



# Lincoln Lore

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## THE PATTON HOUSE Elizabethtown, Kentucky

The house in Elizabethtown, Kentucky, where Thomas Lincoln married Sarah Bush Johnston (the widow of Daniel Johnston) was first called the Percefull house and later, the Patton house. It was razed in 1921. The wedding ceremony which took place on December 2, 1819 was performed by the Rev. George L. Rogers, a minister of the Methodist Episcopal Church.

The original structure, about twenty feet square, which acquired several additions during its life of more than a century, was built in 1798 by Aaron Rawlings. It was situated (Lot No. 25 of the town as originally incorporated) on a half acre lot on North Main Street, just north of the Public Square. The lot was sold by the town trustees to Aaron Rawlings and Samuel C. Patton. Most of the timber which was used in the construction of the original house was grown on the half acre lot.

The property in the year 1819 belonged to a prominent Elizabethtown lawyer by the name of Benjamin Chapeze. One cannot help but wonder why Tom Lincoln and Sally Bush would be invited into the parlor of the Chapeze home to be married. Perhaps the downtown location of

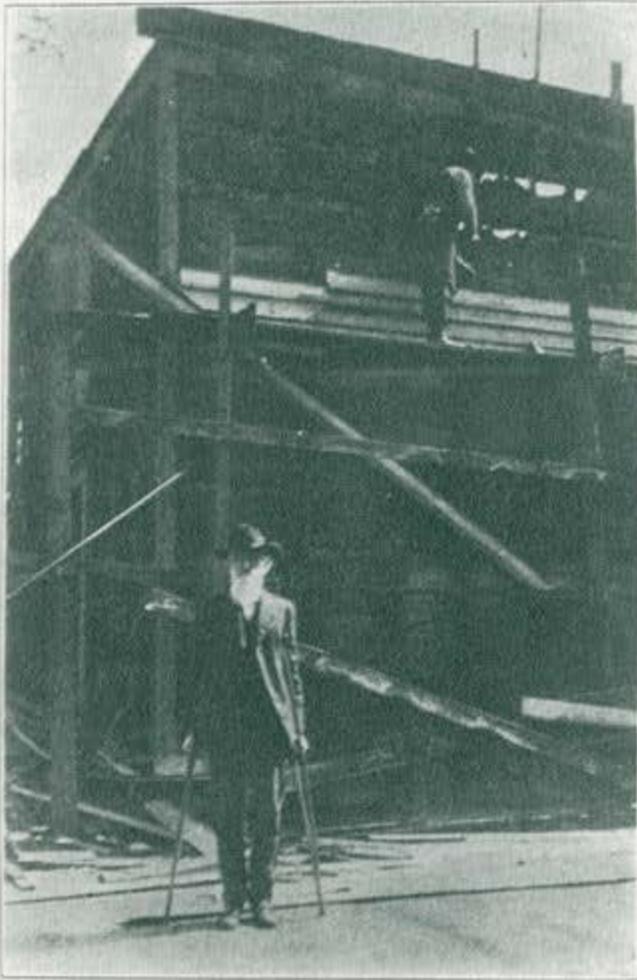
the Patton house was the reason. It was situated very close to the courthouse where a marriage bond would have to be made and the Chapeze property was even closer to the cabin home of Sarah whose house lot bounded the lawyer's property on the northeast. Then, too, the Widow Johnston was a member of the well known and respected Bush family and was deserving of this courtesy which must have been tendered by Mr. Chapeze. Also, Thomas Lincoln, who had once resided in Elizabethtown, was a respectable gentleman and worthy of the lawyer's hospitality.

While the Patton house would be remembered in later years as the place of President Abraham Lincoln's father's second marriage, it also has an intriguing history as many families of distinction occupied the residence. One of the most notable residents was Duff Green, who became a close advisor of President Andrew Jackson and was later elected to Congress. He married a sister of Ninian Edwards who in 1809 became the territorial governor of Illinois, and the elected governor of the state from 1826 to 1830. His son, Ninian Wirt, married Elizabeth P. Todd, a sister of Mrs. Abraham



*From the Collection of Mrs. Edmund I. Richerson, Elizabethtown, Kentucky*

This photograph of the Patton house (Circa 1900-1910) was made by J. H. Davis, an Elizabethtown, Kentucky, photographer. It was acquired from a family named Berry, which may be the name of the women in the horse drawn buggy.



Mr. Squire Bush in Front of Old Cabin

*From the Collection of Dr. Louis A. Warren*

Squire H. Bush, a nephew of Abraham Lincoln's stepmother, stands in front of the Patton house in Elizabethtown, Kentucky, as it was being razed in 1921. He served in the Confederate Army, Company B, Sixth Kentucky Regiment of the Orphan Brigade. He was appointed commissary sergeant November 2, 1861, and first sergeant on May 8, 1862. He fought at Shiloh, Vicksburg, Baton Rouge, Stone River, Jackson and Chickamauga. He was dangerously wounded at the latter place on September 20, 1863 and though disabled remained in service until the close of the war. After the Civil War, he became an attorney at law in Elizabethtown and was a boyhood acquaintance of the editor whose home was located only a stone's throw from the Patton house.

Lincoln. Other residents were well known educators, doctors, clergymen, tradesmen and lawyers.

Samuel Haycraft, Jr., in his book *A History of Elizabethtown, Kentucky And Its Surroundings, 1869*, stated that the "old house" has become classic' and he gave the following short history of the structure and its occupants:

"The lot containing one half an acre was originally purchased of the trustees on the 10th day of September, 1798, at the Statutory price of an oath, five shillings. Rawlings hastily put up a hewed log house, about twenty feet square, without a chimney, the timber of which, or most of it, being cut down upon the lot. That was done in 1798-99. In 1799 John Pirtle rented it and moved into it, and lived in it until 1802. After passing through several hands, on the 8th day of March, 1804, it fell into the hands of Samuel Patton, who married a daughter of Major Wells, of Revolutionary fame. Patton lived in it until 1806, during which time he put up a brick chimney, and on the back of the chimney inscribed these letters: "S. P. 1806," and that chimney to this day fixes

the locality of the alley running by it.

"In 1806 Patton sold it to John Davidson, from Virginia. He resided in it until 1809, and during that time weather-boarded the house and hid the "S. P. 1806"; so that it did not see the light of day for sixty-four years, and then only looked out for one day, and was shut up again. In 1809 John Davidson sold it to his brother Thomas, who only lived in it one year; and in 1810 he sold it to John Eccles, Esq., who was originally a shoe and boot maker, but was then a lawyer of some note.

"Eccles resided in it until the 19th day of February, 1814, when he sold it to Gen. Duff Green, who resided in it until 1817. He has since become known world-wide.

"In 1817 Gen. Green sold the premises to Elias Rector, of Missouri. Rector never lived in it, but sold the property to the late Hon. Benjamin Chapeze, a distinguished lawyer. He resided in the house until the 14th of April, 1828, when he sold it to Thomas J. Walker, a soldier, who resided in it until shortly before his death. The house has had numerous tenants in it of short periods. One of them was Montgomery Mason, a hatter. On the 17th day of June, 1835, the present occupant, Dr. Harvey Slaughter, purchased the property of Wathen's executors, and resided in it ever since. The Doctor at various periods, made several additions and alterations but it still had an antiquated appearance, by no means suited to the Doctor's taste, he being an eminent physician, a literary man, and fond of the poets; but still his house was on a par with those of most of his neighbors, and he philosophically submitted to its rural appearance, with the majestic locusts before the house, which embosomed the building and lent something of majesty and the grandeur of the feudal times of old England and sometimes pallisading or entrenching himself behind the poet who sang:

'I knew by the smoke that so gracefully curled  
Above the green elms, that a cottage was near;  
And I said, if there's peace to be found in the world,  
The heart that is humble, might hope for it here.'

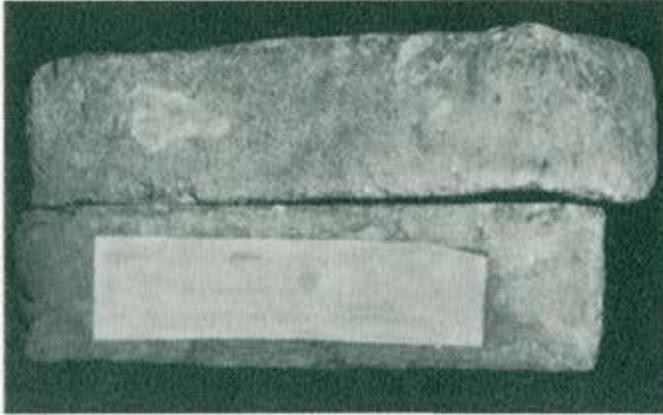
"So it stood for thirty-five years. But it so turned out, in the course of human events, that in August, 1869, a great portion of the town was burned down; and upon the ruins sprang up, like a Phoenix, new and tasty houses, and many houses, such as Dr. Warfield's, Dr. Short's, Hewitt's, Prof. Heagan's, Judge Cofer's, Capt. Bell's and Commissioner Gunter's, in addition to the fine business houses in the popular part of the town.

The Doctor looked out upon this, it became the last feather on the camel's back, and he determined to stand it no longer, and called in the aid of Architect Turner, and off came the old weather-boarding. And such a remodeling and demolishing of the old place, and such a metamorphosing has not been witnessed in the town for seventy-eight years. The tall windows, weighted sashes,



*From the Lincoln National Life Foundation*

This relic is on display in the Lincoln Library-Museum in a show case featuring the Kentucky years of Thomas Lincoln's life.



From the Lincoln National Life Foundation

Two chimney bricks marked S. P. (Samuel Patton) and 1806 are preserved at the Brown-Pusey Community House at Elizabethtown, Kentucky. They were taken from the Patton house when it was razed in 1921.

magnificent doors, splendid Venetian blinds, chaste and heavy cornices — the whole matter rearranged, renovated and renewed — walls painted a dazzling white, window blinds a heavy drab, sash cherry color, with French glass; nothing gaudy about it, but presents a sober, chaste and classic appearance.

"The Doctor still retains and protects the venerable trees before his domicile with all the sacred care that the ancient Druids did their grand old oaks in their mountain fastnesses."

Dr. Harvey Slaughter practiced medicine in Elizabethtown for forty-five years and retired because of ill health. He died August 15, 1878 while residing in the Patton house.

Situated next to the cleared lot (1921), separated only by an alley, stood another old building, erected in 1802 by Benjamin Helm. In this building was the office of the last immediate survivor of the original Bush family named Squire H. Bush, attorney at law, and in his 84th year. It was in the basement of this building that the Helm-Haycraft collection of Kentucky manuscripts was discovered (See *Lincoln Lore* 1581, May, 1970).

On December 1, 1921 S. H. Bush, a nephew of Lincoln's step-mother and former Confederate soldier, made the following statement before a notary public:

#### Affidavit of S. H. Bush

The affiant, Mr. S. H. BUSH, after being duly sworn upon his oath, states: "My name is SQUIRE H. BUSH. I was born in Hardin County September 30, 1837, and, with the exception of eight years residence at Hodgenville, I have lived in Hardin County all my life. My father's name was Christopher Bush, Jr., who was one of a family of nine children, and an own brother of Sarah Bush Johnston, who later married Thomas Lincoln, father of President Lincoln."

The affiant further states: "The marriage bond which was issued to Thomas Lincoln and Sarah Bush Johnston was signed by Thomas Lincoln and my father. My 'Aunt Sally' never returned to Kentucky after her marriage to Thomas Lincoln, but my father visited her in their home in Illinois. I have often heard my father tell the story how Thomas Lincoln won the hand of my 'Aunt Sally.' When he came to Elizabethtown from Indiana to see her, he told her that they had known each other for a long time and had both lost their partners, and asked her to marry him. She told him that she could not just then, and when asked the reason why replied, that she owed a few small debts which she must pay. Thomas Lincoln asked her how much they were, and after learning, went out and paid off each one of them and then they were married."

Affiant further states: "I am now the only surviving member of a family of twelve children. After serving in the Confederate Army I began the practice of law. My office is in the building next to the one in which Thomas

Lincoln married Sarah Bush Johnston, which was built in 1806, and has recently been torn down."

S. H. Bush  
Nephew

Subscribed and sworn to by S. H. Bush this December 1, 1921.

JOHN G. GARDNER,  
Notary Public, Hardin County, Ky.

My commission expires January 14, 1922.

Mr. Bush was in error when he stated "My 'Aunt Sally' never returned to Kentucky after her marriage to Thomas Lincoln . . ." She did return to Elizabethtown with her husband and on September 8, 1829 they sold her town lot and cabin to Thomas J. Wathen (Deed Book C. P. 19) for \$123.00, clearing \$98.00 on an investment made a dozen years before. Another error of no consequence is the statement by Bush that the Patton House was built in 1806, when in reality that was the year a chimney was added.

Today in Elizabethtown, in the County Court Clerk's office may be seen the original Thomas Lincoln Marriage Bond which was signed by Christopher Bush, Junior, on behalf of his sister, their father being dead. This document, now that the Patton' house has been razed, is the most obvious and tangible evidence of the marriage that took place on December 2, 1819, which would provide the youthful Abraham Lincoln with a benevolent step-mother.

Squire Bush mentioned in his affidavit that his father, Christopher Bush (Junior) signed the Lincoln marriage bond. He could have revealed another interesting incident of history connecting the Bush family with the future in-laws of Abraham Lincoln. Christopher Bush, Senior, the grandfather of Squire Bush, has a full page biographical sketch included in *Who Was Who In Hardin County*, published by the Hardin County Historical Society in 1946. Here it is related that Christopher, Senior, was appointed a constable by the Hardin County Court in 1797 only to have him arrest the distinguished Ninian Edwards (on what charge we do not know) who in turn sued Bush in trespass for assault and battery and false imprisonment. The case finally simmered down after an exhibition of proper indignation by Edwards. Anyhow, the State paid the constable for making the arrest.

Fortunately, one photograph of the Patton House, before demolition began, is known to exist. While the house was being razed, Dr. Louis A. Warren who resided in Elizabethtown during the years 1921 and 1922 purchased the roof of the ancient residence with its many original wooden pegs and blacksmith made nails. These were made up into attractive souvenirs and were presented to the Elizabethtown Woman's Club to be offered for sale for the promotion of their projects. The souvenirs, each attractively boxed, were accompanied by a card with the following inscription:

Under this roof at Elizabethtown, Ky., Dec. 2,  
1819, Abraham Lincoln's father, Thomas Lin-  
coln, married Mrs. Sally Bush Johnston

Signed S. H. Bush  
in ink Nephew

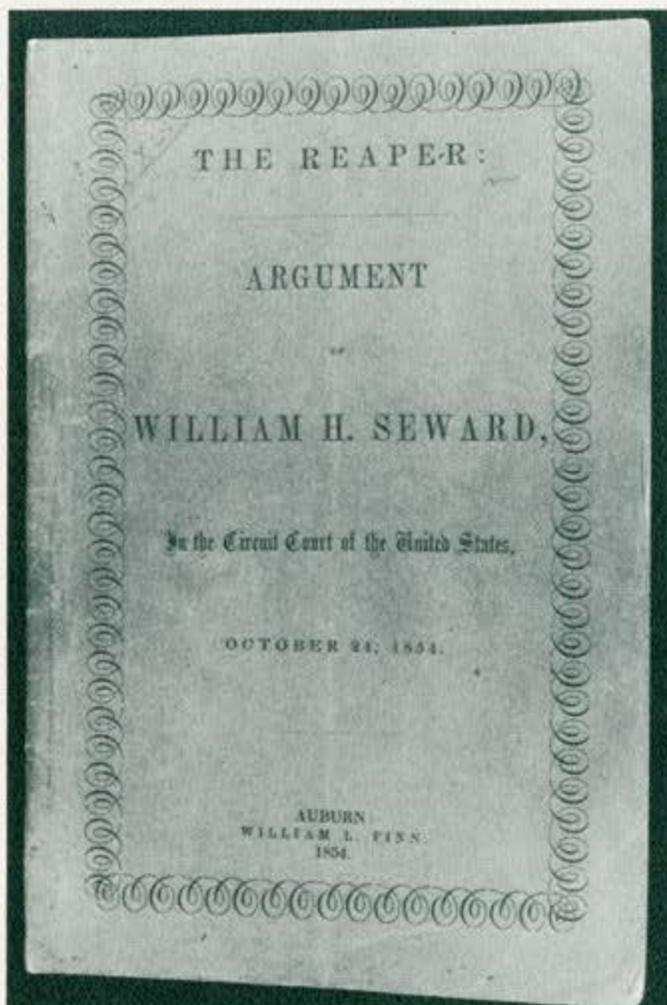
In turn the Elizabethtown Woman's Club published an attractive pamphlet in 1922 with the cover title: Sarah Bush Lincoln/The Beloved Foster Mother/Of/ Abraham Lincoln/A Memorial/Elizabethtown Woman's Club/Elizabethtown, Kentucky. (M2611) This pamphlet contains a "Foreword" by the Historical Committee of the Woman's Club, a facsimile of the Thomas Lincoln marriage bond, a photographic cut of "Mr. Squire Bush in Front of Old Cabin," an article by Dr. Louis Austin Warren titled "Last Lincoln Landmark" and the "Affidavit of S. H. Bush."

It is regrettable that progress according to American standards demands the demolition of ancient historic buildings. The garage building that presently stands on the site of the Patton house is vacant, or has been vacant for several years. A bronze tablet has been placed on the garage building with the following inscription:

In a House  
Which Stood Upon This Lot  
Were married on December 2, 1819  
Thomas Lincoln  
The Father  
and

Sarah Bush Johnston  
The Foster-mother  
of  
Abraham Lincoln  
Elizabethtown Woman's Club  
Feb. 12, 1927

## Lincoln and Seward Patent Lawyers



From the Lincoln National Life Foundation

A 29 page pamphlet giving William H. Seward's argument before a jury in defense of McCormick's patent rights incorporated in his reaping machine.

On June 21, 1834 Cyrus H. McCormick, then of Rockbridge County, Virginia, was granted a patent on the first reaper. Subsequently, he made many improvements on the original machine, which were patented, and with the competition of many other manufacturers he became involved in numerous law suits.

Most Lincoln students are familiar with the well known McCormick Reaper Case of 1855 when the inventor sued John H. Manny and associates of Rockford, Illinois. While Lincoln was employed on the side of the defendant, received a retainer and prepared a brief, he was not allowed to participate in the case when it was tried in Cincinnati in September, 1855. (See *Lincoln Lore* No. 1516 "The Manny Reaper — Some Background Information on the Case of McCormick vs Manny, 1855, June, 1964).

The final outcome of the suit was that there was no infringement of the plaintiff's patent and court costs were to be paid by the complainant.

Less well known is the case of Cyrus H. McCormick vs William H. Seymour and Dayton S. Morgan for infringement of patents of the original inventor's reaping machine. This case was tried in October, 1854 before

the Circuit Court of the United States for the Northern District of New York. Counsel for the plaintiff was William H. Seward, Charles M. Keller and Samuel Blatchford. Counsel for the defendants was Henry R. Selden, John K. Porter, and Nicholas Hill, Jr.

In the McCormick vs Manny case the main point of contention was the "divider" or "shoe" which preceded the sickle, and parted the standing grain. McCormick also claimed infringement of his patent in the setting of the reel post back of the cutter to improve the action of the reel. Furthermore, McCormick claimed as a patent infringement the position of the raker arrangement in combination with the reel to enable the rake to take the grain from the platform and deliver it on the ground at the side of the machine.

In the McCormick vs Seymour and Morgan case, the main contention was the "divider" patented in 1845 and 1847. Seward ably pointed out that the divider consists of several parts:

First — A beam on the left side of the machine, and reaching out into the wheat.

Second — On the inside of that beam is an iron attached thereto, which enters the grain in the swath to be cut, under the fallen stalks, and, rising as the machine advances, bears those stalks upward and inward, so that they become disentangled and freed, and are brought within the sweep of the reel, which then presses them between the guard-fingers and against the teeth of the vibrating sickle.

Third — On the outside of that same beam, and at the end of it, is a bow extending backwards, bent outwards like the human arm with its elbow, and rising to a shoulder as it returns to the beam opposite the reel standard.

Fourth — The reel, which revolves in front of the sickle, and over the inside Divider, and receives the stalks as they are raised, and delivers them within the guard-fingers.

The trial resulted in a verdict for the plaintiff for \$7,750. One cannot help but wonder if President Lincoln and Secretary of State Seward, during a leisure moment, ever discussed the mechanical merits of the different reapers they had studied so diligently and were prepared to so ably defend.

## Samuel J. Watson Postmaster of Muncie

Lincoln manuscripts with an Indiana connection are eagerly sought for the archives of the Lincoln Library-Museum. Such a document was recently acquired from Mr. and Mrs. Ralph S. Thompson of the Bismarck, North Dakota.

The document is an appointment of Samuel J. Watson as Postmaster of Muncie, Indiana. Signed by Abraham Lincoln and William H. Seward, the appointment dated January 12, 1865 is for a period of four years.

Mrs. Thompson secured the document about three years ago from her uncle. Sam Watson, the Postmaster, was the grandfather of the wife of the above-mentioned uncle.

