

A Lincoln

PRESIDENT LINCOLN'S COTTAGE
AT THE SOLDIERS' HOME

President Lincoln's Cottage at the Soldiers' Home Fact Sheet

Historical Significance

Located on a picturesque hilltop in Washington, DC, President Lincoln's Cottage is the most significant historic site directly associated with Lincoln's presidency aside from the White House. How can we make such a claim? Just look at the facts:

- During the Civil War, President Lincoln and his family resided from June to November of 1862, 1863 and 1864 in a 34-room Gothic Revival house today known as President Lincoln's Cottage. All totaled, Lincoln lived here for a quarter of his presidency.
- It was during his first season at the Soldiers' Home that Lincoln developed his policy of emancipation and drafted the preliminary Emancipation Proclamation.
- A kind of 19th century Camp David, the Soldiers' Home is located just over three miles north of the White House in Washington, DC. Here Lincoln plotted war strategy and hosted political meetings away from the glare of the White House. Visitors included Cabinet members, political allies and adversaries, and foreign dignitaries.
- Lincoln commuted daily to the White House on horseback or by carriage, often passing poet Walt Whitman who then resided in Washington, DC. Kidnappings during the commute were a constant concern, and Lincoln even survived an assassination attempt one evening.
- Lincoln's remarkable rapport with the Union soldiers was strengthened by his daily interaction with them as he commuted between the White House and the Cottage. Lincoln sought out soldiers returning from the front for first-hand news and their opinions on current issues, which then helped to inform his decisions.
- The Soldiers' Home was established in 1851 as the first federal institution to provide care for retired or disabled army veterans. During Lincoln's time, there were 100-200 disabled veterans living there. Today approximately 1,100 retired servicemen and women reside at what is now known as the Armed Forces Retirement Home.
- As the first presidential retreat, the Soldiers' Home was used by several presidents including Buchanan, Lincoln, Hayes and Arthur.
- The first designated National Cemetery is adjacent to the Soldiers' Home and was in Lincoln's clear view. More than 5,000 were buried there during the Civil War. It was after this cemetery reached capacity that Arlington National Cemetery was established.

- In 2000, President Clinton designated the Cottage and 2.3 surrounding acres *The President Lincoln and Soldiers' Home National Monument*, reflecting the great historic significance of the site.

Touring the Cottage

After a \$17 million capital campaign by the National Trust for Historic Preservation to restore the property, President Lincoln's Cottage at the Soldiers' Home will be open to the public for the first time on February 19, 2008. The Robert H. Smith Visitor Education Center, adjacent to the Cottage, will feature related exhibits exploring the history of the Soldiers' Home, wartime Washington, DC, Lincoln as Commander-in-Chief and a special exhibit gallery.

- Guides lead small groups (15 maximum per tour) through President Lincoln's Cottage, exploring the major issues of Lincoln's presidency including the war, freedom and democracy – themes which resonate with Americans still.
- Visitors walk in Lincoln's footsteps discovering how he reached difficult decisions such as when and how to abolish slavery while preserving the Union.
- The tour paints an intimate portrait of the Lincoln family, their joys, sorrows and struggles during the Civil War.
- Visitors explore President Lincoln's daily routine, hear "historical voices" and see images of friends and family, household staff, and other contemporaries, including poet Walt Whitman.
- On the grounds of the Soldiers' Home, visitors can experience the vista of the Capitol and downtown Washington, DC, enjoyed by Lincoln.

Planning Your Visit

Because President Lincoln's Cottage is located on the grounds of the Soldiers' Home, the active Armed Forces Retirement Home, please follow these guidelines when planning a visit:

- Reservations are strongly recommended and can be made online at www.lincolncottage.org, or by phone 1-800-514-ETIX (3849). For groups of 10 or more call (202) 829-0436. Tickets are \$12. All tours are guided and limited space is available; therefore, we cannot guarantee entry to President Lincoln's Cottage without a reservation.
- Bring photo identification.
- Arrive 15 minutes before your tour is expected to start.
- Directions and additional information are available at 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.

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