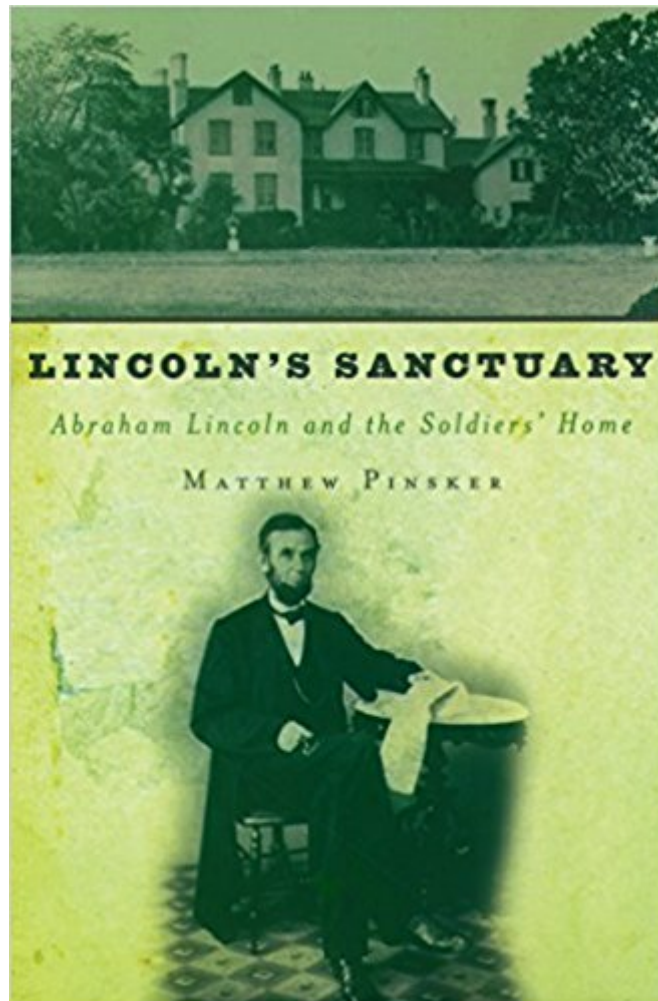


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Lincoln's Sanctuary: Abraham Lincoln And The Soldiers' Home



Synopsis

After the heartbreaking death of his son Willie, Abraham Lincoln and his family fled the gloom that hung over the White House, moving into a small cottage in Washington, D.C., on the grounds of the Soldiers' Home, a residence for disabled military veterans. In Lincoln's Sanctuary, historian Matthew Pinsker offers a fascinating portrait of Lincoln's stay in this cottage and tells the story of the president's remarkable growth as a national leader and a private man. Lincoln lived at the Soldiers' Home for a quarter of his presidency, and for nearly half of the critical year of 1862, but most Americans (including many scholars) have not heard of the place. Indeed, this is the first volume to specifically connect this early "summer White House" to key wartime developments, including the Emancipation Proclamation, the firing of McClellan, the evolution of Lincoln's "Father Abraham" image, the election of 1864, and the assassination conspiracy. Through a series of striking vignettes, the reader discovers a more accessible Lincoln, demonstrating what one visitor to the Soldiers' Home described as his remarkable "elasticity of spirits." At his secluded cottage, the president complained to his closest aides, recited poetry to his friends, reconnected with his wife and family, conducted secret meetings with his political enemies, and narrowly avoided assassination attempts. Perhaps most important, he forged key friendships that helped renew his flagging spirits. The cottage became a refuge from the pressures of the White House, a place of tranquility where Lincoln could refresh his mind. Based on research in rarely tapped sources, especially the letters and memoirs of people who lived or worked at the Soldiers' Home, Lincoln's Sanctuary offers the unexpected--a completely fresh view of Abraham Lincoln--through the window of a place that helped shape his presidency.

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Customer Reviews

In each of the years he served as President of the United States (minus the 11 southern states which seceded launching the Civil War!) President Abraham Lincoln, his wife Mary and family would journey to the Soldiers Retirement Home about 4 miles from the White House. Son Robert would visit on his trips home from Harvard. Youngest Lincoln son Tad enjoyed the Soldiers' Home where he had a menagerie of pets; got to know the guard troops from Pennsylvania, New York and Ohio stationed there. Wife Mary was often vacationing in New England or shopping in New York. In this atmosphere Lincoln enjoyed the camaraderie of soldiers; received visitors and enjoyed the company of Secretary of War Edwin M. Stanton living in a nearby cottage. It was in this location that the President agonized over his decision to issue the Emancipation Proclamation; decided to fire George B. McClellan and help plan the 1864 presidential campaign. Every day Lincoln would ride a horse to the White House surrounded by mounted cavalrymen. His wife Mary fell from her carriage in July, 1863 while traveling to the home. She was seriously injured. Pinsker tells us of plots against Lincoln's life. He may have even been fired upon by an unknown assassin according to a soldier who reported this incident in his postwar memoirs. Matthew Pinsker has written an outstanding book adding to our knowledge of the heretofore little known Lincoln residence at the Soldiers Home. The Home is now a National Landmark and is being renovated and opened for the public. One can imagine how awed poet Walt Whitman was as he saw Lincoln on his daily ride from the White House to the Soldiers Home.

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