Marriage Bond for Marriage of
THOMAS LINCOLN and NANCY HANKS
I, Thomas Lincoln, a resident of the county of Fayette and state of Kentucky, am the father of the above bound Thomas Lincoln. I, Richard Berry, a resident of the same place, am bound unto the said Thomas Lincoln, for a term of two years. For the sum of fifty dollars, I undertake to bring in the said Thomas Lincoln to the age of fifteen years and to deliver him to his father at the expiration of said term, and to return him to his father if he shall have left home. The said bondman is bound to the said Thomas Lincoln for the term aforesaid and to perform all the duties of a bound boy. If he shall do any injury to any person or property, I agree to pay for the same. If he shall leave his master, I agree to pay a fine of $50.00 for every such offense. If he shall be lost, I agree to pay a reward of $50.00 for his recovery.

Thomas Lincoln
Richard Berry

Dated this 2nd day of June, 1816.
Know all men by these presents that we Thomas Lincoln and
Richard Berry archeld and firmly bound unto his
Exclency the governer of Kentucky half the just and full sum of
fifty pounds current money to the payment of which we
shall and hereby do and will make to the said governer and his successors.
for the bond our selves and each of us jointly and severally freely
by these presents sealed with our seals and dated this 13th
day of June 1806.
The condition of the above
obligation is such that whereas there is an marriage shortly
intended between the above bound Thomas Lincoln and
Nancy Parks
for which above has agreed
now is there be no lawful caud to obstruct the said
Marriage then this obligation shall be void to remain
in full force and virtue in Law.

MARRIAGE BOND OF THOMAS LINCOLN.
BY A. LINCOLN AND OTHERS.

The tavern was never opened, for about this time Lincoln and Berry were challenged to sell out to a pair of vagrant brothers named Trent, who, as they had no idea of paying, were willing to give their notes to any amount. They soon ran away, and Berry expired, extinguished in rum. Lincoln was thus left loaded with debts, and with no assets except worthless notes of Berry and the Treants. It is greatly to his credit that he never thought of doing by others as others had done by him. The morality of the frontier was deplorably loose in such matters, and most of these people would have concluded that the failure of the business expunged its liabilities. But Lincoln made no effort even to compromise the claims against him. He promised to pay when he could, and it took the labor of years to do it; but he paid at last every farthing of the debt, which seemed to him and his friends so large that it was called among them “the national debt.”

He had already begun to read elementary books of law, borrowed from Major Stuart and other kindly acquaintances. Indeed, it is quite possible that Berry and Lincoln might have succeeded better in business if the junior member of the firm had not spent so much of his time reading Blackstone and shade of a great oak just outside the senior quietly fuddled him-

other compensation, and his hearty friendliness and vivacity, as well as his industry in the field, made him a welcome guest in any farmhouse in the county. His strong arm was always at the disposal of the poor and needy; it is said of him, with a graphic variation of a well-known text, “that he visited the fatherless and the widow and chopped their wood.”

In the spring of this year, 1833, he was appointed Postmaster of New Salem, and held the office for three years. Its emoluments were slender and its duties light, but there was in all probability no citizen of the village who could have made so much of it as he. The mails were so scanty that he was said to carry them in his hat, and he is also reported to have read every newspaper that arrived; it is altogether likely that this formed the leading inducement to his taking the office. His incumbency lasted until New Salem ceased to be populous enough for a post-station and the mail went by to Petersburg. Dr. Holland relates a sequel to this official experience which illustrates the quaint honesty of the man. Several years later, when he was a practicing lawyer, an agent of the Post-office Department called upon him, and asked for a balance due from the New Salem office, some seventeen dollars. Lincoln rose, and opening a little trunk which lay in a corner of the room, took from it a cotton rag in which was tied up the