Zachariah Riney was born in 1762 in St. Mary’s County, Maryland, came to Kentucky in 1795, and was an early Catholic school teacher of Lincoln’s Knob Creek home. He conducted a subscription school about two miles north of Lincoln’s Knob Creek home. Abe was just six years old when he accompanied his sister, Sarah, to the log schoolhouse situated near the present site of Adairsville, Kentucky, at the fork of the Cumberland and Pottinger’s Creek Roads. This was a bll school. Numbers from 1 to 10, the alphabet A to Z, and other lessons were recited aloud to show they were busy studying.

Riney later moved to northern Hardin County, and the town of Rineville is named in his honor.

The next teacher who taught in this schoolhouse was Caleb Hazeel. He lived about three hundred feet from the Lincolns’ Knob Creek home. This next door neighbor of the Lincolns also attended the Little Mount Church. Hazeel was known to have fine penmanship.

**OF THE FIVE SCHOOL TEACHERS THAT ABRAHAM LINCOLN HAD DURING HIS BRIEF TENURE OF FORMAL EDUCATION, FOUR ONCE LIVED IN HARDIN COUNTY, KENTUCKY.**

The first school Abe attended in 1819-20 in Indiana was one and one-half miles south of his cabin. The teacher was Andrew Crawford and parents paid two dollars for each child they had enrolled in this subscription school. It was here, at age eleven, that Lincoln first read Weems’s *Life on Washington* a book that discussed politics, presidents and heroes. This book would have a profound effect on Lincoln in his later years.

**INDIANA YEARS**

Crawford moved from Spencer County, Indiana, and in the 1821-22 school term, Lincoln’s second teacher was James Swaney, (Sweeney) son of Michael Swaney who had moved to Indiana from Hardin County, Kentucky, just before the Lincolns. Swaney’s school house, larger and better constructed than the Crawford school was, was four and a half miles southwest of the Crawford school. The distance may have kept Abe from attending regularly; however, Swaney, nevertheless, should be given credit for introducing Lincoln to some new books, including Murray’s *English Reader*, which was supposed to be the best text of its day. Lincoln’s stepmother, Sally Bush Johnston Lincoln, owned a copy of this book, and she spent many hours laboring over exercises in the use of English.

In a short autobiographical sketch prepared for John L. Scripps, Lincoln made the following statement concerning his early schooling: “Before leaving Kentucky, he and his sister were sent for short periods, to A.B.C. schools, the first kept by Zachariah Riney, and the second by Caleb Hazel.”

Lincoln’s First School, 1910
Taken shortly before it was dismantled. This is the only known real photo postcard of the schoolhouse. On May 15, 1819, the sender wrote, “School house where Lincoln recited part of his education where a goy [goat] wandered by.”

**LINCOLN’S FAMILY - FAMILY and FRIENDS**

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

**Memorable School Days Friends**

Memorable School Days Friends

Austin Gollaher, the son of Thomas Gollaher who lived about two miles from the Lincolns, often played with Abraham Lincoln. Gollaher lived well into his 90’s and told how once he saved the seven-year-old Lincoln’s life in 1816.

Lincoln while president said, “I would rather see (him) than any man living.”

Gollaher’s Story:

“I once saw Lincoln’s life. We had been going to school together one year; but the next year we had no school, because there were so few scholars to attend, there being only about 20 in the school the year before.

Consistently Abe and I had not much to do but as we did not go to school and our mothers were strict with us, we did not get to see each other very often. One Sunday morning my mother took me up early, saying she was going to visit Mrs. Lincoln, and that I could go along. Glad of the chance, I was soon dressing to go after my mother and I got there Abe and I played all day through the day.

While we were wandering up and down the little stream called Knob Creek Abe said: ‘Right up there’... pointing to the east... “we saw a crow... perched yesterday. Let’s go over and get some of them. The stream was swollen and was too wide for us to jump across. Finally, we saw a narrow foot log, and we concluded to try it. It was narrow, but Abe said: ‘Let’s go in.’

I went first and reached the other side all right. Abe went about half way across, when he got scared and began trembling. I bulbored to him, ‘Don’t look down nor turn sideways, but look right at me and hold on tight!’ But he fell off into the creek, and, as the water was about seven or eight feet deep, I could not swim, and neither could Abe. I knew it would do me no good to go on after him.

So I got a stick, a long water-straw, and held it out to him. He came up, grabbed with both hands, and put the stick into his hands. He clung to it, and I pulled him out on the bank, almost dead. I got him by the arms and shook him well, and then rolled him on the ground, when the water poured out of his mouth. He was all right very soon. We promised each other that we would never tell anybody about it, and never did for years. I never told any of it until after Lincoln was killed.”

**LINCOLN’S YEARS**

Lincoln’s years

Lincoln at the Peck House 1822
Lincoln was seven years old when his family moved to Illinois. It was here that he met David S. W. Peck, who lived on the north bank of the Sangamon River. He was a successful lawyer and editor of the Sangamo Journal. He was also a close friend of Abraham Lincoln's future law partner, Thomas Lincoln. The two men often visited each other, and Lincoln spent many happy days on the Peck farm.

**LINCOLN’S FIRST TEACHER**

The first school Abe attended in 1819-20 in Indiana was one and one-half miles south of his cabin. The teacher was Andrew Crawford and parents paid two dollars for each child they had enrolled in this subscription school. It was here, at age eleven, that Lincoln first read Weems’s *Life on Washington* a book that discussed politics, presidents and heroes. This book would have a profound effect on Lincoln in his later years.

**INDIANA MENTORS FROM HARDIN COUNTY, KENTUCKY**

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Two years after Lincoln’s brief attendance at the Swaney school, he enrolled in his third and last school in Indiana, Azel W. Dorsev, born in Kentucky in 1774 and legal guardian of James Swaney, had engaged in farming a tract near the farm of James Lincoln in Hardin County, Kentucky. Dorsev had removed to Indiana a few years before the Lincolns. He served in several political offices as well as a teacher before instructing Lincoln during the 1824-25 term. His school was located a little over a mile southwest of the Lincoln farm. Ward Lamou in his volume on Lincoln describes the school as follows: “It was built of unhewn logs, with windows of greased paper, the roof was just high enough for a student to stand erect.”

The relationship between Lincoln and Dorsev was an important one. Dorsev was not only a teacher but also a mentor and role model for Lincoln. He taught him the basics of reading, writing, and arithmetic, but more importantly, he instilled in Lincoln a love of learning and a respect for knowledge. Dorsev’s influence on Lincoln was profound, and it would shape his future as a lawyer and statesman. 

**LINCOLN’S SCHOOL DAYS**

Lincoln’s school days

Lincoln attended schools in several locations throughout his childhood, including the Peck House School. He was able to enroll in these schools by working to earn money to pay for his education. Lincoln’s intelligence and perseverance allowed him to succeed despite his lack of resources.

**THE PHILADELPHIA YEARS**

Lincoln’s Philadelphia years

Lincoln moved to Philadelphia in 1830 and attended the Douglass School. He was able to enroll in this school by working as a laborer and using the money he earned to pay for his education. Lincoln’s dedication and hard work paid off, and he was able to continue his education at the University of Guelph.

**THE ILLINOIS YEARS**

Lincoln’s Illinois years

Lincoln moved to Illinois in 1830 and worked as a laborer to support his family. He was able to enroll in the Douglass School by working and using the money he earned to pay for his education. Lincoln’s intelligence and perseverance allowed him to succeed despite his lack of resources.

**THE WASHINGTON D.C. YEARS**

Lincoln’s Washington D.C. years

Lincoln moved to Washington D.C. in 1846 and worked as a junior clerk in the U.S. Treasury Department. He was able to enroll in the Douglass School by working and using the money he earned to pay for his education. Lincoln’s intelligence and perseverance allowed him to succeed despite his lack of resources.

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