Jesse Head, the Methodist Preacher who married Thomas Lincoln, and Nancy Hanks, Parents of Abraham Lincoln.

Dr. C.C. Graham's statement:
I know that Abraham Lincoln was a legitimate child, for I was present at the marriage of his parents. He was born at what was then called the Rock Spring Farm. It is now called the Great Place, three miles south of Hodgenville, Larue County, Kentucky. Kentucky consisted of three counties at the time Thomas Mays was made, and the larger counties made later have also been subdivided. His parents are said to have lived three years after he was born. Another boy was born in Kentucky, and buried at Hodgenville. His sister, Sally, was born two years the oldest. I do not remember about the family Bible. If they had one it was probably the Fletcher Bible, edited with notes and a preface by that eminent all-METHODIST divine, and the only commentary of the Methodist church, before Dr. Clarke wrote his great work. It was thought a sin to dedicate a Bible to a King as was done in the King James Bible, and the Virginia dissenters liked it as little as did the Puritans. The old Bibles did not have the printed blanks for the
births, marriages and deaths, as now, but a quantity of paper was bound in front and back, and on these sheets, often fifty or more pages, the great families wrote out the family history, with the branches, etc., as a means of regulating inheritance. The court houses were of logs, and the churches kept no regular registers as they do in the old countries. There was nothing to call my attention to such a book or to its records, if the Lincoln family had one. Every marriage was returned to the court from which both preacher and the parties derived authority; and besides the written return, often made for a whole year's work at once, there were marriage lines "given to the couple married. The ring was seldom used, as the discipline of the church forbade "putting on of gold or costly apparel." It preachers with a good watch would have been dismissed.

As to whether the family were likely to part with such a bible, I can not say. Don. Lincoln was a carpenter, such as there was need of in those days when the cabin was built mainly with an axe, and he had a chest of tools. The fact that Jesse Head, the Methodist preacher that married them, was a cabinet maker by trade, was a bond between the then

Looking for a family record of the famous...
neighbor families, as they were for some years after his quarrel with the Bishops. Many of the first men of the South were then opposed to slavery, but largely because these other savages, freed from African wars, were as likely to prove dangerous as the Indians. The movies of Bible, with such books as Baxter’s Saints Rest, Bunyan’s Pilgrimage, etc., with good paper, were imported from England, and a Bible cost as much as a team and spinning wheel combined, or a wife.

Thomas Lincoln, like his son after him, had a notion that a fortune was to be made by one who would visit the savages and inquire into their habits. He went to New Orleans. The boats were told there being unfit to breast the current. There were then no steamboats. Thomas built his own boat rather too narrow, with a view to speed. His boat was clear, free and wolf skins, gentian root and the like. The settlers called ginseng or “yam,” venison and bear meat, nuts, honey, peach brandy, cloth woren by his second wife Sally Bush Lincoln, - Nancy having died, some said because of a slander about her and Abraham Lincoln, called Inlow - while Abe was still little. I think their Sally was named for her or her family. The venture was started down Knob Creek when it was flush with rain, and the Ohio full of rapids and whirlpools. I think Tom carried his tool chest to leave in Indiana. His boat upset, and
he lost about all he had and came home on foot, much in debt to his neighbors who however never pressed any one who lost by flood orIndians.

What he had saved he left on the river bank, and took up when they went on horseback and afoot, as they had no mind for the Rolling Fork, Salt River or Ohio in any boat. They probably crossed the river at a ferry run by a man named Thompson, and I saw nothing of them after they got to Indiana, as they probably had no pleasant memories of Kentucky where the father had not succeeded.

Thomas and Nancy both could read and write, and she went to school about a year, they leaving before he was eight years old. They were very ordinary people, and I did not suppose I would have any cause to remember the wedding. The preacher, Jesse Head, would talk to me on religion and politics, and was opposed to slavery from principle.

I have thought it might have been from his opinions, that I lost a favorite negro musician. But Mr. Head never encouraged a runaway, nor had any underground railroad. He only talked freely and boldly. It was in my trip after the negroes that I met the brother of the great chief,
Temascal in Canada. I was wanted to kill me because I was after my negro, and the grand looking Indian who was an officer and wore a splendid British uniform, protected me. He talked freely, and he said that while his brother was killed at the battle of the Thames in October 1813, he was not slain at the point described by Col. Richard McJohnson whose accession to the Vice Presidency in 1836, arose largely from the credit of this exploit. He said that the story of the skin of his brother being taken off by the Whites was false, as they never had the chance. The Indians never abandoned their chief, alive or dead. He was a lad at the time, was this brother.

The Rev. Jesse Head was able to own slaves but did not on principle. There was a great feast at tables the wedding and inure of the Lincoln-Hanks union. I remember we had bear, venison, wild turkey, dice, eggs, wild and tame, then worth only 25 cents a bushel they were so plenty, maple sugar called brown by strips over the table to boil all or bite, maple syrup in two gallon jowls, peach brandy and honey, a sheep that the two families barbecued whole over a fire in a pit, an ace for the whiskey bottle—all on the premises intended for the new cabin floor, a taise table. They had a cow and calf, feather bed, “River Tide” and all they needed. William Hardisty was there.

I am very deaf and I tell this to my young friend Henry Cleveland that I know as a boy.
Some other time I will tell about life in a back-camp with Daniel and Squire Boone his brothers of how he used to wade in a "creek" as he would spell it so as not to be trailed by the Indian dogs, and when there was no running water handy, he and I both have slung our guns over our shoulders by the strap, and taking a swinging grape-vine in both hands as it swung from a giant tree, have made a long jump from a dune, and then a swing as far out as the vine could throw us, and so broke the scent of the trail, that way. When they had no dog which we knew by hearing no bark in the silent woods, we could fool the red men by walking backward which we practiced to do very fast. Squirrels often gave us the warning by a chattering bark, they hearing well.

I tell this at the Exposition to my friend.

Christopher Columbus Graham, in my 100th year.

1883-84.