

# LINCOLN LORE

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## GLOBE TAVERN—ROBERT LINCOLN'S BIRTHPLACE

The earliest abode of Abraham Lincoln and Mary Todd in Springfield, Illinois, has been given very little attention although in their one room apartment in Globe Tavern their first child was born. This reference may have a tendency to emphasize the fact that Abraham Lincoln was born in a one room Kentucky cabin, upon marriage went to keeping house in a smaller room than the one in which he was born and finally passed away at Washington in a still smaller room than either of the other two.

The Sangamon Journal for the fall of 1842 helps us to create an atmosphere for the Lincoln's residence in Globe Tavern. The paper for Friday, November 11, 1842, carries this announcement:

"Married. In this city on the 4th instance at the residence of N. W. Edwards Esq. by Rev. C. Dresser, Abraham Lincoln Esq. to Miss Mary Todd, daughter of Robert S. Todd of Lexington, Kentucky."

One week before this hastily announced wedding there appeared a notice in the Sangamon Journal which may have encouraged the young people to take immediate steps to consummate the wedding agreement. They must have read with some interest this announcement:

### "Globe Tavern

"The subscriber will still be found at his old stand on Adams Street near the corner of 5th St. a little southwest of the state house (Springfield, Illinois) where he is fully prepared to tender every accommodation to the traveling community. His house having undergone considerable repairs he can furnish the weary with a comfortable resting place—and the hungry shall always find the best table the market will afford. In fine he pledges himself that his house shall be prudently and promptly managed, he asks what he confidently anticipates—a just and liberal patronage.  
"C. G. Saunders.

"N.B. A few families can be accommodated with pleasant and convenient rooms as boarders if application is made soon. C. G. S."

The same paper which carried the announcement for the Globe Tavern also printed a notice for the City Hotel with the following rates:

"Regular boarders per week with lodging \$3.00.

"Regular boarders per week without lodging \$2.50."

With these two announcements before them, Abraham and Mary probably came to the conclusion that they could not only find a comfortable place to live but they could also live within Mr. Lincoln's earnings. So they took up their residence at Globe Tavern.

About six months later Lincoln wrote a letter to Joshua Speed of Louisville, Kentucky, telling him about their location and urging Joshua and his wife to pay them a visit. In this letter dated May 18, 1843, Lincoln wrote.

"We are not keeping house; but boarding at the Globe Tavern, which is very well kept now by a widow lady of the name of Beck. Our room (the same Dr. Wallace occupied there) and boarding only costs four dollars a week."

There has been much discussion about whether or not Lincoln meant \$4.00 a week for both or \$4.00 a week for each. It seems quite clear from the rates announced by the City Hotel, formerly mentioned, and the emphasis which Lincoln placed on the price by the use of the expression "only" that the \$4.00 a week paid the board and room for both of them. Comparing the rate of two permanent boarders using the same room would not make the price out of line with the City Hotel rates while \$8.00 would be more than two occupants, each with a private room would pay.

There seems to be some difference of opinion as to who the proprietor of the house was at the time the Lincoln's lived there. It is quite likely it changed management during the first six months of their occupancy. It would appear from the advertisement that Cyrus J. Saunders was the proprietor in November when the Lincoln's first moved there but that by the following May a Mrs. Beck became the hostess.

While the Lincoln's were living in Globe Tavern General William F. Thornton gave a party there on February 20, 1843, for the members of the Legislature, so it would appear the tavern was often used for parties containing a considerable number of people.

That the Lincoln's were living at Globe Tavern as late as August, 1843, is evident from the fact that their first child Robert was born there. There is one tradition related by J. C. Thompson which would place the responsibility for their moving on this

same infant, Robert. Thompson relates: "Young Bob Lincoln was possessed of a pair of powerful lungs. He cried lustily. The other boarders at Globe were greatly annoyed by his wailing. Something of their annoyance must have reached the Lincoln's, anyway they decided to move."

It is understood generally that the Lincoln's went immediately after the Globe Tavern residence to the house they were to occupy for so many years at the corner of Eighth and Jackson Streets. However for a period of six months it is known that they lived in a small cottage at 214 South Fourth Street on the east side north of Monroe Street. It stood directly on the street. A sketch from memory of the house which stood on the site, later occupied by the Argus Hotel, has been preserved.

The Globe Tavern was erected in 1835 by Wharton Ransdell and stood on the north side of Adams Street half-way between Third and Fourth. It was a two story frame house of the conventional two gable type. On the Adams Street front there were three doors and six windows on the first floor and nine windows on the second floor. Apparently there were eight rooms in the house approximately 12 by 14 feet with probably a double reception room on the first floor. There were three chimneys and built upon the ridgepole a large box which covered a bell, used to announce the arrival of the stagecoach and probably at meal time.

Sometime previous to 1865 the tavern had been remodeled by extending the back wall of the building about five feet and raising the roof over that section so as to give the rooms proper height. Pictures taken at the time of Lincoln's funeral showing many visitors standing in front of the structure which is draped in mourning, reveal the marks of improvement.

The picture of Globe Tavern which is usually displayed shows still a later stage of the building than the 1865 photograph. A house reduced in frontage on Adams Street by more than one-half with but four windows on the second floor, yet containing the extended rear wall gives a very inaccurate picture of the tavern as it was when the Lincoln occupied it. A photograph of this part of the original structure was made in 1879 by August Kessberger, the other parts of the old tavern having been torn down. The site of Globe Tavern is now marked by a bronze tablet.