



# Foundation Document Overview

## Lincoln Boyhood National Memorial

Indiana



### Contact Information

For more information about the *Lincoln Boyhood National Memorial Foundation Document*, contact: [libo\\_superintendent@nps.gov](mailto:libo_superintendent@nps.gov) or (812) 937-4541 or write to:  
Superintendent, Lincoln Boyhood National Memorial, 3027 East South St., Lincoln City, IN 47552

## Purpose

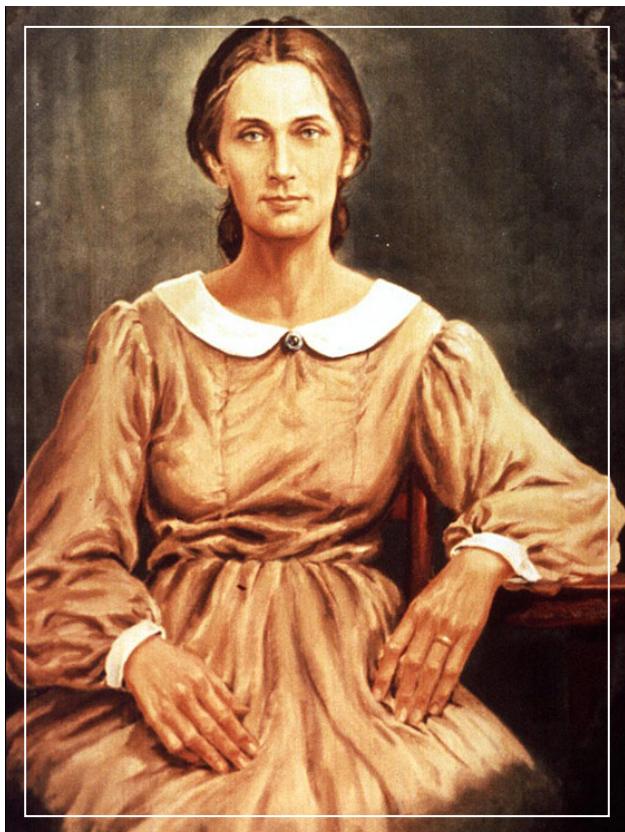


*The purpose of LINCOLN BOYHOOD NATIONAL MEMORIAL is to preserve and interpret the site associated with the boyhood and family of President Abraham Lincoln and the grave of Nancy Hanks Lincoln as a public memorial.*

## Significance

Significance statements express why Lincoln Boyhood National Memorial resources and values are important enough to merit national park unit designation. Statements of significance describe why an area is important within a global, national, regional, and systemwide context. These statements are linked to the purpose of the park unit, and are supported by data, research, and consensus. Significance statements describe the distinctive nature of the park and inform management decisions, focusing efforts on preserving and protecting the most important resources and values of the park unit.

- Lincoln Boyhood National Memorial contains the farm site of Thomas Lincoln and the marked gravesite of Nancy Hanks Lincoln and is associated with the formative years of President Abraham Lincoln's life from age 7 to 21.
- Lincoln Boyhood National Memorial was established to nationally commemorate Abraham Lincoln. The site contains physical expressions of the nation's respect and reverence for President Abraham Lincoln, including formal and informal memorial landscapes.



## Fundamental Resources and Values

Fundamental resources and values are those features, systems, processes, experiences, stories, scenes, sounds, smells, or other attributes determined to merit primary consideration during planning and management processes because they are essential to achieving the purpose of the park and maintaining its significance.

- **The Historic Farm Site.** The farm site owned by Thomas Lincoln where Abraham Lincoln lived, including the spring and the Lincoln Trace on that property. The Lincoln Trace is the route the Lincoln family used to get to their property, and it later became a road.
- **Gravesite of Nancy Hanks Lincoln.** The approximate site of Nancy Hanks Lincoln's grave in what is known as Pioneer Cemetery.
- **Memorialization.** The value of commemorating Abraham Lincoln and the time he spent in Indiana that was formative to his character, including the values and process of remembrance and respect for his mother.

Lincoln Boyhood National Memorial contains other resources and values that may not be fundamental to the purpose and significance of the park, but are important to consider in management and planning decisions. These are referred to as other important resources and values.

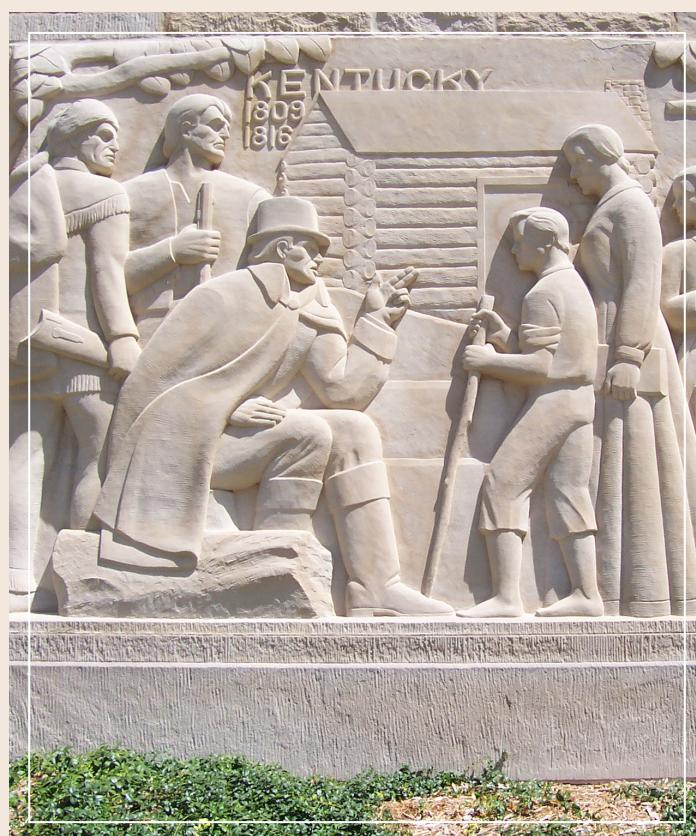
- **Commemorative Landscapes.** Physical commemorative efforts on the landscape, including the Nancy Hanks Lincoln Memorial structure and landscape Trail of Twelve Stones, Cabin Site Memorial, and Living Historical Farm, all of which are in a setting reflective of Lincoln's time featuring woods, night skies, and natural sounds.
- **Pioneer Cemetery.** The cemetery that grew up around the grave of Nancy Hanks Lincoln during the early settlement period as well as the Lincoln City period.



## Interpretive Themes

Interpretive themes are often described as the key stories or concepts that visitors should understand after visiting a park—they define the most important ideas or concepts communicated to visitors about a park unit. Themes are derived from—and should reflect—park purpose, significance, resources, and values. The set of interpretive themes is complete when it provides the structure necessary for park staff to develop opportunities for visitors to explore and relate to all of the park significances and fundamental resources and values.

- The 14 years that Abraham Lincoln spent in the evolving frontier environment of Indiana were crucial in his physical development and in the formation of his intellect and character.
- Lincoln Boyhood National Memorial represents an important expression of the nation's respect and reverence for Abraham Lincoln and is reflective of a universal desire to preserve memory.
- Memorialization is a dynamic process that changes over time as cultural context and scholarship changes, making management and interpretation at national memorials distinct from that at more traditional historic sites.



## Description

Lincoln Boyhood National Memorial in Lincoln City, Indiana, was established in 1962. The 200-acre site in southwestern Indiana commemorates the pioneer family farm where Abraham Lincoln lived from age 7 to 21 through a Memorial Visitor Center and commemorative landscape as well as an active, historical farm. It is also the burial site of Lincoln's mother, Nancy Hanks Lincoln.

Abraham Lincoln, revered among the greatest Americans, was shaped in large measure by his years in Indiana. In 1816, Thomas and Nancy Hanks Lincoln packed their belongings and two children and left Kentucky for the new frontier of southern Indiana, arriving at his 160-acre claim near Little Pigeon Creek in December.

In much of the homesteading work, Thomas was assisted by Abraham, who increased his skill with the plow and, especially, the axe. In frontier Indiana, endless farm work meant that there were few opportunities for formal education. Abraham's time spent in classrooms totaled about one year. By all accounts, he loved to read and often could be seen carrying a book as well as his axe.

In the fall of 1818, when Abraham was nine, Nancy Hanks Lincoln went to tend to neighbors ill with milk sickness and became infected and died. It was a tragic event for the family and the first of many losses Abraham would endure over his lifetime. The site of her burial, and other, later burials, became known as Pioneer Cemetery.

After President Lincoln's assassination in 1865, the Indiana home site became a place to honor both him and his mother. Although no physical traces of the Lincolns' farm remained above ground, in the late 1800s local residents began creating a memorial landscape at this site.

Between 1927 and the 1940s the Indiana Department of Conservation led the effort to create a more formal Lincoln memorial. The memorial building represents an era when the creation of memorial edifices and landscapes was a popular way to express the nation's reverence for its 16th president.

The Lincoln Living Historical Farm is a working pioneer homestead representative of the type of farm on which Lincoln would have lived. Rangers in period clothing perform a variety of activities typical of daily life in the 1820s, including farming, gardening, cooking, and spinning.

