Hananiah Lincoln in Revolutionary and Pioneer History

By Louis A. Warren

Hananiah Lincoln has been the despair of genealogists who have tried to decide just where he belongs in the Lincoln family tree. Two roles have been assigned him, just recently, which call for some documentary study of his activities. A group of his descendents who live close to the Kentucky-Tennessee border line are under the impression that Hananiah Lincoln was the grandfather of the President and that he should receive the honor and recognition which has been given to another. Contrariwise to this patronizing theory an argument has been set forth in a recent magazine article which would make Hananiah Lincoln largely responsible for depleting the funds in the treasury of the pioneer Abraham Lincoln. The straitened circumstances of the widow, Bersheba Lincoln, and her five orphan children are charged to Hananiah who is said to have borrowed all the surplus cash from her husband and failed to repay him.

The documents bearing upon this very interesting character do not support either one of these theories, but show Hananiah's genial relationship to both the grandfather and father of Abraham Lincoln, the President. Aside from the controversial features which invite this discussion, Hananiah Lincoln's service in the Revolutionary War is of interest to his many descendents who are now living in the state of Indiana.

Much of the confusion about Lincoln history would be avoided if the contents of Abraham Lincoln's correspondence and autobiographical sketches were more fully known. A letter to one of his relatives states that he remembered, "a long time ago seeing Austin and Davis Lincoln, said to be sons of Hanael or Hannanial Lincoln who was said to have been a cousin of my grandfather." The relationship of Hananiah to the President's grandfather Abraham is stated correctly, although there seems to have been some difficulty in spelling the name. I have come upon these different spellings: Hannanighah, Hannael, Hannanial, Hanniniah, Hannia, Anniah, Niah, and some others which could not be accurately deciphered. The

right spelling is "Hananiah," as it so appears in his own handwriting wherever he signs his name.\(^8\)

The first paternal ancestor of Hananiah Lincoln in America was Samuel Lincoln who arrived at Salem, Massachusetts in 1637. He was about fifteen years of age at this time and within a year moved to Hingham where some of his relatives had already settled. The date of Samuel's marriage and the surname of his wife Martha have not been discovered. His fourth child Mordecai, was born June 14, 1657. Mordecai married Sarah Jones and they named their first child, born April 24, 1685, Mordecai, Jr. Mary Robeson became the wife of Mordecai, Jr. and they had four sons: John, Mordecai, Thomas and Abraham. It is at this point that the family lines of Abraham Lincoln the President and Hananiah Lincoln separate. The President tracing his lineage through John, and Hananiah through John's brother, Thomas.\(^4\)

The wife of the Thomas Lincoln just mentioned was Elizabeth Davis. It was the name Davis that the President remembered as having been given to one of Hananiah's sons, evidently in honor of Elizabeth Davis, his grand-mother. It was in the Boone and Lincoln settlement at Exeter, Pennsylvania, that Hananiah Lincoln was born about the year 1756. The exact date is not known.

There was much inter-marrying between the Boones and the Lincolns. Sarah, a sister of Thomas Lincoln and John Lincoln already named, married William Boone a cousin of Daniel Boone. Squire Boone, father of Daniel, was a close neighbor to the Lincolns. An Abraham Lincoln who married an Anne Boone has often been confused by historians as the grandfather of the President.\(^5\)

The military service of Hananiah Lincoln began in the year 1775 when he was made a sergeant in the company of which George Nalis was Captain and which was attached to the regiment of Col. William Thompson. On October 4, 1776, Hananiah was commissioned First Lieutenant in Col. William Cooke's Twelfth Pennsylvania Regiment. An appointment to a captaincy came to him on May 20, 1777, and he served in that capacity until he resigned on October 20, 1777.\(^6\) At this time, tradition says, he went to Daniel Boone's settlement in

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\(^8\) Durrett Mss. (University of Chicago).


Kentucky. Boone's survey book contains three entries in the name of Hananiah Lincoln: one in 1782, another at an unknown date, and the third a survey made in 1786.8

The first positive evidence we have discovered of Hananiah's presence in the Kentucky country is a promisory note given in Jefferson County on January 3, 1882, and witnessed by Henry Hall. The document which bears his signature is as follows: "I promise to pay or cause to be paid unto Enos Atwater on his order the just and full sum of twenty pattons of deer skins well prest fit to ground on or before the first day of August next it being for value received in witness my hand and seal."*

On September 13, 1783, Hananiah entered 890 acres of land on the east side of Cartwright's Creek, and on the following December 8, he entered a tract of land comprising 1000 acres of land on the south side of Beech Fork, next to James Thompson's Land. Still another tract was entered this same year on the Kentucky River.7

The following two years, 1784 and 1785, Hananiah was evidently located in Jefferson County for he served there as a Juryman.9 In the year 1785, we find a record of his association with the pioneer Abraham Lincoln, grandfather of the President. He served on May 7, of this year as a chain carrier for the surveyor who was marking the lines of his cousin Abraham's Long Run farm in Jefferson County.10 He was probably living at Hughes Station when this cousin, Abraham Lincoln, was massacred by the Indians in the month of May, 1786. By July 25, 1786, Hananiah had removed to Nelson County, Kentucky, where he entered a record of more land at the county court house.11 A Jefferson County Fee Book for 1787 carries this notation opposite the name of Hananiah Lincoln: "No inhabitant, lives in Nelson County."

There recently appeared in the New York Times a feature article which set forth the proposition that Hananiah Lincoln was responsible for the "narrow circumstances," of the pioneer Lincoln's family after his death in 1786. According to the author it was: "The drains made upon his purse by his

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* Draper Ms. (University of Wisconsin).
7 Draper Ms. (University of Chicago).
8 Possessioners Report Book, Nelson County [Ky.] Court.
9 Durrett Scrap Book (University of Chicago).
11 Land Book B, 60, Jefferson County [Ky.] Court.
12 Order Book 1784-1788, 215, Nelson County [Ky.] Court.
father's cousin [Hananiah] that laid its heavy burden on Ber-
sheba widow of the pioneer [Abraham] Lincoln, and limited
still further the opportunities of her children." One of these
children was Thomas Lincoln, father of the President. Ber-
sheba and her family, some weeks after the massacre of her
husband, had settled near the line that later divided Wash-
ington from Nelson County, and in the same community where
Hananiah was living.

The results of my researches made many years ago in the
Kentucky court houses do not support the theory, that Hanan-
iah Lincoln failed to repay the estate of Abraham, the money
which he had borrowed from his cousin some three years be-
fore Abraham's death. John Caldwell as administrator of the
pioneer Lincoln estate brought suit as early as March 10, 1791
against Hananiah Lincoln for the collection of borrowed
money. The case appears on the docket at regular intervals,
with the citation, "continued," until September 14, 1791 when
the bill of the plaintiffs was endorsed, "Award returned and
judgment accordingly." I would interpret this endorsement
as a verdict for the plaintiff, and there is every reason to be-
lieve that Hananiah abided by the finding of the court.15

There is no evidence that has been called to my attention
which would suggest anything but good will existing between
Hananiah Lincoln and the family of Bersheba Lincoln except
the suit just outlined. Hananiah may have refused to pay the
obligation due the estate, to the administrator, John Caldwell,
because of lack of confidence in him. This fact is certain,
that the following year on July 12, 1792: "John Caldwell the
administrator of the estate of Abraham Lincoln, deceased, be-
ing requested by his security to give counter security, refused,
whereupon, on the motion of Mordecai Lincoln who made oath
according to law, the administrator of said estate is granted
him on giving security."16 At a later date when Mordecai as
administrator was bringing suit against the Reed heirs to re-
cover some land, Hananiah appeared as a witness for the es-
te.17

On February 7, 1787, Hananiah Lincoln married Sarah
Jane Jeffries, daughter of Moses Jeffries.18 Although Han-

14 Order Book, 1792: 199, Nelson County [Ky.] Court.
15 Lincoln vs. Reed, Bundle, June 1816, Nelson County Circuit Court.
16 Marriages Register, Nelson County Court.
Hananiah was about thirty years old at this time, evidently, he had not been married before. The first child, who was born on December 22, 1787, was named Moses for his grandfather Jeffries. Hananiah immediately began to take an interest in the affairs of the county. In the month of May, 1788, he served on a Nelson County Jury.17 On September 10, of the same year, Moses Jeffries resigned as captain of the militia in the first battalion of Nelson County and Hananiah was recommended as his successor.18

About the time that Kentucky was set apart from Virginia as a State of the Union, some citizens in Bardstown, the county seat of Nelson County, were interested in forming a settlement at a point called Hartford on Rough Creek, now the county seat of Ohio County. On April 30, 1792, Hananiah Lincoln purchased from Gabriel Maddison, for the sum of three pounds, certain lots “fully complying with the terms proposed by Robert Baird for the encouragement of the settling of the town of Hartford.” This is the same Robert Baird for which Bairdstown, now called Bardstown, was named.19

Hananiah moved to Hartford and bought from a man by the name of Welsh, “a lot sowed in grass adjoining the one acre where he now lives.” The purchase of this land from Welsh involved Lincoln in litigation, with Welsh as the defendant. Not only did these men seek recourse in the courts but the wife of Lincoln, the wife of Welsh, and Mrs. Hettie Inlow and her daughters Polly and Elinor, were involved. The trouble over the disappearance of a piece of callico belonging to Mrs. Lincoln was the cause of the disturbance. It appears that Mrs. Lincoln was having some sewing done and alleged that some goods had been stolen. The court records do not show what disposition was made of the case, but the fact that Lincoln later sued Welsh and wife for slander implies that some hard words had been used about the missing callico.20

Hananiah was not very well pleased with his investments at Hartford as he only remained there about two years. On October 8, 1794, he sold two “in” lots and two “out” lots in Hartford which evidently closed his interests there.21

17 Order Book, 1788, 349, Nelson County Court.
18 Order Book (b), 1788, 56, Nelson County Court.
19 Deed Book 4, 474, Nelson County Court.
20 Lincoln vs. Welsh, Equity Bundle 1, Hardin County [Ky.] Circuit Court.
21 Deed Book A, 54, Hardin County Court.
His next move was to Elizabethtown, the county seat of Hardin County. A road order for July 28, 1795, names him and three other citizens of Elizabethtown on a commission to view a road to Jacob VanMetre's mill. On October 27 of the same year, Hananiah was appointed to assist in appraising the estate of William Stewart who lived near him. A commissioners' book filed in the archives of the Kentucky Historical Society at Frankfort allows us to learn the extent of Hananiah's land holdings at this time: 1000 acres on Licking River in Mason County; 1450 acres on Kentucky River in Bourbon County; 1000 acres on Beech Fork in Nelson County; 50 acres on Hickman Creek in Fayette County; and 500 acres in Hardin County. This last tract was probably the one close to Elizabethtown on which he was then living.

Aside from his land Hananiah listed for taxation one horse, and eleven cattle. The following year he entered the same amount of land and live stock on the commissioners' book, but, in 1797, he had evidently disposed of most of his land as he named only one tract. A very interesting observation with reference to the 1797 tax list for Hardin County is the presence of Thomas Lincoln's name directly under that of Hananiah's in a book where there is no effort to follow the alphabetical order. This is good evidence that Thomas Lincoln, father of the President, was living with Hananiah at this time and probably accompanied him on his next migration which was to occur the following year.

About this time an act of the Kentucky Legislature made available lands south of Green River, and Hananiah and Thomas Lincoln decided to try their luck there. They settled on Marrowbone Creek, a branch of the Cumberland River, at a point in Cumberland County, Kentucky. On the first page of the first order book of Cumberland County, established in 1798, this entry appears: "Hananiah Lincoln produced a commission from his Excellency James Garrard, Esq., appointing him Sheriff in and for the county aforesaid," etc.

In the month of May, 1801, Thomas Lincoln entered a tract of vacant land in Cumberland County and apparently settled upon it to assure possession. A fee of four dollars and forty-three cents is credited on the certificate of entry which is

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28 Order Book A, 70, Hardin County Court.
29 Order Book A, 72, Hardin County Court.
30 Kentucky State Historical Society Archives, Tax Lists.
dated November 28, 1801. We are not to assume, however, that Thomas was tied down to this piece of land and not at liberty to spend some time in the communities where he had formerly lived. On August 16, 1801, his name appears on the marriage certificate of a friend in Washington County and during most of the year 1803 there is plenty of evidence that he was located in Hardin County. Neither of these counties was more than seventy-five miles from Cumberland County and each was connected therewith by pioneer roads. It also appears that Thomas Lincoln served as a Constable in Cumberland County on January 12, 1802, Jesse Gee and Moses Kirkpatrick joining with him in signing the necessary bond. It is evident that Thomas soon disposed of his Cumberland County land and, the purchase made by a Thomas Lincoln in the year 1815, is undoubtedly by another person.

The association of Thomas Lincoln, father of President Lincoln, with Hananiah Lincoln has caused some confusion as to the relationship of these two men. Many of the descendants of Hananiah now believe him to have been the grandfather of the President. This confusion is accentuated by the fact that Hananiah did have a son Thomas, but this Thomas was not the father of Abraham Lincoln. The citizens of Cumberland County have recently put forth a claim that Abraham Lincoln was born there. No one who is familiar with the history of Thomas Lincoln in Hardin County, from the time he was married in 1806 until he left for Indiana in 1816, will give this claim very serious consideration. The testimony of the President himself is sufficient to quiet all these idle notions, as he not only states the place of his birth but also gives the name of his grandfather.

The Thomas Lincoln who entered 200 acres of land in Cumberland County in 1815, was very likely the son of Hananiah, who was about twenty-five years old at that time. He would have been too young, however, to serve as a constable as early as 1802. The fact that there were two Thomas Lincolns in Cumberland County for a period has added to the confusion. Another consideration which has helped to nourish the tradition that Hananiah Lincoln was the grandfather of the President is the close association of Thomas, the President's father, and the children of Hananiah, in the Indiana country.

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26 Cumberland County (Ky.) Court.
We learn from the Cumberland County records that on February 14, 1801, Hananiah Lincoln married Lucy Wilson. There is no tradition among the descendants of Hananiah that he was married a second time, but there seems to have been no other Hananiah of a marriageable age at this time. Hananiah was then forty-five years old and the marriage of a widower of that age would have been reasonable to expect. In fact we know very little about Hananiah Lincoln after this date. Serving as sheriff of Cumberland County for some time he is said to have joined Boone in his Missouri expedition. Tradition affirms that he soon returned, however, and took up his residence in what was then Jackson County, now Clay County, Tennessee. This is just across the state line from the old home in Cumberland County, Kentucky. Both he and his first wife are buried on the old farm and the exact sites of the graves were known as late as 1860 but now seem to have been obscured.\footnote{Family records of Miss Genie Armstrong, Tompkinsville, Ky.}

Just how many children Hananiah and Sarah Jeffries Lincoln had is not known. We have positive evidence of six and probably there were others. The old family Bible of Moses Lincoln has been preserved. An inscription therein proves him to have been the first-born child of Hananiah and Sarah. He was born December 22, 1787 and named for his Grandfather Jeffries. Thomas, Austin and Davis, were other sons, probably born in this order. There were two daughters, Sarah and Lucy. The last named was born April 27, 1799. The fact that Hananiah married Lucy Wilson about two years later would suggest that Hananiah's first wife died shortly after the birth of this child, who was possibly named for the woman, a friend of the family, who became the second wife of Hananiah later.

It will be convenient to present these six children in three groups of two each. The two eldest sons, Moses and Thomas, about the year 1816, went north to Ohio. Thomas was married before the time of the migration, as his wife was a Gee, daughter of Jesse Gee who had been a bondsman for Thomas Lincoln, father of the President, in the year 1802. The fact that Thomas, the son of Hananiah, named one of his children Jesse G. Lincoln supports the statement. Moses did not choose a wife until he reached Preble County, Ohio, where the
brothers settled. There he married on September 18, 1816, Elizabeth Crawford, daughter of James and Martha Crawford who lived at Eaton, Ohio. In 1818, this Moses Lincoln moved his family to Warren County, Indiana, where thirty-five years later he died on September 19, 1866. His wife passed away on the 24th of January of the same year. Tradition claims that Abraham Lincoln once visited the family in Warren County.

The scope of this article will not permit following these family lines to their many descendants. The known grandchildren of Hananiah, we shall attempt to name. The children of Moses are given in the order of their birth: Sarah Jane, John Crawford, James Harvey, Marthy Ellen, William Washington, David Shankland, Mary Ann, Lucinda Caroline, Elizabeth Ruth. The children of Thomas Lincoln and his wife, who was a Gee, cannot be given in the order of their birth although the list is said to be complete: Ananias, Jesse G., Moses, James, Thomas, John, Sarah, Elizabeth, Susie, and Martha.

The two girls Sarah and Lucy settled in Kentucky, although Sarah first lived for a time in Indiana and after the Kentucky residence moved to Tennessee. She married George Peterman and three children were born to them—Martha, Malinda and Rebecca. Lucy married Jonathan Hills in Hardin County, Kentucky, on October 4, 1817, and probably lived near Elizabethtown most of her life. I was personally acquainted with one of her daughters, Mrs. Lucy Lasley, a genial old lady, now deceased. The children of Lucy Lincoln Hills were: William Jeffries, Sarah, John, Margaret, Sena, James, Charles, Elizabeth, Mary Priscilla, Malvina, Eliza Rebecca, Lucy Jane, and Martha.

Austin and Davis Lincoln are the two sons of Hananiah in which we are more especially interested, because of their association with President Lincoln's family in Southern Indiana. The Boone connections were probably responsible for the first Lincoln migrations to Indiana Territory, some time before it became a State. Ratliff Boone, a dominant character in Indiana politics for many years in the early history of the State, had taken up his residence there as early as 1809. It was he that undoubtedly influenced the two sons of Hananiah to locate in the new country. Austin had entered his claim in the

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88 Family records of Mrs. A. A. Brewer, Connersville, Ind.; Mrs. E. V. Smith, Williamsport, Ind.
89 Marriage Register, Hardin County [Ky.] Court.
90 Family records of Miss Eliza Lasley, Elizabethtown, Ky.
land office at Vincennes by December 16, 1816. More than a year before, however, in the month of June, 1815, he had served on a Perry County jury.

Very little is known about Austin Lincoln. In the 1820 census, he is entered as between the ages of 26 and 45 and his wife is listed as over 18 and under 26. They had two sons and a daughter at this time, all three under ten years of age. I have been unable to learn the names of either of his two sons. A Levisy Lincoln married a James Hargrave on June 21, 1828. This wedding took place in Spencer County and it is likely that this was the daughter of Austin Lincoln. Tradition says that Austin moved on either to Illinois or Missouri, and upon his death left a widow and two children. His wife’s name is not known.

It was not until sometime between Thanksgiving and Christmas of 1816 that President Lincoln’s father and his family moved into Indiana. They located not more than twelve miles from the Austin Lincoln property, and must pass it as they journeyed en route from Kentucky to the new home site. It is my opinion that Austin Lincoln was largely responsible for the coming of Thomas to Indiana and for his choice of the particular tract of land which he occupied. It is not likely that Davis Lincoln reached the Indiana country until late in the year 1820, as his name does not appear on the 1820 census. He entered a tract of land, however, as early as April, 1821. His sister Sarah came with him, and I am also of the opinion that Elender Lincoln, who married Jesse Conner in Perry County on June 26, 1821, was a sister of Sarah and Lucy Lincoln, although no proof of this fact is attainable.

It is the family of Davis Lincoln which has become best known in Southern Indiana. Many of the descendants still live there and at other points in the State. Davis was quite a prominent character serving as a Justice of the peace as early as 1823. He was the owner of the Lincoln Mill on Anderson Creek which brought him into contact with a great many people. On a trip to New Orleans he contracted cholera.

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81 Record of Relinquishments, Indiana State House.
82 Complete Records, Perry County [Ind.] Court, book 1, June term, 1815.
83 United States Census Returns, Indiana State Library.
84 Marriage Register, Spencer County [Ind.] Court.
85 Land Entry Book, Indiana State House.
86 Marriage Register, Spencer County [Ind.] Court.
87 Deed Book A, Spencer County Court, 100.
and is said to have died at Natchez. The date of his death is not known but the fact that his wife Abigail was interested in a land transaction in 1826 would imply that his death had antedated that year. The widow later married Thomas Jones and by him had two children, James and Caroline.

It was the children of Davis Lincoln with whom Abraham Lincoln became more intimately acquainted. There were three boys and five girls. Hananiah, Austin, Robert J., Ellen, Nancy, Sarah, Martha, and Lucy. All of these children must have been known to Abraham Lincoln. On days when he visited the Lincoln mill he must have enjoyed the companionship of these distant cousins. Hananiah married Adelia Sanders on November 26, 1836. They had five sons and three daughters. Hananiah was usually called "Niah". He died sometime before 1850 and is buried in the old Avery Cemetery.

Austin Lincoln married Catherine McGuffey, December 28, 1837. He operated the Lincoln Mill on Anderson Creek, where he met his death. He is buried near Troy. Robert J. Lincoln married Christina Williams, November 26, 1836. His wife joined him in signing a deed to a piece of property as late as April 6, 1844, but the date of his decease is not known to me.

The names of the three oldest girls, Elender or Ellen, Nancy, and Sarah are all entered on the marriage registers of Perry or Spencer County. Elender or Ellen Lincoln married a Mr. McGuffey on December 19, 1830. The marriage register gives his name as Macijah, but the family tradition says it was Jesse. Nancy, according to the marriage returns married Josiah Dunn on February 15, 1827, but he is called Cyrus by descendants of the family. Sarah became the husband of Francis Armstrong on November 18, 1839. They moved to Kentucky and later to Tennessee.

It seems that nearly every Lincoln story, from the time the
grandfather of the President was massacred by the Indians, until the President himself died by the hand of an assassin, includes a tragedy. This story of the Hananiah Lincoln family is no exception. The two youngest daughters, Armarintha or Martha, and Lucy, have evidently been confused by members of the Hananiah Lincoln family as they have set down certain traditions about these two girls, so we are not able to learn just which one was held indirectly responsible for the reputed haunting of the old Lincoln mill. It appears to have been Armarintha. Some members of the family claim that Lucy was not married in 1847 when she moved to Kentucky, but a Warrick County Marriage record reveals that a Lucinda Lincoln married John Montgomery on August 25, 1835,* and, in 1840, a Lucy Mills who had undoubtedly been a Lucy Lincoln signed her name to a deed.4 There is a possibility that Lucy Lincoln may have been married twice before 1847.

Armarintha was in love with a young man by the name of Wilson. His attentions were not looked upon with pleasure by Austin Lincoln, the brother with whom the girl was then living. Wilson continued to keep company with her, however. One day he visited the Lincoln Mill with the intention of making a further appeal for the hand of Armarintha, to whom he had become engaged, when a fierce struggle occurred between Austin Lincoln and his sister's suitor. That evening the dead body of Austin Lincoln was found on the stairs leading to the second story of the mill. Wilson fled the country taking a boat down the Ohio and Armarintha is said to have disappeared at some later date. The presumption is that she met Wilson and that they were married. Of one fact we are certain that on December 5, 1840, Armarintha was still single as she was a party to a sale of some land in Spencer county which she had evidently inherited.**

It is to be hoped that some member of the Hananiah Lincoln family will become interested in following the descendants of this revolutionary soldier beyond the point where it has been found necessary to conclude this narrative. A complete genealogy of this family would make a valuable addition to Lincolniana.

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*Marriage Register, Warrick County (Ind.) Court.
*Deed Book 5, Spencer County (Ind.) Court, 308.
*Ibid.