

# LINCOLN LORE

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## LINCOLN LOG CABIN STATE PARK

The dedication of another Lincoln park in Illinois under the supervision of the State of Illinois, and the United States Department of the Interior National Park Service will be of interest to Lincoln students. This new state park is the old home site of Abraham Lincoln's father and here both Thomas and Sarah Bush Lincoln passed away. It is situated eight miles southwest of Charleston, Illinois, and will be known as "The Lincoln Log Cabin State Park."

### Family Land Holdings

Just about the time Abraham Lincoln took up his permanent residence in Springfield, Illinois, his stepbrother, John D. Johnston, entered a tract of land in Goose Nest Prairie country, located in Coles County, Illinois. This section was called Goose Nest because the cleared space in the timber resembled a goose nest of immense proportions. Section 21, in Township 11, Range 9, fell within this area and a diagram on this page shows the tracts once in possession of both Thomas Lincoln and his son, Abraham.

Tract No. 3 was acquired by Johnston on August 4, 1837, and contained forty acres. Tracts No. 1 and No. 2 were purchased by Thomas Lincoln from Ruben and Mary Moore on March 5, 1840, at a cost of \$400.00, and comprised eighty acres. On December 31, 1840, through a quit claim deed with a money consideration of but \$50 Johnston disposed of Tract No. 3 to Thomas Lincoln. Tracts Nos. 1, 2, and 3, comprising 120 acres, were at this time all in Thomas Lincoln's name.

Just what part Abraham Lincoln had in financing his father's land enterprises previous to October 24, 1841, we do not know, but on that date he paid Thomas Lincoln and Sarah, his wife, \$200 cash for Tract No. 3 "reserving the use and control of said land to the grantors and to the survivors of them during both and each of their natural lives." He also signed a bond at this time agreeing to sell the property to John D. Johnston for \$200 any time within one year after the death of Thomas Lincoln and wife.

While Lincoln was in Congress in 1848, the day before Christmas he sent his father \$20, which had been requested by Thomas Lincoln to pay a judgment against his property, and "save it from being sold."

The death of Thomas Lincoln occurred on Jan. 17, 1851. On August 12 of the same year Abraham Lincoln and Mary, his wife, deeded to John D. Johnston for the consideration of \$1.00 all their interest in Tracts Nos. 1 and 2, "subject to the dower interest of Sarah Lincoln, widow of Thomas Lincoln, deceased." Abraham Lincoln's interest in the tract was derived as sole heir to Thomas Lincoln. It will be noted that now Abraham held some claim to all three tracts.

Four months later John D. Johnston and wife, Nancy, sold their claim in this same 80 acres (Tracts 1 and 2), which he had acquired from Abraham Lincoln, to John J. Hall for \$250. Hall was the son of Matilda Johnston Hall and a grandson of Sarah Johnston Lincoln.

The east forty acres (Tract 3) which Abraham Lincoln acquired was in his possession at the time of his death and his heirs never claimed it. John J. Hall, however, after the death of Sarah Lincoln in 1869 cultivated this forty acres and on May 7, 1888, because of undisputed possession for more than twenty years, acquired a legal title to the land. In May, 1891, John J. Hall sold to James W. Craig of Mattoon, Illinois, a certain tract of land and a cabin which stood on it.

### Abraham Lincoln Log Cabin Association Transactions

The first land transaction which looked forward to the acquisition of the Lincoln farm as a memorial occurred in 1891 when John J. Hall sold a small irregular piece of land to the Abraham Lincoln Log Cabin Association.

The deed specifies that the approximate one-third of an acre was conveyed as "Memorial grounds on which the Lincoln cabin stood." The deed was dated August 15, 1891. The consideration was \$200, and the grantees guaranteed to keep the place fenced. Five months after acquiring this cabin site the association paid \$10,000 for the log cabin and land Craig had

purchased from Hall. The association sold the tract of land it had acquired from Hall to M. E. Dunlap for \$1,000 on February 24, 1892, but took the cabin to Chicago.

The cabin was exhibited in connection with the World's Fair at Chicago. Later it was stored in the yard of the Libby Prison War Museum on Wabash Avenue. Several years later an advertisement in the Chicago Tribune called upon the owners to claim possession or it would be sold for storage charges. It was about this time evidently that the *Washington Post* reproduced a picture of the Coles County cabin with this information: "The Lincoln log cabin is now in Chicago, but it is the question of but a short while before it will be brought on and erected in Washington." This project, however, never materialized, and there is evidence that most of the cabin was used for fire wood.

### Acquisition by State

The Chambers of Commerce in the cities of Charleston and Mattoon in 1928 acquired by purchase at an administrator's sale the west thirty-four acres, a part of Tract 1, and about this time an option of thirty-four acres just east of the land already acquired was secured.

In June, 1929, arrangements were made by the State of Illinois for taking over the land acquired by the Chambers of Commerce and also for acquiring the thirty-four acres in possession of Mr. and Mrs. William Phipps. The eighteen acres in possession of John D. Martin, however, where the cabin is said to have stood, was the most desired tract to be secured, and it finally came into possession of the state.

A replica of the log cabin which originally stood at a point marked x on Tract 2 has been constructed.



Thomas Lincoln Land Surveys