



A Fine Fella

Chapter 3 - by Kay Hively

Confused and unhappy, Abe helped his father load the wagon. Soon, that very day, the family was ready to go. Abe rode on the wagon seat with his father.

As they started the journey, Abe looked back at the lonely old cabin, and the new cabin, still unfinished.

It was December of 1816, and Abe wondered what Christmas would be like in

Indiana. In Kentucky, Christmas had been very simple for the Lincoln family.

There was no extra food or candy, they just had each other.

For several days the family traveled through a wilderness. At times the way was so rough and rugged that Abe and his father had to chop down trees so the wagon could pass over the trail. When Abe cut down a

tree, he thought of the new cabin in Kentucky. His heart was heavy for his old home, but there was no turning back.

Finally, they came to the Ohio River. Mr. Lincoln said Indiana lay on the other side. As Abe looked at the river he wondered how they would ever make the crossing.

But a short way downstream they came to a ferry crossing. Soon the horses and wagon



and the Lincoln family were on the ferry. Abe's job was to hold onto one of the horses as they crossed the cold water. It was a scary ride. When the ferry finally thumped into the shore,

Abe was glad to be on solid ground, even if it was in Indiana, not Kentucky. The little family continued north until they came to a favorable spot. Mr. Lincoln said they would stay there

because it was government land—they would become squatters.

Quickly, Abe and his father built a half-face cabin for the family. This shelter had only three sides. The fourth side was wide open to the wind and weather. As soon as this little shelter was finished, work began on a regular cabin.

It wasn't long before the weather improved, and nights were not as long and cold. Days became warm and, under a bright sun, Abe helped his father plant a garden. Soon the cabin was finished and life was better in Indiana.

As he grew older, Abe grew stronger. He was slim and tall and seemed to be all legs and arms. He also was able to go to school some. He and Sarah attended a blab school. Abe, who always

loved to talk, liked going to the blab school because he was allowed to talk most all day long.

Frontier schools didn't have many supplies or resources, so the teachers taught by memorization. In Abe's school, the teacher dictated the lessons and the students repeat them back.

Blab school was a noisy place, but Abraham Lincoln was making new friends and getting more education. He loved to argue and was also becoming a fine speaker.

But, just when things were getting better for the family, an illness that people called "milk sickness" spread through the countryside. Many people were dying, and Nancy Lincoln became very sick.

Nine-year-old Abe was worried about his dear mother.

Next Week: Chapter 4 - The New Garden

Things to Think About and Do

1. The Lincoln family rode on a ferryboat. Have you ever ridden on a boat? What does the word "ferry" mean? Make a list of at least 10 kinds of boats. Underline those you would like to ride on.
2. Ask your teacher to let the class read like the children did in blab school. Let everyone read two or three pages together, out loud and very slowly. When the reading is done, let everyone tell how they liked "blab reading."
3. Starting life in a new place can be scary, but the newspaper is a good way to learn about a community. Look through the paper for stories and ads about things that would help a newcomer learn about your town.

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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