"WHEN LINCOLN WENT FLATBOATING FROM ROCKPORT"

100TH ANNIVERSARY OF LINCOLN'S FIRST FLATBOAT
TRIP TO NEW ORLEANS WITH ALLEN GENTRY

A BIENNIAL HISTORICAL PAGEANT OF THE LINCOLN
FAMILY IN SPENCER COUNTY, INDIANA,
1816-1830.

PRESENTED JULY 4TH, 1928,
AT ROCKYSIDE PARK, ROCKPORT, INDIANA,
BY THE SPENCER COUNTY HISTORICAL SOCIETY,
UNDER AUSPICES OF THE
INDIANA LINCOLN MEMORIAL ASSOCIATION

WRITTEN AND DIRECTED BY BESS V. EHRMANN.
PAGEANT COMMITTEE.

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FOREWORD.

In the year 1816 Indiana became the nineteenth state of our United States of America.

In that same year Thomas Lincoln with his wife, Nancy Hanks Lincoln, and his two children, Sarah, aged nine years, and Abraham, aged seven years, left their Kentucky home and came to the new state of Indiana. Here they lived in Spencer County until 1830 when they moved to Illinois. The mother, Nancy Hanks Lincoln, and the daughter, Sarah, both died and were buried here.

The formative years of Abraham’s life were spent in Spencer County. Here he worked, studied, played and grew to manhood, going to Illinois almost, if not entirely, equipped for the great work that lay before him. Kentucky gave him birth, Illinois gave him his political career, but Indiana molded the man.

As an act of patriotism the citizens of Rockport and Spencer County portray this pageant every second year as a living memorial to America’s greatest citizen, Abraham Lincoln.

Most all the parts are taken by the descendants of those pioneer men and women who lived here and were friends of the Lincolns.

The pageant ground is the spot in Rockport, on the beautiful Ohio, where Abraham Lincoln, at the age of nineteen years, had the first great adventure of his life, going with Allen Gentry on Gentry’s flatboat to New Orleans to market the Gentry produce. On this trip he saw slaves whipped and sold and later
vowed if he ever had a chance to hit this evil, he would hit it hard.

The writer of the pageant has tried to be historically accurate. Only a few changes have been made for dramatic effectiveness.
INTRODUCTION.

Heralds announce: "Hear ye! Hear ye! The pageant is about to begin."

To the sound of music, girls representing water nymphs led by the Spirit of Ohio advance upon the stage. The Spirit of the Ohio portrays the movement of the water in a beautiful dance. Then comes the Spirit of the Forest followed by the wood nymphs. At close of their dance, Columbia enters with Liberty and Justice, followed by her eighteen states.

Young Indiana enters followed by young women bearing the gifts that Indiana Territory offers to Columbia to join the states, flowers, fruits, corn, wheat, tobacco, minerals. Indiana with her maidens kneels before Columbia who rises, approaches Indiana and takes her hand and accepts her as a state. Then together they advance to front of stage, surrounded by the other states, Liberty, Justice and gift maidens, nymphs and all sing "America", after which all leave stage.
PROLOGUE.

Herald announces: The prologue will now be spoken as the ferryboat, with the Lincoln family on board, crosses the Ohio from Kentucky to Indiana.

While the prologue is being read, an old fashioned ferry-boat can be seen crossing the river. It is timed to arrive at the close of the prologue.

Miss Tarbell: my prologue for this pageant is not finished and I could not read it now. 
Reso Ehrenroth
EPISODE I.

In the year 1816
Herald announces: A The Lincoln family arrive on Indiana soil after crossing the Ohio River near Maxville.

Thomas Lincoln and wife, Nancy Hanke Lincoln, and two children, Abraham and Nancy, arrive in Indiana after their long trip from their Kentucky home. While Thomas asks questions of the ferrymen, Nancy with her children kneels and offers prayer for their safe arrival in the new state.

EPISODE II.

Herald announces: Two years later, in 1818, Nancy Hanks Lincoln dies and is buried on a nearby hillside. This scene shows the return of the family and friends from the funeral.

In 1818 Nancy Hanks Lincoln died from a disease known as milk sickness. A coffin was made from lumber cut out of logs by a whip saw and put together with wooden pegs. She was buried on a hillside near the little cabin home. Her body in its rude coffin was pulled on a sled to its last resting place. There was no ceremony and no preacher, just a few friends and the sorrowing family.

Months later a minister from Kentucky held a religious service for the departed wife and mother.
EPISODE III.

Herald announces: One year later Thomas Lincoln, after a visit to the old home in Kentucky, returns to Indiana with his second wife and her three children. Abraham, Sarah and Dennis Hanks welcome the new mother.

Thomas Lincoln, after the death of his wife, found life an uphill struggle and finally, about a year later, he returned to the old home in Kentucky and while there met a former sweetheart, Sarah Bush Johnston, who had been married and widowed. Thomas proposed marriage and was accepted. On December 2nd, 1819, they were married and soon after left for the Indiana home. Ralph Orume, who had married Mary Lincoln, sister of Thomas, was pressed into service with his four horse team and the new Mrs. Lincoln with her three children, Elizabeth, Matilda and John, her husband, Thomas, and her furniture and household belongings left Kentucky for Indiana. On their arrival in Indiana, they are greeted by Abraham and Sarah Lincoln and Dennis Hanks.

EPISODE IV.

Herald announces: Lincoln goes to the Hammond tannery in Grandview.

Abraham Lincoln, now a tall strong boy, goes to the Hammond tannery to have a hide tanned for his father. Here he shows his great strength as a wrestler.
EPISODE V.

Herald announces: The pioneer school where Abe Lincoln was taught manners as well as the three R's.

The boy Lincoln attended several schools in Spencer County. One was taught by Andrew Crawford who taught manners as well as "book larnin". He would teach the children how to accept introductions and give them and to understand the etiquette of the day.

EPISODE VI.

Herald announces: Lincoln walks to Rockport to borrow a book from John Pitcher.

At Rockport lived the noted lawyer, John Pitcher, who was also postmaster from 1827 to 1832. Lincoln walks from his home near Gentryville to Rockport, seventeen miles, to borrow a book from Pitcher. He finds Pitcher just leaving to try a case at Boonville but he loans Abe the book. Later Lincoln, in a group of friends, tries to imitate Pitcher as an orator and deliver an address on temperance.

EPISODE VII.

Herald announces: The marriage of Ann Roby and Allen Gentry.

Allen Gentry, son of James Gentry who employed Abraham Lincoln as a farm hand, came to Rockport to live in 1827. On March 19th, 1828, Allen Gentry and Ann Roby were married in Rockport, just a few weeks before leaving on that memorable trip taking Lincoln along with him as an oarsman. The wedding is followed by an old fashioned frolic.
EPISODE VIII.

Herald announces: Loading of the Gentry flatboat for its southern trip.

Allen Gentry was the owner of the flatboat on which Abraham Lincoln was engaged as oarsman. His father and brothers brought produce from Gentryville and the boat was loaded for its southern trip in the spring of 1828.

With the goodbyes of family and friends, Gentry and Lincoln leave on their hazardous journey.

EPISODE IX.

Herald announces: The Lincolns leave Indiana for Illinois in 1830.

In 1830 Thomas Lincoln, his wife, Sarah Bush Lincoln, and Abraham, now a young man of twenty-one, and the families of Dennis Hanks and Levi Hall, who had married Matilda and Sarah Johnson, numbering thirteen in all, immigrated to Illinois.

Sarah, Abraham's sister, who had married Aaron Grigsby, had died in 1828, so in Indiana he was leaving behind the burial spot of mother and sister.

The Lincoln family is accompanied part way on its journey by the Gentrys with whom they had stayed all night. Farewells are said, the Gentrys turn back and the Lincolns continue on their way.
EPISODE I.

Herald announces: As a Clay elector, Lincoln returns to Rockport in 1844.

In 1844, when Lincoln was making speeches for Henry Clay, candidate for president, he visited Rockport and Gentryville and mingled again with friends of his boyhood.

In Rockport he is introduced by Colonel William Jones, his old friend, who tells the people that Lincoln will now address them on the political issues of the day. Lincoln says "By what authority do you say this?" Colonel Jones strikes his own chest with his hand and says "By this authority". Lincoln smiles and then greets the people and invites them to come to the court house where he will make a speech.

FINALE.

Columbia with Liberty and Justice and all the states advance onto the stage, followed by all the actors. Columbia raises her flag and all sing "The Star Spangled Banner". Then all pass off of stage singing as they go, Columbia and the states being the last to leave.