

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 1036

FORT WAYNE, INDIANA

February 14, 1949

A PROPOSAL FOR A HOOSIER SCOUT TREK

A year ago Lincoln Lore featured the pilgrimage for Boy Scouts to Lincoln Shrines on February 12 which have been conducted annually for fifteen years. At the same time it was suggested that a Lincoln trail hike in Indiana, similar to those conducted in both Kentucky and Illinois, would be of great inspirational value to Hoosier youth as well as to scouts from other states.

Three different routes were suggested as possibilities in the foregoing statement and this past summer the editor of Lincoln Lore made a survey of these prospective treks. The one from Lincoln City to Boonville, a distance of twenty miles, was first eliminated as it led away from the Lincoln Country instead of into it, although it is known that Lincoln often visited Boonville. The one from Lincoln City to Rockport was not so easily dismissed especially due to the Lincoln village at Rockport, and also to the flatboat landing, two places of much importance. A careful mile by mile recording was made of this route nineteen miles long, but it also failed to be impressive when compared with the one from Lincoln Ferry Park to the Lincoln home site.

This last mentioned route instead of moving away from the Lincoln country moves into it, inviting a further inspiration of places of interest with a continuation of trips to either Boonville or Rockport. It also fits into the Indiana Lincoln picture chronologically, beginning at a point near where the Lincolns crossed the river from Kentucky in 1816. It extends along the route the boy, when but seven years of age, followed to his Indiana home site. One coming from Kentucky would pick up the trail enroute to the Pigeon Creek Community. The fact that Lincoln, when about sixteen years of age, worked at the mouth of Anderson River, where the trail begins and travelled back and forth at intervals between the place of employment and his home, also contributes to the importance of the suggested route. Just a mile east from the starting point is the town of Troy, county seat of Perry County in 1816, when the Lincolns settled within its boundary.

The fact that the trek starts on the banks of the Ohio River would be of special interest as it was at this very spot that Lincoln first looked upon this mighty stream. Here also many scouts would see this impressive flow of water for the first time and get a thrill similar to the one Lincoln as a small boy must have received.

The road selected after following the river for some distance strikes into a hilly, picturesque, and thinly settled countryside, creating just the environment to allow the scout to get into the atmosphere of such a pilgrimage. Southern Indiana also is especially rich in its variety of birds and flowers, which should make the trek of unusual interest.

There are two communities on the trail which offer accommodations for official stops and provide checking facilities. Lamar, the first place, is a little over seven miles from the starting point. It is a small town right on the highway and has a post office which could be used for checking or signing trek cards.

The other stop is the famous Santa Claus Post Office and the adjacent recreation grounds with an excellent restaurant. The manager of the Santa Claus project has

already expressed his willingness to cooperate fully with the authorities conducting the trek. It is also fortunate that the Santa Claus development is near the end of the hike as it will serve as an incentive to push on in the early stages of the trek so that some time may be spent there in relaxation for the final effort, and grand climax of the objective, the beautiful Nancy Hanks Lincoln Memorial and home site of the Lincolns in the Pigeon Creek community.

A very necessary feature for such a pilgrimage is the facilities for overnight camping at each of the terminals. One could not find more ideal situations for this than is provided in the state parks, one at each end of the route. The more important consideration however in favor of this route, over any other Indiana segment of a similar distance, is the fact that it is a part of the road already designated by the state as the Lincoln Memorial Highway. It extends on north westwardly via Vincennes into the Lincoln country of Illinois.

The trek begins in the Lincoln Ferry Park at the mouth of Anderson River near where the Lincolns ferried across the river from Kentucky to Indiana in 1816 and it is eighteen miles to the terminal at Lincoln City. A description of the route with the mileage noted follows:

Leave park on Highways No. 145 and No. 66 travelling west to junction point of above two highways. 1.3.

Leaving No. 66 turn northwest on No. 145 over hilly road.

Arrive at a small settlement. 5.1.

Proceed to the town of Lamar. First checking point is in this town at Post Office. 7.4.

Continue north passing white church on left at top of a hill. 11.4.

Down hill to old town of Santa Claus with Candy Castle on right. 12.5.

Continue on to present Santa Claus.

The Post Office here is the second checking point on pilgrimage. 13.2.

Leave Santa Claus travelling north on highway No. 245 to the junction of No. 162. 13.5.

Leave highway No. 245, turn left on highway No. 162, continue west passing road to Buffalo on left. 16.0.

Straight ahead to boundary of Lincoln Farm. 16.9.

Ahead crossing railroad to Nancy Hanks Lincoln Park. 17.7.

Turn up path to Lincoln's mother's grave and take historical trail to site where the Lincoln home stood. 18.0.

Return to the office of custodian at Nancy Hanks Memorial buildings in park for final checking. Custodian on duty at Park, weekdays, 9:00 A.M. to 5:00 P.M., Sundays, 8:00 A.M. to 6:00 P.M.

There is also a shorter trek of about two miles, from the Lincoln home site to Gentryville where the Lincolns did their trading, which would make an admirable hike for cub scouts. Over this trail Thomas Lincoln and his boy, Abe, often travelled and by extending it to the old site of Jonesboro, about a half mile further, it would be the route which Abe took back and forth to school during one term.