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Civil War Diary on Display at President Lincoln's Cottage

For the first time ever, the diary and personal belongings of Albert Nelson See, a soldier who guarded President Lincoln at the Soldiers' Home in Washington, DC, will be on public display on September 26th 2013.

Washington, D.C. – The original Civil War diary and personal artifacts of Albert Nelson See, a member of Abraham Lincoln's Presidential Guard, will go on public display for the first time in history at President Lincoln's Cottage this autumn. See's eye-witness accounts detail President Lincoln's life at the Cottage, Jubal Early's attack on Washington at Fort Stevens, and the inner workings of the presidential guard. Visitors to the exhibit will discover an authentic perspective of Civil War life in Washington. The exhibit opens to the public on September 26th 2013 in the Robert H. Smith Visitor Education Center at President Lincoln's Cottage, and will remain on display until December 31st, 2013.

“When President Lincoln and his family resided at the Soldiers' Home, they moved closer to the action of the Civil War,” says Erin Carlson Mast, Executive Director of President Lincoln's Cottage. “From greeting wounded soldiers en route to Harewood Hospital, to witnessing growing numbers of contraband camps and military burials, Lincoln's life at the Soldiers' Home connected him profoundly to the stark realities of the Civil War. As a member of his presidential guard, See lived on the Soldiers' Home grounds and bore witness to the Lincoln family's daily life, as well as Civil War events such as the battle at Fort Stevens in the summer of 1864. Lincoln himself left only a few written records of his life at the Soldiers' Home, and See's narrative offers an invaluable window into that period.”

The Albert Nelson See Diary was a gift to President Lincoln's Cottage from Ms. Betty Kessler, the great granddaughter of Albert Nelson See. Having been passed down through several generations of the See family before being donated to President Lincoln's Cottage in December of 2009, the diary underwent significant conservation efforts. It is now being displayed to the public for the first time.

This exhibit is the first in “originALS,” a series of exhibitions at President Lincoln's Cottage highlighting an individual or small group of objects connected to President Lincoln that speak to the importance and complexity of the Lincoln story and relate directly to Lincoln's time here at the Soldiers' Home.

President Lincoln's Cottage, “the Cradle of the Emancipation Proclamation,” is located on the grounds of the Armed Forces Retirement Home in Washington, DC. While living here for more than a quarter of his presidency, Abraham Lincoln bonded with soldiers and veterans, made crucial decisions about the Civil War, and, most notably, developed the Emancipation Proclamation his first summer in residence. His daily commute put him in regular contact with wounded soldiers and self-emancipated men, women, and children. Today, the site offers an intimate, never-before-seen view of Abraham Lincoln's presidency and private life, and new perspectives on the influential ideas Lincoln developed while living here.

Hours of operation: The Robert H. Smith Visitor Education Center is open 9:30am-4:30pm Monday-Saturday and 10:30am-4:30pm Sunday. Cottage tours are on the hour, 7 days a week. For more information on President Lincoln's Cottage, visit: www.lincolncottage.org or call 202-829-0436.

The National Trust for Historic Preservation, a privately-funded non-profit organization, works to save America's historic places. President Lincoln's Cottage is a site of the National Trust for Historic Preservation. For more information, visit: www.preservationnation.org.
