CHAPTER TEN.

When Nancy Hanks Lincoln and her children waved their last farewell to Thomas as he paddled down the Rolling Fork on his way to Indiana, it was the last they saw of him until weeks later he suddenly walked in. He brought back a fine story of adventure, thrilling to young Abraham; he told them how as he made his way from the mouth of the Salt River into the Ohio, his boat had overturned and tool chest and whiskey barrels, together with all his produce had gone to the bottom. He told them what he had done to rescue tools and whiskey and how that done, he had made his way down the river to a point near a little settlement called Troy where he had stored his goods with an interprising settler called Posey. From there he had struck into the unbroken country and selected about sixteen miles northwest of the river, the site of their future home.

I have no doubt that Tom Lincoln painted glowingly the land he had chosen. He saw it with a pioneer's eyes, cleared, its fields under cultivation, a home, a shop, stock in comfortable barns; he saw it better than it is today.

The preparations for the removal to the new home were quickly made. There was probably a sale of whatever possessions they had that would be unwise to attempt to move. There would be a little of Tom's homemade furniture, a few head of stock and the sale would be a species of farewell to the neighborhood at which Nancy Hanks would provide a dinner assisted by all her near-by friends, Mrs. Caleb Hazel, the wife of Abraham's school teacher, Austin Gollaher's mother and possibly a few women from near the old home at Hodgenville; for such was the way of the Pioneer farmer, as indeed it is the way of the farmer today when he "moves out."

I can scarcely believe that Nancy and Thomas Lincoln would have moved out of the State without a farewell visit to Washington County where both of them had spent so much time in their youth and where they had been married. Thomas's brother, Mordecai still lived on his farm near Springfield; he had become a man of some importance in the County; there is a tradition that he had even been sent to the Kentucky Legislature, though there is no document to prove it; possibly he was a candidate but defeated. At all events he was held high by his relatives, his nephew Abraham claiming that he "had all the brains in the family". Then there were all of Nancy's relatives, the Berrys, Thompsons and Mitchells. Surely, they would not have left Kentucky without seeing them all.

The visits and the sale over then would come the packing. To know how to pack for migration was as much the business of a pioneer as to know how to build a log cabin or to plant a field. The Lincolns had lived too long on a highway over which a continual stream of migration was flowing not to have picked up much of the technique of this migration.

No doubt their calvacade was simple, a covered wagon, stout and roomy, horses, not less than three, a cow or two, a few hens "to start with" and of course a dog.

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It was simple but not mean as those who for partisan or other reasons would have us believe, Thomas Lincoln might be a poor man but he had not been shiftless, he was not without some means when he left Kentucky. He was a good carpenter, a trader, a farmer, that is he had the trade knowledge and experience with which to make a start in a new land. The start of course was hard for the boy. It was his first experience in breaking off friendships, saying goodbye for good and all to a playmate who he had come to look upon in the way of children as a part of his life. Before he was eight years old, little Abraham Lincoln had the painful lesson in the transcient nature of human nature. When you left friends stayed behind, that was what moving meant. It is one of the hard things that youth has to learn.

The route the Lincolns followed from Knob Creek to the Ohio is I find, in dispute in the neighborhood. There are those like Mr. John Bariy, the Editor of the Rolling Fork Echo, who think they went by boat as Thomas Lincoln had gone on his reconnoirtering trip. Tradition is aginst him however and so is probability. It would have been more difficult and more uncertain than going overland by wagon.

The point the Lincolns wanted to reach on the Indiana side was the mouth of what was known as Anderson Creek and near Troy where Tom had left his possessions when he first landed. In a straight line, Troy was about seventy-five miles from the Knob Creek home. To get there, they must follow roads and trials to the Kentucky side of the Ferry which crossed the Ohio from Anderson's Creek. This northwest route would lead them through Hodgenville, give them a chance to see their friends there, and then to Elizabethtown, where of course they would halt for visits. Here lived Joseph Hanks with his young family, a man dear to both Nancy and Thomas, always their friend and the friend of their boy. The travelers no doubt "put up" with him and from his home said goodbye to those they knew in Elizabethtown. Even young Abraham had his friends there for he had often gone with his father on his business trips and sat on a nail keg in the grocery and eaten the lumps of sugar the clerk gave him. Years later this clerk, Mr. J. B. Helm grew to be a man of importance in Missouri and both he and Mr. Lincoln meeting there in a political campaign recalled the visits and the sugar. Mr. Lincoln remembered something else, that this friendly clerk was the first man he knew that wore "store clothes" all the week.

Leaving Elizabethtown, the Lincolns went no doubt by their old farm on the Mill Creek farm that Tom Lincoln had sold two years before, near here too lived his two sisters, both married with families. What this amounts to is, that the first period of their journey was made over roads that they knew and their stops were at the homes of relatives and friends, but after that they came into country new to them and all the more exciting because new. It was a beautiful rolling country with many streams to be forded, heavily timbered, sparsely settled. The fall was coming on, the weather at that season in Kentucky is dry and warm, a perfect time for following the road. Every day would be full of exciting incidents for the children, the cap of them being the making of camp for the night. Whatever the days troubles - difficult fords, straying animals, broken wheels, all is forgotten when the camp fire blazes at the close of day and the bacon

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commences to sizzle! It took the Lincolns no less than a week to reach the Ohio after leaving Elizabethtown. The river at this point makes a magnificent bend, the water moving as silently and smoothly as if it were the surface of a lake. What a wonder this first big water that he had ever seen must have been to the young traveler. The crossing over landed them at the foot of Anderson Creek, a point which in the future was to play a big part in Abraham's youthful life. Anderson's creek flows down to the Ohio between high banks. There is a long wide flat at its mouth which had been found by the river boats to be an excellent landing place. Here they often tied up for the night and here the settlers in the young town of Troy nearby had already established a trade in pork and other produce. Here to, they had a big wood yard from which the river steamers took on fuel. It was a bustling place when the boats were in and it was well for the Lincolns to make acquaintance with it for it was to become their future market place.

Although Thomas Lincoln remained no longer at Anderson's creek than was necessary to make preparations for the trip through the forest to his nes land, there are people living there nowadays who for commercial purposes insist on telling you that he remained a year and show you the house he lived in to prove it! Local historians who care more for the facts than they do for any possible profit that the community or any individuals in it may get from a Lincoln tradition are irate and emphatic in denying this tale. They scoff at the attempt of one property owner who has advertised for sale in the last year or so, the Anderson Creek home of the Lincolns. This is one of those exploitations of a Lincoln connection for which the tourists in the Lincoln country must always be on guard. Many a motor car has stopped in the last two years before this house, kodaks have snapped and plates have been marked, "The home of Thomas Lincoln on the Ohio River."

We can be sure there was no delay in getting on, they had sixteen miles to travel and the sooner they were at the end of the journey, the more comfortable would be their winter. I think one may rightfully evny them that journey and will if he has a drop of Gypsy blood in his veins for it was made through a forest, which in its autumnal colors was a thing of rarest beauty. The country through which they travele d was not a jungle as it has often been described. Southwestern Indiana had long been the home of Indian tribes and there were cleared spaces left by them. The forests had been kept largely clear of underbrush by the occasional prairie fires which swept across country. That is, it was a fairly open land, there were trails too and the beginning of roads. Thomas Lincoln was by no means the first settler in this part of Indiana. In examining the records at Rockport, I found many entries made within a few miles of where he settled in the years of 1811, that is when the travelers made their way Northwest, they passed within reach of more than one settler that had proceed them and no doubt took pains to call and to pick up whatever information they could about conditions. The October glory was still on the trees when the little party reached the hilltop on the land which Thomas had chosen for them. They could not have known then how really a beautiful site it was. Today, with the land cleared as it is so that one can look over the great Buckthorn Valley,

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see the line at Pigeon Creek, locate the homes of the neighbors with whom Abraham was to grow up, identify point after point connected with his life in this point, you get a very genuine respect for Thomas Lincoln's ability in selecting a promising site in what was then an unbroken forest. Probably there was nothing to be seen about them but trees, but trees of great size, much of it probably primeval timber, there were elms, chinchanpin oaks, walnut, maple, birches, sassafras, trees which now were gold and red and yellow, and when the sun sifted through them became things of pure color, almost without substance.

Along the stream there were cleared placed covered with crimson sumac and masses of golden rod, wild rose, blackberry vines an almost impentrable tangle. Not far away too, there was what was called a "deer lick" a salty marsh to which wild animals came, a precious neighbor to the settler who must depend upon his gun for his supply of meat.

There was no time now however for exploring the country, a shelter must be ready for winter and Thomas Lincoln and his son fell at once to cutting and clearing and preparing for what was known as a half-face camp. I am pretty sure that they were not unaided in this work, settlers were already within easy reach of them, building like Tom Lincoln. Some of them were already in need of a carpenter's skill, that is from the first, Tom had work at his trade, and much of this work was done in exchange for help in clearing and building.

Many mournful pictures have been drawn of this first shelter of the Lincolns in Indiana, but the half-face camp was like the sod house of the prairie, the shack of the mining town and quite as good as either. The best description of its making which I have ever seen is the one given by one of Mr. Lincoln's friends on the Circuit, Mr. Henry C. Whitney. It is not improbable that his description was based on talks which he had with Mr. Lincoln for the two men frequently discussed pioneer life and its makeshifts. According to Mr. Whitney the first step in establishing the camp was to select a site on a Southern slope where two straight trees stood about fourteen feet apart East and West. These trees were trimmed and topped to serve as corner posts for the open front of the structure, logs were then cut about fourteen feet in length sufficient for three sides, they were fastened with wooden pins to the posts that had been prepared and laid log cabin fashion until built to the proper height. A roof of small poles interwoven with branches and matted with brush and dry grass was built above these three sides. The openings were then filled with mud, the result was a warm and tight structure open to the South. In front of this open face, a fire place was built of stone, it was big and solid for the whole comfort of the family through the winter depended on this fire place. Quantities of fuel must be kept to keep it going, big back logs of hard wood, smaller stuff, branches and boughs for blazes, chips to kindle quickly. After cold weather set in this fire was not allowed to go out. It was not only warm and a cooking place for cooking that the fire place gave, it was protection from wild animals. There were many of them, indeed they are one of the two things that seems to have made an impression deep enough on Abraham Lincoln at this time for him to have remembered them when years later he came to record his memories of

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this first year in Indiana.

His second strong impression was of the ~~axes~~ ax; this useful instrument! so he wrote in 1860, was put into his hands on their arrival in Indiana and as he intimates was rarely dropped until he was twenty-three.

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It was hard work, no doubt, but the boy was young, strong and large for his age according to his own account and work done for so fine an obvious purpose as this work has its compensations. He was helping build a home and took pride in his part of the undertaking. As a matter of fact, I think the boy Lincoln was just discovering that he might be something of importance, something useful. ~~He had~~ The boy's pride particularly strong in his case in being allowed to work with men.

It was not only building the camp that occupied him and his father. There was the stern necessity of seeing that there was ~~to be~~ food in the larder before the winter, also that there was a bit of clearing ready for corn in the spring. The game that was on all sides, big and little, was joyfully followed by Tom Lincoln, always an eager hunter. Deer was killed and hung to dry. There were wild turkeys, duck quail and there was an occasional bear. The game meant something more than meat to the Lincolns. It meant skins and skins meant not only cloths and covering, it meant things to trade with. There were few settlers of this time that did not make the trapping and killing of fur bearing animals a part of their winter's business. Young Abraham learned to skin and cure and the walls of the half faced camp were probably decorated continuously with a variety of valuable skins.

The hardships of this first winter have been long dwelt on but the compensations have been generally passed by. The woodman's life has its joys. The forest in its winter garb is always a beautiful thing. Every morning brings its enjoyments. The weather itself is a constant interest, shaping as it does the day's work.

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The devices for meeting the problems of food and shelter kept the wits awake and the fingers busy. The Lincolns' first winter would have been filled with the work necessary to keep themselves alive at all that the spring would be upon them before they knew it.

The spring in southwestern Indiana is a wonderful thing. It comes early, usually with great floods of water, with flocks of birds, big and little; with a riot of flowers followed by many small fruits and a thickened luxury of foliage. Life became a busy thing for the boy then. There was probably a calf or two to look after and there was planting and in the intervals there was work on the new cabin for which part at least of the logs had been cut in the winter. It was a big cabin for the time, eighteen feet square with a loft and a huge fireplace and chimney, at the place near the camp and on the top of the knoll. The location is marked to-day by a marble slabe and clean as the country has been, one can realize how finely it was selected. To make this cabin habitable became Nancy Lincoln's business. She did her planting without. The settler's wife invariably brought with her some root of a favorite flower, a bulb, a bit of vine to plant by her cabin door, something to remind her of the home she had left. Nancy Lincoln planted her vines and in the clearing nearby fruit trees were soon set out. There are straggling remnants of them still to be seen on the slope. Between house building, clearing and planting, the boy would be busy enough. Then too, they were beginning to make some connections in the neighborhood. Pigeon Creek Valley was filling up. A church had been organized though there was no building yet and only irregular services held in private houses and there was talk of a school though not yet a school.

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I cannot believe but that this first year was one of real interest as well as of hard work for the boy.

They were joined in the fall of 1817 by three relatives from Kentucky, the Sparrows and with them a cousin of Nancy, Dennis Hanks by name, a boy about ten years older than Abraham. The coming of these old acquaintances made life more interesting and gave more strong hands to push the develppment of their farm. In every way then the second winter was easier for the Lincolns than the first. The second summer undoubtedly gave them still further hope for by this time Tom Lincoln had his hands full of carpentry work. Things would have gone from now on increasingly well, I am convinced, if in the fall of 1818, just about two years after they came into the country, there had not come to Thomas Lincoln that greatest of blows to the pioneer, the death of his wife.

The country in which the Lincolns had settled was a rolling wooded one as I have said. The wide valleys threaded as they were by big and little creeks were usually a tangle of matted vegetation, ~~the accumulation of hundreds of years.~~ True, an occasional forest fire swept through and kept down the vegetation but usually the rank growth simply rotted during the winter. The frequent heavy rainfalls filled the streams to overflowing, soaking the accumulated leaf mold, making it a rank malarious mass. All through the fall too, heavy fogs lay over the land so that the poison that rose from the valleys was not carried off by the air and sun. As was inevitable, this had its effect upon the settlers. What was called Chills and Fever, Ague, was common. When the conditions were particularly bad an intensified form of malaria broke out. This disease was commonly known in southwestern Indiana as Milk-sick. There was an outbreak of this disease in the fall of 1818. It attacked more than one of Nancy Lincoln's neighbors

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and she, as is the custum in such settlements, went from one house to another helping as she could to take care of the suffers. Among the sick was one of her best friends, a Mrs. Brooner, whose children lived to tell of her kindness to their mother. Mrs. Brooner felt sure she was going to die but Nancy Lincoln, so the fable witnesses tell, would reprove her. "Tut, Tut," she said, "you will soon be well and strong again. Woman, keep up your courage." Hy-Hym Homely well-meant comfort but unavailing. Mrs. Brooner died but before her death Nancy Lincoln herself was stricken with the epidemic. Death followed quickly, so quickly that to the unprepared family it must have been like an angry hand of God laid upon them.

This sudden death of his mother came to young Abraham Lincoln as an irreparable tragedy. The boy of nine or ten depends upon his mother in a very special and intimate way. He could not think of life without her. It has never occurred to him that life can go on without her and then to have her taken suddenly almost without warning from the home makes an unforgotten impression. It certainly did on Abraham Lincoln. I am inclined to think that the deep melancholy of his nature was then first stirred into life, that here he began to question, as we know he did later, the rightness and goodness of the administration of the world in which he found himself.

Death was a peculiarly intimate thing in the home like that of the Lincolns. The body lay on your bed. You ate and slept byside it. You must yourself make all the preparations for burial, even to making the coffin in which the dead body was to be laid away. In a hundred ways now we protect ourselves from the effect of death by the method of burial but in those days every detail was under your eye. You must lend a hand at every point. Nothing could be covered up, spared you.

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~~carried away from~~ remembered details of the

~~Thus to~~ young Sarah and Abraham ~~this~~ death of their mother was ~~in the very nature of the case~~ = which would never be known to children a more intimate ~~matter~~ than death could be in a more highly developed home.

The burial of the dead in the pioneer community is always a matter of general concern ~~interest and concern~~. It ~~has its traditions~~ not to be neglected. It is a community event and it is a part of neighborliness to be present at funeral services and at the grave but now in a country where sickness was in every household, where every household was strickened, where there was no church or minister, all of the usual ceremony must be dispensed with. Tom Lincoln and his children must go practically alone to the burial of Nancy Hanks.

They laid her in a beautiful spot. Perhaps half a mile from their cabin was a knoll heavily wooded, uncleaned, a spot ~~in which~~ where already a grave or two had been dug ~~and here they took her~~. It was October and the woods were in full color, red, yellow, brown. Let us hope it was a sunny day for the heartbroken little family had little or nothing of that which they felt was due to the dead to comfort them, no burial service, no sympathetic neighbors. They were alone and forlorn in a strickened land.

It was many months before the funeral services which they felt, as all people of their traditions felt, was so necessary, were held. It was owing to Abraham's effort that finally ~~brought~~ a the minister, so tradition goes, that held Nancy Lincoln's funeral months after her burial. But there is nothing surprising about this. It constantly happens in remote communities that funeral services are long at least as they were in the case of Nancy Hanks Lincoln.

Tom ~~Lonse~~ Lincoln and his children would go often to visit her grave but they were never able to do more to honor her memory than to put up what

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was common in the world at that time, what one sees everywhere still in the old graveyards, an uncut fragment of red sandstone, no lettering, no date, only this marker and so the grave lay for nearly sixty years when in 1879 a friend of her son put up a head stone and a fence about the grave and upon it wrote the inscription

Nancy Hanks Lincoln.
Mother of President Lincoln
died October 5, A. D. 1818
Aged 35 years
Erected as a token of love
by a grateful son.

It has remained for the state of Indiana to make of this grave a protected and sacred spot which it should be. I know of no woman's grave in this or any other country which more deeply and reverently so touches the heart than that of this simple pioneer woman, the mother of our greatest American. How worthily and beautifully is the place marked! The hilltop on which she lies with the group of little graves which gradually grew around hers has been turned into a little park, not a pretentious park but a rarely loving one. Hundreds of beautiful trees cover the knoll. Between them one looks out upon the valleys, distant farms, fertile well developed country, the kind of thing which Thomas and Nancy Lincoln had in mind when they started overland into the new country. I think it must be a regret to most people that generous and loyal friends of Nancy Hanks have in recent days insisted on putting before her grave a pretentious marble stone feeling that the modern gravestone which is set up would sufficiently honor her. The other is much more beautiful, more suitable. The park itself with its outlook over the wide sweeping country which she gave her life to open to the future is much more fitting and beautiful. I wish they

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would take the big stone away!

It was a sad household to which Tom Lincoln and his children returned after Nancy Hanks' burial, a diseased ridden household too for there quickly followed the death of both Mr. and Mrs. Sparrow, leaving the ~~family~~ without a woman, only the child Sarah now but eleven years old. Abraham Lincoln was having at nine his first experience with the deepest of sorrows and with all the ~~perhplex~~ perplexing problems that ~~that~~ sorrow brings. It was not until a year later that life again took on something of the old order and ~~normality~~ and that came from Tom Lincoln's bringing into the home a second mother. The coming of that mother belongs to our next chapter.

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It was simple but not mean as those who for partisan or other reasons would have us believe, Thomas Lincoln might be a poor man but he had not been shiftless, he was not without some means when he left Kentucky. He was a good carpenter, a trader, a farmer, that is he had the trade knowledge and experience with which to make a start in a new land. The start of course was hard for the boy. It was his first experience in breaking off friendships, saying goodbye for good and all to a playmate who he had come to look upon in the way of children as a part of his life. Before he was eight years old, little Abraham Lincoln had the painful lesson in the transcient nature of human nature. When you left friends stayed behind, that was what moving meant. It is one of the hard things that youth has to learn.

The route the Lincolns followed from Knob Creek to the Ohio is I find, in dispute in the neighborhood. There are those like Mr. John Bariy, the Editor of the Rolling Fork Echo, who think they went by boat as Thomas Lincoln had gone on his reconnoirtering trip. Tradition is aginst him however and so is probability. It would have been more difficult and more uncertain than going overland by wagon.

The point the Lincolns wanted to reach on the Indiana side was the mouth of what was known as Anderson Creek and near Troy where Tom had left his possessions when he first landed. In a straight line, Troy was about seventy-five miles from the Knob Creek home. To get there, they must follow roads and trials to the Kentucky side of the Ferry which crossed the Ohio from Anderson's Creek. This northwest route would lead them through Hodgenville, give them a chance to see their friends there, and then to Elizabethtown, where of course they would halt for visits. Here lived Joseph Hanks with his young family, a man dear to both Nancy and Thomas, always their friend and the friend of their boy. The travelers no doubt "put up" with him and from his home said goodbye to those they knew in Elizabethtown. Even young Abraham had his friends there for he had often gone with his father on his business trips and sat on a nail keg in the grocery and eaten the lumps of sugar the clerk gave him. Years later this clerk, Mr. J. B. Helm grew to be a man of importance in Missouri and both he and Mr. Lincoln meeting there in a political campaign recalled the visits and the sugar. Mr. Lincoln remembered something else, that this friendly clerk was the first man he knew that wore "store clothes" all the week.

Leaving Elizabethtown, the Lincolns went no doubt by their old farm on the Mill Creek farm that Tom Lincoln had sold two years before, near here too lived his two sisters, both married with families. What this amounts to is, that the first period of their journey was made over roads that they knew and their stops were at the homes of relatives and friends, but after that they came into country new to them and all the more exciting because new. It was a beautiful rolling country with many streams to be forded, heavily timbered, sparsely settled. The fall was coming on, the weather at that season in Kentucky is dry and warm, a perfect time for following the road. Every day would be full of exciting incidents for the children, the cap of them being the making of camp for the night. Whatever the days troubles - difficult fords, straying animals, broken wheels, all is forgotten when the camp fire blazes at the close of day and the bacon

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commences to sizzle! It took the Lincolns no less than a week to reach the Ohio after leaving Elizabethtown. The river at this point makes a magnificent bend, the water moving as silently and smoothly as if it were the surface of a lake. What a wonder this first big water that he had ever seen must have been to the young traveler. The crossing over landed them at the foot of Anderson Creek, a point which in the future was to play a big part in Abraham's ~~youthful~~ life. Anderson's creek flows down to the Ohio between high banks. There is a long wide flat at its mouth which had been found by the river boats to be an excellent landing place. Here they often tied up for the night and here the settlers in the young town of Troy nearby had already established a trade in pork and other produce. Here to, they had a big wood yard from which the river steamers took on fuel. It was a bustling place when the boats were in and it was well for the Lincolns to make ~~xxxxx~~ acquaintance with it for it was to become their future market place.

Although Thomas Lincoln remained no longer at Anderson's creek than was necessary to make preparations for the trip through the forest to his nes land, there are people living there nowadays who for commercial purposes insist on telling you that he remained a year and ~~show you~~ the house he lived in to prove it! Local historians who care more for the facts than they do for any possible profit that the community or any individuals in it may get from a Lincoln tradition are irate and emphatic in denying this tale. They scoff at ~~the attempt of~~ one property owner who has advertised for sale in the last year or so, the Anderson Creek home of the Lincolns. This is one of those exploitations of a Lincoln connection for which ~~the~~ tourists in the Lincoln country must always be on guard. Many a motor car has stopped in the last two years before this house, kodaks have snapped and plates have been marked, "The home of Thomas Lincoln on the Ohio River."

We can be sure there was no delay in getting on, they had sixteen miles to travel and the sooner they were at the end of the journey, the more comfortable would be their winter. I think one may rightfully evny them that journey and will if he has a drop of Gypsy blood in his veins for it was made through a forest, which in its autumnal colors was a thing of rarest beauty. The country through which they travele d was not a jungle as it has often been described. Southwestern Indiana had long been the home of Indian tribes and there were cleared spaces left by them. The forests ~~xxxxxxxxxx~~ had been kept largely clear of underbrush by the occasional prairie fires ~~which swept across country.~~ That is, it was a fairly open land, there were trails too and the beginning of roads. Thomas Lincoln was by no means the first settler in this part of Indiana. In examining the records at Rockport, I found many entries made within a few miles of where he settled in the years of 1811, that is when the travelers made their way Northwest, they passed within reach of more than one settler that had proceed them and no doubt took pains to call and to pick up whatever information they could about conditions. The October glory was still on the trees when the little party reached the hilltop on the land which Thomas had chosen for them. They could not have known then how really a beautiful site it was. Today, with the land cleared ~~as it is~~ so that one can look over the great Buckthorn Valley,

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see the line at Pigeon Creek, locate the homes of the neighbors with whom Abraham was to grow up, identify point after point connected with his life in this point, you get a very genuine respect for Thomas Lincoln's ability in selecting a promising site in what was then an unbroken forest. Probably there was nothing to be seen about them but trees, but trees of great size, much of it probably primeval timber, there were elms, chinquapin oaks, walnut, maple, birches, sassafras, trees which now were gold and red and yellow, and when the sun sifted through them became things of pure color, almost without substance.

Along the stream there were cleared placed covered with crimson sumac and masses of golden rod, wild rose, blackberry vines an almost impentrable tangle. Not far away too, there was what was called a "deer lick" a salty marsh to which wild animals came, a precious neighbor to the settler who must depend upon his gun for his supply of meat.

There was no time now however for exploring the country, a shelter must be ready for winter and Thomas Lincoln and his son fell at once to cutting and clearing and preparing for what was known as a half-face camp. I am pretty sure that they were not unaided in this work, settlers were already within easy reach of them, building like Tom Lincoln. Some of them were already in need of a carpenter's skill, that is from the first, Tom had work at his trade, and much of this work was done in exchange for help in clearing and building.

Many mournful pictures have been drawn of this first shelter of the Lincolns in Indiana, but the half-face camp was like the sod house of the prairie, the shack of the mining town and quite as good as either. The best description of its making which I have ever seen is the one given by one of Mr. Lincoln's friends on the Circuit, Mr. Henry C. Whitney. It is not improbable that his description was based on talks which he had with Mr. Lincoln for the two men frequently discussed pioneer life and its makeshifts. According to Mr. Whitney the first step in establishing the camp was to select a site on a Southern slope where two straight trees stood about fourteen feet apart East and West. These trees were trimmed and topped to serve as corner posts for the open front of the structure; logs were then cut about fourteen feet in length sufficient for three sides, they were fastened with wooden pins to the posts that had been prepared and laid log cabin fashion until built to the proper height. A roof of small poles interwoven with branches and matted with brush and dry grass was built above these three sides. The openings were then filled with mud, the result was a warm and tight structure open to the South. In front of this open face, a fire place was built of stone, it was big and solid for the whole comfort of the family through the winter depended on this fire place. Quantities of fuel must be kept to keep it going, big back logs of hard wood, smaller stuff, branches and boughs for blazes, chips to kindle quickly. After cold weather set in this fire was not allowed to go out. It was not only warm and a cooking place for cooking that the fire place gave, it was protection from wild animals. There were many of them, indeed they are one of the two things that seems to have made an impression deep enough on Abraham Lincoln at this time for him to have remembered them when years later he came to record his memories of

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this first year in Indiana.

His second strong impression was of the ~~axks~~ ax, this useful instrument, so he wrote in 1860, was put into his hands on their arriving in Indiana and as he intimates was rarely dropped until he was twenty-three.

It was hard work, no doubt, but the boy was young, strong and large for his age according to his own account and work done for so fine an obvious purpose as this work has its compensations. He was helping build a home and took pride in his part of the undertaking. As a matter of fact, I think the boy Lincoln was just discovering that he might be something of importance, something useful. ~~He had~~ The boy's pride particularly strong in his case in being allowed to work with men.

It was not only building the camp that occupied him and his father. There was the stern necessity of seeing that there was ~~to be~~ food in the larder before the winter, also that there was a bit of clearing ready for corn in the spring. The game that was on all sides, big and little, was joyfully followed by Tom Lincoln, always an eager hunter. Deer was killed and hung to dry. There were wild turkeys, duck quail and there was an occasional bear. The game meant something more than meat to the Lincolns. It meant skins and skins meant not only cloths and covering, it meant things to trade with. There were few settlers of this time that did not make the trapping and killing of fur bearing animals a part of their winter's business. Young Abraham learned to skin and cure and the walls of the half faced camp were probably decorated continuously with a variety of valuable skins.

The hardships of this first winter have been long dwelt on but the compensations have been generally passed by. The woodman's life has its joys. The forest in its winter garb is always a beautiful thing. Every morning brings its enjoyments. The weather itself is a constant interest, shaping as it does the day's work.

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The devices for meeting the problems of food and shelter kept the wits awake and the fingers busy. The Lincolns' first winter would have been filled with the necessary to keep themselves alive at all that the spring would be upon them before they knew it.

The spring in southwestern Indiana is a wonderful thing. It comes early, usually with great floods of water, with flocks of birds, big and little; with a riot of flowers followed by many small fruits and a thickened luxury of foliage. Life became a busy thing for the boy then. There was probably a calf or two to look after and there was planting and in the intervals there was work on the new cabin for which part at least of the logs had been cut in the winter. It was a big cabin for the time, eighteen feet square with a loft and a huge fireplace and chimney, at the place near the camp and on the top of the knoll. The location is marked to-day by a marble slabe and clean as the country has been, one can realize how finely it was selected. To make this cabin habitable became Nancy Lincoln's business. She did her planting without. The settler's wife invariably brought with her some root of a favorite flower, a bulb, a bit of vine to plant by her cabin door, something to remind her of the home she had left. Nancy Lincoln planted her vines and in the clearing nearby fruit trees were soon set out. There are straggling remnants of them still to be seen on the slope. Between house building, clearing and planting, the boy would be busy enough. Then too, they were beginning to make some connections in the neighborhood. Pigeon Creek Valley was filling up. A church had been organized though there was no building yet and only irregular services held in private houses and there was talk of a school though not yet a school.

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I cannot believe but that this first year was one of real interest as well as of hard work for the boy.

They were joined in the fall of 1817 by three relatives from Kentucky, the Sparrows and with them a cousin of Nancy, Dennis Hanks by name, a boy about ten years older than Abraham. The coming of these old acquaintances made life more interesting and gave more strong hands to push the develppment of their farm. In every way then the second winter was easier for the Lincolns than the first. The second summer undoubtedly gave them still further hope for by this time Tom Lincoln had his hands full of carpentry work. Things would have gone from now on increasingly well, I am convinced, if in the fall of 1818, just about two years after they came into the country, there had not come to Thomas Lincoln that greatest of blows to the pioneer, the death of his wife.

The country in which the Lincolns had settled was a rolling wooded one as I have said. The wide valleys threaded as they were by big and little creeks were usually a tangle of matted vegetation, ~~the accumulation of hundreds of years.~~ True, an occasional forest fire swept through and kept down the vegetation but usually the rank growth simply rotted during the winter. The frequent heavy rainfalls filled the streams to overflowing, soaking the accumulated leaf mold, making it a rank malarious mass. All through the fall too, heavy fogs lay over the land so that the poison that rose from the valleys was not carried off by the air and sun. As was inevitable, this had its effect upon the settlers. What was called Chills and Fever, Ague, was common. When the conditions were particularly bad an intensified form of malaria broke out. This disease was commonly known in southwestern Indiana as Milk-sick. There was an outbreak of this disease in the fall of 1818. It attacked more than one of Nancy Lincoln's neighbors

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and she, as is the custum in such settlements, went from one house to another helping as she could to take care of the suffers. Among the sick was one of her best friends, a Mrs. Brooner, whose children lived to tell of her kindness to their mother. Mrs. Brooner felt sure she was going to die but Nancy Lincoln, so the fable witnesses tell, would reprove her. "Tut, Tut," she said, "you will soon be well and strong again. Woman, keep up your courage." Hy-Hym Homely well-meant comfort but unavailing. Mrs. Brooner died but before her death Nancy Lincoln herself was stricken with the epidemic. Death followed quickly, so quickly that to the unprepared family it must have been like an angry hand of God laid upon them.

This sudden death of his mother came to young Abraham Lincoln as an irreparable tragedy. The boy of nine or ten depends upon his mother in a very special and intimate way. He could not think of life without her. It has never occurred to him that life can go on without her and then to have her taken suddenly almost without warning from the home makes an unforgotten impression. It certainly did on Abraham Lincoln. I am inclined to think that the deep melancholy of his nature was then first stirred into life, that here he began to question, as we know he did later, the rightness and goodness of the administration of the world in which he found himself.

Death was a peculiarly intimate thing in the home like that of the Lincolns. The body lay on your bed. You ate and slept byside it. You must yourself make all the preparations for burial, even to making the coffin in which the dead body was to be laid away. In a hundred ways now we protect ourselves from the effect of death by the method of burial but in those days every detail was under your eye. You must lend a hand at every point. Nothing could be covered up, spared you.

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carried away from
remembered details of it

~~Thus to~~ young Sarah and Abraham this death of their mother was in the ~~very nature of the case~~ a more intimate matter than death could be in a more highly developed home.

The burial of the dead in the pioneer community is always a matter of ~~interest and concern~~ general concern. It ~~has its traditions~~ is not to be neglected. It is a community event and it is a part of neighborliness to be present at funeral services and at the grave but now in a country where sickness was in every household, where every household was strickened, where there was no church or minister, all of the usual ceremony must be dispensed with. Tom Lincoln and his children must go practically alone to the burial of Nancy Hanks.

They laid her in a beautiful spot. Perhaps half a mile from their cabin was a knoll heavily wooded, uncleared, a spot in which already a grave or two had been dug and here they took her. It was October and the woods were in full color, red, yellow, brown. Let us hope it was a sunny day for the heartbroken little family had little or nothing of that which they felt was due to the dead to comfort them, no burial service, no sympathetic neighbors. They were alone and forlorn in a strickened land.

It was many months before the funeral services which they felt, as all people of their traditions felt, was so necessary, were held. It was owing to Abraham's effort that finally brought the minister, so tradition goes, that held Nancy Lincoln's funeral months after her burial. But there is nothing surprising about this. It constantly happens in remote communities that funeral services are long delayed at least as they were in the case of Nancy Hanks Lincoln.

Tom ~~Lenos~~ Lincoln and his children would go often to visit her grave but they were never able to do more to honor her memory than to put up what

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was common in the world at that time, what one sees everywhere still in the old graveyards, an uncut fragment of red sandstone, no lettering, no date, only this marker and so the grave lay for nearly sixty years when in 1879 a friend of her son put up a head stone and a fence about the grave and upon it wrote the inscription

Nancy Hanks Lincoln
Mother of President Lincoln
died October 5, A.D. 1818
Aged 35 years
Erected by a friend of her
Martyred Son.

It has remained for the state of Indiana to make of this grave a protected and sacred spot which it should be. I know of no woman's grave in this or any other country which more deeply and deservedly so touches the heart then that of this simple pioneer woman, the mother of our greatest American. How worthily and beautifully is the place marked! The hilltop on which she lies with the group of little graves which gradually grew around hers has been turned into a little park, not a pretentious park but a rarely loving one. Hundreds of beautiful trees cover the knoll. Between them one looks out upon the valleys, distant farms, the fertile well developed country, the kind of thing which Thomas and Nancy Lincoln had in mind when they started overland into the new country. I think it must be a regret to most people that generous and loyal friends of Nancy Hanks have in recent days insisted on putting before her grave a pretentious marble stone feeling that the modern gravestone which is set up would sufficiently honor her. The other is much the more beautiful, more suitable. The park itself with its outlook over the wide sweeping country which she gave her life to open to the future is much more fitting and beautiful. I wish they

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