

Birthplace - Sinking Spring Farm

Frontier Farm on the Edge of the Barrens

On December 12, 1808, Thomas Lincoln acquired a 300-acre farm in eastern Hardin County a few miles south of Hodgen's Mill. He paid Isaac Bush \$200 in cash and assumed a balance owed a previous owner.

Nancy Lincoln was great with child when in late 1808 she and Thomas and their infant daughter took up their abode in a one-room log cabin on the farm. Located nearby was a large limestone spring of cool water which had given its name, Sinking Spring, to the place.

In this one-room log cabin near the Sinking Spring, a child, Abraham, was born to Thomas and Nancy Hanks Lincoln on February 12, 1809.



Courtesy of the National Parks Service

Birthplace cabin as it stood at the spring in 1895. Photo taken by Russell T. Evans of Evans Art Co., in Elizabethtown before cabin dismantled and taken on tour across America.

THE LINCOLNS LIVED AT THEIR SINKING SPRING FARM ON THE SOUTH FORK OF THE NOLIN RIVER FOR ABOUT 2 1/2 YEARS BEFORE DIFFICULTIES AROSE IN THE LAND TITLE. BY MIDSUMMER OF 1811 THEY HAD MOVED TO THE KNOB CREEK AREA.

The Boundary Oak

When Thomas Lincoln purchased the Sinking Spring Farm, a magnificent white oak tree stood at the western edge of the farm. This tree served as a boundary marker and survey point for determining the property lines. The Boundary Oak was first identified as a specific boundary marker in the original 1805 survey of the farm [...beginning at a large white oak thirteen poles above the sinking spring or rock spring...] and stood less than 150 yards from the cabin in which the President was born. It is estimated that the tree was 150 years old at Lincoln's birth.

Before its death in 1976 from time, weather, insects, and even disease, the Boundary Oak grew to six feet in diameter, 90 feet in height, and had a crown spread of 115 feet.



Courtesy of the National Park Service, 1957

"He Will Never Come To Much"

Dennis Friend Hanks, Nancy Lincoln's nine year old cousin, was one of the first family members to hold the newborn Abraham. He was born near Buffalo, Kentucky, and had accompanied his aunt, Elizabeth Hanks Sparrow, and her husband Thomas to see the new baby. When the baby cried incessantly, the young boy who had looked forward to a new playmate, proclaimed, "He will never come to much."

Dennis Friend Hanks, a cousin of Abraham Lincoln, knew more about him than any man living when Lincoln was assassinated. He had been present immediately following Lincoln's birth, lived near him in Kentucky and Indiana and finally moved in with the Lincoln family right before the death of Nancy Hanks. Hanks lived with the Lincolns even as they moved to Illinois as he had married Abraham's stepsister, Elizabeth Johnston.



Courtesy of the White House Collection

THE SINKING SPRING WATER IS A MODERATE, BUT CONTINUAL, FLOW THAT IMMEDIATELY ENTERS A SMALL CAVE, FLOWS UNDERGROUND AND EMPTIES INTO THE SOUTH FORK OF NOLIN RIVER ABOUT ONE MILE SOUTHWEST OF THE SPRING.

Entrance to Sinking Spring Farm. Photo taken by Russell T. Evans of Evans Art Co., in Elizabethtown, Kentucky in the spring of 1895. A trail leads downward to the limestone spring and cabin. The land when bought by Thomas Lincoln might have been somewhat cleared for farming, since there had been prior owners. If not, it probably was partially cleared by Thomas Lincoln as he did some farming of the land.



Courtesy of the National Park Service



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LINCOLN - FAMILY and FRIENDS