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## A NEW LINCOLN PILGRIMAGE

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Three hundred years ago, come June 20th, there landed at New Salem in the Colony of Massachusetts Bay a lad of sixteen destined to found the family from which was to come in its seventh generation, the man we unite in calling the "First American." The lad's name was Samuel Lincoln.

Never until this year has there been an attempt to add the arrival of Samuel Lincoln to the roll of events in our history which we believe important enough for annual commemoration. This year, however, a group of devoted Lincoln students are inaugurating such a commemoration and they are doing it in a novel and exciting fashion. Gathering in Boston on June 20th they propose to follow step by step the migrations of the men of the Lincoln line from Samuel to Abraham. It is a long trek running from Hingham, Massachusetts where Samuel settled, through New Jersey, Pennsylvania, the Shenandoah Valley, into Kentucky by the Wilderness Road, from Kentucky to Indiana and then through to Illinois.

The last stages of the pilgrimage are well known. Yearly increasing thousands of people visit what has become known as the Lincoln Country, those parts of Kentucky, of

Southwestern Indiana and of Illinois where the last three of the seven generations lived out their lives. There is not a spot along the route where there are not markers for every known important and perhaps occasionally an <sup>un</sup>important event. Printed matter, guides, friendly inhabitants, combine to make the pilgrimage over this part of the way easy and fruitful.

What is proposed now is to add to this well-known national pilgrimage a hundred and fifty years in time and something like a thousand miles in distance. How practical is the idea? What will they be able to see as they follow the movings of Samuel Lincoln, his sons and grandsons and of their sons and grandsons? Will there be enough to reconstruct the kind of men they were?

Several years ago, curious to know more of the quality of the men and women out of whom Lincoln had sprung, I undertook the pilgrimage that they are to make, and I know from what I saw then that if they read the plain meanings of what there is for them to see it will go a long way towards breaking down the old tradition of the meanness of Abraham Lincoln's forbearers. It will show him to have come from a sturdy, independent, daring line of men and women, the kind that bravely and hopefully undertook the settlement of this country and the difficult problem of devoting it to freedom and her ways.

To begin with Samuel Lincoln. What will they find of him in Hingham? First, they will find that this first Lincoln is not without honor in his home town since a marker has been set showing the exact spot of land on which he first set foot. They do doubt will be surprised to find that it is some two blocks from the water edge, which the Hinghamites explain by their improvement of the water front as well as by the natural recession of the shore. They will be able to look on the site of the house Samuel built, but will find only a few timbers of the original. They will see one of the most interesting churches in New England - the "Old Ship Church" - grown out of the one which Samuel Lincoln and his family helped build, back there in the 17th Century, contributing good money according to the list of contributors still existing. They should not fail to look at the pewter communion set from which Samuel received the bread and wine.

If they want to know more about the intimate details of the life of the family, just how they kept house three hundred years ago, the kind of kitchen utensils they used, the way they heated and lighted and cooked, the type of furniture, they will find it all in the capital historical museum of <sup>Hingham</sup> New England. Indeed, they will not find until they get to New Salem, Illinois as complete and authentic a showing of home life of any Lincoln.

Two items I hope they will not miss are manuscripts of two ancient diaries - one kept by the minister of the parish, Peter Hobart, is to be found in the library of the Boston Historical Society and will make a good start for their sight-seeing. From this journal they will find how big a part the Lincoln's played in <sup>the</sup> his parish.

The other diary was kept by a man who ran Hingham's general store - Daniel Cushing by name. He was a lively observer, a frank reporter of life as it went on in the community. From his gossip, as well as from a staid entry in Peter Hobart's journal we know that "Old Sam Lincoln died of small pox" on May 25, 1690. I am not at all sure that Daniel Cushing's diary will be on view for our pilgrims now. It is faithfully guarded by a descendant and it took much diplomacy and negotiation for me to get a sight of it and the right to make facsimile copies of some of the pages.

From Hingham the pilgrims move down to Cohasset where Samuel's son Mordecai, great, great, great grandfather of Abraham Lincoln settled. Mordecai had learned the blacksmith trade, as an ironmaster was called in those days, learned it over in Hull when he married his master's daughter and brought into the Lincoln family the name we so honor - Abraham.

Settling in Cohasset by a lively brook bordering his land he developed a water power, ran a grist mill, a saw mill and iron works. The first house he built still stands, a quaint hip roof, but prospering he built a second house, a fine colonial. One can be thankful it has passed into reverent hands that have done a beautiful piece of restoration.

I hope the pilgrims will not go on their way without visiting the old Scituate graveyard where Mordeke (sic) Lincoln is buried. His alate gravestone is elaborate for the day - the angel head engraved on it being flanked by wings showing a decided Assyrian influence!

There will not be much chance in the ten days the pilgrims have given themselves for their trek to look at records but if they have time for it I should say they should run down to Plymouth and go over the copy of the will which Mordecai left behind. Not only does it give a picture of a prosperous man, buying land, building houses and dams and

mills but it shows him a kind, thoughtful and considerate person, providing even for grandsons who might possibly be brought up to "learning or liberal education." Each of these who so turned out were to be paid ten pounds annually during the four years he remained at College.

The pilgrims will make a long jump for the next in the line - Mordecai II for Mordecai II and his brother Abraham left New England about 1712 for a point further down the Atlantic Coast, where many New England men were going hoping to better their conditions and to escape Puritan regulation - New Jersey - a much advertised colony. I do not know whether they made their journey overland or by boat, though shipping was so active in those days along the coast that I have always been inclined to believe they made their way from Hingham to Perth Amboy. Certain it is they ended up in Monmouth County where Mordecai promptly bettered himself by marrying into what was the grandest family of the countryside - the Salters. This marriage connected him not only with the Salters but with the prominent New York family into which Richard Salter, his father-in-law had married - the Bownes, and through the Bownes with the family of that splendid old saint and patriarch Obadiah Holmes of Connecticut.

We know from deeds that he bought land not far from Buckhorn Manor, Richard Salter's estate. The little map here printed shows where that land lies, perhaps

fifteen miles east of Trenton and not more than four from Allentown. Tradition says that <sup>Mordecai</sup> / put up a forge there. I once spent hours and hours hunting for that forge but did not find it. Possibly our 1937 pilgrims will have better luck.

As a matter of fact it will take a better antiquarian than I am to locate in Monmouth County <sup>any</sup> physical remains of Mordecai Lincoln's activities there. Local authorities are not particularly interested. Monmouth County is occupied historically with Betsy Ross and the Battle of Monmouth, ~~at least~~ The editors, antiquarians and the oldest settlers I hunted down in my effort to place Mordecai Lincoln in New Jersey at once switched to that great historic event and that stirring person, ~~XX~~ One can hardly blame them. But if there was a forge, as tradition persists in saying, it should not be impossible that it be located.

So far as I know the only proof of the passing of Mordecai Lincoln this way, outside of wills and law suits and deeds and marriage certificates, is a little slate tombstone. Its inscription reads:-

Deborah  
 Linean  
 Aged 3 Y 4 M  
 May 15 1720

Touching enough is the picture it evokes. There were no church burying grounds in that day, only family plots. Friendly neighbors sometimes opened their private <sup>as yet</sup> grounds to those who had/no place to lay their dead. This a

neighbor did when death for the first time touched Mordecai Lincoln's little family. The plot still exists on a height called Covell's Hill.

Our pilgrims should lay a wreath on Deborah's grave. ~~The little hill is not hard to reach from Allentown as the little map shows.~~ I spent days myself trying to locate it and feel some satisfaction in passing on what I learned by awkward and criss-cross investigations. On the little map here printed (A) marks Deborah's grave.

Mordecai II did not like his father and grandfather "stay put." There was a sound economic reason for leaving New Jersey. He was an ironmaster and he was badly situated for more than a local market. The center of iron manufacturing in the colonies was rapidly settling <sup>Shiffrin</sup> in and near Philadelphia. <sup>2 miles</sup> The excellent transportation, as well as accessibility to iron ore had decided the matter. Mordecai and his brother followed trade, sold out in New Jersey and soon were partners in one of the big iron works of Chester County. Just where these works were I hope our pilgrims will find. I never have. The location seems to have been lost by the advance of what we call progress, a process which is responsible for the destruction of many interesting and beautiful things.

But Mordecai was not satisfied and along about 1725 sold his holdings. Taking his money and adding to it that which <sup>a little later</sup> had ~~recently~~ come to him from the settlement of

his father's estate he went up the Schuylkill River and bought a tract of some three hundred acres and here built a house. The date mark reads:- "M L 1733."

Our pilgrims ought to have a delightful time visiting this house. I do not know how they will get there but I should advise driving out from Redding, that being the way I went. The drive is over good country roads with frequent glimpses of mountain and river. And there is a surprise in the house, itself. It is simple, quaint - more Dutch than American. There are apple trees by the door that they tell you Mordecai, himself, planted, and there are the slave quarters still standing, for Mordecai like some of his New England forerunners was a slave holder in a small way.

Not far away, a short walk our pilgrims should take, still stands the home of the Lincoln's most prized neighbor - the Boones. This intimacy is responsible for the rumor which even reached Abraham Lincoln years later, that his ancestors were Quakers. Not so, but the Boones were and one of Mordecai's daughters married a Boone to the scandal of her church though apparently not to her family.

The Boones were responsible for the next move of the Lincoln line, that into the Shenandoah Valley. It was being promoted in much the same way as New Jersey had been. Mordecai Lincoln's neighbor George Boone had been down there, bought land. His reports were apparently too much for John Lincoln, Mordecai's oldest son, to resist in spite of the fact that he was a considerable land owner in both Berks and

### Lancaster County.

Mordecai Lincoln had left John well established in New Jersey when he moved into Pennsylvania, but John who was a weaver by trade, like his great grandfather Samuel, was not satisfied, he sold out and followed his father. When the boom in the Shanandoah Valley came he sold out and followed that. Curiously enough he left no trace behind, so far as I have been able to discover - no house - no loom - no piece of woven cloth. So our pilgrims having no remains of John's life in Pennsylvania to see, better hurry on to the land he bought in 1768 - settled - left twenty years later to his sons and daughter. They will not see another piece of Lincoln land so lovely on all their trip as this six hundred acres of Virginia John's on Linville Creek, a few miles from the old and interesting town of Harrisonburg.

As to what happened there to John and his family they can find out by searching the records and from the stories of those who have searched them. What they will be interested in is the fine house that John's son Jacob, great-uncle of Abraham Lincoln, built and left to his ancestors. After the Cohasset house it is the finest on the Lincoln route and I am not sure but it is a more substantial one for it is of brick with stone trimmings, with a long two story ell running out from the rear with kitchen, pantries and woodshed. Over these is the room so important to a householder of that day - a workshop. In this workshop the Lincolns made their furniture. Jacob made some pieces remarkable for size and

weight, of mahogany logs which tradition says he brought overland from New York City by ox team - a huge wardrobe, a huge sideboard, a huge four poster. Where a modern house would put them it is hard to say. When I made my visit they were owned by a Miss Kate Pennypacker whose grandfather was a Lincoln. If Miss Kate is still living and will receive them I can promise the pilgrims as spirited an interview as they will have on their way.

They will not be able to linger long on Linville Creek but must take the road John's son Abraham took in 1780 after selling out all the substantial holdings that he had inherited from his father and to which he had steadily added.

Abraham was a friend of Daniel Boone. Boone was promoting Kentucky and Abraham followed him over the old Wilderness Road to the vicinity of Louisville. There he took up land. He went to its clearing, gun in hand, but one day an arrow reached him at his work. His great, great, grandfather Samuel had carried a gun to church in his day. The Indian question had always been with the Lincolns, but no Indian had captured or killed a Lincoln of their line until now.

Abraham Lincoln's death left his family of boys to make their way in an unsettled land. What his son Thomas and Thomas' son Abraham did - what they built and left - our pilgrims will have no difficulty in seeing. Every step of the way has its tablet.

It is the long route of the first four of Lincoln's ancestors - Samuel, Mordecai I, Mordecai II and John that is poorly chartered. Here are few markers to guide and with few exceptions poor sources of information. That is, this is a pioneer pilgrimage, one which should give to Americans new and stirring proofs of the human effort, patience, high devotion to freedom of thought and action which has gone into the making of this country.