

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 DEC 29 1976

DATE ENTERED

SEE INSTRUCTIONS IN *HOW TO COMPLETE NATIONAL REGISTER FORMS*
TYPE ALL ENTRIES -- COMPLETE APPLICABLE SECTIONS**1 NAME**

HISTORIC

Abraham Lincoln Birthplace National Historic Site

AND/OR COMMON

"Sinking Spring or Cave Spring Farm"

"Lincoln or Nolin Creek Farm"

2 LOCATION

STREET & NUMBER

Route 1, US 31E

__NOT FOR PUBLICATION

CITY, TOWN

Hodgenville

__ VICINITY OF

CONGRESSIONAL DISTRICT

2nd District

STATE

Kentucky

CODE

21

COUNTY

LaRue

CODE

123

3 CLASSIFICATION

CATEGORY

 DISTRICT BUILDING(S) STRUCTURE SITE OBJECT

OWNERSHIP

 PUBLIC PRIVATE BOTH

PUBLIC ACQUISITION

 IN PROCESS BEING CONSIDERED

STATUS

 OCCUPIED UNOCCUPIED WORK IN PROGRESS

ACCESSIBLE

 YES: RESTRICTED YES: UNRESTRICTED NO

PRESENT USE

 AGRICULTURE COMMERCIAL EDUCATIONAL ENTERTAINMENT GOVERNMENT INDUSTRIAL MILITARY MUSEUM PARK PRIVATE RESIDENCE RELIGIOUS SCIENTIFIC TRANSPORTATION OTHER:**4 AGENCY**

REGIONAL HEADQUARTERS: (if applicable)

National Park Service, Southeast Region

STREET & NUMBER

1895 Phoenix Blvd.

CITY, TOWN

Atlanta

__ VICINITY OF

STATE

Georgia

5 LOCATION OF LEGAL DESCRIPTION

COURTHOUSE,

REGISTRY OF DEEDS, ETC.

LaRue County Courthouse

STREET & NUMBER

High Street

CITY, TOWN

Hodgenville

STATE

Kentucky

6 REPRESENTATION IN EXISTING SURVEYS

TITLE

Administrative History of Abraham Lincoln Birthplace National Historic Site

DATE

Sept. 20, 1968

 FEDERAL STATE COUNTY LOCALDEPOSITORY FOR
SURVEY RECORDS

Division of History, Office of Archaeology and Historic Preservation,

CITY, TOWN

National Park Service, Dept. of Interior

STATE

Washington, D.C. 20240

7 DESCRIPTION

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

DESCRIBE THE PRESENT AND ORIGINAL (IF KNOWN) PHYSICAL APPEARANCE

Birthplace
The Abraham Lincoln National Historic Site was established to preserve the traditional birthplace cabin and a part of the farm where the 16th President of the United States spent his first 2½ years of life. Situated in LaRue County, near the south fork of Nolin Creek in central Kentucky, the park site is only fourteen miles from Elizabethtown and fifty miles from Mammoth Cave. Thomas Lincoln originally purchased 300 acre farm in 1808. He lost it 2½ years later because of a defective land title. The farm then ~~ex~~changed hands several times until 1906 when the Abraham Lincoln Farm Association bought 110 acres to perpetuate the memory of President Lincoln. Unable to support the area, it was donated to the state of Kentucky and later to the federal government in 1916. The War Department was given jurisdiction until 1933. It was then transferred to the Department of the Interior. The park today encompasses 116.5 acres of the southern third of the original 300 acres. The site consists of the birthplace cabin; the Memorial Building which encloses the cabin; the Sinking Spring and the ancient Boundary Oak; and the Visitor's Center.

The birthplace centers around the farm purchased by Tom Lincoln in 1808. The farm on Nolin Creek stood on the edge of the Barrens, a great tract of land 70 miles long and 60 miles wide. The land had been made treeless by successive fires started by the Indians to create open grazing lands for buffalo and other game. The region was barren except for tall grass and scattered trees along infrequent streams. Beneath it were numerous subterranean caverns and springs. One such spring was located on Nolin Creek Farm. The farm was popularly known as the Sinking Spring, the Cave Spring, or the Rock Spring farm. Near the spring was a magnificent oak tree, which still stands. Both of these natural features appear as landmarks in early surveys and deeds, as well as for the survey of the Abraham Lincoln National Historic Site, marking the southwest corner of the farm. Both the spring and the oak possess much interest not only as natural features which existed at the time of Lincoln's birth, but as historical landmarks in the settlement of pioneer Kentucky.

The Sinking Spring today is located just below the Memorial Building with limestone steps and walls leading down to it. The spring is in a depression 6'-8' down. Water is seen through a circular opening. The Boundary Oak is in poor condition. Much of it has died in recent years. Limited growth has resulted because of over watering and poor drainage. A new drainage system has been built and studies are being made to save the tree.

While little is known about the actual appearance of the farm at the time of Lincoln's birth in 1809, enough can be told to create a picture of the environment into which Lincoln was born. The farm was not a fertile area. The soil was stony, red and yellow clay supporting a few scattered trees.

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and thick underbrush; at least such are the descriptions which tradition and the recollections of later years have handed down. Life for the Lincolns centered around a rude one-room log cabin which stood near the Sinking Spring. The Cabin (No. ABLI-1) could not have been greatly different from most of the dwellings of the time and region. The floor was earthen, while the roof was made of rough slabs held in place by poles and stones. In the log wall was a small opening to form a window, possibly covered with greased paper to admit dim light. The door was two broad slabs fastened together and attached to the side by hinges of wood or hide. At the end was a crude fireplace with an outside "cat and clay chimney", made by mixing straw or grass with stiff clay and laying it in alternate layers with split planks of hard wood. Hooks within the fireplace held some cooking utensils and pots were suspended from a long iron crane.

The log cabin was dismantled and transported several times between 1860 and 1906 before returning to its original site permanently. According to a local resident, remains of the cabin were removed from the site near the spring in 1860 to another farm about a mile north. It remained there until 1895 when it was returned to the Lincoln Farm as the Birthplace Cabin for promotional purposes. In 1897-1911 the cabin was exhibited at various places throughout the country such as the Nashville Centennial in 1897 and the Pan American Exposition in Buffalo, New York in 1901. The logs were stored in a Long Island residence until 1906 when they were purchased by a representative of Robert Collier for the Abraham Lincoln Farm Association. Collier, publisher of Collier's Weekly, had purchased the Lincoln Farm in 1905 and was instrumental in forming the Abraham Lincoln Farm Association early in 1906. The logs were returned to the farm from storage and reerected in 1909 for the cornerstone laying of the Memorial Building. The cabin was disassembled for the final time in 1911 when it was placed fully reconstructed in the completed Memorial Building. There is no conclusive evidence of the cabin's history between 1811 and 1860 when it was first removed. Without question, the authenticity of the Lincoln cabin is a debatable matter.

The cabin today consists of 63 mostly white oak squared logs. Size of assembled structure is approximately 12 x 17 feet. Since most area cabins measured 16 x 18 feet, it is assumed that the loss in size resulted from deteriorated log ends which have been trimmed. It is known that 11 logs were replaced. The cabin is placed on a concrete slab within the Memorial Building which has been covered with a layer of dirt in keeping with tradition. It is plain on the inside with only a mantle board over the fireplace. The Memorial Building had an air conditioning humidifier system installed in 1971 to help preserve the cabin by maintaining a controlled temperature and

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and humidity level year round. Its condition is fair with logs dried and cracked, with some dry rot.

The Lincoln Birthplace Memorial Building (No. ABLI-2) was conceived in 1906-1908 as the nation's principal memorial to Abraham Lincoln by the Lincoln Farm Association (before the Lincoln Memorial was built in Washington, D.C.). The association was formed in 1906 by a group of Lincoln admirers, particularly Robert Collier, to preserve and memorialize the Lincoln Farm with the purpose of making it a National Park. Individual contributions were solicited throughout the country for the erection of the memorial. Ultimately, \$350,000 was collected from over 100,000 people. Thousands of school children responded with small amounts. The noted architect John Russell Pope was selected to design the Memorial. Using a Greek Classical design, the Memorial was built with pink Connecticut granite and Tennessee marble between 1909 and 1911. The cornerstone was laid in 1909 by President Theodore Roosevelt. However, the building was not finished until 1911. At which time President Taft presided over the dedication.

The Memorial stands on or near the ^{resumed}~~proposed~~ original site of the cabin. The size of the building is 50' long x 35' high x 35' wide. Minor additions and improvements have been made since the property was conveyed to the Government in 1916. Presently, the Memorial is in excellent condition.

Another park feature is the Visitor's Center. The Center depicts the background and early environment of Abraham Lincoln in pioneer America through exhibits and audio-visuals. Among the exhibits is the original Bible of Thomas Lincoln. The Center was built in 1959 of structural steel and masonry. It measures 84' x 48' with an offset restroom building of 24' x 24'. The Center is approximately 100 yards east of the Memorial Building. All key features are within a quarter of a mile from the parking area.

The area as a whole is now in one of the most beautiful parts of Kentucky. The land in the park is abundant with varieties of birds, wildlife, and flora. The land contour is rolling to upland plains. The land has been left in its natural state. Some minimal landscaping of woods and fields has been done around the center and a path is being cut on the far side of the park. The natural simplicity of the Lincoln Farm is ~~times~~ ^{expressed} as a parallel to the simplicity and strength of the man, Abe Lincoln.

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 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 type="checkbox"/> SCULPTURE
<input type="checkbox"/> 1600-1699	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> ARCHITECTURE	<input type="checkbox"/> EDUCATION	<input type="checkbox"/> MILITARY	<input checked="" 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 checked="" type="checkbox"/> 1800-1899	<input type="checkbox"/> COMMERCE	<input type="checkbox"/> EXPLORATION/SETTLEMENT	<input type="checkbox"/> PHILOSOPHY	<input type="checkbox"/> TRANSPORTATION
<input type="checkbox"/> 1900-	<input type="checkbox"/> COMMUNICATIONS	<input type="checkbox"/> INDUSTRY	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> POLITICS/GOVERNMENT	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> OTHER (SPECIFY)
		<input type="checkbox"/> INVENTION		Biographical

SPECIFIC DATES

BUILDER/ARCHITECT

STATEMENT OF SIGNIFICANCE

The Abraham Lincoln Birthplace National Historic Site was established to preserve, for the benefit and inspiration of ensuing generations, the traditional birthplace cabin, the Memorial Building enclosing the cabin, and a part of the original site (farm) where the 16th President was born and spent the first 2½ years of his life. ~~Because of this is an historical area, its basis for existence in national importance is that it is the birthplace of Abraham Lincoln.~~

The park approach is simply treated and is the the keynote to the area's interpretive program. The Lincolns bought 300 acres of land on Nolin Creek near Elizabethtown in 1808. Abraham was born to Tom and Nancy Lincoln February 12, 1809. They lived there 2½ years; at which time they were forced to move due to a defective land title. They moved 10 miles east of Hodgenville to the Knob Creek Farm.

After a long history of dismantling and reconstruction, the cabin was moved for the final time and reerected in the completed Memorial Building. Here it stands as an example of the hardships of early American settlement and the strengths of character such life developed in Americans, especially Abraham Lincoln. It illustrates the beginning of a man who directed political and military changes during the upheavals of the Civil War and who, more than any other president, exemplified the American political and humanitarian image.

The Memorial Building, designed by John Russell Pope, illustrates the classical designs used for memorializations near the turn of the ^{30th} century when intense emotionalism revived interest in the American Civil War period. John Russell Pope was the foremost architect of his time in designing classical, private and public buildings. His designs include the National Archives Building, the Jefferson Memorial, and Yale University.

Other park features such as the Spring and the Boundary Oak historically represent the image of the land and natural environment to which Lincoln was first exposed. The simplicity and the power of nature are reflected in Lincoln's outlook and reactions to life. These two natural aspects of the area are symbolic of what probably existed. The surrounding 100 acres reinforce and enclose the area to create a feeling of the expanses of the pioneer country of that time.

9 MAJOR BIBLIOGRAPHICAL REFERENCES

- Davis, Benjamin H. Report of Research on the Traditional Abraham Lincoln Birthplace Cabin, typewritten manuscript (Hodgenville: NPS, 1949),
- Davis, Benjamin H. A Revised Report on the Original Lincoln Nolin Creek Farm, typewritten manuscript (Hodgenville: NPS, 1949).
- Hays, Roy, "Is the Lincoln Birthplace Cabin Authentic" The Abraham Lincoln Quarterly, Vol. V, No. 3 (Sept. 1948) (Continued)

10 GEOGRAPHICAL DATA

ACREAGE OF NOMINATED PROPERTY 116.5

UTM REFERENCES

A	116	612	4118	411	550	70	B	116	612	4115	411	518	10
	ZONE	EASTING	NORTHING					ZONE	EASTING	NORTHING			
C	116	611	200	411	513	960	D	116	611	4110	411	515	060
	ZONE	EASTING	NORTHING					ZONE	EASTING	NORTHING			

VERBAL BOUNDARY DESCRIPTION

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

STATE	CODE	COUNTY	CODE
STATE	CODE	COUNTY	CODE

11 FORM PREPARED BY

NAME / TITLE

Andrew M. Loveless, Superintendent

ORGANIZATION

Abraham Lincoln Birthplace National Historic Site DATE (Revised April 29, 1976

STREET & NUMBER

Route 1 TELEPHONE November 14, 1974

CITY OR TOWN

Hodgenville STATE 502-358-3874

Kentucky

12 CERTIFICATION OF NOMINATION

STATE HISTORIC PRESERVATION OFFICER RECOMMENDATION

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 1 National ___ State ___ Local.

FEDERAL REPRESENTATIVE SIGNATURE

TITLE Deputy Assistant Secretary DATE DEC 10 1976

FOR NPS USE ONLY

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

DIRECTOR, OFFICE OF ARCHEOLOGY AND HISTORIC PRESERVATION

DATE 12/13/77

ATTEST:

DATE 12-9-77

KEEPER OF THE NATIONAL REGISTER

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- Peterson, Gloria, An Administrative History of Abraham Lincoln Birthplace National Historic Site, Hodgenville, Kentucky (Washington, D.C.: NPS, 1968).
- Warren, Dr. Louis A., Lincoln's Parentage and Childhood (New York: Century Co., 1926).
- Interpretive Prospectus, Abraham Lincoln Birthplace National Historic Site, U.S. Department of the Interior, NPS, 1970.