



photo—Paul K. Williams—*The InTowner*.

View of Lincoln Temple Congregation Church at the northeast corner of 11th & R Streets as it appears today.

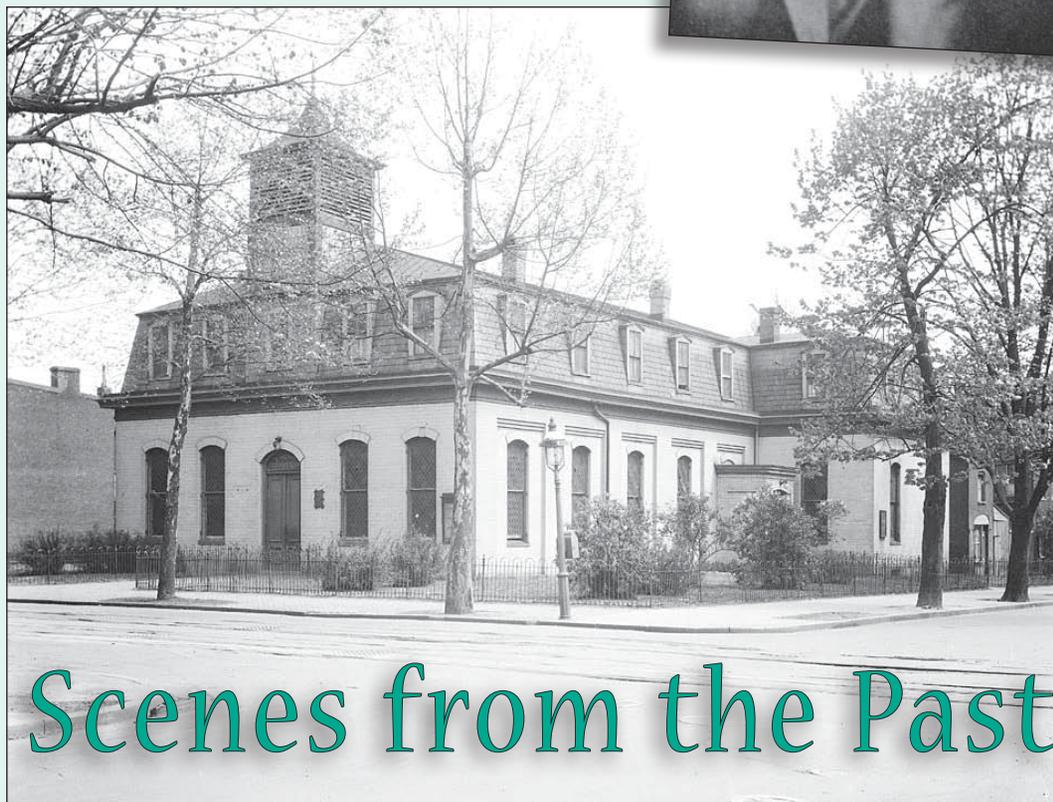
The Lincoln Congregational Temple United Church of Christ, built beginning in 1928 on the northeast corner of 11th and R Streets, NW, is an unusual example of Italian Romanesque Revival architecture. It was designed by Howard W. Cutler, and replaced a mission that had been built on the site in 1868. It is regarded as the oldest African-American Congregational Church in Washington, DC.

Lincoln Temple evolved from religious organizations founded at Civil War camps that had been located close by, including Camp Barker at 13th and R Streets, the founding of a Sabbath school in 1863 at the Wisewell Barracks at 7th and P Streets, and establishment of the Lincoln Mission as a school and community center at the corner of 9th and R Streets. Following the war, thousands of freemen stayed in what was then the edge of the city, benefiting from food, clothing, and religious education, provided by a number of benevolent organizations and church groups.

In 1868, the Colfax Industrial Mission occupied the building seen here that was built at the corner of 11th and R Streets by the American Missionary Association “for the education of the colored children of Washington.” It was formally dedicated in 1870 and celebrated its first Sunday service under the leadership of Rev. G.N. Marden.

The Mission was renamed the Lincoln Industrial Mission in 1870, in memoriam to fallen President Abraham Lincoln. Ten years later, in 1880, 10 black members of the First Congregational Church joined with Mission and chartered the Lincoln Memorial Congregational Church. Rev. Simon Peter Smith served as its pastor. Later, in 1901, it merged with the Park Temple Congregational Church, with its pastor, Rev. Sterling Brown (father of poet Sterling Brown, 1901-1989), serving as its pastor.

Born in Tennessee, Rev. Brown was educated at Fisk University and the Oberlin Theological Seminary. At Lincoln Temple, Rev. Brown introduced a business school and an employment



photo—Addison Scurlock Studio Records, ca. 1905-1994, courtesy, Archives Center, National Museum of American History.

This photograph of the 1868 French Mansard-style building that housed the Colfax Industrial Mission was taken by Addison Scurlock in 1926 shortly before it was razed to make room for the new Lincoln Temple Congregation Church.

Scenes from the Past

agency, and made the building a central meeting place for such organizations as the Bethel Literary and Historical Society and the Samuel Coleridge Taylor Choral Society. Dr. Brown taught in the Howard University Theological Department from 1892 until 1914, and in 1924, authored his autobiography, *My Life Story*.

In November of 1903, the congregation was one of several churches in Washington to host the National Conference on the Race Problem in the United States, which resulted in the scholarly proceedings titled *How to Solve the Race Problem*.

The congregation obtained a permit to build the current structure at 11th and R Streets on June 9, 1928, with construction overseen by Rev. Robert Brooks. It was designed by architect Howard Wright Cutler (1883-1948), who was born on February 19, 1883 in Ouray, Colorado to geologist Martin Van Buren and Margaret (Jocknick) Cutler. He was educated at the local schools, and obtained a B.A. in architecture from the Athenaeum and Mechanics Art Institute in Rochester, New York in 1904. He began his archi-

photo—Washington Past and Present (1930).

The Lincoln Temple Church was designed by architect Howard Wright Cutler (1883-1948), below.



tectural career at the local firm of Gordon and Maden. Then, in 1906, he started his own architectural firm, designing a building for the Eastman Kodak Company in Rochester.

During World War I, he was assigned to the Army's Designing and Architectural Department, and rose to the rank of Major. He designed hospitals across the country, including an addition to the Walter Reed Hospital in Washington, DC. Following the War, Cutler formed a firm with engineer Samuel Woodbridge in Washington, DC which did business under the name of Cutler and Woodbridge between 1919 and 1921, followed by Cutler and Moss with architect Louis R. Moss, which lasted until 1923. After that time, he practiced on his own and resided in Silver Spring, Maryland.

Cutler designed more than 25 schools in Montgomery County, Maryland. In 1926, two years prior to his work on Lincoln Temple, he designed the Spanish-Mission Revival Eldbrooke Church at 4100 River Road, NW in Tenleytown.

Perhaps Lincoln Temple's most notable congregant was Mary Church Terrell, who in 1952 led lunch counter sit-ins in downtown Washington. In 1963, the Lincoln Temple served food to participants in the March on Washington, and six years later its auditorium served as the venue for a concert by musician and vocalist Roberta Flack.

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photo—Addison Scurlock Studio Records, ca. 1905-1994, courtesy, Archives Center, National Museum of American History. Shown here are Rev. Robert Brooks (standing) and members of the Lincoln Temple Congregation Church attending the dedication and cornerstone laying ceremonies of their new building in 1928.