

The Abraham Lincoln Genesis Cover-up

"The Censored Origins of an Illustrious Ancestor"

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"Abraham Lincoln was of illegitimate origin, his father was Abraham Enloe, and not Thomas Lincoln or anyone else."

James H. Cathey, *The Genesis of Lincoln*, 1899

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Foreword

Left to traditional historians and other Lincolnians, the story of Abraham Lincoln's life from womb to grave may well remain the longest cover-up in America. With misleading writings, the subject of Lincoln's parenthood and birthplace has been watered down, twisted or just plain avoided. In reality, the North Carolina account of his birth is far more genuine and believable than the trumped up, government manufactured story fed the American public these past one hundred and fifty years.

With the depiction of his "true" beginnings, we see how one of the most revered presidents in U.S. history overcame more adversity than anyone could have imagined. I believe the inspiring reality of Lincoln's life will instill hope as well as bring truth to a great period in our country's heritage.

Hardly anyone questions the birth story of the 16th president of the United States as James R. Cathey did in his bombshell expose of Abraham Lincoln's genesis. Most will say that he was born in Kentucky in February 1809 and his father was Thomas Lincoln. Very few have heard of Abraham Enloe, early American, believed by some to be the president's natural father -- a respected businessman and a participant in the development of the country at the time Daniel Boone was carving trails out of the wilderness, fighting Indians and wrestling bear.

So let me offer some truths -- not what history books tell us, because there is much left unsubstantiated in them about Lincoln's forebears and his beginnings. I believe the public has been shamefully hoodwinked about the facts of his birth and early childhood. Prominent men have disguised the truth in a patchwork of misleading information, half-truths, irrelevant data, assumptive fact and often-outright fiction coldly engineering an unbelievable cover-up. If you were deceived by the Watergate cover-up, and if the Chappaquiddick misadventure sticks in your craw as a mockery of truth and justice, you may now add to your list one more shocker. It is the gold medal winner -- the fabricated genesis of Abraham Lincoln!

Kentucky vs. North Carolina Tradition

My skepticism of the traditional account of Abraham Lincoln's genesis eventually gave way to the conviction that we all have been tricked by a well-orchestrated deception that has been perpetrated over the years. The more one investigates, the clearer it is that neither side -- the legitimists nor the illegitimists -- has a totally airtight case. Therefore, theoretically either could be correct. The legitimists, sometimes categorized "The Kentucky Traditionalists", built their case on the thinnest of evidence. This "official" version of Lincoln's genesis is full of inaccuracies, deceptions, and omissions.

Incredibly for 200 years the "true" story has been successfully suppressed, covered over, and crowned with a plastic headstone. A glorified story has been substituted for Abraham Lincoln's true genealogy, his mother's illegitimacy, his turbulent life, his grandmother's promiscuity, his actual place of birth, and even his accurate age.

All the details including the brutality he and his mother suffered at the hands of Thomas Lincoln have been skillfully kept out of history books. Even more amazing is how so much could have been written about the man with little about his true beginnings. In a sixty-year period following his assassination in 1865, over 2,500 books were published about Lincoln. Nevertheless, the shaky account of his Kentucky origin endured -- the portrayal of a child born and raised in an average pioneer family with signs of his greatness to come. It is a story that in many ways competes with the fable of our beloved George Washington and the Cherry Tree.

Fortunately, there have been individuals who wanted America's heritage to be an honest account of men such as Lincoln's law partner of twenty years William H. Herndon, James H. Cathey ("Genesis of Lincoln," 1899), and J.C. Coggins ("Abraham Lincoln: A North Carolinian With Proof," Second Edition, 1927). In defiance of convention and pretense, these men had the courage to write about Lincoln's life the way they knew it. The not-so-brave, who buckled under direct political pressure, unjustly collected all the honors. William H. Herndon, who worked with Lincoln and knew him probably better than anyone else, supplied Ward Lamon with information to produce an honest biography. Unfortunately, Before it was published, Lamon's "Life of Lincoln" was essentially mutilated. Subjected to a ruthless censoring of what he proposed to

publish, he was compelled to remove distasteful matters from his manuscript. The final result, after all the edits, revealed nothing more than a recorded rumor of illegitimacy and a soft-pedaling of unsavory details.

Moreover, the political ambitions of Lincoln's son Robert, Secretary of War and mentioned for the presidency, figured prominently in the censorship of material for publication. A Harvard graduate and mover in high social circles, Robert did not want his father's humble beginnings aired in public. Under his careful watch, writers who would not romanticize or falsify Lincoln's background paid for it with near literary oblivion. They were not welcome at the same table with the "kid-glove" biographers who had cashed in and had plans for further exploitation of this great man. Most likely, the small segment of public to whom the truth was known raised little fuss about the cover-up knowing they were vastly outnumbered, and the remaining could be expected to be resentful of anything disturbing an image they were not comfortable with.

From the time of his assassination in 1865, there was renewed speculation of Lincoln's true beginnings. Even Lincoln himself cast suspicion on his own genesis in 1860 when he was a presidential candidate at the Chicago Convention. When nominated, J. L. Scripps, a reporter for the Chicago Tribune, asked him about his origins. Lincoln told him it was a waste of time to make anything out of his early life; that it can all be condensed into a single sentence found in Grey's elegy, "The Short and Simple Annals of the Poor." He added "And that's my life and that's all you or anyone else can make of it." It was also rumored that Lincoln confided certain details of his ancestry and asked Scripps to take them to the grave.

With Lincoln's passing, old rumors leaped to the forefront. Among others, Henry Clay and Patrick Henry were attributed to having sired the President -- Thomas Lincoln's role as natural father always in doubt. The parentage record was so bare that one reputable eulogist desperately offered the possibility of a miracle, declaring: "Abraham Lincoln was without ancestors, fellows or successors." The stage was set for a writer's field day. Among them Louis A. Warren's "Lincoln's Parentage and Childhood," William E. Barton's "The Life of Abraham Lincoln", Ward Lamon's "Life of Lincoln". The burden of untruth, along with the irresponsibility of many biographers, is perpetuated even to this day.

As you will observe, the uncorrupted story, the so-called "North Carolina Tradition", is the most truthful version of Lincoln's life. It instills even a greater respect and admiration for Abe Lincoln to learn about the reality of the miserable circumstances from which he rose.

Validating the North Carolina Tradition

The controversy became white-hot and in the thick of it stood the unheralded Herndon. He wrote hundreds of letters to collaborating biographers -- preserved and uncensored in Emanuel Hertz's "The Hidden Lincoln," an oft-referenced source. In his letters, Herndon frequently refers to Lincoln's dark secret of the past as Lincoln's "cancer." Herndon's painstakingly honest and forthright recordings became the toughest enemy to the genesis cover-up. To read them is to discover how cunning the custodians of history were as they carefully picked what they thought would be best for mankind to remember.

For example, observe for yourself the brazen piece of censorship invoked when someone altered the frequently quoted tribute Lincoln made to his mother: "All that I am, or ever hope to be, I get from my mother. God bless her." Herndon gave the full text of what Lincoln said to him:

"Billy, I'll tell you something, but keep it a secret while I live. My mother was a bastard, was the daughter of a nobleman so called of Virginia. My mother's mother was poor and arduous, etc., and she was shamefully taken advantage of by the man. My mother inherited his qualities and I hers. All that I am or hope ever to be I get from my mother. God bless her."

This unedited "confession" would seem worthy of headlines, but it never reached the typesetter. Neither did the illegitimacy of Lincoln's mother, Nancy Hanks; the story of the seducible Lucy Hanks, his maternal grandmother who was charged with fornication; nor his pointed tribute to an unnamed ancestor, clearly stated as someone other than a Lincoln. Understandably, it was not the best copy for grade school texts, but the truth should have been shared with the general public. Who was there influential enough to dare alter the image of our Number One Pioneer Family and most exalted citizen? His altered genealogy, broadcast to the world, was to be forever set in stone. With cabins enshrined and maps marked. Carl Sandburg's

popular "The Prairie Years" just about sealed off the truth forever as he charmed the unsuspecting reader over and around the rough terrain of Lincoln's parentage and early childhood.

With what is now known, Lincoln could be expected to be evasive and uncommunicative given a merciless press and political enemies always at the ready. His reticence was probably because he knew well his pedigree and didn't think it mattered to anyone but himself. Even Herndon did not have all the answers to the genesis mystery and had to scour the countryside in Kentucky, Illinois and Indiana for more information. Ironically, there were many North Carolinians who had known the story for sixty years, and he would have saved himself plenty of saddle sores and hours of letter writing had he sought them out instead.

Back in 1916, taxpayers unknowingly became part of the vulnerable Kentucky tradition. On April 16th of that year, the United States Government bought the Kentucky land on which Lincoln was believed to have been born. Despite speculation as to the exact location in the state, a decision was reached. North Carolinians knew that they were way off course -- by an entire state! Although the Kentucky purchase was made more than 100 years after Lincoln's believed birth, any doubts of the correct location were seemingly overridden by an urgent need to erect a monument.

One hundred and seventeen years after Lincoln's celebrated birth date, Louis A. Warren, a recognized Lincoln authority, would lay to rest (at least in his own mind) any remaining concern about the accuracy of the site selected. He abruptly brushed aside claims from North Carolina and Tennessee. In dealing with the Kentucky options, he disqualified two bids from Bourbon County, one from Elizabethtown, two from Washington County, four from Hardin County, and four from La Rue County. Finally, he disclosed irrevocable evidence that it was the Lincoln Spring Farm near Hodgenville. Warren proclaimed that his discovery of records, revealing that Thomas Lincoln had held the title to the farm as of December 12, 1808, was proof that Abraham Lincoln was born there since his date of birth is but a few months later on February 12, 1809. Warren's logic would seem only to confirm speculation about the site's legitimacy, while adding further doubts to the accuracy of Lincoln's date of birth.

The world has known few heroes with sixteen possible birthplaces. This weak justification must have thoroughly enraged Cathey and Coggins, who had devoted so much time to collecting testimony that eventually turned out to be consistent with what Herndon had independently discovered. These investigations should have been heralded for disproving the Kentucky Tradition and shedding light on the truth.

Unchecked, however, the deception continued with biographer upon biographer endlessly echoing the "official" genesis theme. So numerous were the machinations of deception and some so complex, we shall contend with only two here -- those of William E. Barton and Louis A. Warren. They entered the "competition" after Lincoln's death by churning out thick, impressive volumes. The lack of hard data in the Kentucky Tradition afforded them an open road to publish... and publish, which they did. The products of their fruitless efforts serve only to expose that their intent was clearly to validate the Kentucky version.

Barton wasted no time putting down other biographers' attempts to provide Lincoln an ancestry befitting his position in the minds and hearts of men. His "The Life of Lincoln" worked hard to avoid the ever-lurking and convincing testimony from North Carolina that threatened his thesis at every turn. He shrewdly fulfilled an obligation to deal with it in a way that would be harmless to his new, self-appointed role as Lincoln chronicler. He briefly mentions that some of the Hanks migrated from Virginia to the western part of North Carolina, where, he reports, these Hanks formed the basis of a "stupid story connecting the name of John C. Calhoun with the Lincoln family." Barton in his "The Life of Abraham Lincoln" knowingly added another bull to the paternity pasture, cleverly selecting from seven reputed sires of the president, the flimsiest father-candidate. In knocking down Calhoun and all others, he presumed to squelch the ever-nagging reports about one Abraham Enloe of North Carolina, closing the paternity door to all but Thomas Lincoln.

Barton and Warren both proclaimed the importance of documented proof yet never hesitated to use assumptions when they fell short of facts to support their manufactured conclusions. They intertwined irrelevant and relevant information with a technique seemingly borrowed from fiction writers, using fabricated details that create the illusion of intimacy with a person or situation. They would have the reader believe they stood at Nancy Hanks' elbow as she hummed a tune while fixing Tom's and little Abe's dinner. Barton, faced with unexplainable gaps of time in the lives of the cast of this wilderness drama, laid his smokescreen by disclaiming, "While details are lacking, we have no difficulty in supplying essential fact."

The believability of the Kentucky birth contention hinges entirely on how strong the case can be made for Lincoln's mother, Nancy Hanks, to have spent all of her life in Kentucky prior to marrying Thomas Lincoln, except for her birth and infant years in Virginia. His strategy was to eliminate every possibility that she may have had contact with Abraham Enloe in North Carolina. Barton's version has Nancy, her mother Lucy Hanks, and Lucy's parents departing Virginia and arriving in Kentucky without so much as a pit stop in North Carolina, thereby validating his own contrived supposition.

Barton claims that the Hanks left Virginia in 1784. Admitting a poverty of records, he nevertheless assumes that this is the same year Nancy was born. Warren reports that Lincoln was ignorant of his mother's place of birth, which would likely make him hazy on the date as well. He deals with this dilemma by disputing the work of biographer Caroline Hanks Hitchcock, who states Nancy had been born February 5, 1784. Barton further contributes to the conspiracy by deducing that 1783 is the date from her tombstone inscription: "Nancy Hanks Lincoln, mother of President Lincoln, died October 5, 1818, aged 35 years. Erected by a friend of her martyred son, 1879."

The uncertainty of the Kentucky version is further evidenced as we learn that a second line of the inscription was removed when the original stone was replaced. It is my belief that Nancy would have been born before 1784, for her mother would be more apt to brave a wilderness alive with Indians and wild animals with an older child and not a suckling babe.

Barton has a difficult time keeping North Carolina out of Nancy's and Lucy's itinerary because there are no records to confirm the time they spent in Kentucky. He borrows from Lamon's conveniently censored book, noting that Lucy became the wife of Henry Sparrow in Kentucky in 1791. To establish her presence in that state at an earlier date, and serving his purposes with regard to Nancy's whereabouts, he must remove his silk gloves to tell the reader, reluctantly, that Lucy was charged with fornication in 1789.

He cannot explain the whereabouts of Nancy and is forced to rescue himself with more assumptions: "It is probable that for a time Nancy lived with this Aunt and Uncle (in Kentucky); and it appears almost certain that she went for a few months to her own mother, Lucy, who married Henry Sparrow. But this was not an ideal arrangement, and when Thomas Sparrow married Elizabeth Hanks in 1798, she went to live with them."

On the premise that where Lucy went Nancy was to follow, Warren tags along with Barton dodging and weaving to miss the haunting North Carolina Tradition. He writes that he does not have any positive evidence of Nancy Hanks in Kentucky until November 24, 1789, the date her mother was called up on the fornication charges. In the same predicament that Barton was in, he depends on creativity to bail himself out as he writes that this is sufficient to conclude that Nancy was with her mother at the time.

Both men, in fact, reinforce the contention that Nancy was living with the Enloes in North Carolina at the time. All the testimony, as we shall disclose, corroborates her presence in the Enloe home. Our two part-time historians keep stumbling over themselves in trying to prove otherwise. Barton works against himself again when he writes that Joseph Hanks' sorrow was so deep that he left Lucy out of his will made nine years after her indiscretions. He suggests that Lucy's wayward ways also may have caused him to turn his daughter out. If that were the case, there is every reason to believe that Lucy and little Nancy went their own way when the family left Virginia. The rift between Joseph and daughter Lucy was even worse than originally thought -- we learned from North Carolina sources that Lucy had two illegitimate children.

It was no secret to Cathey and Coggins, or to the numerous witnesses in the mountains of western North Carolina, where Nancy Hanks resided before being swept away to Kentucky. Replace all the fictional stories we have accepted purely on faith, with a tradition and recollection of the people who observed the truth. And so it comes down to a simple story retold generation after generation, one that is too significant to simply set aside, known as the Lincoln genesis that many have diligently struggled to cover up.

In a 1910 newspaper article penned by a Mrs. Pruett and a Mrs. Beard, Coggins reports of finding a very illuminating reading:

"Little has ever been written concerning Nancy Hanks ... the fact that she spent much of her early life in North Carolina has been unknown and ignored by (Lincoln's) biographers. In an effort to preserve this truth to history, there has recently been erected near the town of Belmont, Gaston County, North Carolina, a monument on the site where stood her cabin home, near the banks of the Catawba ... according to local

tradition Nancy Hanks was an "orphan" and came to North Carolina with her uncle Dicky Hanks, when he moved there from Virginia ... Nancy spent most of her girlhood with her uncle leaving him to live in the western part of what then was Lincoln, now Rutherford County, North Carolina, near where the town of Rutherfordton stands today. Here she lived in the home of Abraham Enloe, going there to assist Mrs. Enloe with her household duties. She later went with his family to what is now Swain County, North Carolina."

The boulder pictured in this particular article was erected by descendants of a former owner of the land. On the boulder is a plaque bearing a replica of a frontier cabin and the inscription- "This stone marks the site of the log cabin home of Dicky Hanks, uncle of Nancy Hanks, mother of Abraham Lincoln. Nancy spent much of her girlhood here with her uncle."

In no uncertain terms, the Pruett-Beard article also tells us about Abraham Enloe – "he being of fine physique, tall, angular, black hair, community leader and better educated than his associates, his father having been a school teacher." It reports a situation that arose in the Enloe household causing Mrs. Enloe to insist that Nancy leave, adding that members of the Enloe family escorted her to their new home in Kentucky.

In Coggins' research, we meet the nephew of Abraham Enloe, Barry H. Melton, who had testified that he knew of Lucy's plight; how her extreme poverty forced her to put her daughter Manda in the home of a man named Pratt, and Nancy in the home of the Enloes on Puzzle Creek in western North Carolina. We begin to notice that the perceived long-involved testimony is really quite uncomplicated, with events clearly described and relationships as they were remembered.

From James Cathey's research, we learn that Abraham Enloe was a large dealer in livestock and each year drove cattle, horses and mules to the south, thereby gaining a far-reaching reputation as a businessman. Enloe's family described him as a big man, at least six feet tall, not corpulent but muscular and sinewy, prominent nose and stiff black hair. Writes Cathey, "The President's father had a good mind, but he was no saint."

In 1895, Walker Battle (b. 1809, Hayward County, N.C.) told Cathey about his father having come to the Ocona Lufta area with Abraham Enloe -- two of the first settlers in western North Carolina. Battle lived there his entire life and said he knew Abraham Enloe and family almost as well as his own. He distinctly remembers stories of trouble between Abraham Enloe and Nancy Hanks, and of her being sent to Kentucky where she married a fellow named Lincoln. He said that Enloe sent something to her in Kentucky taking great care that his wife did not find out.

The suppressed genesis of Lincoln denied us the testimony of Captain James W. Terrell (b. 1829, Rutherford County, N.C.) who told Cathey he had seen an article in "Bledsoe's Review" about the difficulty between Thomas Lincoln and a man named Enloe. Terrell checked it out with Abraham Enloe's son-in-law, Dr. John Mingus, and others. He was told of a young girl named Nancy Hanks, who was employed in the Enloe household (in Rutherford County at the time), her position nearly that of a family member.

Terrell also learned that a family fight resulted when Nancy became pregnant and she was sent to Kentucky with the help of Honorable Felix Walker, then a member of the Congress from the Buscombe district, N.C. He knew that Abraham Enloe's wife's maiden name was Egerton and she was a native of Rutherford County, N.C. Terrell met a Dr. Egerton of Hendersonville, N.C. and on finding he was related to Mrs. Enloe, a conversation took place that added to the growing fund of testimony.

Some time in the early fifties, two young men of Rutherford County moved to Illinois and settled in or near Springfield; one, named Davis, became intimately acquainted with Lincoln. In the fall of 1860, just before the presidential election, Davis and his friend went back to Rutherford and spent an evening with Dr. Egerton. Davis told Egerton that in a private conversation with Lincoln, the presidential candidate said in confidence that he was of Southern extraction and his right name ought to be Enloe, but that he had always gone by the name of his stepfather.

Terrell noted that the familial connection was reinforced by the physical resemblance between Wesley M. Enloe, legitimate son of Abraham Enloe, and Mr. Lincoln – describing a photograph of either could be passed on to the family of the other. Incidentally, Wesley lived on the Ocona Lufta where his father had first settled.

Coggins puts other matters into clearer focus for he too was convinced that our 16th president was born in the Enloe household on Puzzle Creek, N.C. (near Bostic). He was convinced that the Enloe family, with the pregnant Nancy, moved to their wilderness home on the banks of the Ocona Lufta River because the girl was a thorn in Mrs. Enloe's side. The forest seclusion was welcome but did not satisfy her. Walker, close friend and neighbor of Enloe, took Nancy in her expanding condition to his home of Jonathan Creek to get her out of sight of Mrs. Enloe and neighbors. While Nancy remained in Walker's home, he visited the tenants of Enloe's other home on Puzzle Creek to arrange for them to take Nancy in. Nancy stayed with them until she was delivered of her son. Coggins writes that Nancy's temporary removal from the Enloe home was not enough, especially with the child about, and so Enloe arranged for the woman and child to be transported to Kentucky with his own daughter and her husband, the Thompsons.

H. J. Beck, born and reared on the Ocona Lufta and Enloe's neighbor, testified to Cathey that after Enloe had gotten Walker to take the pregnant Nancy away and they had been gone for several weeks, neighbors began to think Enloe had done away with her. She was reported missing until the report arrived that she was alive and had had a child. Still her whereabouts at Puzzle Creek were kept a secret. Walker then arranged for Michael Tanner, mule driver and horse trader of Rutherford County, to take Nancy and the infant Abe from Puzzle Creek back to the Ocona Lufta to satisfy concerned neighbors.

History can also reflect on the recollections of George DePriest of Shelby, N.C., who was living at Duncan's Creek, Rutherford County, and was acquainted with a Polly Price, "Aunt Polly," (who lived to be 100 years old). She often talked about Nancy Hanks with whom she was closely associated in her girlhood. They went to quiltings and dances together and Nancy often visited her home. She visited her when Nancy was living with the Enloes on Puzzle Creek. She also saw Nancy, after the baby was born at the Enloe home, at the Old Concord Baptist Church where she took the baby and held him in her arms. When Nancy got ready to leave for Kentucky, Aunt Polly said that she was at the Enloe place and saw her get on a horse behind a man who was a horse trader and ride away, the man taking the baby in his arms. DePriest had no doubt that Abraham Enloe was the true father of Abraham Lincoln.

In Coggins' findings, according to C.O. Ridings (attorney of Forest City and grandson of Hon. Columbus Tanner of Rutherford County), Michael Tanner was known as the father of Nancy by Lucy Hanks. Ridings swore to Coggins his knowledge of the existence of a paper he had read on the subject, as well as, to hearing his own grandfather recant the story of Nancy and her child Abraham.

Pieces Fall into Place like a Jigsaw Puzzle

Inevitably the truth unfolds, pieces of it from here and there, falling into place and fitting against one another as in a jigsaw puzzle. It is difficult to imagine separately concocted stories. Herndon had independently come up with much of the information sixty years before Cathey and Coggins decided it was time to call a halt to the Kentucky propaganda machine.

Cathey included an illuminating article from an 1893 issue of the Charlotte Observer in his book:

"I resolved to see Colonel Davidson, the father of our late Attorney General. I found him at home (Asheville) and willing to talk ... here is his story. Abraham Enloe lived in Rutherford County. In his family he had a girl named Nancy Hanks, about ten or twelve years of age. At the end of eight years he moved to the house at the foot of the Smokey Mountain ... the present home of Wesley Enloe. There is a lady now living who as a girl was visiting Abraham Enloe ... she says that Nancy Enloe Thompson (Enloe's daughter also named Nancy) having become reconciled with her parents, had returned from Kentucky to North Carolina. They were to start back in a few days, and she remembers a neighbor saying- "I am glad Nancy and her boy are going to Kentucky with Mrs. Thompson, Mrs. Enloe will be happy again! I married into the Enloe family (Davidson went on) ... settled Abraham Enloe's estate, have frequently heard this tradition ... have no doubt of its truth. I am a lawyer. I was seated in my office ... a gentleman called, introduced himself as Thompson and stated that he learned that I was the man who settled the estate; that he was the son of Nancy Enloe Thompson ... he was a Democrat, and had been an Indian agent during the Lincoln administration. I asked how Lincoln, a Republican, appointed him, a Democrat, an Indian agent? Thompson replied that Lincoln was under some great obligation to his (Thompson's) mother, and expressed a desire to aid her, if possible, in some substantial way."

Single-minded Louis Warren shoots down the recollections of two Kentuckians who were playmates of Lincoln. Reverend Duncan, a Kentucky preacher of some prominence, told Herndon in 1865 how Lincoln had run about a quarter of a mile to a blacksmith shop to get an iron hook and pole to extract a groundhog they had chased into a crevice. The preacher lived on Nolin Creek near the Lincoln's and was born July 5, 1804. Warren says Duncan was mistaken because Lincoln was then only two years old and Duncan seven. Abe was not only big for his age, but also older than most knew. North Carolinians, witness to the birth of Lincoln, would say he was about the same age as Duncan.

Kentuckian Austin Gollahers (born 1805) also is felled by Warren's guillotine. Gollahers said he saved Abe's life when he fell into a deep creek. On another occasion, Abe made a 14-mile trip to a mill and carried a "turn" on his back. Too much for an eight year old boy, Warren claimed. Carolina tradition would make Abe about twelve, and as he was big for his age, therefore capable of the deed.

Two respectable but maligned associates of the president add to the belief that when Thomas Lincoln and Nancy Hanks were married in 1806, a three-year old named Abe was kept out of sight. True to form, the Kentucky traditionalist biographer must automatically destroy every non-conforming obstacle in his path, and often the justification for the dismissal is a wave of the hand

The hot potato that the purists dared not touch was the bloody brawl between Abraham Enloe and Thomas Lincoln. History books never mentioned it because it would beg explanation. The press might have headlined it "The Grudge Battle of the Century", had the contestants' future been prophesized. The savage fight confirmed there was more than a casual connection between the two men and therefore mention of it had to be avoided.

Herndon wrote to Lamon about it, reporting that Thomas Lincoln found Enloe with his wife and soon took Nancy and Abe out of Kentucky to get away from Enloe and the surrounding bad influences. Herndon provides the date of 1815 when Abraham Enloe "was caught by Thomas Lincoln in such relations and such conditions with his wife that he was convinced that his wife was not, like Caesar's wife, above suspicion." He then tells how Thomas Lincoln took off after Enloe and in the ensuing brawl bit off the end of Enloe's nose.

In the same letter, Herndon added that while "Mrs. Lincoln (Nancy) bred like a rat in Kentucky she had no more children in Indiana." The same letter also referenced information he received that Thomas Lincoln had become sterile, possibly due to contracting the mumps, with no explanation of when this occurred.

If it were not the common interest in Nancy and little Abe, what was it that brought the two men together? Thomas Lincoln, obscure distiller, was not likely to have other than personal business with the North Carolinian. Enloe was a successful farmer, landowner, merchant, and horse trader, known to be the owner of the best horses in his neighborhood. Enloe owned the only forge and blacksmith tools in his settlement for repairing his and neighbors' farming implements. The nearest stores were in Augusta and Charleston; and Enloe, who owned the only wagon, transported salt and powder from these markets for himself and neighbors. He also served as justice of the peace. After Boone had opened his Wilderness Road to Kentucky and traffic began to grow on it, there was a new market for the enterprising Enloe.

Herndon supplied an answer to this question; writing that for a consideration from Enloe, Lincoln assumed the paternity of the infant of a poor girl named Nancy Hanks. Also, Coggins quotes from a newspaper article dating back to about 1897 by Colonel T. Lary Grant (editor of the News-Reporter), "Nancy Hanks was raised in the Enloe family... Enloe was named as the responsible party... was never known to make any denial... was known to make all the necessary arrangements for the girl's care and comfort."

Martha Ann Melton was the sister of Abraham Enloe. Her son Berry H. Melton, first cousin of the president, met with Coggins. He lived in the northeastern section of Buncombe County, on Bee Tree Creek, N.C. His family knew that one Enloe-Lincoln fight was because Tom Lincoln had whipped Nancy and little Abe unmercifully. Melton expressed his certainty to Coggins that Abraham was an Enloe; there was not a drop of Lincoln blood in the President; and historians were all wrong as to his ancestry and where he was born.

He acknowledged knowing Nancy Hanks, as he wrote:

"We were children together... I knew her uncles William and Dick Hanks. My people came from the same community in Rutherford County, North Carolina, where Nancy Hanks was raised. Everybody spoke of her uncle as old Dick Hanks ... a habitual drunkard ... spent every cent he could get for liquor. He was put in jail in Rutherford County ... made shoes in jail but the income from his work was not sufficient to support the family, and the children were taken from Old Dick and bound out in different families."

"My Uncle Abraham Enloe took Nancy. She was about eight or ten years old when she became a member of his family. Nancy remained in my uncle's home until she was grown ... she learned to read and write ... Uncle was a man who believed in education ... among his folks were doctors, lawyers and school teachers, all descendants of Scotch teachers."

Melton related how the Enloes came to be in the western part of the state of North Carolina that was virtually uninhabited except for Indians. A risky time to travel alone, they came with others west from Rutherford County in the first covered wagons to cross the mountains into Buncombe County. The migrating party stopped at what was called Soco Creek by the Indians, a few miles south of Asheville. They made friends with the Cherokees, then separated and took up land from the state, with Enloe eventually building a house on the bank of the Ocona Lufta River.

Herndon's report of the deplorable circumstances of Nancy's life with Thomas Lincoln was confirmed by Melton's testimony. Many biographers thought Herndon had exaggerated. Melton was specific.

"Uncle's daughter married a man in Kentucky by the name of Thompson. They lived just across the state line and that was where Nancy and little Abe were sent ... Uncle sent money over there for Nancy's support, as much as fifty dollars at a time. And he made an occasional trip to see the folks, and in the meantime he built a mill there. He made an agreement with Tom Lincoln, that if he would marry the girl, and take care of her and the boy, he would give him five hundred dollars, and a wagon and a team. Lincoln married her, but failed to comply with the agreement in properly providing for the couple. There was no floor in the house, and it was reported that she had to sleep on a pine straw bed. Moreover, he was brutal in his treatment of both Nancy and the child. He was jealous, too, and would get drunk, and take his spite out in beating little Abe. And when Nancy interfered he beat her. Uncle refused to pay him the full amount, and they had trouble. Lincoln got drunk and threatened to kill Enloe. Enloe was a large, tall man and Lincoln was a heavy, muscular man. They fought just like bulldogs. Old Lincoln got Uncle down and bit off the end of his nose."

After the fight, Melton said, they reconciled, Tom taking Nancy and the boy over the mountains to Enloe's. Tom needed the mare and the mule and a little pocket change that he was to get for taking care of Enloe's boy Abraham. He got only fifteen dollars, the mare and the mule.

While Herndon's investigation came up with little complimentary to Thomas Lincoln -- such as the house Nancy and young Abe lived in being a half-faced camp, fourteen feet square, of unhewn logs, the bed made of skins and leaves -- men like Warren strained to paint a respectable picture of him. There were those who had deified the president, others who canonized his mother, but Tom's reputation was universally so bad that no one felt equal to crowning him with glory. Warren's beautification of Thomas was readily accepted by the caretakers of history in spite of it being one of the clumsiest parts of the cover-up.

Thomas Lincoln had been called a vagabond, an idler, worthless, listless, lazy and ignorant. Warren is mystified by the allegations because, he claims with feigned innocence, no one alive really knew him. Therefore, only documentation can tell us what this man was really like, and with the records he found in Kentucky he continued to dignify the Big Whitewash. An entire chapter in his "Lincoln's Parentage and Childhood" is devoted to Vocations of the Father and another to His Avocations. Warren dug up pay records showing that Thomas had hewn logs at Haycraft's and Geohegan's mills and this, he deduces, makes him a carpenter (Sandburg polishes it up to the rank of cabinet-maker). Another pay record earns him a chapter subtitle of "Laborer" for the ditch he dug. "Surveyor" Thomas Lincoln, as one record divulged, checks out to be the term used for a citizen's responsibility to maintain passable a given section of road -- no instruments required.

Although one biographical manuscript from Nicolay and Hay had removed from it references to Thomas' failure as a "Farmer," under the respectable title given him by Warren, Tom fairs somewhat better. Lincoln left an unpaid mortgage held by a George Lindsey and a sizeable corn crop when he went to Indiana. If there were any industry in Lincoln's makeup it would have turned to raising corn, a favorite crop for distillers many of whose descendants were known as Kentucky Moonshiners.

Warren reaches to create respectability for Thomas by associating his name with that of horse breeder Mordecai Lincoln, his clinching document an estate sale record of Thomas having paid sixty-five cents for a currycomb. As "Hunter" even Warren must admit he found evidence that Thomas shot not one wolf in five years when three hundred fifty-five were killed for pelts that brought a price, Tom not in need of the money presumed. The title bestowed of "Indian Fighter" was earned as member of a twelve-man militia disbanded after one month. As "Guardman" he stood watch over a jailed prisoner. As "Juryman" he served on cases of little importance, Warren supplies. Warren defeated himself in trying to fashion a silk purse from this sow's ear; yet his wobbly vindication of Old Tom was hailed another victory by the strange band of purists almost fanatically devoted to making the Lincoln genesis into what it was not.

The elite group of "history pirates" danced on tiptoe when Warren dredged up the missing marriage record of Nancy Hanks and Thomas Lincoln. The 1806 date, three years before Abe Lincoln's official birth, was to them equal to a blend test and immaterial that only "in law" would he be legitimate. The public was in the dark in any event, but the lingering doubters would be quelled, and perhaps of greater significance would be the easing of conscience for those who lived off the legend they had filed and polished like diamond cutters. The North Carolinians at the foot of the Smokies, perhaps weary of the endless debate but confident in their knowledge, would agree that Thomas was at the most legal father of the president and no more than legal father of Abe's sister Sarah and a child they named Thomas who died young. This is not unlikely, as Abraham Enloe always had more than a foot in the door. Herndon reported that when Old Ben Hardin wanted to, he could use the girl Nancy most any time. Thomas' sterility, thought done at an early age, was not a factor to be ignored.

In Conclusion

Example upon example show how the verdict was in before actual testimony was heard. The genesis cover-up has indeed falsified history. The lengths to which callous writers have gone to keep the counterfeit story of Lincoln's beginnings alive are astounding. On the other side of the coin, there is ample evidence to strip away, layer by layer, the thick varnish that conceals, without any right to do so, information clearly belonging in the public domain.

With the discovery of photographs showing Wesley Enloe (son of Abraham Enloe and according to the suppressed truth, the half-brother of the president), William A. Dills told Coggins, "The public may read in Wesley Enloe, son of Abraham Enloe, a walking epistle of Abraham Lincoln."

Sion T. Early wrote to Cathey from Dillsboro, North Carolina:

"In 1894 Mr. Theodore Harris of San Antonio, Texas, was stopping in my town. He had heard of the Lincoln tradition and was thoroughly acquainted with the personal characteristics of Abraham Lincoln. Mr. Harris and myself made a trip up the Ocona Lufta River ... as we were nearing Mr. Wesley Enloe's place, we saw a man coming on foot down the road toward us... Harris pointed in the direction of the man and said -- That is Mr. Enloe of whom I have heard the alleged half-brother of Lincoln, or words to that effect. He explained to me that the resemblance ... to Abraham Lincoln flashed upon him like a revelation."

By the time Cathey had the opportunity to visit Wesley Enloe, the latter was balding and in his 81st year; facial features, admits Cathey, not what he expected in the reported resemblance. Wesley told Cathey he favored his mother's family, but in size he was like the Enloes. What amazed Cathey was the striking similarity of body structure and posture when comparing side by side photographs of the two revealing a likeness not to be overlooked. From descriptions handed down, the squat, stout, full and round face Thomas Lincoln standing alongside the taller and angular Enloes would bring back Melton's words that there was not a drop of Lincoln blend in the president. Both Cathey and Coggins were satisfied that Thomas Lincoln was the fifth wheel in this wilderness drama.

Herndon laid down the framework of the new history in the late 1800's, his research and firsthand knowledge coming from a different direction than taken by Cathey and Coggins. All three of these determined men worked independently pulling together information from unique sources. What one said, the other confirmed; suspicions became realities; time gaps were filled; the linkage was unbelievably smooth. It needed no elaborate defense or documentation. The only people who paid any attention to the real genesis were the ones busy suppressing it and whose typewriters hemorrhaged an unprecedented flow of published works careful to ignore it.

The North Carolina tradition has not been challenged with the intensity of effort applied to perpetuating the Kentucky version; had it, the testimony would have been revealed, and it would have negated the publicly favored and generally accepted ancestral theme. The gag rule had its affect long enough for the well-manicured genesis to become deep-rooted in people's minds. The prose of the legitimists was like gondolas moving the reader gently through the canals of Venice -- the beauty barely overshadowing the slight aroma of bilgewater.

Perhaps it is not too late to fulfill Coggins desire to dedicate the "Lincoln Hill Park" where Abe Lincoln was born, near Bostic, North Carolina. Are the requirements so rigid that history will never acknowledge the second-generation Scot who sired Abe Lincoln? Will the site of the old homestead along the Ocona Lufta River where Abraham Enloe, his family and Nancy Hanks lived, be forever unmarked? Will Cathey, Coggins and Herndon ever get the chance to serve notice on past and future historians that the passage of time will not befriend their deceptions? Whatever happens, we remain with the knowledge that history has been tampered with -- an undeniable fact; whatever side one may have wanted to take, censorship denied any such choice. The genesis cover-up of Abe Lincoln is of the cruelest kind because it stole from the people a vital part of what is entirely theirs, and the motives were political and commercial. Abraham Lincoln, the whole man, belongs to the people if ever a man did.

History will be a lot brighter for the truth.

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Affidavits

From the 1880s to the 1920s a number of writers, particularly James A. Cathey, a state legislator, and Dr. James Coggins, president of Atlantic Christian College, collected testimony of Lincoln's origin in Rutherford County and other areas. Among the affidavits they procured were statements such as these:

- Nancy "Grannie" Hollifield, who lived until 1900 and "Aunt Polly" Price, who died in 1890, stated that they were friends of Nancy Hanks and held the child Abe in their arms before Nancy and her baby left for Kentucky.
- Wesley Enloe, Lincoln's reputed half-brother, said that the tradition of Lincoln's origin in the Abraham Enloe family "no doubt is essentially true."
- Nancy Hanks' name was recorded on a roll book of the Concord Baptist Church. Unfortunately, this book was later destroyed in a fire.
- Several people who knew Lincoln as a boy in Kentucky provided evidence that his "official" birth date of 1809, recorded only in a family Bible dating from the 1850s, is several years too late.
- Austin Gallaher stated that he saved Lincoln from drowning in 1812, and at that time the two boys had been in school together for over a year. Although Lincoln had great intellectual gifts, he hardly would have been walking to school at the age of two.
- Residents of Elizabethtown, Kentucky remembered seeing Abe as a toddler -- two years before he is supposed to have been born.

In North Carolina, Attorney General Theodore Davidson, the Rev. Dr. Tilman R. Ganes of Shelby, prominent Rutherford County residents including government officials, attorneys, doctors, bankers, and merchants, and older residents of several counties all testified to the truth of Lincoln's origin.

Among those who attested to their belief in this tradition were:

J. B. Martin, ex-sheriff of Rutherford County	Mr. R. E. Price (Editor, Rutherford County News)
Berry H. Melton	Gen. Julian S. Carr
Rev. Drew Rollins	Mr. T. L. Gantt (Editor, New Reporter, Spartanburg, S.C.)
Mr. H. J. Beck	Maj. L. P. Erwin (Journalist)
Phyllis Wells	John E. Rowland
Judge J. B. Helm	A. K. DeWallace (historian, Rutherford County)
Mr. Brackston Smart (related to "Grannie" Hollifield)	Wm. A. Tanner (prominent citizen, Rutherford County)
Rev. C. R. Lee (Methodist minister)	Edmond David Dill (Jackson County, N.C.)
Rev. Jesse Head	Preston Bostic (owner of Lincoln Hill)
Atty. C. O. Ridings (Rutherfordton)	Judge Gilmore (of Kentucky and Texas)
J. N. Jones, Groceryman, Forest City (corroborated by Hollifield's story)	Rev. John Duncan
Atty. J. R. Quinn (Shelby, N.C.)	Phillip Dills (Rutherford County, b. 1/10/1808)
Mr. James P. Cook (Editor, <i>The Uplift</i> , 11/20/26)	Walker Battle (Haywood County, b. 2/12/1809)

William E. Conley (b. 1812)
Capt. Ep. Everett (Tennessee, b. 4/4/1830)
Capt. James W. Terrell (Rutherford County, b. 12/31/1829)
Dr. John Mingus (A. Enloe's son-in-law)
Mrs. Polly Mingus (A. Enloe's daughter)
Abram Mingus (A. Enloe's nephew)
William Farley
Hon. William H. Thomas
Hon. Wm. A. Dills
Joseph A. Collins (Clyde, N.C.)
C. A. Ragland, Esq.
D. K. Collins (b. 10/7/1844)
Capt. Wm. A. Enloe
Rev. S. C. Kennedy
Berry Howell (raised by Wesley Enloe)
C. C. Boone (Black Mountain, N.C.)

Mr. Cornelius Melton (Asheville, N.C.)
M. L. Edwards
R. S. Eaves
D. F. Morrow
C. L. Miller
J. Y. Yelton
J. F. Flack
O. T. Waldrop
W. A. Thompson, MD
Jno. P. Bean
W. C. Hardin
W. O. Geer
J. L. Taylor
C. F. Gold, MD
F. W. H. Logan, MD

R. Vincent Enlow

The author, now in his 81st year, was born in the panhandle of western Maryland. His ancestors there date back to 1670 at the time three Enloe school teacher brothers arrived from Lieth, Scotland -- one the antecedent of the Abraham Enloe, who sired the 16th President of the United States.

Former marketing executive of Ford Motor International, he introduced the first one-hour television spectacular in Latin America and staged the first Broadway-style automotive shows in the Middle East. He initiated television to the Wall Street Journal, receiving the "Clio" award at the American Television Commercial Festival. At the time, the Wall Street Journal had its largest growth in history and reached a circulation of one million.

Political cartoonist, sculptor and artist, he resides with his wife in the Watchung Mountains area of central New Jersey.

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