

*NPS already listed*

UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR  
NATIONAL PARK SERVICE

**NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES  
INVENTORY -- NOMINATION FORM**

FOR FEDERAL PROPERTIES

FOR NPS USE ONLY	
RECEIVED	FEB 5 1981
DATE ENTERED	

SEE INSTRUCTIONS IN *HOW TO COMPLETE NATIONAL REGISTER FORMS*  
TYPE ALL ENTRIES -- COMPLETE APPLICABLE SECTIONS

**1 NAME**

HISTORIC

Lincoln Memorial

AND/OR COMMON

**2 LOCATION**

STREET & NUMBER

West Potomac Park

\_\_ NOT FOR PUBLICATION

CITY, TOWN

CONGRESSIONAL DISTRICT

Washington, D.C.

\_\_ VICINITY OF

STATE

CODE

COUNTY

CODE

**3 CLASSIFICATION**

CATEGORY	OWNERSHIP	STATUS	PRESENT USE	
<input type="checkbox"/> DISTRICT	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> PUBLIC	<input type="checkbox"/> OCCUPIED	<input type="checkbox"/> AGRICULTURE	<input type="checkbox"/> MUSEUM
<input type="checkbox"/> BUILDING(S)	<input type="checkbox"/> PRIVATE	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> UNOCCUPIED	<input type="checkbox"/> COMMERCIAL	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> PARK
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> STRUCTURE	<input type="checkbox"/> BOTH	<input type="checkbox"/> WORK IN PROGRESS	<input type="checkbox"/> EDUCATIONAL	<input type="checkbox"/> PRIVATE RESIDENCE
<input type="checkbox"/> SITE	<b>PUBLIC ACQUISITION</b>	<b>ACCESSIBLE</b>	<input type="checkbox"/> ENTERTAINMENT	<input type="checkbox"/> RELIGIOUS
<input type="checkbox"/> OBJECT	<input type="checkbox"/> IN PROCESS	<input type="checkbox"/> YES: RESTRICTED	<input type="checkbox"/> GOVERNMENT	<input type="checkbox"/> SCIENTIFIC
	<input type="checkbox"/> BEING CONSIDERED	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> YES: UNRESTRICTED	<input type="checkbox"/> INDUSTRIAL	<input type="checkbox"/> TRANSPORTATION
		<input type="checkbox"/> NO	<input type="checkbox"/> MILITARY	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> OTHER: commemoration

**4 AGENCY**

REGIONAL HEADQUARTERS: *(If applicable)*  
National Capital Region

STREET & NUMBER

1100 Ohio Drive, S.W.

CITY, TOWN

STATE

Washington, D.C.

\_\_ VICINITY OF

**5 LOCATION OF LEGAL DESCRIPTION**

COURTHOUSE,  
REGISTRY OF DEEDS, ETC.

STREET & NUMBER

CITY, TOWN

STATE

**6 REPRESENTATION IN EXISTING SURVEYS**

TITLE

DATE

\_\_ FEDERAL \_\_ STATE \_\_ COUNTY \_\_ LOCAL

DEPOSITORY FOR  
SURVEY RECORDS

CITY, TOWN

STATE

## 7 DESCRIPTION

CONDITION		CHECK ONE	CHECK ONE
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> EXCELLENT	<input type="checkbox"/> DETERIORATED	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> UNALTERED	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> ORIGINAL SITE
<input type="checkbox"/> GOOD	<input type="checkbox"/> RUINS	<input type="checkbox"/> ALTERED	<input type="checkbox"/> MOVED DATE _____
<input type="checkbox"/> FAIR	<input type="checkbox"/> UNEXPOSED		

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### DESCRIBE THE PRESENT AND ORIGINAL (IF KNOWN) PHYSICAL APPEARANCE

The Lincoln Memorial stands at the foot of 23rd Street, N.W., in West Potomac Park near the east bank of the Potomac River and in line with the U.S. Capitol and the Washington Monument. It is bordered by Constitution and Independence Avenues on the north and south and by the Reflecting Pool on the east.

The Memorial, constructed with a Colorado-Yule marble exterior and an Indiana limestone interior, appears as a majestic peripteral Greek temple, 189'8" long, 118'6" wide, and 99' tall. It is surrounded by a peristyle of 38 fluted Doric columns, one for each of the 36 states in the Union at the time of Lincoln's death, and two columns in-antis at the entrance behind the colonnade. These columns are 44' tall with a base diameter of 7'5". Each column is composed of 12 drums including the capitals. The columns, like the exterior walls and facades, are inclined slightly toward the building's interior. This is to compensate for perspective distortions which would otherwise make the Memorial appear asymmetrical.

Above the colonnade inscribed on the frieze are the names of the 36 states and the dates in which they entered the Union. Their names are separated by double wreath medallions in bas-relief. The cornice is composed of a carved scroll regularly interspersed with projecting lions' heads and ornamented with palmetto cresting along the upper edge. Above this on the attic frieze, are inscribed the names of the 48 states present at the time of the dedication. A bit higher is a garland joined by ribbons and palm leaves, supported by the wings of eagles. All ornamentation on the friezes and cornices was done by Ernest C. Bairstow.

The Memorial is anchored in a concrete foundation, 44-65' in depth, constructed by M.F. Comer and Company and the National Foundation and Engineering Company, and is encompassed by a 187' x 257' rectangular granite retaining wall measuring 14' in height.

Leading up to the shrine on the east side are the main steps. Beginning at the edge of the Reflecting Pool, the steps rise to the Lincoln Memorial Circle roadway surrounding the edifice, thence to the main portal, intermittantly spaced with a series of platforms. Flanking the steps as they approach the entrance are two buttresses each crowned with an 11' tall tripod carved from pink Tennessee marble.

The interior of the Lincoln Memorial is divided into three chambers by two rows of Ionic columns. These columns, four in each row, are 50' high and 5'6" in diameter at their base. The north and south side chambers contain carved inscriptions of Lincoln's Second Inaugural Address and his Gettysburg Address. Bordering these inscriptions are pilasters ornamented with fasces, eagles, and wreaths. The inscriptions and adjoining ornamentation were done by Evelyn Beatrice Longman.

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Above each of the inscriptions is a 60' x 12' mural painted by Jules Guerin graphically portraying governing principles evident in Lincoln's life. On the south wall mural Freedom, Liberty, Immortality, Justice, and the Law are pictured, while the north wall portrays Unity, Fraternity, and Charity. Both scenes contain a background of cypress trees, the emblem of Eternity. The murals were crafted with a special mixture of paint which included elements of kerosene and wax to protect the exposed artwork from fluctuations in temperature and moisture conditions.

Lying between the north and south chambers is the central hall containing the solitary figure of Lincoln sitting in contemplation. The statue was carved by the Piccirilli brothers under the supervision of the sculptor, Daniel Chester French, and took four years to complete. The statue, originally intended to be only 10' tall, was on further consideration enlarged so that it finally stood 19' tall from head to foot, the scale being such that if Lincoln were standing he would be 28' tall. The extreme width of the statue is the same as its height--19 feet. The Georgia white marble sculpture weighs 175 tons and had to be shipped in 28 separate pieces.

The statue rests upon an oblong pedestal of Tennessee marble 10' high, 16' wide, and 17' deep. Directly beneath this lies a platform of Tennessee marble 34'5½" long, 28'1" wide, and 6½" high. The statue is subtly bordered by two pilasters, one on each side. Between these pilasters and above Lincoln's head stands the engraved epitaph:

IN THIS TEMPLE  
AS IN THE HEARTS OF THE PEOPLE  
FOR WHOM HE SAVED THE UNION  
THE MEMORY OF ABRAHAM LINCOLN  
IS ENSHRINED FOREVER

The ceiling of the Memorial, 60' above the floor, is composed of bronze girders, ornamented with laurel and oak leaves. Between the girders are panels of Alabama marble, saturated with paraffin to increase their translucency. Despite the increased light from this device, Bacon and French felt the statue required even more light. They decided upon an artificial lighting system in which a louvered lighting panel would be set in the ceiling with metal slats to conceal the great floodlights. Custodians could adjust the lights from a control room varying them according to the outside light. Funds for this expensive system were appropriated by Congress in 1926, and in 1929, seven years after the dedication, the statue was properly lighted. Since that time, only one major alteration has taken place in the Memorial's design. This was the addition of an elevator within the structure to aid handicapped visitors, which was installed in the mid-1970s.

# 8 SIGNIFICANCE

PERIOD	AREAS OF SIGNIFICANCE -- CHECK AND JUSTIFY BELOW			
<input type="checkbox"/> PREHISTORIC	<input type="checkbox"/> ARCHEOLOGY-PREHISTORIC	<input type="checkbox"/> COMMUNITY PLANNING	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> LANDSCAPE ARCHITECTURE	<input type="checkbox"/> RELIGION
<input type="checkbox"/> 1400-1499	<input type="checkbox"/> ARCHEOLOGY-HISTORIC	<input type="checkbox"/> CONSERVATION	<input type="checkbox"/> LAW	<input type="checkbox"/> SCIENCE
<input type="checkbox"/> 1500-1599	<input type="checkbox"/> AGRICULTURE	<input type="checkbox"/> ECONOMICS	<input type="checkbox"/> LITERATURE	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> SCULPTURE
<input type="checkbox"/> 1600-1699	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> ARCHITECTURE	<input type="checkbox"/> EDUCATION	<input type="checkbox"/> MILITARY	<input type="checkbox"/> SOCIAL/HUMANITARIAN
<input type="checkbox"/> 1700-1799	<input type="checkbox"/> ART	<input type="checkbox"/> ENGINEERING	<input type="checkbox"/> MUSIC	<input type="checkbox"/> THEATER
<input type="checkbox"/> 1800-1899	<input type="checkbox"/> COMMERCE	<input type="checkbox"/> EXPLORATION/SETTLEMENT	<input type="checkbox"/> PHILOSOPHY	<input type="checkbox"/> TRANSPORTATION
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> 1900-	<input type="checkbox"/> COMMUNICATIONS	<input type="checkbox"/> INDUSTRY	<input type="checkbox"/> POLITICS/GOVERNMENT	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> OTHER (SPECIFY) Commemoration
		<input type="checkbox"/> INVENTION		

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SPECIFIC DATES	1912-1922	BUILDER/ARCHITECT	Henry Bacon, Architect Daniel Chester French, Sculptor
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## STATEMENT OF SIGNIFICANCE

The Lincoln Memorial, designed after the temples of ancient Greece, is significant as America's foremost memorial to her 16th president, as a totally original example of neoclassical architecture, and as the formal terminus to the extended Mall in accordance with the McMillan Commission's plan for the monumental core of Washington.

Abraham Lincoln has long stood in the minds of the American people as a symbol of honesty, integrity, and humanity. Although a national monument to him was not raised until the 20th century, demands for a fitting memorial had been voiced since the time of his death. In 1867, Congress heeded these demands and passed the first of many bills incorporating a commission to erect a monument to Lincoln. An American, Clarke Mills, was chosen to design the structure. His plans reflected the bombastic nationalistic spirit of the age. His design called for a 70' structure adorned with six equestrian and 31 pedestrian statues of colossal proportions, crowned by a 12' statue of Lincoln. Fortunately, subscriptions for the project were insufficient and it collapsed.

The matter lay dormant until the turn of the century when, under the leadership of Senator Shelby M. Cullom of Illinois, six separate bills were introduced to Congress for the incorporation of a new Memorial Commission. The first five bills, proposed in the years 1901, 1902, and 1908, met with defeat; however, the final bill (Senate Bill 9449), introduced on December 13, 1910, passed. The Lincoln Memorial Commission had its first meeting the following year and President William H. Taft was chosen as president. Things progressed at a steady pace and by 1913 Congress had approved of the Commission's choice of design and location. This approval was far from unanimous, however. Many thought that architect Henry Bacon's Greek temple design was far too ostentatious for a man of Lincoln's humble character. Instead they proposed a simple log cabin shrine. The site too did not go unopposed. The recently reclaimed land in Potomac Park was seen by many to be either too swampy or too inaccessible. Other sites, such as Union Station, were put forth. The Commission stood firm in its recommendation though, feeling that the Potomac Park location, situated on the Washington Monument-U.S. Capitol axis, overlooking the Potomac River and surrounded by open land, was an ideal site. Furthermore, the Potomac Park site had already been designated in the McMillan Plan of 1901 to be the location of a future monument comparable to that of the Washington Monument.

# 9 MAJOR BIBLIOGRAPHICAL REFERENCES

The Director of Public Buildings and Public Parks of the National Capital.

The Lincoln Memorial in Washington. Washington: Government Printing Office, 1927.

Gordon, Suzanne. In this Temple... Washington: Museum Press, Inc., 1973.

Heintzelman, Patricia. Classified Structure Field Inventory Report for the Lincoln Memorial (Structure #332-1). National Park Service, 1975.

# 10 GEOGRAPHICAL DATA

ACREAGE OF NOMINATED PROPERTY 19

UTM REFERENCES

ACREAGE ~~REQUIRED~~

UTM ~~NOT REQUIRED~~

A 1,8 | 3,2,2,3,4,0 | 4,3,0,6,4,2,0  
 ZONE EASTING NORTHING

B 1,8 | 3,2,2,3,4,0 | 4,3,0,6,0,8,0  
 ZONE EASTING NORTHING

C 1,8 | 3,2,2,0,0,0 | 4,3,0,6,0,8,0

D 1,8 | 3,2,2,0,0,0 | 4,3,0,6,4,2,0

## VERBAL BOUNDARY DESCRIPTION

The Lincoln Memorial stands at the foot of 23rd Street, N.W., in West Potomac Park near the east bank of the Potomac River and in line with the U.S. Capitol and the Washington Monument. It is bordered by Constitution and Independence Avenues on the north and south and by the Reflecting Pool on the east.

## LIST ALL STATES AND COUNTIES FOR PROPERTIES OVERLAPPING STATE OR COUNTY BOUNDARIES

STATE	CODE	COUNTY	CODE
STATE	CODE	COUNTY	CODE

STATE	CODE	COUNTY	CODE
STATE	CODE	COUNTY	CODE

# 11 FORM PREPARED BY

NAME / TITLE

Donald C. Pfanz, Clerk-typist

ORGANIZATION

National Park Service, National Capital Region

DATE

January 12, 1981

STREET & NUMBER

1100 Ohio Drive, S.W.

TELEPHONE

202-426-6660

CITY OR TOWN

Washington, D.C. 20242

STATE

# 12 CERTIFICATION OF NOMINATION

N/A Not a nomination; documentation of STATE HISTORIC PRESERVATION OFFICER RECOMMENDATION an existing Register property  
 YES\_\_\_ NO\_\_\_ NONE\_\_\_

STATE HISTORIC PRESERVATION OFFICER SIGNATURE

In compliance with Executive Order 11593, I hereby nominate this property to the National Register, certifying that the State Historic Preservation Officer has been allowed 90 days in which to present the nomination to the State Review Board and to evaluate its significance. The evaluated level of significance is National State Local.

FEDERAL REPRESENTATIVE SIGNATURE

*F. R. [Signature]*

TITLE Assistant Director, Cultural Resources

DATE 1-26-81

FOR NPS USE ONLY

I HEREBY CERTIFY THAT THIS PROPERTY IS INCLUDED IN THE NATIONAL REGISTER

*(Already listed in N.R.)*

*Documentation accepted*

*Lynn A. Beube for Acting Keeper*

DATE March 24, 1981

DIRECTOR, OFFICE OF ARCHEOLOGY AND HISTORIC PRESERVATION

ATTEST:

DATE

KEEPER OF THE NATIONAL REGISTER

UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR  
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With Congressional approval and a \$300,000 allocation, the project got underway. On February 12, 1914, an inauspicious dedication ceremony was conducted and the following month the actual construction began. Work progressed steadily according to schedule. However a few changes did have to be made. The statue of Lincoln, originally designed to be 10' tall, was later enlarged to 19' to prevent it from being dwarfed by its huge chamber. As late as 1920, the decision was made to substitute an open portal for the bronze and glass grille which was to have guarded the entrance. Despite these changes, the Memorial was finished on schedule. In a May Day celebration in 1922, Commission president William H. Taft dedicated the Memorial and presented it to President Warren Harding, who accepted it for the American people.

Since that time, the Lincoln Memorial has been visited by millions of people each year. Upon occasion it has been the site of large public gatherings such as that of Easter Sunday, 1939, when 75,000 people attended a concert by singer Marian Anderson. Twenty-four years later, on August 28, 1963, 200,000 people massed at the shrine to hear performers Mahalia Jackson, Marian Anderson, and Odetta. Also featured was Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. who delivered his famous speech, "I Have a Dream." Today the Lincoln Memorial, under the supervision of the National Park Service, continues to attract crowds of people from every part of the world.