

Breeding & Horse Racing Interest

A Measurable Investment in Stock

A compilation of the Commissioner's Tax Books of Hardin County shows that Thomas Lincoln listed for taxes as many as four horses at one time during his residence in Kentucky.

Out of 104 (tithables) taxpayers shown in the Commissioner's Book during the year 1815, only six other residents of Hardin County had as many horses as Thomas Lincoln. The fact that he was required to pay an extra fee to own a stallion for breeding purposes indicates his interest in the improving of blooded stock.

1804....Linkhorn, Thomas.....	1 Horse
1805....Linkhorn, Thomas.....	1 Horse
1806....Linkhorn, Thomas.....	
1807....Linkhorn, Thomas.....	1 Horse
1808....Linkhorn, Thomas.....	1 Horse
1809....Linkhorn, Thomas.....	2 Horse
1810....Linkhorn, Thomas.....	2 Horse
1811....Lincoln, Thomas.....	1 Horse
1812....Lincoln, Thomas.....	3 Horse
1813....Lincoln, Thomas.....	2 Horse
1814....Lincoln, Thomas.....	3 Horse
1815....Lincoln, Thomas.....	4 Horse (1 Stallion)
1816....Lincoln, Thomas.....	4 Horse

THE MARCH 10, 1789, APPRAISED INVENTORY OF THE ESTATE OF THE PIONEER CAPTAIN ABRAHAM LINCOLN LISTED: "ONE SORREL HORSE VALUED AT EIGHT POUNDS AND ONE BLACK HORSE VALUED AT NINE POUNDS AND TEN SHILLINGS." THE VALUATION PLACED ON THESE HORSES BY THE APPRAISERS INDICATED EXCEPTIONALLY FINE ANIMALS. THE ADMINISTRATOR OF THE LINCOLN ESTATE, JOHN CALDWELL, WAS IN POSSESSION OF ONE OF THE FINEST STALLIONS IN KENTUCKY ACCORDING TO THE *Kentucky Gazette*, PUBLISHED AT LEXINGTON ON MARCH 22, 1788. HE WAS ALSO A NEIGHBOR AND INFLUENCE IN THE INTEREST OF FINE HORSES, BOTH RACING AND BREEDING, THAT MANIFESTED IN THE LINCOLN FAMILY.

Old Bob, The President's Horse

Abraham Lincoln's horse, "Old Bob," was a significant part of his master's last tribute. During the funeral procession in Washington D.C., "Old Bob," draped in a black mourning blanket and carrying a pair of riding boots positioned in the reverse, followed the hearse carrying the body of the slain president.



Courtesy of The Whitehouse Collection

Race Paths - A Popular Kentucky Sport

As an adult, Abraham Lincoln many times acted as a judge during horse racing events. His Kentucky background caused him to be considered an authority on the rules and procedures of a meet. Stephen A. Douglas on one occasion, while engaged in the Lincoln-Douglas debates, made the following statement concerning Lincoln's abilities along this line:

The dignity and impartiality with which he presided at a horse race or fist fight excited the admiration and won the praise of everybody that was present and participated.

There were several race tracks called "race paths" in Hardin County while the Lincolns lived here. The races called a "course" were held on two tracks located near the Lincoln home. Martin's Turf, the best race path in the county, was located at Middle Creek midway between Hodgenville and Elizabethtown. This course was only eight miles from the Lincoln farm. Another race path was located on the Merrifield property, adjacent to the Sinking Spring farm and only one half a mile from the birthplace of Abraham Lincoln.

Local Race Event Purse Paid in Corn

520 bushels of corn were donated by thirty prominent citizens of Hardin County according to a corn list made and run for on Middle Creek in the year 1810. A note dated November 7, 1810, about two weeks after the big race resulted in the suit of "Hanks vs. Williamson." Williamson charged "that note was won on a bet on a horse race, which makes it fraudulent." Hanks, a relation of Nancy Lincoln, stated, "it was not bet on a horse race." Promiscuous betting was frowned upon by the local churches.

"We the undersigned wishing to improve the breed of horses in Hardin County do for that purpose, propose a course, race to be run on Martin's Turf on Middle Creek, on the third Thursday, Friday and Saturday in October next, to be free for any horse, mare or gelding owned by any residenter of Hardin county at this time; to be run the first day three miles and repeat, the second day two miles and repeat, the third day one mile and repeat. To be run under the rules and direction of the Lexington Jockey Club, for which we, the undersigned, do oblige ourselves to pay the quantity of corn opposite our names, to the winners by their demanding it, between the first day of December next and the twenty-fifth, as witness our hands this 13th day of August, 1810."



LINCOLN - FAMILY and FRIENDS

Funded in part by the Kentucky Humanities Council Inc. in association with the Kentucky Abraham Lincoln Bicentennial Commission.