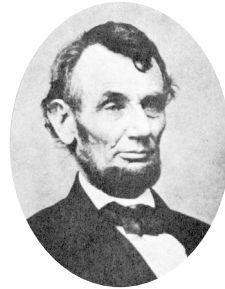


Play I



Young Abe Lincoln: A Dramatic Play on the Early Years of America's 16th President

[Musical Selection: "Young Abe Lincoln"]

Prologue:

[Lincoln the President enters in front of the drawn curtain, walks to the center of the stage, turns to the audience and begins to speak]

Lincoln the President: "Fellow citizens, we cannot escape history. We of this Congress and this administration will be remembered in spite of ourselves. No personal significance or insignificance can spare one or another of us. The fiery trial through which we pass will light us down in honor or dishonor to the latest generation...⁴

I presume you all know who I am. I am humble Abraham Lincoln..."⁵ I was born on February 12, 1809, to Thomas and Nancy Hanks Lincoln in Hodgenville, Kentucky.

Act I - Scene 1: Lincoln's Birth

[Thomas and Nancy Hanks Lincoln enter near the log cabin at stage right. Nancy is holding a baby wrapped in a blanket. At the same time, Dennis Hanks runs over to them from the opposite side of the stage. Lincoln the

President moves from center stage to stage left. Dennis Hanks passes in front of him without recognizing him.]

Dennis Hanks: *[shouting]* Where is he?

Thomas Lincoln: Sh!, Dennis, be quiet. The baby is asleep.

Nancy Hanks Lincoln: It's all right, Denny. You can see him now. *[She unwraps the bundle in her arms so Dennis can get a good look at the baby's face. He takes a look and steps back in alarm.]* What's the matter?

Dennis Hanks: That baby is so wrinkled and red! He looks just like a cherry after the juice has been squeezed out. What's wrong with him?

Nancy Hanks Lincoln: Nothing is wrong; he's a newborn. That is all. I reckon you looked that way once too, Denny. See his wee fists and the way he throws them around! He'll...

Dennis Hanks: *[interrupting]* What's his name?

Nancy Hanks Lincoln: We're calling him after his grandpappy: Abraham Lincoln!

Dennis Hanks: That great big name for *that* scrawny little mite?⁶ By the looks of 'em, I reckon he'll never come to much.⁷

Nancy Hanks Lincoln: Give him a chance to grow, will you? Just wait.⁸ It won't be long until little Abe here will be running around in buckskin breeches and wearing a coonskin cap.

Dennis Hanks: Well, maybe—⁹

Nancy Hanks Lincoln: Would you like to hold him?

Dennis Hanks: I reckon so. *[takes the baby in his arms; begins to rock it.]* Cousin Nancy says that you are going to grow. And when you do, do you know what I'm going to do? I'm going to teach you how to swim. Yes, and we can go fishing down by the creek. When I go to the mill to get the corn ground, you can come along. You can ride behind me on the horse, and when it goes clippety-clop¹⁰—Cousin Nancy, are you sure Abe will ever grow up to be as big as me?

Nancy Hanks Lincoln: Bigger'n you are now.

Dennis Hanks: Will he grow as big as Cousin Tom?

Nancy Hanks and Thomas Lincoln: *[in unison]* Bigger'n anybody, maybe.¹¹ *[Nancy Hanks Lincoln, Thomas Lincoln and Dennis Hanks go backstage behind cabin; light shifts back to Lincoln the President alone at stage. He returns to center stage.]*

Lincoln the President: My mother was right. I did grow. "If any personal description of me is thought desirable, it may be said I am, in height, six feet four inches, nearly; lean in flesh, weighing, on an average one hundred and eighty pounds; dark complexion, with coarse black hair,