

ABRAHAM LINCOLN

OR

LINKHORN.



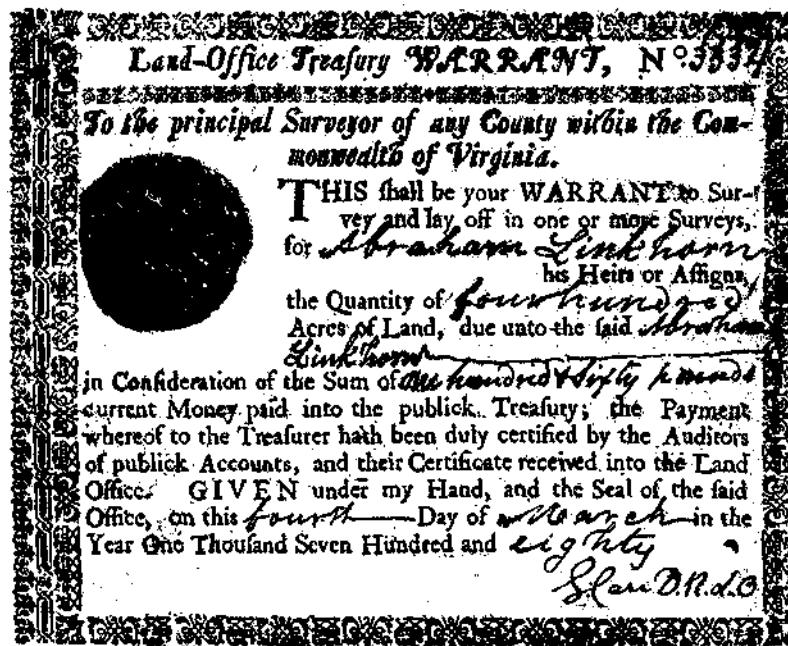
ABRAHAM LINCOLN OR LINKHORN.

AN ARGUMENT, READ BY L. P. HENNIGHAUSEN AT THE YEARLY
MEETING OF THE SOCIETY IN 1901.

WAS it a blunder of the clerk in the land office at Richmond, Va., in 1780, when he issued the Land Warrant to the grandfather of Abraham Lincoln by the name of Abraham Linkhorn, as alleged by his biographers ?—

The only historical information we have of the ancestry of Abraham Lincoln is his own saying that his ancestors originally came from Berks County, Pa., and moved from there to Rockingham County, Va. That his grandfather Abraham about 1780 with his wife and children left Rockingham County to establish himself in Jefferson County on a farm about twenty miles east of the present City of Louisville. This grandfather was a man of some means, for we find that before he left for Jefferson County, he obtained from the land office of the Commonwealth of Virginia in payment of the sum of one hundred and sixty pounds current money, the Land Office Treasury Warrant No. 3334, bearing date the fourth day of March, 1780, and directed to the principal surveyor of any county within the Commonwealth of Virginia to survey and lay off in one or more surveys for ABRAHAM LINKHORN, his heirs and assigns, the quantity of four hundred acres of land, due to the said Linkhorn.

I here offer a fac-simile of said Land Warrant.



Kentucky was at that time a part of Virginia, still inhabited by the Indians, who resisted the white invader by every craft of cruel warfare known to them. The reports of the wonderfully fertile soil and salubrious climate of the territory, brought home by adventurous hunters from the Western frontier settlements of North Carolina, Virginia and Maryland were the cause of the emigration of many from these parts of the country to Kentucky. Western Maryland, West Virginia and Western North Carolina are reported to be first and principally settled by Germans from Berks, Lancaster, Bucks and other Counties of Pennsylvania in the 18th century.¹).

1) Hugh Jones in his book "The Present State of Virginia," published 1724 in London describes a flourishing colony of Germans in Madison County at the foot of the Blue Mountains. Augusta, Rockingham, Frederick, Madison, Shenandoah were in a large measure settled by Germans.

"Virginia, her Past, Present and Future," by Samuel N. Janney, 1804, p. 27;

Abraham Linkhorn must have taken his time to select his future homestead, for it was five years later on May 7, 1785, that he received his certificate of the survey of 400 acres of land in Jefferson County, by virtue of said Treasury Warrant No. 3334 on the Fork of Floyd's Fork. The certificate, a facsimile is herewith offered, is recorded in Record Book "B," page 60, in the office of Jefferson County, Kentucky.

*Surveyed for Abraham Linkhorn 400 acres of
Land in Jefferson County by virtue of a Treasury
Warrant No. 3334 on the Fork of Floyd's Fork now
called the Long Run beginning about two
miles up the said Fork from the Mouth of a
Fork of the same formerly called the Fork at a Sugar Tree
standing on the side of the same marshes 5¹/₂ rods
extending thence East 300 poles to a Poplar and Sugar
Tree worth 213¹/₂ poles to a Beech and Dogwood tree
300 poles to a white Oak with Hickory total 213¹/₂ poles to
the Beginning on May 7th 1785 William Marion D. J. C.
Ananias Lincoln and William May J. J. C.
Josiah Lincoln C. C. 3
Abraham Linkhorn drawing*

You will see from this that the name of Abraham Linkhorn appears in the body of the Warrant, and it is also signed by him as Linkhorn, whilst two officials who had to affix their signatures to the warrant and named C. Ananias Lincoln and Josiah Lincoln sign as such and not as Linkhorn.

The next year, 1786, this Abraham Linkhorn was killed by the Indians. His son Thomas, the father of President

"Physical Survey of Virginia" by Prof. M. F. Maury, p. 123, Richmond, Va. 178. In 1746 and 1747 the German missionaries Rev. Michael Schlatter and Rev. Dr. M. Mühlberg travelled through Western Maryland and the Shenandoah Valley, Va., and preached to numerous German settlements. and reported to the Mission Homes in Germany. Rev. Gerhard Henkel was the Pastor of a German settlement on the Yadkin River, N. C., in 1734.

Hallische Nachrichten. Allentown, Pa., 2 Vols., 1886, 1895. Schuricht's History of the German Element in Virginia, I Vol. 91, Kercheval's History of the Valley, Winchester, Va., 1833.

Lincoln, was then only seven years of age; he was allowed to grow up without any schooling, he never learned to write, and we are not informed whether he could read; he was known as Lincoln.

During the life-time of President Lincoln no one ever appeared to claim or was recognized by him as a relative on his father's side of his ancestors. It is only since the death of that great man, that the attempt is made to connect him with a certain Mordecai Lincoln, "Gentleman" of Massachusetts, who removed to Monmouth, New Jersey, where he is said to have died in 1735. Whenever President Lincoln was asked about the genealogy of his family, he loved to quote the line from Gray's Elegy on a country church yard:

" You must look into the short and simple annals of the poor."

The greatest fame of the President is that he was honest. Honest, not in vulgar sense of finance only, but honest in all he said and acted. If he had been a descendant of the New England gentleman, Lincoln would have known it and said so. We know, rich people are likely to forget poor relatives, but the poor for many generations remember and cherish traditions of former wealth and social standing of their ancestors; and most all mankind has a remarkable faculty to trace the most distant relationship to a man of great fame and who has many thousand offices, with honor and salaries attached, to dispose of. The laborious effort of the biographers of the President to make him a descendant of a rich gentleman from New England, who died only seventy-three years before Lincoln was born, and the absurd assertion that the name and signature of his grandfather was by an ignorant or mischievous clerk changed from the well known historic English "Lincoln" to the German sounding "Linkhorn," especially when two attesting officials named Lincoln also, affix their signatures, belongs to nursery tales and not to historical researches. The fact that the Warrant and certificate are the only muniments of title to the 400 acre homestead of Abraham Linkhorn is conclusive, without the clearest proof to the contrary, that *Linkhorn*, and not the more familiar and common Lincoln, the name of an old English city and county, was the family

name of the grandfather of the President, and was changed, like an untold number of German names, by and during the life of his illiterate son Thomas.

Lincoln said, his ancestors came from Berks County, Pennsylvania, and emigrated from there to Rockingham county, Virginia. We know that Berks county was settled by Germans²⁾ at the end of the 17th and first decades of the 18th century, and the German language is to this day the common vernacular of the people of the county. Further we know that in the third decade of the 18th century an emigration set out from Berks and adjoining counties to Rockingham county, Virginia, and that many of these German emigrants were German Quakers or non-combatants, Menonites, etc.³⁾ Lincoln stated his ancestors were Quakers. From the church records and school houses erected by these new settlers in Virginia, as well as from many family bibles, hymn books, certificates, letters, etc., still preserved, we know that they were not illiterate, and if Abraham Linkhorn was one of them, he could write his name and neither the land office in Richmond, nor the surveyors in their certificate, are guilty of clerical errors.

Whether the ancestors of our illustrious Lincoln were of German descent I leave to the fair judgment of my hearers; for me it is sufficient that he was a true American, and a great one; the reason I have made this argument is, that our would-be historians as a rule often ignore, and some falsify and pervert plain truths and facts of American history in favor first of New England and the Pilgrims, and next in favor of the fantastic fiction of Anglo-Saxon in its latest development. The great and important part of the Germans in colonial times and later formation of our nation is not mentioned, and the names of the actors in our history, if of German origin, are, as a rule, anglicized.

It is to be regretted that this changing or anglicizing the German family name by the descendants has become to a large

2) Diffenderfer's "The German Immigration into Pennsylvania." Lancaster, Pa., 1900. Part II, p. 96.

3) Bittinger, "The Germans in Colonial Times." Philadelphia and London, 1901. Rupp's "History of Berks County." J. F. Sachse, "German Pietists." Philadelphia, 1895.

extent a habit, and leads to most incongruous, absurd results. The descendants of a worthy German, who settled in the eighteenth century in Augusta county, Virginia, and who now number several thousand people, scattered over many States of the Union, recently held one of their family re-unions at Trinity church, Augusta county, Virginia, near which the progenitor of the multitude, Kaspar Koynath, lived and died and lies buried. More than a thousand descendants had assembled. However, I believe not one of them bore the true name of their common ancestor Koynath, they had all anglicized their name in the most capricious manner. There were Koiners, Koyners, Coyners, Coiners, etc. They erected a monument, a great square block of granite, ten feet high, surmounted with an immense sphere of granite, and appropriately inscribed, over the grave of their honored ancestor; a noble act of piety, but not one of them carries his true family name.

In my personal experience the curious case occurred that the descendants of a German, whose name had been anglicized, changed it and adopted the real family name again, which was the cause of an inheritance of 50,000 Marks coming to them from Westphalen, Germany, where a relative of the father's side had died without leaving any known heirs, and the authorities had advertised for the unknown heirs. The Americans, my clients, had no knowledge of their relative. It happened that a very old German who had known their deceased father in his youth, and knew the family relation, attracted by the familiar old German name on the business sign of one of them, made himself known, and hearing of the notice for the unknown heirs, informed them of their relationship to the deceased, and I was able, although the notice had expired, to collect the money for them. Had they continued to live under the anglicized name they would never have known of their inheritance and the money would have gone to the descendants on the mother's side of their grandfather.