



Lincoln's Citadel: The Civil War in Washington, DC

By Kenneth J. Winkle

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Lincoln's Citadel: The Civil War in Washington, DC By Kenneth J. Winkle

The stirring history of a president and a capital city on the front lines of war and freedom.

In the late 1840s, Representative Abraham Lincoln resided at Mrs. Sprigg's boardinghouse on Capitol Hill. Known as Abolition House, Mrs. Sprigg's hosted lively dinner-table debates of antislavery politics by the congressional boarders. The unusually rapid turnover in the enslaved staff suggested that there were frequent escapes north to freedom from Abolition House, likely a cog in the underground railroad. These early years in Washington proved formative for Lincoln.

In 1861, now in the White House, Lincoln could gaze out his office window and see the Confederate flag flying across the Potomac. Washington, DC, sat on the front lines of the Civil War. Vulnerable and insecure, the capital was rife with Confederate sympathizers. On the crossroads of slavery and freedom, the city was a refuge for thousands of contraband and fugitive slaves. The Lincoln administration took strict measures to tighten security and established camps to provide food, shelter, and medical care for contrabands. In 1863, a Freedman's Village rose on the grounds of the Lee estate, where the Confederate flag once flew.

The president and Mrs. Lincoln personally comforted the wounded troops who flooded wartime Washington. In 1862, Lincoln spent July 4 riding in a train of ambulances carrying casualties from the Peninsula Campaign to Washington hospitals. He saluted the "One-Legged Brigade" assembled outside the White House as "orators," their wounds eloquent expressions of sacrifice and dedication. The administration built more than one hundred military hospitals to care for Union casualties.

These are among the unforgettable scenes in *Lincoln's Citadel*, a fresh, absorbing narrative history of Lincoln's leadership in Civil War Washington. Here is the vivid story of how the Lincoln administration met the immense challenges the war posed to the city, transforming a vulnerable capital into a bastion for the Union.

8 pages of illustrations

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Editorial Review

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During the Civil War, Washington, D.C., was a boomtown. Against the distant sound of cannon fire, the city multiplied in size as various groups of people flowed in. Office seekers, military casualties, and escaping slaves lent the city a turbulent wartime sociology that Winkle probes. First, however, he depicts antebellum Washington during Abraham Lincoln's 1847–49 term in Congress. Recounting Lincoln's and fellow antislavery politicians' encounters with the peculiar institution, Winkle underscores the complicated legal conditions imposed on blacks, free and enslaved. He carries the legal scaffolding of D.C. slavery into the war years, when Congress abolished it by gradations, and details each step's ramifications on Washington's blacks and whites. Lincoln's personal and political part in these proceedings does not dominate but rather supplements Winkle's narratives of people drawn into the city as battle casualties or fugitives from slavery. His anecdotes of individual cases usefully illustrate his deployment of statistics about hospitals and refugee camps. Reminiscent of Margaret Leech's classic *Reveille in Washington* (1941), Winkle's history modernizes a story ever attractive to Civil War readers. --Gilbert Taylor

Review

"Well-researched and thoroughly engaging, Winkle's history is a welcome addition to a body of Civil War literature that too often privileges men and massacres." (Publishers Weekly)

"Eloquently chronicles the transformation of the capital wrought by the Civil War." (James M. McPherson, author of *War on the Waters: The Union and Confederate Navies, 1861–1865*)

"Kenneth Winkle has earned a reputation for original research, expert interpretation, and crackerjack storytelling, and all these attributes are on full display in *Lincoln's Citadel*. This is an invaluable addition to the Lincoln bookshelf." (Harold Holzer, chairman, Abraham Lincoln Bicentennial Foundation, and author of *Lincoln President-Elect*)

"A marvelous book?and a must-read!"" (Jay Winik, author of *April 1865*)

"A skillful portrait of the nation's capital as microcosm of a nation divided. A deep-reaching study of a city in wartime, which Washingtonians and visitors, to say nothing of students of the Civil War, will find to be of great interest" (Kirkus Reviews)

"Sets a new standard for research and insight into wartime Washington. Kenneth Winkle has taken the political intrigue of the nation's besieged capital and turned it into the setting for a remarkable series of human stories about the ordinary men and women who rallied to help President Lincoln save the Union." (Matthew Pinsker, author of *Lincoln's Sanctuary*)

About the Author

Kenneth J. Winkle, acclaimed Lincoln biographer and Civil War historian, is a professor of history at the University of Nebraska, Lincoln. *The Young Eagle*, his volume on Lincoln's rise, is the standard account.

Users Review

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Anderson Austin:

In this 21st one hundred year, people become competitive in each way. By being competitive today, people have to do something to make all of them survive, being in the middle of the particular crowded place and notice by surrounding. One thing that occasionally many people have underestimated this for a while is reading. That's why, by reading a book your ability to survive improve then having chance to stay than other is high. In your case who want to start reading a new book, we give you this kind of Lincoln's Citadel: The Civil War in Washington, DC book as basic and daily reading publication. Why, because this book is more than just a book.

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