PRESIDENT LINCOLN'S COTTAGE

ABRAHAM LINCOLN AND THE ROAD TO EMANCIPATION

When Abraham Lincoln assumed the presidency on March 4, 1861, there was little popular support to abolish slavery or emancipated enslaved people. Only 15% of the nation called themselves abolitionists, and Congress had recently considered a Constitutional amendment to make slavery permanent and unalterable. Even with his comparatively moderate stance of restricting slavery's spread, Lincoln had only been able to garner 39% of the vote. And yet, just eighteen months later, Lincoln issued the **Emancipation Proclamation**, freeing enslaved people in the South and beginning the process of ending the institution of slavery. The story of how Lincoln moved the nation toward emancipation – without suggesting that he was solely responsible for that effort – offers fascinating insights into the **nuts and bolts leadership needed to drive change and achieve results.**

Our day begins in the seminar room with a discussion of the strategies Lincoln used to move the nation toward emancipation. We examine the development of Lincoln's own anti-slavery stance, and then how he, a **relative unknown, brought national attention to his platform**. Lincoln's strategy for winning the presidential election of 1860 offers compelling insights into **strategic thinking**. Looking at the cabinet members Lincoln selected and the other people he surrounded himself with – from both his perspective and theirs – is a fascinating way to explore **problem solving**. Finally, an inventory of the legal action the Lincoln administration took against slavery from the summer of 1861 until the fall of 1862, culminating in the issuance of the Emancipation Proclamation, offers a great case study into how leaders can move a change effort forward **even in the face of opposition**.

Our seminar piece concludes with Lincoln beginning to draft the next step in his anti-slavery movement, the Emancipation Proclamation. **That Proclamation was written at a cottage – now called President Lincoln's Cottage** – three miles north of the Capitol at the Old Soldiers' Home. After this introductory seminar – held either at a location in D.C. or in meeting room the grounds of the Old Soldiers' Home itself – **we tour the cottage** and see where Lincoln drafted that momentous document as well as where he employed many of his other leadership skills over the summers of 1862 to 1864. Upon returning to the seminar room, we reflect upon what insights today's leaders can take from Abraham Lincoln and the road to emancipation.

The Anderson Cottage at the Old Soldiers' Home