



Architecture

Lincoln Memorial

Washington, D.C., USA





Lincoln Memorial

Abraham Lincoln holds a unique place in the history of the United States: not only did he save the Union, he reinvigorated the nation's founding principle – that all men are created equal. The campaign to erect a fitting memorial in his name began even as he lay on his deathbed in 1865. It would eventually be completed 57 years later, after decades of disagreements over what type of monument to build and where it should be placed.

[In this temple, as in the hearts of the people for whom he saved the Union, the memory of Abraham Lincoln is enshrined forever.]

History and Construction

Demands for a fitting national memorial for the 16th president of the United States began shortly after his assassination in April 1865. Although Congress passed its first bill on the matter in 1867, it would be 1913 before the design, location, and funding of the memorial were finally approved.

Even then many still questioned whether architect Henry Bacon's Greek temple design was too extravagant for such a humble man as Lincoln, and whether the swampy and inaccessible Potomac Park was the best place for it to stand.

The Lincoln Memorial Commission stood firm in its recommendation: the memorial would stand alone at one end of the National Mall. The massive sculpture of Lincoln, the saviour of the nation, would face east toward the monument celebrating the founder of the nation, George Washington, and in between would be a long reflecting pool.

The project got under way with a ceremony on 12 February 1914, and construction began a month later. Although work slowed as a result of the United States entering the First World War in 1917, the monument was completed on schedule in 1922. On Memorial Day, 30 May 1922, 50,000 people attended a dedication ceremony. Among those present were hundreds of Civil War veterans; Robert Todd Lincoln, the president's only surviving son; and President Warren G. Harding, who accepted the memorial on behalf of the American people.

The memorial itself echoes a classic Greek temple and the structure measures 58 by 36 meters and is 30 meters tall. It is surrounded by a colonnade of 36 fluted Doric columns, one for each of the 36 states in the Union at the time of Lincoln's death. The columns stand 13 meter tall with a base diameter of 2.3 meter.

Above the colonnade, inscribed on a frieze, are the names of the 36 states in the Union when Lincoln died and the dates in which they entered. Above this are inscribed the names of the 48 states present in the Union at the time of the memorial's dedication.

The memorial is anchored on a concrete foundation, 13 to 20 meter in depth, and is encompassed by a 57 by 78 meter rectangular granite retaining wall measuring 4.3 meter in height.

The interior of the monument is divided into three chambers. The north and south chambers contain carved inscriptions of Lincoln's second inaugural address and his Gettysburg Address. Above each of the inscriptions is a 18.3 by 3.7 meter mural portraying the governing principles in Lincoln's life.

Between the north and south chambers is the central chamber containing the solitary figure of Lincoln sitting in contemplation. The statue rests upon an oblong marble pedestal 3 meter high, 5 meter wide, and 5.2 meter deep.



Lincoln Memorial under construction, 1919

The People behind the Memorial

While many people were involved in the design and construction of the Lincoln Memorial, it is the architect Henry Bacon, sculptor Daniel Chester French, and artist Jules Guerin who were most prominent.

Henry Bacon (1866–1924)

Henry Bacon was a New York–based architect who had travelled widely in Europe and was especially fond of ancient Greek architecture. His inspiration for the Lincoln Memorial is the Athenian temple known as the Parthenon.

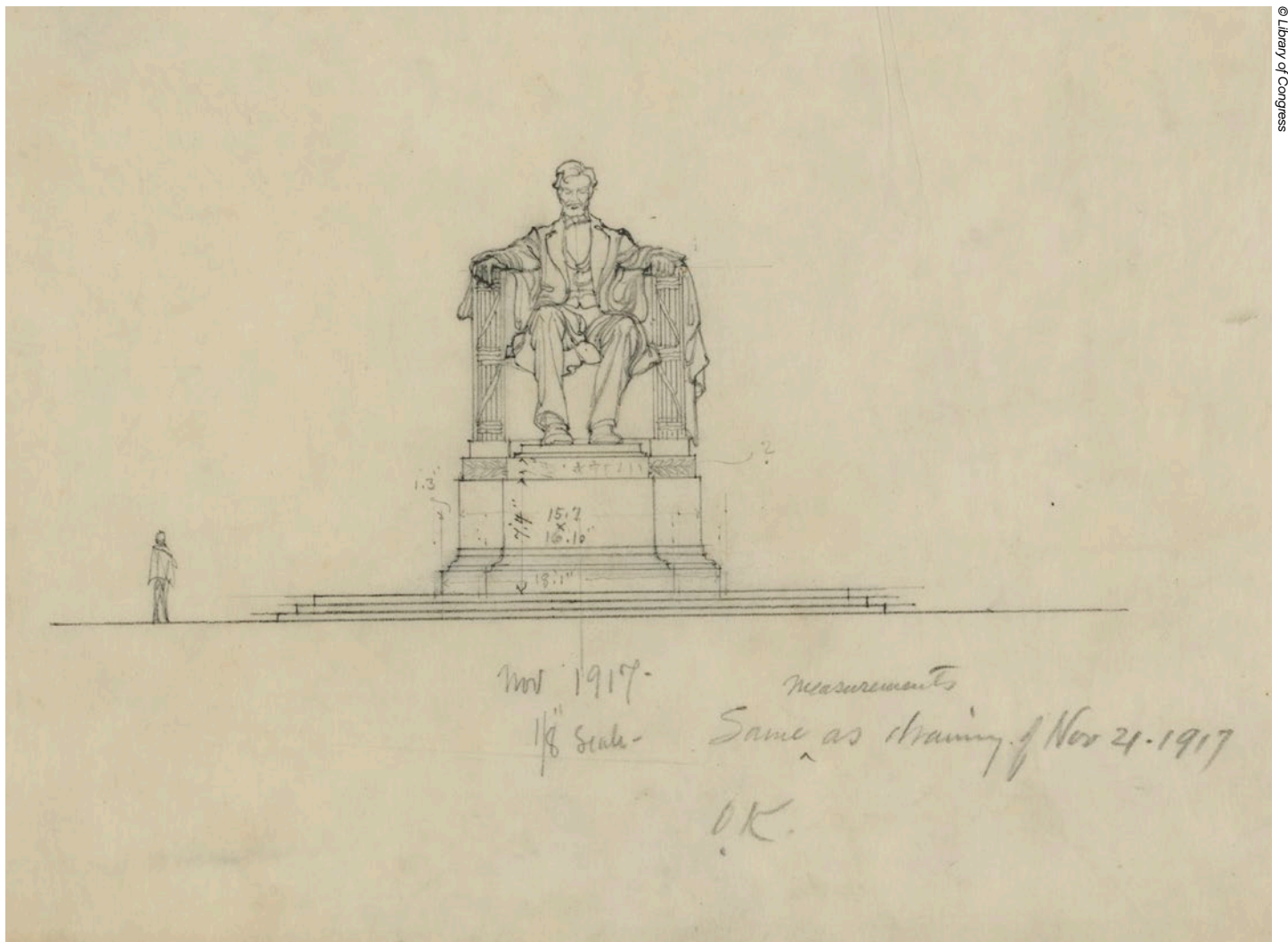
Bacon instinctively understood the symbolic role of the memorial in reunifying a country torn apart by civil war and deliberately chose building materials from as many states as possible. The granite at the terrace level came from Massachusetts, the marble of the upper steps and outside façade came from Colorado, and the pink marble floor of the chamber came from Tennessee. Indiana limestone is used on the interior walls and columns of the chamber, and the ceiling tiles are made of Alabama marble. The statue of Lincoln itself is carved from Georgia marble. Bacon was awarded the Gold Medal of the American Institute of Architects, his profession's highest honour, for his work on the memorial.

Daniel Chester French (1850–1931)

Daniel Chester French was the leading American sculptor of his day and his most famous work is the statue of Lincoln, which dominates the interior of the memorial. The plans originally specified a 3.6 meter bronze statue, but it proved out of scale for the huge building. The finished statue is 5.8 meter tall, which means if Lincoln were standing, he would be 8.5 meter tall. The sculpture took four years to complete, weighs 159 tonnes, and is carved from 28 separate blocks of white Georgia marble.

Jules Guerin (1866–1946)

Jules Guerin was originally hired by Henry Bacon to create watercolour illustrations of his proposed plans for the memorial. Guerin was born in St Louis, Missouri, a year after the end of the American Civil War. Later, he went on to study art in Chicago and Europe. He was thereafter selected to decorate the interior of the memorial with two canvas murals 18.3 meter long by 3.7 meter high. Together, the murals visually symbolise the principles of Abraham Lincoln and emphasise his two great accomplishments – emancipation and unity.



Drawing on tracing paper of Lincoln's statue by Henry Bacon, 1917



The Memorial as a National Symbol

The Lincoln Memorial is not only an iconic piece of architecture, it is a symbol of everything Abraham Lincoln stood for. For this reason, it has also been the venue for many of the most memorable demonstrations within the American Civil Rights movement.

On 28 August 1963, more than 200,000 people journeyed to Washington from all over the United States and stood in front of the memorial as Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. delivered his famous 'I Have a Dream' speech. The spot on which King stood was engraved in 2003 in recognition of the 40th anniversary of the event.

The memorial has played a central role in a number of blockbuster movies and also appears on the back of the U.S. five dollar bill, the front of which bears Lincoln's portrait. Approximately six million people visit the memorial annually; it is open 24 hours a day, every day of the year except Christmas Day. In 2007 the American Institute of Architects ranked it seventh in the list of America's Favorite Architecture.

Facts about the Lincoln Memorial



Location: West end of National Mall, Washington, D.C.
 Area: 2,539.6 m²
 Architect:..... Henry Bacon
 Architectural style: Beaux-Arts
 Construction start: 1914
 Construction end:..... 1922
 Size:..... Memorial (external) 58 meter width,
 36 meter breadth, 30 meter height
 Exterior materials: Colorado Yule marble, Tennessee pink marble,
 Massachusetts granite
 Interior materials: Indiana limestone, Georgia white marble,
 Tennessee pink marble, Alabama marble,
 bronze, brass
 Construction costs: \$2,957,000

Facts and Statements



Many believe that Lincoln is shown using sign language symbols to represent his initials, with his left hand forming an "A" and his right hand an "L."



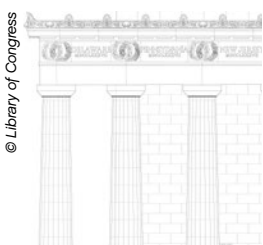
The Alabama marble used in the ceiling panels was saturated with melted beeswax for better translucency.



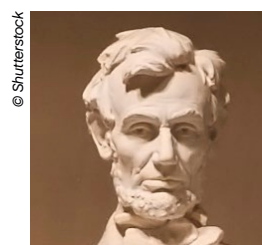
Although \$2 million was set aside to cover the memorial's construction costs, the final cost was closer to \$3 million.



The statue's left hand is clenched to symbolise strength and determination. The right hand is open to symbolise charity and compassion.



The columns and exterior walls are inclined slightly toward the building's interior. This compensates for visual perspective distortions that would make the memorial appear to bulge out at the top.



There is a myth that the face of Confederate General Robert E. Lee is carved in the back of Lincoln's head.

LEGO® Architecture – Then and Now



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LEGO Architecture Studio

There has always been a natural connection between the LEGO® brick and the world of architecture. Fans who build with LEGO elements instinctively develop an interest in the form and function of the structures they create. At the same time, many architects have discovered that LEGO bricks are the perfect way to physically express their creative ideas.

This connection was confirmed in the early 1960s with the launch of the LEGO 'Scale Model' line. It matched the spirit of the age where modern architects were redefining how houses look and people were taking an active interest in the design of their new homes. These sets were designed to be different from the normal, brightly colored LEGO boxes and also inspired its users with a book on architecture.

Decades later, architect and LEGO fan Adam Reed Tucker revived the idea of expressing architecture using LEGO bricks and, in partnership

with the LEGO Group, launched the LEGO Architecture line that we know today. His first models, and the original sets in the current LEGO Architecture series, were interpretations of famous skyscrapers from his hometown of Chicago. Since then LEGO Architecture has developed and evolved, first with well-known buildings from other cities in the United States, and now with iconic structures from Europe, the Middle East, and Asia.

The introduction of our LEGO Architecture Studio set echoes the ambitions of the earlier LEGO 'Scale Model' line and widens the potential of the LEGO Architecture series. Now you can enjoy building and learning about specific landmark buildings, or create exciting architectural models from your own fantasy. An inspiring 270-page book, featuring a number of renowned architects from around the world, guides you through the principles of architecture and encourages you in your own creative building.

References

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