



A Fine Fella

Chapter 1 - by Kay Hively

Young Abe was just a little guy, but his muscles were strong. As he helped his father cut down oak trees, his muscles bulged out, and he smiled to himself. He smiled because he knew the trees he and his father were felling would one day be a new cabin for the Lincoln family.

Abe was only 7 years old, but he knew how to work. On the Kentucky frontier, work was what kept a family going.

Like other families in that part of the country, the Lincoln family had almost no money, so what they needed had to come from the land or from a barter with someone.

Abe's father, Thomas Lincoln, was a good carpenter so he would often

make something and then trade it to a neighbor for food or supplies. Trading one thing for another, without using money, is called barter. Abe thought his father was very good at bartering.

But one thing Mr. Lincoln had not traded for was a good cabin. That's why Abe was happy as he chopped down trees to make logs for the new home. Abe was born in an old log cabin right there in Kentucky in 1809.

While Abe and his father cut trees, his mother Nancy and his sister Sarah worked in the cabin.

It had been a long winter, and their food supply was low. Times were hard, and everyone was looking forward to putting in a garden and gathering fruits and berries from the woods.



Every day the temperature was a little warmer, so Abe knew spring was coming. As he worked on the trees, he thought about the little pouch of seed he had hidden away. Last summer he had found a giant pumpkin in the garden. When his mother cooked it, Abe had scraped out all the seeds.

Now, when it was time to put in this year's garden, he was going to plant every one of the seeds and get lots and lots of pumpkins.

Abe liked pumpkins. He ate them raw right out of the garden. And, of course, he ate them cooked in a kettle or baked into bread. But best of all, he liked them after they were dried in the sun.

Each summer, the Lincoln family sliced some of their pumpkins and apples, put

the slices on strings, and laid them in the hot sun. The sun burned away all the juices, making dried fruits and vegetables. Then, all winter long, the family had apples and pumpkins to eat, along with the meat Mr. Lincoln brought home from his hunts in the woods.

As Abe helped his father move one of the heavy logs, he realized he was hungry. He was sure that any minute Sarah would call him to dinner. But as he listened, the only thing he heard was the sound of something coming through the woods.

Looking up, Abe saw a man on horseback riding straight toward him. Strangers were rarely seen around the Lincoln farm. Abe wondered who this might be.

Next Week: Chapter 2 - A Sudden Move

Things to Think About and Do

1. The Lincoln family dried pumpkins and apples in the sun. The next time you visit the grocery store, look for dried fruits and vegetables. Count how many kinds you see.
2. Abraham Lincoln was born in 1809. How old would he be if he were still alive? Why wasn't Abe born in a regular hospital?
3. Find an ad for something you'd like in the newspaper. If you were going to barter, what could you trade in exchange?

Learn more about Abraham Lincoln by visiting the following Web sites:

- <http://www.nps.gov/history/nr/twhp/wwwlps/lessons/126libo/>
- <http://www.whitehouse.gov/about/presidents/abrahamlincoln/>
- <http://home.att.net/~rjnorton/Lincoln77.html>
- http://www.conservapedia.com/Abraham_Lincoln

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