

INDIANA'S MEMORIAL TO ABRAHAM LINCOLN

Now Taking Definite Form In Lincoln State Park

Discovery of Original Hearthstones Adds to Significance of Marker on Cabin Site

STONES which formed the hearth of the Thomas Lincoln cabin and must have been the resting place for Abraham Lincoln's books as he studied by the fireplace, have been excavated on the site of the cabin in Lincoln State Park and will form the central part of a memorial being erected on that spot. The discovery of the hearthstones is an important contribution to Indiana's establishment of a shrine honoring the Great Emancipator.

The stones, about 150 in number, were found during excavation for the new marker, erection of which is a part of the program of the Civilian Conservation Corps camp stationed at the park. They were about 10 or 12 inches below the surface and were of sandstone which is found in neighboring parts of Spencer County. The hearth had been formed by three layers of stones, each about 18 inches square and five to six inches in thickness, and was "T"-shaped, indicating that they had formed the base of the chimney as well as the hearth.

All available information establishes the point at which they were found as the location where the fireplace was erected by Thomas Lincoln shortly after he brought his family to Indiana. The Lincoln cabin was taken down about 1850 and another residence was erected on the site, leading to the belief that the original fireplace was not used in the second building which was in existence until about 1910.

The Lincoln family came to Indiana in 1816 when Abraham Lincoln was between seven and eight years of age and a rude log hut was erected. The location of this hut has been fixed as about 30 or 40 feet west of the point on which the cabin was erected. It was here that the family lived when Nancy Hanks Lincoln died and was buried on a nearby hilltop, now a part of Lincoln State Park.

The permanent marker being erected at the cabin site includes a low wall enclosing a sodded plot, in the center of which will be four bronze logs, marking the walls of the cabin. The stones of the original hearth will be carefully replaced in the position in which they were found and will form an important part of the completed memorial. Work on this construction has been proceeding steadily.

The monument erected by Spencer County in 1917 to mark the cabin site has been moved to a new position along the Historical Trail. It was during preparations for the moving of the monument that the hearth was uncovered by members of the Civilian Conservation Corps.

Historical Importance of Hoosier Shrine Increasing with New Developments in Park Area

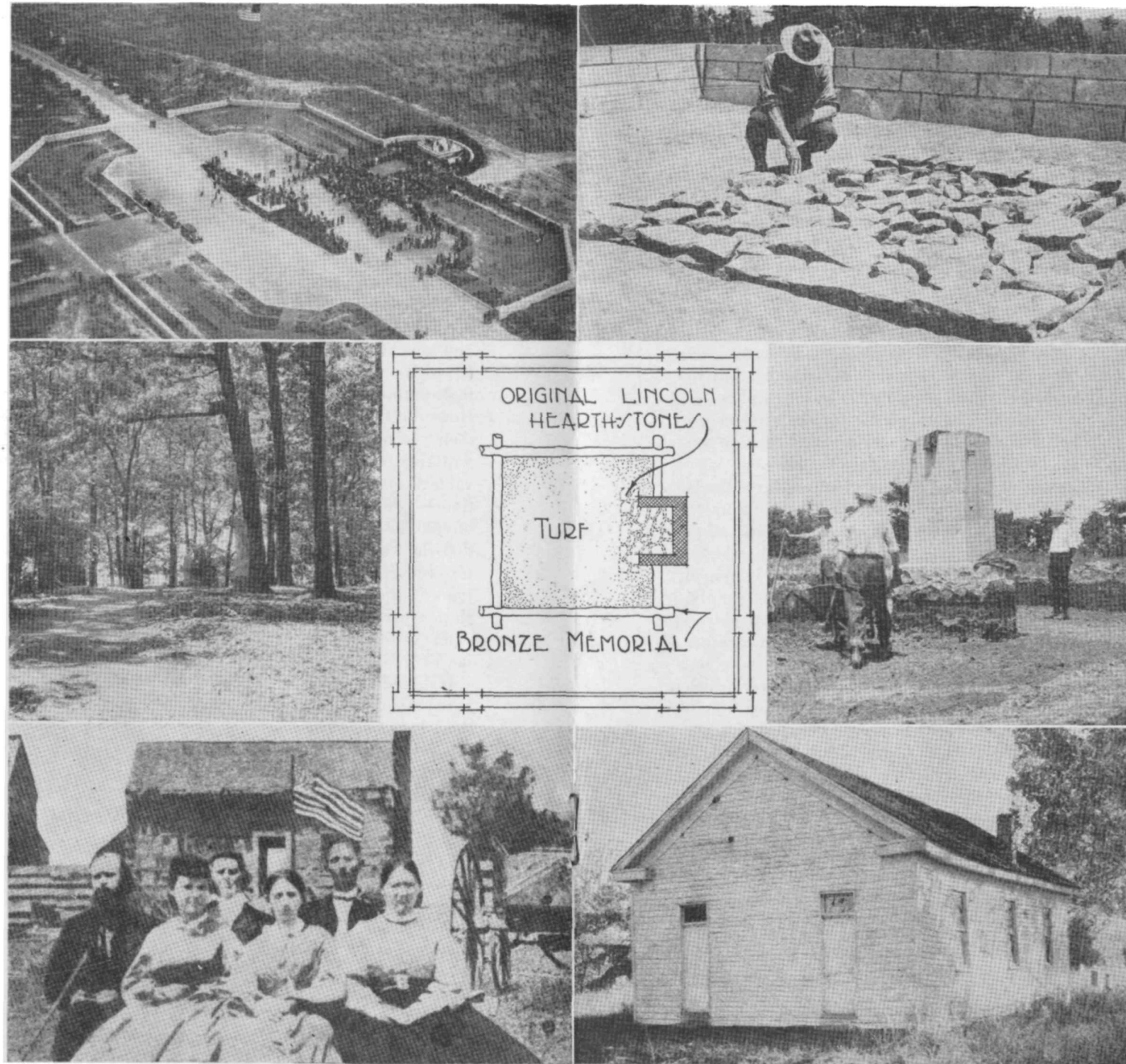
A LASTING memorial to Abraham Lincoln, president of the United States during the dark days of the war between the states, is being built by Indiana down in the hills of Spencer County where he spent fourteen of the formative years of his youth. Already a national shrine, drawing thousands of visitors each year, the memorial is taking form around the site of the cabin in which the Lincoln family resided and the grave of Nancy Hanks Lincoln.

The land included in Lincoln State Park is hallowed ground for it is indelibly associated with the boyhood of Abraham Lincoln at a period when he was acquiring the character and background which marked his later years. The memorial is characterized by a simplicity and rugged beauty which harmonizes both with the setting and the life of the man it honors.

The park memorial is a development of comparatively recent years resulting from private initiative and the aroused interest of both the Spencer County and state governments. The grave of Nancy Hanks Lincoln was marked by a simple marble slab in 1878, the gift of P. E. Studebaker of South Bend. Governor Mount formed a Nancy Hanks Lincoln Memorial Association in 1897 but it was not until 1900 that Spencer County purchased 16 acres of land around the grave. This plot formed the nucleus of the present park and memorial.

Seventeen years later Spencer County marked the site of the Lincoln cabin and in 1925 the legislature transferred control of the property to the Department of Conservation. The following year the Indiana Lincoln Union was named to unify the efforts of all organizations and to erect a national shrine.

Then the state possessed the small tract around the grave but did not own any of the original Lincoln farm upon which the cabin had been located. The cabin site was on the playground of a public school and separated from the grave by a state highway. Since that time the Lincoln farm has been acquired together with additional land consolidating the cabin and grave sites. It has been landscaped, a central court established and at the present time a permanent marker is being placed at the site of the cabin. Other places associated with the residence of the Lincoln family are also being preserved as a part of the memorial shrine.



Upper left—The central plaza by which the visitor enters the park.

Upper right—The stones of the hearth as discovered.

Center left—A trail approaching the Nancy Hanks Lincoln grave.

Center—The plan of the cabin memorial.

Center right—Removing the former monument at the cabin site.

Lower left—The Lincoln cabin in the background. The group in the foreground includes members of the Kelsey family.

Lower right—The Little Pigeon Creek Church. Lincoln's sister is buried in the churchyard.