



THE COTTAGE COURIER

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www.lincolncottage.org

Summer 2013

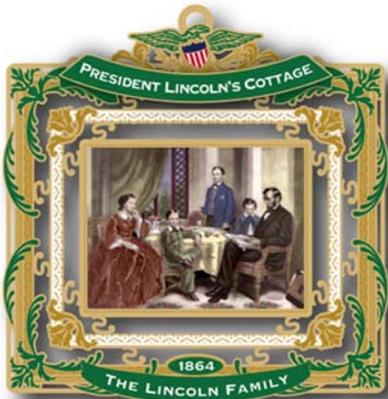
Bring the Lincoln Family Home for the Holidays

From the Director



Dear Friends,

Each summer, we get to experience reasons why the Lincolns chose to live here. From a cool breeze on a hot day to being situated above the city, this place gave Lincoln a different perspective and some distance from the public spectacle that was the White House. That perspective is evident in our featured article by Dr. Douglas L. Wilson, "[Lincoln and Pope's 'Essay on Man.'"](#) While reading the article you might be struck by the timelessness of some of the quotes, whether from Pope's work or Lincoln's visitor who commented, "Public life in America has no private side at all." Find a cool, shady tree and lose yourself in part two of Dr. Wilson's series on what Lincoln read here.



The 2014 edition of our Civil War ornament series is available in the [online store](#).

FAMILY DAY IS BACK!

Saturday September 21, 2013
10am - 3pm. More on page 3.
lincolncottage.org/FamilyDay2013

In our last issue, I announced our first International Students Opposing Slavery (SOS) Summit. Thirty-five young people from six different countries convened here to learn the history of what Lincoln accomplished here and worked together to develop ways they could help end slavery and continue the fight for freedom. Anyone who doubts that history can be an inspiring force for young people should check out this dedicated group via the [SOS website](#), [Facebook page](#), [Twitter feed](#), and [some photos on page 6](#).

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Other recent highlights include the publication of our [Emancipation at 150 anthology as an e-book](#) and receiving two awards for our exhibit on modern slavery "Can You Walk Away?". We also have an exciting fall planned, including our annual Family Day, the kickoff of our sixth season of Cottage Conversations, and the launch of a new exhibit series, "originALS," featuring the diary and other items belonging to Albert N. See, a member of Lincoln's Presidential guard at the Cottage. The diary will be unveiled to the public for the first time ever on September 26. It is a must see!

With thanks for your support,

Erin Mast
EMast@savingplaces.org

A Lincoln

PRESIDENT LINCOLN'S COTTAGE
AT THE SOLDIERS' HOME



A Site of the
National Trust for
Historic Preservation



Cottage Conversations 2013-2014 Season

Join us for the sixth season of *Cottage Conversations*, our signature lecture series! Mingle with the authors at the reception and enjoy a book signing after the lecture. Special thanks to our sponsors Northern Trust Corporation, David Bruce Smith, and James F. Tennies.

October 17: Richard Moe, *Lincoln and Roosevelt in Roosevelt's Second Act*

November 21: Chris DeRose, *Congressman Lincoln*

December 5: Kenneth Winkle, *Lincoln's Citadel: The Civil War in Washington, DC*

Spring 2014 (date TBD): John Taliaferro, *All the Great Prizes*

May 15: Stephen Mansfield, *Lincoln's Battle with God*

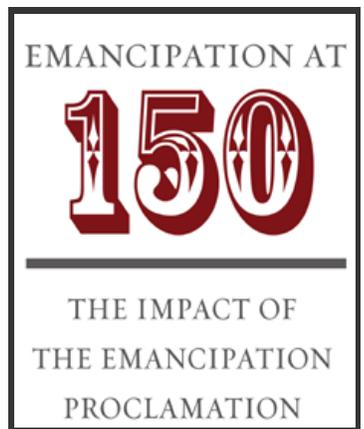
Reception \$10, lecture \$10.
Free for \$250+ members.
Reception: 6:00pm
Lecture: 6:30 pm
For reservations, contact
SMiraminy@savingplaces.org.

New E-Book Available

Emancipation at 150: The Impact of the Emancipation Proclamation is an anthology of the latest research on the Emancipation Proclamation from leading Lincoln scholars and government officials, jointly produced in 2012 by President Lincoln's Cottage and the United States Commission on Civil Rights in commemoration of its 150th anniversary.

Now available for \$2.99 in the:

- [Amazon Kindle store](#)
- [Barnes and Noble Nook store](#)
- [iBookstore](#)
- [Kobo E-book store](#)
- [Sony Reader store](#)





Experience the Difference

We're thrilled to announce our enhanced Cottage tour experience, with new interactive technology. Our guides will now be able to curate the Cottage experience by tailoring the multimedia to the needs and interests of each group in real time.

Visit www.lincolncottage.org and reserve your space on a tour today!

This project is made possible by a grant from the U.S. Institute of Museum and Library Services.

FAMILY DAY IS SEPTEMBER 21ST, 2013!

FREE Activities for All Ages 10:00 AM - 3:00 PM

Visit www.lincolncottage.org/FamilyDay2013 to RSVP and learn more

Petting Zoo

DIY Top Hats and Crafts

Civil War Encampment

Military Band

Bucktail Soldiers

Cottage Tours

Food Vendors

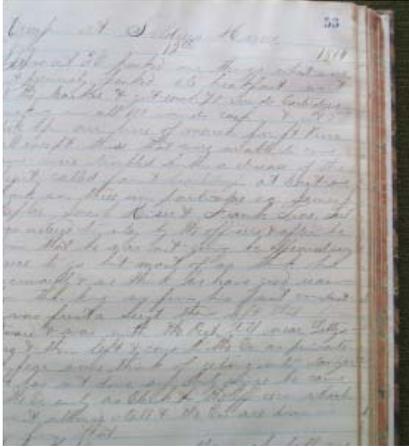
Picnic on the Grounds



Photos: Bruce Guthrie

“originALs: The See Diary”

Exhibit opens Thursday, September 26



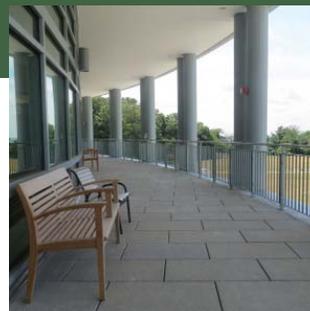
View the diary and other personal artifacts of Albert Nelson See, a Bucktail soldier who guarded Lincoln while he was in residence at the Cottage.

See's eye-witness accounts cover the full range of life at the Cottage, from daily life with the Lincoln family to the the Battle of Fort Stevens. Discover Civil War life at the Soldiers' Home, through the eyes of Albert Nelson See.

This exhibit is the first in “originALs,” a series of exhibitions highlighting an original or small group of objects at a time. The objects in “originALs” speak to the importance and complexity of the Lincoln story and relate directly to Lincoln’s time here at the Soldiers’ Home.

On display in the Robert H. Smith Visitor Education Center

Tour the Soldiers' Home!



On Thursday August 29th, enjoy the rare opportunity to tour the grounds of the Armed Forces Retirement Home, in celebration of the new Scott building's completion.

View the newly built Scott Hall. Join tours led by President Lincoln's Cottage staff of other historic buildings, including the Sherman Tower, offering terrific views of downtown Washington. More details to come!

Double Your Impact!

If you donate to President Lincoln's Cottage, the Robert H. Smith Family Foundation will generously match your contribution. For example:

\$50 becomes \$100, funding the semi-annual cleaning and maintenance of up to 10 of the 66 historic Cottage windows.

\$125 becomes \$250, covering the cost of semi-annual conservation and waxing of the Lincoln statue.

\$500 becomes \$1,000, supplying books and resource materials for our local and national teacher workshops.

Help us offer meaningful programs and build a sustainable future for this National Monument by doubling your gift today.

*Click here
to donate*

Schedule your class trip to the Cottage

A visit to President Lincoln's Cottage inspires young minds to consider the example of Lincoln's leadership and character and his impact on their lives today.

Contact the Education Department and schedule your class field trip to President Lincoln's Cottage, today! Email LincolnEd@savingplaces.org or call 202-829-0436 x31232.

To receive your copy of the 2013-2014 school programs brochure, call 202-829-0436 x31232 or email LincolnEd@savingplaces.org.





STUDENTS OPPOSING SLAVERY

raising awareness of human trafficking

Teenagers from around the world gathered at President Lincoln's Cottage this summer for the inaugural Students Opposing Slavery International Youth Summit. They met with leaders in the anti-human trafficking field, strategized on awareness raising campaigns, and gained the tools to go back to their home communities as informed abolitionists.

www.studentsopposingslavery.org



CAN YOU WALK AWAY?

AWARD-WINNING EXHIBIT!

MODERN SLAVERY
HUMAN TRAFFICKING IN THE UNITED STATES

MODERN SLAVERY: HUMAN TRAFFICKING IN THE UNITED STATES

Now on display through December 31, 2013!

Memories that Last a Lifetime

Host your special event at
President Lincoln's Cottage.

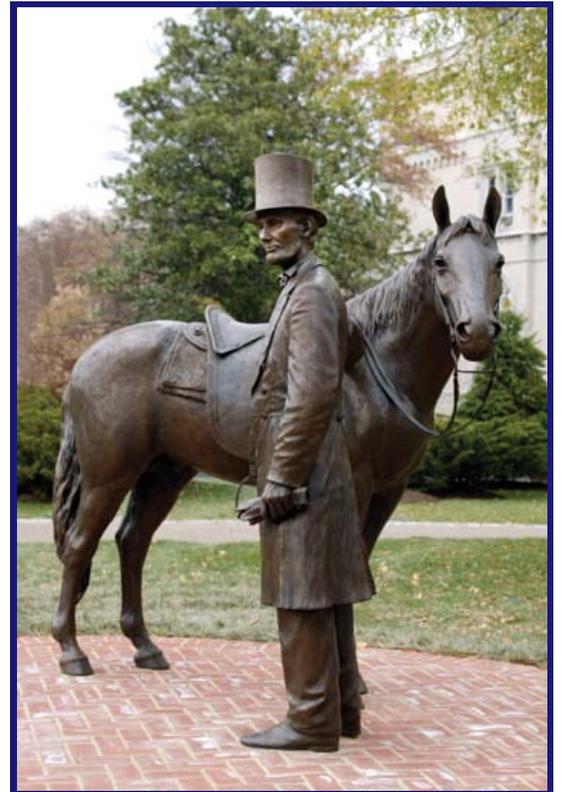
Inquiries: Sahand Miraminy
SMiraminy@savingplaces.org

Photo: Emily Chastain Photography

What will be your legacy?

As a private non-profit, President Lincoln's Cottage depends on donations and bequests. You can help ensure this powerful place is here for generations to come by leaving a bequest in your will.

For more information about using your will to protect President Lincoln's Cottage and the big ideas of freedom and equality that live here, please contact John Davison, Associate Director for Development, by calling 202-829-0436 x31225 or emailing JDavison@savingplaces.org.



“Lincoln and Pope’s ‘Essay on Man’”

By Douglas L. Wilson

This is Part II in a three-part series of articles about Abraham Lincoln’s affinity for reading and how it influenced him. In each part, historian Douglas L. Wilson describes recorded moments of Lincoln’s life that involved reading, especially moments that are significant in the Cottage’s history. For Part I, check out our Winter 2013 Newsletter.

George Tuthill Borrett, a Fellow at Kings College, Cambridge, and a keen and somewhat skeptical observer of American life and culture, toured Canada and the Northern United States in 1864, recording his observations in long and informative letters to his father. These he collected and had published in London the following year as *Letters from Canada and the United States*. The highlight of his visit was an interview with the President of the United States, Abraham Lincoln.

Borrett makes it clear that this was, from the first letter, a prime object of his visit, and that he had to work very hard to make it happen. One of his gambits that almost worked was getting Henry Raymond, Editor of the *New York Times*, to introduce him to President Lincoln, but they arrived at the White House too early, and he received, instead, a guided tour of the presidential mansion.

“We were not a little surprised to find that the President’s house was totally unguarded — not even a house-dog on the watch; but what was our astonishment to see the editor fling open the glass swing-door, where there was not a vestige of a porter’s calves, pass through the hall, in which there was not a soul to be seen, up the staircase, which a domestic was cleaning (for it was yet early, and the President had not

arrived from his summer residence outside the city), and into the President’s private study. We followed in mute amazement, half-ashamed of treading unasked on this sacred ground; but the editor quieted our apprehensions by assuring us that it was all perfectly public; the people paid for this house, and they had a right to see the inside of it; they paid the President to live there, and they had a right to see him in it.”¹

Borrett’s aversion to American disregard of their President’s elevated station and privacy would eventually moderate, for after several attempts to meet Mr. Lincoln through more orthodox channels, he finally decided to take advantage of what he had repeatedly complained of, namely that “public life in America has no private side at all.” “What is an

American citizen elected to the Presidency and paid for,” Borrett asked rhetorically, “but to sit at home and listen at all hours to the wants of all who choose to assail him, from the clouds of hungry office-seekers to the country bumpkins lionising the city? So we went to our friend the Under-Secretary of the Treasury, and told him we wanted to see the President, and could he manage it for us? Oh, yes! his daughter knew Abe well; she would take us up in the evening to his country seat — the thing was as simple as possible.”²

Where Raymond had failed, the Under-Secretary’s young daughter succeeded to perfection. When they arrived after dark at the President’s

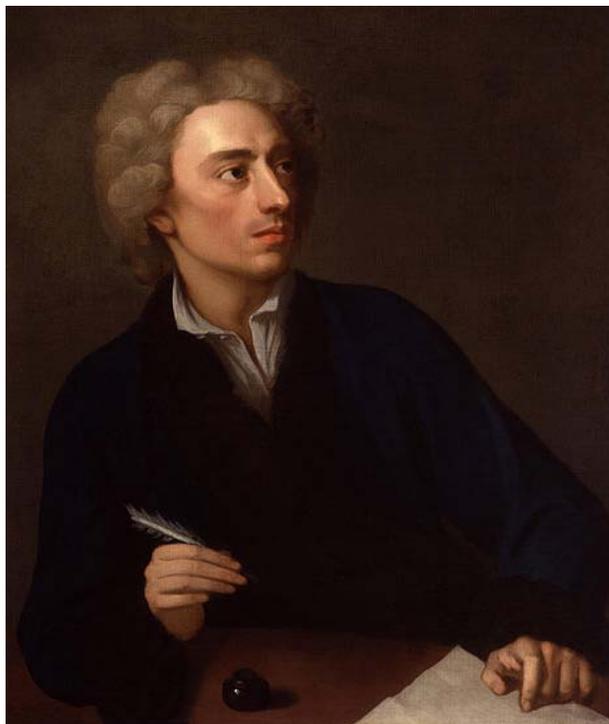


Borrett met with Lincoln in the drawing room at the Cottage.

summer residence at the Soldiers' Home, the servant that answered the door "suggested that it was rather late for an interview with Mr. and Mrs. Lincoln, and as it was then considerably past eight, I thought the hint very reasonable. Not so the Secretary's daughter. With ready wit and admirable aplomb, she bade the officious page to go in and tell his master that there were three gentlemen there, who had come three thousand miles for the express purpose of seeing him and his lady, and did not intend to go away till they had done so."³

The party was soon "ushered into a moderate-sized, neatly furnished drawing-room, where we were told the President would see us immediately. We had sat there but a few minutes, when there entered through the folding doors [a] long, lanky, lath-like figure . . . with hair ruffled, and eyes very sleepy, and — hear it, ye votaries of court etiquette! — feet enveloped in carpet slippers... All my uneasiness and awe vanished in a moment before the homely greeting of the President, and the genial smile which accompanied it."⁴

Borrett admitted earlier in his narrative that he had arrived in America a sympathizer with the Confederacy, a feeling he shared with much of the British upper class, but which moderated the more he met and talked with Northerners. In his initial glimpse of the President, with his ruffled hair and carpet slippers, Borrett's comic



Lincoln drew inspiration from "Essay on Man" by the English poet Alexander Pope (above in circa 1727 painting).
Courtesy National Portrait Gallery, London.

expectations had been confirmed, but the unaffected entrance and warmth of the President's welcome to late-night intruders produced a distinct change in Borrett's tone and in his avowed estimate of his quarry.

The President took the lead in the conversation and made a knowledgeable comparison of British and American Constitutions, followed by a discourse on some interesting differences between British and American law. Borrett quickly admitted he enjoyed listening to the man converse. "It was a treat to hear him talk of his early life, with a certain quiet pride in his rise from the bottom of the ladder. And why is it not a matter to be proud of? and where is the sting of the jeers of our English journals against the humble origin of Lincoln, the 'rail-splitter?' Abraham Lincoln has enemies

enough, Heaven knows; but 'he never makes a friend that never makes a foe;' and I am quite convinced that the President has many excellent qualities, which will some day or other be recognised and appreciated." Such an encounter, Borrett suggested, "will give the lie to such calumnies. But sit and talk with him for an hour, and note the instinctive kindness of his every thought and word, and say if you have ever known a warmer-hearted, nobler spirit."⁵

For students of Lincoln, the most notable part of Borrett's account of his visit at Soldiers' Home undoubtedly came near the end.

"The conversation next turned upon English poetry, the President saying that when we disturbed him he was deep in [Alexander] Pope. He seemed to be a great admirer of Pope, especially of his "Essay on Man;" going so far as to say that he thought it contained all the religious instruction which it was necessary for a man to know. Then he mused for a moment or two, and asked us if we could show him any finer lines than those ending, as he quoted them without hesitation—

*'All nature is but art, unknown to thee;
All chance, direction, which thou canst not see;
All discord, harmony not understood;
All partial evil, universal good:
And, spite of pride, in erring reason's spite,
One truth is clear, whatever is, is right.'*

And here, on getting to the last few words, his instinctive humour broke out, for to an extremely flat remark of mine upon the beauty of the verses he had repeated, he replied with a smile—

"Yes, that's a convenient line, too, that last one. You see, a man may turn it, and say, 'Well, if

*whatever is right, why, then, whatever isn't must be wrong."*⁶

Borrett's description affords a glimpse of President Lincoln using the quiet of his evenings at the Soldiers' Home to return to his favorite texts in search of insight into his and the nation's dilemmas. Borrett's visit came about a week before Lincoln's reelection, and Lincoln's recurrence to a life-long favorite, Pope's "Essay on Man," fits into the pattern of his continuing ruminations during 1864 on what he would finally put forward in his Second Inaugural Address four months later.⁷ His view of the importance he places on Pope's "Essay" is underlined in his remembered saying that "it contained all the religious instruction which it was necessary for a man to know." Lincoln's own religion eludes precise definition, but it was imbued with fatalism, the belief that ends or outcomes in human affairs are preordained, that the will of God always prevails, and thus whatever is, is right. In a paragraph presumably written for his own sense of clarity, he had taken this idea as his first premise: "The will of God prevails."⁸ This, he went on to say, led him to the conclusion regarding the progress of the Civil War that "God wills this contest, and wills that it shall not end yet." And this we recognize as a central idea of his last great speech:

*"If we shall suppose that American slavery is one of those offenses which, in the providence of God, must needs come, but which, having continued through His appointed time, He now wills to remove; and that He gives to both north and south this terrible war as the woe due to those by whom the offense came, shall we discern therein any departure from those divine attributes which the believers in a living God always ascribe to Him?"*⁹

George Borrett's account of his intrusive visit to the Soldiers Home thus offers a telling example of how and under what circumstances Lincoln pursued ideas and arrived at momentous conclusions.



1. George Tuthill Borrett, *Letters from Canada and the United States* (London: J. E. Adlard, 1865), 223-24.
2. Borrett, 249-50.
3. Borrett, 251.
4. Borrett, 251-52.
5. Borrett, 254.
6. Borrett, 254-55.
7. See Douglas L. Wilson, *Lincoln's Sword: The Presidency and the Power of Words* (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 2006), 244-77.
8. Abraham Lincoln, *Speeches and Writings 1859-1865*, ed. Don Fehrenbacher (New York: Library of America, 1989), 359.
9. *Speeches and Writings 1859-1865*, 687.



Dr. Wilson is Co-Director of the Lincoln Studies Center at Knox College and a member of the President Lincoln's Cottage Scholarly Advisory Group.

