

Lincoln Memorial at Louisville Waterfront Park



The Lincoln Memorial at Waterfront Park was dedicated on June 4, 2009.

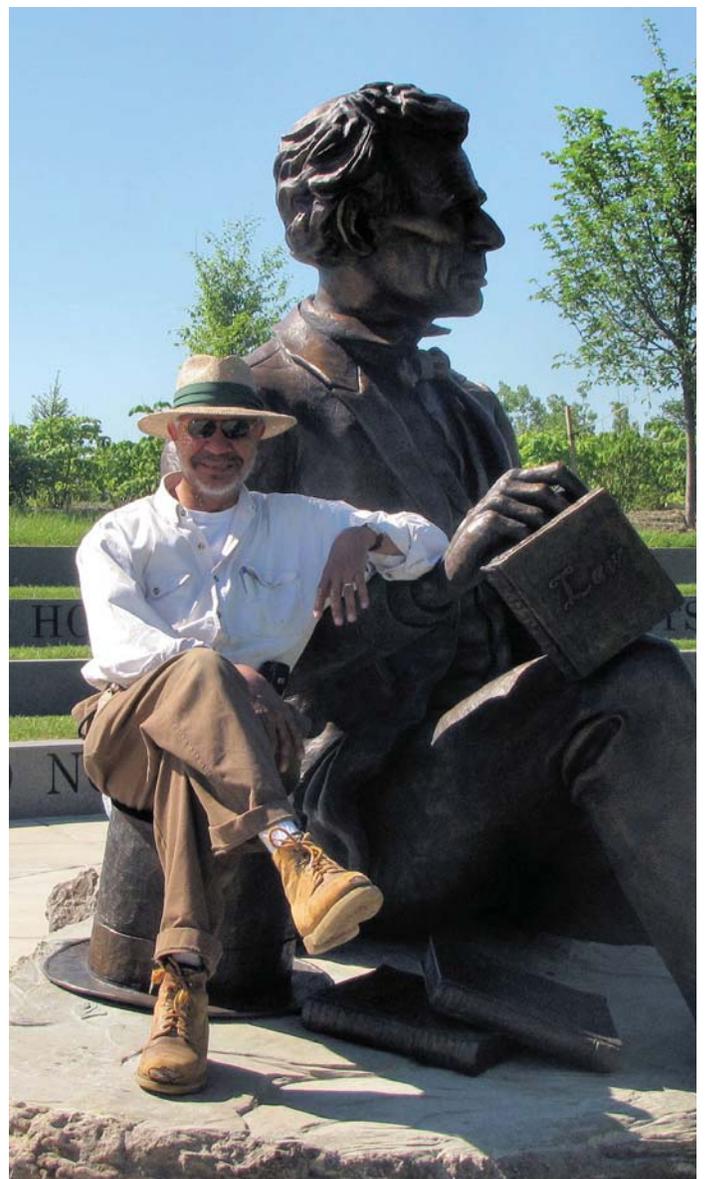
Louisville Waterfront Park celebrated the opening of the Lincoln Memorial with a sunset dedication that featured a program of orchestral music and readings, culminating with a dramatic performance of Aaron Copland's "Lincoln Portrait," narrated by actor and Louisville native William Mapother.

The memorial, funded by the Commonwealth of Kentucky, the family of Harry S. Frazier, Jr., and the Kentucky Historical Society/Kentucky Abraham Lincoln Bicentennial Commission, features a 12 ft. statue of Lincoln seated on a rock and looking out over the Ohio River. Louisville artist Ed Hamilton sculpted Lincoln and the four bas reliefs that line the path into the site, which feature four scenes that represent stories of Lincoln's life-long ties to Kentucky.

The memorial site, designed by landscape architectural firm Hargreaves Associates, is an amphitheater that faces the river and provides a frame for the sculptural pieces. The face of the granite amphitheater seating is engraved with four famous Lincoln quotes, and the site is planted with a variety of trees, including several that were Lincoln favorites.

The memorial is free to the public and is open year-round during Park hours, 6:00 a.m. through 11:00 p.m. daily. The memorial site is just east of the Big Four Bridge. Parking is available in the Lincoln Memorial parking lot and the Silver and Purple parking lots in the park off of River Road. Enter the Lincoln Memorial from the Promenade along the river's edge.

For more information on the Lincoln Memorial and Waterfront Park, visit: www.LouisvilleWaterfront.com.



Sculptor Ed Hamilton relaxes with Abraham Lincoln, just placed in his new home in Waterfront Park.

The four bas reliefs in the Lincoln Memorial demonstrate the influence Kentucky had on Lincoln's life and Presidency. Here, the background story of each panel is explained.

SCENE 1: LINCOLN'S FORMATIVE YEARS IN KENTUCKY

Born on February 12, 1809, near Hodgenville, Kentucky, Abraham Lincoln was the first president of the United States born outside the original thirteen colonies. Lessons learned from his early years on the Kentucky frontier shaped our 16th President immeasurably.

Lincoln's parents, Thomas Lincoln and Nancy Hanks, were both second-generation "pioneers," who married on June 12, 1806, near Springfield, Kentucky. They taught their son the meaning of hard work and perseverance and instilled in him a profound love of learning—a love that Abraham's stepmother, Sarah Johnston Lincoln, continued to nurture in him.

From an early age, Lincoln became an avid reader. He was largely self-taught, becoming one of Illinois' most successful lawyers long before his election as president in 1860. As an adult, Lincoln thought of himself as a Kentuckian and a self-made man. He advised others to find their calling as he did: "get the books, and read, and study them carefully."

SCENE #2: LINCOLN'S KENTUCKY CONNECTIONS

When Thomas Lincoln moved his family to Spencer County, Indiana, in December 1816, he was following a well-worn path laid out by thousands of other households from the Upper South. Similarly, at age twenty-two, Abraham Lincoln left his father's household and made his way to New Salem, Indiana—a growing village inhabited by many former Kentuckians.

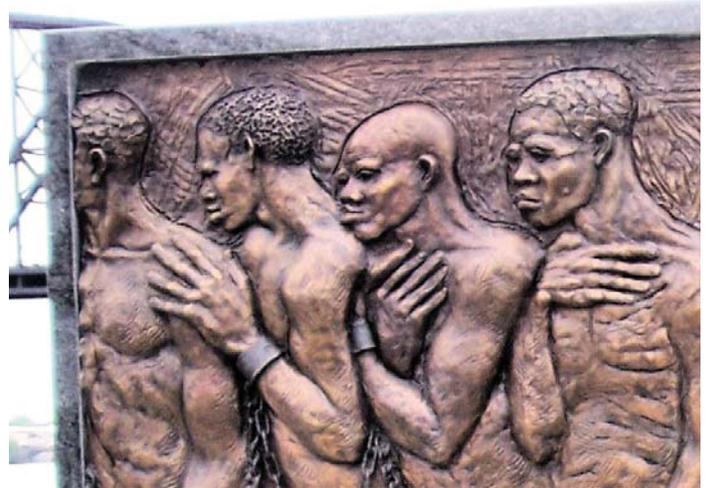
Lincoln was already well integrated into an important network of Kentuckians who continued to shape his life and career when he moved to Springfield, Illinois in 1837. John Todd Stuart, his first law partner, had encouraged Lincoln to run for political office and study the law as early as 1832. In Springfield, Lincoln also met his best friend, Louisville-native Joshua Speed.

Like many of his generation, Lincoln found inspiration in the great Kentucky statesman, Henry Clay. With Mary Todd Lincoln, who came from one of Kentucky's most prominent families, he formed an ambitious, intellectually rich, and politically powerful partnership. Lincoln often turned to fellow Kentuckians for advice, guidance, and support as a lawyer, politician, and president.

SCENE #3: A HOUSE DIVIDED

In his famous speech of June 16, 1858, senatorial candidate Abraham Lincoln invoked the biblical injunction, "A house divided against itself cannot stand." When war came on April 12, 1861, President Lincoln's own family became a house divided, as most of Mary Lincoln's relatives, the Todds of Lexington, supported the Confederacy.

The Lincolns felt keenly the deaths of Mary's half-brother Samuel at the battle of Shiloh and her brother Alexander at Baton Rouge. Lincoln was visibly shaken when he learned that his friend and brother-in-law, Confederate Brigadier General Benjamin Hardin Helm, had been killed in the battle of Chickamauga. The conflict permanently estranged the Lincolns from Mary's sister, the widowed Emilie Todd Helm. Sharing in the nation's wounds, Lincoln anticipated, in his Second Inaugural Address, the need for true reconciliation, "with malice toward none, with charity for all."



The fourth bas relief is a moving depiction of slaves shackled together for transport by riverboat.

SCENE #4: SLAVERY AND EMANCIPATION

Raised in a deeply religious household by Separatist Baptist parents, from an early age, Abraham Lincoln abhorred the institution of slavery and considered it a moral wrong. Disagreeing with both defenders of slavery and abolitionists, Lincoln nonetheless came to believe that the Declaration of Independence, by stating that "all men are created equal," and the Northwest Ordinance of 1787, by outlawing slavery north of the Ohio River, had placed the institution "in course of ultimate extinction." First-hand knowledge of slavery also bolstered these views.

Writing to his friend Joshua Speed in 1855, Lincoln recalled their trip of August 1841 on the Ohio River, during which he saw a dozen enslaved African Americans being transported to New Orleans: "That sight was a continual torment to me; and I see something like it every time I touch the Ohio, or any other slave-border." To others he asked: "Can we, as a nation, continue together permanently – half slave, half free?"

As president during the Civil War, military considerations and Lincoln's longstanding antislavery views combined to answer this question. On January 1, 1863, Lincoln issued the Emancipation Proclamation. One year later, he risked losing his presidency by supporting the Thirteenth Amendment that abolished slavery in the United States.

For more information on Lincoln's ties to Kentucky, visit <http://history.ky.gov/kylincoln/>