

LINCOLN LORE

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THE CHURCHES MEMORIALIZE THE LINCOLNS

Although Abraham Lincoln was not affiliated with any religious organization, many churches have memorialized him and his kinsmen. It is not likely one will be traveling in England this summer where two of these shrines are located, but there are several in America which Lincoln admirers touring in this country will not want to miss.

St. Andrews Church Hingham, England

Within a specially prepared niche in an interior wall of St. Andrews Church is a Volk bust of Lincoln, and under it is this inscription: "In this parish for many generations lived the Lincolns, ancestors of the American Abraham Lincoln. To him, greatest of that lineage, many citizens of the United States have erected this memorial in the hope that for all ages between that land and this land and all lands there shall be malice toward none with charity for all."

"Old Ship" Church Hingham, Massachusetts

The oldest church building continually used for worship in the United States was built by Abraham Lincoln's forebears and their kinsmen. In this church there worshipped Samuel Lincoln, first American progenitor of the President. The place in the church originally occupied by the old Lincoln pew is marked by an inscribed tablet.

Lincoln Marriage Temple Harrodsburg, Kentucky

Possibly the most interesting and unusual of all the churches memorializing the Lincolns is a church structure which houses a log cabin. In this cabin, removed from its original site at Beech Fork, Washington County, Kentucky, the parents of Abraham Lincoln were married on June 12, 1806.

First Presbyterian Church Springfield, Illinois

Soon after the Lincolns left Springfield Mrs. Lincoln wrote these lines to a Springfield friend, "I had intended requesting Mr. Melvin to have given me a promise that on our return to Springfield we could be able to secure our particular pew to which I was very much attached and which we occupied some ten years. May I hope that he will be able to do this." Although the family never occupied pew No. 20 again, the church has done well to preserve the original seat which was removed to the present building. The site of the old structure in which it formerly stood is also marked by a bronze tablet.

Plymouth Church of the Pilgrims Brooklyn, New York

Pew No. 89 in Henry Ward Beecher's old church bears a small silver plate with this inscription: "A. Lincoln, February 26, 1860." In Brooklyn for a speech originally scheduled for this church but transferred to Cooper Institute, Lincoln attended Plymouth Church with Henry C. Bowen on the Sunday preceding his New York address.

St. James Church Chicago, Illinois

Abraham Lincoln first met Vice-President-elect Hannibal Hamlin in Chicago at an especially arranged conference on November 21, 1860. Remaining over the following Sunday, he attended worship with Isaac N. Arnold at the St. James Church which is now marked with a tablet recalling the visit.

First Unitarian Church Buffalo, New York

On Sunday, February 17, 1861, while enroute to Washington, Abraham Lincoln attended the First Unitarian Church at Buffalo with former President Millard Fillmore. The old church, now used as a business house, still stands, and a tablet on the southeast corner of the structure mentions Lincoln's visit.

New York Avenue Presbyterian Church Washington, D. C.

The New York Avenue Church, where Dr. Phineas D. Gurley preached, three blocks from the White House, was the Lincolns' place of worship in Washington. The pew originally occupied by the family has been marked with a silver plate properly inscribed. The assembly room for smaller gatherings where Lincoln sometimes attended mid-week meetings is called "The Lincoln Chapel." Funds for rebuilding a carillon tower on the church were donated by the late Mrs. Robert Todd Lincoln and her family.

Central Woodward Christian Church Detroit, Michigan

Dr. Edgar DeWitt Jones, minister of the Central Woodward Church and former president of the American Council of Churches is a disciple of Abraham Lincoln. A magnificent stained glass window has been installed in his church. The artist, A. Kay Herbert, shows the Emancipator striking the shackles from a kneeling negro slave.

University Church of Disciples Chicago, Illinois

Lincoln supposedly said, "When any church will inscribe over its altar, as its sole qualification for membership, 'Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy mind, and thy neighbor as thyself,' that church will I join with all my heart and with all my soul." Taking Lincoln at his word, Dr. Edward Scribner Ames accepted the Spirit of Lincoln into the fellowship of his church on a Sunday in February, 1927. Memorializing this event, a bronze tablet containing the Gettysburg Address was placed over a mantle in the parish house.

Church of St. John the Divine New York, New York

As one approaches the choir loft in the most beautiful of New York's cathedrals, he observes a series of niches in the parapet. There are twenty of them representing the centuries since the Christian era. A statuette of the man who contributed most to Christian civilization in the century in which he lived occupies its respective niche. The nineteenth century is represented by the likeness of Abraham Lincoln.

Christ Church London, England

The steeple on Christ Church is the earliest memorial to Abraham Lincoln in England and was dedicated on the significant American centennial, July 4, 1876. A stone tablet within the structure states that the tower was built "In commemoration of the abolition of slavery effected by President Lincoln and as a token of international brotherhood." A sum of nearly thirty-five thousand dollars was raised in English sixpence and American dimes by the pastor, Rev. Newman Hall.