

**NANCY HANKS: THE
STORY OF ABRAHAM
LINCOLN'S MOTHER**

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Nancy Hanks: The Story of Abraham Lincoln's Mother by Caroline Hanks Hitchcock

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CAROLINE HANKS HITCHCOCK

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NANCY HANKS



ABRAHAM LINCOLN'S BIRTHPLACE.

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NANCY HANKS

THE STORY OF : : : :
ABRAHAM LINCOLN'S MOTHER

BY

Caroline Hanks Hitchcock



NEW YORK
DOUBLEDAY & McCLURE Co.
1900

"A dirge for the brave old pioneer !
Columbus of the land !
Who guided freedom's proud career
Beyond the conquered strand,
And gave her pilgrim sons a home
No monarch step profanes,
Free as the chainless winds that roam
Upon its boundless plains."

PREFACE

TO no woman whose name is of interest in American history has greater injustice been done by biographers than to Nancy Hanks, the mother of Abraham Lincoln. This injustice has been in repeating or allowing to go unchallenged traditions of her early life of which there were no proofs.

Daughter of a pioneer, wedded with a pioneer, Nancy Hanks spent her life in a conflict with the wilderness. Dying in 1818, when only 35 years old, she was

buried in the woods of Indiana. Her simple life would have passed away as unremembered as the flowers with which she grew up had she not left behind her a son who forty-two years after his mother's death became the leader of one of the great political parties of the United States in a bitter civil struggle. When this son was placed at the head of his party his name was unfamiliar to much of the country; he himself knew little of his family: he did not even possess records to show when and where his father and mother were married. His opponents saw the opportunity to belittle him, and they spread the story that he not only was of humble origin, as he

himself publicly acknowledged, but was a nameless child—that Thomas Lincoln was not his father.

Later they deepened the stain on his mother's name by hinting that she herself was a waif—fatherless like her boy. There was never any proof produced in support of the stories—curiously enough the first in particular took many forms. Lincoln's father's name was said in one account to be Enloe, in another Calhoun, in another Hardin and several different States laid claim to a share in his ancestry. Even in the present year a book has been published in North Carolina to prove that his father was a resident of that State. The bulk of the testimony in this