

Lincoln Memorial

National Park Service
U.S. Department of the Interior
Washington, D.C.



It is rather for us to be here dedicated to the great task remaining before us—that from these honored dead we take increased devotion to that cause for which they gave the last full measure of devotion—that we here highly resolve that these dead shall not have died in vain—that this nation under God shall have a new birth of freedom—and that government of the people, by the people, for the people shall not perish from the earth.

Abraham Lincoln
Gettysburg Address
November 19, 1863

Lincoln—the Man

Abraham Lincoln was born February 12, 1809, in a log cabin near Hodgenville, Kentucky. He became the 16th President of the United States, leading his country through its greatest trial, the Civil War. His life was full of personal tragedy and disappointment, but his belief in the principles of the Declaration of Independence and his experience gained as a state legislator, lawyer, and Congressman, along with a whimsical sense of humor, gave him the strength to endure. Throughout his political career Lincoln strove to maintain the ideals of the nation's

founders. He saw slavery as hypocritical for a nation founded on the principle that "all men are created equal." In an 1854 speech Lincoln said: "I hate it [slavery] because it deprives our republican example of its just influence in the world—enables the enemies of free institutions, with plausibility, to taunt us as hypocrites." As President he used the power of the office to preserve the Union. In freeing the slaves Lincoln left a legacy to freedom that is one of the most enduring birthrights Americans possess.

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Lincoln—the President

By condemning slavery's expansion and maintaining that he would not interfere with it where it already existed, Lincoln won the presidential nomination of the Republican Party in 1860. Upon his electoral victory, seven states of the lower South seceded and formed the Confederate States of America. At his inauguration in March 1861 Lincoln implored the South to show restraint and tried to dispel its mistrust, but he also pledged to do whatever was necessary to preserve the Union. The South responded by firing on Fort Sumter in Charleston harbor, April 12, 1861. Lincoln in turn, issued the call for troops to put down the rebellion, and four more states in the Upper

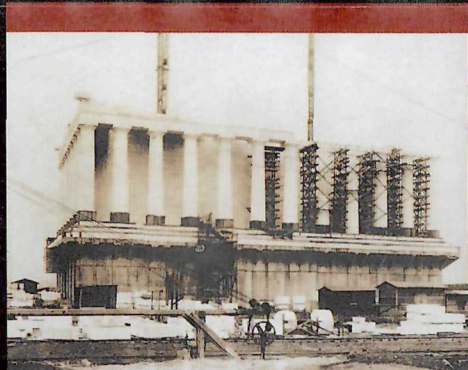
South—Virginia, Arkansas, North Carolina, and Tennessee—seceded. The result was four years of bloody conflict. In January 1863 Lincoln issued the Emancipation Proclamation to free slaves within the states in rebellion, thus raising the war to a higher moral plane. In January 1865 he secured Congressional approval of the 13th Amendment that abolished slavery in the United States. In his Second Inaugural Address, March 4, 1865, Lincoln offered peace and reconciliation to the South. He was shot by an assassin on April 14, 1865, and died the next day—six days after Gen. Robert E. Lee surrendered his troops at Appomattox Court House, Virginia.



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Building the Memorial

Congress incorporated the Lincoln Monument Association in March 1867 to build a memorial to the slain President, but no progress was made until 1901 when the



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McMillan Commission chose a West Potomac Park site for the memorial. This decision expanded on the ideas of Pierre L'Enfant, who designed the Federal City and envisioned an open mall area from the Capitol to the Potomac River. Congress agreed on a design submitted by New York architect Henry Bacon, and construction began on February 12, 1914. Daniel Chester French

designed the statue; the Piccirilli Brothers of New York carved it. It is 19 feet tall and 19 feet wide and made from 28 marble blocks. Murals, painted by Jules Guerin depicting principles evident in Lincoln's life, are on the north and south walls above inscriptions of Lincoln's Gettysburg Address and his Second Inaugural Address. Ernest Bairstow sculpted other features with the assistance of Evelyn Beatrice Longman.

The building is constructed primarily of Colorado Yule marble and Indiana limestone. The 36 columns around the memorial represent the states in the Union at the time of Lincoln's death; their names are carved in the frieze. Names of the 48 states in the Union when the memorial was completed in 1922 are carved in the exterior attic walls. A plaque in the plaza commemorates the admission of Alaska and Hawaii. President Warren G. Harding dedicated the memorial on May 30, 1922. Robert Moton, president of Tuskegee Institute, gave the principal address at the dedication. Robert Todd Lincoln, the President's only surviving son, attended the ceremony.

Visiting the Memorial

The memorial is open daily except December 25. Park rangers are available to answer questions, give talks, and provide information. Books and educational materials may be purchased in the bookstore on the chamber level. For visitors with disabilities, restrooms and chamber access are in the lower level.

Lincoln Memorial is one of more than 380 parks in the National Park System. The National Park Service cares for these special places saved by the American people so that all may experience our heritage. To learn about national parks and National Park Service programs, visit www.nps.gov.



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Daniel Chester French, sculptor (left) and Henry Bacon, architect, at the memorial.

More Information
Lincoln Memorial
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