

*A Lincoln*

PRESIDENT LINCOLN'S COTTAGE  
AT THE SOLDIERS' HOME

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## **Hidden Historic Treasure Offers New Insights into Abraham Lincoln**

*After a seven year restoration, President Lincoln's Cottage Opens to Public on President's Day 2008*

**Washington, D.C.** – On February 18, 2008, President Lincoln's Cottage at the Soldiers' Home opens to the public for the first time, giving Americans an intimate, never-before-seen view of Abraham Lincoln's presidency and family life. Designated a National Monument by President Clinton in 2000, President Lincoln's Cottage served as Lincoln's family residence for a quarter of his presidency and is the most significant historic site directly associated with Lincoln's presidency aside from the White House. President Lincoln's Cottage is located on the grounds of the Armed Forces Retirement Home in northwest Washington, D.C. and has been restored by the National Trust for Historic Preservation.

“Moving President Lincoln's Cottage out of the shadows and into the spotlight it deserves is one of the most exciting and rewarding things we've ever done,” said Richard Moe, president of the National Trust for Historic Preservation. “Lincoln used the cottage as a welcome retreat from the pressures of wartime Washington, a quiet spot where he could relax with his family. But it was also a place where he conducted important business, met with his generals and members of his Cabinet, and did much of the thinking that shaped the Emancipation Proclamation. No other place offers more insight into the Lincoln presidency – and the character of Lincoln the man.”

Until now, President Lincoln's Cottage had been virtually unknown outside of academic and historic circles. This quiet retreat, just over three miles from downtown Washington, was the Camp David of its day, serving as an escape for Presidents Buchanan, Lincoln, Hayes and Arthur. But it was the time that Lincoln spent here that gives the site its vital place in American history. In addition to developing his policy of emancipation here, Lincoln plotted Union wartime strategies. He also decided to include the 13<sup>th</sup> Amendment abolishing slavery in the Republican platform of 1864 while staying at the Cottage. Life at the Soldiers' Home offered Lincoln both a respite from some of the pressures of war, and direct contact with the soldiers he met on his daily commute between the White House and the Cottage.

“At the Cottage, President Lincoln reviewed strategies and crafted the speeches, letters and policies that inspired a war-weary north to fight on for a republic that would redefine the rights of liberty and the pursuit of happiness to include both races,” said Frank Milligan, Director of President Lincoln's Cottage. “Lincoln's ideas on liberty and equality are complex and nationally significant stories that need to be conveyed with impact.”

To explain the complexity of Lincoln's policies and presidency, visitors will find a carefully balanced tour experience that respects the architecture, maximizes the historical ambiance of the President's beloved Cottage, and incorporates techniques that enhance the learning experience while clarifying the Lincoln legacy. Visitors will tour the Cottage in small groups with tour guides expertly trained to explain the nuances of Lincoln's presidential ideas. These guides bring to life stories that actual visitors recorded after their encounters with the President at the Cottage. Drawing on letters and photographs and using audio and visual enhancements, guides will invite visitors to feel at home and "hear" the voices of the President, Mrs. Lincoln and their guests.

The Robert H. Smith Visitor Education Center at President Lincoln's Cottage, located in a restored 1905 building adjacent to the Cottage, presents exhibitions telling the story of wartime Washington, the Lincoln family's discovery of their country retreat at the Soldiers' Home, and Lincoln's role as Commander-in-Chief. A special exhibitions gallery features rotating displays of Lincoln-related artifacts. *In Pursuit of Emancipation*, opening February 18, 2008, includes a signed copy of the Emancipation Proclamation, the pen Lincoln used to sign it, the inkwell he used to draft it, and a signed copy of the 13<sup>th</sup> Amendment. The Visitor Education Center is the first building at a National Trust for Historic Preservation site to receive Leadership in Energy and Environmental Design (LEED) Certification from the U.S. Green Building Council.

The restoration of President Lincoln's Cottage and the establishment of the Robert H. Smith Visitor Education Center took seven years and cost over \$15 million. Major donors to the project include Robert H. Smith, the U.S. Congress, United Technologies Corp., Save America's Treasures, Matthew and Ellen Simmons, the National Endowment for the Humanities, AT&T Foundation, 1772 Foundation, Gilder Lehrman Institute of American History, D.C. Commission on the Arts and Humanities, Goldman Sachs, John F.W. Rogers, Mark Taper Foundation, Textron Inc., Winnick Family Foundation, Civil War Preservation Trust, Linda B. Bruckheimer, HGTV, Kiplinger Foundation, National Park Service, PEPCO and Tourism Cares/Trip Mate Insurance.

For more information on President Lincoln's Cottage, please visit: [www.lincolncottage.org](http://www.lincolncottage.org).

### **About the National Trust for Historic Preservation**

The National Trust for Historic Preservation is a non-profit membership organization bringing people together to protect, enhance and enjoy the places that matter to them. The National Trust for Historic Preservation helps revitalize communities, spark economic development and promote environmental sustainability. With headquarters in Washington, DC, six regional offices, 29 historic sites and partner organizations in all 50 states, the National Trust for Historic Preservation provides leadership, education, advocacy and resources to a national network of people, organizations and local communities committed to saving places, connecting us to our history, and collectively shaping the future of America's stories. For more information, visit [www.nationaltrust.org](http://www.nationaltrust.org).