

of the War the major Indian threat was over, the Indian's power was broken. Immigration into Kentucky swelled to its greatest proportions in the years following the War, and in 1796 the Wilderness Road was improved to accommodate wagon traffic. It has been estimated that 75% of the people going west prior to 1800 went along this route.

Many famous names have been connected with Cumberland Gap but more important were the nameless, faceless thousands who became the settlers of the west. When they walked through Cumberland Gap into the wilderness of Kentucky, these pioneers left behind their old ways and carved out a new life. They came not simply to trap furs and then move on, but rather to build, plant crops, and raise families, and they became totally self-sufficient. The mountain people of Kentucky remember Daniel Boone with his long rifle and buckskins, which have long since disappeared, but their real kinship lies with the settlers whose plow and axe are still used today.

LINCOLN'S BIRTHPLACE — HODGENVILLE, KENTUCKY

Andrew M. Loveless

Tiny Hodgenville (pop. 2600), County Seat of Larue County in Central Kentucky is celebrated as the birthplace of Abraham Lincoln, the nation's 16th President, and that area's most famous citizen.

President Lincoln was born on the 300-acre Sinking Spring Farm, three miles south of Hodgen's Mill, in the early morning hours of February 12, 1809. Today a 116-acre National Historic Site preserves the home-site and birthplace cabin of the Great Emancipator. Administered by the National Park Service, the Birthplace park is visited by over one half million people each year.

While many of the States of the nation observe February 12 as a legal holiday, citizens of Larue County join together each year on the nearest Saturday to the 12th of February to stage a day-long pageant. Highlights include a parade, costume and beard contests, an art competition, craft displays and demonstrations, historical exhibits, and a Lincoln Day dinner.

The celebration evokes memories of an earlier era when outdoor pageants and speech-making, often of a patriotic nature, were a major form of public enlightenment and entertainment. For millions of Americans in the 19th and early 20th centuries, com-

Andrew Lovelace is the Superintendent of the Abraham Lincoln National Historic Site, Hodgenville, Kentucky.



The Lincoln log cabin. Photo: National Park Service.

memorative activities represented a social and educational phenomenon now largely supplanted by modern communications media. In the days before radio and television, such celebrations were often the only means for keeping abreast of State and national issues, for seeing and hearing famous personalities, and in general receiving all the benefits of social interchange.

The celebration originated during the years 1909 to 1911. During that time Hodgenville was host for a series of ceremonies that culminated in the preservation of the birthplace farm and saw the completion of a classic granite and marble memorial building to protect the original Lincoln cabin. More than 100,000 people, including many school children, contributed over \$300,000 towards the memorial.

Robert Collier, publisher of the popular Collier's Weekly magazine, purchased the Lincoln Farm in 1905 and later turned it over to the Lincoln Farm Association, organized to preserve the birthplace and create the Nation's first major memorial to the President. To publicize and support the aims of the association, Collier sent staff photographers to Hodgenville to make dozens of pictures in and around the community.

On the 100th anniversary of Lincoln's birth, February 12, 1909, 8000 people watched President Theodore Roosevelt lay the cornerstone for the Memorial Building. In May 1909, Kentuckians turned out to dedicate Adolph A. Weinman's seated bronze of the mature Lincoln. "A noble likeness of my father," said Robert Todd Lincoln, who attended the unveiling in Hodgenville's town square. In November 1911, thousands witnessed President William Howard Taft dedicate the completed memorial.

Many of the Collier's photographs taken during this period have been preserved by the National Park Service as part of the historic resources of the site. The spirit of these memorable celebrations has also been preserved at Hodgenville's important annual event.