

Bayhood Stories (2)

Drawer 3

Youth - Indiana

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Abraham Lincoln before 1860

Boyhood Stories (2)

Excerpts from newspapers and other
sources

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Abraham Lincoln's Boyhood

Evangelical Messenger 2. 12-13

Abraham Lincoln passed his boyhood in three places and in three states. He was born at Nolan's Creek in Kentucky, and lived there till he was eight years old. Then his father removed to Pidgeon Creek, near Gentryville, in Southwestern Indiana. Here young Lincoln lived till he was twenty, a man grown, when the family moved once more to Sangamon Creek, in Illinois. All his homes were log cabins, and he was to all intents and purposes a pioneer boy.

No boy ever began life under less promising auspices than young Abraham Lincoln. The family was very poor! his father was a shiftless man, who never succeeded in getting ahead in life. Their home was a mere log cabin of the roughest and poorest sort known to backwoods people. The rude chimney was built on the outside, and the only floor was the hardened earth. It was not so good and comfortable as some Indian wigwams. Of course, the food and clothes and beds of a family living in this way were of the miserable kind.

The family lived as did most pioneer families in the backwoods of Indiana. Their bread was made of corn meal. Their meat was chiefly the flesh of wild game shot or trapped in the woods. Pewter plates and wooden trenchers were used on the table. The drinking cups were of tin. There was no stove, and all the cooking was done over the fire of the big fireplace. Abe's bed was simply a couch of leaves freshly gathered every two or three weeks.

At that time Indiana was still part of the wilderness. It had just been admitted to the Union as a state. Primeval woods grew up close to the settlement at Pidgeon Creek, and not far away were roving bands of Indians, and also wild animals—bears, wildcats and panthers. These animals the settlers hunted and made use of for food and clothing. Young Abe and his brothers and sisters spent the larger part of their time out of doors. They hunted and fished and learned the habits of the wild creatures, and explored the far recesses of the woods. The forest lore Abe never forgot, and the life and training made him vigorous and tough and able to endure in after days the troubles and trials that would have broken down many a weaker man.

Lincoln was fortunate in his mothers. His own mother died when he was eight years old, but she had done her best to start her boy in the world. Once she said to him: "Abe, learn all you can, and grow up to be of some account. You've got just as good Virginian blood in you as George Washington had." Abe never forgot this. Years afterwards he said, "All that I am or ever hope to be, I owe to my blessed mother." His stepmother, Sarah Bush, was a kind-hearted, excellent woman, and did all she could to make the poor, ragged barefooted boy happy. She was always ready to listen when he read, to help him with his lessons, to encourage him. After he had grown up and become famous, she said of him: "Abe never gave me a cross word or look, and never refused to do anything I asked of him. Abe was the best boy I ever knew."

There was a backwoods schoolhouse quite a distance away, which Abe attended for a short time. These log school houses in Lincoln's day had large fireplaces, in which there was a great blazing fire in the winter. The boys of the school had to chop and bring in the wood for the fire. The floor of such a schoolhouse was of rough boards hewn out with axes. The schoolmasters were generally harsh, rough men, who did not know very much themselves. Abe soon learned to read and write, however, and after awhile he found a new

teacher, and that was himself. When the rest of the family had gone to bed he would sit up and write and cypher by the light of the great blazing logs heaped up on the open fireplace. So poor were this pioneer family that they had no means of procuring paper or pencil for the struggling student. Abe used to take the back of the broad wooden fire shovel to write on, and a piece of charcoal for a pencil. When he had covered the shovel with words or with sums in arithmetic, he would shave it off clean and begin over again. If his father complained that the shovel was getting thin, the boy would go out into the woods and make a new one. As long as the woods lasted, fire shovels and furniture were cheap.

There were few books to read in that frontier cabin. Poor Abe had not more than a dozen in all. These were Robinson Crusoe, Pilgrim's Progress, Aesop's Fables, the Bible, and a small history of the United States. The boy read these books over and over till he knew a great deal of them by heart, and could repeat whole pages from them.

One book that made a great impression upon him was "Weems' Life of Washington." This book he borrowed of a neighbor, who loaned it to him on the condition of his returning it in as good a condition as he received it. And this the young student intended to do. But one night there was a great storm, and it rained down in the cabin and seriously injured the precious volume. Lincoln was very much troubled and informed the neighbor of what had happened. The surly old man told him that he must give him three days' work shucking corn, and that then he might keep the book for his own. It was the first book that Lincoln ever owned. No one knows how many times he read it through. Washington was his ideal hero, the one great man whom he admired above all others. How little he could have dreamed that in the years to come his own name would be coupled with that of the Father of his Country by admiring countrymen.

By the time the lad was seventeen, he could write a good hand, do hard examples in arithmetic, and spell better than any one else in the country. Once in awhile he would write a little piece of his own about something which interested him. Some times he would read what he had written to the neighbors, when they would clap their hands and exclaim: "It beats the world what Abe writes!"

So Lincoln was all the time learning something and trying to make use of what he did know. Perhaps the great success of his life lay in the fact that in whatever position he was placed he always did his best. The time when the boy could no longer stay in the small surroundings of Pidgeon Creek came. He tried life on one of the river steamboats, then he served as a clerk in a store at New Salem, where he began at odd moments to study law. In a short time he was practicing his profession, and people in the West were talking of the tall, lank young lawyer and of what a future he had before him.

Such was the humble boyhood of Abraham Lincoln, but its very simplicity and the hardships he endured and overcame made him a strong man, a successful man. Later, when he came to be President and the leader of a Nation through a great civil war, we find that it was these same qualities of perseverance and courage and fidelity which enabled him to triumph over difficulties and become the saviour of a Great Republic. His life is a lesson and an inspiration to all aspiring boys."—*Frey Myron Colby, in United Presbyterian.*

EARLY INFLUENCES ON LINCOLN.

So much has been said about Abraham Lincoln, including his boyhood life in Indiana, that it has seemed that nothing more was to be learned, but Judge Roscoe Kiper, formerly of the Circuit court of the Second Judicial district in Indiana, comes forward in a recent number of the Kiwanis magazine and presents the youth Lincoln in a different light from that in which most of his biographers place him.

Nearly all biographers have dwelt upon his lack of school education and his unsatisfied hunger for books, these conditions being ascribed to the primitive conditions of the region and to his father's poverty. The impression has been conveyed that his reading was confined to two or three books which he borrowed from the neighbors, and that he had practically no advantages of an intellectual sort until after he left Indiana.

Judge Kiper protests against this belief which, on the face of it, is improbable. Lincoln was 7 years old when he came to Indiana with his parents and he lived in the state fourteen years—the really formative years of life. It is entirely unlikely that he could at once have developed the qualities of mind that distinguished him among his neighbors in Illinois had he been the ordinary unlearned country boy with a wholly untrained mind and undeveloped character. Judge Kiper, who is familiar with the region and its history, presents facts which support the argument that while young Lincoln had little acquaintance with the world when, at 21, he journeyed to another state to seek his fortune, he had a mental and moral equipment that was a good foundation for his later life.

It is asserted that the poverty which was his early environment was not the poverty of the lazy and shiftless, such as is found in crowded communities, but that of the pioneer in a new country who had much to contend with. Thomas Lincoln, it is shown, was neither lazy nor shiftless. He was a carpenter of unusual ability and was employed by the trustees of the First Baptist Church at Troy, afterward Gentryville, to construct the doors, window frames and pulpit. He became a member of that church by letter from his Kentucky church, was afterwards trustee and was frequently sent as a delegate to other church organizations. New settlers kept coming in rapidly and by the time Abraham Lincoln was 16 schools were established in the locality. In one, three miles from the Lincoln home, the rudiments of English were taught. Another was built on the same section of land near the Lincoln home. Men by the name of Bryant, Crooks, Watson and Price were teachers in these schools and it is well authenticated that Lincoln attended them.

There were men of unusual quality in the region along the Ohio beyond the town of Gentryville. There was Corydon, the capital, thirty-five miles from the Lincoln home, and much talk about statehood, with the question of slavery agitated. The towns of Newburgh, Boonville and Evansville were beginning to flourish. The Lincoln home was on the main traveled highway. John Pitcher, one of the great lawyers of southern Indiana, lived at Rockport, the county seat of Spencer county. He had an unusual library and it is said that young Lincoln on his visits to the town, when he brought in farm products to the boat landing at Rockport to be shipped down the river, often called at Pitcher's office and that the lawyer had a great liking for the youth. In after years on a visit to the town Lincoln looked for the place where Pitcher had his office.

Ratliff Boon, who came from Kentucky, settled two miles from the town of Boon. He became a power in politics, was elected to Congress eight different times from the district in which the Lincolns resided, was elected Lieutenant Governor twice and filled out the unexpired term of Governor. Daniel Grass, another man of high political standing and a member of the constitutional convention held at Corydon in 1816, was frequently in Gentryville. Drill contests for the state militia on muster days were held at Boonville and were events of great importance. Ratliff Boon, Daniel Grass and William Prince were leading spirits in these contests. Lincoln went to Boonville to see these drills and another attraction there was John A. Breckenridge, who, Judge Kiper believes, had more to do with attracting the attention of Lincoln to the study of law than any other man and probably influenced his life in that regard. It is well authenticated that he frequently visited the home of Breckenridge and borrowed law books which he read and returned. Whether or not he was ever in personal communication with all these men, he was under their influence to some extent. He was undoubtedly influenced by the pioneer preachers and the honest and honorable character of the majority of the settlers.

Judge Kiper believes that the opportunities Lincoln had of coming in contact with and observing some of the greatest and strongest minds of the state in his youth developed certain qualities of mind and character in after life which bear strong similarity to the ideals of the community in which he lived, and that many of his outstanding characteristics, his open mind and freedom of thought, his tenderness of soul were laid deep in his nature during the nascent period of his life while living in Indiana. It is a reasonable conclusion. That

this view concerning the greatest man of our time has not been presented before may be explained in part at least by the fact that outsiders who have written of him could not know of the character of the men mentioned by Judge Kiper as undoubted influences as a writer could do who knew the temper and spirit and traditions of the people of Lincoln's time and locality. It is well to have these traditions, this ^{hitherto} ^{2nd star} unwritten history, saved before it is too late. 4-8-27

February 11, 1928.

Visiting Lincoln, the Boy

By Edna Groff Deihl, in Exchange

Most great things have had small beginnings. We seldom see the giant oak, without recalling the tiny acorn. So Abraham Lincoln, the wonderful man, the friend of the oppressed and the great President, started his life in a small way in the little old log cabin in Kentucky.

Let us go back to the year 1816 and visit a similar cabin in Indiana. The cabin has neither doors nor window glass. There is no furniture but a few stools, a rude table made of logs; and a bed made of dried leaves, on a dirt floor. Sitting with his pale-faced mother, and his sister Sarah and good-hearted, though rather do-little father, is an awkward boy of eight, whose name we learn from the neighbors is Abraham, or as he is called, Abe Lincoln.

"How did you come to live in this out-of-the-way Indiana home?" we ask the boy, who seems to be rather embarrassed at our presence, but whose bright face lights up as he tells us of wearily cutting a way through thick woods from a similar cabin in Kentucky. We next ask him where he goes to school and what books he studies. At this question his face clouds, as he tells us of a vague ambition to attend a school some miles away, if only for a few months. He shows us his one book—the Bible—which his good mother had used for reader and instruction guide of every kind. We marvel as he tells us many things and quotes beautiful truths, which even we twentieth-century folk, with our Sabbath schools and libraries, do not know the great Book contains.

Several years have passed. Again we visit the same cabin, but it is greatly changed. In place of the pale-faced mother, is another woman, an energetic soul, who mothers Abraham joyfully and well, in spite of the three other children she has brought with her. The pale-faced one has gone to brighter realms. The new mother brought with her unheard-of elegance to the boy—tables, bedding, a chair and even a bureau! There is a more home-like air about the rude cabin, and Abraham is poring over a new book, "The Life of Washington," with eager eyes bulging, and heart beating underneath a worn jacket, as he reads of the achievements of a wonderful man.

"Where did you get the new book, Abraham?" we ask. He tells us he borrowed the book in a neighboring town, and that one stormy night the rain had beat between the logs of the cabin and flooded the volume, and he had sadly carried it back to its owner and worked three days at twenty-five cents a day to make the ruined book his own.

"It's a wonderful book," says Abe, his eyes shining into ours. "It's wonderful to be a man like that! I've other books, too," he adds proudly. "I have 'Aesop's Fables,' 'Robinson Crusoe' and 'Pilgrim's Progress,' and I know now that there's a great, wide, wonderful world waiting for me. The other day," he continues, "I was makin' some noise, and an old colored woman says to me, 'Now, Abe, what on earth d'ye suppose will ever become of ye?' I answers, 'Well, I reckon I'm goin' to be the President of the United States some day!' En I reckon I am!" he adds with a steady, twinkling eye.

Time passes and once more we visit Abraham. We find that he is "living out"—hoeing, planting and chopping wood for the farmers around his home; tending babies, telling stories, reciting poems for the farmers' wives; wrestling and jumping with the farmers' children—yet all the while studying the few books he has to which he gradually keeps adding such as "Plutarch's Lives" and the "Life of Benjamin Franklin." He studies the people with whom he comes in contact and thus learns to know the different types of the human family. But although he lives among these people he never joins in their wild debaucheries or drinks their poisoning liquors.

Our visits are over; the curtain drops. Abraham's boyhood is a thing of the past. He is eighteen years old and his real career as a storekeeper, lawyer and speech-maker has commenced. The war with Black Hawk, the chief of the Saes, breaks out, and young Abraham becomes a volunteer. On and up he climbs until he stands at the head of our nation—the great liberator, the kind pardoner, the beloved emancipator of the negro race.

In all our admiration for the great man, we never lose sight of the boy who was a real boy, who struggled as one of the least of us, and became one of the greatest.

Lincoln in Indiana

The greatest prophet could not have foretold when Abraham Lincoln arrived in Indiana late in 1816 that he was destined to be the most distinguished human being who ever lived on Hoosier soil.

Two horses carried Thomas Lincoln and his family and household equipment as they left Kentucky to make their new home among the forests of Spencer county, this state. Little Abe, who was in his eighth year, rode behind his father. His mother and sister were mounted on the other horse.

The first Lincoln home in Indiana was a three-sided shelter which was utterly devoid of comfort and convenience. The forests around were full of wild animals. The swamps were full of mosquitoes and frogs. Death lurked in the stagnant pools.

The Lincoln family spent 14 years in Indiana and a crude frontier though it seems to us, it was anything but a sterile environment to the keen, active mind of Abraham Lincoln.

It was in this state that he made many of the contacts and received many of the impressions which determined his course in later years. In fact his stay in Indiana seems definitely to have fixed his destiny.

Nancy Hanks Lincoln, his mother, died in 1818 of a mysterious disease which the settlers called "milk sickness." No one need be told what a deep impression that tragic event made upon the mind of a sensitive child.

In 1819, near Christmas time, Thomas Lincoln returned from Kentucky with a new wife. Her name was Sarah Bush Johnston. She immediately set to work to improve the cabin home, to wash and comb and dress the children, and to make life more pleasant for the entire family. If there was ever a woman who brought glory to the name of "step-mother" it was Sarah Lincoln.

But we had almost forgotten to tell what this woman, who could not read, brought with her. She brought Robinson Crusoe, Pilgrim's Progress, Sinbad the Sailor, Aesop's Fables, and probably a Bible. What a pleasure and a profit these books proved to be for young Abe!

It was in Indiana that Abe began to write compositions and poetry, the first experiments of the author of the letter to Mrs. Blxby, the Gettysburg Address and the Second Inaugural.

The first speakers he heard were the early Indiana preachers. His step-mother later declared that at the age of 15 Abraham could come home from church and repeat almost word for word the sermons that he had heard.

About his fifteenth year he also started the practice of climbing on a stump in the field and talking so entertainingly that his fellow workers would quit their toil to come and listen. His first preparation for the Cooper union speech.

He obtained from some source, Grimshaw's History of the United States. It was the most stimulating history published at that time. The first chapter explained the advances which had been made in astronomy, geography and navigation, before taking up the discovery of America and its subsequent development.

The boy also secured a copy of the Revised Laws of Indiana and read them as his first study of the law. He also walked to Boonville, a distance of about 14 miles, to hear a brilliant prosecuting attorney named John A. Brackenridge speak before the juries of Warrick county.

He used to hear Ratliff Boone make speeches as a candidate for congress from the Lincoln district.

He was still a resident of Indiana when he took his first trip to New Orleans on a flat boat. New Orleans was the largest city he had ever seen and it was so far away from home. The world must be a whopper. That trip on the flat boat stirred his imagination and made him long to be a part of the great world of affairs.

Another change of great importance in the Lincoln career took place in Indiana. The Lincolns were all Andy Jackson Democrats, and right proud of their politics.

It was during the years between 1828-

1830 that Henry Clay, the eloquent Whig orator, began to vamp young Abe away from the politics of his fathers.

William Jones, storekeeper at Gentryville, was a Whig and took the Louisville Journal, which devoted much space to the speeches of Clay. Lincoln read this newspaper which was an ardent supporter of Clay, and the internal improvement plans of the most brilliant political leader of the western country fired Lincoln with enthusiasm.

Just a fortnight before the Lincoln family left Indiana to make its home in Illinois, Abraham had read in the Louisville Journal of the great reply of Daniel Webster to Robert Y. Hayne, of South Carolina.

The idea of a strong Union—a new nationalism—was in the air. It was rather a big idea. It was refreshing and a tonic. It appealed to a young man. Lincoln embraced it.

In February, 1830, the year he arrived at the age of 21 years, Illinois received as her adopted son the native Kentuckian, whom Indiana had done so much to prepare for his destiny.

Nights of Reading on Gentryville Farm Made Lincoln Mental Giant

(In a recent article in *The Star* Andrew M. Sweeney, 312 East Thirteenth street, former president of the State Life Insurance Company, told of hearing from a boyhood companion of Abraham Lincoln recollections of Lincoln's efforts to educate himself. In the following Mr. Sweeney presents further Lincoln observations.)

726/35 — *Star*

I hope I do not tire your good readers with my Lincolniana, but I would like our school children to get a glimpse of the school desk that Abe Lincoln, our greatest American, had to use. It was circular in form and had neither legs, lid, seat, inkwell, nor hinges; it never saw paint nor varnish, and had only one opening at one end. In other words, it was a six-foot hollow log, about three feet in diameter, in which Lincoln had to store his books, almanacs and papers to save them from rain or rodents.

When it rained hard in hot weather he and his pal Jimmy would divest, push their scant duds into the dry school desk and take a shower bath from the clouds which was distilled in gentle rain. They sat on top of the desk while studying. Compare it with your beautiful desks, fashioned so as to prevent curvature of the spine.

Career Challenging.

When Abe came to that part of Indiana 117 years ago it was then very close to being "nowhere," but by almost superhuman efforts we see him jump from there to the White House—to "everywhere," we might say. We must admit it was a marvelous feat. From "nowhere" to almost "everywhere," from poverty, ignorance and obscurity, from a flatboat man to be President and direct the destiny of the greatest nation in the world, his career seems to challenge veracity and trench upon the miraculous.

Uncle Jimmy Grigsby said it was no use to go to the Lincoln cabin to visit in the evening, as he tried it several times. "The parents went to bed early and when they were asleep Abe would pull a bundle of old quilts or a big sack of dry leaves or straw and spread it on the clay floor in front of the bright fireplace and open the borrowed Bible and then it was 'goodnight' for me. He was then lost to the world.

"I could not see how his head didn't get melted or scorched," said Uncle Jimmy. He would lie there and read for hours. He would sometimes drop the open book on his chest, to rest his arms, look up toward the clapboard roof and keep mumbling something, till I got tired and left without his seeing me go nor missing me. Next day he would ask why I slipped away so suddenly.

"Loved That Bible."

"He loved that Bible."

This all goes to show his great will power, his persistency, his determination to wage a relentless warfare with the irony of a bitter fate, to conquer or die.

I have dwelt often during the past sixty-three years upon what Uncle Jimmy told me so minutely regarding Abe. I have read a few of the hundreds of books and thousands of essays upon his life. As far as my humble analysis can sift them, Abe's biographers are always groping, as it were, to find a base for consistency or sweet reasonableness in the paradox of a young, lazy, ignorant

backwoodsman in middle life eclipsing all the literary giants of the English tongue by the unmistakable evidences he displayed of having extraordinary mental powers.

Placed in False Light.

This inconsistency is the result of the false light in which his father had placed him in youth, and which the world accepted as true. I now am vain enough to think that Uncle Jimmy and my modest self have helped shed a truer light upon the real Abe.

Uncle Jimmy insisted that Abe tried hard to make himself of real worth. I insist that those fourteen years at Gentryville, from 7 to 21, were the crucial, formative years of his life, and are of every boy's life. I remember them in my own experience, too.

The mental tissue, also, is a great factor and I always thought that a gold fiber permeated the convolutions of Abe's cranial nerve centers, so that they easily took on polish. It is said that the rougher the brain surface the stronger the mind.

Rule Works.

Well, if Abe's cranial interior were a counterpart of his angular exterior, then the rule works, and no wonder he was an apt student, even in the forest college near Gentryville.

I have reserved for the last of this article what I think was the crowning glory of Abe's career and what afforded him the power of garmenting his naturally receptive mind with the supreme, sublime thoughts of the richest and rarest portions of the Bible. No man can do that earnestly without being rewarded, for it is the world's choicest literature, and with this he impregnated and tintured his intellect. I think he was lucky not to be bothered much with other books.

It was the careering of his hungry intellect with and through the splendors of the proverbs of Solomon the wisest; in humming the psalms of David the King; by conning the letters and epistles of St. Paul, and weighing the wonderful wisdom of the parables of the Savior that dowered his keen intellect with the vivid scintillations of genius, and peopled his imagination with highest Christian principles and love for all suffering human kind.

It was there, at Gentryville, I think, he caught the nascent mental germs, of which the gleams from his coruscation at Gettysburg were the fruitings.

LINCOLN'S BOYHOOD DAYS

(By Rev. A. Rump, pastor of St. John's Evangelical church at Gary, Ind., who attended the annual Press Club picnic at Lincoln City last year and who hopes to be at the picnic again this year. The subject of this article is "A Study in Lincoln History for His Birthday" and it is such a splendid article that we thought it would be appropriate for this Press Club edition.—The Editor.)



When Lincoln was a president-elect had at last reached the top-most rung of the ladder, and was now prepared to say farewell to the people of that city, where he had lived a quarter of a century, he left behind him also his law partner, that Herndon, who was destined to become his biographer.

When Lincoln first met "Billy" Herndon, he was a clerk in a store at Springfield, a keen but agreeable boy whom everyone liked. Having some college education, he let himself be induced to study law. And after he had been admitted to the bar, Lincoln found in him that partner, that he needed. Of all the friends, that worked for him to become president, no one was more faithful and loyal to Lincoln than "Billy" Herndon. And parting from each other, did not sever the connections that existed between the two for more than twenty years.

After Lincoln's tragic death, shortly after his second inauguration, Herndon began to work for us, who were then the generation to come. Lincoln did not only serve those who heard his voice and grasped his hands, we too, who were then yet to be born, were to learn from him. And in order that this might be possible, Herndon told us, what we heard and know about his strength and his wonderful work. Gathering the material for what we read, extended over a period of many years.

Write Life of Lincoln
When Herndon became somewhat advanced in years, a man from Greencastle, Indiana, Jesse W. Wells, came to his assistance in the preparation of two volumes, which have so greatly enlarged our common treasure of facts and information. A man from Greencastle, Indiana. Not only those children, that were born in Illinois, but we, who live in Indiana have reason to celebrate Lincoln's birthday.

During the 14 formative years of his life, Abraham Lincoln lived in our state. Southern Indiana is now a well marked Lincoln country. Near Lincoln City, in the hillside country of Spencer county, we have the Nancy Hanks State Park of Indiana. The Lincoln Shrine in this part is the grave of President Lincoln's mother.

Soon after Thomas Lincoln left Kentucky, the "milk sick", as the settlers called it, swept into Pigeon Creek, where he had built his cabin. And his good wife, Nancy Hanks, who with her two children, had moved with him into Indiana, became one of the first victims of this disease. Her dead body, after she had breathed her last, was not carried back to Kentucky, to be

buried in a cemetery. In a rude coffin, made by Thomas Lincoln himself, and in a grave dug on a nearby hill, her dead bones were laid to rest. During the lifetime of her husband no stone or board was placed to mark this spot. The gravestone which marks this grave today, bears this inscription:

Nancy Hanks Lincoln,
October 8, 1818—Aged 32 years
Erected by a friend of her son
At that time, if we stop and think, when the mother left him, her son had no friends, who took an interest. Seeing that he had been born as a fine child, he should have been taken back to Kentucky to go to school. That girl which he later married was instructed in all the wisdom of the distinguished families of Kentucky. But Lincoln, when he later as a man, met the "Little Giant" in debate, had to admit: "I have no fine education."

Thomas Lincoln, the father had neither the means, nor the desire to grant this privilege to his son! At an early age, he was farmed out as a hired laborer, to earn his daily bread by the toil of his hands, in farming, grubbing and making fences.

Good School For Him
But after all, these years of hard labor were a good school for him. He found no objection in that his earnings should go to his father, who exacted them as his legal right, until the boy was twenty-one years of age. But he also learned that every man has a right to enjoy, that which he earns by the sweat of his brow, and that no one has a right to make a slave of his laborers. In a speech, that he made to Kentuckians in later years, his arguments on this point were these:

I hold that if there is any one thing that can be proved to be the will of God by the external nature around us without reference to revelation, it is the proposition that whatever any one man earns with his hands and by the sweat of his brow, he shall enjoy in peace. I say whereas God Almighty has given every man one mouth to be fed, and one pair of hands adapted to furnish food for that mouth, if anything can be proved to be the will of Heaven, it is proved by this fact that that mouth is to be fed by those hands, without being interfered by any other man who has also his mouth to feed, and his hands to labor with.

I hold if the Almighty had ever made a set of men that should do all the eating and none of the work, he would have made them with mouths only and no hands; and if he had made another class that he intended should do all the work and none of the eating, he would have made them without mouths, and with all hands. But inasmuch, as he has not chosen to make men in that way, if any thing is proved, it is that those hands and mouths are to be co-operative through life and not to be

interfered with. That they are to go forth and improve their condition as I have been trying to illustrate is the inherent right given to mankind directly by the Maker. The homely wisdom expressed in these sayings was learned by him, when he himself, worked as a hired laborer, for eight and twelve dollars per month.

Leans to Argue
These sayings also show, that he learned how to argue with the common people, and how to sway them to his way of thinking. Making contact in different surroundings, he learned to like the people, and they learned to like him, mostly because of his way to entertain and to inform them.

In the country store at Gentryville, a mile and a half from the Lincoln cabin, where he often gathered with other men and boys, who craved for companionship, he made many friends. Here, because of his trustworthiness, he gained the confidence of James Gentry, who was the richest man in Carter township, and owned a thousand acres of land. And when this man hired him to make a flatboat trip to New Orleans with his son, Allen, he accepted the chance to get a glimpse of the world at large, beyond Gentryville, beyond Rockport and Boonville, which were then only small villages. At Grandview on the Ohio, he worked for a prosperous farmer by the name of David Turnham, who as a Justice of the Peace, owned the Revised Laws of the State of Indiana. Through this volume, that was loaned to him, he gained a fair knowledge of the elements of law and government. At Rockport, where Abraham often went, he made the acquaintance of John Pletcher, the first resident attorney and later prosecutor of Spencer county. Pletcher had a good library and through its use, Lincoln entered into the world of books, a world hitherto closed to him, well high unopened, indeed.

Reading was the outstanding phase of Lincoln's life at this time. Much as he loved pranks with other youths, he would forego their jollity and lose himself in some new volume, on which he chanced. While other boys idled away their time, says a companion, Lincoln was studying his books. He read and thoroughly reread his books, while we played.

The books at home exhausted, he roamed the countryside for more. Lincoln's friend, William Jones, the storekeeper in Gentryville, took the Louisville Journal and perhaps one or two other newspapers. In these newspapers the speeches of Clay and other public men were printed, and able editorial comment made upon them as well as upon all the questions of the day. Lincoln read these papers, to as much purpose as he read books. To everyone he met and wherever he went he told all he read; he became a kind of newsworthy of the vicinity says Hanks.

Improves His Condition
Thus the boy, Lincoln, under great disadvantages, continually improved his condition, even as a hired laborer.

And the good people around Rockport and Boonville, who learned to know him better, were not slow in helping him along. But the true soon came when the tall lanky youth, with a coonskin cap on his head and clad in homemade trousers, which were always laches too short, was seen no more in the Pigeon Creek settlement.

In his seventeenth year, his sister, Sarah, then aged nineteen, married Aaron Grigsby, son of a farmer, and one of the important men in the settlement. Two years later, Sarah Grigsby died in childbirth, and Abraham, grieving sorely, blamed Aaron Grigsby, and the Grigsby family, for his sister's death, which he thought was due to neglect.

Thus was ignited the antagonism between Abraham and the Grigsby boys, which soon broke out in an open quarrel. Neighbors, as is usually the case, took sides in this fight, and for the time being, even the peace of the Pigeon Creek church was threatened to be disturbed by it. The Grigsbys were of the aristocracy of the backwood, and lived in a house of two stories, built of hewed logs, and the Lincoln cabin has always retained its original rude form.

Thomas Lincoln remained as poor in Indiana as he had been in Kentucky. After his second marriage, there were nine in the family to be supplied with food. That took all the earnings, and the 100 acre farm, which he had bought for two dollars an acre, was never paid for by him. That certainly helped to increase the mutual dislike that had sprung up between father and son. And so in the autumn of 1829, Thomas Lincoln, having heard good reports, resolved to leave Indiana for Illinois.

"In the early spring of 1830, a big clumsy wagon drawn by two yoke of oxen moved out of the backwoods hamlet of Gentryville, Indiana. In the wagon three women and four children found room, among the entire household effects of three families. In front and behind there were five men, one riding a horse and another, a young giant of a man 6 feet, 4 inches in height, angular and awkward as he was tall, drove with gentle goad, the slow and sleepy oxen. A dog walked by his side."—Everidge.

Cabin Site Marked
Many have followed the trail, which took the Lincolns and the Hanks family farther away from the land of slavery. But no one ever told us what became of the original Lincoln cabin. But the spot where the cabin stood is marked by a unique memorial that was built in 1954. It is a replica in bronze of the foundation and fireplace of the original Lincoln home. It was built in a little open rise among the trees, surrounded by a stone wall with stone benches for pilgrims to sit down and ponder. It consists only of four foundation logs, cast in bronze as perfectly that old marks and holes and rotten places look like a real log. At the end of the open square, the stone fireplace rises,

also in bronze, as it once looked, after it had been overhauled. The whole piece is said to be weighing 8 tons, and was cast in Munich at a cost of \$16,000.

Does this spot, which is about a half mile north of the Nancy Hanks grave, deserve to be so honored as a Lincoln shrine? Was it holy ground for the boy who ate and who slept there, and who always returned to this lonely cabin, as a homing pigeon? If this be so, the credit for it belongs mostly to that woman, of which in later years he said that she had been his best friend in this world, and that no one could love a mother more than he loved her.

At that time, when his own mother was stricken by that fatal plague that quickly took her from the land of the living, there lived in Kentucky a young woman whose maiden name was Sarah Bush. Her young husband had died, and she was now a widow with three children. And after it was agreed that he was to pay her outstanding debts, she entered a second marriage with Lincoln's father.

Stepmother Arrives
Her household goods were loaded on a wagon drawn by four horses, and hauled to Pigeon Creek. But when this was done, she brought more into the Lincoln cabin than these things which made it look more decent, more like a home to live in; she brought with her that experience that made her an active member of the old Pigeon Creek church, which was built in the year of her coming. And together with her, there also came a Holy Bible into the Lincoln cabin.

What influence did this Bible have on the character of young Lincoln? Did he search the Scriptures as a revelation? Did they inspire him as they inspired John Bunyan, when he wrote his Pilgrims Progress? Was the reading that he did profitable to him for doctrine? Or did his reading only serve this purpose to improve his literary style? After Moses had written, he said:

"My doctrine—my doctrine shall drop as the dew, my speech shall distill as the dew, as the small rain upon the tender plant, and as the showers upon the grass."

There is sharp dispute as to the extent of his reading of the Bible.—Beveridge. When his star began to rise in Springfield, people only saw that a great man may be a very successful lawyer, not more! After his son Edward died, his wife became a member of the Presbyterian church. But he himself did not. If he at that time felt that heavenly comfort that comes as the small rain upon the tender plant, it must have come to him in this way, that he prayed in secret.

But soon after this year, there came that awakening over the country, that started with last slavery agitation in 1854. This awakening in which the backbone of the slavery power was finally broken, was both general and deep. The preachers had to research the Scriptures to see whether they had read their Bible aright. The old political parties were split wide open. And the politicians were forced to

abandon their old creeds, and to write new platforms.

Lincoln Deeply Touched

It is impossible to conceive that Lincoln, who became one of the chief actors in this awakening, was not deeply touched by it, in his inner life. After one of his closest battles—which he had not a few—he is reported to have made this confession to one of his intimate friends:

"I know that there is a God, and that He hates injustice and slavery. I see the storm coming and I know that his hand is in it. If He has a place and work for me—and I think He has—I believe I am ready. I am nothing, but truth is everything. I know that I am right because I know that liberty is right, for Christ teaches it, and Christ is God. I have told them that a house divided against itself cannot stand, and Christ and reason say the same, and they will find it so. Douglas don't care whether slavery is voted up or voted down, but God cares and humanity cares, and I care, and with God's help, I shall not fail. I may not see the end, but it will come, and I shall be vindicated and these men will find that they have not read their Bibles aright."

Friends, today we are not concerned now Lincoln acquitted himself, when his storm that he foresaw came. We have searched the records of his years in Indiana. Here his beginning was as humble as that of Moses, who was drawn out of the water. Here the foundations for his future greatness was laid. Here he formed those principles for which he stood and which he defended. Here he silently heard the voice of the Unseen who spoke to Moses: "I am that I am. That is my name forever, and my memorial to all generations."

So then its not Abraham Lincoln, but its the hand of the unseen God which he try to see in his life and in his works. He was but an instrument in the hands of Him, who spoke unto his people Israel by 'the voice of Moses, "Fear not, stand still, and see the salvation of the Lord." Passing through Indiana on his way to Washington and stopping at Indianapolis, he, himself, said these words: "I am not a limited time and I appeal to you to constantly bear in mind that with you and not with politicians, not with Presidents, not with office seekers, but with you the people, is the question. Shall the Union of this country be preserved to the latest generations?"

Is not with politicians, not with Presidents, not with office seekers, to bring us out of the wilderness in which we find ourselves today. He that once heard the groaning of his people in Egypt, he must arise. If he speaks the word, then this Nation will under God again have a new birth of freedom, and government, of whatever form it hereafter may be, will not perish from the earth.

LINCOLN LORE

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MY EARLY ADVENTURES IN ILLINOIS—A. LINCOLN

I was raised to farm work, which I continued until I was twenty-two. At twenty-one I came to Illinois, Macon County, where my father and family settled. Here we built a log cabin into which we removed, and made sufficient of rails to fence 10 acres of ground. Fenced and broke the ground, and raised a crop of sown corn upon it the same year. These are or are supposed to be, the rails about which so much is being said just now, though these are far from being the first or only rails ever made by me.

During the winter of the very celebrated deep snow in Illinois, John D. Johnston, John Hanks, and I hired ourselves to Denton Offutt to take a flatboat from Beardstown, Illinois, to New Orleans and for that purpose were to join Offutt at Springfield, Illinois, so soon as the snow should go off. When it did go off about the first of March, 1831, the country was so flooded as to make traveling by land impractical; to obviate which difficulty we purchased a large canoe and came down the Sangamon River in it. This is the time and manner of my first entrance into Sangamon County.

We found Offutt at Springfield but learned from him that he had failed in getting a boat at Beardstown. This led to our hiring ourselves to him for twelve dollars per month each and getting the timber out of the trees and building a boat at old Sangamon Town on the Sangamon River seven miles northwest of Springfield. In company with others I commenced the building of a flatboat and finished and took her out in the course of the spring. Since that time I have been concerned in the mill at New Salem. The time at which we crossed the mill-dam being the last days of April, the water was lower than it had been since the breaking of winter in February or than it was for several weeks after. The principal difficulties we encountered in descending the river were from the drifted timber which obstructions all know are not difficult to be removed. We took the boat to New Orleans, substantially upon the old contract. Hanks had not gone to New Orleans but having a family and being likely to be detained from home longer than he first expected had turned back at St. Louis.

In July, 1831, I stopped indefinitely for the first time, as it were by myself in New Salem. Here I rapidly made acquaintances and friends. In less than a year Offutt's business was failing—had almost failed—when the Black Hawk War of 1832 broke out.

I joined a volunteer company, and, to my own surprise, was elected captain of it. I have not since had any success in life which has given me so much satisfaction. Received April 28, 1832, for the use of the Sangamon County Company under my command, thirty muskets, bayonets, screws and wipes.

Captain A. Lincoln's Company of Mounted Volunteers of Illinois Militia mustered out of service at the mouth of Fox River, May 27, 1832: Abraham Lincoln, Capt.; Samuel M. Thompson, 1st Lieut.; John Brannen, 2nd Lieut.; John Armstrong, 1st Sergt.; Tavier B. Anderson, 2nd Sergt.; George W. Foster, 3rd Sergt.; Obadiah Morgan, 4th Sergt.; Thomas Combs, 1st Corp.; John Plaster, 2nd Corp.; William F. Berry, 3rd Corp.; Alexander Trent, 4th Corp.; Privates: John Erwin, John H. Houghton, Thomas Pierce, Samuel Tibbs, Henry Hadley, Samuel Dutton, Calvin Pierce, Joseph Tibbs, William Kirkpatrick, Cyrus Elmore, Elijah Pierce, Lewis W. Farmer, Bordry Matthews, Ep. Sullivan, Valentine Crete, Charles Sullivan, James Simmons, Hugh Armstrong, Allen King, Joseph Dobson, David Rankin, Urbin Alexander, Henry Cox, Merrit M. Carman, Royal Potter, David M. Pantier, Joseph Hohimer, George Warburton, Evan T. Lamb, Clardey Barnette, John M. Rutledge, William Cox, Usil Mecker, Richard Jones, Charles Pierce, James Clement, John Y. Lane, Richard Lane, Royal Clary, Pleasant Armstrong, James Yardley,

David Rutledge, Michael Plaster, John Mounce, William Hohimer, Isaac Anderson, William Marshall, William Cummins, John Jones, Travice Elmore, William Foster, Nathan Drake, Robert S. Plunkett, William T. Spruce, William Clary, Jacob Heaverer, Isaac Gulihier.

Samuel M. Thompson, 1st Lieut., resigned April 30; John Brannen, 2nd Lieut., absent on extra duty; George W. Foster, 3rd Sergt., transferred to a foot company, April 29th; Obadiah Morgan, 4th Sergt., absent on furlough; John Plaster, 2nd Corp., resigned May 20, and served as a private since; John Erwin, private, promoted to 3rd Sergeant in room of G. W. Foster, April 29; William Kirkpatrick, private, promoted from the ranks, April 30; Hugh Armstrong, private, promoted to 1st Lieutenant, April 30; David Rankin, private, transferred to a foot company, May 19th; Richard Jones, private, promoted from the ranks, May 2; Michael Plaster, private, absent without leave; John Mounce, private, absent without leave; John Jones, private, absent without leave; William Foster, private, transferred to a foot company, April 29; William T. Spruce, private, from the ranks, May 2.

I went the campaign, served near three months, met the ordinary hardships of such an expedition, but was in no battle. I had a good many bloody struggles with the mosquitoes and although I never fainted from the loss of blood, I can truly say I was often very hungry. I bent a musket pretty badly on one occasion—by accident. I did not break my sword for I had none to break. I was not at Stillman's defeat but I saw the place very soon afterwards. I now own in Iowa land upon which my own warrants for the service were located.

Returning from the campaign and encouraged by my great popularity among my neighbors, the same year ran for the legislature and was beaten—my own precinct, however, casting its votes 277 for and 7 against me—that too while I was an avowed Clay man and the precinct the autumn afterward given a majority of 115 to General Jackson over Mr. Clay. This was the only time I was ever beaten by a direct vote of the people.

I was now without means and out of business, but was anxious to remain with my friends who had treated me with so much generosity, especially as I had nothing elsewhere to go to. I studied what I should do—thought of learning the blacksmith trade—thought of trying to study law—rather thought I could not succeed at that without a better education.

Before long, strangely enough, a man offered to sell, and did sell, to me and another as poor as myself an old stock of goods, upon credit. We opened as merchants. Of course we did nothing but get deeper and deeper in debt. The store winked out.

I was appointed post master at New Salem, the office being too insignificant to make my politics an objection.

The surveyor of Sangamon offered to deputize me that portion of his work which was in my part of the county. I accepted, procured a compass and chain, studied Flint and Gibson a little, and went at it. This procured bread and kept soul and body together.

The election of 1834 came, and I was then elected to the legislature by the highest vote cast for any candidate. Major John T. Stuart, then in full practice of the law, was also elected. During the canvass, in a private conversation he encouraged me (to) study law.

After the election I borrowed books of Stuart, took them home with me, and went at it in good earnest. I studied with nobody. I still mixed in the surveying to pay board and clothing bills. When the legislature met, the law-books were dropped, but were taken up again at the end of the session.

Lincoln's Early Poverty A Myth, Says Authority In Kiwanis Club Speech

Recent research into the early life of Abraham Lincoln tends to show that much of the legend of the Great Emancipator's extreme poverty and illiteracy in childhood is a myth, started at the time Lincoln was running for president, M. L. Houser, authority on Lincolniana, said today.

Speaking at the Kiwanis club luncheon at the Jefferson hotel, Mr. Houser said it has been fairly well established now that Lincoln's father, Thomas Lincoln, owned 500 acres of good Kentucky farm land before the family moved to Illinois.

As a small boy in Indiana, Mr. Houser said, Lincoln's family lived in a cultural community with many of their neighbors being college graduates who gave their time and effort to the early education of young Abraham.

Says He Was Well Educated

"When Lincoln came to Illinois as a youth of 21," Mr. Houser said, "it is virtually certain that he had better than the average academic education."

Mr. Houser said the new slant on Lincoln's early background in no manner detracts from the fact that the future president was a bright, industrious lad who never overlooked an opportunity to soak up the knowledge placed at his disposal.

Many of the early Indiana neighbors of the Lincoln family, the speaker said, were college graduates who had migrated from the east and in addition to this there were several nearby institutions of higher learning in Louisville and Parkstown, Ky.

Records Back Story

"Old tax records have been found in Kentucky," he said, "showing that Lincoln's father was the sixteenth highest taxpayer on a list of 98 in his community."

In his early days as an Illinois lawyer, Mr. Houser said, there is no record of Lincoln ever mentioning his humble background.

In 1854, he said, Lincoln made a presidential campaign speech in Chicago and the Chicago Journal, which was supporting him, ran an accompanying "background" story playing up their favorite candidate as product of abject poverty who had educated himself by reading heavy tomes by the flickering light of log fire.

Vote-Getting Story

"The story apparently made a big hit with the rough and ready pioneers of the middle west" said Mr. Houser, "and as such it made thousands of votes for Mr. Lincoln."

From that point on, said Mr. Houser, Lincoln played heavily on the point of his humble and disadvantageous childhood.

With all his greatness, Mr. Houser said, Lincoln was a masterful politician who kept his fingers on the public pulse at all times.

Mr. Houser, holder of an honorary doctor's degree from a Tennessee college for his Lincoln research work, resides on the outskirts of Peoria and has devoted most of the last 15 years to getting the true facts on the background of the great Civil war president.

Much of his knowledge came from his grandfather and father who were personal friends of Lincoln when he lived in New Salem.

THE little model farm that raised a man." It was Mark Twain who so named the birthplace of Abraham Lincoln, where he spent the first four years of his life. Behind him was a long line of sturdy forebears. In the family since the latter part of the seventeenth century there had always been an "Abraham," and his sister Sarah, two years older, also bore a name honored in past generations. For, after years of patient research, Miss Tarbell has established that the first of the Lincolns, Samuel, a boy of seventeen, came to America in 1637 and settled at Hingham, Massachusetts. Through seven generations the lines have been traced—from Massachusetts to New Jersey, Pennsylvania, through the Shenandoah Valley of Virginia to Kentucky, Indiana, Illinois. A line to be proud of, for the Lincolns of every generation were men of courage, energy, and property. In many cases holders of some office of trust. Abraham Lincoln, the grandfather of our martyred President, was captain of the Augusta County militia in the Shenandoah valley.

In him, however, as in the blood of all the Lincolns, was the pioneering instinct. It took him to Kentucky while that State was yet the "dark and bloody ground." And with him went his young, well-born wife and their three little children. It is said that he took up over two thousand acres of land near the Green River. At that time the only safety for families was in stockades, and it is probable the Lincoln family lived in one called Hughes Station, near a tract of four hundred acres which Abraham Lincoln had taken up near Louisville.

One day while he and his three boys—Mordecai, fourteen; Josiah, twelve, and Thomas, eight, were at work in this clearing, an Indian shot Abraham. The savage, carrying off little Thomas, was in turn shot down by Mordecai. Tradition says that the body of this treacherously killed grandfather of the sixteenth President of the United States lies in the graveyard of Long Run Baptist Church, in Jefferson County, Kentucky.

His widow, with her children, joined a group of friends and relatives near Springfield, Washington County, and there Thomas Lincoln was brought up in company with the children of the best families of the neighborhood. Schooling was hard to get in those days, but, as Miss Tarbell puts it, "People of the training and antecedents of his mother and of Hananiah Lincoln (a cousin), of the Berrys and the Thompsons, always saw to it that after food and protection were granted to

The Boy Lincoln

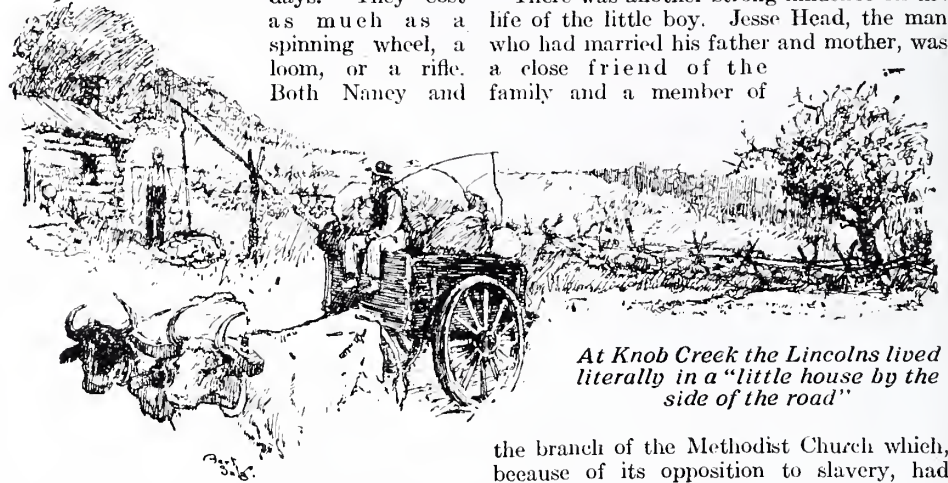
By Mabel Ansley Murphy
Illustrations by Bert Salg

date agree with this finding. In this light it is interesting to note the influences that were about Abraham Lincoln on "the little model farm that raised a man."

In the first place, his mother was a woman of charm—spirited, beautiful, a favorite wherever she went. From her children's earliest years she told them Bible stories, and when they were older she helped them with their lessons. There was a Bible in that early home—and Bibles were hard to get in those days. They cost as much as a spinning wheel, a loom, or a rifle. Both Nancy and

cattle and wagons, peddlers, missionaries, local politicians, soldiers returning from the war of 1812. A welcome and a loved visitor was Christopher Columbus Graham, a scientist who made a study of Kentucky's flora and fauna and strata. Perhaps it was from this man that the little boy learned to take a keen interest in the wonders of the natural world about him. "If a 'great man' like Dr. Graham noticed such things they must be worth while."

There was another strong influence on the life of the little boy. Jesse Head, the man who had married his father and mother, was a close friend of the family and a member of



At Knob Creek the Lincolns lived literally in a "little house by the side of the road"

Thomas Lincoln were members of the Baptist Church, and in that day attendance was not a matter of choice. From necessity, services were irregular, but when they were held members were expected to be present. If they were absent they were "visited!" that meant disciplined!

IN THE second place, Abraham Lincoln had a good father. Nothing is more certain than that Thomas Lincoln was far from being the shiftless man he is so often represented as having been. Miss Tarbell tells us: "Thomas Lincoln, orphaned, made himself a place in a new country, acquired land, became a good craftsman, held various local offices, was a trustee of his church, its moderator and its committeeman again and again—a trusted, respected man. In the end he fell a victim to disease. Attacked at fifty, he never rallied."

Probably Abraham's father was a great story teller. Certainly he must have had a fund of anecdotes to draw upon. His father's cousin, Hananiah Lincoln, who befriended the young widow and her three little children, had been a captain in the Revolutionary War. He had fought both at Lexington and at Brandywine. It is safe to presume that he

told the children stories of those stirring times. And Thomas Lincoln knew the Indians at first hand. Had not one tried to carry him off after killing his father? He must have been familiar also with wild animals and their ways, for men lived very close to nature in those days. Little Abraham must surely have heard many a tale of Indians, of wild

animals, of pioneer daring.

It is safe to conclude that one of the

the branch of the Methodist Church which, because of its opposition to slavery, had seceded from the regular church. Thomas Lincoln himself belonged to the branch of the Baptist Church that was fighting slavery. Shelbyville, nearby, was the center of a strong anti-slavery group which sent out agents to talk and distribute tracts over the whole of Kentucky. Little doubt these agents frequently stopped at this home whose host was in sympathy with the sentiments they were spreading abroad. Subconsciously little Abraham must have absorbed many anti-slavery arguments as the family and their visitors gathered about the hearth in the winter or sat on the front doorstep in the cool of the evening in the summer. Indeed, we have his own word for it that often, even at this age, he puzzled over the, to him, dark sayings of his elders.

Dr. Graham, not himself an anti-slavery advocate, in his hundredth year wrote his reminiscences of the Lincoln family. He says: "They were just steeped full of notions about the wrongs of slavery and the rights of man, as explained by Thomas Jefferson and Thomas Paine."

STILL another influence in Abraham's first seven years was that of his first two teachers. Caleb Hazel, a man who owned a farm next to the Lincolns, was a friend of the family, a man interested in developing the country. Zachariah Riney, a "gentleman," was a Catholic, one of many in that neighborhood, many of them people of culture. Surely it meant something that thus early in his life Abraham Lincoln came in contact with a man of manners, which are, we are told, minor morals.

Very early Abraham Lincoln came into close touch with the mysteries of birth and death. When he was six years old a little brother was born. And what child ever forgets his first sight of a new-born baby, his first contact with the wonder of existence? Swiftly upon the heels of this first experience of the unknowable came a second—for the little baby did not live. In those early days no softening of the harshness of that reality was possible. Little Abraham must have



this jaunt. Into the long, narrow boat went skins, ginseng roots, honey, beeswax, cloth from Mrs. Lincoln's loom, and Thomas' own tools, said to be "the best in Washington County."

And what a lesson in patience Abraham and Sarah must have had as they waited with their mother for their father's return! Many an evening they must have sat on the doorstep, looking down the road, their young eyes eagerly watching every distant dust cloud on the highway in the hope that it might disclose their father. He came finally and an exciting story he had to tell!

Then came the excitement of good-bye visits to relatives, of the sale of such household goods as they could not take with them, a sale with an accompaniment of a "big" dinner, to which all the neighborhood came. In all this joyful hubbub there was an undercurrent of regret. Austin Gollaher had been as much a part of the little boy's life as had his sister Sarah. Austin, who lived just over the bluff, had waded in the creek with the little Lincolns, had lain beside them on the bluff watching the angry water in the deep pool below when the creek was high with the spring floods. One day Abraham had fallen in. Austin, a few years older, saved his playmate's life. Now Abraham had to say good-bye to Austin.

But the grief of parting could not sit heavily on the spirits of a seven-year-old boy making his first journey into the great world. For the first time in his life he saw a mighty river. At the point where the Lincolns crossed the Ohio it sweeps silently and smoothly in a great curve. And when the other side was reached there were sixteen miles to travel through the autumn forest. Miss Tarbell says: "I think any one may rightfully envy them that journey and will if he has a drop of gypsy blood in his veins, for it was made through a forest which in its autumnal coloring was a thing of rarest beauty."

As soon as the site of the new home was reached Abraham's first real work began. Of course, up to this age he had not been idle. Children were not in those days. The fireplace was the heart of the pioneer home, and very early every child learned that no task was of more importance than to keep the fire fed. For months before winter came, fuel of the right kind had to be gathered. Even a little child could help. True, he could not saw logs a half dozen different sizes, logs of hard wood and soft, of green wood and dry. But he could gather chips for a low fire and pile great heaps of the brush which was used to make a blaze. Be sure Abraham did his share.

Now he was to learn the next lesson—how to wield an ax. He himself has told us that one of his strong impressions of the new Indiana home was of "this most useful instrument," as he termed it. He was a big, strong boy, and he must have felt pride in being allowed to work among men. Then, too, he was helping to build a home, and a fine sense of manhood and responsibility must have been behind every stroke of his little ax.

THE other strong impression he retained of these first days in Indiana was the number of wild animals that peopled the woods. If before it had been important not to let the fire go out during cold weather, now it was



Children were not idle in those days. Be sure Abraham did his share

doubly so. For the fire not only kept the family comfortable, but kept the wild animals from becoming too inquisitive.

For this fireplace was built out of doors. It was a big, solid stone chimney on the open side of the half-face camp in which the Lincolns, as was the custom in those days, spent their first winter. It was not so bad a shelter as city folk might think. Listen how it was built:

"A site on a southern slope where two straight trees stood about fourteen feet apart east and west was chosen. These trees were trimmed to serve as corner posts for the open front of the structure. Logs were then cut fourteen feet in length sufficient for three sides. They were fastened with wooden pins that had been prepared and laid in log-cabin fashion until the walls reached the proper height. A roof of small poles interwoven with branches and thatched with brush and dry grass was built above these three sides. The openings between the logs were then filled with mud. The result was a warm, tight structure open to the south."

Here, sheltered from the cold, protected from wild beasts, we must leave Abraham Lincoln. No longer a little child, "a bit of plastic clay." The most formative years of his life are past. Before him stretches the future, unknown, as yet unlit by vision. But a future sure to be largely shaped by the training and environment that have been his during his life on the Hodgenville farm and the home on Knob Creek.

Wellspring, Boston.

THE BOYHOOD OF LINCOLN AND ITS INSPIRING STORY

His Early Life is Characterized in a Single Line from Gray's Elegy,—“The Simple Annals of the Poor.”

Lincoln—as he proved in the so-called “twenty-line address” at Gettysburg—knew how to say a great deal within the briefest compass, whether he was writing or speaking. In a letter to his friend, the Hon. Jesse W. Fell, of Bloomington, Ill., dated December 20, 1859, he compressed the entire story of his early years into this little tabloid: “I was born February 12, 1809, in Hardin county, Ky. My parents were both born in Virginia, of undistinguished families, perhaps I should say. My mother, who died in my tenth year, was of a family of the name of Hanks, some of whom now reside in Adams, and others in Macon county, Ill. My parental grandfather, Abraham Lincoln, emigrated from Rockingham county, Va., to Kentucky, about 1781 to 1782, where, a year or two later, he was killed by Indians, not in battle, but by stealth, when he was laboring to open a farm in the forest. His ancestors, who were Quakers, went to Virginia from Berks county, Pa. An effort to identify them with the New England family of the same name ended in nothing more than a similarity of Christian names in both families, such as Enoch, Levi, Mordecai, Solomon, Abraham, and the like.

Had Little Schooling.

“My father, at the death of his father, was but six years of age, and he grew up literally without education. He removed from Kentucky to what is now Spencer county, Ind., in my eighth year. We reached our new home about the time the State came into the Union (1816.) It was a wild region, with many bears and other wild animals still in the woods. There I grew up. There were some schools, so-called, but no qualification was ever required of a teacher beyond ‘readin,’ ‘writin’ and cipherin’ to the Rule of Three. If a straggler, supposed to understand Latin, happened to sojourn in the neighborhood, he was looked upon as a wizard. There was absolutely nothing to excite ambition for education.

“Of course, when I came of age, I did not know much. Still, somehow, I could read, write and cipher to the Rule of Three, but that was all. I have not been to school since. The little advance I now have upon this store of education I have picked up from time to time under the pressure

or necessity. I was raised to farm-work, which I continued until I was 22.” “My early life,” he said on another occasion, “is characterized in a single of Gray’s Elegy: ‘The short and simple annals of the poor.’”

Wilds of Indiana.

It is easy to make for the mind’s eye a picture of that “family flight from home” to the wilds of Indiana in 1816. There was a great Cumberland mountain wagon fairly sagging with its load of household utensils, drawn by a patient, plodding horse, umbrella-ribbed and ignorant of the taste of oats, his harness compounded of bits of ancient rope and fragments of rawhide. On the front seat sat the little Abe’s mother, “Nancy Hanks that was,” and his nine-year-old sister, jolted uncomfortably by the ruts and quagmires of the wagon track. Here and there trees had to be cut down to permit of the passage of the caravan. Thomas Lincoln and the seven-year-old boy walked behind, shepherding the cow that was the family’s chief reliance, and a big dog ranged the woods or trotted soberly along beneath the wagon.

When they came to the “Beautiful river,” the Ohio, at one of the sparsely scattered landings, the little cavalcade was ferried across the torrent on a flatboat, the water running high from the autumnal rains. Near the present town of Gentryville the journey (which, could they have gone as the crow flies, would have been a hundred miles or so), ended in the heart of the ancient wood; they built their camp fire beside a spring, and slept in the emigrant wagon till the father and the little boy had built a log cabin and cleared a space for the planting of grain. It was too much for one man with only the help of so small a child, to build a house with proper doors and windows, so the cabin was constructed solidly of logs on three sides, leaving the fourth side open or covered with a curtain of skins, to serve for door and windows, all in one.

Learned to Plow.

Those who had two rooms to live in, in those days, were looked up to as today we revere the multi-millionaires. The first thing for the little Abe to learn to do was to guide the plow straight, despite its plunging, behind the one faithful horse, and to learn how to fell a tree, with few

strokes, in the right direction. A few days before he was eight years old he had his first and last hunting experience, for he was nothing of a Nimrod. A flock of wild turkeys—the prospect of delicious eating—flew toward the cabin while his father was away, and the child from within the log cabin thrust a rifle through a crack, and, shutting his eyes, pulled the trigger. What was his surprise to find a luckless bird subsequently lying on the ground.

Long afterward the grown man would often recall the incident, remarking that he had never since that time pulled a trigger upon large game. But he did try for smaller birds, for Austin Gollaher, a schoolmate, used proudly to narrate how they were once “trapesing” through the woods together in search of partridge, when they came to an unfordable stream.

The future President essayed to cross it on a fallen tree, but slipped and tumbled in, heels over head. Whereupon Gollaher, his senior by some years, sprang to the rescue, and thus indirectly preserved the Union and emancipated the black race.

After the first winter the family occupied a cabin with the luxury of a loft, where Abe slept upon a pallet made of leaves. The staple diet was potatoes or Indian corn, for wild turkeys were shy and occasional, and bear and venison could not always be relied upon. The mother was most anxious that her son should have book learning, but the father, worn with unremitting toil, could not spare the boy’s hoe from the clearing, his axe from the primeval forest. Finally the malarial fever almost mercifully came to Nancy Lincoln, and her tired eyelids closed upon the unequal struggle to live, in 1818, when her little girl was 12 and Abe was nine.

The mother’s parting words to her family were that they should worship God and love one another.

A Melancholy Youth.

A neighbor with some rude skill in carpentry made a rough-hewn coffin from the forest trees. There was no minister to conduct funeral services; it was not till months afterwards that Thomas Lincoln found a “sky pilot” to say a few words above the lonely forest grave. The dwellers round about had remarked of Abe that he seemed “considerin’ and old-like.” The low, swampy land along Little Pigeon Creek put in his veins the same smouldering malarial fever that had taken his mother from him, and he was often obsessed by the melancholy that was quite as characteristic of the grown man as was the inextinguishable sense of humor.

He was no milksop or mollycoddle, even though he didn’t care much about hunting wild animals. During the

brief and occasional episodes of desultory schooling, which he said afterwards amounted to about one year in all, he wrote his English compositions on such subjects as cruelty to animals, the evils of intemperance, the blessings of universal peace. He stood out sturdily for the value of the life of an ant and its right to live. He fought other boys, who, with a refinement of cruelty, put live coals on a mud turtle to make it thrust forth its head; and his pre-eminence with his fists was such that the other boys had to respect him when he haled the village drunkard from the freezing ditch beside the roadway when others would have jeered or passed by on the other side.

Bright in Studies.

His friend Gollaher says of Lincoln in that brief experience of school that he "was an unusually bright boy . . . and made splendid progress in his studies. Indeed he learned faster than any one of his schoolmates. Though so young, he studied very hard. He would get spicewood bushes, tack them up on a log and burn them, two or three together, for the purpose of giving light by which he might pursue his studies."

The household group had now increased to nine persons, of four different families. Thomas Lincoln and the two older cousins, Dennis and John Hanks, would sit up till all hours settling the manifest destinies of nations and individuals by the blazing logs—firewood was about the only property that was abundant in those days—and after they had gone to bed, Lincoln (like the child Mozart copying music by moonlight) would get to work, feeding the dying embers with the spicewood bushes and working out his examples in addition and subtraction with a charred stick on the back of a wooden shovel. From time to time a book would come his way. He had been steeped in Biblical lore and language by his mother, and he would take a homemade candle up into the loft with him to read about Washington (lofty sentiments being appropriate to the place), and Henry Clay, Bunyan's pilgrim and Defoe's hero, or perusing perhaps the history of his country, or the dictionary until the light of morning streamed through the cracks or the last candle guttered into darkness.

A Jack-of-All-Trades.

There was no one whose services were in greater demand among all sorts and conditions of men. He was by turns a carpenter, a farm laborer, a hired messenger, and his specialty was the odd jobbery of a Jack-of-all-trades, such as splitting fenceraills, chopping firewood, plowing and killing hogs. At 18 years of age he stood six feet four in his moccasins. He was as ungainly as a lamp-post. "His big, protruding ears, standing out from his head; his mop of stiff dark-brown hair, which looked as though it had never known a brush; his gray eyes, his large, uncompromising nose and big mouth, with humorous hanging underlip, crowned a stalky, big-boned figure, roughly clad in deerhide coat and breeches, which he continued more and more to outgrow, till at last a gap of bare, bluish shins was exposed above the moccasins or his feet." This was the uncouth apparition that came to the village store to hear the newspaper read aloud and take part in the discussion of its contents.

Earning First Dollar.

His first dollar of hard money Abe had earned in 1826, when he ferried two passengers from the shore at the mouth of Anderson Creek to their steamer out in the Ohio. At the age of 19, eager "for to admire and for to see" the world so full of a number of things, he hired out to Mr. Gentry of Gentryville, for the flatboat trip with produce to New Orleans. It was agreed that as "bow hand" he should receive \$8 a month and his return passage by steamer. That thousand-mile journey down the Father of Waters not merely gave him his first experience of towered cities and the busy hum of men, but left upon Lincoln's mind the indelible impression that the vast expanse watered by the Mississippi and its tributaries constituted a country that was rightly one and indivisible. At Baton Rouge, while the boat lay tied to the bank—"the coast," as it was called—of the mighty river, seven negroes bent on robbery or murder attacked it and were with difficulty beaten off, not before several of the crew had been wounded.

Moved to Illinois.

In March, 1830, the Lincoln family moved to the promised land of Illinois—13 of them in a single wagon, behind two yoke of oxen, with Abraham to guide the animals with his gad-whip and his coaxing patience. The journey of 200 miles required a fortnight, and on the way the enterprising ox driver made money by peddling "small wares and notions" from the cart. A dog—inevitable companion of such a migration—had been left behind, by accident, on the further bank of an ice-covered stream which the heavily

laden wagon had negotiated with difficulty. Lincoln, taking pity on the howling plight of the animal, waded back for it, waist and shoulder deep in the freezing water and said long afterward: "His frantic leaps of joy and other evidences of a dog's gratitude amply repaid me for all the exposure I had undergone."

After the hard winter of 1830-31—"the winter of the deep snow," when the starving settlers of the Sangamon river district killed and ate the abounding wolves—Lincoln went on a second flatboat journey, and as the first expedition had given him a clear realization of the essential unity of our country despite the "magnificent distances," so this second journey burned in upon his soul and the unspeakable horrors of slavery. Herndon describes how for the first time "he saw negroes in chains—whipped and scourged."

Hatred for Slavery.

Against this inhumanity his sense of right and justice rebelled, and his mind and conscience were awakened to a realization of what he had often heard and read. No doubt, as one of his companions has said, "Slavery ran the iron into him then and there." One morning in their rambles over the city they passed a slave auction. A vigorous and comely mulatto girl was being sold. She underwent a thorough examination at the hands of the bidders; they pinched her flesh and made her trot up and down the room

like a horse to snow she moved, as the auctioneer said, that "bidders might satisfy themselves" whether the article they were offering to buy was sound or not.

The whole thing was so revolting that Lincoln moved away from the scene with a deep feeling of "unconquerable hate." Bidding his companions follow him, he said: "Boys, let's get away from this. If ever I get a chance to hit that thing (meaning slavery) I'll hit it hard."

How Lincoln kept his promise made that day to himself and his companions is writ large in the history of civilization.

