

LINCOLN LORE

Bulletin of the Lincoln National Life Foundation - - - - - Dr. Louis A. Warren, Editor.
Published each week by The Lincoln National Life Insurance Company, Fort Wayne, Indiana.

Number 413

FORT WAYNE, INDIANA

March 8, 1937

THE INDIANA FARM—HOME OF LINCOLN'S YOUTH

There has been much confusion about Thomas Lincoln's land transactions in Indiana although he occupied the same home site there for fourteen years. While it is admitted by early biographers that Thomas Lincoln secured a patent for his land, Lamson says, "It is very probable that the money which finally secured the patent was furnished by Gentry or Aaron Grigsby and the title passed out of Lincoln's name in the course of the transaction." Lamson also quotes Dennis Hanks as follows: "He (Thomas Lincoln) settled on a piece of government land—eighty acres. This land, he afterwards bought under the two dollar act; was to pay for it in installments, one-half he paid, the other half he never paid, and finally lost the whole of the land."

In the process of preparing his biography of Lincoln, William H. Herndon wrote to the General Land Office for information about the patent issued to Thomas Lincoln for his Indiana land. He received the following reply.

"I have the honor to state, pursuant to the Secretary's reference, that on the fifteenth of October, 1817, Mr. Thomas Lincoln then of Perry County, Indiana, entered under the old credit system,—

1. The South-west Quarter of section 32, in township 4, South of Range 5 West, lying in Spencer County, Ind.

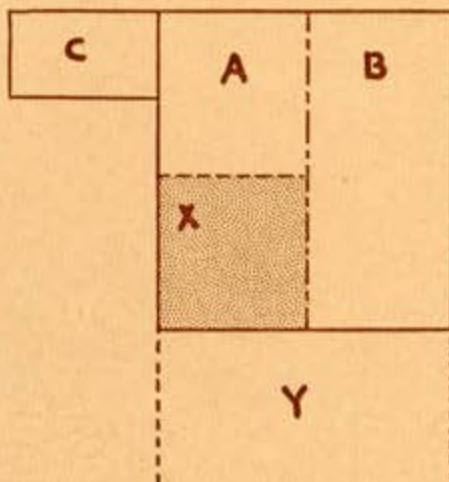
2. Afterwards the said Thomas Lincoln relinquished to the United States the east half of the said South-west Quarter; and the amount paid thereon was passed to his credit to complete payment of the west half of the South-west quarter of section 32 in township 4, South of Range 5 West; and accordingly a patent was issued to Thomas Lincoln for the latter tract. The patent was dated June 6, 1827, and was signed by John Quincy Adams, then President of the United States, and countersigned by George Graham, then commissioner of the General Land Office."

This information about completing payment on the land he retained should settle for all time the question about Thomas Lincoln's title to his Indiana farm. The fact that he relinquished part of his land after ten years possession has been used as evidence against his industry and good sense. A law was passed stipulating that any land then in possession of those entering it might be relinquished at the same price for which it

was originally purchased and the amount paid credited on any other property for which the patentee might be in debt to the government.

Lincoln evidently went to Vincennes in 1827 with his two closest neighbors, Thomas Carter and Thomas Barrett, each of the three Thomases relinquished half of his own quarter section. This was a wise business deal which allowed them to dispose of their poorest land at the same price per acre they had paid for all of it.

Another Lincoln land transaction which has caused some confusion is



THE INDIANA FARM

x—Site of cabin.

y—Burial place of Nancy Hanks Lincoln.

A, B—Southwest one quarter of section 32, T. 4 S., R. 5 W.

A—One-half quarter section retained.

B—One-half quarter section relinquished.

C—Forty acres purchased from Casebier in Section 31.

Shaded portion—Land in original Lincoln section now part of Nancy Hanks Lincoln State Park.

the sale of the homestead at the time of the removal to Illinois. Herndon claims Lincoln sold out to James Gentry. Gentry did eventually come in possession of the land but he did not buy from Thomas Lincoln the tract of eighty acres on which Lincoln was living in 1830. The Spencer County deed book shows that Thomas Lincoln sold the home tract to Charles Grigsby for the sum of \$125.00. Grigsby held a bond on Lincoln given two months earlier so probably this was the second payment. Grigsby sold the farm

five years later to Edlery Brown for \$200.00. Brown kept the property for a little over a year and made a profit of \$40.00 on it, and the following year on January 11, 1838, it passed into the hands of Joseph Gentry at the same figure.

Joseph Gentry divided this property and the north 40 acres was sold in 1850 to Elijah Winkler and three years later the south 40 acres was sold to William Oskins. That same year Oskins obtained possession of the north 40 acres from James Gentry, who had in the meantime bought out his son, Joseph's interest. Five years later the entire eighty acres was again acquired by James Gentry. On November 28, 1871, Gentry deeded the land with several other tracts to Henry Lewis, etc., "Except and reserving the log house known as the Lincoln house" which was built by Abraham Lincoln and his father, Thomas, and which has been theretofore sold.

In this transaction, Henry Lewis and his associates acquired the entire quarter section which was originally entered by Lincoln. The new owner cut up this one hundred and sixty acres and some adjacent land into building lots. The town of Lincoln City grew up on this site.

In tracing this property from Thomas Lincoln, the original patentee, down to the division of the section into town lots by Lewis, one fact discovered by the editor of Lincoln Lore many years ago, which has not been generally known, was brought to light. Thomas Lincoln owned twenty acres of land in section 31 adjacent to his eighty acres, giving him a full hundred acres apparently free of debt. This twenty acres sold to Thomas Lincoln, was patented May 9, 1817, by David Casebier. There is some evidence that when Lincoln moved to Illinois, he traded a few acres of land to John Romine for a horse and this may be the land. On March 11, 1834, James Gentry sold to Joseph Gentry, the southeast quarter of section 31 and the deed states "there being twenty acres of the said last quarter section of land sold by David Casebier to Lincoln."

Twenty acres of land which surrounded the Lincoln cabin home on the eighty acre tract was acquired a few years ago by the Indiana Lincoln Union and it is now a part of the Nancy Hanks Memorial State Park which is comprised of 1300 acres of land adjacent to the Lincoln's Indiana home.