

THE STOR-Y OF A-BRA-HAM LINCOLN

Part 1 —THE KEN-TUCK-Y HOME

Not far from Hod-gens-ville, in Ken-tuck-y, there once lived a man whose name was Thom-as Lin-coln. This man had built for him-self a lit-tle log ca-bin by the side of a brook, where there was an e-ver-flo-wing spring of wa-ter.

There was but one room in this ca-bin. On the side next to the brook there was a **low** door-way; and at one end there was a **large** fi-re-plaCe, built of rough stoneS and **clay**.

The chim-ney was ver-y broad at the bot-tom and nar-row at the top. It was made of **clay**, with flat stoneS and slen-der stickS **laid** a-round the out-side to **keep** it from fa-lling a-part.

In the wall, on one side of the fi-re-plaCe, there was a **square** **hole** for a win-dow. But there was **no** **glass** in this win-dow. In the sum-mer it was left o-pen all the time. In **cold** wea-ther a deer-skin, or a pieCe of **coarse** cloth, was hung o-ver it to **keep** out the wind and the **snow**.

At **night**, or on stor-my **dayS**, the skin of a bear was hung a-cross the door-way; for there was **no** door on hin-ges to **be** o-pened and shut.

There was **no** cei-ling to the room. But the in-mateS of the

ca·bin, by look·ing up, could **see** the bare raf·ters and the rough roof·boards, which Mr. Lin·coln him·self had split and hewn.

There was **no** floor, but **on·ly** the bare ground that had been smoo·thed and **bea·ten** un·til it was a s lev·el and hard a s pave·ment.

For chairs there were **on·ly** blocks of wood and a rude bench on one side of the fi·re·pla·ce. The bed was a lit·tle plat·form of poles, on which were spread the fur·ry skins of wild an·i·mals, and a patch·work quilt of home·spun goods.

In this poor ca·bin, on the 12th of Feb·ru·ar·y, 1809, a **ba·by** boy was born. There was al·ready one child in the fa·mi·ly—a girl, tw^o years **old**, whose name was Sar·ah.

The lit·tle boy grew and **be·c**ame strong like o·ther **ba·bie**s, and his par·ents **na**med him **A·bra·ham**, af·ter his grand·fa·ther, wh^o had been killed by the In·**d**i·ans man·y years **be·fore**.

When **he** was **old** e·nough to run a·bout, **he** **li**ked to **play** un·der the trees by the ca·bin door. Some·times **he** would **go** with his lit·tle sis·ter in·t^o the woods and wa·tch the birds and the squir·rels.

He had **no** play·mates. **He** did not **know** the mean·ing of toys or play·things.

But **he** was a hap·**py** child and had man·y plea·sant **way**s.

Thom·as Lin·coln, the fa·ther, was a kind·hear·ted man, ver·y strong and **brave**. Some·times **he** would **take** the

child on his knee and tell him strange, true stories of the great for-est, and of the In-dians and the fierce beasts that roamed a-mong the woods and hills.

For Thomas Lincoln had al-ways lived on the wild fron-tier; and he would ra-ther hunt deer and o-ther game in the for-est than do any-thing else. Per-haps this is why he was so poor. Per-haps this is why he was con-tent to live in the lit-tle log ca-bin with so few of the com-forts of life.

But Nan-cy Lincoln, the young mo-ther, did not com-plain. She, too, had grown up a-mong the rude scenes of the back-woods. She had ne-ver known bet-ter th-ings.

And yet she was by na-ture re-fined and gen-tle; and peo-ple wh-o knew her said that she was ver-y hand-some. She was a mod-el house-kee-er, too; and her poor log ca-bin was the nea-test and best-kept house in all that neigh-bor-hood.

No wo-man could be busi-er than she. She knew how to spin and weave, and she made all the clo-th-ing for her fa-mi-ly.

She knew how to wield the ax and the hoe; and she could work on the farm or in the gar-den when her help was need-ed.

She had al-so learn-ed how to shoot with a ri-ple; and she could bring down a deer or o-ther wild game with as much ea-se as could her hu-s-band. And when the game was brought home, she could dress it, she could cook the flesh

for food, and of the skins she could make clothing for her husband and children.

There was still another thing that she could do—she could read; and she read all the books that she could get hold of. She taught her husband the letters of the alphabet; and she showed him how to write his name. For Thomas Lincoln had never gone to school, and he had never learned how to read.

As soon as little Abraham Lincoln was old enough to understand, his mother read stories to him from the Bible. Then, while he was still very young, she taught him to read the stories for himself.

The neighbors thought it a wonderful thing that so small a boy could read. There were very few of them who could do as much. Few of them thought it of any great use to learn how to read.

There were no school-houses in that part of Kentucky in those days, and of course there were no public schools.

One winter a traveling school-master came that way. He got leave to use a cabin not far from Mr. Lincoln's, and gave notice that he would teach school for two or three weeks. The people were too poor to pay him for teaching longer.

The name of this school-master was Zachariah Riney.

The young people for miles around flocked to the school. Most of them were big boys and girls, and a few were

grown up young men. The **o**n·ly lit·tle child wa^s **A**·bra·ham Lin·c·oln, and **he** wa^s not yet five year^s **old**.

There wa^s **o**n·ly one book stud·ied at that sch^{ool}, and it wa^s a spel·ling·book. It had some **ea**·sy re·ading les·son^s at the end, but the**se** were not to **be** read un·til af·ter ev·er·y word in the book had been spelled.

You can i·ma·gine how the big boy^s and girl^s felt when **A**·bra·ham Lin·c·oln proved that **he** could spell and read bet·ter than any of them.