



Lincoln Lore

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The Soldiers' Home The Lincolns' Summer Retreat

Editor's Note: "Lincoln's Summer Home" was the title of an early number (332) of *Lincoln Lore* published on August 19, 1935.

In the summer months of the early 1860s when the Lincolns sought a place of solitude and a chance to escape the heat of Washington, D. C., the Soldiers' Home offered distinct advantages. For one thing, it was of a higher elevation than the White House, and it was situated on a beautifully wooded hill with winding paths shaded by wide-spread boughs of green trees. The Soldiers' Home is situated about four miles (Mrs. Lincoln wrote that the distance was 2½ miles) north of the Capitol in the District of Columbia on the Maryland side.

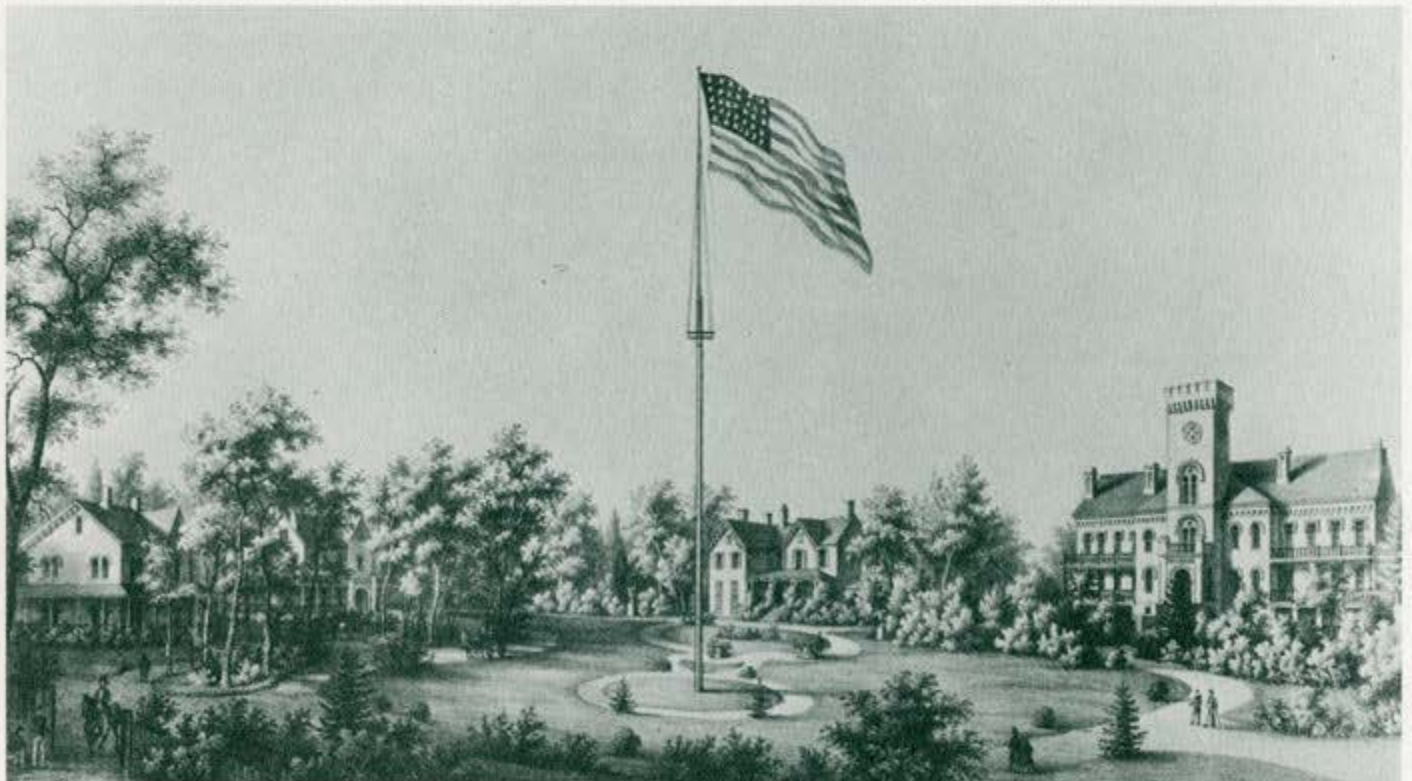
The Lincolns became acquainted with the Soldiers' Home shortly after they took up their residence in Washington because Mrs. Lincoln drove out to the place, in a carriage, on March 6, 1861, and on the following day the President rode horseback to the Home before breakfast. However, they did not reside there until the summer and autumn months of 1862, 1863 and 1864.

The twelve room house the Lincolns occupied was

originally called the Riggs House; however, it has been renamed the Anderson Cottage (1888) in honor of Major Robert Anderson who contributed so much to the development of the Soldiers' Home. The house of many gables, two and one-half stories high, was originally a brick building, with stucco added at a much later date. The date of its construction was about 1811.

Lincoln was not the first President to take up summer residence at the Asylum, as it was called before the Civil War. In 1857, General Winfield Scott invited President James Buchanan and Secretary of War John B. Floyd to reside at the Soldiers' Home. There is no record of how Floyd enjoyed his residence there, but Buchanan in October wrote his favorite niece, Miss Harriett Lane, that he "slept much better at the Asylum than at the White House."

Other Presidents, after Lincoln, who enjoyed summer residence at the Soldiers' Home were President Hayes (1877-1880), and President Arthur (1881-1884), and it was reported that President Garfield was making prep-



From the Lincoln National Life Foundation

A black and white print by Charles Magnus dated 1863 of the Soldiers' Home, Washington, D. C. The four buildings are identified as follows (left to right): Dr. King's Residence, President's Villa (Anderson Cottage), Military Governor's House and Soldiers' Home. The house in which the Lincolns resided has also been called the "President's Cottage" and the "Mansion House."

arations to occupy the Anderson Cottage in the summer of 1881 when he was assassinated on July 2, 1881.

In the late spring of 1865 the ladies of Andrew Johnson's family gave some thought to a summer residence at the Soldiers' Home, but after looking over the Anderson Cottage decided against it.

When the Lincolns occupied the so-called cottage, it had undergone few improvements since its initial construction. Its physical features afforded a distinct advantage as a summer retreat, as many of the rooms in the various wings had windows on three sides. The bedroom used by the President and Mrs. Lincoln "is such a room, and has two large windows over the entrance facing the drill grounds." A spacious porch extended along the front of the house and a balcony could be entered through one of the second story windows. In 1923 the interior of the house was altered by building small squadrooms to accommodate the retired soldiers quartered in that building.

The years of the Civil War brought the Soldiers' Home its most distinguished resident; however, the same invitation as prevailed in the Buchanan administration was in effect and the Honorable Simon Cameron, the President's first Secretary of War, was invited to occupy the Corliss Cottage and did so in 1861, as Secretary Edwin M. Stanton would do in 1864.

With such important officials in residence two companies of the 150th Regiment, Pennsylvania Volunteers, were to be detailed on September 6, 1862 to act as guard at the summer White House. These soldiers were a part of the Bucktail Brigade and they wore as a distinguishing insignia, a bucktail on their caps. Both the President and Mrs. Lincoln became well acquainted with the officers and men of the two companies, particularly with those of Company K, and at Lincoln's request they were detailed as the White House guard and remained in that capacity until the end of the war.

Secretary Stanton, concerned for Lincoln's safety as he traveled between the White House and the Soldiers' Home arranged for a cavalry escort. This escort was a part of "Scott's Nine Hundred," the 11th New York Cavalry. Their usual route of travel was down 7th Street to the White House and return. They would usually return with the President around four in the afternoon. Apparently, their appearance was not impressive as Walt Whitman wrote to the *New York Times* in the summer of 1863 that "The party makes no great show in uniforms or horses."

There was an attempt to assassinate the President while he was in residence at the Soldiers' Home. One evening in mid-August 1864, a sentry on duty at the main gate of the Soldiers' Home heard a shot from the direction of the city. Later, Lincoln made his appearance arriving at full gallop and without his hat. That particular evening he had been riding alone. The sentry quieted the horse and after Mr. Lincoln had entered the cottage, he sought out a corporal who assisted him in a search for the missing hat. Once it was found, it was discovered that a bullet had gone through it. The President made light of the incident and requested that nothing be said about it.

As the chronology of events at the Soldiers' Home, as compiled from *Lincoln Day By Day, 1861-1865*, will indicate, the President did not escape many of his burdens of office while living at the summer retreat. Perhaps the most satisfying thing that he did while in residence at the Anderson Cottage was the completion of his second draft of the preliminary Emancipation Proclamation. It is believed that Lincoln wrote this great state document in the upper corner room with the two windows under the big gray gable, at the left end of the building.

On June 13, 1862 when the Lincolns first moved to the Soldiers' Home, Mrs. Lincoln was far from relieved of her grief over the death of Willie which occurred on February 20 of that same year. She had been led to believe that she might be able to get in touch with Willie's spirit through mediums and she was induced to permit "a charlatan who went by the alias of Colchester to hold a seance at the Soldiers' Home." (See *Lincoln Lore* No. 1497, November, 1962, pages 3 and 4). The results of this meeting were not very comforting for the distracted mother, and numerous other encounters with Spiritualists occurred in the White House (See *Lincoln Lore* Nos. 1497, 1498 and 1499).



From the Lincoln National Life Foundation

A modern photograph of the Anderson Cottage, said to be the oldest building on the grounds of the U.S. Soldiers' Home in Washington, D. C. It was originally a farmhouse and was sold with 200 acres of land which comprised the grounds (502 acres) of the Soldiers' Home which General Winfield Scott founded in 1851.

Mrs. Lincoln also revealed in a letter written on May 29, (1862) to Mrs. John C. Sprigg in Springfield, Illinois, a certain amount of anxiety about living at the Soldiers' Home: "I dread that it will be a greater resort (for visitors) than here, if possible, when we are in sorrow, quiet is very necessary to us."

Undoubtedly, the most distressing incident during the Lincoln's three summer residences was the accident suffered by Mrs. Lincoln on July 3, 1863 when she sustained head injuries when thrown from her carriage while driving to the Soldiers' Home. The reason the frightened horses ran away was that the driver's seat of the carriage became detached from the rest of the vehicle, with the result that the driver was thrown out. It was believed that the driver's seat had been loosened by hostile hands.

Mrs. Lincoln, for awhile alone in the carriage, was eventually thrown violently to the ground and struck the back of her head on a sharp rock. Her wound was dressed at a nearby hospital and she was returned to the Anderson Cottage.

The full extent of Mrs. Lincoln's injuries was not immediately realized. Finally, the wound became infected, and Mrs. Rebecca R. Pomroy, who had nursed the dying Willie, was secured to comfort the President's wife. After three weeks of intensive care, Mrs. Lincoln appeared to have recovered. This was a trying time for the President as the accident occurred while the Battle of Gettysburg was being fought. It was Robert Lincoln's opinion that his mother "never quite recovered from the effects of her fall."

Perhaps the most exciting days at the summer White House were in July 1864 "when news was broadcast that the Confederate military leader, Early, was approaching the City of Washington. The people who lived out in the Maryland villages beyond the Anderson Cottage came flocking into Washington over the old Seventh Street Road past the Presidential summer home. The rebel cannon could be heard but ten miles away; and the President and his family were staying at the Anderson Cottage, which was situated in the path of the

approaching army, about half way between the outer line of fortification at Fort Stevens and the city.

"When Secretary Stanton learned that the enemy was within striking distance of where Lincoln was located, on Sunday night, July 10, he ordered that the President should return to the White House and sent a carriage for him. Lincoln went back to town against his own will and was very indignant when he learned that a small Navy vessel had been made ready in the Potomac for his escape, in case the Confederate troops entered the city." On July 14, 1864 the President and his family resumed their schedule for living at the Soldiers' Home.

When the President's family moved from the White House and back again, it must have created quite a hauling job as the November 4, 1863 entry in the chronology indicates that James L. Thomas hauled nineteen loads of furniture from the "Soldiers' Home to the White House." This must indicate that a President could live as graciously in the Anderson Cottage as in the Executive Mansion.

The building is now marked with a wooden plaque as follows: Summer House/President Lincoln/1862 1863 1864/visitors not/permitted To/Enter Bldg.

Today it is difficult for the average tourist or sight-seer to locate the Soldiers' Home. From downtown Washington, D. C. it can be reached as follows:

Go north on Georgia Avenue, turn right off Georgia Avenue and go east on Upshur to 2nd & Upshur, enter at Eagle Gate. (Anderson Cottage is a very short distance inside the gate). Another route would be to go east on New York Avenue to North Capitol, turn left and go north on North Capitol. This route connects with the southern tip of the grounds of the Soldiers' Home at Michigan Avenue and North Capitol. Next, turn left on Michigan Avenue and follow the perimeter of Soldier's Home to the Eagle Gate.

Editor's Note: Many inquiries have been made over the years as to the best route from downtown Washington, D. C. to the Soldier's Home. The above directions have been compiled by Bert Sheldon of Washington, D. C.

A Chronology of the Lincolns' Residence at the Soldiers' Home Compiled from *Lincoln Day By Day 1861-1865*

1861

March 6 — Mrs. Lincoln drives out to Soldiers' Home, Upshur St. and Rock Creek Rd., N.W.

March 7 — Lincoln rides horseback before breakfast to Soldiers' Home.

1862

June 13 — Lincoln's family moves to Soldiers' Home for summer.

June 18 — President and Vice President Hamlin ride horseback to Soldiers' Home for evening meal.

June 25 — Sen. Browning (Ill.) and friends visit Lincoln at Soldiers' home in evening.

June 30 — In the evening Browning, accompanied by Mr. and Mrs. William M. Dorman of Florida, visit President at Soldiers' Home.

July 4 — Lincoln meets train of ambulances on road to Soldiers' Home and rides along some distance talking to casualties from peninsular campaign. At Soldiers' Home in evening he reviews recent military actions around Richmond with Gen. Meigs and Henry H. Sibley, former governor of Minnesota.

July 5 — In evening Sen. Browning and friends visit Lincoln at Soldiers' Home. Mrs. Lincoln in carriage on way to Soldiers' Home tells Comdr. Dahlgren that President frequently passes sleepless nights.

July 25 — In evening at Soldiers' Home Lincoln has conversation with Sen. Browning on public affairs.

Aug. 8 — In evening at Soldiers' Home Mrs. Heintzelman discusses with Lincoln her husband's opposition to withdrawal of Army of Potomac from peninsula.

Aug. 30 — Lincoln reveals peculiarities of Gen. Halleck to John Hay while riding to White House from Soldiers' Home.

Sept. 3 — At Soldiers' Home confers from 9 P.M. until midnight with Sec. Seward, returned from New York.

Sept. 5 — Gen. McClellan orders guard established at President's residence on grounds of Soldiers' Home.

Sept. 13 — President sprains wrist checking his runaway horse during morning ride from Soldiers'

Home to White House. September 25, 1862, Dr. Zacharie treats President for sprains.

Sept. 17 — At Soldiers' Home Lincoln completes second draft of preliminary Emancipation Proclamation.

Sept. 25 — In evening John Hay rides to Soldiers' Home with Lincoln.

Sept. 28 — President continues summer residence at Soldiers' Home.

Oct. 13 — President and Vice President Hamlin "talk all night" at Soldiers' Home about military situation and Gen. McClellan.

Nov. 9 — President writes wife in Boston that "Mrs. Cuthbert (seamstress) & Aunt Mary (nurse) want to move to the White House, because it has grown so cold at Soldiers' Home. Shall they?"

1863

June 22 — Lincolns begin summer residence at Soldiers' Home.

June 26 — About 9 P.M. Col D. T. Van Buren and Col. S. W. Burt visit President at Soldiers' Home to tell him that Gov. Seymour (N.Y.) will stand behind him.

July 3 — Mrs. Lincoln receives head injury when thrown from carriage during drive to Soldiers' Home.

July 6 — Lincoln leaves telegraph office in War Dept. and arrives at Soldiers' Home about 7 P.M.

July 10 — At Soldiers' Home, President interviews A. C. Dickson, Orloff A. Zane, and John Absterdam regarding Absterdam shell.

July 19 — Sec. Seward makes appointment for President with Lord Lyons at Soldiers' Home, 8:30 P.M.

July 25 — At night John Hay accompanies President to Soldiers' Home.

Aug. 22 — Hay goes to Soldiers' Home with President and falls asleep listening to him read Shakespeare.

Aug. 23 — Soon after breakfast Lincoln and John Hay return to White House . . .

Sept. 20 — Leaves Soldiers' Home at 10 P.M. and spends night in White House.

Sept. 23 — Returns to city from Soldiers' Home late at night for cabinet meeting called by Sec. Stanton at War Dept. Orderly escorts President to Soldiers' Home after meeting.

Sept. 27 — Gen. Hooker and John Hay visit him (Lincoln) at Soldiers' Home.

Nov. 4 — James L. Thomas hauls 19 loads of furniture from Soldiers' Home to the White House, where the Lincolns must now be living.

1864

June 29 — President telegraphs Mrs. Lincoln in New York: "All well. Tom is moving things out." ("Tom" may have been Thomas H. Cross, furnace-man at White House; Thomas Cross, doorkeeper; or T. Stackpole, watchman.)

July 2 — President and family begin summer residence at Soldiers' Home.

July 10 — At 10 P.M. President and family leave Soldiers' Home and return to White House.

July 14 — President resumes living at Soldiers' Home.

July 26 — In evening Sec. and Mrs. Welles visit for hour with Lincoln at Soldiers' Home.

Aug. 12 — Walt Whitman, poet and hospital attendant, records: "I see the President almost every day, as I happen to live where he passes to or from his lodgings out of town. . . I saw him this morning about 8:30 coming in to business, riding on Vermont Avenue, near L Street. He always has a company of twenty-five or thirty cavalry, with sabres drawn and held upright over their shoulders."

Aug. 24 — In evening at Soldiers' Home, Lincoln and group of officials witness demonstration of Morse signalling from tower of Soldiers' Home to roof of Smithsonian Institution.

Aug. 28 — Near midnight Charles J. M. Gwinn, Baltimore lawyer for convicted spies, visits Lincoln at Soldiers' Home to ask for reprieve.

Sept. 8 — President writes to Mrs. Lincoln at Manchester, Vt.: "All well, including Tad's pony and the goats. Mrs. Col Dimmick, (wife of governor of Soldiers' Home) died night before last."

Sept. 11 — Cong. Fernando Wood (N.Y.) has 8 A.M. appointment with Lincoln at Soldiers' Home.

Oct. 3 — O. H. Browning visits Lincoln in evening at Soldiers' Home.

1865

April 13 — Rides Horseback to Soldiers' Home.

Rare Sheet Music — "The Abe-iad"

The rarest piece of Lincoln sheet music is to be found at Lincoln Memorial University, Harrogate, Tennessee. A less desirable copy (margins trimmed) is in the Library of Congress. The title is *The Abe-iad* published by John H. Parrott in Alexandria, Virginia, in 1861, with words by J. P. McRebel. Perhaps it was published too early to be classified as a Confederate imprint, as it does not appear in the compilations of Crandall and Harwell. The theme deals with the Baltimore assassination plot.

The Sixteenth President was hardly ever referred to in music bearing a genuine Confederate imprint, a courtesy that Northern music publishers could not boast — as to Jefferson Davis. Even though *The Abe-iad* may or may not bear a Confederate imprint, it is a major rarity.

The title cover is illustrated, a quality few Confederate pieces afforded. The cartoon illustration depicts Lincoln wearing a military cape and a Scotch cap (See *Lincoln Lore* Number 1424). Lincoln's alleged disguise when he passed through Baltimore, Maryland, en route to Washington, D. C. to be inaugurated President. The cartoon shows Lincoln fleeing before a Confederate soldier who is in the act of firing a cannon at him. Lincoln says, while the cannon-ball is in midair, "Catch who." The soldier stands beneath the stars and bars, and on the Lincoln Memorial University copy the colors of the flag have been hand painted. Under the cartoon is the following statement:

The former place, the changing face
The Midnight race, and present place
of Honest Abe.

The five verses of *The Abe-iad* follow:

Abe Lincoln, was a citizen of very small
renown,
A railing abolitioner, of little Springfield
town;
Abe's party said, "November comes, now Abe,
don't let us fail
To meet the other parties all, and beat them
with a rail!"
November came, the rogues turned out, and
yet, 'twas not allow'd
That Abe should come, lest Abram's face,
should fright away the crowd!
So Abram at his Springfield home,
staid waiting for the news,
The while, his party licked their
chops, at smell of public stew;
Soon hordes of every grade and
shape, high, low, and ragged feller!
Came for each place, from chair of
state, to toting Abe's umbreller!
So Abram, left, and foolish speech,
and maudlin kiss and shout
Of flattering rabble, well composed,
the triumph of his route.
At length, a man full hard he ran —
"A plot, a plot!" did yell,
Then quick beneath each seat they
sought infernal bursting shell;
The man, they tried (and forth he
lied) "The special train," he said,
"Will be upset, and if Abe 'scapes,
arm'd men will shoot him dead!"
Abe's friends a counter plot did hatch,
'twas, "Run Abe Lincoln straight —
For running was a strategem, of
Bonaparte the Great!"
Away went Abram, nech or naught, all
in the midnight dark.
Away went Abram, fast he flew! no
judge that time could mark
And dreading still, Grimalkin's corpse,
or brick bats envious blow,
At dead of night, he slyly passed thro'
dreadful Baltimo'!
So Abe stole into Washington (alas
the woeful day)
And fondly thought, poor foolish Abe!
"Well four years here I'll stay!"



From the Lincoln Memorial University Collection

Only one other copy of "The Abe-iad" is known to collectors. This piece was taken from an album and was presented to M. F. Savage by a friend in the South.

Abe' human hopes are sandy ropes;
to my advice give heed!
And dearly prize those lengthy limbs,
which give you wondrous speed!
Repent and change! or as you came,
soon darkly back you'll run;
Aye! day and night, with all your
might, you'll run from sun to sun!
Then let us say, make haste the day!
and Abram, make haste he!
And when old Abe, shall run that
race, I may be there to see!

The Abe-iad is a part of the largest Lincoln sheet music collection numbering over five hundred different items (some titles will bear six or seven different imprints) which is to be found at Lincoln Memorial University.

Nearly all Lincoln collections, private or institutional, have some sheet music pertaining to the Sixteenth President. For cataloguing, the following categories can be set up:

1. Lincoln theme
2. Dedication
3. Portrait on cover
4. Mentioned in lyric
5. Immediate collateral interest

The Lincoln Memorial University sheet music collection has been gathered over a period of years with an occasional title added from time to time. Then, too, certain acquisitions bear the names of Friedman, Wessen and Bosler as donors of sizeable collections. However, a windfall of Lincoln and collateral sheet music came to the college in June 1951, with the acquisition of 735 titles known as the M. F. Savage Collection, a gift of Stanley H. Byram of Martinsville, Indiana. (See *Lincoln Herald*, Fall 1951, pages 38 to 40).

Incidentally, Lincoln Memorial University has the fifth largest collection of sheet music bearing a Confederate imprint.