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A JUNE BRIDE

On June 12 a new Lincoln shrine will be dedicated at Harrodsburg, Kentucky. The cabin in which the parents of the president were married, enclosed within a beautiful edifice, will be preserved as a memorial of the marriage vows that made Thomas Lincoln and Nancy Hanks husband and wife.

The nuptials occurring in the month of June, 1906, served as a climax of another one of those typical pioneer romances where the children of neighbors were united after having been playmates, sweethearts, and lovers.

Thomas Lincoln and Nancy Hanks were both orphans, having lost their fathers before they reached their teens. Thomas' father was massacred by the Indians in Kentucky in 1786. Both family tradition and court documents, reveal that Nancy's mother was a widow when she came to Kentucky some time before 1790.

After the second marriage of Nancy's mother the child went to live with Richard Berry, Sr., whose wife is said to have been a sister of Nancy's mother. Her home was not far from where the widow Lincoln was living on Beech Fork.

The senior Richard Berry died sometime before December 4, 1798, the date on which his will was probated. His old daughter, Joanna Berry Brumfield, was the mother of William Brumfield, who married "Ann" Lincoln, sister of Thomas Lincoln. Richard Berry, Sr.'s, oldest son, Richard Berry, Jr., after his father's death, became the guardian of Nancy Hanks, and he so signs on her marriage bond.

It will be noted that Richard Berry, Jr., was a brother-in-law to Thomas Lincoln's sister. One who is familiar with the close proximity of the Berry, Brumfield, Crume, and Lincoln homes on Beech Fork will be able to visualize the community that served as

playground for the children of these pioneers. All five of the Widow Lincoln's children, including Thomas, married young people living in the Beech Fork neighborhood.

From the reminiscences of Mr. James Thompson and William Hurd-esty, we glean the following description of the Richard Berry cabin "on the banks of Beech Fork near what was then called Mattingly's Mill, now called Beechland Mills. It is situated about seven miles from Springfield, on the top of a grassy knoll in the midst of a clump of trees. The higher cabin to the right in the photograph is the original Berry Cabin, while the one to the left has been constructed since. The old cabin has but one room, and it was in that room that deacon Jesse Head performed the ceremony that united Thomas Lincoln and Nancy Hanks. The rough floor timbers show the usage that they have been subjected to, and the logs that form the walls are blackened with smoke and age. The mud with which the cabin is chinked has grown hard and is as much a part of the structure as the logs whose interstices it fills."

The traditions gathered by Herndon and used by him in his Lincoln biography, and later by Lamon and Beveridge, have been responsible for building up a false and purely imaginary background for the girlhood days of Nancy Hanks.

One by one duly authorized public records have made invalid this idle talk and gossip which Herndon displayed under the caption of "Gods naked truth," and when the "stagnant putrid pool" from which he claimed Lincoln came is actually located it proves to be associated with another family.

The confusion of Lincoln's mother with another Nancy Hanks, a woman about the same age, is partly responsible for the great injustice done to the orphan girl who lived in the home of the Berrys.

According to Herndon, Thomas and Betsey Sparrow took the waif, Nancy, into their home to live and they became her foster parents. The Sparrows were not married until six and one-half years after the date of Nancy's alleged adoption by them, and there is no dependable evidence to show that she ever lived with them.

Herndon's classification of Nancy among the poor whites is also unjust.

The Berrys, Brumfields, Crumes, Mitchells, Thompsons, Caldwells, Shipleys, etc., among whom she lived in Washington County and who had immigrated from Virginia, would not bear out the reflection which has been cast on her own forebears.

The disgusting camp meeting scene featuring Nancy Hanks as a young lady in a most unbecoming manner is a gross misrepresentation of the woman who was to become the bride of Thomas Lincoln. Herndon not only assumes the identity of the female who participated in this incident but he deliberately moves the original traditional story back ten years to antedate the marriage of Nancy Hanks.

The Herndon manuscripts also allege that Nancy Hanks was courted by Thomas Lincoln while she was a visitor in the home of Joseph Hanks in Elizabethtown, and that Lincoln met Nancy in Hank's carpenter shop. This story is also baseless. Joseph Hanks was a single man until four years after Nancy's marriage and had neither home nor carpenter shop in Elizabethtown previous to 1806.

Lamon using the Herndon source material told the world that of "Nancy Hanks marriage there exists no evidence but that of mutual acknowledgement and cohabitation." He further states that she married a man who did not love her and that she was a sort of a second choice wife. This of course paved the way for the gross libel which both Herndon, Lamon, and later writers have brought against the moral character of the president's mother.

The marriage bond of Thomas Lincoln and Nancy Hanks, on file in the Washington county court house, signed by Richard Berry, the guardian of Nancy Hanks, lifts the mother of Lincoln out of Herndon's "stagnant putrid pool" and places her in a wholesome cabin on Beech Fork. Here she was wooed and won by a worthy pioneer, the youngest son of the Widow Lincoln.

It is to be hoped that those who have a voice in the dedication of these nuptial logs now preserved at Harrodsburg, will make plain that the parents of Abraham Lincoln are worthy of this belated recognition of their honorable and happy union, which was productive of such a noble son as Abraham Lincoln.