bodily comfort was concerned, the most trying time in the life of the future President, as he lived quite on the level, if not below, that of thousands of slaves whom he afterward liberated. With one side of their little cabin open to the elements and the rebellious smoke again and again sweeping into the camp, it furnished not only a striking contrast to the later life of the President, but so far surpassing anything in history as to leave little chance for a parallel.

The elder Lincoln has been censured from first to last for his failure to provide better accommodations not only during the first year of his Indiana life, but is charged with continued improvidence and neglect, being called lazy by many of the biographers of his son. It must be remembered in speaking of Thomas Lincoln's poverty that while he was poor indeed, yet poverty was quite the rule of all the pioneers of this early period. Though it can not be claimed that he was especially "work brittle" and ambitious enough to go out and seek labor, yet he never avoided work offered. He seems to have rested upon that passage of Scripture which says to let every day provide for itself. Nevertheless, the writer failed to find among his pioneer neighbors any charge that Thomas Lincoln, and his son Abraham in particular, were "lazy". On the contrary, it was asserted that while the elder Lincoln lacked initiative, taking life quite easy, he was content if perchance crops were abundant and labor to be had. When the morose and gloomy made doleful prophecies as to a hard winter and failure of crops, he was buoyant in spirit, optimistic, laughing and even joking with his neighbors concerning their fears. Although not regarded as a hard-working man for himself, he made a "good hand for others" and was at work almost continually.

So much has been said concerning the poverty of Lincoln's youth that it is proposed here to examine the evidence from an angle hitherto not taken. One of the boyhood friends of Lincoln, Wesley Hall, some two years younger than the President, related a number of incidents concerning this period, and one in particular bearing upon his poverty.

Wesley Hall's father was a Kentuckian who had moved to Indiana, settling some four miles from the Lincoln cabin, but reaching this section some time after the coming of the Lincolns. The elder Hall was regarded as quite prosperous for one in those days. Furnishing some justification for this claim, he operated a tanyard, in addition to owning and cultivating a large farm, making shipments of leather by way of the river to southern markets. This necessitated at certain times the employment of a number of men, and he frequently employed both the elder Lincoln, as well as his son Abraham.



On one occasion during the early winter Wesley Hall was sent to mill beyond Gentryville, a short distance from the Lincoln cabin, but since the Halls lived to the east some four miles it was more than a five miles' journey. According to the pioneer custom, no favors were shown youth or age in certain things, and the rule especially obtained in the matter of going to mill, for each one had to "take his turn." Such was the law.

Young Hall found upon his arrival on this occasion that a number of men and boys had preceded him, and by the time his turn came the entire day had almost passed. During the last half of the afternoon a severe snow storm had set in, and by the time the miller carried out his "grist" and assisted him to mount preparatory to making the homeward journey some inches of snow had fallen. This alarmed the pioneer lad, lest some mishap should befall him and he should lose his way through the forest, become a prey to wild animals, or succumb to the cold. More especially was he so impressed since nightfall was fast approaching and the snow was driving furiously in his face. On reaching the turn in the road leading up to the Lincoln cabin he decided to go there for the night. Riding up in front of the silent, snow-mantled house, he hallooed in true pioneer fashion a time or two: "Hel-lo! Hel-lo!" Just here it will be proper to permit Mr. Hall to tell the remainder of his story:

Bye and bye I heard the door begin to creak on its wooden hinges, and then through the storm I saw old Tom a shadin' his eyes with his hand a tryin' to see who I wuz. And purty soon, satisfyin' himself that it wuz me, he leaned back and laughed a big broad laugh, and then a startin' out to where I wuz he says, says he: "Is that you Wesley? You get down from thar and come in out of the weather." So I commenct to git ready to slide off my sack and by the time I got ready to light, old Tom wuz there and helped me down. Then a turnin' around lookin' towards the cabin, he calls out a time or two, big and loud: "Abe! O. Abe! Abe!" And he aint more'n called till I seen Abe a comin' through the door, and when he asked what wuz wanted, and seein' who I wuz at the same time, old Tom says: "Come out here and git Wesley's grist while I put his hoss in the stable. Wesley's mighty nigh froze I reckon." Then he laughed again. Well, I wuz cold I c'n tell you fer I hadn't had anything to eat ceptin' parched corn since mornin'. Well, as I say, old Tom told Abe to come and get my sack, and I noticed as Abe come out to

where I wuz he hadn't but one shoe on, and thinks I to myself, what's up with Abe fer I saw Abe wuz a walkin' on the ball of his heel so's to hold his big toe up which wuz all tied up, and by this time I reckon there wuz mighty nigh six inches of snow on the ground. Yit Abe's foot wuz so big and long it didn't make no difference if the snow wuz that deep. Abe hadn't any trouble about a keepin' his sore toe above the snow line. When I asked him what wuz the matter with his foot he told me he'd split his big toe open with an ax out in the clearin' that day. Well, Abe then wuz as big and stout as he ever wuz, and so he jest reached over and took that sack of meal with one hand and layin' it across his arm, him and me went into the house while old Tom put the hoss in the pole stable.

I set down in front of the fireplace and commenct to thaw out, and in a little bit old Tom come in, and a settin' down by me a slappin' his hands together and then a rubbin' em so, like he allus' done, he says, says he: "Wesley, you got purty cold I reckon, did you?" And when I commenct to say I did, Mrs. Lincoln come in and she says, after we'd passed the time of day, she says, says she: "Wesley, I reckon you're hungry." And I told her I wuz; and then I told her about the parched corn. And she says: "We haint got no meal to bake bread. We're out just now, but a pointin' to the big bank of embers that I'd already noticed in the fireplace and of course knowd what it meant, she says, says she, "we've got some potatoes in thar a bakin' and we'll git a bite fer you purty soon." At that I spoke up and I says, says I: "Mrs. Lincoln, jst help yerself out of my sack thar." And so she done as I told her.

Well, old Tom and Abe and me went on a talkin' and purty soon I heard a funny grindin' noise back of me, and I looked around to see what it wuz, and it wuz Mrs. Lincoln a hollerin' out a big turnip.

Just at this point in Mr. Hall's narrative he paused and asked the writer if he could guess what Mrs. Lincoln was "hollerin' out that turnip fer". When some two or three attempts had been made to solve this mystery and all proved to be clearly wrong, to the evident amusement of the old gentleman, he resumed his narrative by saying:

She was makin' a grease lamp. Course I'd seen a many one. She hollered it out and cut a small groove in it on the lip, and after she'd filled it with hog's lard and laid a wick in the notch, and lit it, she handed it to me, and a butcher knife to Abe, and she says: "Boys, go and get me some bacon." So me and Abe went out to a little pole smoke house and I held up the light while Abe cut a half moon out of a side of bacon. So Mrs. Lincoln went on with gittin' supper, and bye and bye she says: "Supper's ready." So when we set down to it we had corn

cakes, baked potatoes and friend bacon. After the supper dishes was washed up old Tom, a slappin' his hands together and a rubbin' em like I say, he says, says he: "Now, Abe, bring out your book and read fer us." Old Tom couldn't read himself, but he wuz proud that Abe could, and many a time he'd brag about how smart Abe wuz to the folks around about. Well, Abe reached up on a shelf where he kept his books and then a stirrin' up the fire on the hearth with some dry stuff he had piled in one corner by the jamb, he commenced to read.

When the writer asked as to whether the narrator remembered what book it was that Abe read from, he straightway replied:

Oh, yes! It wuz the life of Ben Franklin. He read to us till bed time, and that night Abe and me slept together up in the loft. We got up there through a scuttle hole in one corner of the cellin', and to git up to it we had to climb up a peg ladder made by boring holes in the logs and insertin' wooden pins. I remember the bedstid which of course I saw many a time. It wuz a mighty sorry affair; still it answered the purpose. A hole wuz bored in the north wall and a rail-like piece wuz sloped off to fit this. The same thing wuz done on the west wall, and these two rails wuz brought together and fastened in the same way to an upright post out in the floor and then acrost these wuz laid split boards or whipped plank, or some thin slats rived out, and on these wuz a gunny sack filled with leaves gathered from the woods. On this Abe and me slept covered with bear skins.

Lincoln's bedfellow on this snowy winter night lived to see him in the White House.

#### LINCOLN'S BOYHOOD ASSOCIATES

"Gold is good in its place, but loving, brave patriotic men are better than gold. For my part I have striven, and will strive to avoid placing any obstacle in the way. So long as I have been here I have not willingly planted a thorn in any man's bosom." .

In the thousands of pamphlets and more extended notices of the life of Abraham Lincoln there is, for the most part, comparatively little said concerning the adolescent or formative period in his career. Because of the universal interest in Mr. Lincoln's life, any contribution bearing upon any phase of his career should be of interest and not wholly without value. Nevertheless, it is true that there has been but meager notice of his youth, since those who have undertaken this

task possessed but little data, and thus in consequence the conviction inevitably forced itself upon all that there was but little that transpired during Mr. Lincoln's youth particularly prophetic of the years that followed. In many instances, therefore, the formative period in Mr. Lincoln's life has been, in consequence of the meagerness of knowledge and reliable data, dismissed as being commonplace. Professing to see nothing exceptional during these formative years, his biographers in many instances have passed on to the days of his early manhood, and sought to call attention to what they regard the real beginnings of his remarkable career. In doing so, in their unwarranted haste to pass to the scenes of his public career, they do not fail to quote the well-known lines of the poet which Mr. Lincoln was accustomed to apply to himself: "My life was but the short and simple annals of the poor," as if this would prove a sufficient refutation of any charge of meager notice of the years prior to the day of his appearing on the prairies of Illinois. To put it in another way, the Lincoln admirers have been made to believe that he was a Hoosier prodigal who came to himself about the time, or soon after, reaching the State of Illinois; and at this time, or subsequent to it, there were certain super-added things affixed to his character that made for honesty, truthfulness, and fixity of purpose.

The fact of Mr. Lincoln's honesty, which was so prominent in his later life, is not doubted for a moment, but since substantially all the recorded instances of this trait of his character found their setting in some event in later life, there is a belief that this trait was not particularly noted in his early career, or if so, it was not sufficiently prominent to call forth especial attention; whereas, all of his early associates interviewed by the writer stated that this was quite marked, and so much so as to cause them to remember him by it.

The writer is convinced, by reason of some years' residence among the early associates of the great war President, that the boy Lincoln was father of the man. We are indebted to the many biographers of Mr. Lincoln for so many things, and to some of these in particular, it would be something approaching sacrilege, for one now at this late day, to even

appear to take any liberties with any long established beliefs concerning our martyred President. Happily this does not appear to be necessary. But however well meant the efforts were on the part of these numerous historians touching Mr. Lincoln's early career, unfortunately they have succeeded in focusing the gaze of the world either upon the spot in the State of Kentucky that gave him birth, or upon the prairies of Illinois where he took his rise to fame, and where his ashes now rest. Those years in his life which he spent in Indiana—from seven to twenty-one—which ordinarily make a period in the life of most men of momentous importance, have been more or less neglected. To undertake at this late day the task of correcting the perspective of the Lincoln admirers by focusing the attention upon his youth is an exceedingly difficult one, and ordinarily would prove discouraging, but since it is believed that sufficient data is at hand to substantiate the claim, the task has been undertaken with a view at least of supplementing the work of recognized authorities in this field, as well as rendering tardy justice to Lincoln's youth.

It is to be regretted that some of the earlier biographers of Mr. Lincoln did not make a greater effort to collect information touching his youth, since the field was at that time white unto harvest; particularly soon after the death of the President, at which time some two or three biographers came to visit the scenes of Mr. Lincoln's boyhood and young manhood in Spencer county, Indiana. Some of the more recent writers met with experiences well calculated to discourage further effort in this field, since they possessed erroneous notions of Hoosier manners and customs. In consequence of this handicap some very amusing, not to say ludicrous, things transpired during attempted interviews with certain ones of Lincoln's old associates. Many of the historians in speaking of the citizens now residing in the region where Gentryville is located, regarded them as quite below the average; characterizing them as "listless", "poor", "free and easy", "devoid of ambition", and reference has been made to the "antiquated business methods", "dog-fennel streets" and with many other such statements they seem to pay a tribute to the wisdom and foresight of the Lincolns in having the good sense to leave

that region, since the country and its inhabitants at the present time do not meet with their approbation.

That there is apparent justification for such a characterization of both the inhabitants of that section today, as well as the region itself, is quite true, and perhaps this would more especially appear so to strangers, although it may be permissible to suggest that these allegations are particularly in bad taste relative to the country itself, since they were made by those who happen to reside in that section of the United States where abandoned farms are the rule, whereas there are few abandoned farms in Spencer county, Indiana. Appearances are often woefully deceptive, and it is believed that a better knowledge of Hoosier manners and customs, particularly among the pioneers, would in itself serve a splendid corrective in certain things.

It may be true that Gentryville and Lincoln City are "dog-fennel towns", yet there are several hundreds like them in Indiana. Gentryville is much the same place that it was during the boyhood of Lincoln. One may still see the Saturday group of loungers seated on dry goods boxes, whittling and chewing favorite brands of tobacco, and "swapping yarns", from which point of vantage they gaze betimes down the little streets to the barren knolls in the distance. The scene is common and to be met with not only in this section of the State of Indiana, but in certain portions of Kentucky and Illinois. Such scenes are not particularly inspiring, and are not calculated to impress a visiting stranger with the belief that from such an environment there would come forth any youth who could by any possibility rise to fame; yet, nevertheless, just such places have produced, and may yet be destined to produce, some of our most eminent men. Some two or three incidents and circumstances are here related that occurred within the Lincoln zone, all of them of comparatively recent date and coming under the personal observation of the writer.

A man with long gray locks, somewhat loose and disheveled, was seated in the witness chair in the circuit court. It was during the month of January, and the weather was cold. He wore a pair of "eastern" boots whose heels had a predilection for rolling over and upward as if in sport of one

another. His "foxed" trousers were baggy and tattered, and whether the bottoms were too badly worn for service or whether it was merely a habit of the owner, no matter; in any case they were crowded down into the boot tops. A faded brown hand-me-down overcoat, held to its moorings by a bit of binder-twine looped through the torn buttonhole and about the button, served to keep out the cold, this being the only outer garment worn over a shirt not too immaculate. On his knees rested a somewhat dilapidated hickory-straw hat, with the preponderance of evidence in favor of its having done service for at least two summers and certainly until far into mid-winter.

An attorney (now holding a government position of national importance) from a distance, with evident preconceived notions concerning the old gentleman, was cross-examining the witness.

"Mr. Witness, can you read and write?"

"No, sir."

"You spoke of the payment of taxes" (resting his eyes for a moment upon the boots). "Do you own property?"

"Well, yes, sir."

"Now then, just state to the jury what your holdings consist of, whether real estate, etc., etc."

"Well," began the witness, looking down as if greatly embarrassed, "well, I own a leetle land in this county and some in the county a-jinen."

"You own a little land, you say, in this and the adjoining county?" (Another glance at the boots, which on taking its leave swept past the straw hat and then fixed itself steadfastly upon the apparently disconcerted face of the witness.)

"Now, sir, just tell the jury about how much land you own."

"Well," still looking down, "well, sir, I've got a leetle the rise of three thousand acres here in this county, and some time back I got hold of a leetle jag of money, and not havin' any place jest then to put it, I bought a few hundred acres over in tother county. Besides what leetle land I own, and a few hundred head of cattle, horses and sheep, I've off and on ever now and then been loanin' a leetle money an' ginerally took

mortgages on land, so I've got plasters you might say, mountin' to nigh on to right about \$30,000 or better, and I've got government"——

"That will do, Mr. Witness, that will do."

The witness here referred to was about the same age as Lincoln and lived but a few miles from Gentryville. The writer was present on the occasion referred to, and remembers the chagrin and crestfallen air depicted upon the countenance of the imported attorney, and furthermore he recalls the apologetic remarks subsequently made by the attorney, he being more especially induced to do this on learning that the witness was not only a fine type of old fashioned honesty and truthfulness, but was the wealthiest man in the county.

The old gentleman was not a miser nor yet miserly. He merely continued the habits and customs of the pioneer days. His dress as above described, which is not in the least exaggerated, was subject to a marked change on Sunday; that is to say, the soiled linen was replaced by a garment destined to do duty until the next Sabbath. With slight variation in the matter of dress—on the whole somewhat better—but in all other points essentially the same, the foregoing description would be that of the father of a man born in this region during the Civil war, who today occupies a chair in one of the great universities of our country.

A case was being tried in the Federal court. A number of witnesses were subpoenaed, among them being an elderly man with a snow-white crescent encircling his chin. His shoes, originally black, were now brown. He wore no such conventional apparel as a collar or necktie, and his clothing otherwise was not at all pretentious. He had spent most of his life in the school room, and was quite generally addressed by all classes of citizens in this Lincoln country as "Professor," and being well known to the officer of the court he very naturally in calling the witness thus addressed him. An attorney, thinking to make capital out of this circumstance, especially since he noted the character of his dress, began his examination of the witness by requesting to know why he was called "professor."



"I do not know, sir, why I am thus so regarded and so addressed, for I make no claim whatever to that honorable title. It is true that I have been a teacher for some time, in fact nearly all my life; but I do not suppose that I am at all entitled to such consideration."

The attorney, not yet satisfied, pursued the matter further.

"Well, professor, you are a graduate of course, and can doubtless read Latin." (not at all supposing that the witness was a graduate nor possessing such knowledge as the question implied.)

"Yes, sir," replied the professor, "Yes, sir, I am a graduate of our State University, and in obedience to your desire to know whether I possess ability sufficient to enable me to read Latin I should say that in addition to my mother tongue I speak French and German rather fluently, Spanish only indifferently well, but I read Hebrew, Latin, Sanscrit and Greek quite well. Indeed, I have even been told by those who have manifested a decided partiality for me that I could have been a linguist had I taken up this study, say at your time of life, but I attribute this great claim of my friends to some little acts of kindness which I have rendered them from time to time through a somewhat lengthened life, rather than to any real excellence that I may possess."

It was within a half dozen miles of Gentryville that a stranger was impertinent enough to ask an old Hoosier who had an extraordinarily large-sized nose: "How does it happen that you have such a big nose?"

"I kept it out of other people's business, sir, and let it get its growth."

As an aid to credulity and at the same time serving in part at least as a fair excuse for the treatment here offered, it may be stated that the writer was born among and reared with later generations of the Lincolns.

It does not appear to be generally known that all three sons of the elder Abraham Lincoln, grandfather of the President, eventually emigrated to Indiana. The first to come was Josiah, the second son, who settled on Big Blue river, in Harrison county, Indiana. This was in the year 1812. To

this wilderness home came Thomas Lincoln, father of the President, on a visit, and in part at least his removal from Kentucky to Indiana a little later, in the year 1816, was due to the persuasions of his brother, Josiah. His reasons for leaving Kentucky are given elsewhere in this narrative, but on deciding to leave Kentucky he was induced by his brother to try his fortunes in the new State north of the Ohio river.

The writer's forbears came up from the South to this section of Indiana, also settling in Harrison county, and were neighbors to Josiah Lincoln. Thus the writer grew to manhood with the descendants of the uncle of the President.

Later the writer resided for some years in that region where the future President spent his childhood and boyhood, and attained his majority. Here he personally knew a number of Mr. Lincoln's boyhood and girlhood friends and associates. Repeated interviews were obtained with these pioneers, some of whom up to that time had never so much as been interviewed by a newspaper reporter, much less by any of the biographers of Mr. Lincoln. It may be said, however, that this latter statement, apparently incredible, is to some extent accounted for by reason of the fact that these in particular had removed from the Spencer county home to other points in the State, and in one or two instances to other States.

Some of these boyhood friends of Lincoln here referred to were parishioners of the writer or were members of his congregation, and in a few instances he officiated at their funerals and the funerals of members of their families.

It is believed that much confirmatory information was obtained from quite a number of the older citizens, who, while being mere children during the residence of the Lincolns in Spencer county, yet being children of the neighbors of the Lincolns and accustomed to hear the fireside discussions concerning the great President, especially after his rise to fame, what they related was in certain instances quite as valuable and trustworthy, and perhaps in an instance or two even more so, than was that offered by some who spoke from personal knowledge.

With no well-defined purpose of ever making any use of

the data obtained, beyond personal gratification, having been reared a Democrat in the belief that Douglas was transcendently great as compared to Lincoln, and having had a gradual political "conversion" my interest in Lincoln grew accordingly. Much time was thus pleasantly spent in interviewing those who either personally knew Lincoln as a boy, or those who were mere children during his stay in Indiana, or those who were born about the time of his leaving the State in the year 1830.

Considerable care has been exercised to distinguish between matter of fact truth and mere tradition. Of this latter there was considerable and occasionally there was an intermingling of fact and tradition. The traditions in every case came but little short of well established facts, and some of these were quite as interesting and suggestive as any statement based upon personal knowledge.

The mooted question as to the President's maternal ancestry was altogether in favor of the position taken by almost all of his earlier biographers, particularly by Herndon. With no desire whatever of attempting to reopen a discussion that appears to be closed, a statement or two is made. In every case when Lincoln's pioneer neighbors were asked as to the obscure origin of Nancy Hanks, the reply was invariably the same—that she was the daughter of Lucy Hanks, and a Virginian.

On one occasion after the writer had delivered a lecture on Lincoln in the region where the President had lived as a boy, and having some of Lincoln's old friends in the audience, he was approached by a rather elderly lady who requested an interview on the following day. This was gladly granted. After some questions as to what "the books said concerning the origin of Nancy Hanks," the following statement was made:

I am the daughter of a woman who was about the same age as Lincoln and lived neighbors to the Lincolns both in Kentucky and in Indiana. My grandmother and Nancy Hanks were girl friends, and my grandmother often told me that she was present at the birth of President Lincoln. I've heard both my mother and grandmother tell many incidents concerning Nancy Hanks and the Lincolns and Abraham in particular. As to Nancy Hanks' origin I've heard my grandmother say again

and again that Lincoln's mother was a fine lady and wasn't to be blamed for some things; that she was the daughter of Lucy Hanks and some unknown man in Virginia. My mother said that was what the older people told her, and no one ever said anything to the contrary.

Inquiry was made as to the reliability of the testimony offered, and it not only appeared abundantly trustworthy, but was corroborated by the statement of others. In no case among the pioneers was there a disposition to accept any other story relative to the origin of Lincoln's mother. That Mr. Lincoln himself held to this belief concerning his mother is certainly true. Herndon, *Life of Lincoln* states:

Beyond the fact that he (Lincoln) was born on the 12th day of February, 1809, in Hardin county, Kentucky, Mr. Lincoln usually had but little to say of himself, the lives of his parents, or the history of the family before their removal to Indiana. If he mentioned the subject at all it was with great reluctance and significant reserve. There was something about his origin he never cared to dwell upon.

Herndon further asserts that on one occasion while he and Lincoln were driving across the prairie in a buggy the statement was made to Herndon by Lincoln that his mother, Nancy Hanks, was the daughter of Lucy Hanks and a well-bred but obscure Virginia planter or farmer. He argued that from this last source came his power of analysis, his logic, his mental activity, his ambition and all the qualities that distinguished him from the other members and descendants of the Hanks family.

A biography of Lincoln was prepared by Mr. Scripps for campaign purposes. Lincoln was asked to submit data for this, which he rather reluctantly did. In a letter to Herndon after Lincoln's death Scripps stated:

He (Lincoln) communicated some facts to me concerning his ancestry which he did not wish to have published then, and which I have never spoken of or alluded to before.

What these facts were we of course do not know, but presumably they must have had to do with this obscurity. Dennis Hanks, a son of Nancy Hanks, aunt of the mother of Lincoln, was ever insistent that the mother of President Lincoln was named Sparrow instead of Hanks. Certain it is

that both she and Dennis Hanks were for a time in the home of the Sparrows, who, after the marriage of Nancy to Thomas Lincoln and her removal to Indiana, also removed to that State, taking the irrepressible Dennis with them. It was these Sparrows who occupied the half-faced camp abandoned by the Lincolns, and when seized with milk-sick were removed to the Lincoln cabin and both died there. Their deaths took place at the same time as that of Lincoln's mother.

It is passing strange that these pioneers should all be of one mind concerning the obscure origin of Nancy Hanks if there was no foundation for such belief.

However reliable may be the statements of discoveries made by Mrs. Hitchcock, a descendant of the Hanks family, relative to the origin of the President's mother, there never was, and is not now, just ground for any accusation against these pioneer neighbors of the Lincolns for entertaining and freely expressing the belief, since it was indisputably credited by her illustrious son, and by the elder Hankses and others whose testimony is a matter of record.

#### MANNERS AND CUSTOMS OF THE HOOSIER PIONEERS.

"Quarrel not at all. Yield larger things to which you can show no more than equal right; and yield lesser ones though clearly your own. Better give your path to a dog than be bitten by him in contending for the right. Even killing the dog would not cure the bite."

A proper understanding of the manners and customs of the pioneers of Lincoln's youth and young manhood is essential to appreciate some qualities of his mind and peculiarities of belief and practice which appeared when later he was associated with the learned and skillfully trained statesman and politicians, who were for the most part reared under an altogether different environment. The pioneer was more or less given to superstitious beliefs and committed to the trustworthiness of tokens and dreams. While this characterized substantially all classes during the formative period of our country, yet these strange and weird beliefs in particular

found a congenial abiding place in the minds of the pioneers who came from the South and settled in this wilderness. Indeed, the belief in the efficacy of tokens and dreams, and the faithfulness and almost religious zeal with which signs have been observed have ever characterized the frontier line.

These strange beliefs inevitably begot still stranger customs. This was especially true of the people in and about Gentryville. If in this section there may yet be found some of those strange beliefs still lingering among those of that earlier period, it need not be regarded as strange, since in other centuries the will of the Almighty was determined by the presence or absence of dew upon a sheep's pelt, and kingdoms were lost or won by the casting of lots. It may well be doubted whether there is not yet clinging to most of us, like barnacles upon a ship's hull, some of the age-long beliefs of our fathers. While we are living with the light beating full upon our faces, yet there is discerned in some an indication that these fireside memories and nursery teachings of that dim and distant past so possess us as to lead to the conclusion that it would not at all be difficult to revert to the practices and beliefs of other years. Bishop Matthew Simpson, one of the greatest forensic orators of his time, and an educator of national prominence, himself a pioneer and a great friend and confidential adviser of Lincoln, ever felt a strange and unaccountable pleasure and delight on seeing the new moon over his left shoulder. A certain United States senator from Lincoln's boyhood state on more than one occasion in the midst of political campaigns refused to ride in a carriage drawn by black horses.

Abraham Lincoln was so indoctrinated with many of these beliefs during his youth that they clung to him until the day of his death. He always believed in the trustworthiness of dreams, one of which in particular was viewed as a good omen, because he dreamed it prior to the victories of Antietam, Vicksburg, Gettysburg, the naval battle between the Monitor and the Merrimac, as well as just before the surrender at Appomattox. This dream and others he with a strange simplicity related to cabinets, and doubtless in the very simplicity of his belief failed to realize that these gen-

men viewed such as exceptional, if not indicating a decided weakness.

Advantage is taken of the opportunity here of calling attention to a fact not especially enlarged upon by any, yet which is patent and known to all; that is, we do not take liberties with Lincoln as we do with many other great men. We laugh with him, but we do not suffer any criticism of him without registering a vigorous protest. This is not even true of Washington.

To the pioneer in Lincoln's day the carrying of an edged tool, such as a hoe or ax, through the house was an omen of bad luck, foretelling a death in the family during the year. The breaking of a mirror was also another sign of death within that period. The plaintive howling of a dog meant that the morrow would tell of a death somewhere. The crossing of the hunter's path by a dog meant bad luck in the chase unless the hunter locked his little fingers until the dog was out of sight; or, what was regarded as better still, if he returned to the point of starting and began his journey anew, all ill fortune occasioned by the bad start would not be reckoned against him. The writer has frequently witnessed these circumstances.

Friday was a day in the calendar to be avoided in instituting any new departure; that is to say, beginning anything new such as plowing, sowing or reaping in the fields, or the making of a garment, unless the labor could be completed during the day. A bird alighting on the window or coming into the house was a sure sign of sorrow. All planting, sowing, fencing and preparation for the same was to be governed by certain signs of the moon. Plants, such as potatoes, maturing beneath the surface of the soil must be planted in the dark of the moon. And in like manner tomatoes and beans must be planted in the light of the moon.

Clapboards on the roofs of buildings would cup and curl if the sign was not right. The fence would settle and sink or creel if there was a failure to consult the almanac for the proper sign. They believed in witches of various sorts, quite as much as they of New England ever did. Although there was no disposition to burn them, they were feared and

guarded against. They especially believed that some evil-disposed old witch could work evil upon a child.

The writer has a distinct child's recollection of being caught up from his innocent play into the arms of a frightened lady and hurriedly carried away to a point of supposed safety from a reputed old witch who it was presumed was working her spell over him preparatory to actually bewitching him. It is not believed that this old witch in reality succeeded in her efforts at this time or at any subsequent period, but the writer frankly confesses that while he escaped all of the influences and beliefs so generally prevalent in his youth, nevertheless he finds more satisfaction and contentedness than do some if there is never a hoe or an ax carried through his house. Truly the beliefs of our grandmothers live after them.

Although there was no physician nearer than thirty miles to the Lincoln home, yet this settlement had a "Doctor" of a doubtful sort, one "Cy" (Josiah) Crawford, for whom Lincoln and his sister Sarah often labored as "hired man and girl." "Cy," or "Old Blue Nose" Crawford as Lincoln later named him, was what was usually spoken of as a "yarb and root" doctor. As a diagnostician he doubtless did not excel, but it was small matter since his prescriptions were few and generally harmless, even if sometimes unpleasant to take. If there was evidence of inflammation, "a counter-irritant was slapped on," and generally "a heroic old fashioned Baptist foot washing," was urged just before the hour of retiring. Blue mass pills were used on the least provocation, although if these were not to be had a substitute was suggested. The writer recalls one instance when "shoemaker's wax" was in an emergency made into plaster and the patient lived to praise his saviour, if not his remedy in his effort to remove the same. Crawford, in lieu of there not being even a traveling dentist, was an extractor of teeth. Heroic methods were used for a time, but his services being so much in demand he obtained a "twister" pair of forceps, and thereafter the surgery was more scientifically performed. A conversation with some who sat under his "prying, twisting and gouging" revealed the fact that laughing gas would have been more than welcomed.



Since bleeding was quite generally practiced in that day by reputable physicians, Crawford, always abreast with the times, obtained a lancet and thus added this accomplishment to his practice. Generally speaking, every settlement had a man or woman who could stop bleeding in cases where a vein or artery had been severed, without resorting to the barbarous practice of ligating or cauterizing. This was done by pronouncing certain cabalistic words. The secret of possessing such power was on no account to be conveyed to another unless under proper direction and orderly procedure. A man was forbidden, on penalty of losing his skill, to convey to his brother the secret, but he might with perfect safety admit a woman into the secret, and she in turn could with equal safety initiate a man. At the perilous risk of losing forever whatever cunning and skill the writer may possess in this regard, he dares here to put it to a test by indiscriminately publishing the secret. It will be at once apparent that this conveyance is only possible to ladies. The remedy is simplicity itself, and consists in thrice repeating the sixth verse of the sixteenth chapter of the Prophecy of Ezekiel.

Faith doctors were implicitly believed in. Long journeys were made to them, their charms invoked and their skill put to a test. In substantially every case these men behaved something after the manner that Captain Naaman supposed the prophet Elisha would have done in his case. They refused to make any charge for services rendered, but if exceedingly provoked by some who were the beneficiaries of their healing powers, they suffered them, on taking their departure, to leave a token of their appreciation as a thank offering.

There was a commendable reciprocity of neighborliness prevailing among the pioneers. Much of their work was shared in common, particularly such as raisings, huskings and rollings. Associated with these labors by the men, which may not inappropriately be styled field sports, the women of the entire neighborhood assembled to prepare the sumptuous feasts consisting of venison, turkey, pigeon potpie, hominy and corn-dodger.

Spinning contests were indulged in and the hand-made loom was much in vogue, and if there chanced to be the fin-

ishing of a blanket or coverlet, or in some instances a quilt, all the young ladies—and some not so young—would surround this, holding on with both hands, while some one from the crowd of men who were interested onlookers would throw puss, the now thoroughly frightened house cat, into the bagging center. Well might there be manifest interest, for who could tell which way a cat might jump under such circumstances and thus indicate the next bride?

Play parties and dancing (hoe-downs) were much in favor, and the mere announcement of a neighborhood wedding meant an invitation for all to attend who cared to do so. Spelling matches were held every Friday night during the school term, and schoolhouse debates invariably attracted large crowds. Old time school exhibitions, where dialogues were recited and "pieces" declaimed, were frequent. Sometimes these were weeks in preparation and the program so lengthy as to last half the night. Religious services prior to 1820 were conducted in private homes, usually by some chance itinerant preacher. Lincoln never saw a church until he was eleven years of age, and he helped in its erection.

The dress of the pioneer would appear quite as strange to us as some of the modern fashions would have been to him. No woolens were worn in and about Gentryville until the year 1824. Buckskin breeches, sewed with whang, thus making an ornamental fringe, a loose-fitting blouse, and a coonskin cap with the tail hanging down was the usual garb of the men. This was Lincoln's dress during his entire Indiana residence, save that he managed in some manner to get possession of a white shirt a short while before his removal to Illinois.

In all of these farm and community labors, social gatherings, exhibitions and religious worship Lincoln was a familiar figure. He particularly enjoyed the schoolhouse debates and exhibitions. The *Kentucky Preceptor* furnished the major portion of the declamations, as well as subjects or themes for debate. Some of these latter which were debated by young Lincoln and others were: "*Resolved*, That fire is more destructive than water." "Who has the greater right to complain, the negro or the Indian?" Such themes were very gravely discussed not only by the younger generation, but by the older

men as well. It is said that young Lincoln in these debates was calm, logical and clear. He, however, often became quite humorous, causing great laughter by his peculiar antics and original remarks, but his aim appeared to be to cause his side to win. At such times two captains stood forth in the presence of the assembled crowd in obedience to the demand of the society and proceeded to "choose up." A stick some three feet in length, often a walking cane, was tossed into the air by one of the captains, the other captain catching it in one hand, and the first in turn grasping it. They placed their hands alternately in position until one became the possessor of the stick. This was repeated three times, the two best out of three deciding first choice of a debater or the side of the argument—depending upon the original agreement. After the house had been divided, the "jury" was selected by the president, usually from three to five members. Sometimes ladies were privileged to sit as judges. It will be seen that Lincoln's method in debate was such as to win "the jury."

One of his old friends, Nathaniel Griggsby, usually called "Natty", although Lincoln called him "Nat", said that when Lincoln appeared in company

the boys would gather and cluster around him to hear him talk. He was figurative in his speeches, talks and conversations. He argued much from analogy, and explained things, hard for us to understand, by stories, maxims, tales and figures. He would point out his lessons or ideas by some story that was plain and near to us in order that we might instantly see the force and bearing of what he said.

Young Lincoln was a great mimic, entertaining and amusing crowds quite as much in this manner as in any other. The humor of any situation or a mirthful and ludicrous turn seemed to criss-cross with smiles his face, which even at that time his associates alleged was "shrivelled and wrinkled". His smiles and laughter spread in humorous confusion over his countenance long before the vehicle of speech had presented the object or subject of his humor to his auditors.

In his reading he devoured anything and everything that came in his way, never stopping to inquire what it was so long as it furnished his active mind something on which to labor. In like manner the subjects of his mimicry were as varied as occasion might offer, ranging from peculiarities in gait or

speech of a neighbor or passing stranger to the pulpit efforts of the backwoods, hard-shell Baptist preacher. He was much in the habit of repeating the Sunday sermon to the men and boys in the field on Monday. If perchance he made a rare find, and his Monday audience appeared to appreciate his efforts, he repaired to the Gentryville store at night after the days' labor was done, and there repeated it, embellishing, revising and enlarging as occasion seemed to warrant.

The Little Pigeon Baptist meeting house was erected in the year 1820. The elder Lincoln was the boss carpenter, superintending its erection, and, while Abraham was but eleven years of age at this time, it is said that he assisted in felling the trees out of which the building material was obtained. This church was a story and a half high, and, while its proportions were not great,—being twenty-six by thirty feet,—for that period it made a rather pretentious house of worship. It had two windows, each twenty by thirty-six inches, and was heated in extreme weather by means of two old-fashioned fireplaces, there being two mud and stick chimneys, one at either end of the building.

The church was more or less regularly served by pastors duly called, but there were long intervals when the little congregation was largely dependent upon "local" ministers or some chance ministerial visitor. The regular ministry, while more or less helpful, was in the main but little beyond the major portion of their parishioners intellectually. Since most of them were illiterate, and some of them painfully so and much given to certain pulpit mannerisms, they afforded the critical student of human nature, young Lincoln, a fine field for the free play of his powers of mimicry, and his mirth-provoking efforts at preaching were such as indelibly to fix these in the memory of his boyhood associates many years afterward.

Matilda Johnson, his step-sister, said "he was an indefatigable preacher". It was his usual custom when his father and mother went to church and he and other members of the family remained at home to take down the Bible, read a verse, give out a hymn, and after this had been rendered he proceeded to "preach" a sermon. On one occasion when in the

midst of a sermon-lecture in the grove near the cabin, John Johnson, his step-brother, and others who had doubtless heard the Sunday morning sermon out in the fields during the week, came up with a land terrapin which they had picked up in their morning rambles along the creek, and desiring to witness the quick but clumsy movement of the creature, placed a coal of fire on its back. Young Lincoln remonstrated, but in the midst of the fun occasioned by the frantic efforts of the fire-bearing creature to escape its tormentors Johnson picked it up and hurled it against a tree, breaking its shell. As it lay quivering and dying the preacher quickly adapted himself to his audience and began an exhortation on "Cruelty to Animals", saying among other things that "an ant's life is just as sweet to it as our lives are to us."

Young Lincoln was in the habit of delivering the Sunday sermon to his stepmother when for any cause she was not privileged to attend worship. The entire family would sit and listen to Lincoln, who would not only repeat the sermon, but the text, and in almost every way reproduce the morning effort, even to the amen. Mrs. Lincoln greatly enjoyed these reports and professed to think that she derived more benefit from Abe's sermonizing than she did from the minister himself.

The Lincoln home was the stopping place for the ministers. This furnished such an opportunity for Lincoln to argue that he invariably availed himself of it. On one occasion he had "cornered" an illiterate preacher on some point in the story of Jonah, and in the midst of his confusion Lincoln suddenly asked him who was the father of Zebedee's children. The pastor confessed that he did not know. This Zebedee witticism was one of Lincoln's earliest attempts, although the first recorded humorous effort was when going to mill and witnessing the slow grinding of the old horse mill, he remarked that "his hound pup could eat all the meal it would grind in a day and then bawl for his supper."

It was in the pulpit of this Little Pigeon Baptist meeting house, Mr. Herndon states, that young Lincoln witnessed an amusing incident which befell one of these transient preachers, an incident that Lincoln in later years frequently related, and is as follows:

The meeting house was located in the woods a mile and a half from our home and some distance from any other residence. Regular services were held only once each month. The preacher on this occasion was an old-line Baptist, and was dressed in coarse linen pantaloons and shirt of the same material. The trousers were manufactured after the old fashioned style, with baggy legs and flaps in front, commonly spoken of as "barn doors", which were made to attach to the frame without the aid of suspenders. A single button held his shirt in position, and that was at the collar. He arose in the pulpit and in a loud voice announced his text: "I am the Christ whom I shall represent today." About this time a little blue lizard ran up underneath his roomy pantaloons, and the old preacher not wishing to interrupt the steady flow of his sermon slapped away on his legs, expecting to arrest the intruder, but his efforts were unavailing and the little fellow kept ascending higher and higher. Continuing the sermon the preacher slyly loosened the button which held the waistband of his pantaloons, and with a kick off came the easy fitting garment. Meanwhile Mr. Lizard had passed the equatorial line and was exploring the part of the preacher's anatomy which lay underneath the back of his shirt. Things by this time were growing interesting, but the sermon kept grinding on. The next movement on the part of the preacher was for the collar button, and with one sweep of his arm off came the tow linen shirt. The congregation sat for an instant as if dazed. At length one old sister in the rear of the room rose up and glancing at the excited object in the pulpit shouted at the top of her voice: "If you represent Christ, then I am done with the Bible."

On another occasion a traveling minister happened in the settlement one Sunday morning and was invited to preach. It appears that his pulpit mannerisms, gestures and platform eccentricities were quite out of the ordinary. He had the habit among other things of rolling his eyes not unlike the old-time colored preacher, and when he warmed up to his theme he pounded the Bible and the hymn book mercilessly, accompanied by certain pauses that might have been eloquent but for the fact that the speaker's zeal got the better of his judgment, for just at this juncture he introduced sundry groans and windy suspirations which no doubt he supposed would greatly aid in fastening the word as a nail in a sure place. In addition to the foregoing the preacher possessed an unfortunate physical defect, perhaps acquired, which was so characteristic of not a few public speakers. He had a mingled sybillant sonorous nazal twang which he pitched into that peculiar key in rendering his sing-song address.

Lincoln was present on this occasion, as were many others

of his age, and some of these boyhood friends of Lincoln, among whom was Nat Griggsby, related that young Lincoln again and again repeated this sermon to the farm hands and the group of loungers at the Gentryville store, and so faithful was the presentation not only in words, but in pulpit mannerisms—the rolling of the eyes, pounding of the Bible, and the nazal twang—that it was the judgment of those who heard Lincoln's effort, as well as the original presentation, that it was impossible to tell wherein the one differed from the other.

It will become at once apparent from some of the foregoing incidents that there never was any justification for the position taken by some of Mr. Lincoln's biographers in assuming, as they did, that he was inclined to make sport of the church or religion as such. The attitude assumed by some of his biographers was not only based upon this habit of Lincoln in repeating the Sunday sermon, but upon some poetic effusions composed "in Bible language", usually after the manner and style of the ancient Chronicles, wherein he caricatured "Sister Gibson and Brother Gibson", members of the Little Pigeon church, who had been derelict in duty and in consequence had been called upon to undergo the ordeal of a church trial. After diligent inquiry touching Mr. Lincoln's religious convictions, nothing whatever was found indicating any tendency toward infidelity or atheism; certainly no semblance of a disposition to criticise or lightly esteem the church or religion. This position of his earlier biographers, who were themselves personally so inclined, is absolutely without any foundation.

When it is recalled that young Lincoln's habit of mimicry and his subjects and objects of caricature were promiscuous, there is small wonder that these crude efforts in the pulpit were seized upon by him as quite the best for the exercise of his powers, since this field was more inviting than any other that presented itself and he very naturally availed himself of it.

Being naturally more or less a comedian, and adapting himself to his audiences, he gave way to buffoonery indiscriminately, making selection of anything especially appealing

to him. He not only mimicked the noisy traveling preacher who was much given to polemic discussion, but was also in the habit of repeating any public address heard, whether on the stump or before the bar. If the address appealed to him as being eloquent or possessing any excellence in any other way, he brought into play his exceptional powers of memory, repeating such portions with evident attempt at seriousness, noting their effect, taking this opportunity to "hear his voice", of which his associates maintained that he was especially vain. Not that his vanity led him to suppose that his voice was musical or fitted for public address beyond others, but his consuming ambition to become a public speaker gave free play to his fancy, and in such boyish efforts he flattered himself into the belief that he was preparing against the day when he could and would take the stump in real earnest.

He early manifested a desire to indulge himself in public address. If the school exhibitions may be taken into account, his age was about eleven years when he began on his own account. This disposition grew upon him through the years, until by the time he had reached seventeen he was continually "on the stump". His stepmother stated that after a few efforts before boys of his age he at length ventured to try his powers before larger groups. He particularly made choice "of the hands in the fields" until, as she put it, "it soon became an amusing sight to see and hear him make these speeches." She further confessed that her "husband was forced to break it up with a strong hand", since it kept the men from their work.

There appear to be few such characters as Shakespeare, Burns and Lincoln who, if left to dwell apart and follow the plow or make use of the ax and maul, deprived of the privilege of a university or college, develop those great faculties which nature has so abundantly endowed them with, and happily reach their destined goal by a route, if circuitous and accompanied by exacting and patient toil, is nevertheless apparently best suited to them.

Perhaps if Lincoln had been privileged to enjoy the curriculum of a great university, we would doubtless have had a master mind so skilled and trained as to have enabled him



to occupy a commanding and enviable place in history, but it may well be doubted whether or not the very discipline imposed by such a course of training would not have marred or altogether lost to the world some of those rare qualities of mind and heart which were so prominent in him and which above all else distinguishes him from most great men of his time.

Since Lincoln was destined to rise by the sheer force of his own personality and imperious will, and to develop the great qualities of mind in this almost unbelievable manner, it was his good fortune to spend those years of strange preparations among a simple-minded, yet honest and patriotic folk, hedged in by a wilderness but freed thereby from those conventional restraints and hindrances that older and more settled communities usually impose. At the same time he was removed from the blighting effects of vice which, had he been subjected to, might have prevented the maturing of a character, embodying all of the essential basic elements of the plain people. Lincoln did not, as some have supposed, live the cabin life in the White House so much as he lived the White House life in the cabin.

Any attempt to analyze his character or in any measure seek to account for the sustained, universal interest in him by substantially all classes of people, as well as youth, and claimed by all political faiths, leads to the fact that in him was embodied all of the essential and vital elements of manhood, as well as the willingness and sincerity of purpose to give executive expression to the wishes of the people. There is discerned in this universal admiration of Lincoln not only an unconscious expression of resentment of such encroachment, but an indication of an instinctive desire to throw off all mere artificialities of life. We recognize that in him dwelt the fullness of the simplicities of life to the extent that he became the apotheosis of the plain people.

Leonard Sweet, a political friend and associate of the great President, stated that Lincoln in speaking of his Indiana life always spoke of it as the story of a happy childhood. There was nothing sad or pinched about it, and no allusion to want in any part of it. His own description of his youth

was that of a happy, joyous boyhood. It was told with mirth, illustrated by pointed anecdotes, and often interrupted by his jocund laugh.

If the Civil war crisis in our national life necessarily demanded a leader who was the embodiment of all that the people themselves stood for or desired, then Providence anticipated this by making choice of a youth without a distinguished name, reared him in the seclusion of the wilderness, just as He has almost all of His great leaders and when he appeared he so far met the high expectations of the Almighty and received the gratitude and applause of mankind that Major John Hay, his private secretary, voices the sentiment of many when he said:

"Abraham Lincoln was the greatest character that has appeared in the history of the world since Jesus Christ."

*(To be continued)*