

Lincoln Memorial

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



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 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 Person

Abraham Lincoln was born February 12, 1809, in a log cabin near Hodgenville, Kentucky, and 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, a lawyer, and as a Congressman, along with a whimsical sense of humor, gave him the strength to endure. Throughout his political career Lincoln strove to maintain

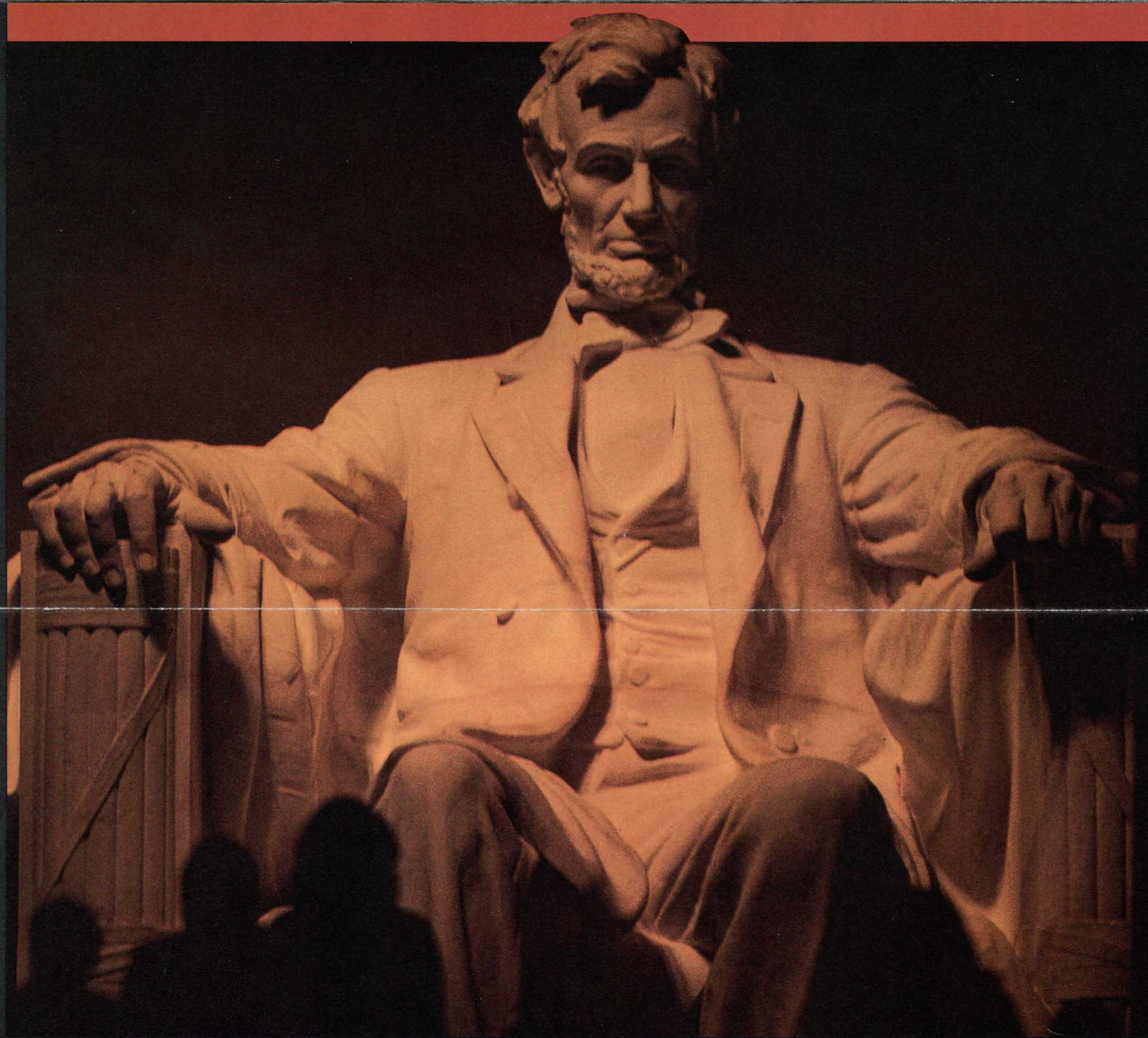
the ideals of the Nation's founders. He saw slavery as hypocritical for a Nation founded on the principle that "all men are created equal." In an 1854 speech he said: "I hate it [slavery] because it deprives our republican example of its just influence in the world—enables the enemies of free institutions, 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 Caro-

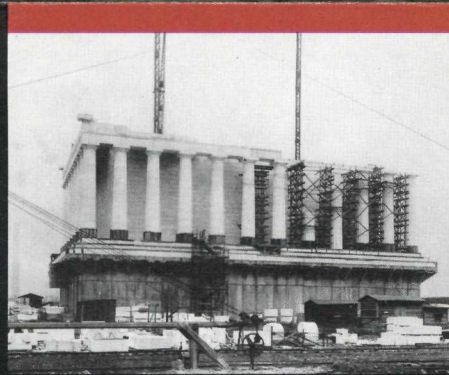
lina, and Tennessee—seceded. The result was four years of bloody conflict. In January 1863 Lincoln issued the Emancipation Proclamation to free slaves within the states in rebellion, thus raising the war to a higher moral plane. In January 1865 he secured Congressional approval of the 13th Amendment 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 the surrender of Gen. Robert E. Lee and his troops at Appomattox Court House, Virginia.



Bill Weems

The Memorial to Lincoln

Although Congress incorporated the Lincoln Monument Association in March 1867 to build a memorial to the slain President, no progress was made until 1901 when the McMillan Commission chose West Potomac



Park as the 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 for the memorial submitted by New York architect Henry Bacon and construction began on February 12, 1914. Daniel

Chester French designed the statue, and the Piccirilli Brothers of New York carved it. It is 19 feet tall and 19 feet wide and made of 28 separate blocks of white Georgia marble. Murals, painted by Jules Guerin depicting principles evident in Lincoln's life, are on the north and south walls of the memorial above inscriptions of Lincoln's Gettysburg Address and his Second Inaugural Address. Ernest Bairstow sculpted other features of the memorial with the assistance of Evelyn Beatrice Longman, French's 19-year-old apprentice. 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 directly above. The names of the 48 states in the Union when the memorial was completed in 1922 are carved in the exterior attic walls. A memorial plaque in the plaza commemorates the later admission of Alaska and Hawaii. President Warren G. Harding dedicated the memorial on May 30, 1922. The principal address at the dedication was given by Robert Moton, president of Tuskegee Institute. Robert Todd Lincoln, the President's only surviving son, attended the ceremony.

Visiting the Memorial

The Lincoln Memorial is staffed from 8 a.m. to midnight every day except December 25 by park rangers, who are available to answer questions and give talks. They also answer questions about other National Park Service sites in and around Washington, D.C. Books and educational materials may be purchased at the bookstore on the chamber level. For visitors with disabilities access to the chamber and restrooms is in the lower level of the memorial. This memorial is a unit of the National Park System, U.S. Department of the Interior, one of more than 370 parks that are important examples of our nation's natural and cultural heritage. For information write: Superintendent, National Capital Parks-Central, 900 Ohio Drive SW, Washington, DC 20024-2000. Or, www.nps.gov/nacc on the Internet.



Daniel Chester French (left), the sculptor, and Henry Bacon, the architect, stand on the steps of the memorial that they created together. The dimly-lit figure of Lincoln can be seen behind them.

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