

LINCOLN LORE

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LINCOLN'S SHIPLEY ANCESTORS

Most people who trace their ancestry through several generations, seem to be interested primarily in searching for a succession of names similar to the one they bear. So it is with the student of Lincoln who has followed the Lincoln paternal line of descent through those progenitors bearing the name Lincoln, back to the President's ancestor of the seventh generation, Samuel Lincoln.

There were sixty-three other characters, seven generations removed from the President, who contributed just as much to the making of our illustrious American as Samuel Lincoln, although little or no attention is paid to them.

It is claimed by many authorities that mothers contribute most to their children. Yet it is the succession of mothers who are largely left out in the genealogical studies. While it is admitted, generally, that Abraham Lincoln inherited his most valuable tendencies from his mother, those who have made any attempt at all to account for her superior womanhood have immediately forsaken Nancy Hanks' maternal forebears and speculated on her inheritance from some unknown Virginia planter who existed only in the minds of those accepting and circulating the fabulous story of her origin.

Evidence available seems to make it reasonably sure that Abraham Lincoln's maternal grandmother was Lucy Shipley Hanks and it is now possible to trace with some degree of accuracy the Shipley line of descent back to the first American Shipley. Here again we find ourselves, however, switching over to the male progenitors.

Adam Shipley.

The first man, in America, to whom the Lincoln branch of the Shipley family traces its ancestry was named Adam. This Adam Shipley settled in Maryland in 1668, not far from Annapolis. In 1661 a tract of land was surveyed for him bordering on the Severn River. It consisted of 200 acres and was called "Shipley's Choice".

Adam's wife was named Lois and she died a widow in 1725. How many years before this Adam passed away is not known. Tradition claims there were nine sons and two daughters born to Adam and Lois Shipley. The names of but three of them are known: Richard, Robert, and Lois. Of these children Robert is the one in whom we are especially interested.

Robert Shipley, Sr.

The tract of land which Robert Shipley, Sr., received from his father Adam's estate consisted of 240 acres and the farm was called "Shipley's Discovery." It was on the Patopsco

River south of Great Falls. This land was surveyed in 1724. In 1742 Robert sold 140 acres to Nathan Barnes and two years later he sold the remaining 110 acres to Peter Porter. Robert then acquired a large farm near Sykesville, Maryland, and it was here that he made his home the rest of his life.

Robert Shipley, Sr., was a member of Christ's Church, Queen Caroline Parish, and in 1736 he held pew No. 11. It is interesting to note that a William Hanks was in possession of pew No. 28. Shipley was a member of the first vestry of the church and the births of his nine children are registered on the church record. Robert's wife's name was Elizabeth and there is a possibility he was married again. The mother's name, however, does not appear with the birth record of each child. The names of Robert Shipley's children follow in the order of their birth: Charles, Robert, Ruth or Rachel, Ketura, Elizabeth, Sarah, Lois, George, and William.

Robert Shipley, Sr., was dead by 1767, as two of his sons, William and George, who were made executors of his estate filed their inventory at this time. It is significant to note that the two youngest sons were made executors, suggesting that the older sons were not available for this service. The migration of the older son is in accord with the family tradition. George is said to have migrated too, so that William was the only son to remain in Maryland.

Robert Shipley, Jr.

Robert Shipley, Jr., son of Robert Shipley, Sr., was born October 9, 1713. He migrated to Virginia some time previous to 1850 where we find his name on a commissioner's book in Lunenburg County as a tithable, indicating he was over twenty-one years of age, and the head of a family. William Caldwell according to the court order was appointed to make out the tax list for Lunenburg County in the territory "from Little Roanoke up the Fork." The list contained among others the names of Robert Shipley, Richard Berry, and Robert Mitchell.

Another list giving the names of those subject to military call in 1858 contains the name of Robert Shipley. In 1765 Shipley purchased a tract of 314 acres in Lunenburg County in what was later Bedford County. Part of this land was sold in 1767, and on April 30, 1771, Robert and his wife Sarah sold the remaining 164 acres to Daniel Mitchell.

In 1771 Robert and Sarah Shipley removed to Mecklenburg County, North Carolina, and evidence on file in the Bedford County Court leaves no question as to the identity of the Vir-

ginia and North Carolina Shipleys. Here they lived during the remainder of their lives.

Although we know that Robert Shipley's wife's name was Sarah, we do not know her family name. Just how many children Robert had is also unknown but the names and birth dates of some of them are to be found in the family records. There were at least five daughters: Rachel, who married Richard Berry; Ann, who married David McCord; Naomi, who married Robert Mitchell; Margaret, who married Robert Sloan; and Lucy, who married James Hanks.

Lucy Shipley

Evidence from many sources now seems to confirm the fact that Lucy Shipley, daughter of Robert Shipley, Jr., and wife of James Hanks was the mother of Nancy Hanks. The Hanks family was in the Shipley community in Virginia and we find them again with the Shipleys in North Carolina. The identity of the James Hanks who married Lucy has not been positively established.

Lucy Shipley's sister Naomi was born April 26, 1748, her sister Ann's first child was born in 1766, her sister Rachel's third child was married in 1781. Lucy was probably one of the youngest children, as her daughter Nancy was born not much earlier than 1785.

When Lucy reached Kentucky she married as her second husband Henry Sparrow, and at this time made affidavit that she was above twenty-one years of age and her brother-in-law, Robert Mitchell, testified to this fact. Sometime after this second marriage her daughter Nancy went to live with her Uncle and Aunt Richard and Rachel Berry. George and Edward Shipley also migrated with the Shipley sisters, but their relation to Lucy has not been determined.

The Mercer County, Kentucky, census for the year 1810 reveals that Lucy was over 45 years of age at that time. This would place her birth as early as 1765. That she was living as late as 1820 is revealed by the census of that year. She is said to have passed away about 1825, which would have made her at least sixty years old at the time and probably older.

It appears from the 1810 census that Lucy had nine children by Henry Sparrow, five boys and four girls. Two of the boys became ministers and there is nothing but words of commendation for the wholesome atmosphere of her home and the integrity of her children. This much abused woman is deserving of a significant place among the forebears of Abraham Lincoln.