CAPSULE SUMMARY
PG-75A-030
Lincoln Memorial Cemetery
4001 Suitland Road
Suitland, Prince George's County
1927
Private

Lincoln Memorial Cemetery in Suitland, Maryland, was established in 1927 by James Easley Edmunds, a Virginia attorney and real estate developer. The park-like grounds were designed by landscape architect John H. Small of Washington, DC. The cemetery provided a dignified final resting place for African-Americans in an era when burial grounds for whites and African-Americans were segregated, and cemeteries were in short supply in the District. In the 1920s and 1930s, Lincoln Memorial was one of only two known public cemeteries for African-Americans located in the metropolitan area. The cemetery was apparently named to evoke positive associations with Abraham Lincoln in its potential market, and the founding board included some of the most prominent African-American leaders in the District in the early twentieth century. Lincoln Memorial Cemetery is significant for its association with African-American life in the era of government-sponsored segregation and as an example of early twentieth century trends in cemetery development.

Lincoln Memorial Cemetery comprises nearly 108 acres, on land that slopes upward from Suitland Road on the north to a wide plateau. At the rear of the cemetery, the land slopes downward towards a section of woods; beyond the woods are tracks belonging to the Washington Metro. There are level, low-lying sections on the west and south west. The western section of the cemetery is bordered by woods. On the east, the cemetery is bordered by the grounds of Washington National Cemetery.

Just inside the cemetery entrance from Suitland Road, on the east side of the cemetery road is the two-story brick administration building. The building is in fair condition and is still in use although scheduled for renovation. Southwest of the administration building, the cemetery road branches east and west and loops around the cemetery with branches that permit access to all sections. The majority of the grave markers are either granite headstones or flush plaques. The headstones mark individual graves or family lots. Bronze, granite, or marble flush plaques mark individual graves, and can either identify separate grave plots or individuals buried in a family lot. Less prevalent are family mausoleums, statuary, and memorials. Overall, the grave markers and grounds are in good condition.

Lincoln Memorial Cemetery possesses a moderate-to-high level of integrity. Changes in vegetation and an increase in the number of grave markers reflect the passage of time and 80 years of continuous use of the site as a burial ground. Of the two original buildings on the site, only one, the lodge remains; a second building, the chapel, was demolished by the owner during the survey period. Overall, Lincoln Memorial Cemetery retains its original design, setting, location, workmanship, materials, and feeling, and association with the historic period.

Maryland Historical Trust Inventory No. PG: 75A-030 **Maryland Inventory of Historic Properties Form** 1. Name of Property (indicate preferred name) historic Lincoln Memorial Cemetery other 2. Location street and number 4001 Suitland Road not for publication Suitland, Maryland city, town vicinity Prince George's County county 3. Owner of Property (give names and mailing addresses of all owners) Osiris Holding of Maryland, Inc./StoneMor Partners, L.P. name street and number 155 Rittenhouse Circle telephone 215.826.2800 **Bristol** PA 19007-1617 city, town state zip code 4. Location of Legal Description courthouse, registry of deeds, etc. Prince George's County liber folio Upper Marlboro 0551846 city, town tax map 80 tax parcel 18 tax ID number 5. Primary Location of Additional Data Contributing Resource in National Register District Contributing Resource in Local Historic District Determined Eligible for the National Register/Maryland Register Determined Ineligible for the National Register/Maryland Register Recorded by HABS/HAER Historic Structure Report or Research Report at MHT x Other: Prince George's County Planning Department, MNCPPC 6. Classification

Category	Ownership	Current Function		Resource Co	ount
x district building(s) structure site object	publicxprivateboth	agriculturecommerce/tradedefensedomesticeducationfunerarygovernmenthealth careindustry	landscape recreation/culture religion social transportation work in progress unknown vacant/not in use x other: cemetery		Noncontributing buildings sites 2 structure objects 2 Total ntributing Resources ted in the Inventory

7. Description		Inventory No. PG 75A-030		
Condition				
excellent	deteriorated			
x good	ruins			
fair	altered			

Prepare both a one paragraph summary and a comprehensive description of the resource and its various elements as it exists today.

SUMMARY

Lincoln Memorial Cemetery is located in Suitland, Maryland, within one-half of a mile from the Maryland-District of Columbia border. The cemetery comprises nearly 108 acres of rolling terrain. The designed landscape features mature trees and shrubs near the road and in sections south of the administration building. At the rear (south) and on the western side of the property there are low lying sections bordered by woods. Adjacent to the cemetery on the east are the grounds of Washington National Cemetery. Grave markers in Lincoln Memorial Cemetery include granite headstones, granite obelisks, flush plaques of granite and of bronze, and mausoleums. There are also a number of memorials honoring individuals not buried here. At the cemetery entrance is a two-story brick administration building with a modern office annex. A large brick, Colonial Revival style building that was the cemetery's former chapel was demolished by the owner in summer 2008.

DESCRIPTION

Lincoln Memorial Cemetery is located in Suitland, Maryland, within one-half of a mile from the Maryland-District of Columbia border. The cemetery comprises nearly 108 acres, on land that slopes upward from Suitland Road on the north to a wide plateau. At the rear of the cemetery, the land slopes downward towards a section of woods; beyond the woods are tracks belonging to the Washington Metro. There are level, low-lying sections on the west and south west. The western section of the cemetery is bordered by woods. On the east, the cemetery is bordered by the grounds of Washington National Cemetery. Overall, the cemetery grounds are in good condition.

The cemetery entrance is on the north off of Suitland Road. Stone walls flank the entrance, and bear signs with the cemetery name and address. Just beyond the entrance, on the east side of the cemetery road, is the two-story brick Colonial Revival style administration building. The two-story, 3 x 2 bay, side-gable building is clad with a Flemish brick bond. There are three inset, front-gable dormers on the façade and rear elevation. The dormers have single, six-over-six, double-hung wood sash windows and wood sills. Windows on the first-story are single, six-over-six, double-hung wood sash, with brick jackarches and decorative, metal bars. The entrance is in the end-bay with an original wood paneled door with a five-arched light transom and Colonial Revival door surround. The building is in fair condition and is still in use although scheduled for renovation. In the surround of the cemetery name and address.

Directly south of the entrance is an island that contains a bust of the cemetery's namesake, with plaques honoring the founder, James Easley Edmunds, and B. Prescott Edmunds and William W. Edmunds, sons of the founder who served respectively as president and executive vice president of the cemetery. The cemetery road branches east and west and loops around the cemetery with branches that permit access to all sections. Connected to the east side of the administration building is a one-story modular office building that contains the sales offices for Lincoln Memorial Cemetery and Washington National Cemetery. The office annex is scheduled for demolition and a more permanent addition constructed, according to the cemetery supervisor.²

At the front of the property, near the administration building, there are stands of mature trees and shrubs. There are also mature trees and shrubs located throughout the sections immediately south and southwest of the administration building and offices. Beyond this section -- on the plateau, the gently sloping section to the rear, and the low-lying area to the west -- vegetation is sparse. According to a cemetery employee, the oldest sections of the cemetery are D, E, and G. [See map for section designations.] Sections D and E, located south of the administration building, appear to contain the oldest shrubs and trees, and grave markers and memorials from the

¹ Telephone interview with Mr. Youse, supervisor of Cedar Hill, Lincoln Memorial, and Washington National cemeteries, 12 May 2008

² Telephone interview with Mr. Youse.

Name Lincoln Memorial Cemetery Continuation Sheet

Number 7 Page 1

first decades of the cemetery. A brick chapel was located in Section H, at the convergence of sections H, D, E, and I. The chapel was demolished during the survey period, between May 3 and August 22, 2008.

Inventory No. PG: 75A-030

The majority of the grave markers in Lincoln Memorial Cemetery are either granite headstones or flush plaques. The headstones mark individual graves or family lots. Bronze, granite, or marble flush plaques mark individual graves, and can either identify separate grave plots or individuals buried in a family lot. Less prevalent are family mausoleums, statuary, and memorials. The family mausoleums line the south side of the road diving sections H and D. While the headstones are generally in good condition, a number of the bronze plaques have settled and are partially obscured. Some of them appear to have been damaged by mowing or other maintenance equipment.

Based on a comparison of historical photos and descriptions reproduced in newspaper articles and advertisements published during the 1930s and 1940s, Lincoln Memorial Cemetery appears to possess a moderate-to-high level of integrity. Changes in vegetation and an increase in the number of grave markers reflect the passage of time and 80 years of continuous use of the site as a burial grounds for African-Americans in Prince George's County. Of the original two buildings on the site, only one, the lodge remains; a second building, the chapel, was demolished by the owner during the summer of 2008. Overall, Lincoln Memorial Cemetery retains its original design, setting, location, workmanship, materials, and feeling, and association with the historic period.

8. Significa	ance			Inventory No. PG: 75A-030
Period	Areas of Significance	Check and	justify below	
1600-1699 1700-1799 1800-1899 <u>x</u> 1900-1999 2000-	agriculture archeology architecture art x_commerce communications community planning conservation	economics education engineering entertainment/ recreation x_ethnic heritage exploration/ settlement	health/medicine industry invention landscape archite law literature maritime history military	science <u>x</u> social history
Specific dates	1927		Architect/Builder	John H. Small, Landscape Architect
Construction dates c. 1928				
Evaluation for:				
	National Register		Maryland Register	xnot evaluated

Prepare a one-paragraph summary statement of significance addressing applicable criteria, followed by a narrative discussion of the history of the resource and its context. (For compliance projects, complete evaluation on a DOE Form - see manual.)

SUMMARY

Significance

Lincoln Memorial Cemetery was chartered by the state of Maryland in September 1927.³ The business was founded by James Easley Edmunds, an attorney and real estate developer from Lynchburg, Virginia. His Washington, DC-area projects included the subdivisions of Richmond Park, Cleveland Park, Greater Capital Heights, and Barnaby Manor. In July of 1927, Edmunds purchased two tracts of land comprising approximately 164 acres for \$43,000 from John A. Baker of Washington City. The land was part of a larger property known as "Nonesuch," and previously as "Brothers Joint Interest." The land may have been intended for residential development, since the mortgage contract states that, "If the said land is divided into building lots, there shall be sufficient trees on each lot to shade or ornament it." In December of the same year, Bell transferred 100 acres of the property to the Lincoln Memorial Cemetery Corporation.

At the time of its founding, Lincoln Memorial Cemetery appears to have been one of only two cemeteries in the area established to provide a dignified place of burial for African-Americans. (The other cemetery, Harmony Cemetery, founded in 1829, was located at Ninth Street and Rhode Island Avenue, N.E.) The growing African-American population provided a ready market for the new venture in a time when burial grounds, like education, employment, and housing, still denied access based on race. Between 1910 and 1930, the African-American population of the District increased by more than one third, with larger increases in the two following decades.8

According to newspaper accounts, the grounds were landscaped by John H. Small, "one of Washington's noted landscape architects." Small also planned the cemetery's lodge and chapel "on the exclusive Maryland Colonial type." The layout and management of the

³ "Lincoln Memorial Cemetery Now in Thirteenth Year," *The Washington Tribune*, February 15, 1941

⁴ S. Garland Hamner, "James Easley Evans, 1860-1952," Proceedings of the Virginia Bar Association, Vol. 63, 1952: 136-137

⁵ Prince George's County Land Records, Deed: 288:223. The grantee was (Miss) Jesse Bell, who may have worked as a secretary or clerk for Edmunds.

⁷ Information on the founding and early development of the cemetery is derived from newspaper articles, advertisements, and land records. Minutes of Board of Trustees meetings of the 1920s and 1930s are in the possession of the current owner who denied access to these documents.

⁸ Campbell Gibson and Gay Yung, Table 23. District of Columbia, Historical Census on Population Totals by Race, 1790-1990, and by Hispanic Origin, 1970-1990, September 2002, Washington, D.C.: U.S. Census Bureau. Available on the World Wide Web: http://www.census.gov/population/www/documentation/twps0056/twps0056.html

⁹ The Washington Tribune, 15 February 1941. Small held a master's in landscape architecture from Cornell University and ran a successful florist business founded by his grandfather in 1855, John H. Small and Sons (Obituary, The Washington Post, 11 November 1965)

Name Lincoln Memorial Cemetery Continuation Sheet

Number 8 Page 1

cemetery combines elements of the "lawn-park" scheme adopted by many in American cemeteries in the mid-nineteenth through the early twentieth centuries and the "memorial park" scheme introduced in the first quarter of the twentieth century. ¹⁰ While both types of cemeteries are located in the suburbs, Lincoln Memorial Cemetery is more pastoral and park-like in design than the suburban setting of the memorial park. The landscape of Lincoln Memorial is also more picturesque than that of a memorial park, with a greater number of granite headstones and mausoleums than the latter. ¹¹ While both cemetery types were managed by an entrepreneur and superintendent, the lawn-park also has trustees. ¹² Photographs of Lincoln Memorial Cemetery reproduced in the Washington Afro-American in the early 1940s provide an idea of the property's early features. There is the entrance on Suitland Road flanked by walls; a wide circular driveway edged with tall trees; a broad expanse of lawn with flowering ornamentals scattered among upright granite monuments; and two stately mausoleums sitting next to the road on a hillside. On the lower right corner of the page there is an informal portrait of the cemetery's founder, J. E. Edmonds, Superintendent C. Tiffany Toliver, and the board of directors standing before the bust of Abraham Lincoln on a granite pedestal at the entrance.

Inventory No. 75A-030

The naming of the cemetery for Abraham Lincoln shows the new venture's awareness of the esteem held by former freedmen and their sons and daughters for the assassinated president. A 1942 advertisement describes the cemetery as "The Nation's Shrine," and prominently features the image and words of Lincoln. The aim of the cemetery according to a 1941 *Tribune* article, "is to be a credit to the glorius (sic) name of Lincoln and to be as outstanding as any cemetery in the United States."

Edmunds assembled a Board of Directors for the new cemetery that must have provided instant credibility among African-American residents of the District and suburban Maryland. Among the founding directors were Rev. Dr. William D. Jarvis, then in his twentieth year as pastor of New Bethel Baptist Church; Mary Church Terrell, civil rights activist and suffragist; Rev. Mr. William H. Jernagin, pastor of "the largest Negro congregation in Washington," Mt. Carmel Baptist Church, and a leader "in the battle for his people to gain racial equality." Also serving on the board was the Rev. Dr. C.T. Murray, pastor of the Vermont Avenue Baptist Church.

The growth of the cemetery indicates that the local African-American community was highly receptive of the new venture. By 1938, more than 3,000 individuals had been interred in Lincoln Memorial. Less than four years after its founding, the cemetery sought to expand its grounds above the legally permitted 100 acres. It is not known whether this suit was successful; however, in 1931, Jesse Bell deeded the remaining 64.15 acres purchased in 1927 to Washington National Cemetery Corporation. Two years later, a land exchange between Lincoln Memorial Cemetery and the adjacent Washington National Cemetery established the boundary between the two properties. By 1941, burials were approaching the 7,000 mark. By 1996, there were approximately 51,000 persons interred in Lincoln Memorial Cemetery.

¹³ *The Washington Afro-American*, 50th Anniversary Edition, 19 September 1942. The selected quote also highlights desirable attributes of a lawn-park cemetery.

¹⁰ David Charles Sloane, The Last Great Necessity, Baltimore: The Johns Hopkins University Press, 1991: 4-5

¹¹ David Charles Sloane, The Last Great Necessity, Ibid.

¹² Ibid

¹⁴ Obituary, *The Washington Post*, 16 July 1955

¹⁵ Lincoln Memorial Cemetery Passes 3,000 Mark in Burials," *The Washington Tribune*, 20 August 1938. The 1938 and 1941 Tribune articles are fulsome in their praise of the cemetery superintendent C. Tiffany Toliver.

¹⁶ *The Washington Post*, 21 March 1931, 3. There would be no opposition from neighbors, according to the attorney who introduced the bill, since "the grounds have been improved and beautified."

¹⁷ 1941 Tribune

Name Lincoln Memorial Cemetery Continuation Sheet

Number 8 Page 2

Over the years, Lincoln Memorial Cemetery has served as the final resting place of many prominent African-Americans, including religious leaders, politicians, and academics. ¹⁸ In the first decade, renowned African-Americans buried there include Charles A. Tignor, physician and former instructor at Howard Medical School (1936); Eleanor Robinson Lee, teacher and a founder of the Teacher's Benefit and Annuity Society (1938); and Kelly Miller, mathematician, educator, and columnist (1939). The cemetery is also the location of memorials to prestigious figures buried elsewhere, including Robert Herberton Terrell, lawyer and municipal court judge, buried in Harmony Cemetery in 1925; Reverend George W. Lee, pastor of the Vermont Avenue Baptist Church, who died in 1910, and Henry Lincoln Johnson, former Recorder of Deeds and Republican national committeeman, who died in 1925 and was buried in Harmony Cemetery. Two 1932 newspaper articles record the pomp associated with the dedication of the Johnson memorial, erected by the Henry Lincoln Lodge of the Colored Elks of New York. ¹⁹

Inventory No. 75A-030

STATEMENT OF SIGNIFICANCE

Lincoln Memorial Cemetery in Suitland, Maryland, was established in 1927 by James Easley Edmunds, a Virginia attorney and real estate developer. The park-like grounds were designed by landscape architect John H. Small of Washington, DC. The cemetery provided a dignified final resting place for African-Americans in an era when burial grounds for whites and African-Americans were segregated, and cemeteries in short supply in the District. In the 1920s and 1930s, Lincoln Memorial was one of only two known public cemeteries for African-Americans located in the metropolitan area. The cemetery was apparently named to evoke positive associations with Abraham Lincoln in its potential market, and the founding board included some of the most prominent African-American leaders in the District in the early twentieth century. Lincoln Memorial Cemetery is significant as an example of early twentieth century trends in American cemetery development and for its association with African-American life in the era of government-sponsored segregation. The Lincoln Memorial Cemetery has significant character, interest, or value as part of the development, heritage, or cultural characteristics of the County, exemplifies the cultural, economic, social, political, or historic heritage of the county and its communities, and represents an established and familiar visual feature of the community due to its singular physical characteristics or landscape.

¹⁹ The Washington Post, 26 and 27 June, 1932

¹⁸ A hand-out distributed by the sales staff to potential plot purchasers lists 36 "Influential African Americans" buried in Lincoln Memorial cemetery including professional athletes, entertainers, and media personalities

Inventory No. 75A-030

Name Lincoln Memorial Cemetery Continuation Sheet

Number 8 Page 3

Chain of Title

Tax Map 51, Block 1-A, Lot 17

Deed

288:223 July 29, 1927 John A. Baker, widower, of Washington City to Jesse Bell, unmarried, of Lynchburg, Virginia (Two tracts: 125.5 acres and 38.65 acres, \$10) Tract 1: Lot 6 of tract of land "Nonesuch". Tract 2: southern part of lot 6 of "Nonesuch" beginning at the south line of the County Road. Same land Baker received from F. Snowden Hill, Trustee (Liber JWB 29, folio 695; July 26 1894)

Deed of Trust

304:46 July 29, 1927 Jesse Bell to Mary C. Baker, T. Baker Robinson (Acreage same as deed of even date; \$43,000,

interest 6 % per annum)

Deed

313:248 December 8, 1927 Jesse Bell to Lincoln Memorial Cemetery Corp. (100 acres, \$10) Being a part of the land conveyed

to Jesse Bell by John A. Baker (Liber 288 Folio 223)

Deed

360:195 January 26, 1931 Jesse Bell to Washington National Cemetery Corp. (64.15 acres, \$10) Save and except 100 acres conveyed by Jesse Bell to Lincoln Memorial Cemetery Corp. (Liber 313 Folio 248); leaves rest containing 64.15 acres. Subject to proportionate part of Deed of Trust 304/46; balance due \$33,000.

Deed of Exchange

391: 405

February 1, 1933

Lincoln Memorial Cemetery Corp. and Washington National Cemetery Corp. (94.7 acres and 64.9 acres) Parties own adjacent tracts of land and desire to establish division line between properties. Land on northwest side of division line to Lincoln; land on southeast side to Washington National Cemetery Corp; Lincoln Memorial Cemetery Corp, gives 64.9 acres to Washington

National Cemetery Corp and Washington National Cemetery Corp. gives Lincoln Memorial

Cemetery Corp. 94.7 acres

Deed

745: 277 Joseph Fleichman and Frieda K. Fleichman (wife) to Lincoln Memorial Cemetery Corp

August 18, 1944 (7.898 acres, \$7,747)

Declaration

WWW2233:324 Lincoln Memorial Cemetery Corp. to Washington National Cemetery Corp. (\$1) Establishes boundary between 7.898 acre tract conveyed to Lincoln Memorial by Fleichman (Liber 745

Folio 277) and the 64.9 acres owned by Washington National Cemetery Corp.

Deed

VJ 7996:0780 Lincoln Memorial Park, Inc., to Osiris Holding of Maryland, Inc. (107.898 acres, \$405,087) June 12, 1991

9. Major Bibliographical References

Land records, Prince George's County, Maryland

Pearl, Susan G. 1996, *African-American Heritage Survey*. Upper Marlboro: Maryland-National Capital Park and Planning Commission

Sloane, David Charles. 1991. The Last Great Necessity. Baltimore, MD: The Johns Hopkins University Press

Vertical Files, Cemeteries and People. Washingtoniana, District of Columbia public Library

Washington Afro-American, Microfilm, Black Studies; and, Washington Bee, Microfilm, Washingtoniana. District of Columbia Public Library

Inventory No. PG: 75A-030

10. Geographical Data

Acreage of surveyed property	107.898		
Acreage of historical setting	107.898		
Quadrangle name	Washington East	Quadrangle scale:	1:25000

Verbal boundary description and justification

Lincoln Memorial Cemetery is bounded on the north by Suitland Road, on the east by the Washington National Cemetery, and on the south and west by the legal boundaries of Parcel 18, Tax Map 80. The boundaries coincide with those established in the 1927 deed conveying the land to the Lincoln Memorial Cemetery Corporation, with the eastern boundary established in its 1933 agreement with the Washington National Cemetery Corporation.

11. Form Prepared by

name/title	Rosemary Faya Prola, Architectural Historian		
organization	The Ottery Group for M-NCPPC Planning Department	date	August 24, 2008
street & number	3420 Morningwood Drive, Suite 100	telephone	301.562.1975
city or town	Olney	state	MD 20832

The Maryland Inventory of Historic Properties was officially created by an Act of the Maryland Legislature to be found in the Annotated Code of Maryland, Article 41, Section 181 KA, 1974 supplement.

The survey and inventory are being prepared for information and record purposes only and do not constitute any infringement of individual property rights.

return to: Maryland Historical Trust

Maryland Department of Planning 100 Community Place Crownsville, MD 21032-2023 410-514-7600