The nomination of Abraham Lincoln as the Republican candidate for the presidency of the United States in the election of 1860 immediately directed attention to his origin and early history. At that time there is known to have been available to newspapers but one biographical sketch of him. This story of nearly two thousand words was published in the Chester County, Pennsylvania, Times on February 11, 1860, and later copied in many newspapers throughout the country.\(^1\) It became the source of practically all of the post-convention news items relating to the life of Lincoln. The story did not contain the names of his parents nor any other personal material of much importance.

This very meager biographical source, the lack of vital statistics, Lincoln's own reluctance to say very much about himself, the fact that his own mother died when he was too young to take an interest in the names of his forebears, the confusion of some of his kinsmen about their relationship to him—all these things contributed to the cultivation of an ideal seedbed for a large number of purely traditional stories about his origin and early days.

The majority of the more careful students of history who are contributing to a better understanding of the place which Abraham Lincoln occupies in our American civilization are agreed that Thomas Lincoln was the father of the President.\(^2\) Those, who have been attempting to establish this relationship beyond the question of a doubt, have expended much energy in refuting the many untenable stories claiming the President was an illegitimate child. It is hoped that the paternity question may now rest where Abraham Lin-

---

\(^1\) The original of this sketch is in the Greenly Lincoln Collection, William L. Clements Library, University of Michigan, Ann Arbor, Michigan. It has been reprinted in Lincoln Lore (Fort Wayne, Indiana, April 15, 1929—), nos. 617, 618, February 3, and 10, 1941.

\(^2\) Ida M. Tarbell, In the Footsteps of the Lincolns (New York, 1924), 93, et passim; Louis A. Warren, Lincoln's Parentage and Childhood (New York, 1926), 38-57; and The Lincoln Kinsman (Fort Wayne, Indiana, July, 1938—), nos. 9, March, 1939; 31, January, 1941; 32, February, 1941; 34, April, 1941.
Admitting the regularity of the President's parentage and the possibility now of accounting for some of his inherited tendencies, one is then confronted with another tradition which blocks the approach to a study of the environmental influences exerted over Abraham Lincoln as a child—the tradition of the character of his father. Thomas Lincoln has been the scapegoat for all who would make Lincoln a saint, as well as for those who would relegate the whole Lincoln tribe to perdition. As one writer put it: "Not a single one of Mr. Lincoln's defiers has had the audacity to claim anything superior for Tom Lincoln." Folklore and tradition have made him one of the most despised characters in American history, and as long as he is portrayed as a vagabond, an idler, a tramp, a rover, and as poor white trash, lacking in energy, void of ambition, wanting in respectability, and a general failure in life, it will be impossible to trace any tendencies which the President may have inherited from his father. If no one challenges the statements that Thomas Lincoln was ignorant, shiftless, indolent, restless, unsuccessful, thriftless, trifling, hopeless, improvident, listless, lazy and worthless, those who feel that the President's environmental surroundings may have contributed to his advancement will have difficulty in finding any worthwhile influences exerted over him by his father.

In order to illustrate how Thomas Lincoln's reputed weaknesses have been featured by most of the biographers of his son, it might be of some interest to follow a biographical arrangement of several paragraphs quoted verbatim and selected from various Lincoln books. While the historical sequence may be disturbed somewhat by this method, and some repetition will be discovered, all in all it seems to be the most satisfactory way to give a composite portrait of Thomas Lincoln as drawn by many of the best-known Lincoln authors. The compilation offers a good illus-

---


tration of the ill repute in which the father of Abraham Lincoln is still held by most biographers:

No more ignorant boy than Thomas [Lincoln] could be found in the backwoods.\(^5\) His parents—drifting, roaming people, struggling with poverty—were dwellers in the Virginia mountains.\(^6\) The unhappy child was left to the tender mercies of strangers in a wilderness swarming with savage beasts and still more savage men.\(^7\)

He was as often called “Linkern” or “Linkorn” as Lincoln, because he himself did not know how to spell his name.\(^8\) A shiftless fellow, never succeeding at anything, who could neither read nor write.\(^9\) He was idle, thriftless, poor, a hunter, and a rover. . . . He was an indolent, happy-go-lucky, contented tramp.\(^10\) A shadowy figure, this Thomas; the few memories of him suggest a superstitious nature in a superstitious community.\(^11\) A shiftless migratory squatter by invincible tendency, and a very ignorant man.\(^12\) From all accounts, an ignorant, shiftless vagabond.\(^13\)

He reached the age of twenty-seven, the year of his marriage, a brawny, wandering labourer, a poor white, unlettered and untaught, except for his trade of carpentering.\(^14\) Nobody alleges that he ever built a house, or pretended to do more than a few little odd jobs connected with such an undertaking.\(^15\) He never fell in with the routine of labor; was what some people would call unfortunate or unlucky in all his business ventures—if in reality he ever made one.\(^16\) Slaveholders and wealthy men . . . looked down upon him as a menial of hardly so much account as a slave.\(^17\) Thomas Lincoln was an ignorant, worthless, shiftless, illiterate man.\(^18\) Not only devoid of energy

\(^8\) James Morgan, *Abraham Lincoln, the Boy and the Man* (New York, 1908), 5.
\(^12\) John T. Morse, Jr., *Abraham Lincoln* (2 vols., Boston, 1893), I, 10.
\(^13\) Coleman, *The Evidence that Abraham Lincoln was not born in lawful wedlock*, 8.
\(^17\) William M. Thayer, *The Pioneer Boy* (Boston, 1864), 70.
\(^18\) Eugene W. Chafin, *Lincoln, the Man of Sorrow* (Chicago, 1908), 10-11.
and shiftless, but dull. He had the wandering foot, and looking for other locations for a home was his hobby. A typical "poor southern white," shiftless and improvident, without ambition for himself or his children, constantly looking for a new piece of land where he might make a living without much work. Nomadic Tom Lincoln belongs really nowhere, and so he cannot find out where he belongs. He constantly sought to change, since it seemed that no change could bring him to a lower level than he had already found.

Vagrants, or little better than vagrants, were Thomas Lincoln and his family making their way to Indiana. His earthly possessions were of the slightest, for the backs of two borrowed horses sufficed for the load. Where he got the horses used upon this occasion, it is impossible to say. His decision to move, however, was hastened by certain troubles which culminated in a desperate combat between him and one Abraham Enlow. They fought like savages; but Lincoln obtained a signal and permanent advantage by biting off the nose of his antagonist.

Thomas Lincoln was . . . a poverty-stricken man, whom misfortune had seemingly chosen for her own, and whose ambitions were blighted and hopes almost dead. An ignorant man, amiable enough, but colorlessly negative, without strength of character, and with no ambition worthy of the name. A poor specimen of the "poor whites," synonym for ignorance and superstition to half a continent. To the day of his death he could neither read nor write. He never seems to have left the impress of his goodness or of anything else on any man.

Possibly the most satisfactory way of refuting the many erroneous statements which have been made about Thomas Lincoln would be the preparation of an exhaustive biography of the President's father, supported by duly authorized public records which should put at rest, for all time, the inaccurate and wholly unreliable statements which have been made about

---

19 Herndon and Weik, Herndon's Lincoln, I, 6.
21 Carl Schurz, Abraham Lincoln (Boston, 1892), 3.
22 Denton J. Snider, Abraham Lincoln, An Interpretation in Biography (St. Louis, 1908), 35.
23 Morse, Abraham Lincoln, I, 15.
24 Stephenson, Lincoln, 11.
26 Lamon, Life of Abraham Lincoln, 20.
27 Ibid., 16.
29 Frederick T. Hill, Lincoln the Lawyer (New York, 1912), 6.
31 Lord Charnwood, Abraham Lincoln (Garden City, N. Y., 1917), 4.
him. The only alternative at present, however, is to make some positive statements based on available documents which will briefly portray the historical Thomas Linco'n.

The father of the President invariably has been called a roving, gypsy-like individual. But no one would expect Thomas Lincoln to settle down until he was married and had established a home, especially if he were a laborer. As far as his alleged roving propensities influenced his son, it is of interest to note that from the time Abraham Lincoln was born until he became twenty-one years old his father moved but twice, and Abraham could remember moving but once. Fourteen years, or one quarter of Abraham’s whole life, were spent in the one log cabin home of his father in Spencer County, Indiana.

Upon reaching the Illinois country at the time Abraham left home, Thomas Lincoln did establish two or three different residences during the first two years there until he found a desirable and healthy location. He then settled down and spent the remainder of his life, approximately twenty years, on the same tract of land, in the same cabin home. Fourteen years in the same cabin in Indiana and twenty years in another cabin in Illinois, a total of thirty-four years in two cabins, would not imply that he had “a wandering foot” or that he should be called “nomadic Tom.”

The illiteracy of Thomas Lincoln has been exaggerated out of all due proportion to the facts in the case. Many biographers claim that he could neither read nor write; others claim he could not write until his wife taught him how. The Lincoln National Life Foundation, however, is in possession of a very clear signature written by him as a witness to a note in 1803, three years before he was married. His signature is found on many duly authorized records, and one document is also available which seems to be his own written report of work he had done. We have the testimony of Lincoln’s second wife, Sarah Johnston Lincoln, that “Mr. Lincoln could read a little,”52 so he should not be classed among the illiterates. Nor is there any evidence whatever that he was a stupid man, as many of his early enterprises and achievements gave indication that his intelligence was equal to, and probably above, that of the average Hoosier of his day.

There is no indication that Thomas Lincoln was ever a

52 Emanuel Hertz, The Hidden Lincoln (New York, 1938), 351.
poverty-stricken man. He was poor as other pioneers were poor, to be sure, but Thomas Lincoln during the period when Abraham was growing up was as well off economically as his neighbors and better off than the average pioneer. Thomas Lincoln had more than one source of income. The farm he had purchased in 1803, for a cash payment of one hundred eighteen pounds, was evidently operated by him at some profit, as on February 18, 1806, he was credited at the Bleakley and Montgomery store in Elizabethtown for 2400 pounds of pork and 494 pounds of beef, which amounted in money credit to 21 pounds, 14 shillings, and 1½ pence. Later, on May 16, there was a credit placed to his name of 30 pounds, 4 shillings, and 7½ pence for going to New Orleans on a flatboat, and within five months from this store alone he had received fifty pounds, or more than two hundred dollars. These business transactions all took place within a period of four months previous to his marriage to Nancy Hanks.

In December, 1808, Thomas paid two hundred dollars cash to Elijah Bush for the farm on which Abraham was to be born two months later. While still in possession of two farms for which he had paid four hundred dollars, he acquired an interest in another farm on Knob Creek on which he paid taxes. When Thomas moved into Indiana in 1816 he left a surplus of two hundred bushels of corn in the loft of a neighbor's cabin on Knob Creek.

The most unjust charges against Thomas Lincoln have been those which have attacked his character. The story became so general that one of the granddaughters of Thomas' second wife came to his rescue and said she was tired of hearing Thomas Lincoln abused. She told Eleanor Atkinson:

Abe got his honesty, and clean notions of living and his kind heart from his father. ... I've heard Grandmother Lincoln [Sarah Bush Johnston] say, many a time, that he was kind and loving, and kept his word, and always paid his way, and never turned a dog from the door.

33 Hardin County [Kentucky] Court Deed Book, 225.
34 Bleakley and Montgomery Account Book, in possession of J. W. Montgomery of Elizabethtown, Kentucky.
35 Larue County [Kentucky] Circuit Court, McKelvey Fogle Suit Equity Box 19.
36 Hardin County Court Tax Book, 1815.
37 Hardin Circuit Court, Geo. Lindsay vs. John Kennedy Suit.
In all of the available records referring to Thomas Lincoln there is not a single one of them which would imply he was ever delinquent in his taxes, called to appear before any grand jury, compelled to answer for any misdemeanor, sued for any indebtedness, or that he in any manner discredited himself.

Thomas Lincoln affiliated with the church in Kentucky, and joined by letter the Pigeon Creek congregation in Indiana. He was one of the leading members of this group—a moderator at its meetings, a member of the board of trustees, of the committee to enforce discipline, and of the building committee. While serving in many different capacities in the local church, he was also appointed a delegate of the church to district meetings. Upon reaching Illinois he affiliated with the Christian Church and was known as a conscientious member until his death. The minister who served the church to which Thomas belonged has testified to his exemplary Christian character.

Some of our biographers have ridiculed Thomas Lincoln's ability as cabinetmaker. Possibly they are not familiar with the fact that there are several pieces of his handiwork which have been preserved. Corner cupboards which he made are now in the Speed Museum at Louisville, Kentucky, and the Ford collection at Dearborn, Michigan. There are also several mantles in Hardin County, Kentucky—products of his handiwork which testify to his skill.

William Woods, an Indiana neighbor of the Lincolns, made this statement in some reminiscences which he wrote on September 15, 1865: "Thomas Lincoln often and at various times worked for me, made cupboards, etc., other household furniture for me; he built my house, made floors, ran up the stairs, did all the inside work for my house." It is also well known that Thomas was on the committee that superintended and helped to build the Pigeon Church where the Lincolns attended. The pulpit which was used for more than seventy-five years by the church was made by him.

With Thomas Lincoln's ability as a carpenter well established, it would seem strange that he would provide such impossible living quarters for his family during their first year or two in Indiana, as has been alleged. The story as

---

39 Pigeon Church Record Book.
40 Hertz, The Hidden Lincoln, 383.
told by nearly every Lincoln biographer who mentions the Indiana years affirms that the Lincolns lived in a half-faced camp or a hunter's hut open on one side. This story is absolutely false. Abraham Lincoln himself mentions "the new log cabin" which had been constructed shortly after their arrival. John Hanks, who helped build a new log cabin when the Lincolns moved from Indiana to Illinois, stated: "It [the Illinois cabin] was begun March 30, 1830 and four days were spent in building it." There was no reason on earth why Thomas Lincoln should expose his family to the elements in a half-faced camp when a typical log cabin could be built in four days. A year before Thomas Lincoln moved to Indiana, other Lincoln relatives had preceded him and settled not far from where he built his cabin home, so there were plenty of settlers to help him cut the timber and erect his pioneer dwelling. Thomas Lincoln was, furthermore, an experienced woodsman, had built several cabins, and had one contract for getting out timber for a large mill.

Comments about the title Thomas Lincoln held to his Indiana acres are just as misleading as the statements about his early dwelling. It is claimed he never gained a clear title to his farm and was in debt for it when he left Indiana. It is evident from the records of the general land office and the deed books of Spencer County that Thomas Lincoln's one-hundred-acre Hoosier farm was unencumbered. Timber had already been cut for the erection of a new dwelling at the time the family decided to move to Illinois.

These brief comments on the historical Thomas Lincoln, as contrasted with the folklore Thomas Lincoln, might be concluded with an interview which William J. Green had with Thomas Lincoln not long before he passed away in Illinois. Although Thomas was then an old man seventy years of age, Green came to this conclusion after conversing with him:

He was a man of great reasoning powers and fine social magnetism, reminding me of his illustrious son, but that having received no educational drill or discipline, he knew nothing of persistency of effort in a continuous line, nor of the laws of thrift or financial cause and effect; that he evidently was industrious, though shifting rapidly

---

41 Nicolay and Hay, Complete Works of Abraham Lincoln, VI, 27.
42 Phebe A. Hanaford, Abraham Lincoln: His Life and Public Services (Boston, 1883), 24.
Indiana pioneers have no reason to be ashamed of Abraham Lincoln's father. The innate tendencies passed on to, and environmental influences created about his boy, will always supplement to a very large degree the contributions of Abraham's mother.

If one thinks that Abraham Lincoln's father has been abused by biographers, what has been said about him is mild compared to the comments which are made about his mother. It is not our purpose, however, to review the slanderous stories in circulation and in print about Nancy Hanks, as they have in a measure been offset by many very beautiful tributes to her, tributes which in some instances have been as greatly exaggerated as those unlovely tirades which would defame her.

Just one statement might be made which explains the origin of the story questioning the moral status of Mrs. Nancy Lincoln, and elaborating on Abraham Lincoln's alleged unnatural birth. Within a week after the Chicago Convention, Samuel Haycraft of Elizabethtown, Kentucky, wrote to Lincoln, making some inquiries about his parentage. On May 28, 1860, ten days after the nominations were made, Haycraft received the following letter:

Dear Sir: Your recent letter, without date, is received. Also the copy of your speech on the contemplated Daniel Boone Monument, which I have not yet had time to read. In the main you are right about my history. My father was Thomas Lincoln, and Mrs. Sally Johnston was his second wife. You are mistaken about my mother. Her maiden name was Nancy Hanks. I was not born in Elizabethtown, but my mother's first child, a daughter, two years older than myself, and now long since deceased, was. I was born February 12, 1809, near where Hogginsville [Hodgenville] now is, then in Hardin County. I do not think I ever saw you, though I very well know who you are—so well that I recognized your handwriting, on opening your letter, before I saw your signature. My recollection is that Ben Helm was first clerk, that you succeeded him, that Jack Thomas and William Farleigh graduated in the same office, and that your handwritings were all very similar. Am I right?

My father has been dead near ten years; but my stepmother is still living.

---

43 Newspaper clippings in the files of the Lincoln National Life Foundation, Fort Wayne, Indiana.
I am really very glad of your letter, and shall be pleased to receive another at any time.

Yours very truly,
A. Lincoln

Lincoln's reply indicates that Haycraft had submitted for confirmation the history of the family as remembered by the citizens of Elizabethtown. Fifty-two years had elapsed since the brief two years' residence of the Lincolns in the town. Abraham very frankly wrote to Haycraft: "You are mistaken about my mother. Her maiden name was Nancy Hanks." He mentioned that Sarah Johnston was the second wife of Thomas. Haycraft evidently had confused the stepmother with Lincoln's own mother. It was necessary to correct Haycraft's opinion about Abraham's birthplace as well, and Lincoln stated that he was not born in Elizabethtown but his sister was born there. Apparently there was no attempt on the part of Lincoln to obscure any family history, for he invited Haycraft to write again.

When Samuel Haycraft learned that Abraham Lincoln's mother's maiden name was Nancy Hanks, it would be natural for him, as the country clerk, to search for the Lincoln-Hanks marriage record. Of course he failed to find it, as Lincoln's parents were not married in Hardin County. The older citizens, however, remembered that there was a young woman by the name of Nancy Hanks who lived in the community where Abraham was born. They also recalled that she became the mother of an illegitimate child, a boy. It was this mother and child that undoubtedly gave rise to the story of Abraham Lincoln's questionable paternity.

After it became known generally that the name of Lincoln's mother was Nancy Hanks and that a person by that name in Hardin County was a woman of ill repute, other communities began to discover that once upon a time a certain Nancy Hanks lived in their midst, and it was not difficult to find some man who was said to have betrayed her. So the story of Lincoln's mother became a maze of contradictory stories all evolving about some girl by the name of Nancy; but Nancy Hanks of Washington County, living with her Aunt Rachel Berry, should not be confused with the Hardin County person or any other contemporaries with the same name, as Lincoln's mother's identity is well established.

---

44 Nicolay and Hay, Complete Works of Abraham Lincoln, VI, 21-22.
Josiah Lincoln, brother of Thomas, and Robert Brumfield, grandson of Richard and Rachel Berry, married sisters. Nancy Lincoln, sister of Thomas, married another grandson of Richard Berry, and it is not strange that Thomas Lincoln himself would become closely associated with the Berry family. Thomas resided from the time he was ten years old, 1786, until he was twenty-seven, 1803, a short distance from the Berry home, where there lived a daughter of Berry’s wife’s sister, his niece, named Nancy Hanks. After Thomas left the community in 1803, he lived near Elizabethtown for the next three years, but it is not likely he had forgotten the niece of Richard Berry. It is evident that he paid her a visit very soon after arriving home from a boat trip to New Orleans on May 3, 1806. We are sure of this fact, that he had proposed marriage to Nancy Hanks by May 16, and possibly many months before that date.

On the above date Thomas purchased at the Bleakley and Montgomery store in Elizabethtown material for his wedding outfit, which contained thirteen itemized articles, including cloth for a new suit, the entire account amounting to over nine pounds. A week later he purchased another bill of goods which included three yards of coating which alone cost him three pounds four shillings and sixpence. On June 2, 1806, Thomas bought a “tipt bridle” for his horse, and two days later some “sundries” were charged to him. No more entries appear under his name at this store until after his marriage to Nancy Hanks ten days later.

For the authenticity of this marriage, as well as a sketch of Nancy Hanks at the time of her wedding, we are indebted to an Indianapolis woman, Mrs. C. H. Vawter, whose grandmother was a first cousin of the bride and her constant associate during the years preceding the wedding. Mrs. Vawter was born in Indianapolis on October 26, 1825. She was the daughter of John and Naomi (Thompson) Hobart. She was married in Indianapolis on May 1, 1866, to Achilles Vawter. Mr. Vawter was an educator and served as president of the Baptist Seminary at Lodoga for five years; later he had charge of two different academies in Kentucky. While Mrs. Vawter was living in Kentucky, not far from where her mother was born, and in the same community where Nancy Hanks married Thomas Lincoln, she prepared an article for the press.

---

45 Bleakley and Montgomery Account Book.
commenting on the mother of Abraham Lincoln. She referred to this article in a letter written to Mrs. Caroline Hanks Hitchcock on September 14, 1895:

Twenty two years have elapsed since the letter to which you refer was written in vindication of Nancy Hanks who was the cousin of my grandmother. When young they were intimate as sisters and members of their Uncle Richard Berry's home in Washington Co., Ky. until they were both married. My grandmother was married first, Nancy Hanks five or six years later. My grandmother retained until death the greatest love for her cousin and that knowledge prompted this writing of the letter which has resulted in the entire vindication of a noble woman and the untarnished fame of her honored son. My letter was written in 1873 [1874]. In 1877 I visited Ky. and urged my uncle Mitchell Thompson to have the old courthouse searched for the papers. At a later date he did go to Mr. Broker, clerk of Washington Co., Springfield, the county seat and have the search made which resulted in the finding of the papers. The establishment of the legality of the marriage etc. Nancy Hanks mother's name before marriage was Shipley and she was a Virginian. There were I think six sisters in the Shipley family. But I only remember the names of the husbands of two, Richard Berry and Robert Mitchell, my great grandfather, and Mr. Hanks, Nancy's father.46

The news item Mrs. Vawter prepared appeared in the Louisville Courier for February 20, 1874, and it is worthy of being preserved:

In the year 1859 I went to Springfield, Ky., to teach, and was in that same neighborhood when Lincoln received the nomination for President. ... In 1866, after the liberation of four million of slaves had made the name of Abraham Lincoln memorable, I was again in the neighborhood and visited the old home, in which were celebrated the nuptials above referred to. ... As I remember the story of Nancy Hanks, it ran thus: Her mother's name before marriage was Shipley, and one of her sisters married a Mr. Berry; another sister married Robert Mitchell, who also came to Kentucky about the year 1780. While on the journey the Mitchells were attacked by the Indians and Mrs. Mitchell fatally wounded, and their daughter, Sarah, a child of eleven years old, was captured and carried into Michigan. ... Soon after Mad Anthony Wayne's treaty with the Indians in 1794 or 1795; the lost Sarah was returned to her friends, and lived in the home of her uncle, Richard Berry, with her cousins, Frank and Ned Berry and Nancy Hanks, until both girls married.

These girls were as intimate as sisters. Sarah Mitchell was the pupil of Nancy Hanks in learning to spin flax, the latter being adept in that now lost art. It was the custom in those days to have spinning parties, on which occasions the wheels of the ladies were carried

46 Original letter in the files of the Lincoln National Life Foundation.
to the house designated, to which the competitors, distaff in hand, 
came ready for the work of the day. At a given hour the wheels were 
put in motion, and the flimsy fibre took the form of firmly lengthened 
strands in their mystic hands. Tradition says that Nancy Hanks 
generally bore the palm, her spools yielding the longest and finest 
thread. Abraham Lincoln was not an exception to the rule that great 
men require that their mothers should be talented.

Thomas Lincoln came, it is believed, into this neighborhood to visit 
Mordecai Lincoln, who lived near Major Berry, and there learned of 
the skill of Nancy Hanks. Like Ulysses he was ambitious and later 
became the husband of Nancy Hanks, whose thread of gold has been 
voven by the hand and pen of Abraham Lincoln into the warp and 
woof of the national Constitution.

Sarah Mitchell was a woman of a high order of talent. She 
made a Virginian, had many fine children, and retained until her 
death the greatest veneration for the memory of her cousin, whose 
name she gave to one of her daughters. Modesty has laid the impress 
of silence upon these relatives of a noble woman, but when the voice 
of calumny has presumed to sully her name, they hurl the accusation 
to the ground and proclaim her the beautiful character they had 
learned to love long before they knew that to her had been given an 
honored son.

From one who has learned from saintly lips to admire her grand-
mother's cousin.

C. H. V.

Thomas Lincoln and his wife Nancy Hanks Lincoln had 
located in Elizabethtown, Kentucky, by June 14, two days 
after the wedding, and on that day Thomas purchased at 
the Bleakley and Montgomery store "½ set of knives and 
forks" for five shillings, and "3 skeins" of silk and other pur-
chases for his wife were made during that first week of 
their married life. On August 4, Thomas was charged with 
three dozen buttons, which should imply the presence of a
woman in his cabin home. It was in this same month of May, 1808, that the unborn life of Abraham Lincoln began. Two months before the birth of Abraham, his parents acquired the farm on which he was to be born. About two years after his birth another child, a son, was born, who was named Thomas for his father; but this child died in infancy.

It was Thomas and Nancy Hanks Lincoln who with their two children, Sarah, aged nine, and Abraham, aged seven, moved into the new state of Indiana just about the time it came into the Union. They represented a typical pioneer family from Kentucky, both parents having been born in Virginia, and both with an honorable ancestry of which no man might be ashamed. Two years later the mother passed away, but the environmental influences with which she surrounded her son were not to be lost, and the innate tendencies which the boy inherited from both parents were not to be discounted.

It is hoped that the time may come when all students of history may recognize that the genius and remarkable achievements of Abraham Lincoln find their proper and normal origin in two worthy parents whose ancestry dates back to early colonial days, and who had absorbed, during their western migrations, the very spirit of the nation which passed into their children. Reverence and respect are due to Mr. and Mrs. Thomas Lincoln, as well as to their illustrious son, Abraham, all of whom were Hoosier pioneers.