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# Lincoln Memorial

The idea for a memorial to Abraham Lincoln arose within two years after his assassination on April 14, 1865; however, it took more than fifty years for such a tribute to be built.

Within two years of Lincoln's death, Congress created a Lincoln Memorial Association (1867). The famous sculptor, Clark Mills, was chosen to design the memorial. His idea was to build a 70-foot monument with a large figure of Lincoln on top. Surrounding the President would be 31 foot soldiers and six cavalymen on horseback. The reaction to the design showed how deeply people's emotions ran after the Civil War. The monument of Lincoln as a conquering hero was never funded either by Congress or voluntary contributions from the public.

Illinois Senator Shelby Cullom, who had known Lincoln and admired him, kept the idea of a memorial alive. Cullom, with the help of the powerful Speaker of the House Joseph Cannon, finally got a memorial bill through the House and Senate in 1911. President Taft signed the bill into law on February 19, 1911. Congress had allotted \$2,000,000 to the memorial project.

People sent to Congress many suggestions for the form and location of the memorial. Finally, Congress decided that Lincoln's monument would be located in Washington, D.C., near the Washington Monument. It would contain a sculpture of Lincoln housed in a proper building.

Henry Bacon was one of the leading candidates to design the Lincoln Memorial in 1912. He submitted his design to Congress. Both the Lincoln Memorial Commission and President Taft approved the design in 1913. Construction of the memorial took eight years from 1914 to 1922.

The memorial's building was patterned after the Greek Parthenon, a temple built during the Golden Age of Athens. There were 36 columns (for the 36 states in the Union at the time of Lincoln's death) that formed an outer porch. A sculpted band around the outside of the building had the states' names carved on it. Colorado marble was used for the memorial building.



Bacon planned to have two speeches and two murals put on the inside walls of the memorial. Lincoln's Gettysburg Address is carved in the south chamber, while his Second Inaugural Address is on a wall of the north chamber. Jules Guerin painted the two murals. The picture symbolizing freedom from slavery is above the Gettysburg Address, and a painting about reuniting the United States after the Civil War is above the Second Inaugural Address.

Daniel Chester French designed the statue of Lincoln, which is the main feature of the memorial. The seated Lincoln statue is 19 feet high on an elevated base that is 11 feet high. The Piccirilli brothers, well-known sculptors, carved the statue from 28 blocks of Georgia marble. It took them a year to complete the statue. Above Lincoln's head are carved the words, *In this temple, as in the hearts of the people for whom he saved the Union, the memory of Abraham Lincoln is enshrined forever.*

President Harding dedicated the memorial on February 12, 1922 (the anniversary of Lincoln's birth). Lincoln's oldest and only surviving son, Robert Lincoln, was the guest of honor at the ceremony.

Name \_\_\_\_\_

## *Lincoln Memorial Questions*

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1. How soon after Lincoln's death did the idea of a memorial to President Lincoln arise? \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_
2. Describe the memorial designed by Clark Mills. \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_
3. Who was the main person who kept alive the idea of a Lincoln memorial from 1867 to 1911?  
\_\_\_\_\_
4. a. How much money did Congress set aside for the building of the Lincoln Memorial in 1912?  
\_\_\_\_\_
- b. If the memorial cost 150% of the money given by Congress, what was the final cost of the building and statue? \_\_\_\_\_
5. a. Bacon's design for the outer building of the Lincoln Memorial was based on what historical building?  
\_\_\_\_\_
- b. Why are there 36 columns around the memorial? \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_
6. What two famous Lincoln speeches are carved on the inside of the memorial? \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

### **Thought Questions**

7. Why would the southern states, newly returned to the Union, probably be opposed to a monument to Abraham Lincoln? \_\_\_\_\_
8. One suggestion for a memorial was a series of monuments from Springfield, Illinois, to Washington, D.C. What are two reasons why this idea would not be practical to build? \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_
9. Why were the freeing of the slaves and the reuniting of the Union chosen as the subjects of Jules Guerin's paintings in the memorial? \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

# Abraham Lincoln's Childhood

One of the United States' two most famous and respected Presidents was born in poverty in a log cabin in Hardin County, Kentucky. The date of Lincoln's birth was February 12, 1809, and his parents were Thomas and Nancy (Hanks) Lincoln. He had no brothers and only one older sister, Sarah.

When Abraham was seven, his family moved to southern Indiana. They had left Kentucky because of disputes over land titles. In Indiana, the family lived north of the Ohio River in Perry County.

In 1818 when Abraham was only nine years old, his mother Nancy died from drinking milk from cows that had eaten white snakeroot plant. The boy helped his father bury his mother. A year later, Thomas Lincoln married a widow, Sarah Bush Johnston. She became a loving and much-loved stepmother to the young boy. Tragedy struck again when Abraham's sister died in childbirth.

Life on a frontier farm was very hard and required unending physical labor. From a young age, Abraham was put to work on the farm. He used an axe to help clear trees from the farmland and split the logs into fence rails. That was why he was later nicknamed the "Rail Splitter." Thomas Lincoln often loaned his son to neighbors to do work for them and kept Abraham's wages for himself. All of this work allowed little time for education, and Lincoln had almost no formal schooling. Abraham spent what little spare time he had reading on his own.

In 1830, Thomas Lincoln moved his family to Illinois. By this time, Abraham was 21 and decided to leave home.

