

Abe Lincoln:

An Atypical Hoosier Adolescent in a Typical Pioneer Community

by

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Scope

The scope of this project is three fold. First, utilizing primary and secondary sources, elementary students shall identify effects Lincoln's Hoosier years experiences had on one of your greatest presidents. Second, students shall discover the roles and occupations of settlers in a typical "backcountry" community. Finally, through Lincoln, students realize how determination can guide one in meeting and overcoming challenges before them.

Primary and secondary source materials provide one with content allowing more in depth and exciting lessons and discussions on Abraham Lincoln, as well as the developing frontier. Lesson plans prepared focus on the project's scope while meeting Indiana Standards for Fifth Grade Social Studies and Language Arts.

The backcountry was a unique development in American history. Frontier settlements revolved around simple, yet important, culturally relevant occupations and traditions. It was a different time with differing roles, but the results created some of our nation's greatest leaders. It is important for students to discover how one's environment plays a role in human development.

Determination and perseverance help young people find their unique place in our complex society. Abraham Lincoln's triumphs, through his challenging life experiences, provide students with a role model in which they may relate. Born into a typical frontier household, and facing common challenges of the day, he remained steadfast in attaining many of the goals he set for himself. Today's adolescents need positive role models, and by rediscovering this atypical Hoosier adolescent, one realizes Abe Lincoln definitely meets that need.

Abe Lincoln: An Atypical Hoosier Adolescent in a Typical Pioneer Community

*My childhood's home I see again,
And sadden with the view;
And still, as memory crowds my brain,
There's pleasure in it too
. . . The very spot where grew the bread
That formed my bones, I see.
How strange, old field, on thee to tread,
And feel I'm part of thee!*

Excerpts from poem by Lincoln
Canto 1 and Canto 3
(Warren 1959, 269-270)

There are few, if any, Americans achieving the icon status of Abraham Lincoln. As an adolescent in the 1820's Lincoln looked to earlier icons, such as Benjamin Franklin, George Washington and Henry Clay, for his inspiration. In the 2000's, children in southern Indiana, and the nation, look to Abe Lincoln for their inspiration. While Hoosiers cannot claim his birth, or the successes of his adult life, they have a legitimate right to claim his formative years. These are the years in which the foundation of a person's lifelong character is developed . . . these were Abraham Lincoln's Indiana years.

The Lincoln family's backcountry story is typical of many early Hoosier families. Many classroom teachers convey a "Lincoln was so poor he lived in a log cabin in the wilderness" saga to their students. They fail to enlighten their students that a majority of families living in the developing frontier lived in such a home and experienced the same challenges "Honest Abe" did. Louis A. Warren's *Lincoln's Youth, Indiana Years, 1815-1830*, provides great detail on typical frontier life. Ferry rides, bear hunts, panther attacks, Indian attacks and family separation were part of settling early Indiana. These events, compiled and documented by Warren, not only provided insight to the stories heard by a young pioneer boy, but they also draw today's elementary school students into the content area being discussed.

In 1820 Indiana it was typical to develop a homestead out of the wilderness, grab educational opportunities whenever possible, develop relationships in a sparsely populated area, and face the deaths of close family members. With my own ancestors living in southern Indiana during this time period, one cannot help but ^{imagine} ~~image~~ my own family members engaging in the same daily challenges as the Lincolns. Thomas Lincoln's family, as my own ancestors, and many of the ancestors of the students within my classroom, faced these challenges with an ongoing determination.

Abe Lincoln used determination, along with his unique intellect, to springboard to an intellectual level rare not only among his peers, but among adult frontier society. He basically taught himself how to read, tell stories, debate topics, and practice law. He found a way to draw upon his life experiences and use those experiences to become an effective communicator and leader. He later used these self taught tools, formulated in Indiana, to influence people and create a niche in the developing political scene of

Illinois. This determination eventually led him to the presidency of the United States during its most difficult time. There is little doubt that this man set goals for himself that would guide him out of the “common” life style he did not want. William Miller notes “[Lincoln] could have become a farmer like his father, but he fled from that alternative as fast as his long legs would take him” (Miller 2002, 92).

see Chicago manual of style format

Experiencing many of the typical trades of his day, Lincoln searched for a profession enabling him not only to leave the “common” farming life, but to make his mark in the world. “Lincoln clearly was a young man who wanted to distinguish himself, and politics was a way to do that.” Miller continues . . . “Being a politician entailed activities that Lincoln was good at: making speeches, writing, being the center of attention, persuading people by his logical and rhetorical powers, being an advocate” (Miller 2002, 94). Where does Lincoln first engage in these “activities” for which he is so famous? He begins the process at Little Pigeon Baptist Church, Crawford School, the Baldwin blacksmith shop, The Gentry Store . . . he begins the process in Indiana.

Lincoln’s Indiana experiences prompted his obsession to rise above the “common” people on the rural frontier. After reading Miller and Gienapp, a conclusion one realizes is the common frontier life Lincoln wanted so desperately to rise above gave him the drive, determination, and character allowing him to achieve his goal. Would he have reacted differently when asked to execute southern soldiers if he himself had not emotionally experienced the deaths of his mother and sister? Would his strong moral convictions have been so firm if he had not, at a young age, witnessed the fervent Baptist camp-meetings and services along Little Pigeon Creek? Would his speaking skills have been so persuasive if he had not begun practicing them when responding to the ministers

of some of those same church meetings? Would he have become such a successful and well known lawyer if he had not developed his self^{teaching} techniques on the Hoosier frontier? Would his views of capitalism have been so strong if he had not been an entrepreneur ferrying people from the Troy riverbank to waiting Ohio River ships? Would his views on the slave question have been different if he had not traveled by flat boat to New Orleans at the request of a Hoosier store owner? Would his ideals about state versus national rights and self determination have been so keen if Hoosier merchant William Jones had not discussed the views of Henry Clay with him? Indiana did have a strong effect on our greatest president. Lincoln did not leave Indiana in 1830 and suddenly, within two years, develop views and communication skills making him a strong candidate for the Illinois House of Representatives in 1832, and a winning candidate in 1834. } & stretch

The Little Pigeon Community, with common pioneer occupations, experiences, and colorful characters, provided Lincoln with a foundation on which to build his unique character. According to secondary sources in the community, experiences at the local church, one room school, general store, blacksmith shop, and ferry boat crossing provided young Abraham with life lessons he used successfully throughout his life. Like the CNN and MSNBC of today, these sites provided locals with the news and happenings outside their community.

The church and its emotional meetings played important religious, moral, and social roles in the backcountry of Lincoln's day. While not a religious man in terms of the 19th look
& put it century, the Little Pigeon Baptist Church did play an influential role in Lincoln's life. There is not a doubt Abraham regularly attended church meetings in his family's home

church, and became very familiar with, if not well versed in, the Bible. Miller writes about Lincoln "One cannot read much from Lincoln's own hand without becoming aware of his knowledge of the Bible. Whatever we make of young Lincoln's contrariness with respect to the doctrines and beliefs of churchgoers in the villages in which he lived, there cannot be much doubt that he read and reread and came to know a good deal of the Bible" (Miller 2002, 49).

Lincoln's church experiences also helped him in other important ways not so common on the frontier. He developed public speaking techniques utilizing humor to make his point. Many of Lincoln's Little Pigeon contemporaries told of Lincoln's responses to many of the preachers he witnessed. Miller tells of one of Matilda Johnston Moore's (Lincoln's stepsister) stories. Lincoln, around age 15, would "call the Children and friends around him," "take down the Bible, read a verse-give out a hymn-and we would sing"; "he would preach and we would do the Crying." Then, when upon a stump he would ". . . repeat almost word for word the sermon he had heard the Sunday before" (Miller 2002, 42-43). A young Lincoln apparently absorbed what he heard, but did not necessarily agree with *all* he heard.

While many scholars debate Lincoln's religious beliefs, his writings, including his famous *Gettysburg Address*, throughout his life tell of a man believing in a "merciful Maker." One such writing was sent to his stepmother, Sara Bush Johnston Lincoln, during the fatal illness of his father. Lincoln writes "I sincerely hope Father may yet recover his health; but at all events tell him to remember to call upon, and confide in, our great, and good, and merciful Maker He notes the fall of a sparrow, and numbers

the hairs of our head; and He will not forget the dying man, who puts his trust in Him.” (Holzer 2000, 34). These thoughts certainly reflect beliefs of a religious man.

Pioneer schools, like churches, of the 1810's and 1820's, served as an educational and social center for the community. While formal educational experiences in the Little Pigeon Community were barely regular during Abraham's youth, he made the best of it, and excelled. The Lincoln and Johnston children attended the Crawford School taught by Andrew Crawford. Typical of the day, “. . . nothing was ever required of a teacher, beyond 'readin', writin', and cipherin',' to the Rule of Three. If a straggler supposed to understand latin [sic], happened to sojourn in the neighborhood, he was looked upon as a wizard. There was absolutely nothing to excite ambition for education” (Warren 1959, 83). Apparently, Lincoln's keen and unique intuition told him that if he was going to grow “above” the commonness he so wanted to flee, that he was going to have to rely upon himself. He was up for the challenge.

Lincoln's educational experiences, or the lack of such experiences, concerned him throughout his life. He stressed his concerns for the need of “common” schools in many of his speeches and writings. While preparing notes Lincoln, around 1854, wrote these words about the role of government: “The legitimate object of government is ‘to do for the people what needs to be done, but which they can not [sic], in individual effort, do at all, or do so well, for themselves’ . . . providing for the helpless young and afflicted; common schools; and disposing of deceased men's property, are instances” (Holzer 2000, 34). It seems that Lincoln did not want young Americans to find themselves in the educational situation he endured.

Backcountry general stores were not only the source of merchandise, but also of news and conversation. Lincoln's local stores, just down the road in Gentryville, provided him with an outlet to hear, and read, not only what was happening in the outside world, but they provided him with, according to Miller, "another source of . . . education." Dennis Hanks described Lincoln as "a kind of news boy" (Gienapp 2002, 9). Lincoln would read almost any paper found at the store or its post office. His store experiences brought him in contact with people of many differing and sometimes unique, as far as the Hoosier frontier was concerned, individuals.

One "general store" individual influencing Lincoln was William Jones. While working in Jones's store in Gentryville, Jones, according to Miller, allowed Abe to read the newspapers available. Through Jones and the papers in which he subscribed, Lincoln developed a view supporting Henry Clay and the Whig Party. This was a radical view, as the majority of Little Pigeon Community citizens supported the Democratic cause. According the Dennis Hanks ". . . it was Colonel Jones who made Abe a Whig" (Miller 2002, 106-7). Lincoln continued his support, and later representation, of the Whig Party through his early Illinois years. In 1844, while campaigning for Henry Clay, Lincoln returned to his Hoosier home and spent some time visiting one of his early political mentors. Later in life it would be Lincoln influencing Jones, as the Colonel died while fighting for Union forces during the Civil War.

The Whig Party didn't exist then.
Tom Lincoln liked Henry Clay

Colonel Jones's influence on Lincoln was "life-long." During their many discussions of news of the day, certainly there was note of the issue of slavery and its effect on democracy. One statement Lincoln prepared, but apparently did not use publicly, dealt with that volatile issue. Printed in Lincoln biographies it stated:

As I would not be a slave, so I would not be a master.
This expresses my idea of democracy. Whatever differs
from this, to the extent of the difference, is no democracy.

(Holzer 2000, 38)

Lincoln also received a great deal of influence from a local blacksmith. The blacksmith shop, a necessity for a developing frontier community, served an important role in day to day life. It was important not only for the goods crafted by the artisan, but for the issues discussed while sitting near the smoldering forge. For Lincoln, however, one particular blacksmith made a deep impression on the young Hoosier. According to Dennis Hanks, Abraham spent a great deal of time listening to a locally known story teller and blacksmith by the name of John Baldwin. Hanks suggested “. . . that from him more than anyone else Lincoln got his early supply of stories” (Warren 1959, 193). Such lesson driven stories provided Lincoln with a useful tool he used during his professional and political years.

An example of Lincoln’s use of “parable” in making a point is found in an 1864 address at the Sanitary Fair in Baltimore. In his remarks he reminds listeners to “value” liberty as a shepherd protects his sheep from a hungry wolf. “The shepherd drives the wolf from the sheep’s throat, for which the sheep thanks the shepherd as a liberator, while the wolf denounces him for the same act as the destroyer of liberty, especially as the sheep was a black one” (Holzer 2000, 81). The underlying meaning is clear.

Just as the stories heard in church, school, blacksmith shop, and general stores contributed to Lincoln’s forensic skills, a local ferry boat operation opened his eyes to the world of business, commerce, and trade. A few miles southeast of the Lincoln home place, Troy, Indiana served as an early 1800 “interstate interchange.” Here Lincoln,

along with others, made money delivering fire wood to passing boats, as well as running a ferry across the Anderson River. Miller tells how the Ohio River brought Lincoln into contact with people from a world he so wanted to be part of. After suddenly being called to row some passengers and their trunks to a waiting steamboat, one of the passengers tossed a half-dollar to Abraham. "I could scarcely credit that I, a poor boy, had earned a dollar in less than a day . . .the world seemed wider and fairer before me" (Miller 2002, 9). From these experiences, as well as others, Lincoln knew he did not want to follow the farming footsteps of his father.

Lincoln was not a typical clod hopper clearing a frontier forest, but an atypical self driven young man with a quest for education and a desire to better his personal standing. He had an insight unique to his frontier peers. According to Gienapp's *Abraham Lincoln and Civil War America*, "[Thomas Lincoln's] ambitious, forward looking son, in contrast, was very much part of the new modern world, with its emphasis on self-discipline, social mobility, and opportunity represented by commerce and industry. Abraham was anxious to rise in the world" (Gienapp 2002, 10-11).

It was, perhaps, Abraham Lincoln's strong character that guided him to his much desired "rise in the world." His character, perhaps developed somewhat through genetics, certainly developed through his life experiences. Frankly, he was different from many of his contemporaries. One of Lincoln's Hoosier friends, Nathaniel Grigsby stated "When he [Lincoln] appeared in Company the boys would gather and cluster around him to hear him talk. He made fun and cracked his jokes making all happy" (Gienapp 2002, 8). While he cracked jokes, many of his neighbors said he never attempted to hurt anyone's feelings. He developed his "power," but not at the expense of others. This

characteristic helped him achieve the respect of not only his peers, but the community's adults as well. One Pigeon Creek resident remarked of Lincoln that "Men would Swear on his Simple word" (Gienapp 2002, 8).

Blessed with a unique intellect, traditionally contributed to his mother Nancy Hanks Lincoln, and raised around masterful story telling, of which his father Thomas Lincoln reportedly excelled, Abe, according to Miller, ". . . developed confidence in himself, that he could take up a subject, read the books about it, and acquire a mastery of it sufficient to his purpose-as he would do repeatedly throughout his life. And he developed a confidence with respect to others, that he need not defer to those with more formal learning" (Miller 2002, 47). He would draw from this confidence throughout his political career, and especially throughout his presidency.

Perhaps Lincoln's confidence, and his compassion, was best expressed during his Second Inaugural Address on March 4, 1865 when he so masterfully wrote:

With malice toward none; with charity for all; with
firmness in the right, as God gives us to see the right,
let us strive on to finish the work we are in; to bind
up the nation's wounds; to care for him who shall
have borne the battle, and for his widow, and his
orphan-to do all which may achieve and cherish a just,
and lasting peace, among ourselves, and with all nations.

(Holzer 2000, 87)

One wonders what his one-time Hoosier neighbors and friends thought when they read these now famous words. But, then again, many of them witnessed first hand his intellect, determination, leadership and compassion.

Abraham Lincoln's confidence and his character, if nothing else, grew and expanded during his adolescent years in Indiana. From the rescue of a turtle from the torture of

neighborhood boys, to his effort of self-education, and from his confidence of public speaking to the debating of emotional issues, this young man set his goals and did not give up in achieving them. When he, along with his family, left his Little Pigeon friends for Illinois in 1830, there is little doubt about the impression he left on the community. Within the next three decades, if not during his stay as a member of their community, most of those friends realized Abe Lincoln was definitely an atypical Hoosier adolescent in their typical pioneer community.

Bibliography

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- Holzer, Harold. 2000. *Abraham Lincoln, the writer, a treasury of his greatest speeches and letters*. Honesdale, PA: Caroline House.
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- Warren, Louis. 1959. *Lincoln's Youth, Indiana Years, Seven to Twenty-one, 1816-1830*. Indianapolis: Indiana Historical Society.

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Digitized Lincoln Collections

Primary Sources on Abraham Lincoln's Indiana Years

Digitized Lincoln Collections
Primary Sources on Abraham Lincoln's Indiana Years

Church of Christ Constituted Regular Bapstis, Little Pigeon Church, Warreen County Indeanne Teritory (1816 TO 1842). [online]. Rootsweb [accessed 22 October 2004]. Available from the World Wide Web:
(<http://www.rootsquest.com/~jmurphy/spencer/f2774.htm>)

original membership records (transcript) of the Little Pigeon church

Indiana's storyteller, connecting people to the past [online]. Indianapolis: The Indiana Historical Society [accessed 18 October 2004]. Available for the World Wide Web:
(http://www.indianahistory.org/library/digital_image/digitalpics.html#lincoln_other)

Images of *Lincoln Sum Book Leaf*, dated from 1824-26(?), and written by Lincoln while living in Indiana

Kingsbury, Robert C. 1970. *Transportation & recreation, early routes of transportation* [online]. Bloomington: Indiana University Bloomington Libraries [accessed 18 October 2004]. Available from the World Wide Web:
(<http://www.indiana.edu/~libgm/kingsbury/page74.htm>)

Map showing early roads and trails in Indiana

Nathaniel Grigsby letter [online]. Washington, D.C.: The Library of Congress, American Memory, The Abraham Lincoln Papers at the Library of Congress [accessed 18 October 2004]. Available from the World Wide Web:
(http://memory.loc.gov/cgi-bin/query/P?mal:2:./temp/~ammem_Am7t:)

Nathaniel Grigsby letter discussing life as a Civil War soldier with notations of Indiana "neighbors"

Spencer County, IN 1820 federal census [online]. CensusFinder.com, 2004 [accessed 21 October 2004]. Available from the World Wide Web:
(http://www.rootsweb.com/~cenfiles/in/spencer/1820/pg0086.txt?o_xid=0039580444&o_lid=0039580444&o_xt=39580444)

1820 Federal Census (transcript) listing the Thomas Lincoln family

William Jones letter [online]. Washington, D.C.: The Library of Congress, American Memory, The Abraham Lincoln Papers at the Library of Congress [accessed 10 October 2004]. Available from the World Wide Web:
([http://memory.loc.gov/cgi-bin/query/r?ammem/mal:@field\(DOCID+@lit\(d0293200\)\)](http://memory.loc.gov/cgi-bin/query/r?ammem/mal:@field(DOCID+@lit(d0293200))))

William Jones letter regarding split rails split by Abraham Lincoln

Writings on Abraham Lincoln, speeches and writings [online]. Abraham Lincoln On Line [accessed 18 October 2004]. Available from the World Wide Web: ([http:// showcase.netins.net/web/creative/lincoln/autobiog.htm](http://showcase.netins.net/web/creative/lincoln/autobiog.htm))

Autobiographical entries submitted by Lincoln and including family genealogy and happenings in Indiana

Writings on Abraham Lincoln, speeches and writings [online]. Abraham Lincoln On Line [accessed 18 October 2004]. Available from the World Wide Web: ([http:// showcase.netins.net/web/creative/lincoln/speeches/poetry.htm](http://showcase.netins.net/web/creative/lincoln/speeches/poetry.htm))

Transcripts of poetry, about Lincoln's Indiana home, written ca. 1845 by Lincoln

Abe Lincoln:

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Lesson Plans

Lesson: Hoosier Bear Hunt

Fifth Grade Social Studies and Language Arts

By: Lee Bilderback

Goal: Students will gain an insight on pioneer life by reading and discussing a poem popular during Lincoln's Indiana years.

- Objectives:**
1. Students will identify how pioneers hunted in order to make their homes safe.
 2. Students will compare/contrast the basic needs of the 1820's with 2004.
 3. Students will analyze the poem to gather meaning.
 4. Students will write the steps in "hunting" the bear in sequential order.
 5. Students will identify symbolism used in the poem.

- Materials:**
1. *Hoosier Bear Hunt* sheet
 2. Venn Diagram overhead
 3. paper
 4. markers
 5. book construction materials

Assessment: Student mastery is measured by participation in Venn Diagram activity, completing of *Hoosier Bear Hunt* sequence, and writing "basic needs" poem.

Language Arts Standards:

- 2 Reading: Comprehension
 - 5.2.2 Analyze text that is organized in sequential or chronological order.
- 3 Reading: Literary Response and Analysis
 - 5.3.2 Identify the main problem or conflict of the plot and explain how it is resolved.
 - 5.3.4 Understand that theme refers to the central idea or meaning . . . whether they are implied or stated directly
 - 5.3.5 Describe the function and effect of common literary device, such as imagery, metaphor, and symbolism
- 6 Writing: English Language Conventions
 - 5.6.4 Identify and correctly use modifiers and pronouns
- 7 Listening and Speaking Skills, Strategies, and Applications
 - 5.7.1 Ask questions that seek information not already discussed.
 - 5.7.6 Use volume, phrasing, timing, and gestures appropriately to enhance meaning.

Social Science Standards:

5 Individuals, Society, and Culture

- 5.5.1 Describe basic needs that individuals have in order to survive, such as the need for food, water, shelter, and safety, and give examples of how people in early America adapted to meet basic needs.
- 5.5.4 Compare significant examples of . . . literature from early US history, and illustrate how each reflects the times and cultural background of the historical period

Source: Warren, L. *Lincoln's Youth, Indiana Years, 1816-1830*. Indiana Historical Society, 1959.

Activities:

1. Read the poem identified as the "Hoosier Bear Hunt"
2. Discuss/analyze the theme of the poem.
3. Review/remediate pronouns as students identify and underline pronouns with a highlighter. Discuss in class.
4. After discussing sequential order, students complete the "Hoosier Bear Hunt" sheet.
5. Prepare a Venn Diagram comparing/contrasting the basic needs of 1820's with 2004's.
6. Students use the data from the Venn Diagram to write a poem utilizing the theme of one of their basic needs in 2004.
7. Students prepare illustrations for their poem.
8. Publish a book on student poems.
9. Assessment.

Hoosier Bear Hunt

by Abraham Lincoln

From Lincoln's Youth, Indiana Years, 1817-1830

A wild-bear chace [sic], didst never see?
Then hast thou lived in vain,
Thy richest bump of glorious glee,
Lies desert in thy brain

When first my father settled here,
'Twas then the frontier line:
The panther's scream, filled night with fear
And bear preyed on the swine.

But wo for Bruin's short lived fun,
When rose the squealing cry;
Now man and horse, with dog and gun,
For vengeance, at him fly.

A sound of danger strikes his ear;
He give the breeze a snuff:
Away he bounds, with little rear,
And seeks the tangled rough.

On press his foes, and reach the ground,
Where's left his half munched meal;
The dogs, in circles, scent around,
And find his fresh made trail.

With instant cry, away they dash,
And men as fast pursue;
O'er logs they leap, through water splash,
And shout the brisk halloo.

Now to elude the eager pack,
Bear shuns the open ground;
Through matted vines, he shapes his track
And runs it, round and round.

The tall fleet cur, with deep-mouthed voice,
Now speeds him, as the wind;
While half-grown pup, and short-legged fice,
Are yelping far behind.

And fresh recruits are dropping in
To join the merry corps:
With yelp and yell,-a mingled din-
The woods are in a roar.

And round, and round the chace [sic] now goes,
The world's alive with fun;
Nick Carter's horse, his rider throws,
And more, Hill drops his gun

Now sorely pressed, bear glances back,
And lolls his tired tongue;
When as, to force him from his track,
An ambush on him sprung.

Across the glade he sweeps for flight,
And fully is in view.
The dogs, new-fired, by the sight,
Their cry, and speed, renew.

The foremost ones, now reach his rear,
He turns, they dash away;
And circling now, the wrathful bear,
They have him full at bay.

At top of speed, the horse-men come,
All screaming in a row.
"Whoop! Take him Tiger. Seize him Drum."
Bang,-bang-the rifles go.

And furious now, the doges he tears,
And crushes in his ire.
Wheels right and left, and upward rears,
With eyes of burning fire.

But leaden death is at this heart,
Vain all the strength he plies.
And, spouting blood from every part,
He reels, and sinks, and dies.

Source: Warren, Louis. 1959. *Lincoln's Youth, Indiana Years, 1816-1830*.
Indianapolis: Indiana Historical Society.

Hoosier Bear Hunt

Name: _____ Date: _____

Directions: Read the Hoosier Bear Hunt. On the lines provided, list the events of the bear hunt in sequential order on the lines provided.

1. _____

2. _____

3. _____

4. _____

5. _____

6. _____

7. _____

8. _____

9. _____

10. _____

11. _____

12. _____

Lesson: *Honestly, Honest Abe!*

A Lesson on the Abe Lincoln's Character
Fourth Grade Indiana History, Fifth Grade Social Studies,
Language Arts, Character Education

By: Lee Bilderback

Goal: Students will discover how different events may affect one's character.

- Objectives:**
1. Students will identify typical occupations found on the frontier
 2. Students will recognize individuals and occupations effecting Lincoln while he lived in the Little Pigeon Community
 3. Students will identify economic patterns on the frontier.
 4. Students will present plays using expressive reading
 5. Students will recognize traits of positive character
 6. Students will demonstrate composition of a persuasive writing

- Materials:**
1. d'Aulaire Ingri and Edgra Parin d'Aulaire. 1939. *Abraham Lincoln*. New York: Bantam Doubleday Books.
 2. Harness, Cheryl. 1996. *Young Abe Lincoln, The frontier days, 1809-1837*. Washington, D.C.: National Geographic Society.
 3. Slotkin, Richard. 2000. *Abe, A novel*. New York: Henry Holt and Company.
 4. Warren, Louis. 1959. *Lincoln's youth, Indiana years, seven to twenty-one, 1816-1830*. Indianapolis: Indiana Historical Society.
 5. Pre-written scenes based upon Lincoln's life in Indiana
(If time allows, students may research and prepare their own scenes. This lesson may be used as a precursor to the Little Pigeon Community shoe box mini unit).

- Assessment:**
1. Content mastery is assessed through questioning
 2. Content mastery is demonstrated through completion of persuasive writing assignment.
 2. Skill mastery is determined by scene performance.

Language Arts Standards:

- 1 Reading: Word Recognition, Fluency, and Vocabulary Development
 - 5.1.1 Read aloud grade-level-appropriate narrative fluently and accurately and with appropriate timing, changes in voice, and expression.
- 2 Reading: Comprehension
 - 5.2.4 Draw inferences, conclusions, or generalizations about text and support them with textual evidence and prior knowledge.
- 3 Reading: Literary Response and Analysis
 - 5.3.2 Identify the main problem or conflict of the plot and explain how it is resolved.
- 7 Listening and Speaking Skills, Strategies, and Applications
 - 5.7.5 Clarify and support spoken ideas with evidence and example.

- 5.7.10 Deliver an informative presentation about an important idea . . . develop the topic with simple facts, details, examples, and explanations.

Social Studies Standards:

5 Individuals, Society, and Culture

- 5.5.2 Give examples of groups who made up communities in early America, and compare the different ways that communities were organized.

Sources:

- d'Aulaire Ingri and Edgra Parin d'Aulaire. 1939. *Abraham Lincoln*. New York: Bantam Doubleday Books.
- Harness, Cheryl. 1996. *Young Abe Lincoln, The frontier days, 1809-1837*. Washington, D.C.: National Geographic Society.
- Slotkin, Richard. 2000. *Abe, A novel*. New York: Henry Holt and Company.
- Warren, Louis. 1959. *Lincoln's youth, Indiana years, seven to twenty-one, 1816-1830*. Indianapolis: Indiana Historical Society.
- Webster's new collegiate dictionary*. 1981. Springfield, MA: G. C. Merriam Company.

Activities:

Day 1 1. Define character

Character: moral excellence and firmness.

Source: *Webster's New Collegiate Dictionary*. 1981.

2. Brainstorm how positive character provides one with greater success and happiness.
3. Perform prewritten scenes based upon Abraham Lincoln's Hoosier experience.
 - a. advise students that scenes are based upon true events during Lincoln's Indiana years
 - b. select students to perform scenes (without props). Suggested scenes are based upon persons/occupations in contact with Abe Lincoln.
 1. Thomas Lincoln/debate over reading and working
 2. Nancy Hanks Lincoln/discussion over milk sickness
 3. Sally Bush Johnston Lincoln/supporting Abe's love of reading
 4. Nathaniel Grigsby/Abe saving turtle for neighborhood boys
 5. John Baldwin blacksmith shop/Abe listening and questioning story
 6. Andrew Crawford at Crawford School/Abe helping student with spelling
 7. William Jones at Jones Store/discussion on slavery

8. James Taylor at Troy ferry/Abe getting paid for delivering passengers to steamboat
9. James Gentry at Gentry Store/asking Abe to go on flat boat trip

c. students practice scenes

- Day 2**
1. Students present scenes.
 2. Discuss "Narrator question" posed at the end of each scene.
 3. Assignment: Students write a persuasive writing on which scene (event), in their opinion, had the greatest impact on Abe Lincoln's life.

But Mom

Nancy Hanks Lincoln and Abe Lincoln discuss helping others

- Cast: Nancy Hanks Lincoln, Abe Lincoln, and Narrator
- Narrator: During the early 1800's a strange sickness appeared in many pioneer communities in southern Indiana. People would get dizzy and weak and shake all over! Most of the people catching this disease died. Over half the population of Dubois County, Indiana, adjacent to Lincoln's Spencer County home, died. The Lincoln's neighbors and relatives, Tom and Elizabeth Sparrow, came down with the sickness. Abe's mother, Nancy Hanks Lincoln, went to help her aunt's family. Watch as Abe and his mother discuss helping others. The setting is the Lincoln's Indiana cabin in 1818.
- Abe: (sitting with Nancy at table) Mama, why do you have to help 'em? I'm afraid you might come down with the sickness.
- Nancy: Abe, we need to help our family and friends out whenever we can. Remember what was said at the service yesterday? If we want people to help us, we gotta' help others.
- Abe: If we have to help others, why don't we help slaves then mamma? Don't they need help too? Remember how the Baptist preacher told how people shouldn't own other people?
- Nancy: You may be right, but people with more power than us will have to take care of that! But one thing I do know is I can help take care of the Sparrows right now. Right, Abraham?
- Abe: (sad voice) Yes, ma'am. You're right.
- Narrator: A short time later Nancy died of milk sickness. From what you know about Abraham Lincoln, how could this incident influence him later in life?

To Read or Not to Read

Thomas and Abe Lincoln debate reading and working

- Cast: Thomas Lincoln, Abe Lincoln, and Narrator
- Narrator: Abe Lincoln loved to read. He wanted so much to learn about the world around him. His father had differing views. Thomas Lincoln felt like boys should work on the farm and not worry as much about reading and studying. The setting of this scene is on the Lincoln Farm in the Little Pigeon Community.
- Thomas: (walking toward Abe) Abe! Abe! Why isn't the fence repaired? You should've been done with that hours ago. We need to start fixin' the barn roof, and I'm waiting for you to get this fence repaired.
- Abe: I'll get it done pa.
- Thomas: What's that you've got on the stump over there? (Picks up book). What? 'You been readin' *Robinson Crusoe* again instead of workin'?
- Abe: (looking down at the ground) Yes, sir. I'm getting' to some really good parts and I just don't want to put the book down!
- Thomas: Son, it's okay to do some readin', but when you live on a farm there are even more important things to do . . . like cuttin' wood and clearin' trees. You pretty well taught yourself more words than I know. Ain't that enough?
- Abe: I know pa, but maybe I want to do something other than live on the farm. I think I'd like to be a river captain on the Ohio so I can to meet all those different people and see what's out there!
- Thomas: Well boy, do your fence fixin' now and worry about the world tomorrow.
- Abe: Yes, sir. But when I'm done with all my chores I'm gonna do some more reading!
- Thomas: (shakes his head)
- Narrator: Abe continued to read whenever we could. He loved to read books and newspapers. What does this tell you about a young person living in the wilderness?

So You Love to Read . . . Good for You!
Sally Bush Johnston Lincoln talks to Abe about his love of reading

- Cast: Sally Bush Johnston Lincoln, Abe Lincoln, Narrator
- Narrator: After the death of Abe's mother, Thomas Lincoln married Sally Bush Johnston. Abe didn't know Sally until the day his dad drove up to the Lincoln cabin with her three children and her in his wagon. Over time, Sally and Abe became very close. When she arrived at the Lincoln cabin, Sally brought something with her that young Abraham wanted dearly . . . books to read! The scene is the Lincoln cabin.
- Sally: Abe! A-bra-ham! Come her for a moment.
- Abe: (running in from outside) Yes, ma'm.
- Sally: I brought somethin' with me from Elizabethtown. Your dad told me how much you loved to read. He says you're practically teaching yourself how to read. You think you want to be a teacher someday?
- Abe: (excited) I don't know, but I do know I sure love to read! I read and practice writin' whenever pa' lets me. Sometimes I sneak some readin', but don't tell him.
- Sally: It's important to work, but I sure think it's important to be able to read and write, too. I think these may help you! (holds up books)
- Abe: Wow! What are they?
- Sally: Well, one of 'em will help you learn how to read. It's a *Webster's Speller*. 'Just look at all those words.
- Abe: Words are everywhere (look through book).
- Sally: (hold up other book) This book is called *Robinson Crusoe*. It's about a young boy stranded on an island.
- Abe: (grab book) Can I read it now?
- Sally: Well Abe, you better get your chores done first, and then I think your dad will let you read for a while!
- Abe: Okay! I can't wait. (rush out of room)
- Narrator: What kind of young person would work hard to teach himself how to read and write?

Source: Warren 1959. 66-68.

Doing What's Right is Right!
Abe Lincoln saves a turtle from neighborhood boys

- Cast: Nathaniel Grigsby, Matthew Gentry, Abe Lincoln, Narrator
- Narrator: Abraham Lincoln respected the feelings of people and animals. He loved to tell funny stories, but he did not tell them as a way of making fun of others or hurting their feelings. He didn't use curse words either. He also did not like others mistreating animals. This scene takes place near the Crawford School when Abe was ten years old.
- Abe: (walk in and look excitedly at Nathaniel) What are y'all doing to that turtle?
- Nathaniel: (kneeling with Matt on floor and watching turtle) Come on Abe! We're putting hot coals on his back to see what he does! Look at him!
- Matthew: Yeah, Lincoln! What's it look like we're doin'?
- Abe: (angry) No way Grigsby! Look how you're hurting him! Would you want someone to do that to you? I can't believe you! That's not right!
- Nathaniel: (looking down) I don't know Abe . . . I guess maybe we shouldn't do it.
- Matthew: (looks at Nathaniel and then looks down) We're just poking fun at 'im.
- Abe: It's just wrong to be cruel to a turtle that won't ever bother ya'.
- Nathaniel: I'm sorry Abe. You're a good friend and I believe ya'.
- Narrator: Lincoln remembered that day and later wrote a school paper telling that cruelty to animals was wrong. He also debated others about animal cruelty. What would you have done if you were Abe? What does this tell you about Abe Lincoln?

Teacher's Pet?
Abe Lincoln helps a student with spelling

Cast: Mr. Crawford (teacher), Abe Lincoln, Ann Roby, Narrator

Narrator: Abraham and his sister Sarah attended the Crawford School. The school was a one room log schoolhouse. Every Friday there would be a "spelling match." Lincoln was the best speller in the school and most people knew it. When students were having trouble spelling a word, Lincoln was known to help them if he could. During one match he helped his friend Ann Roby. This scene is set in the school house on a Friday afternoon.

Mr. Crawford: Ann, you're next. The word is "defied."

Ann: (look around as if upset) Defied is spelled d - e - f . . . (pause)

Abe: (look excited and point to your eye when Mr. Crawford is not looking)

Mr. Crawford: Please start over Ann.

Ann: Yes, Mr. Crawford. (look at Abe)

Abe: (continue pointing to your eye)

Ann: (smile as you realize Abe's clue) Defied is spelled d - e - f - i - e - d.

Mr. Crawford: Very good Ann . . . you, too Mr. Lincoln.

Abe: (embarrassed) Thank you Mr. Crawford.

Narrator: Lincoln helped other students in the school as well. What does this tell you about his education and how he helped others?

Once Upon A Time

John Baldwin and Abe Lincoln talk about story telling

- Cast: John Baldwin, Abe Lincoln, and Narrator
- Narrator: The blacksmith was an important person on the frontier. He made important products like horseshoes, door hinges, nails, hooks and saddle rings. John Baldwin, a blacksmith in the Little Pigeon Community, was not known only for his craft, but also for his story telling. Lincoln, as did many people of the community, spent a lot of time visiting at the Baldwin shop. The shop is the setting for this story.
- Abe: (excitedly) Tell that story about the farmer's wife and the pig one more time.
- John: (hammering a horse shoe) Not again Lincoln, I just told that one yesterday!
- Abe: (smiling) I know, but it was funny!
- John: Well, it was meant to be funny my boy, but it was also meant to tell you something else. What did it tell you?
- Abe: It told me how it doesn't matter what ya' do, but it's always important to treat everyone with respect . . . even if ya' pull a pig's tail and the pig knocks ya' down in the mud and then sits on ya'!
- John: Now you know the importance of story tellin'! Tell'em for fun and for teachin' lessons!
- Abe: Now, let me tell *you* a story about the hungry bear and the loud hunter.
- Narrator: Lincoln loved to tell funny stories about the people on the frontier. Many of his stories, while funny, also had an underlying meaning. What does this tell you about Lincoln's communication skills?

All the News that's Fit to Print!

William Jones talks with Abe Lincoln about some issues of the day

- Cast: William Jones, Abe Lincoln, Narrator
- Narrator: Abe worked in a general store with William Jones. Jones knew Abe liked to read newspapers. Since most newspapers were delivered and sold at local stores, Abe had the chance to read them. Papers from cities such as Vincennes and Louisville told about events, especially politics, happening throughout the country. Jones also liked to discuss politics with Abe because they had many of the same views. They became very close friends. The scene is the local general store near Lincoln's Hoosier home.
- Jones: (sitting down and reading paper) 'Here's one Abe. Here's another story about people in Massachusetts getting mad over slavery. I hope Henry Clay can get that problem taken care of or someday something bad may happen to this country of ours.
- Abe: (walks up to Jones and looks at paper) We'll, I can't say I blame 'em. That's one reason why dad moved us out of Kentucky. He didn't like slavery. I don't like it either. How can you treat a person who, except for his skin color, walks, talks and looks like you? It just doesn't make sense to me.
- Jones: You're right. I'm glad Indiana doesn't allow slavery here, but every time we add a new state we're gonna' have this problem. Will the new state allow slavery or not?
- Abe: Whatever we do we must remember the *Declaration of Independence*. People from all the colonies signed it and we must remember to protect it. I don't get it . . . did everyone become free on July 4, 1776 or just white men? I think you're right Jones, somebody, someday, is gonna' have to fix this problem.
- Narrator: What do Lincoln's beliefs tell you about the rights of others? How do you feel about the rights of others?

A Half Dollar for Your Thoughts!

Abe gets paid for helping passengers board a steamboat

- Cast: Man 1, Man 2, Abe Lincoln, Narrator
- Narrator: One of Lincoln's earliest jobs was working with a ferry boat along the Ohio River near Troy, Indiana. Lincoln apparently loved this job, and at one time he wanted to be a riverboat captain. While on this job, he realized the importance of hard work and determination in making money. This was an important event during Lincoln's Indiana years. The scene is on the Ohio River at Troy.
- Man 1: Excuse me young man, but Mr. James Taylor told us to see you.
- Man 2: Yes, we were told you'd row our belongings and us out to the steamer waiting in the river.
- Abe: Yes, I can do that for you.
- Man 1: Great! Kindly help us load our trunks. What is your name young man?
- Abe: My name is Abe Lincoln.
- (Lincoln and the two men load the boat with heavy trunks. They all get into the boat and Abe begins to row.)
- Abe: Where are you going?
- Man 2: We're going to Saint Louis to work on a new banking business.
- (Abe continues rowing while the gentlemen look around. After a short time, Abe stops rowing.)
- Abe: Here you go gentlemen. Ya'll can jump aboard. I'll take care to the trunks.
- (The men get out of the boat and onto the ship. Abe hands them their trunks.)
- Man 1: Thank you for taking such good care of two strangers.
- Man 2: You're a friendly and hardworking young man Abe Lincoln. If you ever get to Saint Louis, please look for us. Here is something for your hard work. (Hands coin to Abe.)
- Abe: (excitedly) A half dollar . . . thank you very much! Wow! Good bye!
- Narrator: Abe realized that working hard in your job, even off of the farm, really pays off. Can you think of other times when Lincoln worked hard in order to reach a goal?

Source: Warren 1959.146.

So You Want to Travel?

James Gentry asks Abe about going on a flat boat trip to New Orleans

- Cast: James Gentry, Abe Lincoln, Narrator
- Narrator: James Gentry was one of the wealthiest men in the Little Pigeon Community. Since there weren't interstate highways, or semi-trucks to carry products to market, pioneers in southern Indiana used rivers to get their goods to locations such as New Orleans. Flat boats were made from wood cut along the river banks, used to carry the goods to market, and then, after delivering the goods, they were torn up so the wood could be sold. The boats relied on the river current to carry them downstream. It could take weeks to get from southern Indiana to New Orleans. Many men made the journey, and young boys looked forward to going to the "big city" for the first time. The setting is the Gentry Store near Abe's Indiana home.
- Gentry: Abe, how would you like to go with my son Allen to take some produce and 'skins to New Orleans? I'll pay ya' \$8.00 a month and I'll pay for ya' to travel back home.
- Abe: (excitedly) Yes, sir! I'd love to go to New Orleans. My dad took a flat boat there one time and I love to hear his stories 'bout all the different people and places.
- Gentry: Great! You'll see hundreds of flatboats going down the river. Ya'll have to be careful or river pirates will steal the goods while you're sleeping.
- Abe: Yes, sir! We'll be careful alright! I can't wait to see a city like New Orleans.
- Gentry: Well, you'll see things like you've never seen before! You won't go until the crops are harvested though. You'll stay in Rockport while Allen and you get the boat ready. It'll be some mighty hard work.
- Abe: Yes, sir! I can't wait! I'm going to run home and tell pa! (rush out of room)
- Narrator: Abe and Allen Gentry travel to New Orleans in 1828. New Orleans was one of the largest cities in the south. Since Abe had not been into the "deep south" before, what might he have seen that affected his view of people?
- Source: Warren 1959. 175-180.

Lesson: The Little Pigeon Community

A Mini Unit on Backcountry Communities Fifth Grade Social Studies and Language Arts

By: Lee Bilderback

Goal: Students will discover roles and occupations in a typical frontier community.

- Objectives:**
1. Students will identify typical occupations found on the frontier.
 2. Students will recognize individuals and occupations effecting Lincoln in the Little Pigeon Community.
 3. Students will identify economic patterns on the frontier.
 4. Students will master basic research skills.
 5. Students will prepare research data using writing process.
 6. Students will write complete paragraphs based upon their research.
 7. Students will present research orally.
 8. Students will follow instructions to prepare a shoebox building.

Note: *This lesson is prepared for a weeklong mini unit, but it may be easily modified to fit class schedules. Working with computer lab teachers and media specialists can greatly reduce days needed to complete the mini unit.*

- Materials:**
1. d'Aulaire Ingri and Edgra Parin d'Aulaire. 1939. *Abraham Lincoln*. New York: Bantam Doubleday Books.
 2. Harness, Cheryl. 1996. *Young Abe Lincoln, The frontier days, 1809-1837*. Washington, D.C.: National Geographic Society.
 3. Slotkin, Richard. 2000. *Abe, A novel*. New York: Henry Holt and Company.
 4. Warren, Louis. 1959. *Lincoln's youth, Indiana years, seven to twenty-one, 1816-1830*. Indianapolis: Indiana Historical Society.

Note: Above sources may be easily substituted with other resource materials, books or videos.

5. *Little Pigeon Community Data Sheet*
6. shoeboxes
7. paints
8. paint brushes
9. water containers
10. newspapers
11. markers
12. construction paper
13. poster board
14. glue
15. duct tape
16. tape
17. natural colored popsicle sticks (optional)
18. twigs (optional)

19. straw (optional)
20. small pebbles (optional)

- Assessment:**
1. Content mastery is assessed through questioning and project completion.
 2. Skill mastery is determined by completion of Little Pigeon Community Data Sheet, shoebox building project, and presentation.

Language Arts Standards:

- 2 Reading: Comprehension
 - 5.2.1 Use the features of informational texts, such as . . . maps to find information and support understanding.
 - 5.2.2 Analyze text that is organized in sequential or chronological order.
 - 5.2.4 Draw inferences, conclusions, or generalizations about text and support them with textual evidence and prior knowledge.
- 4 Writing: Process
 - 5.4.3 Write informational pieces with multiple paragraphs
 - 5.4.4 Use note-taking skills
 - 5.4.8 Review, evaluate, and revise writing for meaning and clarity.
 - 5.4.10 Edit and revise writing to improve meaning and focus
5. Writing: Application
 - 5.5.3 Write research reports about important ideas . . . establish a main idea or topic; develop the topic with simple facts
- 7 Listening and Speaking Skills, Strategies, and Applications
 - 5.7.5 Clarify and support spoken ideas with evidence and example.
 - 5.7.10 Deliver informative presentation about an important idea . . .
Develop the topic with simple facts, details, examples, and explanations.

Social Studies Standards:

- 4 Economics
 - 5.4.2 Summarize a market economy, and give examples of how the colonial and early American economy exhibited these characteristics.
- 5 Individuals, Society, and Culture
 - 5.5.2 Give examples of groups who made up communities in early America, and compare the different ways that communities were organized.

- Sources:**
- d'Aulaire Ingri and Edgra Parin d'Aulaire. 1939. *Abraham Lincoln*. New York: Bantam Doubleday Books.
- Harness, Cheryl. 1996. *Young Abe Lincoln, The frontier days, 1809-1837*. Washington, D.C.: National Geographic Society.
- Slotkin, Richard. 2000. *Abe, A novel*. New York: Henry Holt and Company.
- Warren, Louis. 1959. *Lincoln's youth, Indiana years, seven to twenty-one, 1816-1830*. Indianapolis: Indiana Historical Society.

Activities:

- Day 1**
1. Prepare a KWL on pioneer communities
 2. Read and discuss *Young Abe Lincoln, The Frontier Days, 1809-1837*.
This activity may be a guided reading or an individual read.
 3. Students are assigned partners or small groups for shoebox activity.
 4. Partners/groups select persons and occupations to research.

Suggested persons/occupations:

1. Thomas Lincoln/father, carpenter and farmer
2. Nancy Hanks Lincoln/mother and domestic
3. Sally Bush Johnston Lincoln/stepmother and domestic
4. James Gentry/Gentry Store owner
5. James Gentry/flatboat owner
6. William Jones/general store owner
7. Andrew Crawford/Crawford School teacher
8. Reverend Samuel Bristow/Little Pigeon Baptist Church minister
9. John Baldwin/blacksmith
10. Noah Gordon/horse mill owner
11. James Taylor/Troy ferryboat operator

- Day 2**
1. Distribute *Little Pigeon Community Data Sheet*.
 2. Students meet with partners/groups to research their pioneer occupation and shoebox "building."

- Day 3**
1. Partners/groups meet to continue project research.
 2. Partners/groups follow the writing process to prepare drafts on data sheet.

- Day 4**
1. Partners/groups publish *Little Pigeon Community Data Sheet*
 2. Partners/groups begin construction on shoebox building (ex. 'John Baldwin partners' use their research material to build a blacksmith shop out of a shoebox).

Day 5 Construction continues on shoebox building

- Day 6** Partners/groups present data from *Little Pigeon Community Data Sheet*
1. partners/groups present their data
 2. partners/groups give "tour" of their shoebox building
 3. shoebox building is placed in *Little Pigeon Community*
 4. *Little Pigeon Community Data Sheet* is posted by shoebox building

- Day 7**
1. Little Pigeon Community Celebration!
 1. invite classes "tour" Little Pigeon Community"
 2. partners/groups share data with visiting classes

Little Pigeon Community

Data Sheet

Names: _____

1. Pioneer Settler/Occupation: _____

2. Data about the Pioneer Settler/Occupation:

3. Sources:

①

②

③