

# LINCOLN LORE

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## LINCOLN LORE

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Editor

### THOMAS LINCOLN TESTIMONIALS

This issue of Lincoln Lore is the last of a series of three numbers which have set forth traditions and facts about the father of President Lincoln. It is hoped that these broadsides have helped Lincoln students to draw their own conclusions about the status of Thomas Lincoln at the time he exerted a direct influence over his son.

#### *Reminiscences of His Son*

"Thomas, the youngest son, and father of the present subject, by the early death of his father and the very narrow circumstances of his mother, even in childhood was a wandering laboring-boy, and grew up literally without education. He never did more in the way of writing than to bunglingly write his own name. Before he was grown he passed one year as a hired hand with his Uncle Isaac on Watauga, a branch of the Holston River. Getting back into Kentucky and having reached his twenty-eighth year he married Nancy Hanks, mother of the present subject, in the year 1806. . . . At this time (during Abraham's Kentucky school days) his father resided on Knob Creek . . . From this place he removed to what is now Spencer County, Indiana, in the autumn of 1816, Abraham then being in his eighth year. This removal was partly on account of slavery but chiefly on account of the difficulty in land titles in Kentucky. He settled in an unbroken forest and the clearing away of surplus wood was the great task ahead. . . . March 1, 1830, Abraham having just completed his twenty-first year, his father and family, with the families of the two daughters and sons-in-law of his step-mother, left the old homestead in Indiana, and came to Illinois."

Autobiographical sketch prepared for Scripps by Abraham Lincoln.

#### *Religious Fervor*

"Mr. Hall, grandson of Thomas Lincoln's second wife, speaks of Thomas Lincoln as one of the best men that ever lived. A sturdy, honest God fearing man whom all the neighbors respected and turned to in time of trouble. . . . Would work hard all the week till Saturday and then walk to Charleston, twelve miles to hear the Gospel preached on Sunday."

Globe Democrat, St. Louis, September 29, 1895

#### *Hospitality*

"I am just tired of hearing Grandfather Lincoln abused. Everybody runs him down. Father never gave him credit for what he was. He made a good living and I reckon he would have gotten something ahead if he hadn't been so generous. He had the old Virginian notion of hospitality. Liked to see people sit up to the table and eat hearty and there were always plenty of his relations and grandmother's willing to live on him. Uncle Abe got his honesty and his clean notions of living and kind heart from his father."

Testimony of Mrs. Dowling, granddaughter of Thomas Lincoln's second wife, as printed in "The Boyhood of Lincoln," by Eleanor Atkinson.

#### *Horse Sense*

"I have known several men who knew Thomas Lincoln intimately. They said he had (as they termed it) good strong horse sense and was an excellent man. He was a cabinet maker and thrifty when he lived in Kentucky."

J. L. Nall, Nephew of Thomas Lincoln. Whitney, "Lincoln the Citizen," p. 10.

#### *Character Sketch*

"William G. Greene spent one day with him and was interested to make a study of him, and avers that he was a man of great reasoning powers and fine social magnetism, reminding him 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 from one thing to another; that he was candid and truthful; popular with his neighbors and brave in temerity. He was very stoutly built, about 5 ft., 10 inches high and weighed nearly 200 pounds. His desire was to be on terms of amity and sociability with everyone. He had a great stock of border anecdotes and professed a marvelous proclivity to entertain by "spinning yarns" and narrating his youthful experiences."

Whitney, "Lincoln the Citizen," page 10.

#### *Appearance*

"Thomas Lincoln stood very erect. Always had his face clean shaved. . . . He was 5 ft. 10 or 11 inches in height, standing very erect with large bones and strong heavy muscles. Not fat, weighing about 170 or 175 lbs. with a medium high forehead. Straight nose, gray or light blue eyes, rather a broad face and black hair, which he wore combed straight down, cut off square at the ends, and not combing his front locks behind his ears it gave him something of a picturesque appearance."

From Dr. W. H. Doak, in Terre Haute Star, February 11, 1923.

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1815—September 15, suit for ejectment from Knob Creek land brought against him. December 27, presented with bill in this suit. Listed four horses for taxes.

1816—January 22, filed amended answer in Mather suit. May 13, appointed road surveyor. June 14, summoned to appear in court action in ejectment suit. September 2, settlement of Mather suit awards Lincoln \$200. October 12, signed as witness on Caleb Hazel marriage bond. November 4, filed cross bill against Bush. Paid attorneys \$3.50 for printer. On tax list for last time in Kentucky. Left for Indiana between Thanksgiving and Christmas.

1817—October 15, entered one-quarter section of land in Indiana.

1818—October 5, wife, Nancy Hanks Lincoln, died.

1819—August, voted at an election. December 2, married Sarah Bush Johnston.

1820—Name on Spencer County census report.

1823—June 7, joined Pigeon Creek Baptist Church.

1824—April 10, appointed on church committee. October 9, appointed on church committee.

1825—June 12, appointed on committee to repair meeting house. June 21, name appeared in list of church members. December 20, name again appeared on church list.

1826—August 2, daughter Sarah married Aaron Grigsby. August 4, appointed on church committee.

1827—March 9, subscribed 24 pounds of manufactured corn to church. April 30, relinquished 80 acres of his land to complete payment on the rest of his one-quarter section.

1828—January 20, daughter, Sarah Grigsby, died. September, resigned as trustee of church.

1829—December 12, granted letter of dismission from church.

1830—January 10, church letter called back, but released again. February 13, appointed on church committee. Appointed moderator at church meeting. February 20, sold Spencer County farm to Charles Grigsby. March 1, migrated to Macon County, Illinois.

1851—January 17, died in Coles County, Illinois.

\*The identification of this Thomas Lincoln with the father of the president is not positive.

Note:—The sources used in this compilation are as follows: Durrett Collection, Chicago University; Haycraft Account Book, 1796-1797; Bleakley and Montgomery Store Ledger, July 30, 1804, to June 3, 1808; Pigeon Creek church record book, 1819 to 1830; Kentucky and Indiana court records; tax reports, Kentucky State Historical Society; Lincoln family Bible.