

## For Immediate Release

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## Hidden Historic Treasure Offers New Insights into Abraham Lincoln

**Washington, D.C.** – After a seven year, \$17 million restoration, President Lincoln’s Cottage at the Soldiers’ Home opened to the public on February 18, 2008. The Cottage gives 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 was restored by the National Trust for Historic Preservation.

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. “No other place offers more insight into the Lincoln presidency – and the character of Lincoln the man,” said Richard Moe, president of the National Trust for Historic Preservation. 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 interpreters 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. *My Abraham Lincoln*, opening February 12, 2009, will include several pieces of Lincoln memorabilia from historic and popular culture from a number of private collectors. This exhibit will explore the intense following Abraham Lincoln has had since his death in 1865. 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.

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).