

National Park Service
U.S. Department of the Interior



Lincoln Boyhood National Memorial

The Nancy Hanks Lincoln Gravesite



Unmarked gravesite of Nancy Hanks Lincoln in the 1860s.

In 1868, a Civil War veteran named William Q. Corbin visited the boyhood home of his former commander-in-chief. Corbin was dismayed by the unkempt appearance of Nancy Hanks Lincoln's gravesite and wrote a poem on the subject. His poem, published in the *Rockport Journal* in November 1868, was among the first known public accounts of the grave's condition.

Finally, in 1874, a Rockport businessman by the name of Joseph D. Armstrong erected a two-foot tall marker with Nancy Hanks Lincoln's name inscribed on it at the site. But by 1879, this marker had disappeared and the site was again overgrown with vegetation and almost inaccessible. A newspaper article reporting the neglect prompted Peter E. Studebaker, second vice-president of the Studebaker Carriage Company, to contact Rockport postmaster L. S. Gilkey with instructions to buy the best tombstone available for \$50.00 and place it anonymously on the site. Another \$50.00, solicited from the area residents, paid for an iron fence around the grave.