

# About abraham lincoln's life



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Abraham Lincoln, the sixteenth president of the United States, was born in Hardin County in Kentucky. He was the son of Thomas Lincoln and Nancy Hanks who were farmers. Thomas Lincoln had come to Kentucky from Virginia with his father in 1782. He acquired only enough literacy to sign his name but gained modest prosperity as a carpenter and farmer on the Kentucky frontier.

He married Nancy Hanks in 1806. Abraham was born in a log cabin on Sinking Spring Farm three miles south of Hodgenville in Kentucky. When he was two years old his family moved to another farm on Knob Creek about seven miles northeast of Hodgenville. On this farm of 230 acres Abraham lived for five years, helped his parents with chores, and learned his ABC's by going to school for a few weeks with his older sister Sarah.

In December 1816 the Lincolns again moved, this time to the newly admitted state of Indiana. The tradition that the Lincolns moved because of dislike of slavery may have some truth. However, the main reason for the move was Thomas's uncertainty of Kentucky land titles. Indiana offered secure titles surveyed under the Northwest Law. The Lincolns lived in a rude, three-sided shelter on Pigeon Creek sixteen miles north of the Ohio River. There, Abraham learned the use of axe and helped his father build a house out of the surrounding forest in Indiana. The growing children also snatched a few more months of schooling in the typical one room schoolhouses of the frontier ages. In the late 1817 or 1818 the Lincolns were joined by Nancy's aunt Elizabeth Hanks Sparrow and her husband, Thomas Sparrow, and Abraham's cousin Dennis Hanks. In the fall of 1818 the Sparrows and Nancy Hanks Lincoln all died of milk sickness, probably caused by drinking the milk

of cows that had grazed on white snakeroot which was a very poisonous thing at that time.

After a year of rough homemaking literally, Thomas Lincoln returned to Kentucky, where on December 2, 1819 he married the widow Sarah Bush Johnston and brought her and her three children to Pigeon Creek. His stepmother provided the teenage Abraham with more affection and guidance than his natural mother or his father ever did. With a need for learning and for self improvement, he read every book he could borrow from the poor libraries of friends and neighbors. Abraham's thinly veiled disdain for the life of a backwoods farmer doubtless irritated his father. Abraham in turn resented the requirement of law and custom that any wages he earned before he came of age" by hiring out to neighbors to split rails, for example" must be given to his father. One historian has suggested that Abraham Lincoln's hatred of chattel slavery, which denied to slaves the fruits of their labor, may have originated in Thomas Lincoln's expropriation of the teenage Abraham's earnings (Burlingame, pp. 37" 42).

In any event, relations between Abraham and his father grew increasingly estranged. When Thomas lay dying in January 1851, he sent word that he wanted to say goodbye to his son. Abraham refused to make the eighty-mile trip, stating, If we could meet now, it is doubtful whether it would not be more painful than pleasant (Basler, vol. 2, p. 97). He did not attend his father's funeral. In 1828 Lincoln and a friend took a flatboat loaded with farm produce down the Ohio and Mississippi rivers to New Orleans. He repeated the experience in 1831. These trips widened his horizons and, by tradition, shocked him with the sight of men and women being bought and sold in the

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slave markets of New Orleans. Although he came of age in 1830, he did not immediately strike out on his own. Once more his father sold the farm and set forth to greener pastures, this time in central Illinois. After helping his father clear land, Abraham hired out to split rails for other farmers, and he kept his earnings. In the summer of 1831 he settled in New Salem, a village on the Sangamon River bluff about twenty miles northwest of Springfield.