

Captain Abraham Lincoln is born, May 13, 1744

On this day in history, May 13, 1744, Captain Abraham Lincoln is born – not President Abraham Lincoln, but instead, his grandfather. Abraham's father's family settled in Pennsylvania and Abraham was born in Berks County, the first of 9 children. Abraham became a tanner, perhaps because of a family relationship with James Boone, a well-regarded tanner who lived nearby. James was an uncle of Daniel Boone and his daughter was married to Abraham's father's half-brother.

Much of the Lincoln clan moved to the Shenandoah Valley in Virginia when Abraham's father purchased a large tract of land there in 1768. Abraham received a portion of the land, married and began having children. When the American Revolution broke out, Abraham became involved with the local militia. He served as a captain of the Augusta County militia first and later with the Rockingham County militia when that county was established in 1778. Lincoln's unit was called into service under the Western Department of the Continental Army when Brigadier General Lachlan McIntosh of Georgia was in command there.

McIntosh had recently been involved in the killing of Button Gwinnett, a signer of the Declaration of Independence from Georgia and a political rival of McIntosh, when the two fought a duel over various accusations. George Washington valued McIntosh's contributions to the war and feared that McIntosh might be killed or imprisoned by Gwinnett's supporters, so he had him transferred to the northwest.

The Western Department was headquartered at Fort Pitt (now Pittsburgh) and was responsible for guarding the backcountry from British invasion from Fort Detroit. McIntosh devised a plan to attack Detroit that involved the building of two new forts to aid in the attack, Fort Laurens on the Tuscarawas River in Ohio and Fort McIntosh at the convergence of the Ohio and Beaver Rivers in Pennsylvania. Abraham

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Lincoln's Rockingham militia unit was called into service to help build the two forts during the latter part of 1778.

In 1780, Abraham Lincoln moved his family to Jefferson County, Kentucky (then part of Virginia) and settled near Hughes' Station east of Louisville (a station was like a small fort near which settlers would live for protection). Lincoln began purchasing land and eventually owned 2,000 acres. Unfortunately, the area was still contested by Indians and Lincoln had numerous "visits" from local Indians who wanted him off their hunting grounds.

In 1786, Lincoln was working on the farm with his three sons when he was shot from the forest and killed. The oldest son, Mordecai, who was 15 or 16, quickly ran to the cabin to get a gun, while the next son, Josiah, 13, ran off to Hughes' Station for help. The youngest son, Thomas, who was only 8 years old, stood by and watched in fear as an Indian came out of the woods. When the Indian reached for Thomas, either to kill or kidnap him, Mordecai took aim and shot the Indian dead. The boys then ran into the house where the rest of the family stayed until the arrival of help from Hughes' Station that drove the Indians off.

After his death, Abraham's wife Bathsheba was left with five children on the harsh frontier. Abraham's land was divided by law between Bathsheba and the oldest son, Mordecai, leaving Thomas to earn his own way in life. He would eventually become a wealthy landowner himself and his second child, also named Abraham, would one day become the 16th President of the United States.