

1787-1792

1798

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In 1939, Marian Anderson was denied the opportunity, because of her color, to sing at Constitution Hall, the auditorium owned by the Daughters of the American Revolution in Washington, D.C. President Roosevelt and his wife Eleanor then arranged for her to perform at an open-air concert on the steps of the Lincoln Memorial. The video records her opening song, My Country, 'Tis of Thee. Note her subtle variations on the lyrics.

My country, 'tis of thee,
Sweet land of liberty,
Of thee I sing:
Land where my fathers died!
Land of the Pilgrims' pride!

From ev'ry mountainside
Let freedom ring!
— [lyrics by Samuel Francis Smith; 1831]



Marian Anderson (1897—1993)