ILLUSTRATIONS

for

CHAPTER XVI

1) Lincoln's Surveying Instruments - owned by the Lincoln Monument Association of Springfield, Ill., and on exhibition in the Museum at Lincoln's Tomb. (Early Life, p.191)

2) Lincoln's Saddlebags.

If these are not the identical saddlebags used by Lincoln at New Salem, they are at least like those that he used. They are on exhibition in the Museum of the Lincoln Monument at Springfield. (Early Life, p.195)

3) Fac-simile of letter written by "A. Lincoln P. M." in July of 1834.

4) Interior of Lincoln Museum at New Salem, Ill.

5) Population of New Salem, gathered by the Rutledge Tavern in the Lincoln-New Salem Pageant given in 1918. (Photograph to come)

6) Fac-simile of the Map of one of the first surveys made by Lincoln.

It is of a road running from the Sangamon river below the bluff through New Salem, in the direction of Jacksonville. Clary's Grove, where Lincoln's riotous friends, the Clary Grove Boys, lived is the terminus, as shown on this map.

7) Map of a survey made by Lincoln in November, 1834 - six months after the survey of the New Salem road here printed. There is a decided improvement in the care taken with the drawing.

For the making of this map, Lincoln charged 50¢, as will be seen by the bill herewith printed. (Early Life, p.199)

Fac-simile of bill accompanying the map of road surveyed in November, 1834, between Athens and Sangamontown as here printed. (Early Life, p.198)

(Miss Marshall: Please see that only the bill is reproduced, not the upper part of the fac-simile.)

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

8) St. Gauden's Statue of Lincoln, Lincoln Park, Chicago.

(Miss Marshall: I should think that the surveying instruments and saddlebags might go together, also the map for the survey of the road out of Athens and the bill for making it.

Brown ought to be able easily to get you the St. Gauden's photograph.)

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

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IN THE FOOTSTEPS OF ABRAHAM LINCOLN

CHAPTER XVI

Abraham Lincoln: Surveyor, Legislator, Law Student

The traditional refuge of impecunious young Americans ambitious for an education and a profession in Abraham Lincoln's early day, as it is in ours, was teaching. Not a few of those who in the future were to be his political and legal rivals and colleagues were at a teacher's desk in the years he was doing manual labor and tinkering at a store - the most important among them being Stephan A. Douglas. Lincoln, however, was too conscious of his own lack of schooling, too doubtful of his ability, to think of teaching. When it came to surveying, it was a different matter. He knew he could make good at that; and when the appointment as a deputy surveyor in Sangamon County came to him late in 1833, he took hold of the work with relish and energy.

The first certificate of a survey which I have seen is one bearing the date of January, 1834, published many years ago by Mr. Herndon. Here he laid out a piece of land for a neighbor - a kind of work of which he was to do much in years to come, work not paid for in money. Lincoln received for this first survey two buckskins - something he probably needed, for he had them foxed on his trousers to protect them from briers.

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The territory assigned to him by the chief of the Land Office was that part of Sangamon County lying in and around New Salem. That is, he had work among people who knew him, and the whole section is sprinkled with reminiscences of the corners he marked, the roads he ran, the towns he planned. It was he that surveyed the new road running from Sangamontown through New Salem out towards Jacksonville. It was he who plotted Petersburg, the town which was shortly to absorb New Salem, root and branch. It was he who fixed the corners of the land taken up by new settlers. Drive today in any section out through New Salem, and you will be told with pride, "Lincoln laid out this farm for my grandfather." - "There's the stake that Lincoln drove." - "There's the tree that Lincoln selected as a corner." - "This is Lincoln's road." - "This is one of Lincoln's towns." Everywhere you go it is the same. Offhand one would say that surveying was a pursuit in which there would be little chance for personality to express itself, but in Lincoln's case personality seems to have ruled even his compass and chain.

Edgar Lee Masters, in his biting tale, "Mitch Mitchell", the scene of which is laid in Petersburg, introduces an incident, showing the triumph of his heart over his science:

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My first thought on reading this incident was that it was an invention of Mr. Masters; but last fall, when in Petersburg, I looked up the original survey of the town - a clean, careful and well drawn document. And there it was - a town veered a little out of plumb in order to save trouble and expense to a widow with whom he sympathized.

As a matter of fact, Lincoln found more opportunities in his new calling than he ever had before in any connection, to exercise a precious natural quality very strong in him - the instinct to help one whom he saw to be in need. I take it that if we could have followed the young man from week to week in his surveying that we would have a big collection of anecdotes of instinctive kindness. As it is, there are many. A favorite one along the lower Sangamon is that of the service he rendered to a man who was to become one of the most prosperous and respected citizens of the county, Dr. Charles Chandler.

Dr. Chandler had come into Illinois from Kentucky in the spring of 1832, expecting to settle near Peoria. He arrived with the Black Hawk War, and could go no further at the moment than Beardstown. Looking about, he decided to take up a tract down the Sangamon. The claim was entered, a cabin built and cultivation begun. Busy with this work, Dr. Chandler put off going to

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Springfield to "prove up" his claim. Illinois at that time was alive with a pestiferous tribe of land sharks, and one of these gentry, ostensibly a new settler, had been befriended by Dr. Chandler. When he discovered that the full requirements of the tract which the doctor was developing had not been satisfied, he started for Springfield with the intention of grabbing the entire quarter section. When the news of this treachery came to the doctor, he saw there was but one way to save his property; and that was to head off the interloper. Hastily collecting the amount of "land office money" - gold or silver coin was required - he started on horseback for the county seat, - a long and tedious ride over the unbroken roads. When he was some ten miles from the end of his journey, his horse began to show signs of giving out. Just then a young man rode up, commented on the condition of the horse, and asked why his hurry. The doctor explained the situation, and the young man, bounding down, said, "You take my horse, he's fresh. Get there before that rascal. I will follow and we will swap back when I get to town." The exchange was made, and Dr. Chandler hurried on, reaching the land office barely in time to save his property.

Many months later, Dr. Chandler asked that a survey of his property be made, and what was his surprise to find that the deputy sent him for the job - Abraham Lincoln by name - was the very young man whose friendly act had saved his property.

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Lincoln had never before made as much money as he did now, for while there might be a good many jobs for which he recieved produce - some of which he could use himself as the two buckskins mentioned above, some of which he "traded in," - the county paid in cash, $3 a day, with extras for maps and diagrams - not extravagant extras certainly - for road maps he received fifty cents! For a map of the town of Albany, $2.50. How surprised he would be if he knew that a day was to come when many a collector would pay a hundred times $2.50 to own that map!

Lincoln had a passion for precision - and he was willing to take time to insure his problems. He did not like to guess, to decide until he was confident he was right. The results of his surveying show that he took abundant pains with the lines he was asked to draw in Sangamon Co.

It is said that no survey of his has ever been changed though I do not know this to be true. We do know, however, that he steadily improved in map-making and in note-making; that a comparison of his maps and plans show clearly - also that his reputation for skill and accuracy was such that he was sometimes sent for in disputes outside of his territory. There was a corner in the northern part of Sangamon County which became locally famous in the Civil War because it had been fixed by Lincoln when called in as a referee. The care with which he had done his work seems to have stuck in the minds of the whole neighborhood. He began by

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Nearly twenty-five years after Lincoln laid aside his surveying compass and chain, he was called in by a convention of surveyors who had gathered in Springfield to settle a mooted point in regard to the act passed by Congress in 1805 relating to surveys. Their selection was based not on the fact that he was an able lawyer but that he had been a practical surveyor and had never lost his interest in the science. The opinion in Lincoln's own hand is in existence and was published in fac-simile some twenty-five years ago in the writer's "Early Life of Lincoln."

It is quite unlikely that he had calls enough to keep him continuously busy at this time: if he had half a month's work he was probably doing well. But there is no doubt that as things were now turning for him, that was all that he cared for. His political ambition had revived. He sensed that the popularity which had encouraged him to offer himself for the Assembly two years ago was stronger than ever. Moreover, now he was "somebody." It was quite a different matter for a young man who had a right to walk into the land office at Springfield - one

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of the staff- to offer himself as a candidate, than it had been for the combined farm laborer, flatboatman and hired store-keeper of 1832. Then he had worn well - improved on acquaintance - faith in him was stronger than ever. There was every reason why he should try it again.

Of course there were people to whom he seemed an unlikely candidate. A man who was to become one of his very good friends - later the Rev. Peter Wallace, D.D. of Chicago - told me once that in Springfield where he was then living, there was a pretty general hooting in 1834 at Lincoln's ambitions. Wallace liked him, however, and voted for him; and there were many others in the town that did the same.

There is not a word inexistence, so far as I know, of the platform on which he ran in 1834. None of his speeches have been preserved, no significant anecdotes. Two things are certain, however - he ran as a Whig, putting his emphasis on internal improvements, particularly on the improvement of the Sangamon river; and he was elected by a substantial majority.

The most important fruit of the campaign of 1834, however, was not the election. It was his final decision that he could and would make a lawyer of himself. On the stump with him was a Springfield candidate. also a Whig, Major John T. Stuart. Lincoln already knew something of Stuart for the company of which he had been captain in the first few weeks of the Black Hawk War had belonged to Staurt's

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command. The two men were thrown much together in the campaign and became very friendly. They were about of an age, though their experience in life had been totally different. Stuart had had all the traditional chances - his father had been a Kentucky minister, a college professor; he himself was a college graduate who had studied law, comfortably and properly in a Kentucky firm. He had put out his shingle some time before in Springfield and was already well established. His birth, his associations, all his connections gave him a standing which Lincoln had never known. In spite of these, the two men became good friends, and in their canvass Lincoln confided to him his ambition to become a lawyer and his doubts of having sufficient education to justify him in undertaking the necessary study.

Stuart evidently realized that Lincoln already had a fairly good start in the law, and offered him books, laid out a course for him, - it was the turning point. He saw his way at last. He would do it. That is, he came out of the campaign of 1834 with his mind finally made up. Now there was nothing to do but work. He need no longer torment himself about his inability, his lack of preparation - he was going ahead; and just as he had done when he saw that a mastery of grammar was necessary to the handling of English requisite for political life - just as he had done when he saw that the mastery of Flint & Gibson was

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necessary to hold his surveyor's job, he began immediately the hard and systematic reading which must precede his admission to the bar.

He might have to ride twenty miles and back to get the books at Springfield - but he is not to be pitied for that! He had already developed habits of mind, methods of study which made him practically unconscious of his surroundings. He gathered up his material in moments of leisure, and on his journeys to and from Springfield, to and from his surveying jobs, he went over and over it, absorbing its meaning, saturating himself with it. No possible leisure, association, no so-called advantage or opportunity could of itself have carried him so far as this habit of concentration and assimilation which he had worked out under the hard prod of necessity.

That is, we can think of him by the fall of 1834 as a cheerful and satisfied young man. He was on his way, and he had the exciting experience before him of a first term in the Ninth Illinois Assembly.

It was December when he started for Vandalia, then the capital. The town lay some 75 miles to the south of Springfield, and then, as now, it was reached only by much zig-zagging. In all probability Lincoln went by stage coach. New Salem by this time was on a stage coach route. The line ran from Springfield northwest to the Mississippi through Monmouth. This trip took two full days and cost $9. By taking this route to Springfield, Lincoln could catch the Vandalia coach, which ran eastward to the old

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Cumberland road, a national highway, of which Vandalia for a number of years had been the terminus.

The state capitol was not much to look at when Lincoln saw it for the first time in 1834. He had of course seen real cities - New Orleans, St. Louis, but Vandalia was the largest town in which he had ever lived - a town about fifteen years old, of probably not quite a thousand people - the court house a two-story brick building without any architectural pretension, its houses of worship still poor affairs, no great dwellings - but yet a town which, because of the men that had dominated it, of unmistakable distinction. Vandalia had known several superior men. There was Ninian Edwards whom President Madison had sent to Illinois as its first territorial governor, who later had been a United States Senator, and after that Governor of the State. There was Edward Coles, a gentleman if there ever was one, Governor from 1823 to 1826 - the man who because of his hatred of slavery had put fortune, position, comfort behind him, had brought his slaves to southern Illinois, freed them and established them there, and who had then put through the great fight to make the new State free. Then there was John Reynolds, as virile and picturesque a character as Illinois had known. The State Assembly had always others of fine calibre - men of French descent and a touch of French cultivation - aspiring Kentuckians and Virginians, the best of timber.

As the terminus of the Cumberland road, Vandalia had become

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As the terminus of the Cumberland road, Vandalia had become the great westward highway

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a purchasing center for much of the surrounding country. Capp's store made the prices for all that part of the world, it was said, and had the reputation of keeping everything. Indeed, one of the favorite bets with a new comer was that he could not mention anything that could not be found at Capp's. One newly elected Assemblyman who had taken the bet asked for goose yokes. Mr. Capp promptly appeared with one, saying that they always kept them for legislators. Vandalia had a sense of its dignity as capital of the State, and, on the whole, was an orderly town. There were bound to be fights, it said, philosophically, and provided for them an institution known as the Bull Pen, where everybody was allowed to go and settle his difficulty without disturbing the streets!

To Lincoln, fresh from New Salem, and its little group of people, probably grown too familiar to be stimulating, Vandalia, with its Senate of 26, its Assembly of 55, with its Governor and official staff, with a crowd of lobbiests, with the animated social life incident to even a pioneer capital, it was an exciting change. He came not as an outsider, but as a recognized part, a representative of one of the important counties of the State, a county that everybody saw already must be reckoned with.

Lincoln was too modest by nature, too conscious of his own limitations, to force himself on the Assembly. His approach was different. He had to know his ground, understand his people, make up his mind, study the thing out before he would attempt to put himself forward. The result is that we have a young legislator

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who does what he does very quietly. No speech of his is reported - no signs of leadership show in the record. As a matter of fact, the two sessions of the Ninth Assembly - one in the winter of 1834-35 and an extra one called at the end of 1835, were given over almost entirely to Lincoln's favorite topic of internal improvements; and most of the time of the legislators was devoted to making and passing bills for railroads, canals, roads and bridges. There was little speech-making. The "heart appalling shock" which Lincoln confessed the cost of railroads gave him in 1832 seems to have entirely passed. The Whigs had gone over to the railroad, and they plunged into a scheme of development which takes one's breath away when we remember that the financing of their magnificent scheme must all be done on faith - faith largely in outside capital flowing in to take bonds.

Lincoln's solution of the problem of financing the improvements was for the Government to turn back to the States the proceeds of the sales of public lands. If this was done, Illinois could dig its canals and build its railroads, without borrowing money and paying interest on it. Although there was little hope that this would be soon done, he was no more reluctant than his colleagues to go ahead with their schemes, without any sure means of paying for them. The map of the developments which they planned would be almost sufficient for Illinois today, though it has some lacks that look curious to us now. For instance, they ran a railroad straight north from Cairo, with a terminus at

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Galena. No road to Chicago! Chicago's western connection was a canal. They voted $50,000 for the improvement of the Kaskaskia river on which Vandalia lay, though, as one disgusted legislator who lived on the river declared: "Turtles have been known to run aground on that stream."

It was not only the improvementof rivers and the building of canals and railroads that his hopeful Ninth Assembly provided for. It granted numbers of charters for private undertakings, among them many toll bridges, some of which possibly are still in operation. The second bill, indeed, that Lincoln introduced was for one of these toll bridges - Musick's bridge across Salt creek, destined to be long known to Illinois travelers. And then there were schools, academies and colleges chartered, numbers of them. Transportation and education - these were the needs of Illinois, these were the things which the Ninth Assembly was encouraging, leaving it to luck, private initiative and the lure which the new land might prove to investors to get the money.

If Lincoln's career as a legislator began modestly, it is certain he got his feet firmly on the ground in his first term. He learned the ways, he studied the men, he grew in confidence and directness - the last comes out interestingly in the hand bill he sent out in 1836, announcing his candidacy for a second term. Compare this document with the one he distributed in 1832, and you find him firmer in expression, more willing to present himself in

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few words, no longer feeling it necessary to apologize for himself as he did at the start.

The practical point in the little document is his reiteration of his idea of how money should be attained, in part at least, for all their fine undertakings - good Whig doctrine - the proceeds of the sales of public lands. There is one general proposition which smacks of buncombe, though I have no diubt Lincoln really meant it: "If elected I shall consider the whole people of Sangamon my constituents, as well those that oppose as those that support me." One has heard the phrase repeated so regularly since Lincoln's day and has seen it so rarely applied that he instinctively revolts against putting the words into Lincoln's mouth.

One short paragraph in this two hundred word announcement card has kept it alive, and in the last few years been constantly used in political campaigns, that is the one in which he lays down his then notion of popular suffrage. So far as I know it is his only expression on the subject:

> "I go for all sharing the privileges of the government, who assist in bearing its burdens. Consequently, I go for admitting all whites to the right of suffrage who pay taxes or bear arms, (by no means excluding females) - a suffrage only to those who pay or serve, is what it amounts to.

On the above platform Lincoln was elected in the summer of 1836 to his second term in the Illinois Assembly.

He was not to go back to Vandalia, however, with the light and confident heart that he carried in 1834. True, he was further along in his public and professional ambitions, he had

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made great strides in his law reading, he had begun to see the end, to be sure that he would be admitted. He knew he was solid with his constituents, and probably could be reelected as often as he might want; but his heart was heavy within him.

A singular feature of the frank and voluminous reminiscences we have of Lincoln's life in New Salem from 1831 to 1834 is that none of them recall any intimacy or even companionship with the young girls of the town and countryside. Back in Indiana his acquaintances remembered that he "liked" little Kate Roby. Down at Anderson's ferry on the Ohio they told how he gave a friend a scar "for life" in a quarrel over a girl to whom he had paid attention. In Macon County, Ill., there are detailed traditions of his courting two young women in 1830 ~~and 31~~ and wanting to marry both of them! Yet in New Salem, for nearly three years there seems to have been no one to whom he was so attracted that his sharp-eyed friends remarked it; and you may be sure they would have seen and remembered if there had been such a one.

It is not credible that through these years Lincoln was indifferent to women. I doubt if ever there was a time of his life when he was not conscious of them, drawn to them. The truth undoubtedly is that at his coming to New Salem he was deeply stirred by a young woman of the town who he knew to be engaged to another man. It was not until 1834 that she was free and that he finally won her.

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There is no doubt that she is the first woman that he had loved, that she was the only one who ever brought him romance. The story of their short love and the tragic sorrow with which it ended, a story which turned all his hard earned achievement to dust and ashes will be told in the next chapter.

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