

## Lincoln (70-049)

Lincoln was established in the early twentieth century by African-Americans as a rural retreat located on the railroad line in Prince George's County. The community is located eight miles east of Washington, D.C., south of Glenn Dale, east of Seabrook, and north of Annapolis Road. Lincoln is bounded by Maryland Street on the north, Glen Avenue on the east, Elm Street on the south, Baltimore Lane on the southwest, and Park Street on the west.

In 1908, the Lincoln Land and Improvement Company, Inc., purchased nearly 200 acres of land along the Washington, Baltimore, and Annapolis Electric Railroad and platted the community of Lincoln.<sup>1</sup> Thomas J. Calloway, an African-American educator, developer, and attorney from Washington, D.C., was vice president and general manager of the Lincoln Land and Improvement Company. Calloway envisioned the community as a vacation retreat and garden suburb for African-Americans. The community was ideally located near the Washington, Baltimore, and Annapolis Electric Railroad which provided convenient transportation to and from these cities.<sup>2</sup>

In the early twentieth century, there were few options for affordable housing for middle-class African-Americans in Prince George's County. However, several other African-American communities developed contemporaneously in Prince George's County including North Brentwood, Fairmount Heights, and Glenarden.<sup>3</sup> Lincoln was the only community marketed as a rural retreat for African-Americans. The community was designed with "roomy" streets that stretched 50 to 70 feet wide and building lots that were 50 feet by 150 feet and sold for \$270.<sup>4</sup> The original radiating street plan for the community was only partially developed and the intended semicircle design of Crescent Avenue with a community park inside was never realized.

In 1910, noted African-American architect Isaiah T. Hatton designed the first house in Lincoln for Thomas Calloway. Hatton was a Washington, D.C.-based architect who studied under William Sidney Pittman. Hatton designed a number of prominent landmarks in Washington, D.C., including the Dunbar Theatre and the Whitelaw Hotel.<sup>5</sup> By 1915, approximately 10 families lived in Lincoln including Isaiah Hatton, who designed several houses in the community.<sup>6</sup> Calloway noted that through Hatton's guidance, the community was able "to maintain a high standard of excellence in home planning." Hatton's "leadership at Lincoln has helped us and we have helped him by putting practically all our business of designing in his hands."<sup>7</sup>

The community quickly became a retreat for a number of prominent African-American families who were attracted to the quiet rural setting. Lincoln had its own station on the streetcar line with a general store and schoolhouse located nearby. In 1913, Dr. Daniel P. Seaton settled in Lincoln and established the Bethel African Methodist Episcopal Church. Seaton served as reverend of the church and also as the

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<sup>1</sup> Prince George's County Land Records, Circuit Court, Plat Book BDS 1:58.

<sup>2</sup> Susan G. Pearl, "Lincoln, (PG:70-49)," Maryland Historical Trust State Historic Sites Inventory Form (September 1997), 8:1.

<sup>3</sup> Unknown author, "Lincoln, Maryland: An Early Black Suburb of Washington, D.C.," located in the files at M-NCPPC, Prince George's County Historic Preservation & Public Facilities, Planning Section, 10.

<sup>4</sup> T.J. Calloway, "Lincoln," *The Crisis* (March 1915), 240.

<sup>5</sup> Cultural Tourism, D.C., "Dunbar Theatre/Southern Aid Society of Virginia, Inc. Building," [http://www.culturaltourismdc.org/info-url3948/info-url\\_show.htm?doc\\_id=213724&attrib\\_id=7970](http://www.culturaltourismdc.org/info-url3948/info-url_show.htm?doc_id=213724&attrib_id=7970).

<sup>6</sup> Susan G. Pearl, "Lincoln, (PG:70-49)," Maryland Historical Trust State Historic Sites Inventory Form (September 1997), 8:1.

<sup>7</sup> Calloway, "Lincoln," 241.

community's doctor.<sup>8</sup> Frank Holland, a carpenter and graduate of Howard University, also chose to settle in Lincoln. Holland worked with Hatton and oversaw the construction of several houses in Lincoln. William A. Davis was a former grocery store owner from Philadelphia who relocated to Lincoln and constructed a building that served as a "store, dining room, hotel, and residence." The general store was the community's only commercial building. The community was also the home of several organizations including the Alpha Progressive Club, a social club for the women of Lincoln, and the Lincoln Citizens Association.<sup>9</sup>

Development in Lincoln peaked in the early 1920s. Several residents purchased multiple lots and a few even farmed on their land.<sup>10</sup> The children of Lincoln attended school at the one-room schoolhouse in nearby Buena Vista or traveled to Washington, D.C. to attend classes. However the community desired to have their own school, and in 1921, Calloway and members of the civic associations of Lincoln and Buena Vista successfully lobbied the Board of Education to allocate funds for the construction of a school in Lincoln. The school was funded by \$5,000 from the Board of Education, \$800 from the Rosenwald Fund, and \$700 raised by the community. The school opened in 1922 and Calloway was selected as the school's first principal.<sup>11</sup>

In the 1930s, growth in Lincoln began to decline. Due to decreasing ridership as a result of the increasing popularity and accessibility of the automobile, the railroad ceased operations in 1935. The community was further impacted when the construction of the George Palmer Highway (now called MD Route 704 or Martin Luther King Highway) bypassed Lincoln.<sup>12</sup> Residents who did not own a car were landlocked and the lack of public transportation in the area made it difficult to travel to the District of Columbia. As a result, the community returned to its roots as a vacation and retreat community for Washington, D.C.'s professional African-American population.

Although Thomas Calloway envisioned that Lincoln would eventually gain its own municipal government, the community remained a loosely knit, semi-rural community. Unlike other African-American communities, Lincoln never applied for incorporation. The community remained largely rural until the 1970s when a building boom began. In the 1980s, several historic structures were demolished including the Lincoln railroad station and the original Bethel A.M.E. Church.<sup>13</sup> In 1986, the original schoolhouse was sold to a church which operates the campus as a private school.<sup>14</sup> Additional suburban development has begun to surround the community on the north and west.

There is one Historic Site in Lincoln:

- PG: 70-049-33, Thomas J. Calloway House (NR), 9949 Elm Street

There are currently no designated Historic Resources in Lincoln.

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<sup>8</sup> Susan G. Pearl, "Lincoln, (PG:70-49)," Maryland Historical Trust State Historic Sites Inventory Form (September 1997), 8:1; Calloway, "Lincoln," 242.

<sup>9</sup> Calloway, "Lincoln," 242.

<sup>10</sup> Unknown author, "Lincoln," 21.

<sup>11</sup> Unknown author, "Lincoln," 29-30.

<sup>12</sup> Unknown author, "Lincoln, Maryland," 15.

<sup>13</sup> Bianca P. Floyd, "Town Steeped in History Struggles for Survival," *The Hawk*, undated article located in the "Lincoln" file at M-NCPPC, Prince George's County Historic Preservation & Public Facilities, Planning Section.

<sup>14</sup> Eugene L. Meyer, "Prince George's Enclave Struggles to Catch Up With the Times," *The Washington Post*, 26 January 1986.

## Windshield Survey

A windshield survey of Lincoln was conducted in November 2007. The survey area contains approximately 142 primary resources. The community contains a wide variety of buildings constructed between 1910 and the present. The majority of the buildings in Lincoln were constructed from 1965 to the 1980s. There are a number of popular twentieth-century architectural styles in Lincoln, including Craftsman, Colonial Revival, Tudor Revival, Spanish Colonial Revival, Contemporary, and several illustrations from the Modern Movement. Common building forms including Foursquare, bungalow, ranch houses, minimal traditional houses, split-levels, and split-foyers. There are approximately five extant buildings that date from 1910 to 1920. The Thomas J. Calloway House (PG: 70-049-33) is the only remaining building that was designed by Isaiah Hatton. In the 1970s, many of the original large lots were resubdivided, which resulted in the construction of non-historic infill and irregularly-sized lots. The community is almost exclusively residential and is composed of single-family dwellings. The only exceptions are a church and a school which is located southwest of the residential area and included in the survey of the community.

## Historic District Evaluation

Lincoln represents several Prince George's County Heritage Themes including African-American history, suburban growth, and residential architectural styles. However, despite the community's historic significance as an early planned residential and retreat community for African-Americans, the community is not recommended as eligible for listing as a local Prince George's County historic district or as a National Register Historic District. In 1997, the Maryland Historical Trust (MHT) and the National Register determined that Lincoln was not eligible for listing. At the time of the 1997 survey, only eight dwellings and one school constructed between 1910 and 1920 remained extant.<sup>15</sup> MHT determined that the neighborhood did not portray a cohesive neighborhood or district. MHT found that Lincoln lacked the distinctiveness necessary to be considered as a district or as representative of the work of Isaiah Hatton. MHT determined that Lincoln is not eligible for listing under Criteria A, B, or C.<sup>16</sup>

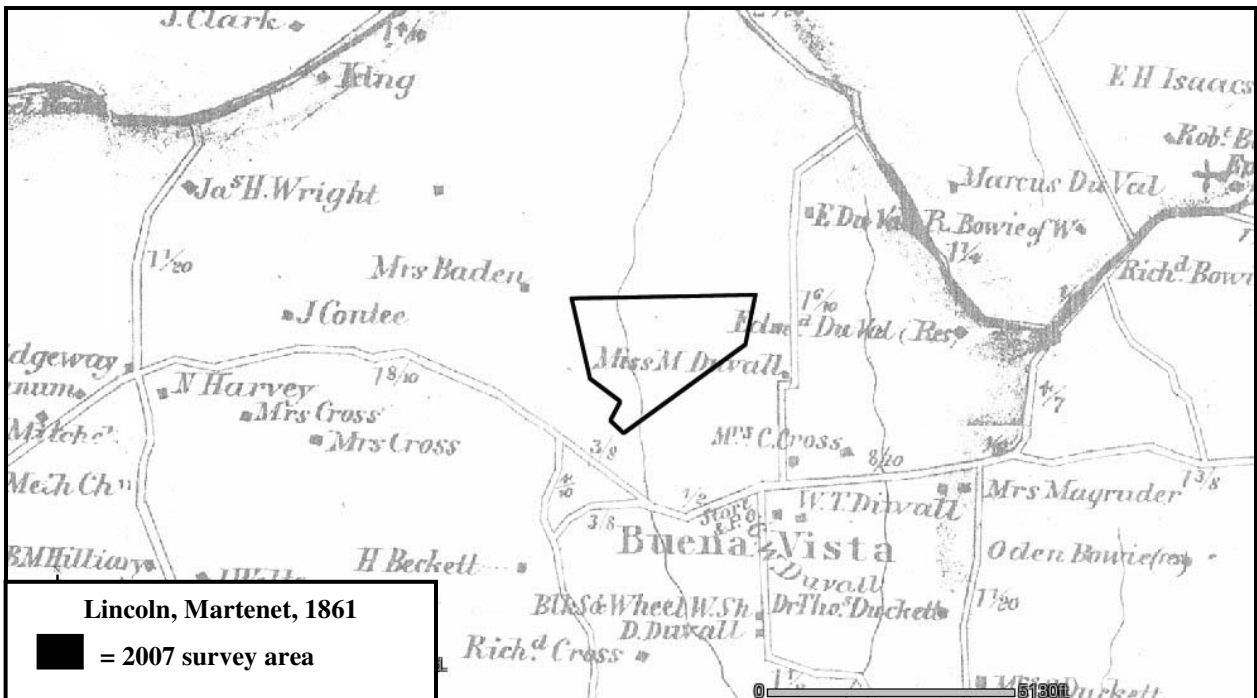
Although Lincoln meets the requirements for eligibility under the National Register of Historic Places Multiple Property Documentation Form for African-American Historic Resources in Prince George's County, Maryland as an African-American settlement, the few extant buildings from the early twentieth century are not adequate to convey the community's historic significance. The period of significance for Lincoln begins in 1908 with the platting of the community and continues to circa 1925 after the construction of the Lincoln School (1922) and the subsequent residential construction related to the establishment of the new school. Of the approximately 142 primary resources in Lincoln, only five properties would be contributing resources in a historic district.

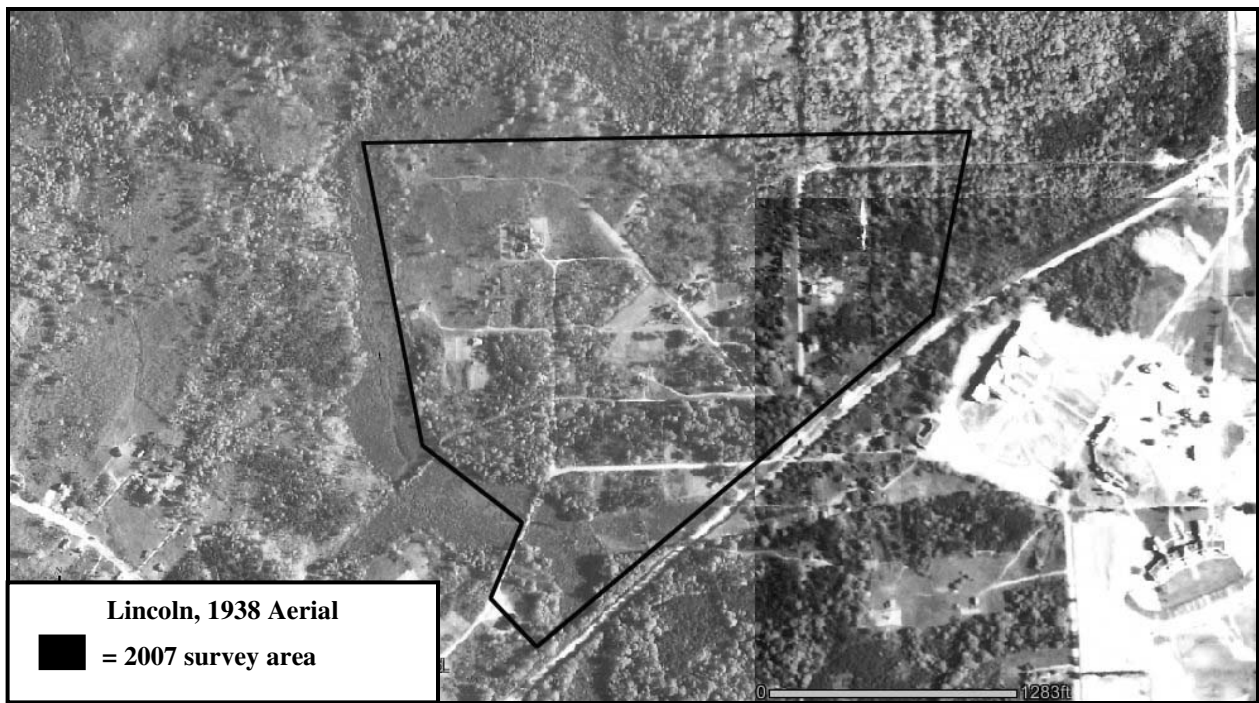
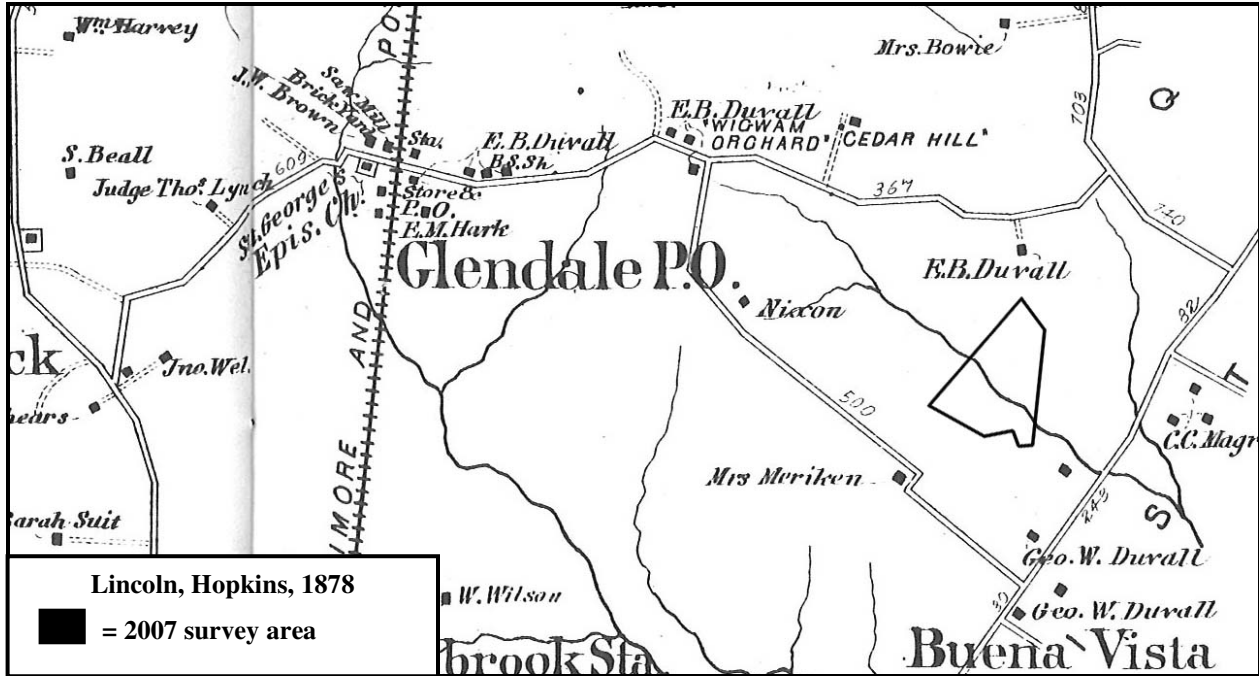
Prepared by EHT Tracerics, Inc.  
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<sup>15</sup> At the time of the 2007 survey, only four of the early dwellings and the school remained extant. They are located at 9950 Elm Street, 9949 Elm Street (Thomas J. Calloway House), 9920 Franklin Street, 5500 Lincoln Avenue, and 5201 Baltimore Lane (Old Lincoln School). The dwellings at 9944 Elm Street, 5908 Crescent Street, 5502 Center Avenue (Isaiah T. Hatton House), and 5510 Lincoln Avenue were demolished.

<sup>16</sup> Anne Bruder, "Lincoln Survey District (PG: 70-49)," Individual Property/District Maryland Historical Trust Internal NR-Eligibility Review Form (November 2007), 1.









Looking northeast, 9922 Grant Street (*EHT Traceries*, 2007)



Looking north, 5503 Center Avenue (*EHT Traceries*, 2007)



Looking northwest, 9920 Franklin Street (*EHT Traceries*, 2007)



Looking east, 9714-9712-9706 Maryland Street (*EHT Traceries, 2007*)



Looking southwest, 5500 Lincoln Street (*EHT Traceries*, 2007)



Looking west, 5506 Lincoln Street (*EHT Traceries, 2007*)



Looking south, Thomas J. Calloway House (PG: 70-049-33) (NR), 9949 Elm Street (*EHT Traceries*, 2007)



Looking southeast, Thomas J. Calloway House (PG: 70-049-33) (NR), 9949 Elm Street (*EHT Traceries*, 2007)



Looking west, 9950-9948-9946 Elm Street (*EHT Traceries*, 2007)



Looking southwest, 9933 Elm Street (*EHT Traceries*, 2007)



Looking southeast, 5201 Baltimore Lane, Jesus Christ Church (formerly the Lincoln School)  
(*EHT Traceries*, 2007)