

LINCOLN'S ROAD TO EMANCIPATION

A STORY OF BUILDING COALITIONS

When Abraham Lincoln assumed the presidency in March of 1861 he faced an uphill battle. Seven southern states had already seceded and formed their own nation, while just 39% of the population had given him their vote in the 1860 election. The story of Lincoln's success over the next four years – his ability to restore the Union while ending slavery – is one of **building coalitions** at its finest.

In June of 1862 Lincoln mused that if he were to announce a plan of emancipation at that time, “Half the army would lay down their arms and three other states would join the rebellion.” Yet, three months later, on September 22, 1862, Lincoln publicly unveiled his Preliminary Emancipation Proclamation to widespread acceptance. The story of what Lincoln did to build a coalition dedicated to emancipation – without suggesting that he was solely responsible for that effort – offers great insight into the building coalitions sub-competencies of **partnering, political savvy, and influencing/negotiating**.

Most people do not know that Abraham Lincoln drafted the Preliminary Emancipation Proclamation at the Anderson Cottage, an 1860s version of Camp David on the grounds of the Old Soldiers Home three miles north of the Capitol. The cottage is now open for tours and offers participants the opportunity to see where Lincoln drafted that momentous document as well as where he honed many of his other Leading People skills over the summers of 1862 to 1864. Our session begins in a classroom adjacent to the Anderson Cottage where we discuss Lincoln's careful building of the emancipation coalition. We then tour the cottage to see what additional insight this place offers before returning to the classroom to further reflect upon what we can learn from Abraham Lincoln about building coalitions.



The Anderson Cottage
at the Old Soldiers'
Home

