

VLR-4/28/95 NRHP-7/21/95

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES
REGISTRATION FORM

This form is for use in nominating or requesting determinations for individual properties and districts. See instructions in How to Complete the National Register of Historic Places Registration Form (National Register Bulletin 16A). Complete each item by marking "x" in the appropriate box or by entering the information requested. If any item does not apply to the property being documented, enter "N/A" for "not applicable." For functions, architectural classification, materials, and areas of significance, enter only categories and subcategories from the instructions. Place additional entries and narrative items on continuation sheets (NPS Form 10-900a). Use a typewriter, word processor, or computer, to complete all items.

1. Name of Property

historic name Hotel Lincoln
other names/site number General Francis Marion Hotel; Lincoln Inn;
VDHR Fils No. 119-10

2. Location

street & number 107 East Main Street not for publication N/A
city or town Marion vicinity N/A
state Virginia code VA county Smyth code 173 zip code 24354

3. State/Federal Agency Certification

As the designated authority under the Rational Historic Preservation Act of 1986, as amended, I hereby certify that this nomination request for determination of eligibility wets the documentation standards for registering properties in the National Register of Historic Places and meets the procedural and professional requirements set forth in 3b CFR Part 60. In my opinion, the property meets does not meet the National Register Criteria. I recommend that this property be considered significant nationally statewide locally. (See continuation sheer for additional comments.)

[Signature] 6-15-95
Signature of certifying official/Title Date

Virginia Department of Historic Resources
State or Federal agency and bureau

In my opinion, the property meets does not meet the National Register criteria. (See continuation sheet for additional comments.)

[Signature]
Signature of commenting or other official Date

State or Federal agency and bureau

4. National Park Service Certification

- I, hereby certify that this property is:
- entered in the National Register See continuation sheet.
 - determined eligible for the National Register See continuation sheet.
 - determined not eligible for the National Register
 - removed from the National Register
 - other (explain):

Signature or Keeper Date of Action

5. Classification

Ownership of Property (Check as many boxes as apply)

- x private
public-local
public-State
public-Federal

Category of Property (Check only one box)

- x building(s)
district
site
structure
object

Number of Resources within Property

Table with 2 columns: Contributing, Noncontributing. Rows include buildings, sites, structures, objects, and Total.

Number of contributing resources previously listed in the National Register 0

Name of related multiple property listing (Enter "N/A" if property is not part of a multiple property listing.) N/A

6. Function or Use

Historic Functions (Enter categories from instructions)

Cat: DOMESTIC Sub: Hotel

Current Functions (Enter categories from instructions)

Cat: DOMESTIC Sub: Hotel

7. Description

Architectural Classification (Enter categories from instructions)

Colonial Revival

Materials (Enter categories from instructions)

foundation CONCRETE
walls BRICK
roof CONCRETE
other METAL: copper

Narrative Description (Describe the historic and current condition of the property on one or more continuation sheets.)

8. Statement of Significance

Applicable National Register Criteria (Mark "x" in one or more boxes for the criteria qualifying the property for National Register listing)

- A Property is associated with events that have made a significant contribution to the broad patterns of our history.
B Property is associated with the lives of persons significant in our past.
C Property embodies the distinctive characteristics of a type, period, or method of construction or represents the work of a master, or possesses high artistic values, or represents a significant and distinguishable entity whose components lack individual distinction.
D Property has yielded, or is likely to yield information important in prehistory or history.

Criteria Considerations (Mark "X" in all the boxes that apply.)

- A owned by a religious institution or used for religious purposes.
B removed from its original location.
C a birthplace or a grave.
D a cemetery.
E a reconstructed building, object, or structure.
F a commemorative property.
G less than 50 years of age or achieved significance within the past 50 years.

Areas of Significance (Enter categories from instructions)

ARCHITECTURE
COMMERCE

Period of Significance 1926-1945

Significant Dates 1926
1927

Significant Person (Complete if Criterion B is marked above)

N/A

Cultural Affiliation N/A

Architect/Builder Eubank & Caldwell

Narrative Statement of Significance (Explain the significance of the property on one or more continuation sheets.)

9. Major Bibliographical References

(Cite the books, articles, and other sources used in preparing this form on one or more continuation sheets.)

- Previous documentation on file (NPS)
preliminary determination of individual listing (36 CFR 67) has been requested.
previously listed in the National Register
previously determined eligible by the National Register
designated a National Historic Landmark
recorded by Historic American Buildings Survey #
recorded by Historic American Engineering Record #

- Primary Location of Additional Data
State Historic Preservation Office
Other State agency
Federal agency
Local government
University
Other
Name of repository: Smyth-Bland Regional Library
South Sheffey Street, Marion VA

10. Geographical Data

Acreage of Property less than one acre

UTM References

(Place additional UTM references on a continuation sheet)

Table with 4 columns: Zone, Easting, Northing, Zone, Easting, Northing. Row 1: 1, 17, 453680, 4076290, 2. Row 2: 3, 4. Includes text 'See continuation sheet.'

Verbal Boundary Description

(Describe the boundaries of the property on a continuation sheet.)

Boundary Justification

(Explain why the boundaries were selected on a continuation sheet.)

11. Form Prepared By

name/title Ronnie E. Harrington
organization date 26 September 1994
street & number Route 2, Box 252 telephone 703-783-4217
city or town Marion state VA zip code 24354

Additional Documentation

Submit the following items with the completed form:

Continuation Sheets

Maps

- A USGS map (7.5 or 15 minute series) indicating the property's location.
A sketch map for historic districts and properties having large acreage or numerous resources.

Photographs

Representative black and white photographs of the property.

Additional items

(Check with the SHPO or FPO for any additional items)

Property Owner

(Complete this item at the request of the SHPO or FPO.)

name/title Mr. Ralph T. Powell
street & number 618 Chatham Hill Road telephone 703-783-7017
city or town Marion state VA zip code 24354

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Marion, Smyth County, VirginiaSection number 7 Page 1**SUMMARY DESCRIPTION:**

Hotel Lincoln is located on East Main Street in the heart of downtown Marion in the same block as the Lincoln Theatre, a Virginia historic landmark. It is a five-story, Colonial Revival style, commercial building constructed of reinforced concrete and Kingsport velveteen brick. The first floor has three street-level entrances with commercial plate-glass store windows. The second floor has thirteen arched double-hung sash windows and a balcony with a balustrade built over the projecting first-floor lobby. Separating the facade of the first two floors from the upper stories is a precast concrete band with an ornamental wave scroll. The third, fourth, and fifth floors feature numerous double-hung sash windows, stone quoins, and a black copper cornice with modillions. Two concrete cartouches bearing the initials F. M. (for Francis Marion) are prominently situated on the facade between the third and fourth floors. Inside, the walls of the lobby, built on three separate levels, are constructed with the same reinforced concrete used on the outside of the building. Linking the three lobby levels together is an open-ended French-style stone staircase (fastened together with steel rods). The staircase is beautifully ornamented by decorative iron railings. A special feature of the second lobby level, where the reception desk is located, is a series of Gothic columns and archways. To the east of the third lobby level, as one ascends the staircase, is a walnut-paneled ballroom. The owners of the hotel are in the process of renovating the property for continued use as a lodging facility. Though still in need of additional renovations, the building is in good structural condition and the architectural integrity of the edifice has been largely preserved.

NARRATIVE DESCRIPTION:

Hotel Lincoln, located in a prominent commercial block of downtown Marion, is a rare surviving example of an early-twentieth-century Colonial Revival-style hotel in Southwest Virginia. The hotel opened in 1927 and cost \$175,000 to build. Designed and built by Eubank & Caldwell, of Roanoke, Virginia, the five-story building, with a ground space of 74' x 74',¹ has a concrete foundation, floors and walls of reinforced concrete, and an exterior veneer of Kingsport velveteen brick on the hotel's upper floors. Approximately half the 1/3 acre of property is occupied by the building itself. The rest is a small parking lot behind the hotel.

The first floor has three street-level entrances. The door to the west leads to an office suite that occupies a space originally used by a Rexall drugstore; the center door is the lobby entrance; and the door to the east opens into the coffee shop. Large plate-glass store windows flank each of the doors. The second floor has thirteen paired double-hung sash windows topped by fanlights and a balcony with a classical balustrade built over the projecting first-floor lobby. The concrete exterior walls and decorative ornaments on the first two floors are painted white with beige trim. Originally the concrete was not painted, but in appearance, matched the stone quoins on the upper floors. Two neon signs, dating from 1932,² still hang from the building. The larger sign, over the balcony, now bears the name "Lincoln Inn" in script lettering. Until 1993, the sign retained

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its original appearance with "The Lincoln Hotel" elegantly scrolled across both sides. The smaller sign hangs over the coffee shop entrance. Though the sign was painted and changed in appearance last year, it still retains the name "Coffee Shoppe" as it did in years past. Separating the concrete facing of the first two floors from the brick upper floors is a precast concrete band with an ornamental wave motif.

The U-shaped third, fourth, and fifth floors are built of random American-bond face brick and contain 102 double-hung sash windows of varying sizes placed one above the other. The masonry on the facade is trimmed with stone quoins and a black copper cornice with modillions extends above the fifth floor. An elegant cement cartouche bearing the initials F. M. (for Francis Marion, the original namesake of the hotel) is located on the facade between the third and fourth floors on both sides of the U. Each cartouche supports a large flagstaff. No longer do flags or banners hang from these poles, but in times past an American flag and a "Hotel Lincoln" banner were displayed here. A composition roof on concrete slab forms the roof deck where an 8' x 10' elevator penthouse is located.³ The west side of the penthouse has a painted blue and white sign bearing the name "Lincoln Inn." Prior to 1993, the sign read "Hotel Lincoln."

The interior of the hotel includes a partial basement under the west wing and rear of the building. Rooms in this area consist of a boiler room, laundry room, two trunk rooms, and a storage room. These spaces are purely functional and have little in the way of architectural interest.

The first floor of the hotel contains the first of three lobby levels. It is a long low room located in the center of the building and features a terrazzo tile floor and walls of exposed reinforced concrete painted an off white color. Originally the walls were not painted, but appeared the same as the exterior walls on the first two floors. Access from the street is gained through a modern plate-glass door that replaced an earlier set of wooden double doors with rectangular glass panes. Eight electric wall sconces illuminate this room. Although these lights have exposed bulbs, in times past the bulbs were covered with miniature shades. These lights are placed between plate-glass windows and French doors that connect the lobby with the coffee shop and the office suite (formerly a Rexall drugstore). Toward the rear of the room is the lower portion of an open-ended French-style stone staircase (fastened together with steel rods).⁴ The staircase, which leads to the upper lobby levels, is beautifully ornamented with decorative iron railings. The lobby was newly furnished in 1993, but in the 1920s this room's furniture was made of "a heavy massive walnut covered in the very best of tapestry." These furnishings, as well as most others in the hotel, came from the Virginia-Lincoln Corporation in Marion.⁵ The second lobby level, where the original wooden reception desk is located, has a ceiling height of 15' 7.5" and contains a series of four Gothic columns and three pointed arches. A terrazzo tile floor and four electric wall sconces continue the decorative theme from the first lobby level to the second. A chandelier with twelve electric lights (matching the wall sconces) was taken down in 1993 and replaced with a more modern chandelier. The desk is flanked by an elevator on the left side and a door leading to a stairwell on the right side. The men's public restroom is reached through a hallway adjacent

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to the stairwell.

Located to the right of the first-floor lobby is a coffee shop--an intimate dining area papered in white with vertical rose designs. The wallpaper dates from 1988 when the coffee shop was redecorated and used briefly as the "Lincoln Family Restaurant." Before this renovation, the coffee shop was papered in blue with red flower designs. It is not known exactly when the blue and red paper was introduced to this room, but, according to photo documentation, it was during or after 1954. The original decoration of the coffee shop is not known. The original maple tables and chairs, manufactured at the Virginia Table Company in Marion (a large factory owned by the Lincoln family), remain in the room. The ceiling is painted white with modern ceiling fans and attached lighting fixtures. During the time of the blue and red wallpaper, the ceiling was painted a light blue and had glass domed lighting fixtures. During the 1988 renovation, the floor was carpeted in mauve, covering a terrazzo tile floor damaged by several long cracks. Behind the coffee shop is a spacious kitchen with up-to-date cooking equipment.

The area to the left of the first-floor lobby area is occupied by the Can Engineering Co. and several vacant offices. Four of the five offices are small (approximately 12' x 12') and have little or no details of architectural interest. The larger office measures 24' x 12'. Originally the offices were all one large room used as a Rexall drugstore, a branch of the Marion Drug Company. Among shelving for display space, the drugstore had a soda fountain and several tables and chairs. In 1941 the drugstore became the Community Shoppe, an informal restaurant and gift boutique.

Two laundry rooms are located behind the former drugstore. These rooms were originally used as a barber shop and beauty salon. Access to this area of the hotel is through a hallway that connects the outside alley to the lobby. With the exception of terrazzo tile floors in both rooms and one sink in the beauty salon, these rooms contain no features reminiscent of their original uses.

Located on the second floor is the third lobby level, a lounging area surrounded by doorways. The terrazzo floor, concrete walls, and electric candle sconces match the other lobbies in appearance. Directly in view, as one ascends the stairs to this lobby, are three doorways facing the open terrace (or balcony) built above the Main Street entrance to the first-floor lobby. Only the middle doorway still contains hinged doors. The doors have been removed from the other two openings and replaced by translucent glass blocks. French doors to the left (as one faces Main Street) open into a ballroom. French doors to the right open into a card room and a hallway leading to the women's restroom and an unused cocktail lounge.

The ballroom, located directly above the coffee shop, is one of the most beautiful spaces in the hotel with newly finished oak floors and rich walnut paneling that reaches almost to the ceiling. The room has no chandelier, but is lit by sixteen electric wall sconces similar to the ones in the

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lobby. Eight arched double-hung sash windows surround the room. A special feature of the ballroom is a matching imitation window with mirrored panes that makes the room appear to have *nine windows instead of eight*. Above the walnut paneling is peeling wallpaper with very small designs. This paper was added to the room during the 1988 remodeling. Originally, the papered area was painted. Behind the ballroom (above the coffee shop kitchen) is a large serving pantry. Access to this room can be reached from the ballroom as well as from the outside (by exterior staircase) or from the interior stairwell that leads from the lobby to the guest rooms. A staircase also leads from the serving pantry to the downstairs kitchen.

The card room is a small airy room with three arched double-hung sash windows overlooking Main Street. The linoleum floor contains artistic illustrations of various playing cards and cocktail motifs in a border around the room. A modern ceiling fan with an attached lighting fixture replaced an elegant crystal fixture during the 1988 remodeling. As the card room was originally intended for women, entrance to the ladies' public restroom was, at one time, gained through this room.⁶ A later remodeling resulted in covering up the door and creating a hallway outside the room that leads to the restroom. Directly across this hall is a small cocktail lounge that is no longer in use. Other than two double-hung sash windows, this room is devoid of any architectural interest. The lounge and the hallway beside it were originally used as a writing room with twelve desks. The lounge, women's restroom, and card room are all located above the first-floor offices.

In the rear of the hotel (above the laundry rooms and men's restroom) is a suite of three offices occupied by an attorney. The offices above the laundry rooms were originally used as sample rooms (display space) for traveling salesmen. The other room, located above the men's public restroom, was originally not connected to the sample rooms. This room was used as the hotel manager's office and has a glass window overlooking the reception desk and lobby areas.

The third, fourth, and fifth floors have almost identical floor plans. Each floor has nineteen guest rooms and thirteen bathrooms. There are four different sizes of rooms ranging from 10' x 13' to 12' 6" x 18' 7". Each room has thick mahogany doors and at least one window. All rooms have access to a bathroom--there are several suites with a bathroom between two rooms. The floors are carpeted over concrete. The view of the town and surrounding mountains is a very attractive feature of rooms on the fourth and fifth floors.

The entire third floor was completely renovated in 1993. (The last major renovation had been in 1966).⁷ The rooms and hallways were repainted, recarpeted, and extensively cleaned. New bedding, curtains, and window blinds were added. Many of the old furnishings remain, but in some rooms new furnishings have been added. In the bathrooms, many of the plumbing fixtures were replaced. The fourth floor contains thirteen renovated rooms and six yet to be renovated. Work has begun on the fifth floor, but much plaster damage from leaky guttering has yet to be repaired. Currently, no rooms are used on this floor.

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STATEMENT OF SIGNIFICANCE:

Hotel Lincoln, a five-story commercial building in downtown Marion, is one of the last remaining early-20th-century hotel buildings in Southwest Virginia. Built in the period 1926-1927, it was Smyth County's first modern hotel and contains many of the Colonial Revival-style architectural details associated with hotels of the period. Besides its original purpose to provide lodging to travelers and visitors to Marion, Hotel Lincoln offered space for public and private meetings, receptions, and dances. The building also contained a drugstore, coffee shop, beauty salon, and barber shop.

JUSTIFICATION OF CRITERIA:

Hotel Lincoln meets Criterion A because the need for its construction in 1926-1927 represented a milestone of commercial growth for Marion and the region. Under Criterion C it is eligible because it is one of the last remaining downtown commercial hotel buildings in Southwest Virginia and its architectural integrity has been well preserved as an example of the Colonial Revival style.

HISTORICAL BACKGROUND:

Hotel Lincoln was built from 1926 to 1927 by Charles Clark Lincoln Sr. and Dr. William M. Sclater.⁸ The hotel is located in the downtown business district of Marion, a small town of less than 7,000 residents in the mountains of Southwest Virginia. Prior to the Lincoln's opening in 1927, when the population was less than 4,000, hotels in the town consisted of several two-story wood frame structures where a traveler could find a room and perhaps a meal, but none of the modern conveniences that were becoming commonplace in larger towns and cities.

Lincoln and Sclater were two of Marion's most prominent citizens. Lincoln, Marion's wealthiest resident, was owner of the Virginia Table Company, the town's largest industry. He also owned the Lincoln Furniture Manufacturing Company in Bristol⁹ and a number of other business interests in Smyth County. Sclater was the owner of the Marion Drug Company and the D. M. Smith Drug Company.¹⁰ These two businessmen recognized early the need for a modern hotel in Marion, even though they had been told by major hotel officials that the town was not yet ready to support such an enterprise.¹¹

Despite the news from the "hotel experts," Lincoln and Sclater had faith in Marion. The 1920s had brought unprecedented growth to the town as evidenced by the construction of the Bank of Marion, the Marion National Bank, Greer's Restaurant, Collins Bros. Department Store, and the Piggly Wiggly. Marion was said to be the best business town between Roanoke and Bristol.¹² Besides hoping to fulfill the needs of a growing community, Lincoln and Sclater recognized the potential of the new Lee Highway (U.S. 11), which offered an excellent opportunity for tourists

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to visit the area and view the splendor of the mountains.

The opening of the Hotel Lincoln on 27 May 1927 was regarded as a milestone of growth for Southwest Virginia.¹³ Situated between the new Marion National Bank and Collins Bros. Department Store, the hotel was an impressive addition to Marion's growing Main Street. The opening reception, held 3 June 1927, featured the Hawkins Orchestra from Bluefield, West Virginia. Distinguished guests included former Governor E. Lee Trinkle, Senator B. F. Buchanan and author Sherwood Anderson.¹⁴

Although the Lincoln was built to meet the needs of a small town, it nevertheless had the quality of a much bigger hotel. Guests were greeted by a doorman at the front entrance. An elevator operator transported guests to the upper floors. Maids cleaned the rooms daily. Meals could be ordered through room service from the hotel kitchen. Each of the fifty-seven guest rooms had such modern conveniences as a telephone, reading lamp beside each bed, writing desk, and access to a private bathroom.¹⁵

Amidst the lobby's elegant French staircase, Gothic columns, and oil paintings from New York, a guest could find the entrance to a coffee shop, barber shop, beauty salon, card-playing room, writing room, ballroom, and sample rooms where merchants could view wares offered by traveling salesmen. From 1927 to the mid-1960s, the Lincoln was recognized as the town's most important destination for social and political functions. The walnut-paneled ballroom was the scene of business meetings, banquets, public forums, wedding receptions, and dances. This room and others on the mezzanine floor provided meeting space for the local Rotary, Kiwanis, Lions, Pilot, and Bridge Clubs as well as many other organizations in the area.

The Lincoln was originally named the General Francis Marion Hotel after the famous Revolutionary War hero and namesake of the town. That name, however, didn't last long. Less than one year later, the closed Hotel Marion across the street was renovated, enlarged and reopened keeping its previous name. The similarity of the names caused confusion between the two hotels; so reluctantly, only a few months before his death on 23 December 1928, Charles Lincoln gave the hotel he had built his own name.¹⁶

Despite what the experts said about Marion as a hotel site, the Lincoln proved to be one of the most successful hotels in the region. Prior to the announcement concerning the reopening of Hotel Marion, plans had been announced for a thirty-six room addition to Hotel Lincoln. The Lincoln Theatre was to be housed on the first two floors of this five-story addition.¹⁷ Although these plans never materialized--presumably because of the Hotel Marion renovation--the Lincoln Theatre was later built in cooperation with the Royal Oak Apartment Building erected further down the street in the same block.

Hotel Lincoln has operated continuously since 1927. Although the hotel has declined in social

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prominence and appearance since the mid-1960s, the present owners have renovated the public areas of the building and thirty-two of the guest rooms in 1993. This renovation, though incomplete, has been largely faithful to the hotel's original appearance. The fifth floor is unused and awaiting improvements.

Coinciding with the renovation, the hotel was renamed "Lincoln Inn" under which it continues to operate. With the exception of the Radisson Patrick Henry in Roanoke, the Lincoln is Southwest Virginia's last downtown commercial hotel still in operation. The architectural integrity of the building has been well preserved as an example of 1920s hotel construction.

ENDNOTES:

1. Smyth County News, "General Francis Marion Hotel," 27 January 1927, p.1.
2. Smyth County News, "Handsome Signs," 24 March 1932, p.1.
3. Eubank & Caldwell, architects, "floor plans," August 1926.
4. Smyth County News, "Work on the New Hotel," 9 December 1926, p. 1.
5. Smyth County News, "New Hotel to Open May 27," 12 May 1927, p.1.
6. Eubank & Caldwell, architects, "floor plans," August 1926.
7. Smyth County News, "Remodeling of Lincoln Announced," 15 September 1966, p.1.
8. Marion Democrat, "A Strong Man Dead," 24 December 1928, p. 1.
9. Marion Democrat, "C.C. Lincoln, Industrial Leader, Dead," 24 December 1928, p. 2.
10. Wilson, Goodrich. Smyth County History & Traditions. Radford: Commonwealth Press, Inc., 1932.
11. Marion Democrat, "A Strong Man Dead," 24 December 1928, p.1.
12. Marion Democrat, "Marion to Have Modern Hotel," 15 April 1924, p.1.
13. Smyth County News, "Hotel Opens May the 27," 26 May 1927, p.1.
14. Smyth County News, "The General Francis Marion Hotel," 2 June 1927, p. 8.

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ENDNOTES CONTINUED

15. Smyth County News, "Hotel Lincoln," 26 April 1928, p. 1.
16. Smyth County News, "Addition to New Hotel," 8 September 1927, p.2.

