

LINCOLN LORE

No. 40

FORT WAYNE, INDIANA

January 13

LINCOLN LORE

BULLETIN OF
THE LINCOLN
HISTORICAL
RESEARCH
FOUNDATION



ENDOWED BY
THE LINCOLN
NATIONAL LIFE
INSURANCE
COMPANY

Dr. Louis A. Warren - - - Editor

A LINCOLN CENTENNIAL

The year 1930 has one outstanding Lincoln anniversary which cannot be overlooked. On March 1, 1830, just one hundred years ago, Abraham Lincoln and the families with whom he was associated left the Little Pigeon Community in Spencer County, Indiana, and started for Illinois.

It would appear that the centennial of this migration should be of sufficient interest to cause a general celebration all along the route which the caravan traveled.

Twenty years ago the first effort was made to mark the route over which these families moved, and much valuable information on the subject was gathered at that time. It was not until within the last year or two that some concerted action was taken to have this route designated as a national highway. The one hundredth anniversary of this occasion should prove to be the opportune time for a demonstration which would create enough interest to bring the project to a climax.

There are unlimited possibilities for making this centennial of national interest. It might develop, with proper organization, into a mighty pageant moving over the entire route with significant public meetings in the communities through which the caravan passed.

With the responsibility for the task resting upon the separate units in the different community centers, the burden of supplying characters and equipment would be reduced to the minimum and a maximum amount of local interest could be created.

The Lincoln caravan consisted of thirteen souls which might be divided into three family groups: Thomas Lincoln, age 54; his wife, Sarah Johnston Lincoln, age 42; with Thomas' son, Abraham, age 21; and Sarah's son, John D. Johnston, age 15, comprising what was left of the original Lincoln family. Group Number two was composed of Dennis F. Hanks, age 31; his wife, Elizabeth Johnson Hanks, age 23; and their four children: John, age 8; Sarah, age 7; Nancy, age 5; and Harriet, age 4.

The third group consisted of but three—Squire Hall, age about 25; Mathilda Johnson Hall, his wife, age

19; and John Hall, their small child, age about 2 years.

Those representing these characters in the pageant would not be called upon to travel more than half a day, so the task would not be overburdensome.

Sixteen days were consumed in reaching the destination, five or ten miles west of Decatur. It is generally understood that the caravan was in Decatur on March fourteenth.

The party used "three covered wagons, two drawn by oxen, and one by horses, and two saddle horses." While it might not be possible to provide the oxen for the pageant, horses would be available and the wagons could be made to represent covered vehicles.

Unless those who might contemplate a pageant of this sort would rely upon the reports of previous commissions as to the route taken by the Lincolns, some difficulty might be encountered in determining the way over which the family reached their destination.

Governor Samuel Ralston appointed a commission, consisting of Joseph M. Cravens and Jesse W. Weik, to determine this route through the State of Indiana.

Their report in brief is as follows: "We are of the opinion that these hardy and venturesome emigrants bade farewell to their cabin homes in Gentryville in March, 1830. They moved Northward through Dale to Jasper, thence northwestwardly to the villages of Ireland, Otwell, and Algiers to Petersburg, at or near which place they crossed White River and then pushed on to Vincennes by the most direct route."

While this route is in dispute in Indiana, the centennial celebration of the occasion might bring out further evidence relative to the accuracy of this report.

The preliminary investigations of the Lincoln Way in Illinois were made by Mr. Charles M. Thompson, of the University of Illinois. He reported as follows:

"From the evidence at hand it is believed that the following points are on the Lincoln Way in Illinois—From the point on the Illinois bank of the Wabash River opposite Vincennes, Indiana; 2—Lawrenceville; 3—Christian settlement; 4—Russellville; 5—Palestine; 6—Hutsonville; 7—York; 8—Darwin; 9—Richwoods; 10—McCann's Ford; 11—Paradise; 12—Mattoon; 13—Dead Man's Grove; 14—Nelson; 15—Decatur; 16—Lincoln Farm, Macon County."

There is also some difference of opinion as to the exact route which the caravan followed in Illinois. The celebrations held at this time might allow all the outstanding claims to be gathered and considered. If general publicity were given to the enterprise,

it is very likely that much obscure evidence would be brought to light.

The Lincoln National Memorial Highway Association in Illinois is quite thoroughly organized. Its executive committee comprises fifteen members as follows:

James M. Weaver, chairman, Oak Park

E. O. Sumerline, vice-chairman, Lerna

E. O. McCann, secretary, Decatur
George Keyes, treasurer, Springfield

Allen C. Lucas, historian, Chandler-ville

Benjamin Weir, Charlestown
Legrew C. Schaeffer, Beardstown
Harry E. Beekman, Petersburg
Dr. T. J. Knudson, Salisbury
Congressman James A. Graham, Springfield.

D. L. Gamby, Mt. Albany
Hubert Mills, Decatur
F. M. Schulhoff, Mattoon
Dr. C. M. Harris, Casey
E. S. Clayton, Martinsville
Bruce Evans, West York, Ill.

Committees are now at work in both Indiana and Kentucky perfecting organizations that will co-operate with the committee from Illinois in creating sentiment in favor of a great national road project from the cradle of Lincoln at Hodenville, Kentucky, to the grave of Lincoln, at Springfield, Illinois.

Bibliography

The Lincoln Lore bulletin next week will contain the usual quarterly bibliography. Most of the Lincoln items published during October, November, and December will be listed.

In order to make more room for the subject matter anticipated in the next issue the subjects of the Lincoln Lore bulletins for the past three months are released below:

Ballot, 1860, Stray. Lincoln Lore No. 30, November 4.

Bibliography, Lincoln. L. L. No. 26, October 7.

Foreign Relations. L. L. No. 27, October 14.

Genealogy, Lincoln. L. L. No. 37, December 23.

Hank's, Nancy Birthplace. L. L. No. 28, October 21.

Index, Lincoln Lore. L. L. No. 38, December 30.

Lexington, Lincoln and. L. L. No. 31, November 11.

Religious Expressions in Lincoln's Letters. L. L. No. 36, December 16.

State Line, Lincoln at. L. L. No. 32, November 18.

Thanksgiving Proclamations. L. L. No. 33, November 25.

Tomb, The Lincoln. No. 34, December 2.

Virginia, A Pilgrimage to Old. N. 35, December 9.