

# LINCOLN LORE

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## MEMORIALIZING THE DEPARTED LINCOLNS

May comes in with its Mother's Day sentiments and makes its exit in the atmosphere of Memorial Day. Altogether, the month is one of hallowed reminiscences and has long been recognized as a season in which we remember relatives and friends who have departed. There has become associated with the thirtieth day of May a patriotic sentiment which invites attention to the sacrifices made for the freedom and unity of the nation. The emphasis which has been placed on Memorial Day by the Grand Army of the Republic and its kindred organizations, naturally contributes to an increasing interest in Abraham Lincoln, its commander-in-chief. Inasmuch as the memorial ceremonies are usually conducted in some cemetery, it would seem appropriate at this time to call attention to the burial places of Lincoln's ancestry, his own having been so impressively consecrated at Springfield, Illinois.

Historians have been fairly successful in identifying the cemeteries where the remains of Abraham Lincoln's direct paternal ancestry bearing the name Lincoln are buried, but the exact location of some of the graves are not known. Little or nothing has been done to discover the burial places of Lincoln's maternal ancestry with the exception of memorializing the grave of the President's mother in Indiana.

Those who have forebears interred in cemeteries where perpetual care of burial lots may be available for a nominal fee, derive much satisfaction from such an arrangement for keeping in order the resting places of those beloved. There are many sacred mounds however, that lack the oversight of caretakers, which should not be desecrated by the attitude of negligence. Among these are several which contain the remains of Abraham Lincoln's ancestors. A case in point are the graves of Bersheba Lincoln widow of pioneer Abraham Lincoln and her daughter Nancy Lincoln Brumfield the sister of Thomas Lincoln father of the President. Nearly thirty-five years ago the editor of this bulletin then living in Kentucky discovered the above graves were almost obscured by underbrush and hired one of the neighbors to cut away the growth so the lot might be cleared. On July 13, 1936 the site of the Old Mill Creek Baptist Church in Hardin County where the graves were located was deeded to the state and designated Park No. 17. It now falls within the Camp Knox reservation.

However, most of the other burial places of the Lincolns and Hankses have not fared even so well as this neglected community of the dead. The Long Run Church Cemetery in Jefferson County, Kentucky undoubtedly contains the remains of the grandfather of the President who was massacred by the Indians a short distance away. Some inscribed tablet should be erected there. Abraham owned the four hundred acre tract on which he has set apart one acre as God's acre and here he lies buried. His death at 40 years of age changed the economic status of the Lincoln family in Kentucky.

Another very much neglected private burial ground is on the farm where Abraham Lincoln's father Thomas was born in Rockingham County, near Harrodsburg, Virginia. Several of the President's relatives are buried in a lot enclosed with an iron fence, among them the great

grandfather of the President, John Lincoln. The farm has recently changed hands and unless something is done in the very near future to prevent this Lincoln family lot from being plowed over, its identity will be lost. Certainly there are enough broad-minded men in official capacity in Virginia who respect the memory of Lincoln that could encourage the state to care for it.

The father of John Lincoln, Mordecai 2nd, is buried in the cemetery associated with the Exeter Meeting House in Berks County, Penn. It is not likely the identical grave is known, but if it were permissible, the simple statement that the great great grandfather of President Lincoln lies buried in the cemetery would be helpful in preserving the information about the lineage of Lincoln.

Mordecai Lincoln the first, father of the Mordecai II, is buried in Situate, Mass. in the family burial lot. If perpetual care has not already been provided for the lot it could be arranged at a nominal cost. At least a marker should be erected noting the significance of the graves.

Possibly the citizens of Hingham, Mass. some time might erect a bronze marker near the communal burial mound to which place it is understool there was removed many of the remains of the citizens who were first buried in the Old Ship Meeting House burial grounds. In this mound Abraham Lincoln's first American progenitor, Samuel Lincoln, and his wife are buried.

Discovering and marking the burial places of the Hanks family presents a more difficult problem. With some research work directed among the members of the Sparrow family in Kentucky it seems reasonably sure that there might be discovered the burial place of Nancy Hank's mother, Lucy Shipley Hanks, maternal grandmother of the President. Her second husband, Henry Sparrow, was a well known pioneer of Mercer and Anderson counties and there is no reason why the cemetery where his grave and that of his wife, Abraham Lincoln's grandmother, cannot be located.

More than thirty years ago the editor of *Lincoln Lore* visited the old Hatt Creek Church in Bedford County, Virginia where he feels the maternal grandfather of Abraham Lincoln, believed to be James Hanks, may be buried. A visit to the same graveyard this past summer however, revealed that the huge stone once marking the Hanks burial lot has been removed and there does not now seem to be any visible signs of the location of the Hanks lot.

Another Hanks grave of importance in Nelson County, Kentucky is the burial place of Joseph Hanks, possibly the maternal great grandfather of Lincoln. The location of the farm where he died is well known and somewhere on the farm or in one of the nearby church yards his remains are undoubtedly deposited.

Another extremely important group of burial sites would be the graves of Robert Shipley, father of Lucy Shipley Hanks. They will probably be found in Mecklenburg County, North Carolina. And once the Shipley line of Abraham Lincoln's maternal ancestry is established, other burial places of the Shipleys in Maryland can be identified.