owned by the University of Chicago. (From photograph in the Filson Club collection.)

6) Lincoln's Spring on Abraham Lincoln, Sr's Kentucky farm. The Lincoln cabin set on the knoll to the left, Hughes Station was probably on a knoll to the right of the Spring.

7) Old headstones in the yard of the Long Run Baptist Meeting House, the yard in which it is believed Abraham Lincoln, Sr., was buried.

8) Group of Lincoln Students on the site of Abraham Lincoln, Sr's home, Hughes Station is supposed to have lain about four to five hundred feet away on the knoll to the left.

9) Unpublished Lincoln letter.

" "Springfield, Ill. April 6, 1860
"Rich[d] V.B.Lincoln, Esq
"My dear Sir
Owing to absence from home, yours of March 19th was not received till yesterday - You are a little mistaken - My grand-father did not go from Berks Co. Pa; but, as I learn, his ancesters did, sometime before his borth - He was born in Rockingham Co. Va. went from there to Kentucky, and there was killed by Indians about 1784 - That the family originally came from Berks, I learned a dozen years ago, by letter, from one of them, then residing at Sparta, Rockingham Co. Va. His name was David Lincoln - I remember, long ago, seeing Austin Lincoln and Davis Lincoln, said to be sons of Hannaniah, or Ananiah Lincoln, who was said to have been a cousin of my grand-father. I have no doubt you and I are distantly related. I should think from what you say, that you and my father were second cousins -
"I shall be glad to hear from you at any time -
"Yours very truly
A. Lincoln"

The above letter, owned by Mr. John W. Lincoln of Mifflinburg, Pa., was written to his father, Richard V.B. Lincoln. It shows both President Lincoln's interest, and something of his knowledge of the Lincoln family. It is the only letter of which I know in which Hannaniah Lincoln is mentioned.

Digital Image, 2011, The Ida M. Tarbell Collection, 1890-1944, Allegheny College Pelletier Library.

Digital Image, 2011, The Ida M. Tarbell Collection, 1890-1944, Allegheny College Pelletier Library.

IN THE FOOTSTEPS OF THE LINCOLNS

CHAPTER V

Abraham Lincoln

Grandfather of President Lincoln

~~1744-(?)-------1788-(?)~~

It is unusual to start the story of a man's life with his marriage license, but, as things now stand in the genealogy of Abraham Lincoln's family, the first certain date that we have concerning his grandfather is that on which he took out a license to be married. The year was 1770, the place what is now known as Rockingham County, Va.

It is tantalizing enough that this record should not show whom he was to marry. The most the date does for us is to prove that at this time Abraham Lincoln, the son of John Lincoln of Linville Creek, Rockingham County, Va. was old enough to be married - 21, let us say, that he paid a fee to the county clerk for the privilege and that the ceremony was conducted by a clergyman of the Established Church, none other being legal.

With such a foundation, we can say with certainty that his birthplace was either Lancaster or Berks County, Pennsylvania, where his father John had lived from the time he left New Jersey until 1768 when he settled in the Shenandoah. It meant much to be born in that part of the world, around the

middle of the 18th century, for it was a land teeming with people of different nations - English, Scotch, Irish, Germans, Dutch. A highway for north and south and east and west travel - a home in which industries and arts were taking root, and in which all sorts of ideas, political and religious, sound and freakish, were seething. Schools were rapidly building up, and it is certain that young Abraham Lincoln had a better chance of schooling than his father had had.

He was old enough when John Lincoln yielded to the migratory spirit, pulled up stakes in Pennsylvania and moved southward into the Shenandoah Valley, to take a full part in that serious - and at the moment - dangerous task. The Indians, while allied with the French in their war on the English, and after the Peace had for several years made life risky for the scattered settlers and travelers in Pennsylvania. The air was filled with rumors, true and false. Refugees continually sought safety in the larger towns like Reading and Lancaster and defense parties went out to help those who stayed at home get in their crops.

These who followed the great route south in 1768 kept a watchful eye not to be surprised by a marauding band. Young Abraham undoubtedly kept his gun in hand throughout that trip south.

When the Shenandoah Valley was reached and the family settled in the new home, there was plenty of opportunity for work for him. He no doubt knew something of all the trades. Probably, like his father and great-great-grandfather, he could handle a loom; like his grandfather and great-grandfather he was something of a blacksmith.

Digital Image, 2011, The Ida M. Tarbell Collection, 1890-1944, Allegheny College Pelletier Library.

The settler must be a little of everything, and undoubtedly young Abraham Lincoln was a man who could turn his hand to any one of a multitude of things that arise in a family situated as was theirs.

The marriage license that he took out in 1770 argues that he immediately improved the social opportunities of the Valley, for his bride was Bathesheba Herring, the daughter of one of the first families of Rockingham County.

There is a possibility, though I have come to the conclusion that it is not a probability, that Bethsheba was his second wife. Until some fourteen years ago, her name was unknown to Lincoln genealogists; the grandmother of President Lincoln, the wife of his grandfather Abraham, was supposed to have been a North Carolina girl, Mary Shipley, whom he had found on a visit to the Yadkin region, where his friends and relatives, the Boones, lived. J. Henry Lea, the most important to date of the Lincoln genealogists, believed that Mary Shipley was a first wife, though it was he who proved that whether this was true or not, he certainly did mary a Bathsheba, believed to be a Herring.

According to the members of the Herring family still living in the Shenandoah Valley, as reported by one of them to Mr. Lea, in 1908; "Abraham Lincoln who married Bathsheba Herring was a poor and rather plain man. Her aristocratic father looked with scorn on the alliance and gave his daughter the choice of giving up her lover or being disinherited. The high spirited young woman did not hesitate. She married the man she loved and went with him to the savage wilds

Digital Image, 2011, The Ida M. Tarbell Collection, 1890-1944, Allegheny College Pelletier Library.

of Kentucky in 1782. Her husband was afterwards killed by an Indian, and one of her sons, a lad of 12 years, killed the Indian, avenging his father's death. Bathsheba Herring was a woman of fine intelligence and strong character. She was greatly loved and respected by all who knew her."

"Poor and plain" though Abraham Lincoln may have been, he seems to have been able promptly to establish himself in the Valley. Three years after the license was taken out, his father, John Lincoln, deeded to him 210 acres of the 600 he bought when he first came into the country. Five shillings and "one peppercorn on Lady Day next if the same shall be lawfully demanded" was the price he paid. To this land, six years later, he added 52 acres adjoining, paying for the same the sum of £500.

But he was doing more than growing in property in the Valley. The dangers from the Indians had made it necessary to organize a strong militia in a remote valley like that of the Shenandoah, soon after its settlement. When the Lincolns arrived they found the Augusta County mil tia a well organized body. Abraham Lincoln soon became a member of this militia, and as early as 1776 was a captain. At least a part of his company in the summer of that year took part in an expedition against the Cherokee Indians. Whether Captain Abraham Lincoln himself commanded his troops we do not know, though we do know that in the years 1776, '77 and '78 he served as a judge advocate of the court.

Digital Image, 2011, The Ida M. Tarbell Collection, 1890-1944, Allegheny College Pelletier Library.

The court was composed of the colonel, lieutenant colonel, major and a captain of the county militia. Charles Kemper, the present leading authority on the Augusta County records, tells me that they represented the best element of citizenship of the county. Among the captains were many whose names are still well known. That Abraham Lincoln was chosen from this group to serve on the court shows that he must have been, if "poor and plain" a man of as good or better education than most of the others, and a man, too, that had won the respect of his fellows. No document that we have concerning him is a better indication of the standing of the President's grandfather than this from the court militia records of Augusta County. Whether he saw service in the field in the Revolution, I do not know, but he was doing his part, just as many of his relations in Massachusetts and in Pennsylvania were doing. A first cousin of his, Hananiah Lincoln by name, living back in Berks County, near Abraham's early home, had been in the Reading company of Rifles which reported from the "camp at Cambridge, Mass." in 1775. Hananiah became a lieutenant in the 12th Pennsylvania regiment, but, disgusted because he was not promoted after the battle of Brandywine, he resigned. He was back again the next year, however, and promoted to a captaincy. Up in Massachusetts, Amos Lincoln, ~~a member of the Boston Tea Party,~~ was, like Abraham, a great-great-grandson of Samuel Lincoln, the first of the family to come to the United had been a member of the Boston Tea Party and afterwards a captain of artillery.

Digital Image, 2011, The Ida M. Tarbell Collection, 1890-1944, Allegheny College Pelletier Library.

That there was opportunity for Abraham Lincoln in Rockingham County, the history of the Lincolns who staied behind proves. With 260 acres of rich land, a creitable record of local service, he might have gone far. His brother Jacob who remained in the Valley certainly did so. But Abraham Lincoln was like his father John, his grandfather Mordecai. He had the imagination, the independent and restless spirit and the daring of the pioneer. He lived, too, in one of the most irresistable migratory currents that ever ran across this country, something that had more of the dash and the pull of California in '49 than anything that we have ever seen. It was Kentucky that pulled Abraham Lincoln.

Reading the records today of the years of suffering, disappointment and murder that the pioneers of that state went through, it is hard to understand how any man with a young family and a fair chance would risk everything in a venture which had cost so many lives, ever so long a term of years. "dark and bloody ground", indeed, it had been, and nobody knew better than Abraham Lincoln what it had cost, for the most indefatigable explorer of that territory was his friend and relative, Daniel Boone.

Abraham Lincoln knew how again and again Boone had gone into the Kentucky region and returned without the furs he had taken and on which he was depending to support his family, and, moreover, without the companions that he had induced to

Digital Image, 2011, The Ida M. Tarbell Collection, 1890-1944, Allegheny College Pelletier Library.

follow him. But always, whatever his misfortunes, he came with wonderful tales of the promise of this Kentucky land. Boone and others like him had finally worn the trail through the Cumberland Gap, northwestward into Kentucky into something like a road - the Wilderness Road. They had carried on their dangerous work until they actually finally had won over the Southern Indians who claimed the central Kentucky country and considered it their fairest hunting grounds, to give them an enormous tract between the Kentucky and the Cumberland rivers. — nearly 20,000,000 acres! —

It was a vicious contract they made with the Indians - a cabin full of paltry English goods for thousands upon thousands of acres of the best of Kentucky's lands. To handle this great tract they formed a company known as the Transylvania, and hastened to establish settlements there, in the meantime advertising their undertaking far and wide.

The Transylvania Company had no sanction from any Colonial government. Indeed North Carolina and Virginia called them a band of land pirates, pointing out that they were violating the king's express orders to let the Western lands alone. It did not disturb the promoters, nor did it deter settlers. It was a great chance. You could go to Transylvania and with a compass and chain lay off as much or as little land as you chose. All you needed to do was to pay the land office fees that were required by the Company. That the adventurers who cam to obtain lands paid no attention to one another's surveys,

Digital Image, 2011, The Ida M. Tarbell Collection, 1890-1944, Allegheny College Pelletier Library.

that they lapped and over-lapped seems at the moment to have gone unnoticed. Transylvania was one of the first of those magnificent land schemes that even today fascinate American speculators and are the easiest of baits for American investors.

This undertaking was short lived. The Revolution had led the British to attempt a back-fire against the Colonies. They officered the Indian tribes and set them on brutal raids, into Pennsylvania, the Shenandoah Valley and particularly into Kentucky. Again and again the settlements which had been formed in Kentucky were raided. No man, woman or child was safe; yet, in spite of the dangers, the settlers increased. Finally, in 1780, Virginia took the matter in hand, establishing her own land offices. She began about this year also to improve the Wilderness Road, the only half-safe entrance at that time into the country, the Ohio river being practically in the hands of the Indians and the British.

It looks as if it may have been the action of Virginia that suddenly decided Abraham Lincoln to try his fortunes there, for although late in 1779 he had added to his Virginia farm, he sold out his entire holdings of 250 acres early in 1780 and began ~~to take up land in Kentucky.~~ in May of that year entered 400 acres of land in Jefferson County, about sixteen miles east of the present city of Louisville on a fork of what is known as Floyds Creek. A few days later, June 7, he entered 800 acres, just below the Green river.

It is probable that before he went back to the Shenandoah home he began

Digital Image, 2011, The Ida M. Tarbell Collection, 1890-1944, Allegheny College Pelletier Library.

Valley he began to clear one or the other of these tracts in preparation for a home for his family.

The next year, 1781, Abraham Lincoln was back in Virginia settling up affairs. Bethsheba, his wife, had been ill, so that the deed for the farm he had sold had not before he went to Kentucky been properly recorded. Indeed it was necessary for the Rockingham court to send "gentlemen" to examine Bethsheba as to whether she was willing to relinquish her right of dower to the land. As the records show they went and came back to declare "the 24th day of September 1781" that "she freely & voluntarily relinquished the same without the Force threats or Compulsion of her said husband."

It was in 1782, if the best tradition is to be believed, that Abraham Lincoln set out for Kentucky with his wife and little family of probably four children - Mordecai, aged 10; Josiah about 6; Mary about 4; and Thomas 2.

Of course they did not start over the Wilderness Road alone. No family ventured on that dangerous trip without many companions. There is a tradition among the Herrings of the Shenandoah Valley that one of Bethsheba's brothers, with a large family, "went West" in 1782. It is not improbable then that they were with her. It is fairly certain, too, that one of the party was Captain Hananiah Lincoln, a cousin of Abraham. In 1776 when he resigned from the army after the battle of Brandywine, he visited Daniel Boone in

Digital Image, 2011, The Ida M. Tarbell Collection, 1890-1944, Allegheny College Pelletier Library.

North Carolina, and I am inclined to think that he was the Lincoln for whom Boone entered land in that year. At all events, his name begins to appear in Kentucky records soon after 1782.

It was not difficult for the Lincoln party to make its way to the beginning of the Wilderness Road, a point known as the Block House, in the north-eastern corner of Tennessee. Here the custom was for the travelers to wait until enough guns were gathered - a gun in their parlance being an armed man - to make a fair guard. They waited, too, until word came back from the settlements along the way that the Indians were comparatively quiet. They knew well enough - these hardy people - that whever the reports, there would never be an hour that there would not be danger of attack. Without this fear, the journey was hard enough, particularly with women and children to protect. There were numberless rivers to be crossed - easy enough if the water was low, but difficult indeed if there was a storm. There were mountains to be climbed, long marshes to be traversed.

But, endless as the difficulties were, the extraordinary beauty and interest of the country - its great forests - the thrill of adventure - the promise of future wealth and comfort - the realization that they, who were taking their lives in their hands, were doing something for the future, something big and important - all of this carried them through whatever they may have had to encounter from day to day. Then, too, to cope with danger and hardship was the habit of their lives. They were schooled to it.

Digital Image, 2011, The Ida M. Tarbell Collection, 1890-1944, Allegheny College Pelletier Library.

If they knew its terrors and sorrows, they knew also its joys and its hopes.

What happened to the Lincoln party in its journey from the Block House of something over 200 miles to the central Kentucky stations, we do not know. We do not even know what time ofyear they made their journey, nor when they arrived. Were the Lincolns at Bryan's Station in August of 1782 when a great number of Indians from the North suddenly surrounded the little group? And was Bethsheba one of that courageous body of women, who, knowing that they had not water in the stockade sufficient to stand a siege, boldly went out with pails on their heads, laughing and talking as if there were not an Indian within miles, filled their pails and came back before the watching eyes of the savages in the forest. Or had they reached Harrisburg? And were Abraham and Hananiah Lincoln in the company of Capt. John Todd who, when the rumors of what had happened at Bryan's Station reached him, quickly collected 150 or more "guns" and attacked the besieging Indians, with terrible results to both sides? These things we do not know; but we can be certain that all the facts of these horrors and many others of the terrible year of 1782 were familiar enough to the Lincolns, and that little Mordecai, Josiah and even Thomas then began to learn something of what Indian warfare meant. We can be sure, too, that Bethsheba Lincoln, living in the midst of constant alarms and threats must many a time have gathered a child to her bosom, ready to fly; many a time have loaded her husband's rifle as he shot through loop holes at prowling Indians.

Digital Image, 2011, The Ida M. Tarbell Collection, 1890-1944, Allegheny College Pelletier Library.

Possibly even herself aimed the rifle.

At least four years, and possibly six, after he led his family over the Wilderness Road, Abraham Lincoln fought to protect wife and children and labored to make them a home. We have only the meagrest details of what he did. We do know that he continued buying land on treasury warrants, principally along the Green river. The Rev. Lewis A. Warren of Kentucky, who has followed the Lincolns through the state with more intelligent patience than any other recent investigator, says that he has found evidence that Abraham Lincoln took up over 2000 acres on the Green river. All this doubtless meant frequent trips away from his family. We do know that in the fall of 1784 the tract of 800 acres he bought on his first trip into Kentucky in 1780 was surveyed for him, and that in May of 1785 the 400 acres near Louisville were surveyed, he acting as marker and his cousin Hananiah and his son Josiah as chain carriers. The probability is that in the summer of that year he took his family to a stockade called Hughes Station, known to have been near his tract. Few people in Kentucky at that time lived outside of the stockades and those that did were usually within easy reach of some kind of garrison.

Desperate things had happened in the neighborhood of Abraham Lincoln's land, but he, like so many of the settlers, was impatient of danger. It was hard to keep the restless pioneer inside the stockade whatever the possible danger without. He could not resist the desire, as well as the necessity, to open

Digital Image, 2011, The Ida M. Tarbell Collection, 1890-1944, Allegheny College Pelletier Library.

up his tract, and thus it was that one day, while working on his clearing, an Indian dashed from the woods and killed him.

His three little boys, Mordecai, now about 14, John 12 and Thomas 8, were with him at the time. The two older escaped to the stockade. Mordecai seized a gun and shot the Indian who was carrying off their little brother. The exact spot of this tragedy has never been satisfactorily settled. In the last two years, however, there has been an investigation carried on by members of the Filson Club of Louisville, to fix by documentary evidence the exact boundaries of Abraham Lincoln's tract and its relation to Hughes Station. The tract has been laid off and its history since it was entered by Abraham Lincoln worked out. Personally, I am inclined to believe that these careful investigators will soon be able to prove that Hughes Station was close to the line of the Lincoln tract and close to the cabin which Abraham Lincoln was building. The site of a cabin long known in the neighborhood as the "Lincoln Cabin" and of a spring known as "Lincoln's Spring" have been decided. There are unmistakable remains of the chimney on the cabin site, and if one will dig a bit, as I did last fall, in the ground about he will turn up bits of yellow crockery with the well known lines of yellow, brown and blue. There is little doubt that here Abraham Lincoln was building his home.

But even a more interesting deduction from the investigations of the Filson Club is that not over 400 feet away

Digital Image, 2011, The Ida M. Tarbell Collection, 1890-1944, Allegheny College Pelletier Library.

and just beyond the Lincoln spring, are the unmistakable ruins, if we may use the word of chink and chimney stones, of a structure fully 100 feet square, with an open court within. It seems reasonable to believe that here was the Hughes Station in which Abraham Lincoln and his family were living at the time of his death.

But what became of Abraham's body? Perhaps a quarter of a mile away from the site of the Lincoln cabin and the possible site of the stockade, at the end of a high tongue of land, lying between two tributaries of Long Run Creek and overlooking the valley of that stream and on to the hills beyond, stands a famous old church, surrounded by an ancient graveyard, the Long Run Baptist meeting house, dating back to 1797. The land of the church and the burial ground occupies a corner of Abraham Lincoln's 400 acres.

Was he the first, or one of the first to lie in the ancient ground? So far as I know, it was not until two or three years ago that the question of where he was buried was ever raised. Close to the stockade - they would not have dared to take his body further - men have said, and they let it go at that. But two or three years ago, the Filson Club was questioned. They set out ~~A young lawyer of~~ Louisville, ~~Mr Thomas Fisher, who had been born and reared not far from the Long Run Baptist church, remembered that he had heard old timers in that section say that Lincoln's grandfather was buried in the old graveyard.~~ and an inclination started with the result that a local tradition was ~~taken up~~ uncalled. The old people of the locality ~~all~~ told of hearing their grandparents say of this or that early settler that he was "keeping company with

Digital Image, 2011. The Ida M. Tarbell Collection, 1890-1944, Allegheny College Pelletier Library.

old man Linkern in the Long Run burying ground." A tradition so wide spread and persistent could not be disregarded, and the more one studies the old yard and its head stones and its relation to the Lincoln home, the more probable it seems that the tradition is correct and that in one of the long sunken graves, marked, if at all, by rude pieces of uncut native red sand stone Abraham Lincoln's body was laid away.

"Why not open these old unmarked graves"? was my instant question, as I went about the yard. But a wise old trapper and explorer of the region scoffed at the query. "They wrapped him up in a deer skin or a blanket - he had no coffin; his remains are long ago turned to dust. You would find nothing." That may be true. And yet one cannot but wonder if it might not be possible that Bathsheba or young Mordecai or some of their friends might not have buried with Abraham Lincoln some mark of identification - a stone or a bit of metal on which his name was scratched? It was the practice of the times to put rude markers everywhere. I can scarcely believe that there would not have been put with the body of this man something to identify it. At least the possibility is sufficient to justify a thorough search. But, whether identified or not, the probability is that in this ancient graveyard of the Long Run Baptist church in Jefferson County, Ky., is the resting place of the grandfather of Abraham Lincoln, 16th President of the United States.

Digital Image, 2011, The Ida M. Tarbell Collection, 1890-1944, Allegheny College Pelletier Library.

(The next article in this series will tell the story of Bethsheba Lincoln and her family in the years immediately following her husband's death.)

Digital Image, 2011, The Ida M. Tarbell Collection, 1890-1944, Allegheny College Pelletier Library.