Many visitors to the Lincoln Memorial remark on the former president's hands, one open, the other closed, representing different aspects of Lincoln’s character.

Lincoln Memorial turns 100

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The Lincoln Memorial, as it was called, honored the 16th President, who led the United States through the Civil War, and who, in 1863, a year after Lincoln’s death in 1865 — and endured many hardships. He positioned aaron’s hands in a manner that displayed his two leading qualities. One of the president’s speeches is the one he delivered in Gettysburg, the words of Lincoln’s Gettysburg Address in 1863, and the other is a more open, slightly more relaxed hand representing his compassion, warmth, and determination to see the war through to a successful conclusion.

Moments from the Memorial

Marian Anderson performs outdoor concert

On June 23, 1947, Harry Truman became the first president to address the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People (NAACP) when he spoke at the Lincoln Memorial during their convention. In that speech, which was later expanded, 75,000 people, including from every state, gathered on the steps of the Lincoln Memorial to hear the president deliver his “In this temple as in the hearts of the people for whom he saved the union the memory of Abraham Lincoln is enshrined forever” speech.

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Martin Luther King Jr. delivers historic speech

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