

Return to Ida M. Tarbell
as soon as possible.

Mr. Lincoln has made two pictures
one of Abe saving men in trees
and "Abe's Log"

Many have no doubt read or heard something about his building a flat-boat and going down the Sangamon river with it. The writer has heard the story not only from his own lips, but more recently and in detail from the lips of the "only man left to tell the tale," John E. Roll, who was two years the junior of Mr. Lincoln and lived in Sangamo, a town on the Sangamon river, about seven miles from Springfield, and at that time quite a business center. Mr. Roll says: "In the spring of 1831 a tall, guant young man came to Sangamo and boarded at the hotel of Jacob Carman. Among the boarders there was also a man by the name of Storrs, who was said to be related to the Rev. Dr. Storrs of Boston. The tall young man was Abraham Lincoln. He was dressed in a suit of blue homespun "jeans" consisting of a "roundabout" jacket, waistcoat and breeches which came to about four inches of his feet. The latter were encased in raw-hide boots into the top of which, most of the time, his pantaloons were stuffed. He wore a soft felt hat which had at one time been black, but now, as its owner dryly remarked, "It had been sunburned until it was a combine of colors." Young Lincoln had come from Decatur, Ill., to build a flat-boat for Messrs. Offut & Green, of New Salem. There was a steam saw mill at Sangamo then, the only one on the river and plenty of timber in the vicinity and these facts in connection with the fact that Sangamo was then the largest town on the river--larger even than Springfield--had all to do with his selecting this place to build his flat-boat.

(Parenthetically it may be appropriately said that all

trace of Old Sangamo town is lost, while Springfield has grown to be a beautiful and prosperous city of 35.000 inhabitants. But to proceed with Mr. Roll's story):

While the flat-boat was being made it was a common thing, Mr. Roll says, for the men of the village to gather in the morning, at noon and in the evening and take their seats on a sleek, barkless log, which " the boys " had fixed up for that purpose in the lane alongside of Sheperd's grist mill. This was their favorite resort, and it was here that Lincoln first acquired a reputation as a joker and story-teller. Mr Roll says with the twinkle of the eye that the curiosity of the mothers, sisters and daughters was often aroused to a painful pitch by the signs of merriment and shouts of laughter which came from the group around the log seat, which grew slippery from the constant sliding off of the young men in their fits of laughter at some of Lincoln's quaint and humorous stories. The log remained in that place until it rotted and was referred to as " Abe's log." After the waters had gone down a little Lincoln started down the river to New Salem where he was to load his flat-boat. The whole village turned out to "see" him off." Mr. Roll, Walter Carman, John Leamon and others of his young friends went with him about two miles down the river where they left him. They afterward learned that he had a very profitable voyage.