

LINCOLN LORE

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THE LINCOLN EXHIBIT AT SANTA CLAUS

A little hamlet of thirty-four people, known as Santa Claus, located but four miles from the boyhood home of Abraham Lincoln in Indiana, entertains each year during the Christmas season a phenomenal number of guests. Press dispatches state that on one day there were 21,216 persons recorded. In fact, throughout the whole year the spot has become a mecca for children from the three states in which the Lincoln's lived—Kentucky, Indiana and Illinois. Boys and girls come to enjoy the unusual recreational facilities and with their parents visit the house of dolls, view the statuettes on Mother Goose lane, and especially observe the human interest exhibits in the museum which feature playthings, many of them home made, used by the children of a century ago.

This unique and educational museum has recently set apart one entire section for a display of curios, books, documents and pictures associated with Abraham Lincoln, the most famous of all Indiana boys, who grew up in the neighborhood but a short distance away. The series of attractive glass cases used to house this Lincoln display have a combined length of twenty-eight feet. They are three feet deep and four feet high.

The Lincoln Exhibit as it is called is an attempt to display items that illustrate some of the many and varied activities, into which Abraham Lincoln entered between the years of seven and twenty-one, while he was growing up in the nearby Little Pigeon Creek Community. Some of these tasks could not be called vocations or even avocations but they do reveal the diversity of interests which occupied his attention.

The exhibit was planned by O. V. Brown of Dale, Indiana who first compiled the list of activities to be featured. He did not attempt to arrange them in chronological sequence because of much overlapping. He did place them in partial alphabetical order which seemed to be the most convenient system. Mr. Brown then set about securing items that would illustrate these various occupations and many of the pieces secured came from the descendants of those who were related to, or knew, the Lincolns when they lived in Spencer County.

In presenting this interesting exhibit these limited columns will permit the mention of but a single object in each classification, with a word of comment supporting the historical background.

ATHLETE—A picture of an original maul used by Abe in driving wedges. The maul was also thrown for distance, back over the shoulder, in the athletic contest called "Throwing the Maul" in which Abe excelled.

BLACKSMITH—An old blacksmith record book. Abe is known to have assisted Baldwin the blacksmith at Gentryville. Abe made the statement that in 1832 he "Thought of becoming a Blacksmith."

BIBLE READER—New Testaments formerly owned by William Woods and Allen Bruner. Abe's use of Biblical language is well known to every student of his literary style.

COOPER—Equipment for the cooper's trade. Tradition claims that Abe worked for a short time with a Spencer County cooper.

CARPENTER—Tools for rough carpenter work. The fact that Abe's father was a carpenter would be sufficient evidence that Abe assisted him.

CABINET MAKER—Picture of a cabinet Abe is supposed to have made, and also some of the instruments used for cabinet work.

FLATBOATMAN—Picture of flatboat and flatboat chart. Abe made one trip to New Orleans on a flatboat while living in Indiana.

FERRYMAN—Pictures of the mouth of Anderson River. A survey of location where Abe operated a ferry is also included.

FIREMAN—Old steamboat riverbook. There is a tradition that Abe worked his way back from New Orleans

by firing the engine on a boat. He is known to have cut wood to fuel the steam engines on the Ohio River steam boats.

FARMER—Old reaper and other farming implements of the early days. Abe wrote on one occasion, "I was raised to farm work."

CLERK—Map locating Gentry's Store and paper. It is well known that Abe served as a clerk at a store in what is now called Gentryville.

HUNTER—Old pioneer rifle. Abe shot a wild turkey with his father's rifle when he was but seven years of age and he tells about it in an autobiographical sketch.

HIDE TANNING—Piece of buckskin. It is similar to that used by early settlers for clothes. A tannery near Grand View, Indiana is said to have hired Lincoln for a short time.

LAWYER—Picture of law book Abe read. The Statutes of Indiana now owned by William H. Townsend of Lexington, Kentucky and borrowed from David Turnham was read by Abe. He is said to have settled disputes among neighbors.

MILLER—Picture of Horse Mill. Abe assisted in the operation of grinding corn by driving the family horse to turn the upper stone.

MATHEMATICIAN—Old book on mathematics from home of William Woods. This activity might represent Abe as a log cabin student.

MUSICIAN—Jews-harp and Old Song Book. The only musical instrument Abe is said to have played was a Jews-harp.

POLITICIAN—Picture of Henry Clay. Abe read the speeches of Henry Clay in early newspapers and became a political advocate of the Whigs as early as the Indiana days.

POET—Photostat of poetry in Lincoln Hand. Schoolboy doggerel copied in old school book by Abe.

PIT SAWYER—Old pit saw Abe used. When Abe visited his old home in 1844 he mentioned the old saw pit where he worked.

RAIL SPLITTER—Section of cherry rail. It was taken from fence row Abe is said to have made near the town of Dale.

SURVEYOR—Early survey book. Abe, like his uncle Josiah before him, is said to have carried a surveyor's chain.

SLAUGHTER HOUSE HAND—An old axe belonging to the Lincolns. Abe worked for some time for Taylor near Troy who conducted a packing house and shipped beef and pork down the river to New Orleans.

TEAMSTER—Pair of old ox shoes. A bronze tablet at Grand View, Indiana states Abe hauled "hoop poles with ox team to river landing."

Inasmuch as the exhibit is in its initial stage it is assumed that it will be added to as time goes on. Lincoln might be called a SCRIBE as he is said to have done the letter writing for the community. In his debate with Douglas at Ottawa, Lincoln mentioned that he did "work the latter part of one winter in a still-house up at the head of a hollow," so he could probably be called a STILL-HAND. To counterbalance this there is proof that as a youth he served as SEXTON in the Little Pigeon Creek Church. We have evidence from the children who grew up in the cabin home with him that even in boyhood he was an ORATOR, which might not overlap his classification as politician as most of his orations were of a classical nature. This exhibit should grow in extent as well as in interest.

Santa Claus is one of the stops on the Boy Scout hike from the mouth of Anderson River to the Nancy Hanks Lincoln Memorial and the Lincoln Exhibit will contribute much to impress the boys with the primitive conditions under which Abraham Lincoln grew to manhood.