

The Collected Works of  
THOMAS LINCOLN  
CARPENTER AND CABINETMAKER



Richard E. Hart

Foreword by Louise Taper

Pigeon Creek Series.

**Front Cover Photograph:** *Dr. John Crook Cherry Desk and Bookcase* (1816-1830) Indiana TL 24.  
*Courtesy of the Abraham Lincoln Presidential Library and Museum, Springfield, Illinois*

**Back Cover Photograph:** *Mill Creek Corner Cupboard, a/k/a The Lincoln-Cowley-Viers-Garner Cherry Cupboard* (1805-1806)  
Kentucky TL 4.  
*Courtesy of the Abraham Lincoln Library and Museum, Lincoln Memorial University, Harrogate, Tennessee*



This daguerreotype (photograph) was originally owned by Lieutenant O. V. Flora, who had served in the Tenth Ohio Battery from Springfield, Ohio. While in Charleston, Illinois, he bought the photograph from someone close to the Lincoln family who claimed it to be an authentic image of Thomas Lincoln (1778-1851). Some challenge the provenance of this photograph.<sup>1</sup>

*Courtesy of the Abraham Lincoln Museum of Lincoln Memorial University  
Harrogate, Tennessee*

*The Collected Works of Thomas Lincoln: Carpenter and Cabinetmaker*  
Pigeon Creek Series.

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<sup>1</sup> *Was Thomas Lincoln Photographed?*, *Lincoln Lore* # 1577, July 1969, pp. 3-4, Dr. R. Gerald McMurtry, editor, published by The Lincoln National Life Insurance Company, Fort Wayne, Indiana.

## Table of Contents

|   |       |
|---|-------|
| Table of Contents .....   | i     |
| Foreword .....  | ii    |
| Thomas Lincoln Reconsidered .....   | iv    |
| Acknowledgements and Thanks .....   | viii  |
| Notes on the Composition of This Study .....                                | viii  |
| Second Addition Explanation.....  | ix    |
| Thomas Lincoln Trained as Cabinetmaker.....                                 | x     |
| Thomas Lincoln’s Tools.....   | xi    |
| Thomas Lincoln’s Hammer and Woodworking Tools .....                         | xi    |
| Thomas Lincoln’s Plane and Auger .....                                      | xii   |
| Thomas Lincoln’s Whipsaw .....  | xiii  |
| Thomas Lincoln’s Frow .....   | xvi   |
| Thomas Lincoln’s Wooden Mallet.....   | xvii  |
| Thomas Lincoln Time Line .....  | xviii |
| Kentucky (1782-1816) Thomas Lincoln’s Age: 4-38 .....                       | 1     |
| TL 1. Haycraft Cherry Sugar Chest (Furniture 3) .....                       | 1     |
| TL 2. Sugar Chest Walnut Base .....   | 3     |
| TL 3. John Wesley Hoskinson Corner Cupboard.....                            | 5     |
| TL 4. Mill Creek Cherry Corner Cupboard (Cupboards I).....                  | 9     |
| TL 5. Hardin Thomas House.....  | 13    |
| TL 6. Hardin Thomas House Pine Fireplace Surround (Furniture 4) .....       | 15    |
| TL 7. Richard Vernon Cherry Hutch (Furniture 1) .....                       | 17    |
| TL 8. Richard Vernon Cherry Day Bed (Furniture 2) .....                     | 19    |
| TL 9. Decker-Kenneday-Crawford Cherry Corner Cupboard (Cupboards II) .....  | 22    |
| TL 10. Drop Leaf Extension Dining Table.....                                | 24    |
| TL 11. Five-drawer, Inlaid Cherry Chest of Drawers (Furniture 6).....       | 26    |
| TL 12. Dever Black Walnut Corner Cupboard (Cupboards IV).....               | 28    |
| TL 13. Lincoln Hickory Chair .....  | 30    |
| TL 14. Yellow Poplar Doll Bed .....   | 32    |
| Indiana (1816-1830) Thomas Lincoln Age: 38-52 .....                         | 34    |
| TL 15. Small Walnut Stand Table.....  | 34    |
| TL 16. Amos Richardson Cherry Cupboard.....                                 | 36    |
| TL 17 (a) Lincoln Family Cherry Corner Cabinet.....                         | 38    |
| TL 17 (b) David Lutz Cherry Corner Cupboard.....                            | 40    |
| TL 18. Enlow Cherry Mill Desk .....   | 42    |
| TL 19. David Turnham-Johnson Walnut Corner Cupboard (Cupboards III).....    | 46    |
| TL 20. David Turnham Cherry Chest of Drawers .....                          | 48    |
| TL 21. Little Pigeon Baptist Church .....                                   | 50    |
| TL 22. Reuben Grigsby-Helverson Cherry Corner Cupboard (Cupboards VII)..... | 52    |
| TL 23. Aaron Grigsby-Wetherill Walnut Corner Cupboard (Cupboards VIII)..... | 54    |
| TL 24. Dr. John Crook Cherry Desk and Bookcase (Furniture 5) .....          | 56    |
| TL 25. Elizabeth Crawford-Meece-Brown Walnut Cupboard (Cupboards V) .....   | 60    |
| TL 26. Josiah Crawford House .....  | 62    |
| TL 27. Crawford Walnut Corner Cupboard (Cupboards VI).....                  | 64    |
| TL 28. William Wood Residence.....  | 66    |
| Illinois (1830-1851) Thomas Lincoln Age: 52-73 .....                        | 68    |
| TL 29. Thomas Lincoln’s Coles County, Illinois Home .....                   | 68    |
| TL 30. Walnut Blanket Chest.....  | 70    |
| TL 31. Lincoln Cherry Pie Safe or Kitchen Safe.....                         | 72    |
| Unknown Date .....  | 74    |
| TL 32. Dr. Jesse Hall Hickory Rocking Chair.....                            | 74    |
| The Corner Cupboards .....  | 78    |

## Foreword

### Louise Taper

Dick Hart has put together the most comprehensive account of furniture made by Thomas Lincoln, the father of Abraham Lincoln. As a Lincoln collector, I wanted to collect all phases of Lincoln's life. I have been fortunate to have owned two pieces made by Thomas Lincoln that are included in this book. My first acquisition was a cherry daybed and then several years later I purchased a cherry desk and bookcase. They both sat proudly in my library.

I purchased the daybed from a lady in Kentucky that had owned it for many years. She was thrilled that it was going to someone that would treasure it as much as she did. It is an unusual example of Thomas Lincoln's work. He mostly made corner cupboards and chests.

In 2001 the Gerald Ford Presidential Museum put together a large Lincoln exhibition and I loaned them pieces to exhibit including my daybed.

During the exhibition they sent me photographs of how my pieces were exhibited. They included a photo of President Ford standing and admiring the daybed. It was fascinating to see a President admiring something made by another President's father.

When the exhibition ended everything was returned. The day bed had been placed in a massive moving van and driven across the country to my home in California. When it arrived, and they opened the doors to the van, there was the daybed sitting by itself in this huge empty space. It was a solemn moment for me. I am sure that Thomas Lincoln, when he made the day bed, would never have thought it would be so cherished and admired by so many people.

Louise Taper  
Lincoln Collector



Richard Vernon Cherry Day Bed Made by Thomas Lincoln. See TL 8. <sup>2</sup>

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<sup>2</sup> *Courtesy of the Abraham Lincoln Presidential Library and Museum, Springfield, Illinois*

## Thomas Lincoln Reconsidered

*By Richard E. Hart*

Thomas Lincoln has been the subject of description and judgment since at least 1860 when a political biography of his son Abraham was written. Since then, about 18,000 titles have been published about Abraham, with a majority having some brief description of Thomas. Those written shortly after Abraham's death were assembled quickly to meet the demand for a record of Abraham's life and accomplishments. Some elevated Abraham to Biblical heights. Indeed, he became Father Lincoln. As Abraham rose to the heavens, Thomas was pushed into an abyss. From that post mortem period to present, most critical judgments of Thomas conclude that he was a miserable failure both as a man and as a father. It is time to reconsider those judgments.

There have been historians who differed with and questioned the conventional wisdom in judging Thomas.<sup>3</sup> In 1942, Louis A. Warren wrote a critique clearly describing what he thought was the unfair demonization of Thomas Lincoln.

Thomas Lincoln has been the scapegoat for all who would make Lincoln a saint... Folklore and tradition have made him one of the most despised characters in American history, and as long as he is portrayed as a vagabond, an idler, a tramp, a rover, and as poor white trash, lacking in energy, void of ambition, wanting in respectability, and a general failure in life, it will be impossible to trace any tendencies which the President may have inherited from his father. If no one challenges the statements that Thomas Lincoln was ignorant, shiftless, indolent, restless, unsuccessful, thriftless, trifling, hopeless, improvident, listless, lazy, and worthless, those who feel that the President's environmental surroundings may have contributed to his advancement will have difficulty in finding any worthwhile influences exerted over him by his father.

Warren was not alone in his nonconventional, sympathetic view of Thomas. Some teachers, historians, writers, historical societies, and Lincoln affectionados who lived in Indiana and Kentucky agreed with Warren's assessment of Thomas. It was easy to ignore and even brush them aside as provincial defenders of their own and Thomas's home turf. The conventional wisdom that Thomas was a deplorable man and father remains alive and well today.

Until a few years ago, I accepted the conventional wisdom and was among those who without question judged Thomas a worthless failure. After all, these were the judgments made by several of my closest friends and prominent Lincoln biographers. At that point, however, I was unaware of the small band of Indiana dissenters, the Warren school, and I had no reason to conclude that one was correct and one was incorrect.

Then I discovered a whole new Thomas Lincoln. He was revealed to me by Indiana and Kentucky friends of the Warren school who are part of a growing, somewhat silent, unorganized, subculture of Thomas Lincoln revisionists. Their voices are quiet and unpretentious, but what

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<sup>3</sup> Pertinent facts supporting the claim that Thomas Lincoln was a carpenter and cabinetmaker may be found in *Lincoln Lore*, Number 503, February 6, 1939, entitled, *The Elizabethtown Carpenter*.

they say resounded in my ears like a loud clap of summer thunder rolling across the Illinois prairie.

The revisionists strongly disagree with the conventional descriptions of Thomas Lincoln found in many contemporary biographies. To support their position, they generously share photographs and information about Thomas's abilities as a cabinetmaker. And not just a rough cabinetmaker, but also a master, whose pieces are treasured by private collectors, museums, and universities. As I learned more about Thomas's beautiful cabinets, I agreed with the revisionists. Thomas was truly a master craftsman with superior artistic and mathematical skills. This became even more remarkable when I learned that Thomas was blind in one eye at least since he first moved from Indiana to Illinois and that his eyesight continued to decline. By the time of his death, he was most likely blind in the other eye. In modern parlance, he was physically disabled and would have been eligible for public assistance. I did not find these important facts in my favorite biographies of Lincoln. I wondered why and I still do.

As I examined other aspects of Thomas's life, I continued to discover a man unlike the one described by some Lincoln biographers. He and his famous son were different in their views of the world and their hoped-for position in the world's future. Thomas's was a matter of fact, unconscious acceptance of a hard and unjust life driven by day-to-day survival on the edge of the American frontier and spiritual dependence on a literal and judgmental Lord. Abraham's was a conscious, cerebral examination--an expansive overview of life and of its possibilities beyond the day-to-day grueling fight for survival. Abraham's view made possible by Thomas'--the survival mentality of the early pioneer Thomas was followed by Abraham and the second generation of fresh pioneers. But their differences did not create hatred or disgust. Their "differences" were nothing more than the father-son rivalry and tension common to man since the beginning of time. The differences did not squelch the love and respect of father for son and vice-versa.

In analyzing and describing the relationship between father and son, some historians have taken letters and events and interpreted them erroneously. These stretched interpretations need to be reexamined.

One such misinterpretation is of a letter from Abraham to his stepbrother, John D. Johnston, about Thomas Lincoln who was sick and dying. On January 12, 1851, five days before Thomas died, and 22 days after Willie Lincoln's birth, Abraham responded to John's letter. He said he could not come because Mary had given birth to Willie three weeks earlier, and she was sick-  
abed. (Baby Eddy had died 10 months before.) Certain parts of the letter have been interpreted in a way that is offered as evidence of Abraham's disdain of his father. Here is Abraham's letter.

Dear Brother [John D. Johnston]: Springfield, Jany. 12. 1851 --

On the day before yesterday I received a letter from Harriett, written at Greenup. She says she has just returned from your house; and that Father [is very] low, and will hardly recover. She also s[ays] you have written me two letters; and that [although] you do not expect me to come now, yo[u wonder] that I do not write. I received both your [letters, and] although I have not answered them, it is no[t because] I have forgotten them, or been uninterested about them -- but because it appeared to me I could write nothing which could do any good. You already know I desire that neither Father or Mother shall be in want of

any comfort either in health or sickness while they live; and I feel sure you have not failed to use my name, if necessary, to procure a doctor, or any thing else for Father in his present sickness. My business is such that I could hardly leave home now, if it were not, as it is, that my own wife is sick-abled. (It is a case of baby-sickness, and I suppose is not dangerous.) I sincerely hope Father may yet recover his health; but at all events tell him to remember to call upon, and confide in, our great, and good, and merciful Maker; who will not turn away from him in any extremity. He notes the fall of a sparrow, and numbers the hairs of our heads; and He will not forget the dying man, who puts his trust in Him. Say to him that if we could meet now, it is doubtful whether it would not be more painful than pleasant; but that if it be his lot to go now, he will soon have a joyous [meeting] with many loved ones gone before; and where [the rest] of us, through the help of God, hope ere-long [to join] them.

Write me again when you receive this.

Affectionately A. Lincoln

Abraham's letter is beautifully poignant in its gentle words to be given to his father in his final illness. It is the Lincoln of our better angels. However, some have cited the letter as acceptable evidence of the low regard with which Abraham considered his father.

Abraham used the word "painful" as a description of the sorrow he would feel if he were to see his father on his deathbed. The pain he would experience was not a loathing or disdainful pain, but rather a sorrowful pain. The "loathing pain" interpretation would be totally contrary to Abraham's nature, a nature that found it hard to harm an ant, turtle, turkey, or small animal, much less his father on his deathbed.

If the "loathing pain" interpretation were true, it would be Abraham and not Thomas who would and should suffer in repute. What son would write such a cruel letter to his 73-year-old father in his final moments of life? A dastardly, mean-spirited, and cruel son. Abraham had none of those characteristics.

When the letter was received, Thomas was dying, partially if not totally blind, and very weak. He was probably beyond the point of being capable of reading Abraham's letter, and possibly unable to understand what it said when read to him. His wife Sarah, however, was not. It would have been Sarah, not Thomas, who would have been the recipient of Abraham's cruel judgment. Surely Abraham realized this as he wrote the letter, and he would not have hurt his beloved stepmother in this way.

To support the "loathing pain" interpretation, some point out that Abraham did not attend his father's funeral that was held only a short time after the January letter. Some suggest and some with great certitude assert that Abraham's absence is clear evidence of his disdain for his father.

But, one must ask, who would suffer the shame of Abraham's slight? Not Thomas. He was dead. It would have been Sarah, but Abraham would not have punished poor Sarah in this manner. Acts of intentional, harmful judgment were not something that were a part of Lincoln's character. And how presumptuous to think that Abraham left us such little clues of his hatred of his father, clues that future historians might examine like tea leaves and discern the truth of that relationship.

Common sense is often the best method to determine the meaning of human activity or inactivity. In 1851, communication and travel were slow. Burials were not. By the time Abraham learned of his father's death, arranged for the care of his Springfield family, and undertook a 100-mile journey across the January prairie to Coles County, the funeral would have been long over.

And if one accepts the premise that important deductions can be made about one's feelings for another by failure to attend a funeral, then why no similar analysis and judgment about Mary and her father, Robert Todd? Neither Mary nor Abraham Lincoln attended his funeral after his death on July 17, 1849, at age 58 in Lexington, Kentucky.

One cannot conclude that Abraham did not attend his father's funeral because he disliked him or had extreme, unresolved issues with him. I believe that it was the living, Mary and the new baby boy Willie, and their needs that Abraham chose to care for, rather than his father's final illness and death. To read more into Abraham's failure to attend his father's funeral defies common sense and is a real stretch.

Thomas Lincoln was a man well suited for his place and time, on the cutting edge of the 19th - century American western frontier with thousands of other like men. He moved into places where there was little or no semblance of western civilization, and brought the rough, foundational elements of that civilization to those new places. He did so by establishing a home, raising a family, providing for them through subsistence farming and masterful cabinet making, participating in the churches, the militia and public institutions of the communities where he lived and fending off the last resistances of the American Indians. He rightfully and thankfully demanded that his son assist in these tasks as he grew. Without the vanguard of Thomas and his ilk, the subsequent flow of American settlers could not have occurred. There would have been no Abraham Lincoln.

I respectfully urge Lincoln historians to take a fresh look at Thomas and reconsider their judgments. To do so will be a pursuit not only of truth, but also answer the call of the better angels within us.

Richard E. Hart  
Springfield, Illinois  
October 1, 2018

## Acknowledgements and Thanks

My interest in Thomas Lincoln furniture began after talking to Steve Haaff and participating in a 2017 panel on Thomas Lincoln hosted at the Elijah Iles House in Springfield, Illinois where Steve spoke. Steve is a native of Spencer County, Indiana, and is a master woodworker and an expert on Thomas Lincoln cabinetry. He is particularly fond of furniture in the federal style (1790-1820), about the same time period that Thomas Lincoln was working as a carpenter and cabinetmaker. Steve's first exposure to the work of Thomas Lincoln was while Steve was visiting his elderly cousin in the early 1980s. The cousin owned an original corner cabinet that Thomas Lincoln had built for the family ancestors. That encounter was the beginning of Steve's lifetime journey to find, document, and reproduce examples of Thomas Lincoln made cabinets. Steve made patterns from them, learned what tools Thomas worked with and availed himself of all the same sorts of clues any expert uses to authenticate antiques and art. His work has resulted in a new and better understanding and appreciation of Thomas Lincoln, the man who fathered and raised Abraham.

Thomas Lincoln may have been a rough and restless man with no education, but he was also a respected carpenter and cabinetmaker who brought an artistic eye to his work.

Steve Haaff.<sup>4</sup>

Many others have helped me discover Thomas Lincoln and his furniture. Some have generously shared information about Thomas as a carpenter and cabinetmaker. Institutions and individuals have shared photographs and they are acknowledged in captions below each photograph. The professionals at these institutions having Thomas Lincoln pieces have been more than generous in sharing information. I thank all of you.

A special thanks to my friend Louise Taper who has inspired me by her devotion, knowledge and passion in collecting and sharing all things Lincoln. Louise's Foreword describes one of her Thomas Lincoln's pieces, a bed, and its journey to the Gerald Ford Museum. Thank you, Louise.

## Notes on the Composition of This Study

I have attempted to collect provenance information and photographs of all known furniture pieces and buildings made by Thomas Lincoln. I have arranged them as best I can in the order they were created--chronological order. Beginning with the earliest piece and coming forward in time, I have given a number to each piece from the earliest, being number one, and the most recent and last piece being number 32. The initials "T. L.", for Thomas Lincoln, precede each number. My hope is that the numbering system will reveal and make sense of the timeline of Thomas' career as a carpenter and cabinetmaker. I hope that the numbering system will be adopted in the future by those writing about Thomas' furniture so that it becomes a standard--a uniform system of identification. Gerald McMurtry, early Thomas Lincoln scholar and collector, gave Roman numbers to identify Thomas' cupboards and customary numbers to identify other furniture. Names have also been used to identify individual pieces. This is very confusing and hinders communication about a piece being studied. I have noted these McMurtry identifiers in my descriptions, but would advocate that my suggested common numbering system be used instead in the future.

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<sup>4</sup> Statement made at a program on *Thomas Lincoln, the tools of his trade and examples of his master cabinetry work* held on Saturday, March 7, 2015 at the Visitor Center Auditorium at Lincoln Log Cabin State Historic Site, Lerna, Illinois. <http://www.lincolnlogcabin.org>

## **Second Addition Explanation**

The first edition of this book was published in early August 2019. Shortly after that publication, I sent copies to a number of friends and people who had assisted me by providing photographs and information about the furniture pieces made by Thomas Lincoln, Abraham's father. Within a few weeks after making these gifts, I learned that I had left out one corner cupboard. It was the Lincoln Corner Cupboard described in this second edition and given the number TL 19 (a). As time goes by, I trust that additional information about Thomas and his furniture pieces will surface. If this book stimulates future findings and sharing, that is a good thing and will require future editions to include any new finds.

Richard E. Hart  
September 11, 2019

## Thomas Lincoln Trained as Cabinetmaker

...Thomas Lincoln constructed quite a bit of furniture and was good at it. I feel in time we will come to find out that he was a better man than most people have given him credit of being.

John J. Fierst  
Jasper, Indiana  
August 2, 1964

Cabinet making was one of Thomas Lincoln's sources of income and the creation of corner cupboards his specialty.<sup>5</sup> From the fall of 1786 to the turn of the century, age 8 to 22, Thomas lived in a log cabin with his widowed mother in Washington County, Kentucky. Exactly when Thomas trained to be as a cabinetmaker is not known, but by 1796 when he was eighteen years of age, he was doing rough carpentry and making plain furniture. It was in that year that he worked for Samuel Haycraft and made a cherry sugar chest for Mrs. Haycraft. This is his first known extant piece.

Jesse Head, a close neighbor of Thomas and his mother, Bathsheba, was a cabinetmaker of some note. A native of Frederick County, Maryland, he was about nine years older than Thomas Lincoln. In addition to his cabinetmaking, he took depositions and preached.

Jesse's fifty-acre farm on Read Run was located in "the midst of the Lincolns and Berrys . . ." in Washington County, Kentucky. This proximity provided Thomas with ample opportunity to learn the trade of a carpenter and cabinetmaker from Jesse. Jesse is known to have had at least one recorded instance of a young man being bound to him for three and one-half years to learn the art of a cabinetmaker. At the end of his apprenticeship, the master craftsman would give the apprentice a joiner, fore plane, jack and smoothing-plane.

As early as 1797, Thomas Lincoln was employed in building a mill dam. For the next four or five years he seems to have been roaming about the country, spending a year with his Uncle Isaac in Tennessee and some time with his mother in Washington County, Kentucky. By the year 1803 Thomas had acquired 240 acre piece of property near Elizabethtown, Kentucky and here he was a cabinet-maker as well as a farmer. It was about 1803 that at age 25 or so, he created the Mill Creek Cherry Corner Cupboard. (TL 3) and also the John Wesley Hoskinson corner cupboard. (TL 2) I judge these two cupboards to be among his finest creations. They are simple and use basic geometrical forms for decoration and creative inlay. Their mass and stature are strong without being overwhelming. He was a master at his craft at age 25.<sup>6</sup>

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<sup>5</sup> Gerald McMurtry in *Lincoln Lore*, Number 513, related in some detail how Thomas Lincoln worked as a carpenter between the years 1803 and 1809.

<sup>6</sup> On June 12, 1806, Reverend Jesse Head, the Methodist minister, performed the marriage ceremony uniting Nancy Hanks and Thomas Lincoln.

## Thomas Lincoln's Tools

Christopher Columbus Graham, an old friend of the Thomas Lincoln family in Hardin County, Kentucky, often visited Thomas Lincoln and his family in their home and knew the family well. He claims that “Tom Lincoln had the best set of carpenter’s tools in Hardin County.”

Between 1804 and 1808, during the early period of Thomas Lincoln’s residence in Hardin County, merchants operating under the name of Bleakley and Montgomery opened a store at Elizabethtown. Some of the Blakeley and Montgomery ledger books are now available and reveal some interesting facts about Thomas’ early purchased for his trade.<sup>7</sup> An itemized list of tools and supplies purchased from Bleakley & Montgomery follows:

|                |                    |                                    |
|----------------|--------------------|------------------------------------|
| Aug. 8, 1804   | 1 casteel saw      | paid the sum of eighteen shillings |
| Sept. 6, 1804  | 1 plane bit        | one shilling and six pence         |
| Nov. 10, 1804  | 1 file             | one shilling and six pence         |
| Feb. 27, 1805  | 1 saw              | nine shillings                     |
| Aug. 27, 1805  | 1 Foot Adze        |                                    |
| June 21, 1806  | 1 shoe knife       |                                    |
| July 2, 1806   | ½ Dozen screws     |                                    |
| Sept. 19, 1807 | 1 Gimlet           |                                    |
| June 3, 1808   | Sandpaper & Screws |                                    |

This list of tools and supplies – casteel saw, plane bit, sandpaper, screws, a gimlet – indicate that Thomas was plying his trade as a carpenter and cabinet maker at this time. In 1807, he was also charged for items used in his trade, and a credit of twelve shillings was made against these charges. The balance was entered by the storekeepers as “Balance put to his credit of work done.” At a public sale on January 15, 1807, Thomas bought an old sword. He may have made it into a drawing knife to give him further equipment for his carpenter’s chest.<sup>8</sup>

### Thomas Lincoln’s Hammer and Woodworking Tools



Thomas Lincoln’s metal claw hammer with wooden handle, Woodworking tools, Axe head, Scythe blade  
Lincoln Collection, University of Chicago, Chicago, Illinois<sup>9</sup>

I have this day sold to Dr. William E. Barton the head of a hammer which belonged to and was for many years used by Thomas Lincoln. My son Clarence T. Hall has fitted in a new handle from hickory that grew on the Thomas Lincoln farm. The handle of course is entirely new, but the head is as described Witness,

Janesville, Ill.  
May 10, 1929

<sup>7</sup> *Lincoln Lore*, Number 1479, May 1961, Dr. R. Gerald McMurtry, editor, published by The Lincoln National Life Insurance Company, Fort Wayne, Indiana. (Hereafter referred to as *Lincoln Lore 1479*.)

<sup>8</sup> *Thomas Lincoln’s Tools and Supplies*, *Lincoln Lore*, Number 1577, July 1969, Dr. R. Gerald McMurtry, editor, published by The Lincoln National Life Insurance Company, Fort Wayne, Indiana, p. 4. (Hereafter referred to as *Lincoln Lore Number 1577*.) *Lincoln Lore Number 1479*.

<sup>9</sup> *Our Lincoln: Bicentennial Icons from the Barton Collection of Lincolniana* <https://www.lib.uchicago.edu/collex/exhibits/exourl/alcove-case-4/> William E. Barton considered artifacts from Lincoln’s life to be an important part of his collection. These tools were once owned by Thomas Lincoln, Lincoln’s father, who was a lifelong farmer as well as a carpenter and furniture maker. Barton purchased the tools from Nancy A. Hall, great-granddaughter of Thomas Lincoln’s second wife, Sara Bush Lincoln. Nancy Hall testified to Barton that the tools “have been in

## Thomas Lincoln’s Plane and Auger

### ROBERT BERRY HAS RELICS OF LINCOLN

#### Old Jack Plane and Brace for Bits Had Been in Lincoln Family For Many Years

Robert Berry, of this city, has a Jack plane and a brace for auger bits, both of which were used in the Lincoln family in Kentucky. The plane was used and owned by Thomas Lincoln. It is of regular length, about 20 inches long, and made of sugar wood. The blade looks as if it might have been hammered out by a blacksmith, and the Wood part carved out by hand. The brace is ornamented with brass, and bears the date of 1731. The plane belonged to Thomas Lincoln when he lived in Kentucky, where Abe Lincoln was born, and the brace was the property of Thomas Lincoln’s father and the date indicated that it was in the Lincoln family in a very early day.

Mr. Berry says that the history of these tools as well as the tools came to him through his grandfather, Nathaniel Petty, who lived near the Lincolns in Kentucky. In trading back and forth or borrowing, the tools were left in possession of Nathaniel Petty when the Lincoln family left Kentucky. The Lincoln family located first in Indiana, and later in Illinois and finally established a home near Johnstown, which was the last Lincoln home.

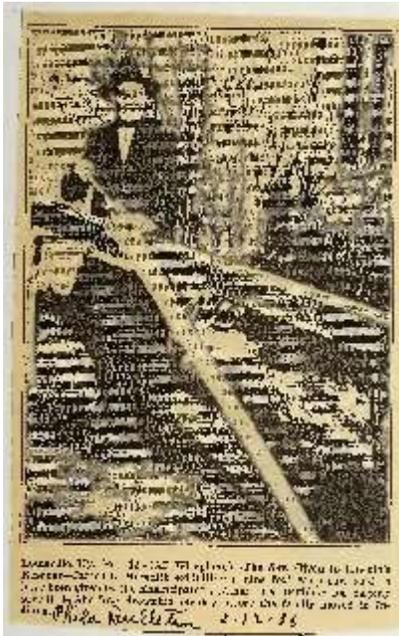
These relics owned by Mr. Berry bear marks that would indicate that the story is a true one, and they were once a part of the set of tools used by the Lincoln family. When Nathaniel Petty left Kentucky, he came to Illinois and settled in Champaign County. J. B. Petty, a grandson of Nathaniel Petty, a grandson of Nathaniel Petty, now lives in Effingham where he conducts the largest store in the city.<sup>10</sup>



our home all my life and . . . were the property of Thomas Lincoln, who died in our home in 1851, his widow dying in the same cabin in 1869.” William E. Barton considered artifacts from Lincoln’s life to be an important part of his collection. These tools were once owned by Thomas Lincoln, Lincoln’s father, who was a lifelong farmer as well as a carpenter and furniture maker. Barton purchased the tools from Nancy A. Hall, great-granddaughter of Thomas Lincoln’s second wife, Sara Bush Lincoln. Nancy Hall testified to Barton that the tools “have been in our home all my life and . . . were the property of Thomas Lincoln, who died in our home in 1851, his widow dying in the same cabin in 1869.”

<sup>10</sup> *Journal*, Tuscola, Illinois, Thursday August 7, 1930. *Curios and Relics: Tools Wood Working Tools Owned by Thomas Lincoln, excerpts from newspapers and other sources*, from the files of the Lincoln Collection, at [archive.org/details/curiosrelicstoolinc\\_22/page/n3](http://archive.org/details/curiosrelicstoolinc_22/page/n3).

## Thomas Lincoln's Whipsaw<sup>11</sup>



One saw owned by Thomas Lincoln deserves some special notice. The last task the Abraham Lincoln completed in southern Indiana before the family moved to Illinois is described by a neighbor in these words, “Abe whipsawed, saw him cutting down a large tree one day; I asked him what he was going to do with it; he said he was going to saw it into planks for his father’s new house—the house was not completed until after Lincoln left for Illinois.” We can say, therefore, that Thomas Lincoln owned a whipsaw. But just what is a whip saw?

Unfortunately, the term “whip saw” was used in the past for two quite different kinds of saws. One is the saw usually called today a cross-cut saw (it may be either a “one-man-cross-cut saw” or a “two-man cross-cut saw.” These saws were used to cut a log into lengths, that is, to cut across the grain. So, for example, an English writer in 1777 called a two-man cross-cut saw a “whip saw.



The photograph to the right is of the back of the Lincoln Family Cherry Corner Cupboard TL 17 (a) showing the marks made by a whipsaw.<sup>12</sup>

The other saw is one that is more frequently called a pit saw. It is a saw with a very long blade up to ten feet long used to cut boards and planks from a log, that is, with the grain. There are manuscript records from Massachusetts between 1647 and 1677 referring unequivocally to saws of this type as whip saws. On the other hand, a hardware catalog of 1865 shows these saws and calls them pit saws.

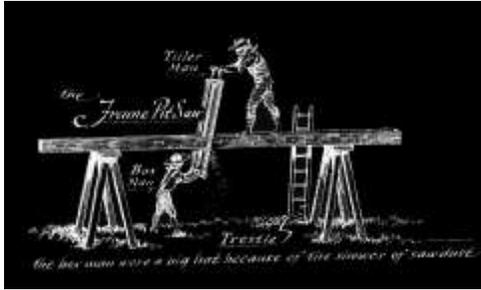
So, was the whip saw young Abraham Lincoln was using one that cut across the grain or one that cut with the grain? The neighbor quoted says that Abraham was going to saw the log into planks, which would therefore imply that the saw in question was one we would call a pit saw. On the other hand, a pit saw required two men to use it, the term pit saw seems to have been in use in the nineteenth century, and no cabinetmakers’ inventory listed a pit saw. Probably the saw in question, then, was what we today could cross cut saw.

**Sawset:** In order for a typical saw to cut properly, it must be “set”: That is, one tooth must be bent slightly to one side while the next tooth is bent an equal amount in the opposite direction. If this is not done, the saw will bind in the cut. The inventories show that few cabinetmakers in the years under survey owned sawsets. Nonetheless, since Thomas Lincoln owned saws and files with which to sharpen them, it is quite possible that he owned a sawset, for this is a simple and inexpensive tool. It is possible to set a saw by tapping each tooth with a punch and a hammer though this is a very tedious process. Thomas Lincoln was an excellent saw setter

**Scraper:** It is quite likely that scrapers were used in Thomas’ final finish of wood surfaces, yet they do not appear in the inventories.

<sup>11</sup> *Curios and Relics: Tools Whipsaw Owned by Thomas Lincoln, excerpts from newspapers and other sources*, from the files of the Lincoln Collection, at [archive.org/details/curiosrelicstoolinc\\_15/page/n1](http://archive.org/details/curiosrelicstoolinc_15/page/n1).

<sup>12</sup> This picture was taken at the Indiana State Museum, Indianapolis, Indiana on June 29, 2013 where this cupboard was on display for one day.



At the time the logs had to be hand-sawn, and so a pit was dug and the log was positioned on a platform. One man would be in the pit and another man on top to do the sawing, he said. “That’s where the term ‘underdog’ comes from, because no one wanted to be in the pit,” Steve Haaff said.



Photographs of Thomas Lincoln’s Whipsaw<sup>13</sup>

The photograph to the right is of the wood that makes up the back of the Lincoln Corner Cupboard TL 17 b. The wood shows the markings made when the wood for this piece was sawed by whipsaw.



Thomas Lincoln’s Whipsaw<sup>14</sup>

<sup>13</sup> The Register of the Kentucky State Historical Society, Vol. 28, No. 82. *Curios and Relics: Tools Whipsaw Owned by Thomas Lincoln, excerpts from newspapers and other sources*, from the files of the Lincoln Collection, at [archive.org/details/curiosrelicstoollinc\\_15/page/n1](http://archive.org/details/curiosrelicstoollinc_15/page/n1). This is the whipsaw that Thomas Lincoln used in Kentucky.

<sup>14</sup> The Register of the Kentucky State Historical Society, Vol. 28, No. 82. *Curios and Relics: Tools Whipsaw Owned by Thomas Lincoln, excerpts from newspapers and other sources*, from the files of the Lincoln Collection, at [archive.org/details/curiosrelicstoollinc\\_15/page/n1](http://archive.org/details/curiosrelicstoollinc_15/page/n1).

COUNTY OF JEFFERSON)  
STATE OF KENTUCKY)

Joseph LEE POWELL, being first duly sworn by me deposes and states as follows:

That his name is Joseph Lee Powell, age eighty-two years, and that he lives in Larue County, Kentucky, near Hodgenville, on Rural Route No. 2 and is the son of Peter R. Powell, now deceased.

Affiant further states that Abraham Lincoln gave to his father a certain whip saw, which was used for sawing lumber by hand power in the year of 1817 or 1818, at the time the Lincoln family moved from Kentucky to Indiana and that the saw remained in affiant's family ever since.

The affiant further states that the saw was a very valuable tool and the only one of its kind in the community known to his father; that since it was his father's custom to so mark his tools with a secret mark, the saw was marked with three notches filed about twelve inches from the big end of the saw and on the back thereof, representing his initials "P. R. P." and that also the same initials were indented with a wrench on the big end of the saw.

The affiant states the saw presented to him at the time of this affidavit is the saw, to his personal knowledge, that was given to his father and Austin Gellisher, for their heroic deed in saving his life from the treacherous waters of the Hellins Fork River, just a short time before leaving Kentucky, by Abraham Lincoln himself, even though he was only eight or nine years of age, and affiant's father was only ten or eleven years of age; that Abraham Lincoln's father Thomas Lincoln, who valued the saw very much gave it to Abraham for that purpose and as a token of appreciation for their services.

The affiant further states that while he is now eighty-two years of age, he still has all his faculties and is of sound memory; that realizing he has but a short time in which to live he would have no motive for making a false statement and that, therefore, the foregoing statements are true, having had personal knowledge, since he was large enough to remember, of the saw and his father's solemn narrative of above stated facts.

I, Cecil Bell, a notary Public in and for the State and County aforesaid, hereby certify that the foregoing affidavit of Joseph Lee Powell, was taken by me this April 1, 1929.

WITNESS MY HAND AND SEAL This April 1, 1929.

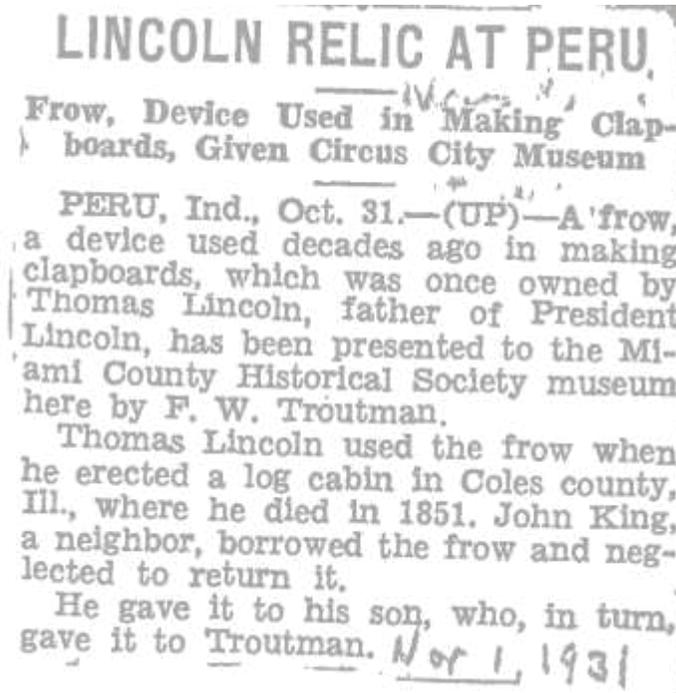
NO COMMISSION REQUIRED

Copy

Affidavit of Joseph Lee Powell Regarding Thomas Lincoln's Kentucky Whipsaw<sup>15</sup>

<sup>15</sup> *Curios and Relics: Tools Whipsaw Owned by Thomas Lincoln, excerpts from newspapers and other sources, from the files of the Lincoln Collection, at archive.org/details/curiosrelicstoolinc\_15/page/n1.*

### Thomas Lincoln's Frow



Roger McBain

Sunday, May 29, 2011

We made an unexpected, tactile connection to Lincoln across the street, in the Fayette County Museum and Artworks Gallery. After talking with us about photographs of Lincoln's family and a large mural depicting Vandalia in Lincoln's time, one of our museum hosts did something remarkable. She opened a cabinet and pulled out a heavy, iron blade fitted with a worn wooden handle. She showed us the letters "AL" etched into the back of the blade, explaining that it was Abraham Lincoln's froe, a tool he'd used to split shingles. And then she handed it to us. We took turns hefting the froe...<sup>16</sup>

<sup>16</sup> Looking for Lincoln | PHOTOS, *Evansville Courier & Press* at [www.courierpress.com/news/2011](http://www.courierpress.com/news/2011). *Curios and Relics: Tools Owned by Thomas Lincoln*, excerpts from newspapers and other sources, from the files of the Lincoln Collection, at [archive.org/details/curiosrelicstoollinc\\_4](http://archive.org/details/curiosrelicstoollinc_4).

### Thomas Lincoln's Wooden Mallet

Abraham Lincoln crafted and used an 11-inch-long wooden bench mallet with the initials "A.L." The mallet was made from a splitting maul, a larger tool used to drive metal wedges into logs to split them. It is inlaid with square-edged nails that comprise the former president's initials with a period for separation. A series of other nails were driven into the bench mallet to form the year "1829." Thomas and Abraham Lincoln used the bench mallet to drive hand-carved pegs into the Federal-style furniture that Thomas made.

For five generations, the bench mallet descended through the family of Barnabas Carter, one of the earliest settlers in Spencer County, Indiana. The Carters were neighbors of the Lincoln's after Thomas Lincoln moved his family to Indiana in 1816. Dale Ogden, former curator of the Indiana State Museum, said he's certain of the bench mallet's authenticity because the family still owns it.<sup>17</sup>



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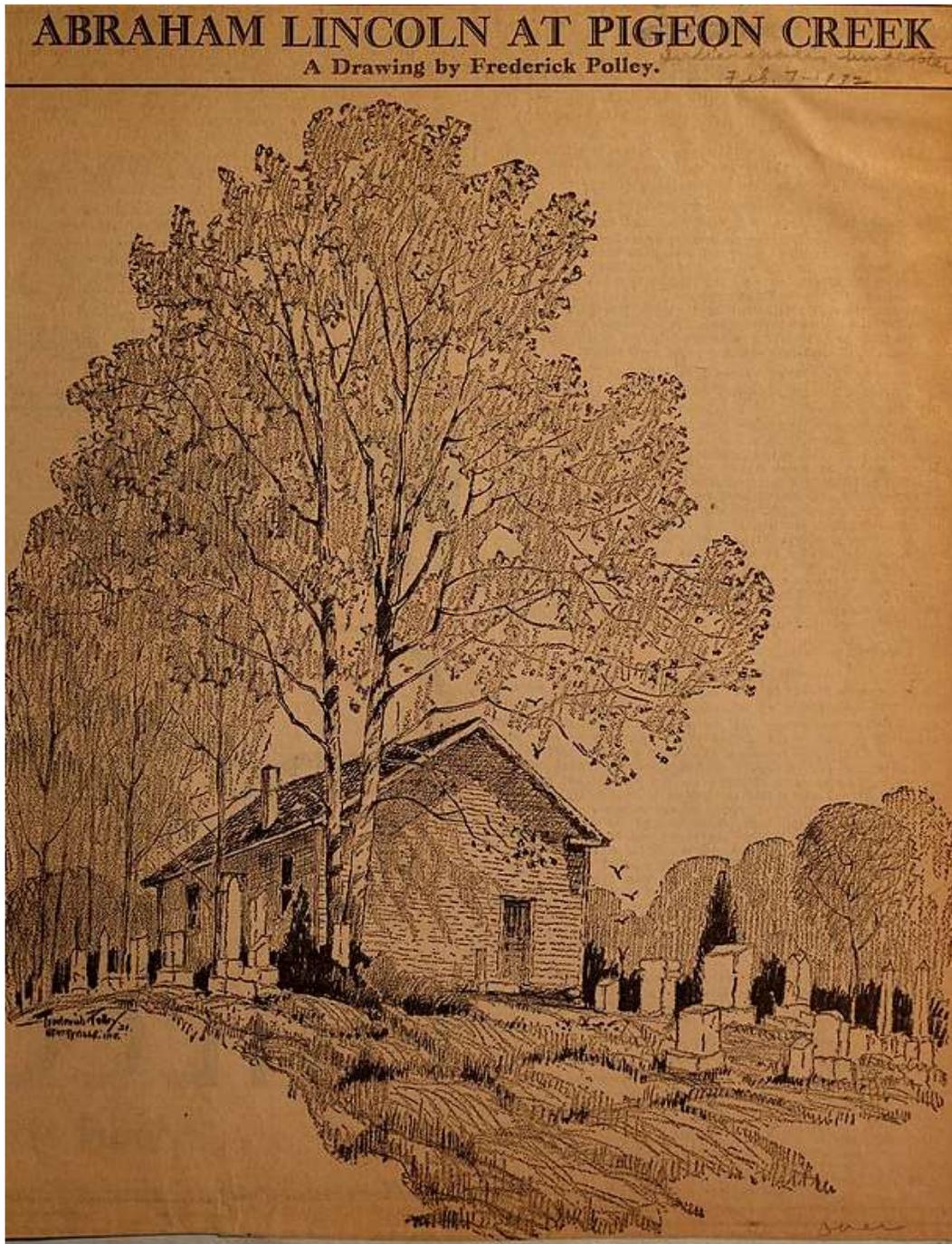
<sup>17</sup> <http://www.evansvilleliving.com/articles/the-lincoln-mallet>

## Thomas Lincoln Time Line

| Year        | Age      | Event   |
|-------------|----------|---|
|             |          | <b>Virginia</b>   |
| 1778 (1776) |          | January: Birth in Augusta (now Rockingham) County, Virginia<br>Father Captain in Revolutionary War  |
| <b>1782</b> | <b>4</b> | <b>Moves from Virginia to Jefferson County, Kentucky Territory</b>  |
|             | 4        | Living at Hugh's Station  |
| 1784        | 6        | Revolutionary War ends  |
| 1786        | 8        | Witnesses father killed by Indians near Louisville  |
|             | 8        | Fall: Moves with mother and lives with Haniah Lincoln on Beech Fork, Washington County, Kentucky  |
| 1786-1796   | 8-18     | Lives with mother and helps on her farm and hired out   |
| 1795        | 17       | June 5 to August 5: Serves in Washington County Militia   |
|             | 17       | Name on Washington County –age between 10 to 21   |
| 1796        | 18       | February: name on road petition in Washington County  |
|             | 18       | May 11: Name on Washington County – age between 10 to 21  |
|             | 18       | Leaves Mother and moves to Elizabethtown, Hardin County, Kentucky   |
|             | 18       | July 13: paid \$9.56 by Samuel Haycraft at Elizabethtown, Kentucky  |
| 1796-1802   | 18-24    | Works various jobs in Elizabethtown and surrounding country<br>Makes Haycraft Cherry Sugar Chest TL 1   |
| 1796-97     | 18       | Helps build Haycraft Mill at Elizabethtown; works with slaves<br>Makes Cherry Base TL 2   |
| 1797-1798   | 19-20    | Possibly works for Uncle Isaac Lincoln in East Tennessee  |
| 1797        | 19       | August 27: listed on Hardin county tax list as 21 years old or older  |
| 1799        | 21       | Returns to Washington County and lives with mother  |
| 1800        | 22       | Works as stonemason at Brandenburg, Meade County, Kentucky<br>July 14: listed one horse on Washington County tax list.<br>Makes John Hoskinson's Corner Cupboard TL 3   |
| 1801        | 23       | August 5: on Washington County tax list   |
| 1802        | 24       | Mother and sisters move to Hardin County, Kentucky<br>Flatboat trip to New Orleans<br>Militia   |
|             | 24       | Buys 238 acres in Hardin County, Kentucky   |
| 1803        | 25       | Meets Sarah Bush<br>June 26: Writes name as witness on promissory note<br>September 2: Buys first farm: Mill Creek 238 acres for \$574.07 in cash<br>October 19: serves on jury in Hardin County, Kentucky                                |
| 1804        | 26       | April 19: served on two juries<br>April 30: served on jury<br>Purchases cabinetmaker tools; best tools in Hardin County<br>Name on road petition in Hardin County<br>Listed one horse for Hardin County taxes                             |
| 1803-1806   | 26-28    | Slave patroller in Hardin County, Kentucky<br>Mill Creek Cherry Corner Cupboard TL 4  |
| 1805        | 27       | Purchases cabinetmaker tools<br>Helps build Hardin Thomas house TL 5<br>Makes fireplace surround Hardin Thomas house TL 6<br>Taxed on one horse in Hardin County<br>March: appointed patroller for three months                           |
| 1806        | 28       | Elizabethtown, Hardin County, Kentucky<br>Builds flatboat at West Point, Kentucky<br>Flatboat to New Orleans and walk back; paid<br>June 12: Marriage to Nancy Hanks in Washington County, Kentucky by Jesse Head<br>Joins Baptist Church |

|      |    |   |
|------|----|---|
| 1807 | 29 | February 10: Birth of Sarah Lincoln in cabin in Elizabethtown, Kentucky<br>Builds water mill for Geoghegan<br>Makes Richard Vernon cherry hutch TL 7<br>Makes Richard Vernon day bed and TL 8<br>Buys tools<br>March 25: Sues Geoghegan for collection of wages and<br>April 23: wins against Geoghegan: judgment for \$19.85, plus 75 cents costs<br>Makes Decker Cherry Corner Cupboard TL 9<br>Taxed on one town lot and one horse |
| 1808 | 30 | June 17 and November 15: Jury service 2 terms<br>Taxed on two house lots in Elizabethtown valued at \$40.00 and one horse<br>June: Paid by county to guard murderer<br>Abraham Lincoln conceived<br>Buys and moves to Sinking Spring Farm   |
| 1809 | 31 | Paid \$17.60 by county for guarding prisoner  |
|      | 31 | February 12: Birth of Abraham Lincoln, Hodgenville, Hardin County, Kentucky   |
|      | 31 | March 15: Serves on jury<br>Entered two horses on tax list  |
| 1810 | 32 | Has stable of horses  |
|      | 32 | Name on tax list, Hardin County, Kentucky   |
| 1811 | 33 | Litigation over title to Sinking Spring Farm<br>Moves to 30-acre Knob Creek Farm<br>July 20: on tax list in Hardin County<br>September 2: Serves on jury  |
| 1812 | 34 | Birth and death of Thomas Lincoln Jr.<br>Entered three horses for taxation<br>June 11: Serves on jury   |
| 1813 | 35 | September 1: Sued by Richard Mather on South Fork Farm<br>September 7: Files Answer in Mather Case<br>On Hardin County tax list   |
| 1814 | 36 | Wealth in Hardin County 19 out of 98 persons<br>Works in John Boone's distillery<br>Makes Dever black walnut corner cabinet TL 12<br>May 9: Appointed to appraise property in Joseph estate<br>October 27: Sells Mill Creek Farm for \$486.<br>Listed three horses for taxes  |
| 1815 | 37 | Taxed on 30 acres and 4 horses and has stable<br>Sued on Knob Creek Farm<br>Works in John Boone's distillery<br>Enrolls Abraham in Riney School<br>Makes drop leaf dining table TL 10<br>Makes cherry chest of drawers TL 11<br>Lincoln Hickory Chair TL 13   |
| 1816 | 38 | Joins Little Mount Church<br>Appointed Road Surveyor<br>Wins Mather Law Suit<br>Exploratory trip to Indiana and selects site for move<br>Enrolls Abraham in Riney School<br>Files cross bill in Mather Case<br>Sues Christopher Bush<br>Yellow Poplar Doll Bed TL 14<br><b>Moves to Spencer County, Indiana</b>   |
| 1817 | 39 | Builds cabin and clears land<br>Buys land in Indiana<br>Makes Small Walnut Stand Table TL 15<br>Makes Amos Richardson Cherry Cupboard TL 16<br>Makes Lincoln Family Cherry Corner Cupboard TL 17 (a)  |
| 1818 | 40 | Death of Nancy Hanks Lincoln<br>Makes David Lutz Cherry Corner Cupboard TL 17 (b)   |

|            |    |  |
|------------|----|--|
| 1819       | 41 | Enlow Cherry Mill Desk TL 18<br>Funeral for Nancy Hanks Lincoln<br>Votes<br>Enrolls Abraham and Sarah in Crawford School<br>Marriage to Sarah Bush Johnston<br>Blended family with 5 children and Dennis Hanks<br>Blind in one eye |
| 1820       | 42 | Makes David Thurman walnut corner cupboard TL 19<br>Makes David Thurman cherry Chest of Drawers TL 20  |
| 1821       | 43 | Builds Little Pigeon Baptist church and pulpit TL 21<br>Enrolls Abraham Lincoln in Swaney School   |
| 1823       | 45 | Mordecai Lincoln visits Thomas<br>Works for Squire Hall as carpenter and tan yard worker<br>Joins Little Pigeon Baptist Church<br>Appointed Trustee of Little Pigeon Baptist Church  |
| 1823-1827  |    | John Hanks living with Thomas Lincoln family   |
| 1824       | 46 | Makes walnut corner cupboards, cherry desk and bookcase<br>Appointed to attend church conference & acts as counselor to members<br>Enrolls Abraham in Dorsey School  |
| 1825       | 47 | Member of Little Pigeon Baptist Church & asked to arrange repairs<br>Appointed to talk to persons not in good standing at church   |
| 1826       | 48 | Makes Aaron Grigsby Walnut Corner Cupboard TL 23<br>Makes Reuben Grigsby Corner Cabinet TL 22  |
| 1827       | 49 | Helps with house raising<br>Builds Dr. Crook Cherry Desk and Bookcase TL 24<br>Builds Crawford Walnut Cupboard TL 25<br>Builds Josiah Crawford House TL 26<br>Builds Crawford Walnut Corner Cupboard TL 27                         |
| 1828       | 50 | Daughter Sarah dies  |
| 1829       | 51 | Appointed to church committee to settle dispute<br>Prepares to build new cabin<br>Builds William Wood House TL 28  |
| 1830       | 52 | Abraham turns 23<br><b>Moves to Illinois</b>   |
| 1831       | 53 | Settles in Coles County, Illinois<br>Builds Cabin TL 29  |
| 1845       |    | Walnut Blanket Chest TL 30   |
| Late 1840s |    | Pie Safe TL 31   |
| 1851       | 73 | Death of Thomas Lincoln, Charleston, Coles County, Illinois<br>Burial: Thomas Lincoln Cemetery, Pleasant Grove Township  |
| 1869       |    | Death of Sarah Bush Johnston Lincoln   |



**Kentucky**  
(1782-1816)  
Thomas Lincoln's Age: 4-38

Thomas Lincoln lived in Kentucky for 34 years, from 1782 to 1816. This was 47% of his 73-year life. While living in Kentucky, Thomas made 11 known pieces of furniture and one identified fireplace surround. He also assisted in the construction of at least one home for a neighbor.

**TL 1. Haycraft Cherry Sugar Chest (Furniture 3)**

Where Made: Hardin County, Kentucky

When Made: Summer 1796-Spring 1797

Age of Thomas Lincoln: 18-19

Last Known Location: Robert Woodford Crossfield, Lawrenceburg, Kentucky in April 2019

Thomas Lincoln, father of Abraham Lincoln worked as a millwright for a time for Samuel Haycraft, Sr. of Hardin County, Kentucky. During the summer of 1796 and continuing through the spring of 1797 Thomas Lincoln in his spare time made a cherry sugar chest for Samuel Haycraft, Sr's wife Margaret Van Meter Haycraft. The cherry sugar chest was used in the main house in Hardin County, Kentucky. Margaret gave the cherry sugar chest to her daughter-in-law Sarah Brown Helm as a wedding present. The chest was given to Sarah Maria Haycraft when she married Stephen McMurtry. Their son George Edgar McMurtry married Rebecca Smith who received the chest and passed it on to their son Joseph Samuel McMurtry. Joseph married Mable Kathleen Bell and they passed the chest to their daughter Helen Smith McMurtry.<sup>18</sup>

An affidavit affirming the historical authenticity of the sugar chest follows:

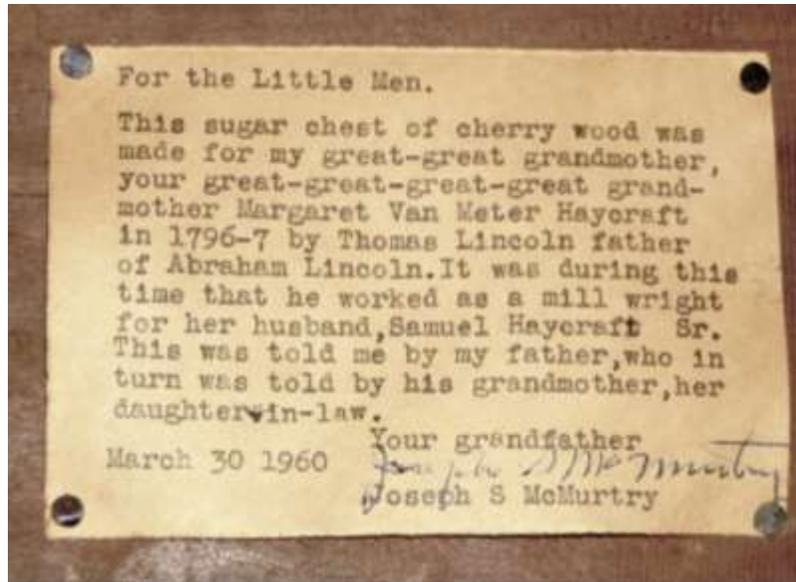
I, Joseph S. McMurtry, hereby certify that I was told by my father, G. E. McMurtry, who was in turn told by his mother, Sarah Maria McMurtry, the daughter of Samuel Haycraft, Jr., the son of Samuel Haycraft, Sr., that this cherry sugar chest was said to have been made by Thomas Lincoln for Mrs. Samuel Haycraft, Sr. of Elizabethtown, Kentucky in 1796 or 1797.

Joseph S. McMurtry Subscribed and sworn to before me this 24th day of April 1963.<sup>19</sup>

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<sup>18</sup> Correspondence via email of March 13, 2019, with John McMurtry Crossfield, the oldest son of Willie Walker and Helen Smith McMurtry Crossfield. Mr. Crossfield also furnished the color photographs of the piece.

<sup>19</sup> *Furniture Made By Thomas Lincoln, Lincoln Lore Number 1512*, pp. 1-4. (Hereafter referred to as *Lincoln Lore 1512*.) McMurtry gave this piece the designation "3" in the cited 1964 *Lincoln Lore*. Affidavit of Joseph S. McMurtry dated April 24, 1963.  
[https://archive.org/stream/thomaslincolnfamline\\_0/thomaslincolnfamline\\_0\\_djvu.txt](https://archive.org/stream/thomaslincolnfamline_0/thomaslincolnfamline_0_djvu.txt)  
[www.findagrave.com/memorial/8757545/samuel-haycraft](http://www.findagrave.com/memorial/8757545/samuel-haycraft)



Statement of Joseph S. John McMurry, March 30, 1960<sup>20</sup>



In April 2019, Robert Woodford Crossfield of Lawrenceburg, Kentucky, owned this sugar chest.

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<sup>20</sup> Lincoln Lore Number 1512.

**TL 2. Sugar Chest Walnut Base**

H 33" x W 37" x D 19"

Where Made: Kentucky

Date Made: Early 1800s

Thomas Lincoln Age: 22 or so

Last Known Location: Lincoln Home National Historic Site, Springfield, Illinois

*A "married" piece of a possible sugar chest walnut base and poplar trunk. The base has a single drawer with turned knobs, and turned legs. The trunk, with a newer painted black oval on the top for decoration, is made from poplar.*

Mariah Vance, an African-American servant in the Abraham Lincoln home, said that shortly after Thomas Lincoln's death in 1851, Abraham Lincoln asked his stepmother for the base as a sample of his father's craftsmanship. Later the trunk and base had been in storage separately and kind of "fell together" as one piece when things were shifted around in the storeroom. When the Lincolns were preparing to leave for Washington, Abraham Lincoln cleaned up the trunk and base and gave them to Mariah Vance. Later, Mariah sold the pieces to her biographer, Ada Sutton, who swore an affidavit in 1939 on this history of the trunk and base but without further supporting evidence that this was a Thomas Lincoln piece or determining who made the trunk. The National Society of Colonial Dames in America in the State of Illinois (aka the Colonial Dames) purchased the pieces from Ada Sutton in the 1950s and placed it in the Lincoln Home. They were transferred to the National Park Service in 1972.

*Based on affidavits, the base was part of a complete blanket chest made in the early 1800s by Lincoln's father, Thomas. After Thomas' death, Lincoln requested the chest and base but later the chest was so badly damaged it was removed and the base put in storage. By coincidence, a trunk had been stored as well that just fit into the base. Mr. Lincoln cleaned it up and refinished it (?) and Mary Lincoln placed it in the bedroom. Later one of the legs was split and it was returned to storage. When the Lincolns were getting ready to move to Washington, Mr. Lincoln took it to Danville and gave it to Mariah Vance.<sup>21</sup>*

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<sup>21</sup> Susan M. Haake, Curator, Lincoln Home National Historic Site, 413 South 8th Street, Springfield, IL 62701, (217) 391-3246  
susan\_haake@nps.gov



*Courtesy of the Lincoln Home National Historic Site, Springfield, Illinois*



*Courtesy of the Brown-Pusey House, Elizabethtown, Kentucky*

### **TL 3. John Wesley Hoskinson Corner Cupboard**

Where Made: Hardin County, Kentucky

When Made: 1800

Thomas Lincoln Age: 22

Last Known Location: Brown-Pusey House, Elizabethtown, Kentucky

Thomas Lincoln created this beautifully constructed butternut or walnut corner cupboard in the early 1800s. The masterful inlay is of holly wood. Many of Thomas's extant cabinets feature the same inlay on the cabinet frame, known as the "star and streamer" pattern.

*The cupboard belonged to John Wesley Hoskinson, 1836-1936, and wife Betty Crume, who lived near Constantine, Kentucky. It was donated to the Brown-Pusey House in 1999 by their great, great grandson, George Wesley Hoskinson.*



*Courtesy of the Brown-Pusey House, Elizabethtown, Kentucky*



*Courtesy of the Brown-Pusey House, Elizabethtown, Kentucky*



*Courtesy of the Brown-Pusey House, Elizabethtown, Kentucky*



Thomas Lincoln's star inlay from the John Wesley Hoskinson Corner Cupboard (TL 3)

**TL 4. Mill Creek Cherry Corner Cupboard (Cupboards I)**

a/k/a The Lincoln-Cowley-Viers-Garner Cherry Corner Cupboard

Where Made: Hardin County, Kentucky

When Made: 1803-1806

Thomas Lincoln Age: 25-28

Last Known Location: Abraham Lincoln Library and Museum, Lincoln Memorial University,  
Harrogate, Tennessee.

Thomas Lincoln created this beautifully constructed cherry corner cupboard. It was most likely used by his family in their Mill Creek home in Hardin County, Kentucky, where they lived from 1803 to 1806.

The cupboard is 88 inches tall, 53 inches wide, and 24 inches deep from the front to the rear corner. The original base has been replaced with a modern one of antique design, probably sometime in the late 1930's or early 1940's. The cupboard has two large upper doors and a pair of smaller doors on the base. There are three shelves in the upper section. The interior is made of wide poplar boards.

A cabinetmaker's skill can best be determined by his inlay, and Thomas Lincoln excelled in that skill. A wooden strip 49 inches long and 2.6 inches wide runs along the outer edge of each of the upper doors. These two strips are inlaid with streamers and are topped with a circle, inside of which is inlaid a four-pointed star design-- "star and streamer" design.

A carved and inlaid "hole and tooth" or "dentil" decoration runs along the top of the cupboard's front. This design appears on other cupboards of this period, but only Thomas Lincoln of all the pioneer cabinetmakers, attached the inlaid strips to his corner cupboard facings.

A legend persists in the Mill Creek area of Hardin County, Kentucky that while Thomas was transporting the cupboard to Indiana, the cupboard toppled out of a wagon into a rain swollen creek and was abandoned by Thomas. There are two versions as to exactly when the cabinet fell into the creek.

One version is that Thomas Lincoln made a flatboat journey to Indiana in the late summer or early fall of 1816 to mark land he was going to claim there. Some say that it was on this occasion that his boat capsized in the Rolling Fork River and the cupboard and Thomas' tools and nails fell into the creek.

The other version is that the cupboard was lost when Thomas Lincoln and his family moved by horse and wagon to Indiana in the late fall of 1816. Some say it was then that the cupboard fell into a swollen stream and was abandoned

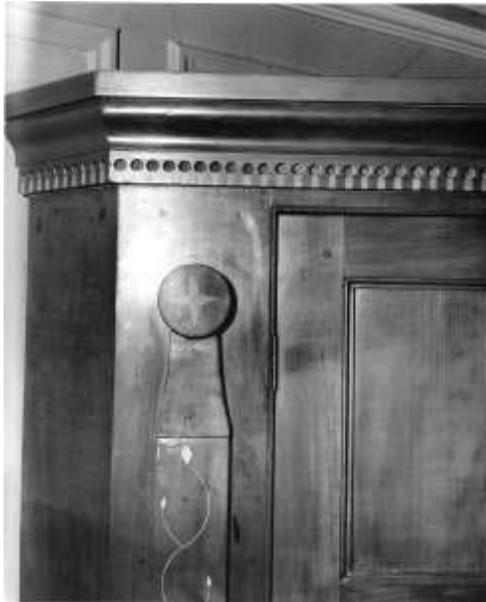
The loss of nails in the capsized explains why the Thomas Lincoln cabinets made while he was in Elizabethtown, Kentucky used nails and those first made in Southern Indiana were put together with wooden pegs.

Sometime thereafter, John T. Cowley rescued the cupboard from the creek and salvaged and restored the cupboard.<sup>22</sup> Later the cupboard was sold at the Cowley sale to Mrs. Martha Viers for fifty cents. Mrs. Viers then gave the cupboard to Mrs. Amos Garner.

R. Gerald McMurtry learned of the cupboard on a research trip to Hardin County, Kentucky and on August 23, 1938, he purchased the piece from Mrs. Garner for \$17.50, the price of a new cupboard that Mrs. Garner had seen for sale and admired.

McMurtry concluded that Thomas Lincoln likely made the cupboard. McMurtry had it restored to repair damage caused by mice and critters and to remove later additions to the original piece. Among these additions he thought were the inlaid strips alongside the doors, but McMurtry wanted them to be preserved. He later became convinced that the strips were original, and they are now reattached to the upper portion of the cupboard.<sup>23</sup>

In February 1961, this cupboard was in the possession of Gerald McMurtry, Fort Wayne, Indiana. It is now (2019) in the Abraham Lincoln Library and Museum, Lincoln Memorial University, Harrogate, Tennessee.<sup>24</sup>



*Courtesy of the Abraham Lincoln Library and Museum, Lincoln Memorial University, Harrogate, Tennessee*

<sup>22</sup> *Thomas Lincoln's Corner Cupboards*, *Lincoln Lore*, Bulletin of The Lincoln National Life Foundation, Number 1476, February 1961, pp. 1-4, Dr. R. Gerald McMurtry, editor, published by The Lincoln National Life Insurance Company, Fort Wayne, Indiana. (Hereafter referred to as *Lincoln Lore* Number 1476.) Some of this information comes from a February 6, 1939, *Lincoln Lore*. McMurtry gave this piece the designation "I".

<sup>23</sup> See also *Lincoln Herald* (XLV) February 1943, pp. 19-22. R. Gerald McMurtry's research on the cupboard is in a binder series housed in the vault of the Abraham Lincoln Library and Museum, Lincoln Memorial University, Harrogate, Tennessee.  
<https://lmlibrary.on.worldcat.org/search?queryString=au%3DThomas%20Lincoln.&databaseList=638>

<sup>24</sup> Lincoln Memorial Museum and Library, Lincoln Memorial University, 6965 Cumberland Gap Parkway, Harrogate, TN 37752 (850).512-5019 [www.LMUnet.edu](http://www.LMUnet.edu) The photographs of this piece have been provided courtesy of the Lincoln Memorial Museum and Library.



*Courtesy of the Abraham Lincoln Library and Museum, Lincoln Memorial University, Harrogate, Tennessee*

A bronze plaque attached to the inside of the top right door reads:

*THOMAS LINCOLN'S CORNER CUPBOARD/This cupboard was made by Thomas Lincoln, the father of the Sixteenth President, While a resident of Hardin County, Kentucky./Purchased by R. Gerald McMurtry/ August 23, 1938.*



*Courtesy of the Abraham Lincoln Library and Museum, Lincoln Memorial University, Harrogate, Tennessee*

**TL 5. Hardin Thomas House**

When Built: 1805

Where Built: Hardin County, Kentucky

Age of Thomas Lincoln: 27

Location: North of Elizabethtown, Kentucky

The two log houses pictured here are of the Hardin County, Kentucky home of Hardin Thomas and his family. The first was built in 1789 and the second and larger one was built about 1805 with the help of a family friend, Thomas Lincoln. Thomas also did the interior finish carpentry -- the stairways, the fireplace mantels and other woodwork.

*This house was built in 1805 about one mile north (U.S. 31 W) of Elizabethtown, Kentucky, and was originally owned by Hardin Thomas. Samuel Haycraft, Jr., in his 1869 book, A History of Elizabethtown, Kentucky And Its Surroundings, made the statement that "He (Hardin Thomas) lived in a house rather better than usual for that day, the carpenter's work of which was executed by Thomas Lincoln, the father of the late President; and the most of that work is to be seen at this day, sound as a trout, although done upwards of sixty years ago."*<sup>25</sup>

The Hardin Thomas house was set afire by an arsonist in May 2009 and suffered substantial damage. The community has since beautifully restored the house.

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<sup>25</sup> Lincoln Lore Number 1476.



*Hardin Thomas House: North of Elizabethtown, Kentucky*

**TL 6. Hardin Thomas House Pine Fireplace Surround (Furniture 4)**

Where Made: Hardin County, Kentucky

When Made: 1805

Age of Thomas Lincoln: 27

Last Known Location: Lincoln Room of the Armor Center Officers' Open Mess,  
Fort Knox, Kentucky

*Lincoln Mantle was made by Thomas Lincoln, father of the Great Emancipator in 1805  
and installed in a house he built for Hardin Thomas two miles north of Elizabethtown.*

*Presented to Camp Knox by Conquer Club.<sup>26</sup>*

Thomas Lincoln built this pine fireplace surround in 1805 as a part of the Hardin Thomas house, located approximately 5 miles south of the Mill Creek farm and about one mile north (U.S. 31 W) of Elizabethtown, Kentucky. The surround was removed and installed at Fort Knox by Major Radcliffe in 1919.

In the fall of 1919, when Camp Knox was under construction, Major William Radcliffe, a construction quartermaster, for a time lived in the Elizabethtown home of Mrs. J. F. Albert, a great-grand-daughter of Hardin Thomas. From Mrs. Albert, Major Radcliffe learned of the Hardin Thomas house, and from Mr. B. F. Jenkins he secured for the United States Government the Thomas Lincoln mantelpiece in that house. It was then installed in a building called "The Hostess House" at Camp Knox. After World War I the post was deactivated.

Later on, a civilian who lived on the edge of the reservation thought the mantelpiece was in danger of being destroyed and had it removed from "The Hostess House" which had become a Station Hospital. Without the authority of the United States Government, the mantelpiece was offered first to the Woman's Club at Elizabethtown on condition that it be installed in the Brown-Pusey Community House. However, Dr. William Allen Pusey, the donor of the community building, declined to let the mantelpiece be installed. The relic was then offered to the Kentucky Pioneer Memorial Association of Harrodsburg, Kentucky, which readily accepted it. However, while the mantelpiece was on display it was not incorporated in the building known as the Mansion Museum, but was attached to the wall adjoining the Music Room.

In 1934, when the army post was again reactivated, a new Officers' Club was built and Col. J. P. Barney, who was in command at Fort Knox, learned of the mantelpiece, possibly through construction quartermaster records. He took immediate steps to recover the mantelpiece and his claim to it could not be denied since government money had originally purchased it. Therefore, the mantelpiece came home to Fort Knox and now has a place of honor in what is known as "The Lincoln Room" of the Officer's Mess.<sup>27</sup>

<sup>26</sup> *Lincoln Lore Number 1476 and Lincoln Lore Number 1512.* McMurtry gave this piece the designation "4". *Bits and Pieces of Hardin County History*, published by the Hardin County Historical Society, Vol. III, No. 2, Robert Beimdlck, Editor April, 1982, *Odyssey of The Thomas Lincoln Mantel*.

<sup>27</sup> [https://archive.org/stream/thomaslincolnfamline\\_0/thomaslincolnfamline\\_0\\_djvu.txt](https://archive.org/stream/thomaslincolnfamline_0/thomaslincolnfamline_0_djvu.txt)

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<sup>28</sup> *Lincoln Lore Number 1476 and Lincoln Lore Number 1512.* McMurtry gave this piece the designation "4". *Bits and Pieces of Hardin County History*, published by the Hardin County Historical Society, Vol. III, No. 2, Robert Beimdlck, Editor April, 1982, *Odyssey of The Thomas Lincoln Mantel*.

<sup>29</sup> [https://archive.org/stream/thomaslincolnfamline\\_0/thomaslincolnfamline\\_0\\_djvu.txt](https://archive.org/stream/thomaslincolnfamline_0/thomaslincolnfamline_0_djvu.txt)



*Courtesy of the Lincoln Room, Fort Knox Leaders Club, Fort Knox, Kentucky*

**TL 7. Richard Vernon Cherry Hutch (Furniture 1)**

a/k/a Vernon-Dodge-Martin-Hoke Hutch

Where Made: Hardin County, Kentucky

When Made: 1807

Age of Thomas Lincoln: 29

Last Known Location: Mrs. L. B. Hoke, Elizabethtown, Kentucky in 1960.

In 1807, Thomas Lincoln was living at Elizabethtown, Hardin County, Kentucky and working as a carpenter, cabinetmaker, and wheelwright. Richard Vernon lived near Elizabethtown and Thomas made this cherry hutch for him.

Mrs. Emma Churchill, being duly sworn, states that her grandfather, Richard Vernon, lived near Elizabethtown in Hardin County, Kentucky, and that he had Thomas Lincoln, the father of Abraham Lincoln, who was also living near Elizabethtown and working at his trade as carpenter, cabinetmaker and wheelwright, make several pieces of furniture for him. She states that the said Thomas Lincoln made a cherry chest or side-board for her grandfather. She well remembers seeing this piece of furniture in her grandfather's home and later in the home of her aunt, Mrs. Lou Vernon Dodge. Her grandfather, Richard Vernon, told her that Thomas Lincoln made said furniture about the year 1807 and he kept it in his own home until his death when it became the property of his daughter, Mrs. Lou Vernon Dodge, who owned it until her death in the year 1908. When the furniture of Mrs. Lou Vernon Dodge was sold at public auction just following her death this chest was purchased by Mrs. Bettie J. Martin of Elizabethtown, Kentucky who has had it in her possession ever since that time. Mrs. Churchill further states that she can positively identify the chest as the same piece which was owned in her family for two generations and later by Mrs. Bettie J. Martin as the same piece which her grandfather told her was made by Thomas Lincoln (more than a hundred years ago) and that she knows said piece of furniture has never been out of the possession and ownership of the three parties named herein. Signed: Mrs. Emma Churchill Subscribed and sworn to before me by Mrs. Emma Churchill this October 17, 1927. Signed: L. K. English Notary Public Hardin County, Ky. My commission expires Feby. 19, 1928<sup>30</sup>

Mrs. Bettie Martin's property and household effects were sold on May 19, 1960. At this public auction the cherry hutch was sold to Mrs. L. B. Hoke for \$700.<sup>31</sup>

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<sup>30</sup> *Lincoln Lore Number 1476. Lincoln Lore Number 1512.* McMurtry gave this piece the designation "1". Affidavit of Emma Churchill, dated October 17, 1927. Mrs. Emma Churchill was the wife of Virgil H. Churchill who, for many years, conducted a jewelry store in Elizabethtown. The family lived on Main Cross Street (now West Dixie Avenue), moved away for some years, returning later to reside on College Street, where Mrs. Churchill died. Her aunt, Mrs. Lou Dodge, mentioned in the affidavit, lived in a large residence on West Dixie Avenue.

<sup>31</sup> [https://archive.org/stream/thomaslincolnfamline\\_0/thomaslincolnfamline\\_0\\_djvu.txt](https://archive.org/stream/thomaslincolnfamline_0/thomaslincolnfamline_0_djvu.txt)



In 1960, Mrs. L. B. Hoke, Elizabethtown, Kentucky, owned the hutch.<sup>32</sup>

**TL 8. Richard Vernon Cherry Day Bed (Furniture 2)**

a/k/a Vernon-Sweets-Meade Day Bed

Where Made: Hardin County, Kentucky

When Made: 1807

Age of Thomas Lincoln: 29

Last Known Location: The Abraham Lincoln Presidential Library and Museum, Springfield,

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<sup>32</sup> *Lincoln Lore* Number 1512.

## Illinois.

In 1807, Thomas Lincoln was living at Elizabethtown, Hardin County, Kentucky and working as a carpenter, cabinetmaker, and wheelwright. Richard Vernon lived near Elizabethtown and Thomas made a cherry day bed for him.

The cherry day bed was sold at public auction in Elizabethtown, Kentucky, on May 24, 1949. The bed was then the property of the late Mary E. Sweets who resided at 212 Mulberry Street, Elizabethtown, Kentucky.

AUCTION TUESDAY, MAY 24, 1:30 p. m.  
Antiques, Furniture, China, Silverware We have contracted with the McCullum Realty Co. to sell all of personal property of the late Mary E. Sweets at her home located at 212 Mulberry Street, Elizabethtown, Kentucky. One Cherry Day Bed Antiques Furniture First-Hardin National Bank, Exec of Mary R Sweets, McCullum Realty Co.<sup>33</sup>



Mr. Howes Meade of Paintsville, Kentucky bought this day bed, the authenticity of which was attested by an affidavit executed by Mrs. Emma Churchill, similar in to the one regarding the cherry hutch. TL 7. The Abraham Lincoln Presidential Library and Museum, Springfield, Illinois acquired the day bed in 2007 from Louise Taper as a part of the Taper Collection.

<sup>33</sup> Advertisement poster of Mary E. Sweets' sale announcing that the cherry day bed made by Thomas Lincoln was to be sold at auction on May 24, 1949. *Lincoln Lore* Number 1512, pp. 1-4. McMurtry gave this piece the designation "2".



*Courtesy of the Abraham Lincoln Presidential Library and Museum, Springfield, Illinois*

**TL 9. Decker-Kenneday-Crawford Cherry Corner Cupboard (Cupboards II)**

Place Made: Hardin County, Kentucky

Date Made: 1807-1808

Age of Thomas Lincoln: 29-30

Last Known Location: Minnie Patterson, Elizabethtown, Kentucky in 1961.

Thomas Lincoln made this cherry corner cupboard in about 1807 or 1808, while he resided in Elizabethtown, Kentucky. Thomas created an interesting carved design across the top front and sides. He used the strips on the jamb facings, although they were carved instead of inlaid. However, at the top of the strips he did use a variation of the “star” inlay. Two drawers add to the attractiveness of this cupboard.

An affidavit, dated August 4, 1945 and signed by Misses Sallie G. Hart and Maggie C. Hart, follows in part: “Affiants say that they are daughters of the late John Hart, who moved to a farm on Youngers Creek in Hardin County, a year or two prior to 1806; that the Decker Kenneday family then resided in the immediate vicinity of the farm of their father and the two families became intimately acquainted with each other; that they heard their father and mother state on several occasions that the cherry corner cupboard then in the possession of the Decker Kenneday family that Mollie Kenneday, and other members of the Decker Kenneday family have told affiants that said cupboard had been in the family for many years and was made by Thomas Lincoln. Affiants further state that when the Kenneday family moved from said farm the said corner cupboard was left in the house which was immediately thereafter occupied by John Crawford, who now resides on the Bardstown Road about six miles north of Elizabethtown, that Minnie Patterson purchased said cupboard from said John Crawford.<sup>34</sup>

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<sup>34</sup> This cupboard is from Dr. McMurtry’s photographic archives as follows: Figure 196. The Decker-- Kenneday-- Crawford cupboard of cherry wood. 03\_Kelly\_4PP\_ack-app\_p212-283.indd 281 3/30/15 9:38 AM 282 appendix 6. *Lincoln Lore* Number 1476. *Kentucky by Design: the decorative arts and American culture*, Erika Doss; Jerrold Hirsch; Jean M Burks; Andrew Kelly, Lexington, Kentucky, University Press of Kentucky, 2015. McMurtry gave this piece the designation II. R. Gerald McMurtry. *Thomas Lincoln’s Corner Cupboards: An Adventure in Historical Research*, *Lincoln Herald*, February 1943, pp. 19-22.



In 1961, Minnie Patterson, Elizabethtown, Kentucky was in possession of this cupboard.

**TL 10. Drop Leaf Extension Dining Table**

H 33" x W 37" x D 19"

Where Made: Hardin County, Kentucky

When Made: 1809-1816

Thomas Lincoln Age: 31-38

Last Known Location: Unknown



Drop Leaf Extension Dining Table, Hardin County, Kentucky

**TL 11. Five-drawer, Inlaid Cherry Chest of Drawers (Furniture 6)**

a/k/a Austin-Harbolts-Atchers-Smooth

Where Made: Hardin County, Kentucky

When Made: 1809-1816

Age of Thomas Lincoln: 31-38

Last Known Location: Private Collection. Southern Illinois University, Carbondale, Illinois.

Thomas Lincoln made this five-drawer, inlaid cherry chest of drawers for the Austin family of Hardin County, Kentucky. It later became the property of the Harbolt and Atcher families, all well-known families living in the vicinity of Elizabethtown, Kentucky. Some say that this is the most beautiful of all the Thomas Lincoln furniture.

Mrs. Clara Atcher, being duly sworn, states that according to statements made by the several members of the Atcher family, a cherry, five drawer, inlaid chest of drawers now owned by Bell Smoot of Elizabethtown, Kentucky, was made by Thomas Lincoln, father of Abraham Lincoln. She further states that according to the statements of the family that the chest was made by Thomas Lincoln for the Austin family. It descended to the Harbolt family and later to the Atcher family who sold it to the present owner, Bell Smoot. Mrs. Atcher states that she can identify the chest as the same one sold to Bell Smoot and that the chest has never been out of the ownership and possession of the three families named in the affidavit. Signed: Clara Atcher May 29, 1960 State of Kentucky County of Hardin Subscribed and sworn to before me a Notary Public for the county and State above written. Signed: Joe G. Gafford Notary Public My commission expires Dec. 31, 1962.<sup>35</sup>

Bell Smoot, who purchased the chest of drawers, had the piece in his possession for about forty years before securing the above affidavit. During the entire period that Smoot owned it, he was under the impression that the chest had been made by Thomas Lincoln.

At one time, the chest was the property of Southern Illinois University, a gift of Philip D. Sang of Chicago, Illinois.

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<sup>35</sup> Affidavit of Clara Atcher, dated May 29, 1960. *Lincoln Lore* Number 1512, pp. 1-4. McMurtry gave this piece the designation "6". *Curios and Relics: Furniture Dresser Made by Thomas Lincoln, excerpts from newspapers and other sources*, from the files of the Lincoln Collection, at [archive.org/details/curiousrelicsfurnlinc\\_60/page/n7](http://archive.org/details/curiousrelicsfurnlinc_60/page/n7).



*Courtesy of a private collector.*

**TL 12. Dever Black Walnut Corner Cupboard (Cupboards IV)**

Measurements: 78 1/4 x 55 x 21 1/2" (198.8 x 139.7 x 54.6cm)

Where Made: Hardin County, Kentucky

When Made: 1814

Age of Thomas Lincoln: 35

Last Known Location: Speed Art Museum, Louisville, Kentucky.

Thomas Lincoln made this black walnut corner cupboard in 1814 while he resided in Elizabethtown, Kentucky. It is perhaps the best identified of all of Thomas's cupboard work. The interior upper part of the cupboard, under the top shelf at the back, contains a crudely chiseled "T.L./1814". The cupboard is put together with pegs. Both the main portion above and the hutch below have paneled, double doors. A line decoration extends across the top and down either side of the upper portion of the cupboard.

In 1936, the cupboard was given to the J. B. Speed Memorial Museum (now the Speed Art Museum) by J. O. Dever of Summit, Hardin County, Kentucky, whose family owned it for over a century. J. O. Dever's 1929 affidavit in the Speed Art Museum files, states that the cabinet originally belonged to his grandfather, Thomas Dever, who came into possession of the cupboard in 1830. It also states that he heard his father, W. A. Dever, state that the cabinet was made by Thomas Lincoln. There are several other signed statements from various people, stating that they had heard the same statements about the cabinet being made by Thomas Lincoln.<sup>36</sup>



<sup>36</sup> *Lincoln Lore* Number 1476, pp. 1 and 3. McMurtry gave this piece the designation IV. R. Gerald McMurtry, *Thomas Lincoln's Corner Cupboards: An Adventure in Historical Research*, *Lincoln Herald*, February 1943, pp. 19-22.



*Courtesy of the Speed Art Museum, Louisville, Kentucky*

**TL 13. Lincoln Hickory Chair**

Where Made: Kentucky

Date Made: 1811-1815

Thomas Lincoln Age: Unknown

Last Known Location: Jennie Fisher, St. Louis, Missouri in May 1931.

4366 Waveland Ave.  
St. Louis, Mo. 5/7 – 1931

Louis A. Warren Director  
Lincoln Historical Research Foundation  
Fort Wayne, Indiana

Dear Mr. Warren:

I have delayed replying to yours of April 17 regarding the small chair made by his father for Abraham Lincoln while a child in Kentucky because I hoped to be able to send with same a good picture of chair. I am enclosing a very unsatisfactory snap shot of the chair by an amateur photographer. The seat of the chair is interwoven from hickory strips, and the whole chair is seasoned and hardened from age until it carries a natural polish.

In answer to your question as to who was the first recipient of the chair will say: When the Lincolns left Kentucky for Indiana Mr Lincoln \_\_\_\_ the chair to a Mrs. Sherman, (now this Mrs. Sherman had been married twice and I do not know her other husband's name) who later gave it to her daughter, Mrs. Samuel Parsons who was removing with her husband to Springfield, Mo. While in Springfield the Parsons meet with Financial reverses (Mr. Parsons was a RR man) and Mr. Parsons was very ill for a long time. During this period of adversity and illness, a neighbor Mrs. Alice Fisher, was very kind to the family and nursed Mr. Parsons to final recovery. The Parsons decided to remove to Monett, Mo. And Mrs. Parsons brought the little chair to Mrs. Fisher with the remark: "I haven't any money with which to reimburse you for your many acts of kindness to us in our distress & illness, but I am going to give you the Abraham Lincoln chair which I prize far more than money, as a remembrance." (It is presumed that Mrs. Parsons is still living and if so is about 70 years of age. Her husband Samuel Parsons was at one time a conductor on the Frisco.) Mrs. Alice Fisher treasured the chair very highly and often loaned it on the occasion of old Soldiers reunions and other public and civic affairs in Springfield, Mo., until she found it was in danger of mutilation by curiosity & souvenir hunters. Mrs. Alice Fisher died in 1909 and gave the chair to her son Harvey who prized it as a sacred bequest. On his death in 1917, it became the property of his wife Mrs. Jennie Fisher of 3515 St. Louis Ave. St. Louis. This lady is highly respected absolutely reliable and truthful conscientious to a fault and under no circumstances would be a party to a fraud or misrepresentation. I have known her for 35 years. She would make an affidavit of facts and information as handed down to her.

Any further correspondence or information you may need should be addressed to Mrs. Jennie Fisher 3515 St. Louis Ave. St. Louis, Mo.

Thanking you for your interest I am,

Sincerely

Mrs. Nellie Shelton<sup>37</sup>

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<sup>37</sup> *Curios and Relics: Chairs Made by Thomas Lincoln*, excerpts from newspapers and other sources, from the files of the Lincoln Collection, at [archive.org/details/curiosrelicsfurnlinc\\_21/page/n5](http://archive.org/details/curiosrelicsfurnlinc_21/page/n5).



Small chair made for Abraham Lincoln by his father. Seat interwoven from hickory strips, and the whole chair is seasoned and hardened from age until it carries a natural polish.

Letter of Mrs. Nellie Shevlin.

Possession of Mrs. Jennie Fisher

3515 St. Louis Ave., St. Louis, Mo.

May 1931

Small Chair Made by Thomas Lincoln<sup>38</sup>

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<sup>38</sup> *Curios and Relics: Furniture Chairs Made by Thomas Lincoln, excerpts from newspapers and other sources, from the files of the Lincoln Collection, at [archive.org/details/curiosrelicsfurnlinc\\_25/page/n1](http://archive.org/details/curiosrelicsfurnlinc_25/page/n1).*

**TL 14. Yellow Poplar Doll Bed**

Where Made: Kentucky

When Made: Circa 1816

Thomas Lincoln Age: 38

Last Known Location: Unknown

## ASHLAND WOMAN HAS BED LINCOLN'S FATHER MADE

**Mrs. C. L. Jones Tells How Little Article of Furniture  
Was Made for Child Because Bigger Lumber  
Was Not Available**

ASHLAND, Ky., June 29—(By The Associated Press)—A doll bed—claimed to be an example of the handicraft of Abraham Lincoln's father—is in the possession of Mrs. C. L. Jones of Ashland.

The bed, made of yellow poplar, is presumed to have been made in about the year 1818 by Thomas Lincoln for a child of whom he was most fond.

The child became ill, according to information in Mrs. Jones' possession and Lincoln told her he would make her a bed like those she had heard described often by one Stephen Jefferson, who was one of the "travelled"

gentry of the section. (He had once been over into Indiana!)

Lincoln started work on the bed, but couldn't find lumber long enough, so being a man who never cared much for hard work, he abandoned the idea of a large bed and made the small one.

"It is for your rag doll," he told the child. "Besides, it is much better than the big bed."

The doll bed has come down through the generations, and now is preserved as a Lincoln curio by Mrs. Jones.

"Perhaps some day I shall give it to a museum," she said today.

Newspaper Article About a Doll Bed Made by Thomas Lincoln<sup>39</sup>

**There is no available photograph of the doll bed.**

<sup>39</sup> *Curios and Relics: Furniture Beds Made by Thomas Lincoln, excerpt from newspapers and other sources, from the files of the Lincoln Collection, at [archive.org/details/curiosrelicsfurnlinc\\_2/page/n3](http://archive.org/details/curiosrelicsfurnlinc_2/page/n3).*

**Indiana**  
**(1816-1830)**  
**Thomas Lincoln Age: 38-52**

Thomas Lincoln lived in Indiana for fourteen years, from December 1816 to March 1830. This was 19% of his 73-year long life. In Indiana, Thomas made 12 known pieces of furniture. He also assisted in the building of a church and two houses. These were his most productive years.

**TL 15. Small Walnut Stand Table**

Where Made: Indiana

When Made: 1820-1830

Thomas Lincoln Age: 42-52

Last Known Location: Abraham Lincoln Birthplace National Historical Park near Hodgenville, Kentucky.<sup>40</sup>

Janesville, Illinois

December 22, 1928

Dear Mr. Townsend,

The Walnut Stand Table that I let you have today was made by Thomas Lincoln for his wife Sally Bush Johnston Lincoln who was my great grandmother and Abe Lincoln's Step Mother. I have heard my Father John J. Hall say that this table was brought by the Lincolns from Indiana to Illinois in the ox wagon that carried Abe Lincoln and his Father and Step Mother and the Hankses and the Halls my Father being one of them that made the journey.

I was born in the old Thomas Lincoln cabin on Goose Nest Prairie and Sally Bush Lincoln rocked me in the cradle. There my grandmother Matilda Johnston was her daughter by her first husband and Matilda Johnston married my Grandfather Squire Hall whose Mother was a sister of Lucy Hanks. The mother of Nancy Hanks Lincoln. After Thomas Lincoln died, Sally Bush Lincoln continued to live in the old cabin on Goose Nest Prairie and my Father John J. Hall her grandson lived with her.

That is how I happened to be born there. My Father and Sally Lincoln were living there when she died. The walnut stand table was in the old cabin from my earliest recollection and stayed there all the time we lived there when my Father broke up housekeeping. He came to live with me and moved his furniture over to my house. This table was among the things he brought. He lived with me until his death and the table has been in my possession ever since that time.

With kindest regards,  
Nancy A. Hall<sup>41</sup>

Foxboro, Mass.

June 6, 1929

Hon. William H. Townsend,

Lexington, Kentucky-

My dear Mr. Townsend:

I congratulate you heartily on your purchase from Mrs. Nancy A. Hall of a table made by Thomas Lincoln. I have seen this table in her home near Janesville, Illinois on the farm adjoining the Thomas Lincoln farm, and have entire confidence in her account of it. The table was made by Thomas Lincoln, as she had told me, and was in the Lincoln cabin for many years. Her father owned the cabin and she was born in it.

Yours truly,  
William E. Barton<sup>42</sup>

<sup>40</sup> <https://history.ky.gov/pdf/Publications/khsChronFall08insertSmall.pdf>

This table made by Thomas Lincoln was among the furniture at Helm Place, the home of Mary Lincoln's half-sister in Lexington, Kentucky. In 2019, Helm Place disposed of certain pieces in its collection. This piece was given to the Abraham Lincoln Birthplace National Historical Park near Hodgenville, Kentucky

Tom Eblen [teblen@herald-leader.com](mailto:teblen@herald-leader.com) 859-231-1415, the Lexington Herald-Leader's metro/state columnist since 2008.

<sup>41</sup> Lincoln Birthplace National Historical Park.

<sup>42</sup> Lincoln Birthplace National Historical Park.



*Courtesy of the Abraham Lincoln Birthplace National Historical Park near Hodgenville, Kentucky*

**TL 16. Amos Richardson Cherry Cupboard**

Where Made: Spencer County, Indiana

When Made: 1816-1830

Age of Thomas Lincoln: 38-52

Last Known Location: Indiana State Museum, Indianapolis, Indiana.

“We have had a Tom Lincoln cabinet in our collection a long time and it is very rough. Historians used to say that Tom Lincoln was lazy or incompetent as a carpenter and that plays into the Lincoln myth. The thing is, Tom Lincoln made a lot of rough furniture and people he was making furniture for were frontier farmers. If they gave him \$5, he made a \$5 cabinet. This was a \$40 cabinet. Tom wasn’t making Louis XIV furniture, but a few of the Tom Lincoln cabinets were extraordinary.”

R. Dale Ogden<sup>43</sup>

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<sup>43</sup> Dale Ogden, the former chief curator of cultural history at the Indiana State Museum, retired in 2017 after 34 years of service.



*Courtesy of the Indiana State Museum, Indianapolis, Indiana*

**TL 17 (a) Lincoln Family Cherry Corner Cabinet**

Where Made: Spencer County, Indiana

When made: 1818

Thomas Lincoln Age: 40-41

Last known location not revealed but still in possession of decedents of Gentry family.

Thomas Lincoln constructed this 7' tall, cherry corner cabinet prior to death of Nancy Hanks Lincoln in October 1818. This is concluded because of accounts that Thomas made Nancy's coffin from a cherry log left over from making the cabinet. The cabinet was made using wooden pegs because Thomas had lost the nails in the Rolling Fork River when he came to Indiana 1816 when using a flatboat to bring larger items and his tools and supplies along with the three corner cabinet (TL 4) and other items they were using in Kentucky. Cousins and acquaintances of Abraham Lincoln recall that he whittled wooden pegs for his father Thomas to use in making the coffin.

According to Steve Haaff, Thomas was a master craftsman "His inlay work is incredible". The detail work on this cabinet is proof of that. Crafted from cherry, with thin geometric inlays of maple, the back side was built from a secondary wood, in this case poplar, all providing more evidence of the builder.

This particular cabinet was made prior to 1820, because the wood was sawed with a whip saw. Thomas did not have access to water-powered saw mills until 1820. One mill was owned by John Jones on Little Pigeon Creek. It was just over half mile from his home. The other was at Huffman Mill located 17 miles to the east. Also nails became available to Thomas in 1820. Haaff comments "This particular piece would have cost a fortune due to the inlays."

This cabinet was used in the Lincoln Cabin during their years in Spencer County, Indiana. The cabinet has seen over 200 years of wear, with rodent damage on the top of the upper doors, a burn mark on the left door and the lower doors missing. This cabinet has stayed in Southern Indiana all these years except for the trip to the Indiana State Museum in Indianapolis for one day.<sup>44</sup>

*Nancy Hanks Lincoln in 1818. This is concluded because of accounts that Thomas made Nancy's coffin from a cherry log left over from making a cabinet and because the Lutz cabinet is put together with pegs, not nails. Cousins and acquaintances of Abraham Lincoln recall that he whittled wooden pegs for Thomas, his father. Those pegs were likely used in the Lutz cabinet and Nancy Hanks Lincoln's coffin. After this cabinet was made, Thomas was able to obtain nails in Southern Indiana and his cabinets were again made with nails as they had been in Kentucky.*<sup>45</sup>

<sup>44</sup> Lincoln family corner cabinet hidden for years in Southern Indiana to be on display for one day only at Indiana State Museum as reported in an article by Kathy Tretter that appeared in the *Spencer County Leader* on June 25, 2013. This cabinet was on display at the Museum on Saturday June 29, 2013.

<sup>45</sup> Lincoln family corner cabinet hidden for years in Southern Indiana, by Kathy Tretter, Special From Ferdinand News on June 26, 2013 in Living. David and Sally Lutz, Newburgh, Indiana, loaned this piece to an exhibit at the Indiana State Museum, The Lincolns: Five Generations of an American Family. It was painted dark green and used to hold coffee cans full of nuts and bolts, according to Dale Ogden, former senior curator of cultural history at the Museum. That was before owner David Lutz of Newburgh saw an article in an Evansville newspaper about furniture built by Thomas Lincoln. Lutz, whose father purchased the cabinet from a neighbor in the 1940s, realized that he had a cabinet that "kinda looked like" the one in the newspaper. By that time, the cabinet was no longer relegated to the garage. It had been stripped of its paint and moved inside. Lutz called Steve Haaff, the Lincoln furniture expert. It took Haaff 10 seconds to identify the piece.



This picture was taken at the Indiana State Museum, Indianapolis, Indiana on June 29, 2013 where this cupboard was on display for one day.



### **TL 17 (b) David Lutz Cherry Corner Cupboard**

Where made: Spencer County, Indiana

When Made: between 1817 and 1819

Thomas Lincoln 39-41

Last Location: Indiana State Museum, Indianapolis, Indiana

Thomas Lincoln constructed this 8 foot tall, cherry corner cabinet prior to 1820 and probably after the death of Nancy Hanks Lincoln. This is concluded because the cabinet was made with wooden pegs instead of nails and the back of the cabinet looks as if it was sawed with a whip saw and Thomas planed out the saw marks. Thomas had access to water powered saws by sometime in 1820. Also he began using nails again sometime in 1820. Abraham Lincoln whittled wooden pegs for his father and had done so for his mother's coffin when Nancy Hanks Lincoln died in October 1818. After this cabinet was made, Thomas was able to obtain nails in Southern Indiana and cabinets were again made with nails as they had been in Kentucky.

The cupboard retains its original hinges. The skirting on the bottom of this cabinet is not symmetrical, but it exactly matches a design Thomas used on other cabinets. Thomas made the distinct inlay by hand. Delicate scrolls of light maple define the cabinet. So do the quarter-sawn door panels and walnut insets. Faint compass marks can be seen in the wood where Lincoln drew the line for a thin maple inlay of intertwining scallops. Thomas Lincoln has been referred to as a "piddler," but the intricate inlay required mathematic equations to figure the dimensions. According to Steve Haaff the inlays on this piece as well as others are mathematically accurate.<sup>46</sup>

Howard Lutz happened upon the cabinet when a friend was cleaning out a storefront in Boonville, Indiana in the late 1940s and he purchased the cabinet. It was painted dark green and used to hold coffee cans full of nuts and bolts, according to Dale Ogden, former senior curator of cultural history at the Indiana State Museum. Later his son David Lutz stripped it of its paints and used the cabinet to house his own Native American artifact collection he had started as a boy. David Lutz of Newburgh saw an article in an Evansville newspaper about furniture built by Thomas Lincoln. Lutz realized that he had a cabinet that "kinda look like" the one in the newspaper. Lutz called Steve Haaff, the Lincoln furniture expert and he was able to identify it in short time.<sup>47</sup>

<sup>46</sup> Thomas Lincoln cabinet heads for Indiana State Museum as per article by Lisa W. Hoppenjans which appeared in *Spencer County Leader* December 25, 2012. This cabinet, belonging to David and Sally Lutz of Newburgh, Indiana, was on display on Saturday June 29, 2013 at the museum.

<sup>47</sup> Lincoln family corner cabinet hidden for years in Southern Indiana to be on display for one day only at the Indiana State Museum as reported in an article by Kathy Tretter that appeared in the *Spencer County Leader* on June 25, 2013. This cabinet was on display at the Museum on Saturday June 29, 2013.



This picture was taken at the Indiana State Museum, Indianapolis, Indiana on June 29, 2013 where this cupboard was on display for one day.

**TL 18. Enlow Cherry Mill Desk**

a/k/a Enlow-Eckert-Joseph

Where Made: Spencer County, Indiana

When Made: 1818 or 1819

Thomas Lincoln Age: 40-41

Last Known Location: Lincoln Boyhood National Memorial, Lincoln City, Indiana

LINCOLN CITY — A wooden desk believed to have been made by Thomas Lincoln, Abraham Lincoln’s father, has a new home at the Lincoln Boyhood National Memorial in Lincoln City, [Indiana] thanks to a Jasper family.

The desk had been in his father, John Fierst’s side of the family for several generations, according to Tom Fierst of Jasper. Through a lot of research over the years, the family compiled the history behind the historic piece of furniture.

The Lincolns moved to what is now Spencer County [Indiana] in 1816 and lived there for nearly 15 years. Tom said they had corn ground at Hoffman’s Mill on Anderson Creek or at Enlow Mill along the Patoka River in Jasper. During one of Thomas Lincoln’s trips to Jasper, he traded the desk for meal.

“We know the desk was used in the old Enlow Mill and it generally passed from one mill owner to another until it reached the Eckert family,” Tom said. “I guess the younger generation of the Eckerts at that time sold it to my great grandfather who was Louis P. Joseph. When he bought it, we’re not really sure.” At the time, Joseph was with the Jasper Desk Company and Tom said he used the desk as an advertisement and put it on display. While on display, “souvenir seekers” would steal the knob from the front of it.

“So that knob that’s on that desk is not an original,” Tom said, saying the same would happen when Joseph took the desk to furniture shows across the U.S.

John acquired the desk in 1964 from his uncle, who was Joseph’s son. The desk sat in John and his wife Gloria’s home — the childhood home of Tom, his two brothers and four sisters — for more than 50 years.

Tom said the desk “was in a very protected location in the house,” at the top of the staircase and to the right.

“When all of us would get to the top of the stairs, we would generally be going left, we wouldn’t be going right,” he said. “It got very little traffic. And, of course, he (dad) was rather protective of it as well.”

John did more and more research on the desk through the years and would tell his kids of anything he learned. He was a history teacher at Jasper High School for 40 years and was Dubois County’s historian for at least 10 years.

Tom believes his father was intrigued by the desk because of his admiration for Abraham Lincoln, whom John studied extensively.

John died in 2008 and he and his kids had discussed what would happen to the historic desk. Someone suggested donating it and then John agonized over where to donate it. He liked the idea of donating it to Lincoln Boyhood, Tom said, because it was made by a man who lived there and because the park would give it more national exposure where a larger number of visitors would see it. After John died, the desk remained in the Fierst home with Gloria. She now lives at Brookside Village and the Fierst children decided it was time to donate it this past February.

“I think that we couldn’t have done anything better than donate it to Lincoln Boyhood,” Tom said

Olivia Ingle<sup>48</sup>

May 18, 2018

<sup>48</sup> *Historic Lincoln desk finds its way back home*, Olivia Ingle, *The Jasper Herald*, May 18, 2018.  
[suncommercial.com/news/article\\_376d0952-5a07-11e8-8791-170582f5a196.html](http://suncommercial.com/news/article_376d0952-5a07-11e8-8791-170582f5a196.html)

According to a letter from John J. Fierst Jasper, Indiana, dated August 2, 1964, a lift-top desk of cherry wood made by Thomas Lincoln is in his home. While no affidavits are available concerning the history of the desk Mr. Fierst has made an interesting statement as to its origin: “While the Lincolns lived in Spencer County, they used to have corn ground at Huffman’s Mill on Anderson Creek and at Enlow’s Mill here in Jasper. During one of their trips they traded the desk for meal. The desk was used in the old Enlow mill and passed from one mill owner to another until it reached the Eckert family. The younger generation of Eckert sold it to my grandfather, Louis P. Joseph. When he bought it, I am not sure. It has a large drawer below the desk compartment.<sup>49</sup>



*Courtesy of the Lincoln Boyhood National Memorial, Lincoln City, Indiana*

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<sup>49</sup> *Lincoln Lore* Number 1577, p. 4.

## Jasper Company Owns Desk Made by Lincoln

**A**N ALMOST priceless relic of the early manhood days of Abraham Lincoln, and one around which is woven a delightful story of the every-day needs of the Great Emancipator is an old-fashioned, solid cherrywood desk now in the possession of the Jasper Desk Company, Jasper, Ind.

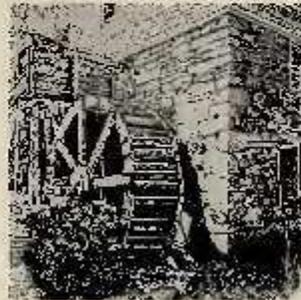
This desk, sturdy and unmistakably made, was fashioned by the hands of the president to be and his father, Thomas Lincoln, in order that the family's stock of cornmeal might be replenished. Pioneers of more than a century ago, the Lincolns, like many of the old families of Indiana, lived in an era in which butter took the place of borrowing and the rifle was the accepted (and nearly only) means of providing meat for the table.

It was just before the Lincoln family took their departure to Illinois in 1830 that they lived in what is now Lincoln City in Spencer County. Wild cherry trees grew in profusion on the higher ground along the edges of a vast swamp west and north of the Lincoln farm. Hard by was the Enlow mill run by Benjamin Enlow and his wife. To them was entrusted the Lincoln corn to be converted into grit by the ponderous wheels of the mill.

### Bartered for Corn Meal

It was not, probably, lack of funds which brought to Miller Enlow the cherrywood desk in exchange for corn meal. Most likely it was the almost universally accepted trade and barter creed of

the proud Indiana pioneers which saved the desk for posterity. The Lincolns needed corn meal and the miller wanted a desk. Ours, the simple exchange was made and both families had filled their



THE ENLOW MILL IN 1825.



MADE BY THE HANDS OF ABRAHAM LINCOLN.— This century-old desk was made by Abraham Lincoln and his father, Thomas Lincoln, and traded to a nearby miller for ground corn.

wants with dignity and pride unquailed.

The mill was located at Jasper, necessitating hitching up a team at the Lincoln farm when a trip to Miller Enlow was contemplated. And it would be a rich contribution to history could we but trace the thoughts in the mind of the gentle Abraham Lincoln on the morning that he drove, with his precious desk, to "make a trade" with his friend, Miller Enlow. Or to know if he even remotely suspected the historical events in which the cherrywood desk would take a part.

For it was at this desk, passed on and on as new owners came in turn to the mill, that was made out the list of Dubois County men sent to Mexico for the war. Deeds to the old mill were signed on its abony surface, and a great many thousand dollars were passed across it to German settlers.

### Pioneer Construction

Simplicity marks the construction of the Lincoln desk. It has a "tilt-top" design which is a "jointed, or ledger" space and below that, a drawer. It measures thirty-six inches in length and twenty-six inches in width. The rear part stands forty-four inches high and the front thirty-four inches.

The desk became the property of the Jasper Desk Company when the late Louis P. Joseph was president of the company. It was purchased from the Eckert family, one of the last owners of the Enlow mill site.

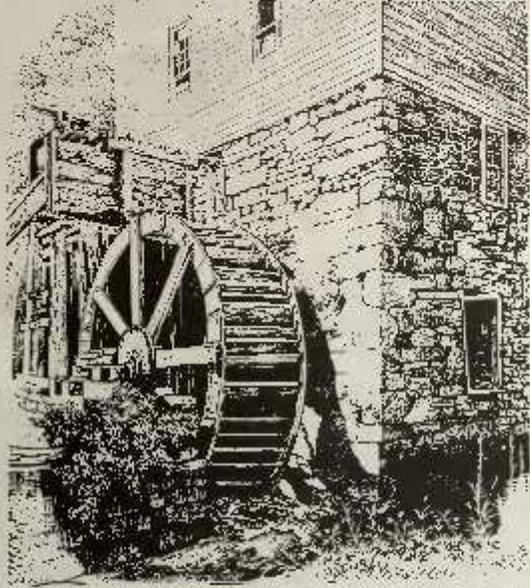
Article About a Desk Made by Thomas Lincoln<sup>50</sup>

Fisher Eugene O.  
Lagrange, Ind

Cherry Writing Desk made by G. Smith  
bought by his grand father Nelson at the  
Smith sale when they moved from

<sup>50</sup> *Curios and Relics: Furniture Desk Made by Thomas Lincoln, excerpts from newspapers and other sources, from the files of the Lincoln Collection, at archive.org/details/curiosrelicsfurnline\_50/page/n3.*

ENLOW'S MILL  
JASPER, INDIANA  
in 1825



In this mill stood this Lincoln desk,  
made by Abraham Lincoln and his  
father, Thomas Lincoln.  
Delivered to Enlow's mill by Abraham  
Lincoln and traded to Jacob Enlow for  
grist (corn meal) in 1828.

C. G. ...  
Publ. Copy: History - Tom. Enlow

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This desk is now the property of  
LOUIS P. JOSEPH, President, Jasper Desk Company  
Jasper, Indiana

Flyer About the Mill Desk Made by Thomas Lincoln<sup>51</sup>

<sup>51</sup> *Curios and Relics: Furniture Beds Made by Thomas Lincoln, excerpts from newspapers and other sources*, from the files of the Lincoln Collection, at [archive.org/details/curiosrelicsfurnlinc\\_50/page/n4](http://archive.org/details/curiosrelicsfurnlinc_50/page/n4).

**TL 19. David Turnham-Johnson Walnut Corner Cupboard (Cupboards III)**

Where Made: Spencer County, Indiana

When Made: Circa 1821-1822

Age of Thomas Lincoln: 43-44

Last Known Location: Evansville Museum of Arts, History and Science, Evansville, Indiana.

Thomas Lincoln made this walnut with white maple inlay corner cupboard circa 1821 or 1822 for his friend and neighbor, David Turnham (1803-1884). In 1819, the Turnham family settled less than one mile northeast of Thomas Lincoln's farm in Spencer County, Indiana. David Turnham was a friend of Abraham Lincoln, and loaned him *Revised Laws of Indiana* (1824) in 1827. According to relatives of Turnham, the walnut lumber used in the construction of this cupboard was cut on the Turnham farm. After Lincoln's assassination, David provided information to historians about Lincoln's youth. David always insisted that young Abraham Lincoln helped in the construction of this cupboard.<sup>52</sup>

The cabinet cornice is a carved and inlaid dentil, a "hole and tooth" pattern. The front decoration is of strips and inlaid four-pointed star and vine--a "star and streamer" design. The cupboard is held together with wooden pegs and metal nails. This cupboard is almost identical in construction to the Mill Creek Cherry Corner Cupboard a/k/a Lincoln-Cowley-Viers-Garner cupboard. [TL 3] Both cabinets have the identical inlaid designs.

This cupboard was never out of the hands of the Turnham family until it was placed in the Evansville Museum of Arts, History and Science, Evansville, Indiana.<sup>53</sup>

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<sup>52</sup> McMurtry: Figure 197. The Turnham-Johnson cupboard of walnut.

To David Turnham<sup>[1]</sup>

David Turnham, Esq. Springfield, Ills.

My dear old friend: Oct. 23. 1860

Your kind letter of the 17th. is received. I am indeed very glad to learn you are still living and well. I well remember when you and I last met, after a separation of fourteen years, at the crossroad voting place, in the fall of 1844. It is now sixteen years more and we are both no longer young men. I suppose you are a grandfather; and I, though married much later in life, have a son nearly grown.

I would much like to visit the old home, and old friends of my boyhood, but I fear the chance for doing so soon, is not very good. Your friend & sincere well-wisher A. LINCOLN

[1] ALS, Evansville Public Museum [now Evansville Museum of Arts, History, and Science], Evansville, Indiana. This letter is misdated November 19, 1860, in Hertz, II, 792.

<sup>53</sup> *Lincoln Lore Number 1476*. McMurtry gave this piece the designation III.



*Courtesy of the Evansville Museum of Arts, History and Science, Evansville, Indiana*

**TL 20. David Turnham Cherry Chest of Drawers**

Where Made: Spencer County, Indiana

When Made: Circa 1821

Age of Thomas Lincoln: 41-42

Last Known Location: Thought to be in the possession of a descendant of David Turnham,  
Arthur E. Patterson, Indianapolis, Indiana.

In a letter dated February 25, 1964, Arthur E. Patterson of Indianapolis, Indiana, stated that a highly prized item in his family is “a cherry chest of drawers made by Thomas Lincoln for Mr. and Mrs. David Turnham.” The owner stated that “The chest was a (a piece) of their “wedding furniture’ and is in perfect condition. In 1819, the Turnham family settled less than one mile northeast of Thomas Lincoln’s farm in Spencer County, Indiana.

This would be one of two pieces of furniture made by Thomas Lincoln owned by the David Turnham family. The other is the corner cupboard shown at TL 19.<sup>54</sup>

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<sup>54</sup> *Lincoln Lore* Number 1577, pp. 3-4.

There is no available photograph of the cherry chest of drawers.

**TL 21. Little Pigeon Baptist Church**

Where Built: Spencer County, Indiana

When Built: 1821<sup>55</sup>

Thomas Lincoln Age: 43

Last Known Location: Spencer County, Illinois

In 1821 Thomas Lincoln superintended the building of a new church building and built the window and door casings and pulpit for the Little Pigeon Baptist Church.<sup>56</sup>

*It is also well known that Thomas was on the committee that superintended and helped to build the Pigeon Church where the Lincolns attended. The pulpit, which was used for more than seventy-five years by the church, was made by Thomas Lincoln.*

Thomas Lincoln neighbor, William Wood,  
written statement dated September 15, 1865.<sup>57</sup>

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<sup>55</sup> Church construction began in 1821 and was completed early in 1822. The first meeting in the new church was in April 1822. *Minute Book of Little Pigeon Creek Baptist Church, Spencer County, Indiana, 1816-1840*, pp. 36-41.

<sup>56</sup> *Minute Book of Little Pigeon Creek Baptist Church, Spencer County, Indiana, 1816-1840*, Foreword. *History of Warrick, Spencer, and Perry Counties, Indiana*, published in 1885.

<http://lincolncollection.tumblr.com/post/173459040224/my-childhoods-homelincolns-indiana-youth/embed>

<sup>57</sup> *Herndon's Informants*, p. 123. *The Lincolns, Hoosier Pioneers*, Louis A. Warren, *Indiana Magazine of History*, Vol. 38, No. 3 (SEPTEMBER, 1942), pp. 251-264. Indiana University Press <https://www.jstor.org/stable/27787319>



Drawing of Little Pigeon Baptist Church<sup>58</sup>



Recreation of Pulpit in Little Pigeon Baptist Church<sup>59</sup>

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<sup>58</sup> Little Pigeon Baptist Church, Spencer County, Indiana <https://www.friendsofthelincolncollection.org/lincoln-lore/thomas-lincoln-reconsidered/>

<sup>59</sup> <http://www.georgehonig.org/lpv/church/church.cfm>



**TL 22. Reuben Grigsby-Helverson Cherry Corner Cupboard<sup>60</sup> (Cupboards VII)**

Where Made: Spencer County, Indiana

When Made: Circa 1826

Age of Thomas Lincoln: 48

Last Known Location: Knox College, Galesburg, Illinois

This cherry corner cupboard was constructed by Thomas Lincoln in Spencer County, Indiana in about 1826. It is approximately seven feet in height and has a triangular back that allows it to fit into any corner, as was common in the times in which it was built. It has only a cornice decoration as shown in the photograph above.<sup>61</sup>

Aaron Grigsby married Sarah Lincoln, the daughter of Thomas and Nancy and the sister of Abraham. Thomas worked for Reuben Grigsby, Aaron's father, and during this period constructed two corner cupboards. One was for Aaron and Sarah. TL 23. The other shown here was for Reuben Grigsby and his family.

The cupboard was owned at one time by Mrs. Gertrude E. (Smith) Savage Helverson of Mount Vernon, Illinois. Her son, writing from Mount Vernon, Illinois, on October 5, 1945, made the following statement: "My mother's grandmother was a sister to Aaron Grigsby, who married Sarah Lincoln." My mother has it in her possession. We have affidavits -- nine in number (in 1960 eleven affidavits are introduced as evidence) and they range in age from 50 to 78, the majority being in the neighborhood of 70 years of age. In addition, my mother has prepared a separate affidavit setting the facts out as she knows them."

<sup>60</sup> Selected cupboards attributed to Thomas Lincoln by Dr. Gerald R. McMurtry from the Gerald R. McMurtry Collection, Abraham Lincoln Library and Museum, Lincoln Memorial University, Harrogate, Tennessee. The cupboards are reproduced here from Dr. McMurtry's photographic archives as follows: Figure 200. The Reuben Grigsby-- Helverson cupboard of cherry wood 03\_Kelly\_4PP\_ack-app\_p212-283.indd 283. *Lincoln Lore Number 1476*. McMurtry gave this piece the designation VII.

<sup>61</sup> Rockport, Feb. 11.— (Special) Mrs. Gertrude Smith Savage of Rockport, a descendant of the Grigsby family which was related to the Lincoln family through marriage of Aaron Grigsby to Sarah Lincoln, sister of Abraham Lincoln. She has a cabinet—a "cupboard"— which she says she can prove was made by Thomas Lincoln with the help of his son Abraham.



*Courtesy of Knox College, Galesburg, Illinois*

**TL 23. Aaron Grigsby-Wetherill Walnut Corner Cupboard (Cupboards VIII)**

Where Made: Spencer County, Indiana

When Made: 1826

Thomas Lincoln Age: 48

Last Known Location: William L. Clements Library, University of Michigan,  
Ann Arbor, Michigan

Thomas Lincoln made this walnut corner cupboard corner cabinet as a wedding gift to his daughter Sarah, who married Aaron Grigsby, on August 2, 1826. It is without trim and has two solid doors above, a single drawer and two smaller doors below. This construction may have been the result of a special request by either Aaron or Sarah Lincoln Grigsby. The workmanship is rather crude and it is in poor condition.<sup>62</sup>

Sarah died in 1828 due to complications during childbirth. Aaron married Margaret Miller on September 12, 1830. They had a daughter Nancy Louisa Grigsby, who married Richard D. Wetherill.

The cupboard passed from Aaron Grigsby to Richard D. Wetherill, his son-in-law, and in turn to Richard's son, George Wetherill of Boonville, Indiana. It was purchased from George in 1931 or 1932 by an antique dealer. After the death of the antique dealer (name unknown), the cupboard was acquired by an Ann Arbor, Michigan man who gave it to the University of Michigan in 1949, and it was moved to the William L. Clements Library where it is presently located.<sup>63</sup> In 2019, the cupboard is used by the Clements Library staff as the cupboard holding teacups and saucers and the things needed to make a good hot tea. Every day that the Library is open, the librarians make and take tea at 10:00 a.m. and invite those using the library to join them.

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<sup>62</sup>

<sup>63</sup> *Lincoln Lore* Number 1476. McMurtry gave this piece the designation VIII.



*Courtesy of the William L. Clements Library, University of Michigan, Ann Arbor, Michigan*

**TL 24. Dr. John Crook Cherry Desk and Bookcase (Furniture 5)**

a/k/a Crook-DeBruier-Garlinghouse

Where Made: Spencer County, Indiana

When Made: Circa 1827\* (Made when Abe was working on ferry at Anderson Creek, Indiana, and learned that Dr. Crook had not been paid for his attention to his mother during her last illness.)

Thomas Lincoln Age: 49

Last Known Location: Abraham Lincoln Presidential Library and Museum, Springfield, Illinois

This cherry wood “fall front” desk was made sometime around 1827 by Thomas Lincoln for Dr. Crook, the first physician in Spencer County, Indiana. Dr. Crook used the piece as a writing table in his office for many years.

The desk stands about eight feet high from the floor to the top of the cabinet section. The cabinet section is designed as a bookcase and is enclosed by two glass doors. The desk compartments for letters and writing materials are concealed under the desktop, which rises up on hinges. There are no drawers in the desk.

Over time, the desk has been used as a bookcase for law books, as a cabinet to store the powders and equipment of a druggist, and as a kitchen cabinet by a southern Indiana housewife who kept it well stocked with dishes and food. It finally returned to its designated use as a desk kept carefully polished in the Townsend J. Taylor family at New Carlisle, Indiana, before passing to a number of private collectors.

Mr. Taylor tells this story: The first practicing doctor in Spencer county, a Dr. Crook, is charged to be the first owner of the desk after it was completed by Thomas Lincoln. Dr. Crook used the desk for many years in his office as a writing table, but upon retiring passed the desk on to Judge Thomas DeBruler. Judge DeBruler, a well-known attorney in southern Indiana at the time, was Mr. Taylor’s great grandfather, according to the story. The Judge used the tall cabinet of the desk in which to stack thick, dusty law books. He passed the desk on to Dr. A. D. Garlinghouse, a druggist and doctor in Rockport, Indiana. Dr. Garlinghouse used the desk as a supply cabinet for medications and prescriptions. As Dr. Garlinghouse’s practice grew and he enlarged his office quarters, he moved the desk to his residence in Rockport, Indiana. There his wife placed the desk on a screened-in kitchen-porch to use for the storage of food dishes and kitchen utensils. According to Mr. Taylor, the Garlinghouses were his grandparents on his mother’s side. They donated the desk to Mr. and Mrs. Taylor. The Taylors, however, vow that they will never sell the desk.<sup>64</sup>

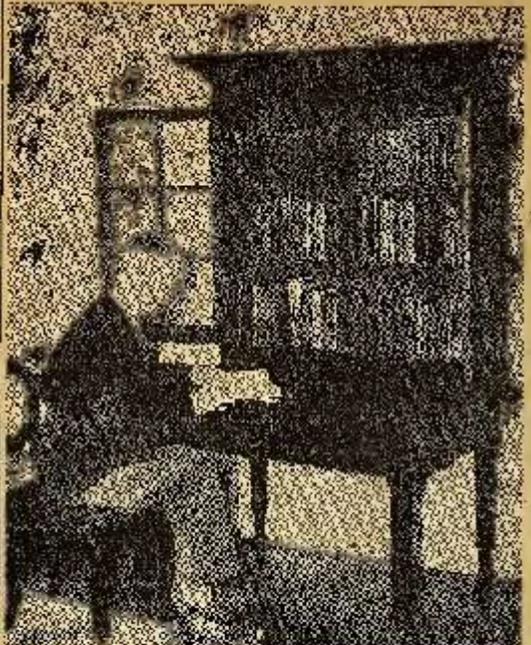
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<sup>64</sup> *Lincoln Lore* Number 1512, pp. 1-4. McMurtry gave this piece the designation 5. *Curios and Relics: Furniture Desk Made by Thomas Lincoln, Excerpts from newspapers and other sources* from the files of the Lincoln Financial Foundation Collection.



*Courtesy of the Abraham Lincoln Presidential Library and Museum, Springfield, Illinois*

Taylor, Mrs. Townsend  
**Lincoln Desk Handed Down**



Townsend Taylor, New Carlisle, sits at the desk built by Thomas Lincoln more than 100 years ago when the Lincoln family lived in Rockport, Ind. The glass panes in the top cabinet doors (shown open) are the original, given except for two which broke as the desk was passed down from generation to generation in Mr. Taylor's family. (Herald-Argus staff photo.)

**Family Values Desk  
Made by T. Lincoln**

**Piece Of Furniture Is Now  
Owned By the Townsend  
Taylors, New Carlisle**

**By FORREST FISCHER**  
Between 1816 and 1830 a farmer and trapper in Rockport, Ind., supplemented his income by building cabinets and furniture. His name was Thomas Lincoln and as he worked laboriously with his hands, and took his time, made cherry wood into desks and cupboards big and small, washboards and offered his help.

Three pieces of Thomas Lincoln's furniture are all that are known to exist. One of them, a secretary desk, is owned by Mr. and Mrs. Townsend Taylor of New Carlisle. One specimen is in the Henry Ford Museum at Ft. Dearborn, Mich., and another specimen is in the court house of Rockport, in Spencer county. The story of the Taylors' desk

since it left the workshop of T. Lincoln early in the 19th century to an interesting tale.

Rockport is the birthplace of Mr. Taylor, and his family seat. It was there Mr. Taylor's ancestors first obtained the desk and began passing it down from generation to generation.

**Varied Uses**  
During its lifetime the desk has been used as book case for law books, as a washstand for the physician and equipment of a druggist, in the kitchen of a southern Indiana homestead who kept it well stocked with dishes and food, and it finally returned to its designed use as a desk kept carefully polished in the Taylor family at New Carlisle.

Mr. Taylor tells this story: The first proceeding doctor in Spencer county, a Dr. Cook, is charged to be the first owner of the desk after it was completed by Thomas Lincoln.

Dr. Cook used the desk for many years in his office as a writing table, but upon retiring passed the desk on to Judge Thomas DeSauler.

Judge DeSauler, a well-known attorney in southern Indiana at the time, and contemporary of Abraham Lincoln, who was practicing law in Springfield, Ill., was Mr. Taylor's great grand father, according to the story.

The judge used the tall cabinet of the desk in which to stack thick bundles of books. He passed the desk on to Dr. A. D. Garlinghouse, a druggist and chemist in Rockport. Dr. Garlinghouse used the desk as a supply cabinet for medicines and prescriptions.

As Dr. Garlinghouse's practice grew and he enlarged his office quarters he moved the desk to his residence in Rockport. There his wife, the former Lucy Taylor, placed the desk on a screened-in fireproof box to use for the storage of food dishes and kitchen utensils.

**Gave It**  
According to Mr. Taylor, the Garlinghouses were his grandparents on his mother's side. They wanted the desk to Mr. and Mrs. Taylor.

Although its exact age is not known it is well over 100 years old. The Taylors have received offers from several Lincoln collectors, including the Ford museum, to buy the desk. The Ford museum bought one of the pieces for \$10,000 several years ago.

The Taylors, however, now when they will leave sell the desk. Although it is not pretty it is the symbol of early Americana, he said.

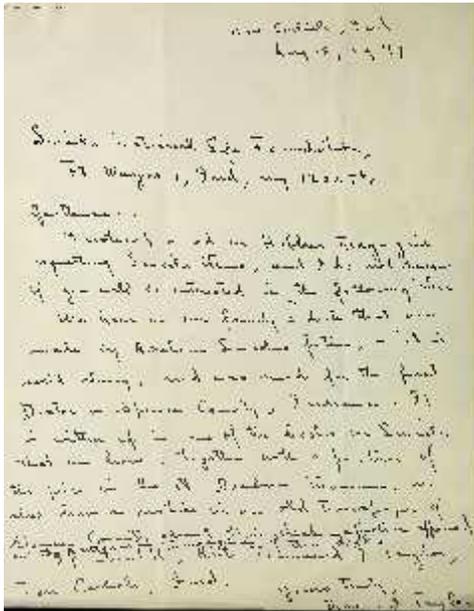
The desk stands about eight feet high from the floor to the top of the cabinet section. The cabinet section is designed as a book case and is enclosed by two glass doors.

The desk compartments for letters and writing material are mounted under the desk top which raises up on hinges. There are no drawers in the desk. It is made of solid cherry wood which has never been painted or varnished, the Taylors claim.

THE HERALD-ARGUS, LA PORTE, INDIANA, MONDAY, APRIL 4, 1949

Family Values Desk Made by Thomas Lincoln, Piece Of Furniture Was Then Owned By the Townsend Taylors, New Carlisle, Indiana.<sup>65</sup>

<sup>65</sup> Family Values Desk Made by Thomas Lincoln, Piece Of Furniture Is Now Owned By the Townsend Taylors, New Carlisle, Forrest Fischer. The Herald Argus, La Porte, Indiana, Monday, April 4, 1949. Curious and Relics: Furniture Desk Made by Thomas Lincoln, excerpts from newspapers and other sources, from the files of the Lincoln Collection, at archive.org/details/curiosrelicsfunmlinc\_51/page/n1



New Carlisle, Ind.  
Aug. 18, 1947

Lincoln National Life Foundation,  
Ft. Wayne, Ind., 120276

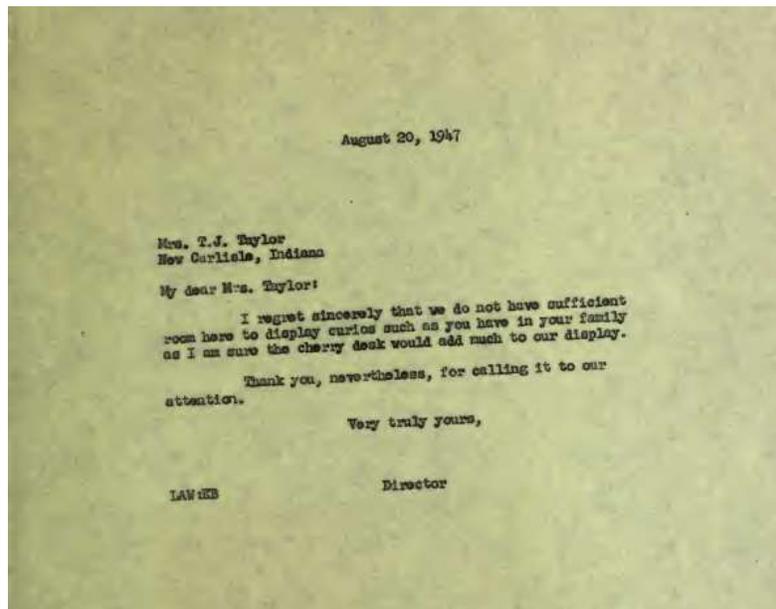
Gentlemen,

I noticed an ad in Hobbies Magazine requesting Lincoln items, and I do not know if you will be interested in the following item.

We have in our family a desk that was made by Abraham Lincoln's father, -- it is solid cherry, and was made for the first Doctor in Spencer County, Indiana. It is written up in one of the books on Lincoln that we have, together with a picture of the piece in the Ft. Dearborn Museum. We also have a notice in an old newspaper of Spencer county about this desk. A picture appeared in the Antiquarian Magazine of this desk.

Letter to Lincoln National Life Foundation Concerning Desk Made by Thomas Lincoln<sup>66</sup>

Interested, Write Townsend J. Taylor  
New Carlisle, Ind.



Louis A. Warren Letter Rejecting Offer to Display Desk Made by Thomas Lincoln<sup>67</sup>

Alas, the Taylors did dispose of the desk. Most recently in 2007, the desk has been acquired from Louise Taper by the Abraham Lincoln Presidential Library and Museum as a part of the Taper Collection.

<sup>66</sup> *Curios and Relics: Furniture Desk Made by Thomas Lincoln, excerpts from newspapers and other sources*, from the files of the Lincoln Collection, at [archive.org/details/curiosrelicsfurnlinc\\_51/page/n1](http://archive.org/details/curiosrelicsfurnlinc_51/page/n1).

<sup>67</sup> *Curios and Relics: Furniture Desk Made by Thomas Lincoln, excerpts from newspapers and other sources*, from the files of the Lincoln Collection, at [archive.org/details/curiosrelicsfurnlinc\\_51/page/n1](http://archive.org/details/curiosrelicsfurnlinc_51/page/n1).

**TL 25. Elizabeth Crawford-Meece-Brown Walnut Cupboard (Cupboards V)**

Where Made: Spencer County, Indiana

When Made: 1827-1829

Thomas Lincoln Age: 49-51

Last Known Location: Rockport, Indiana Court House, Lincoln Pioneer Village,  
Rockport, Indiana

Thomas Lincoln made this walnut cupboard for Elizabeth and Josiah Crawford, who came to Indiana in 1826. It has all of the hallmarks of a Thomas Lincoln cupboard.<sup>68</sup>

As was the custom of the time, the initials of Elizabeth Crawford “E.C.” were carved in large letters on the upper front left door. Much of the original cabinet is intact, although the right front panel is missing. Most likely, it featured the initials of Josiah Crawford.<sup>69</sup>

The piece is important as a proof of a considerable degree of craftsmanship on the part of Thomas Lincoln. It is thoroughly well made and carries a rather elaborate “hole and tooth” design on the top cornice. An inlaid decoration (streamer inlay falls directly below the “stars”) in white ash runs down the doorjamb on each side. Unlike other Thomas Lincoln pieces, the inlay is directly on the doorjamb and not on strips.

“The design ... shows a sense of decoration and patriotism combined, for the curving streamer falls from a star and at each bend there arises a tiny flag. The inlaying is so well done that in spite of fully ninety years of scrubbing and scouring it remains intact.”<sup>70</sup>

This cupboard was first exhibited in 1921 when Charles Brown placed it in the Rockport, Indiana courthouse. He purchased it from a Mrs. Meece, a granddaughter of Josiah Crawford, and was informed that the cupboard was the work of Thomas Lincoln. This cupboard is now at the Spencer County Court House in Rockport, Indiana, the town where Thomas Lincoln went to pay taxes and attend to court business.

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<sup>68</sup> Some have said that Thomas Summers, an uncle of Mrs. Elizabeth Crawford, may have assisted Thomas Lincoln in its construction.

<sup>69</sup> *Lincoln Lore Number 1476*. McMurtry gave this piece the designation V. Full text of “Curios and relics. Furniture” - Internet Archive [https://archive.org/...40/curiosrelicsfurnlinc\\_40\\_djvu.txt](https://archive.org/...40/curiosrelicsfurnlinc_40_djvu.txt) Full text of “Thomas Lincoln family” - Internet Archive [https://archive.org/...0/thomaslincolnfamline\\_0\\_djvu.txt](https://archive.org/...0/thomaslincolnfamline_0_djvu.txt) V. Lincoln legacy, *Evansville Courier & Press*, May 20, 2010. [www.courierpress.com/lifestyle/lincoln-legacy](http://www.courierpress.com/lifestyle/lincoln-legacy)

<sup>70</sup> This cupboard was first described by Ida M. Tarbell in an article entitled “Lincoln’s Second Mother,” *The Boston Globe*, April 22, 1923. The same statement also appeared in Tarbell’s *In The Footsteps of The Lincolns*, Harper & Brothers, 1924, pp. 132-133.



*Courtesy of the Rockport, Indiana Court House, Lincoln Pioneer Village, Rockport, Indiana*

**TL 26. Josiah Crawford House**

Window frames, doors, fireplace mantels

Where Built: Spencer County, Indiana

When Built: 1827-1829

Thomas Lincoln Age: 49-51

Last Known Location: Reconstructed in the Lincoln Pioneer Village,  
Rockport, Indiana

Josiah and Elizabeth Crawford moved to Indiana in 1826. Josiah was a wheelwright, making not only wagons, but also big and little spinning wheels. Thomas Lincoln did all the carpenter work for the Crawford's comfortable frame house--window frames, doors, cupboards. Abraham worked with Thomas on this job and frequently served Josiah Crawford as a hired man.

The Crawfords were neighbors of the Thomas Lincoln family and Abraham borrowed the book Weems's *Life of Washington* from them.

The print on the following page is of the Josiah Crawford House and features a small farmhouse positioned at a three quarter view and set at a distance. There is a split rail fence with vines growing around it in the foreground, which appears to circle around and pass in front of the house. The house has windows in the front and one on the side, as well as a small window on the very top at the side. There is a porch with an awning that is supported by beams, with a similar appearance on the opposite side of the house. The artist's signature appears in the bottom right corner of the print.<sup>71</sup>

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<sup>71</sup> Part of the Lincoln Financial Foundation Collection, courtesy of the Indiana State Museum, Indianapolis, Indiana.  
<https://www.lincolncollection.org/collection/all/item/?view=text&pagesize=36&item=52551>



This illustration of the home of the Josiah Crawford family in Spencer County, Indiana, is one of several illustrations done by C. M. Biggers for the book *The Lincoln Album: Life of the Preserver of the Union, the Liberator of a People, and the First American*, published in 1907 by Hawkins Publishing Company, St. Louis, Missouri.<sup>72</sup>



Reconstructed Josiah Crawford House, Spencer County, Indiana<sup>73</sup>

<sup>72</sup> Lincoln Financial Foundation Collection, courtesy of the Indiana State Museum, Indianapolis, Indiana.  
<https://www.lincolncollection.org/collection/all/item/?view=text&pagesize=36&item=52551>

<sup>73</sup> *Rebuilding Josiah And Elizabeth Crawford Cabin Rockport Lincoln Pioneer Village* <https://www.in.gov/lbc/legacyprojects/4290.htm>

**TL 27. Crawford Walnut Corner Cupboard<sup>74</sup> (Cupboards VI)**

Crawford-Jennings-Cryderman Walnut Cupboard

Where Made: Spencer County, Indiana

When Made: 1826-1830

Thomas Lincoln Age: 48-52

Last Known Location: Henry Ford Museum, Dearborn, Michigan

This cupboard stands seven feet high and weighs over three hundred pounds. There is a hand carved dentil (hole with tooth inlay) across the front of the cupboard above the upper set of doors. There is reeding on the upper two sides. The front is put together with walnut pegs, and the back is with hand-wrought nails. There are two sets of doors (four in all) that are nicely paneled and old-fashioned brass hinges support the doors. Along the upper sides of the cupboard is some handsome carving, which greatly enhances the beauty of this piece of furniture.

This cupboard is evidence of a master cabinetmaker—Thomas Lincoln—who was quite skilled in his carpentry work—and took pride in the finished product. Thomas was meticulous, purposeful, and creative.

This walnut corner cupboard has often been erroneously identified as made by Abraham Lincoln. It was made by Thomas Lincoln for Josiah and Elizabeth Crawford who moved to Indiana in 1826.

*Elizabeth Crawford: Thomas made my furniture. Some of it sold at my husbands admin sale. Thomas was at my house frequently—almost every week.*

*Thomas Lincoln was blind in one eye and the other was weak—so he felt his way in the work of his sense of touch was keen at time.*

Herndon interview, September 16, 1865<sup>75</sup>

Upon the death of the Crawfords, the cupboard became the property of their daughter, Ruth Crawford Jennings of Spencer County, Indiana. Ruth Jennings sold the cupboard to her son, Samuel Hatzel Jennings of Rockport, Indiana. In 1918, his daughter, Maude Jennings Cryderman, a great-granddaughter of Josiah and Elizabeth Crawford, purchased the cupboard from the Jennings's estate.

On President Lincoln's 110th birthday, February 12, 1919, the cupboard was shipped by special request to the National Old Soldiers Home at Sawtelle, California. From the Old Soldiers Home, where it was exhibited, the cupboard was sent to Los Angeles and placed on exhibition in the Historical Room of the Museum of History, Science and Art.<sup>76</sup>

<sup>74</sup> Attributed to Thomas Lincoln by Dr. Gerald R. McMurtry. The Crawford--Jennings--Cryderman cupboard of walnut.

<sup>75</sup> *Herndon's Informants*, p. 125.

<sup>76</sup> An interesting talk was given on its history by the Rev. Mr. Kauffman, while 3,000 old civil war veterans filed by and lovingly examined the handiwork of the martyred President. From the Old Soldiers' Home the cupboard was taken to the Museum of History, Science and Art, Los Angeles, one of the largest museums in the United States, where it was given the place of honor in the mezzanine of historical and antique room where it received a special setting. Despite its century or more of existence, it is still in an almost perfect state of preservation. This historical old Lincoln relic has been in our family for over one hundred years, having descended through the generations from the time Abraham Lincoln, as a boy, made it and gave it to my great-grandmother, Elizabeth Crawford. Ever since it came into my possession in 1918 I have had it in the Museum of History, Science and Art, Los Angeles. Previous to that time it was never out of Spencer County, Indiana, having been successively in the possession of my great-grandparents, my grandmother and my father. It was owned, and in the home, of my grandmother, Mrs. Ruth Crawford Jennings, at Buffaloville, Spencer County, Ind. at the time of the Chicago Worlds Fair in 1893 and my grandmother was offered a substantial sum at that time if she would loan it to the Worlds Fair but my father advised her not to do so for the reason that something might happen that she would never get it back. In 1904, at the time of the 'Worlds Fair at St. Louis it was in my father's home in Rockport, Spencer



*Courtesy of the Henry Ford Museum, Dearborn, Michigan<sup>77</sup>*

county, Indiana where my grandmother was then making her home. He was asked to loan it to the St. Louis Exposition also, but refused for much the same reason he had advised my grandmother at the time of the Chicago Worlds Fair. <http://www.gutenberg.org/files/53822/53822-0.txt> *Footprints of Abraham Lincoln Presenting Many Interesting Facts, Reminiscences And Illustrations Never Before*, published by J. T. Hobson, D.D., L.I.B., author of "The Lincoln Year Book," 1909, The Otterbein Press, Dayton, Ohio, 1909. Its history has been authenticated by affidavits of persons acquainted with the facts, and records in the hands of Mrs. Criderman give proof of its origin.

<sup>77</sup> See: <http://abesblogcabin.org/the-gem-inside-the-logan-county-court-house-in-greenfield-village-michigan#sthash.ZpTKn7qp.dpuf> *The Indianapolis News*, Thursday, March 22, 1928. *Tipton Woman Owns Cupboard Made By Abraham Lincoln* *Peru, Ind.*, April 23 [1928]—(U.P.) — A corner cupboard, made by Abraham Lincoln while he was a resident of Indiana more than 100 years ago, has been purchased by Henry Ford at a reported price of \$25,000. The relic was purchased from Mrs. Maude Cryderman, Peru, whose grandparents were neighbors of the Lincolns in Southern Indiana. It was given to the family by young Abraham Lincoln in exchange for a copy of "Weems' Life of Washington," which had been damaged by rain, when the youth borrowed the book to read.

**TL 28. William Wood Residence**

Where Built: Spencer County, Indiana

When Built: Unknown

Thomas Lincoln Age:

William Wood, an Indiana neighbor of the Thomas Lincolns, made this statement in a reminiscence that he wrote on September 15, 1865.

Sepr 15th 1865

Wm Wood

My Name is Wm Wood — Came from Ky in 1809., March, and settled in Indiana — now Spencer Co — Settled on the hill “yonder” — about 1 m north of the Lincoln farm — am now 82 ys of age. Knew Thomas and Abm Lincoln & family well. Thomas Lincoln & family Came from Ky Hardin Co, in 1816 according to my recollection. Mrs Thomas Lincoln — Abes mother was sick about 1 years after she came. I sat up with her all one night. Mrs Lincoln, her mother & father were sick with what is called the milk Sickness. Sparrow & wife — Mrs Lincoln’s father & Mother as well as Mrs L all died with that sickness — the Milk Sickness. Thomas Lincoln often and at various times worked for me — made cupboards &c other household furniture for me — he built my house — made floors — run up the stairs — did all the inside work for my house. Abe would come to my house with his father and play and romp with my children.

William Wood<sup>78</sup>

Nothing remains at the site of the William Wood residence except the family cemetery.

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<sup>78</sup> *Herndon's Informants*, p. 123. William H. Herndon interview of William Wood, September 15, 1865.

There is no available photograph of this residence.

**Illinois**  
**(1830-1851)**  
**Thomas Lincoln Age: 52-73**

Thomas Lincoln lived in Illinois for twenty-one years, from March 1830 to January 17, 1851. This was 29% of his 73 yearlong life. In Illinois, Thomas made only 2 known pieces of furniture and built his own houses in Coles County. These were his declining years, as he was now blind in one eye and losing sight in the other. He also began using a cane during this period.

**TL 29. Thomas Lincoln's Coles County, Illinois Home**

Where Built: Prairie, Coles County, Illinois

When Built: Circa 1840

Thomas Lincoln Age: circa 62

Last Known Location: nine miles south of Charleston Coles County,  
Illinois

Thomas Lincoln bought a small plot near the Embarrass River in 1840, part of what was then called Goosenest Prairie, now within Pleasant Grove Township on the southern edge of Coles County, Illinois. Soon after that purchase, Thomas and Sarah built what was to be their final home, a saddlebag style log cabin with two main rooms and additional sleeping and storage space in a loft or attic accessed by a ladder. By 1845, the cabin was home to as many as 18 members of the Lincoln and Johnston families, living together in an extended-family arrangement. Here Thomas Lincoln died in 1851. Here Sarah Bush Lincoln died on April 12, 1869.

After Thomas' death, the cabin was occupied until 1891, when it was bought by the Lincoln Log Cabin Association to be shown at the World's Fair in 1893. The log cabin was disassembled and shipped north to serve as an exhibit at the World's Columbian Exposition in Chicago, Illinois. The original cabin was lost after the Exposition. However, the cabin had been photographed many times, and an exact replica was built from the photographs and from contemporary descriptions. The reconstruction of the log cabin was completed in 1934 as a project of the Civilian Conservation Corps. It is now a part of the Lincoln Log Cabin State Historic Site at Lerna, Illinois.



Thomas Lincoln's Home on Gooseneck Prairie in Coles County, Illinois

**TL 30. Walnut Blanket Chest**

Dimensions: 22 1/2" high x 37" long x 20 1/2" wide

Where Made: Coles County, Illinois

When Made: Circa 1845

Thomas Lincoln Age: 67

Last Known Location: Location: Lincoln Log Cabin State Historic Site,  
Lerna, Illinois

In about 1845, Thomas Lincoln and his neighbor Reuben Moore cut down a large black walnut tree, sawed it into boards and stacked it for seasoning. After curing the lumber, they built two identical blanket chests, one for each of them. Thomas designed the chests using the rich black walnut grain primarily as decoration. It appears to be panel construction, but it is a simple box nailed together. There are no dovetails or other complex woodworking joints in the design. Thomas died five or six years after the chests were built, making this among his last furniture pieces.

David A. Warren<sup>79</sup>

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<sup>79</sup> David Warren, late of Crystal Lake, Illinois, spent decades studying Lincoln's furniture.



*Courtesy of the Lincoln Log Cabin State Historic Site, Lerna, Illinois*

**TL 31. Lincoln Cherry Pie Safe or Kitchen Safe**

a/k/a Lincoln-Hall-Barton

Where Made: Coles County, Illinois

When Made: Late 1840s

Thomas Lincoln Age: 70

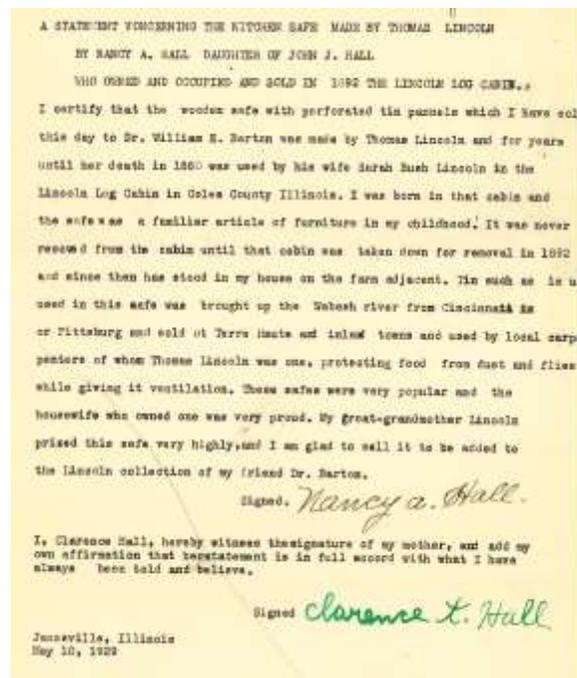
Last Known Location: William E. Barton Collection of Lincolniana, Special Collections  
Research Center, University of Chicago Library, Chicago, Illinois

Thomas Lincoln designed and built this cherry pie safe in Coles County, Illinois for his wife, Sarah, sometime in the late 1840s. Sarah prized her safe for decades when she lived in her log cabin on Goosenest Prairie, south of Charleston, Illinois.<sup>80</sup>

The piece measures 35 ½" x 62" x 12", outside dimensions. It contains three shelves and two full-length doors which are paneled with perforated tin. The overall appearance even discounting age and use, is rough hewn.

Pie cupboards, kitchen safes, and tin safes are some of the names for a 19th century cabinet for storing pies, breads, and other bakery. Pierced tin panels ventilated the cabinet and kept out dust and insects. These unique cabinets were popular from about 1830 until iceboxes appeared.

The safe was a part of the William E. Barton collection and was acquired along with his books, manuscripts and artifacts. The Barton collection now forms the nucleus of the Lincolnia collection now owned by the University of Chicago Library. The following affidavit giving the history of the safe were acquired by Dr. William E. Barton in 1929:



Affidavit of Nancy A. Hall Concerning Pie Safe Made by Thomas Lincoln

<sup>80</sup> *Lincoln Lore* Number 1577, pp. 3-4.



*Courtesy of the William E. Barton Collection of Lincolniana, Special Collections Research Center  
University of Chicago, Chicago, Illinois*

## Unknown Date

### **TL 32. Dr. Jesse Hall Hickory Rocking Chair**

Where Made: Unknown

Date Made: Unknown

Thomas Lincoln Age: Unknown

Last Known Location: Elmer F. Rudee, of Los Angeles

SOUVENIR PRICE 15c

## COME AND SEE

THAT OLD HICKORY ROCKING CHAIR IN WHICH  
ABRAHAM LINCOLN SAT: MADE BY  
HIS FATHER WITH A JACKKNIFE

*B.P.S.W.*



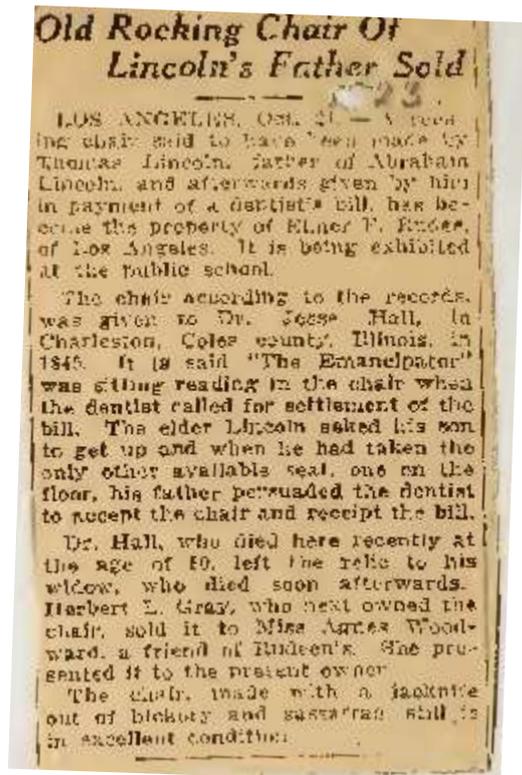
Judge Charles E. Bull impersonating Lincoln, and Joseph H. Hazelton, who was program boy at Ford's Theater the night that Lincoln was shot and who witnessed the tragedy.

This chair has been on display at numerous places, and viewed by thousands of Lincoln lovers. When it was on exhibition at the Los Angeles Biltmore Hotel, it was featured as "That old \$10,000 hickory rocking chair in which Abraham Lincoln sat;—made by his father with a jackknife."

The Los Angeles Times, on September 14, 1923, published a picture of the chair along with the following story:—"Lincoln relic found here; chair traded in by the late president's father to meet dentist's bill; owned by Angeleno, Mr. E. F. Rudeen." (over)

Advertisement for Viewing Hickory Rocking Chair Made by Thomas Lincoln<sup>81</sup>

<sup>81</sup> *Curios and Relics: Furniture Chairs Rocking Chair Made by Thomas Lincoln*, excerpts from newspapers and other sources, from the files of the Lincoln Collection, at [archive.org/details/curiosrelicsfurnline\\_25/page/n1](https://archive.org/details/curiosrelicsfurnline_25/page/n1)



Newspaper Clipping: Old Rocking Chair Made by  
Thomas Lincoln Sold<sup>82</sup>

### Old Rocking Chair of Lincoln's Father Sold

Los Angeles, Oct. 21 [1923] A rocking chair said to have been made by Thomas Lincoln, father of Abraham Lincoln, and afterwards given by him in [payment of a dentist's bill has become the property of Elmer F. Rudee, of Los Angeles. It is being exhibited at the public school.

The chair according to the records was given to Dr. Jesse Hall, in Charleston, Coles county, Illinois, in 1845. It is said "The Emancipator" was sitting reading in the chair when the dentist called for settlement of the bill. The elder Lincoln asked his son to get up and when he had taken the only other available seat, one on the floor, his father persuaded the dentist to accept the chair and receipt the bill.

Dr. Hall, who died here recently at the age of 90, left the relic to his widow, who died soon afterwards. Herbert L. Gray, who next owned the chair, sold it to Miss Agnes Woodward, a friend of Rudee's. She presented it to the present owner.

The chair, made with jackknife out of hickory and sassafras, still is in excellent condition.

<sup>82</sup> *Curios and Relics: Furniture Chairs Rocking Chair Made by Thomas Lincoln, excerpts from newspapers and other sources, from the files of the Lincoln Collection, at [archive.org/details/curiosrelicsfurnline\\_25/page/n1](https://archive.org/details/curiosrelicsfurnline_25/page/n1).*

"Abe, get up a minute,—I want to show the doctor that chair." Abraham arose from the chair, and without taking his eyes from the book in his hand, seated himself on the floor, while his father, Tom Lincoln, took the chair and presented it to Dr. Jesse Hall for his inspection. "There she is, Doc, and she is a dandy, newly painted,—and I made her with a jack knife out of white ash and hickory, and she is built to last a life time. If you want her as payment for that tooth pullin' job, why take her and welcome!"

A statement from the postmaster in the Lincoln home town, declares that Dr. Hall was related to Abe's step-mother, and practiced dentistry there for a season. The doctor treasured the relic and brought it with him to Los Angeles where, about the year 1910, he died, at the ripe old age of over 90. Then his widow moved next door into a house in the rear, where she died a few years later, and the chair became the property of the people who owned the house. They were rank Southerners, of the kind who hated Abraham Lincoln, or anything pertaining to Lincoln. The wife especially held this attitude, and ordered the disposal of the rocker. In a somewhat round-about way, this fact became known to a friend of mine, Miss Agnes Woodward, a prominent lady of Los Angeles, who informed me of this interesting fact, and through whose instrumentality the chair later came into my possession. I can assure you that I prize it most highly.

While giving the bird lore and Lincoln programs in the schools throughout the country, I often longed for something distinctly Lincolnian, such as a letter, or signature, to display before the people. Then as though in answer to prayer, this valuable relic came to me. No other article could have suited the purpose better, considering the beautiful story that could be woven around the old chair in which the mother sat and rocked her children to sleep. We can, in our imagination see Nancy Hanks Lincoln in the rude log cabin, seated in this chair, rocking her baby boy to sleep, or telling Bible stories as she dreamed of a glorious future for him.

But what chance had her Abe, with both environment and heredity against him? The answer to this query has been aptly expressed in the following simple verse:

*"I passed a hovel around whose door  
The signs of penury were strewn;  
I saw the grimed and littered floor,  
The walls of logs from tree trunks hewn.  
I said, 'The gates of life are shut  
To those within that wretched pen.  
But lol from out that lowly hut  
Came one to rule a world of men."*

You must hear the rest of this thrilling story:

Though brought up in a country where the use of booze and tobacco was the order of the day, Abraham Lincoln never used any of it; and when our country was threatened with destruction, he led the Union forces to victory.

Of his Godly mother, Lincoln said, "All that I am or hope to be, I owe to my angel mother."

#### Lincoln Knights' Pledge

"I will emulate Abraham Lincoln in National Loyalty and in the non-use of booze and tobacco."

Ladies who comply with this pledge are known as Ladies of the Lincoln Knights.

In addition to Mr. Rudeen's writings and lectures on Lincoln, he is known as the peer of whistlers, and song bird mimics. Don't fail to hear him!

The old chair has the original hickory bark seat, and the old hand-made wrought iron nails.

This souvenir entitles the bearer to a reserved seat at the entertainment, and from that group will one person be chosen to have the honor of sitting in the old Lincoln Chair.

Mr. E. F. Rudeen  
2408 Medford St., Los Angeles, Calif.

Flyer Concerning Hickory Rocking Chair Made by Thomas Lincoln<sup>83</sup>

<sup>83</sup> *Curios and Relics: Furniture Chairs Rocking Chair Made by Thomas Lincoln, excerpts from newspapers and other sources, from the files of the Lincoln Collection, at archive.org/details/curiosrelicsfurnline\_25/page/n1.*

## The Corner Cupboards

The twelve corner cupboards pictured here were made by Thomas Lincoln. Corner cupboards were large, heavy and difficult to move. They were seldom moved from their original home and this perhaps explains why they have survived. They were also treated as an important part of the household as they were very expensive and functional.



TL 3. 1800



TL 4. (I) 1803-1806



TL 9. (II) 1807-1808



TL 12. (IV) 1814



TL 16. 1816-1830



TL 17 (a). 1818



TL 17 (b). 1818-1819



TL 19. (III) 1821-1822



TL 22. (VII) 1826



TL 23. (VIII) 1826



TL 25. (V) 1827-1829



TL 27. (VI) 1826-1830



### **RICHARD E. HART**

Richard E. Hart was born in Ottawa, Illinois, and attended school and was raised in Springfield, Illinois. He attended the University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign where he received his B.A. in 1964 and his J.D. in 1967. He was admitted to practice law in 1967 and has been a practicing attorney in Springfield for the last fifty-two years. He is a partner in the firm of Hart, Southworth & Witsman. Hart is married to Ann and they have three children and seven grandchildren.

Hart is a past President of The Abraham Lincoln Association and member of the Illinois Abraham Lincoln Bicentennial Commission. He is a past President and board member of the Sangamon County Historical Society, past Chairman of the Advisory Board of The Lincoln Legal Papers, and past President and member of the Board of Directors of the Elijah Iles House Foundation. Hart was largely responsible for raising the funds and managing the day-to-day restoration of the Elijah Iles House and the Strawbridge-Shepherd House, two ca. 1840 Greek Revival residences.

Hart is also past President of Springfield Preservation, Ltd., a for-profit corporation that has restored and leased five Lincoln-era houses in Springfield's German Settlers Row.

Hart suggested the format for the *Looking for Lincoln* project in Springfield and donated his personal historical research and ideas that were used for that project.

Hart and his wife Ann were also responsible for proposing the design for the City of Springfield's streetscape. Their design proposal and advocacy was adopted in lieu of another proposal for a contemporary design. As a part of their advocacy, the Harts purchased and donated the first period lights for Springfield's streetscape. Since that first donation, the use of the design has spread throughout downtown Springfield and is now moving into several neighborhoods, including the Iles Park Neighborhood.

In 1999, Hart was given the City of Springfield's Preservationist of the Year award.

In 2012, Hart was presented with the Logan Hay Medal. The bronze medal is awarded infrequently and is the highest honor given by The Abraham Lincoln Association to recognize individuals who have made noteworthy contributions to the mission of the Association.

In 2014, Hart was awarded the Illinois State Historical Society's Lifetime Achievement Award for his outstanding contributions over the decades to promoting the history of the Prairie State.

In 2015, Hart was awarded the Springfield NAACP Chapter's 2015 Legal and Political Award.

From 2003 until 2015, Hart served on the Board of Managers of Oak Ridge Cemetery and was Chairman of the Board of Managers of Oak Ridge Cemetery. He is a founding member of the Board of Directors of Springfield Illinois African American History Foundation Museum and served from. Hart remains a member of the Board of Directors of The Abraham Lincoln Association and of the Elijah Iles House Foundation.

For ten years Hart has been the editor of *For The People*, a newsletter of The Abraham Lincoln Association, and the *Iles Files*, a newsletter of the Elijah Iles House Foundation.

Hart's personal interest has been in the history of Springfield during the time that Abraham Lincoln lived there and in particular in the presence there of African-Americans. He is also interested in particular areas of Sangamon County during the period of early settlement. He has divided his published research on these two areas into the Spring Creek Series focusing on Lincoln's Springfield, and the Sugar Creek Series focusing on the early settlement of Cotton Hill and Ball Townships in Sangamon County.

*Spring Creek Series*

- Lincoln's Springfield – The Public Square (1823-1865)* (2004)  
*Springfield, Illinois' Nineteenth Century Photographers* (2005)  
*Early Sangamon County Antiques – The Barringer Exhibit* (2005) (Editor)  
*Lincoln's Springfield – The Underground Railroad* (2006)  
*Lincoln's Springfield – The Early African American Population* (2008)  
*The Early Court Houses of Sangamon County, Illinois (1821-1837)* (2008)  
*Lincoln in Illinois: The Bicentennial of the Birth of Abraham Lincoln* (2009) (Editor)  
*Lincoln's Springfield – Abel W. Estabrook: Robert Todd Lincoln's Abolitionist Teacher* (2009)  
*Lincoln's Springfield – Springfield's Early Schools* (2009)  
*The Colored Section, Oak Ridge Cemetery* (2009)  
*Lincoln's Springfield – Greek Revival Architecture on the Prairie* (2011)  
*Camp Butler: A Civil War Story: Photographs of Union Soldiers* (2013)  
*Circuses in Lincoln's Springfield (1833-1860)* (2013)  
*Preston Butler: Photographer in Lincoln's Springfield* (2014)  
*Jameson Jenkins and James Blanks, African Americans in Lincoln's Springfield* (2014)  
*Lincoln's Springfield: The Funeral of Abraham Lincoln: May 3rd and 4th, 1865* (2015)  
*Lincoln's Springfield Neighborhood* (2015)  
*Entertainment in Lincoln's Springfield (1834-1860)* (2017)  
*Lincoln's Springfield–Chair and Cabinet Makers (1831-1860)* (2017)  
*Benjamin Robert Biddle: Lincoln's Tailor and Friend* (2018)  
*Elizabeth Jane Todd Grimsley Brown* (2018)

*Sugar Creek Series*

- Jones Cemetery Tour: Ball, Cotton Hill & Woodside Township, Sangamon County, Illinois* (2002)  
*Philemon Stout Cemetery: Ball Township, Sangamon County, Illinois* (2006)  
*Christopher Newcomer Cemetery: Woodside Township, Sangamon County, Illinois* (2009)  
*Sugar Creek Cemetery: Ball Township, Sangamon County, Illinois* (2010)  
*Vigal Cemetery: Cotton Hill Township, Sangamon County, Illinois* (2010)  
*David Brunk Cemetery: Ball Township, Sangamon County, Illinois* (2010)  
*Cumberland Sugar Creek Cemetery, The Old Burying Ground* (2012)  
*George Brunk Cemetery, Cotton Hill Township, Sangamon County, Illinois* (2012)



This photograph shows the Thomas Lincoln Corner Cupboard (TL 17a) to the right and the David Lutz Cherry Corner Cupboard (TL 17b) to the left. The cabinets are very similar, but the Lutz cabinet is a foot taller. The cabinets were made to fit a specific place in a cabin and height and other dimensions were dictated by that place.<sup>84</sup>

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<sup>84</sup> This picture was taken at the Indiana State Museum, Indianapolis, Indiana on June 29, 2013 where this cupboard was on display for one day..



*Thomas Lincoln constructed quite a bit of furniture and was good at it.  
I feel in time we will come to find out that he was a better man than most  
people have given him credit of being.*

John J. Fierst  
Jasper, Indiana  
August 2, 1964

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