

LINCOLN LORE

Bulletin of the Lincoln National Life Foundation - - - - - Dr. Louis A. Warren, Editor
Published each week by The Lincoln National Life Insurance Company, Fort Wayne, Indiana

Number 986

FORT WAYNE, INDIANA

March 1, 1948

THE PENNSYLVANIA LINCOLNS

The program being sponsored by the Reading-Berks Bicentennial Committee should invite a further study of all the residences of President Lincoln's ancestors in the state of Pennsylvania.

Mordecai — Great-Great-Grandfather

Mordecai was the earliest direct Lincoln ancestor of the President to settle in Pennsylvania. With him came his brother, Abraham, the first of the Lincoln clan to bear that name. They were the sons of Mordecai Lincoln of Scituate, Massachusetts, and grandsons of Samuel Lincoln of Hingham, the first Lincoln progenitor of the President to settle in America.

Both Mordecai and his brother Abraham lived in New Jersey about seven years before migrating to Pennsylvania. While residing in New Jersey, Mordecai married Hannah Saltar, to which union there were born one son, John, and five daughters. One of the daughters died in infancy and lies buried in Monmouth County, New Jersey.

Mordecai and Hannah Lincoln and their family settled at "Scoolkill", later called Coventry Township, in Chester County. Here Mordecai in partnership with Samuel Nutt and William Branson operated a forge on French Creek. Just how long Mordecai remained here it is difficult to determine. There is some indication he intended to return to New Jersey as he sold his interest in the forge for five hundred pounds on December 14, 1726, and five months later he bought of Richard Saltar, a tract of land in Monmouth County, New Jersey. Apparently it was about the time of the New Jersey land purchase in 1727, that his wife, Hannah, passed away and left him with five children, the oldest but eleven, and the youngest, an infant born shortly before the mother's death.

About two years following Hannah's death, Mordecai married in the summer of 1729, Mary Robeson, daughter of Andrew Robeson of Amity, Philadelphia County, Pennsylvania. He had located in Amity Township as early as May 15, 1728, at which time he was appointed a commissioner for the defense of the community against the Indians. The same year as his second marriage, he first leased and later purchased the land on which he built the brick dwelling in 1733, to which we have already referred. He did not live long to enjoy the new house as three years later he passed away, at forty-nine years of age, and left his second wife, not only with the five children by his first marriage, but with three more children by his later marriage, one of them born after the father's death. Although all were under twenty-one, the older children were approaching maturity.

Berks County was not formed until 1752, out of Philadelphia, Lancaster, and Chester counties, sixteen years after Mordecai's death. In reality he never lived in the county which was later to embrace the land where his old house stands. Furthermore, most of the descendants of Mordecai Lincoln bearing the Lincoln name are the offspring of Mordecai Jr., Thomas, and Abraham, children by his second wife, and it is with this group that the Amity or Exeter home, as it is now called, is more definitely associated. Mordecai Lincoln, great-great-grandfather of the President lived in Pennsylvania at Coventry eight years, and Amity eight years, a total of sixteen years in Pennsylvania.

John Lincoln — Great-Grandfather

The only son of Mordecai Lincoln by his first wife was named John and he was born in New Jersey on May 3, 1716. He was four years old when his parents moved to Pennsylvania and settled in the Coventry home. When the family with the step-mother moved to Amity, John was twelve years old. He had reached the age of twenty when his father died.

The next seven years of John's life are almost a blank as there appears to be no record referring to him

during this period. There is a tradition extant that he returned to New Jersey where he had inherited some land from his father in Middlesex County. During this period, however, wherever he may have been, he learned the weaver's trade, and in his land transactions later on he is designated as "a weaver."

From the time Berks County was established in 1752, the name of John Lincoln often appears in the public records, especially in the deed books where his many land purchases are recorded. He sold all his Pennsylvania lands in 1765 and moved the family to the Shenandoah Valley of Virginia. The Pennsylvania residence of John Lincoln included eight years at Coventry, eight years at Amity, seven years at some undetermined location, and nineteen years at Caernarvon.

The first home site of John Lincoln we are able to identify is established by a land warrant assigned to John Lincoln on October 9, 1746. It was for a tract of 50 acres located in Caernarvon Township, Lancaster County, and the assignment indicates that John Lincoln was then living in the township. Two years later he purchased a tract of 150 acres adjacent to the above land and bordering on the Schuylkill River for about one third of a mile. It fell within Robeson Township of Lancaster County.

The first record of John Lincoln thus far discovered is the date of his marriage which occurred on July 5, 1743. His wife was Rebecca Flowers Morris, the widow of James Morris, by whom she had one son. Her parents were Enoch and Rebecca Flowers who lived in Caernarvon Township, Lancaster County, Pennsylvania. Little is known about the Flowers family, except for the fact that Enoch was a Justice of the Peace in Caernarvon Township, where he must have resided. The fact that he and his wife are direct ancestors of President Lincoln would make any information about them important.

John Lincoln named his first three sons Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob. Two other sons, John and Thomas, and four daughters, Hannah, Lydia, Sarah, and Rebecca, made up the family.

Abraham Lincoln — Grandfather

One of the most important historical projects which might be undertaken by the Reading-Berks Bicentennial Committee, during this anniversary year, is the locating and marking of the site of the home where the President's grandfather, Abraham Lincoln, was born. It was this grandfather for whom the more illustrious Abraham Lincoln was named. It was the story of this grandfather's massacre by the Indians that the President remembered more vividly than any other story told to him in boyhood days by his father. To put it in the President's own words: "The story of his death by the Indians, and of Uncle Mordecai, then fourteen years old, killing one of the Indians, is the legend more strongly than all others imprinted on my mind and memory. I am the son of grandfather's youngest son, Thomas."

The massacre took place in the month of May, 1786, at Hughes Station in Kentucky about twenty miles east of Louisville. The pioneer was but forty-two years of age at the time of his death and he left a widow and five small children in the wilderness.

The parents of the Pennsylvania Abraham were married on July 5, 1743, and he was born the following year. It is known that on Oct. 9, 1746, when Abraham was two years old, his father bought the 50-acre tract in Caernarvon Township, Lancaster County and settled his family there. However, the exact place of Abraham's parents residence, at the time of his birth, has not been definitely established. Possibly John Lincoln may have gained possession of this fifty acre tract at the time of his marriage. If this be so then the President's grandfather lived the twenty-one years he resided in Pennsylvania in one location. The fifty-acre tract is located about one-half mile east of the present town of Birdsboro.