



## FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

### **What is President Lincoln's Cottage?**

President Lincoln's Cottage is a private, non-profit organization created to preserve the Lincolns' home and surrounding landscape as a tangible connection to the past and a beacon of hope for all who take up President Lincoln's unfinished work. Located in northwest Washington, DC, this historic site—a "museum of ideas"—is open to the public year-round.

For over a quarter of his Presidency, Abraham Lincoln lived here and made some of his most critical decisions. During his first summer in residence, Lincoln developed the Emancipation Proclamation. Living at the Soldiers' Home and commuting daily to the White House put him in direct contact with wounded soldiers, self-emancipated men, women and children, and veterans. The human cost of the Civil War surrounded him, impacted his thinking, and strengthened his resolve to challenge the status quo. Through innovative partnerships and programs, we use Lincoln's example to inspire visitors of all ages to take their own path to greatness.

### **Why haven't I heard of it?**

In the 20<sup>th</sup> century, public awareness about the historical significance of President Lincoln's Cottage faded from popular memory. Although the Soldiers' Home staff and residents never forgot the importance of the site, it was neither their mission nor their expertise to preserve and interpret the site for the public. The site was declared part of a National Historic Landmark in the 1970s, but would remain hidden from the public. It wasn't until the late 1990s that the general public rediscovered the significance of the site. In 2000, President Bill Clinton declared the Cottage and the surrounding 2.3 acres a National Monument, concurrent with the National Trust for Historic Preservation entering into a cooperative agreement with the Armed Forces Retirement Home to preserve the site. Following an eight-year restoration by the National Trust for Historic Preservation, President Lincoln's Cottage opened to the public for the first time in 2008.

### **Why is President Lincoln's Cottage significant?**

While living here, Lincoln developed his policy of emancipation, plotted Union wartime strategies, and determined to include the 13<sup>th</sup> Amendment abolishing slavery in the Republican platform of 1864. In the words of President Clinton, upon declaring the site a National Monument in 2000, "[I]t is where Lincoln lived and worked, where his son played and his wife found solace, where ideas took shape and his last, best hopes for America took flight." Lincoln is routinely ranked among the most influential presidents of all time and the legacy of the Civil War continues to this day. President Lincoln's time at the Soldiers' Home bookends his presidency: he first visited the Soldiers' Home three days after his inauguration, and last visited the Cottage the day before his assassination. The Lincoln family lived here from June through November of 1862, 1863, and 1864.

### **When was the house built, and how did it become a part of the Soldiers' Home grounds?**

The Cottage was built in 1842 in the Gothic Revival style for George Washington Riggs, a prominent Washington banker. In 1851, Riggs sold the house and 256 acres to the federal government, which was preparing to establish a veterans' retirement home. Between 1851 and 1862, when the Lincolns took up residence, the government had built a dormitory for the veterans, and constructed quarters for officers and



administrators. Through the restoration in the 2000s and ongoing preservation work since opening to the public in 2008, we have invested millions of dollars to maintain the site and keep President Lincoln's Cottage open and accessible to the public.

### **When did the home become a presidential retreat? Which other presidents resided there?**

In 1857, President Buchanan became the first president to live at the Soldiers' Home. President Rutherford B. Hayes also enjoyed the Soldiers' Home setting, and stayed in the Cottage during the summers of 1877-80. President Chester A. Arthur stayed here in the winter of 1882 while the White House was being repaired.

### **What can visitors experience at President Lincoln's Cottage?**

In addition to tours of President Lincoln's Cottage, the Robert H. Smith Visitor Education Center (VEC) adjacent to the Cottage, features related exhibits and media presentations exploring the history of the Soldiers' Home, wartime Washington, Lincoln as Commander-in-Chief, and more. At check in, visitors can see maps of the area to see what is currently accessible to the public. We are also delighted to provide special programs throughout the year, with permission of the Armed Forces Retirement Home, that allow visitors to experience other parts of the historic campus on specific days, such as our annual Freedom 5K and Family Day events.

### **How can I visit President Lincoln's Cottage?**

Admission to the Cottage requires a ticket. Advanced ticket purchase is strongly recommended, and weekend tours often sell out completely. Purchase tickets online at [www.lincolncottage.org](http://www.lincolncottage.org) or by phone at 1-800-514-ETIX (3849). Discounts are available for groups of 10 or more: call (202) 829-0436 or visit our [Group Tour page](#).

### **How can I get to President Lincoln's Cottage?**

For directions and information on public transportation please visit our website – [www.lincolncottage.org](http://www.lincolncottage.org). For GPS use address 140 Rock Creek Church Road, NW Washington, DC 20011. Free parking is available for our visitors.

For more information about President Lincoln's Cottage, contact:  
Rebecca Kilborne, Marketing and Membership Manager  
[rkilborne@lincolncottage.org](mailto:rkilborne@lincolncottage.org)