

# LINCOLN LORE

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## MR. & MRS. THOMAS LINCOLN—AT HOME

This issue of Lincoln Lore bears the date June 12, the anniversary day of the marriage of Thomas Lincoln and Nancy Hanks. It is evident that the young couple went almost immediately after the wedding in Washington County, Kentucky, to Elizabethtown, the county seat of the adjacent county of Hardin, where they were "at home" to their friends. On June 14, 1806, two days after the wedding, Thomas Lincoln acquired in the store of Bleakley & Montgomery at Elizabethtown these two items which were charged to his account: ½ set knives and forks which cost him five shillings, and three skeins of silk at three pence.

It was a week before there was another item charged to Thomas Lincoln and it was but a spool of thread costing two pence, but on June 21 Thomas acquired: one shoe knife at one shilling six pence, and two skeins of thread at four pence.

This is all that is listed in the Bleakley & Montgomery day book charged against Thomas Lincoln between the wedding date and the first of July although many more purchases are recorded during the next few weeks.

The purpose of this issue of Lincoln Lore is to list some of the items which were sold in the Bleakley & Montgomery store during the year 1806 and which were available to the people of that community. While it is not likely that Thomas and Nancy were able to furnish their home with all these conveniences and probably Nancy could not have all the ladies' finery listed, yet it does reveal the fact that Thomas and Nancy did not settle in a wilderness where there were Indians and wild animals lurking around their cabin door.

There are several corner cupboards extant which Thomas Lincoln is known to have built and he would most certainly have one for his own home. Most of the items of food, medicine and such dishes and silverware they acquired would be kept in a cupboard of his own creation.

While there were other stores at Elizabethtown where the Lincolns may have traded, Bleakley & Montgomery carried most of the things they would need. We have already discovered the purchase of knives and forks and the store also carried coffee mills, tea pots, sugar bowls, pitchers, tumblers, mugs, wine glasses, bowls, soup spoons, decanters, sifters, graters, and also wash bowls and tooth brushes.

A few pieces of miscellaneous household necessities might be found in some of the cabins as revealed by the day book: Japanese candlesticks, snuffers, lamps, scrub brushes, sweeping brushes, combs, flat irons, both dressing glass and looking glass are listed, as well as a carpet which cost ten shillings and six pence.

Some of the staple groceries purchased over the counter of Bleakley & Montgomery were flour, sugar, butter, coffee, Bohea and Hyson tea, chocolate, mustard, pepper, salt, cloves, cinnamon, ginger and allspice. It must be remembered that at the time of his marriage Thomas was operating a 240 acre farm not far from Elizabethtown so that Nancy Lincoln would not lack of the fresh meat and vegetables and fruit in their seasons.

Their medicine chest may have contained Godfrey's cordial, Batesman's drops, calomel, tartar emetic, spirit's of turpentine, peppermint, jalap, rhubarb, castor oil and head and throat tablets.

Of course more important from the viewpoint of the lady in the house was the stock of dry goods and it looks as if the variety of cloth was sufficient to satisfy all classes. Some of those listed included the ever present red flannel, swansdown, baize, muslin, satin, scarlet cloth, bombazine, dimity, bed tick, silk, nankeen, velvet, chintz, calico, linen, muslinette, cotton, and also Indian blankets and rose blankets. If any of the goods were to be dyed the following colors were available: indigo, fig blue and turkey red.

Notions were not neglected by Bleakley & Montgomery and they sold over their counter: ribbon, worsted tape, lace, beads, gilt buttons or white shirt buttons, sewing needles and knitting needles, thread by spool or skein, pins, beeswax, thimbles, and scissors.

Among the ready made items at the store were gloves of many kinds including silk, shawls of various materials such as camel's hair and cotton, hose of many prices of both cotton and worsted, handkerchiefs likewise of many varieties; bandana, madras, cotton, silk and muslin, as well as shoes, even silk gloves, fans and umbrellas.

The cabin home at Elizabethtown did not lack books as these titles are recorded as having been sold over the counter at Bleakley & Montgomery store: Bibles, primers, spelling books, Scott's *Lessons in Elocution*, Hymn and Psalm book, *Nocturnal Visit*, *Fair Sex*, as well as subscriptions for newspapers. For those with poor eyesight spectacles were available at four shillings and six pence and strange to say, a case to carry them in cost just the same price. Paper by the quire and ink holders were purchased as well as slates and slate pencils for the children.

No attempt has been made here to list the items which were available for the men and inasmuch as Thomas Lincoln was a carpenter it would be of interest at a later date to list the tools he was able to acquire in the community where he first set out as the head of the household following the trade of a cabinetmaker.

Of course we would not presume that at any time while living at Elizabethtown for almost two years and a half, Nancy Hanks Lincoln had been able to accumulate any considerable number of the items listed but many of them must have been in her cabin home. No storekeeper would stock a lot of merchandise that the average person would not purchase. All the items listed in the enumeration of household conveniences and wearing apparel actually passed over the counter of Bleakley & Montgomery at Elizabethtown, Kentucky in 1806, and the entries are copied from the original volume in possession of the Foundation.