

## The Grave of David Elkin<sup>1</sup>

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It has been accepted, generally, that David Elkin, a former pastor of the Lincoln family in Kentucky, preached the funeral service of Nancy Hanks Lincoln in Spencer County, Indiana.

A certain David Elkins, who is buried in an abandoned cemetery about three miles from Mitchell, Indiana, is said to have been the minister who delivered the eulogy after the death of the president's mother. I have visited this grave and the inscription on the tombstone is as follows:

"DAVID ELKINS / 2 S. C. MIL. / WAR 1812"

He enlisted in the service in the War of 1812 from Richland District, South Carolina, on October 17, 1814, and was discharged on March 9, 1815. It will be noted that this David Elkins spelt his name with a final "s."

I find the name of David Elkin on the tax list of Green County, Kentucky, as early as 1800 and as late as 1842 when he entered for taxation 200 acres of land on the Little Barren River. Spencer in his "A History of Kentucky Baptists," states that David Elkin preached for Good Hope Church in Green County previous to 1811. The minute book of the South Fork Baptist Church which is still extant, shows him to have been associated with that congregation. An order of April 4, 1812, reads: "Brother Jesse Friend appointed to go and see Brother Elkin and request him to come and see us." Jesse Friend was an uncle of Nancy Hanks Lincoln. Another order on the fourth Saturday in March implies that Elkin was then

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<sup>1</sup>The Reverend Louis A. Warren, in his work on *Lincoln's Parentage and Childhood* to be published this year by the Century Company, has devoted considerable space to David Elkin. This brief account is a summary of part of his findings.

their pastor. This church was within two miles of the birthplace of Abraham Lincoln.

Spencer says that David Elkin preached the introductory sermon for the Russell Creek Association in 1814. The marriage register of Hardin County shows Elkin to have solemnized a marriage there on December 20, of the same year. In 1815 his name appears on the commissioner's books of Green County as being a resident there. Green and Larue Counties are adjacent and Larue was formerly a part of Hardin.

Field Elkin, a grandson of Rev. David Elkin, told me that his grandfather was living at Mt. Sherman near the Green-Larue County line at the time of his death and was buried in that community. I have visited the Mt. Moriah cemetery where Field Elkin's father is buried and I am of the opinion that the pioneer preacher also lies buried here, although the grave is not marked. The tradition of this family has it, that David Elkin preached the funeral sermon of Nancy Hanks Lincoln while on a visit to his two sons, Hodgen and Warren Elkin, who then lived in Indiana.