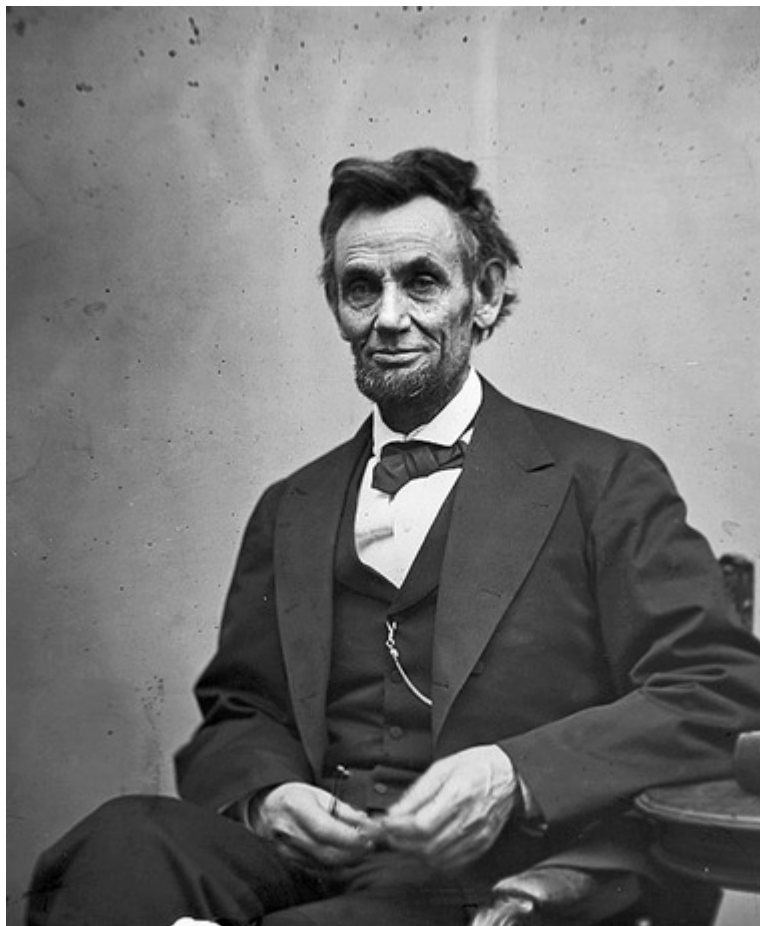


First version of Emancipation Proclamation, Martin Luther King speech on view in Syracuse Sept. 27

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President Abraham Lincoln signed the Preliminary Emancipation Proclamation on Sept. 22, 1863. It was issued as a military order to end slavery in 11 states in the Southern Confederacy. The handwritten document will be on view in Syracuse Sept. 27 at the Oncenter.

Abraham Lincoln's handwritten first version of the Emancipation Proclamation — which set slaves on the road to freedom — will be on display Sept. 27 at the Oncenter in Syracuse.

The document, called the **Preliminary Emancipation Proclamation**, will be on public view from 9 a.m. to 9 p.m. Issued on Sept. 22, 1862, during the civil war, this text marks the first time Lincoln set a date for freeing slaves in 11 states of the Southern Confederacy, if the states failed to return to the Union.

The historical document is part of a statewide traveling exhibition, "The First Step to Freedom: Abraham Lincoln's Preliminary Emancipation Proclamation," marking its 150th anniversary. At one time, the proclamation was owned by Central New York abolitionist Gerritt Smith.

The exhibition also will include the original manuscript of a speech by **Martin Luther King Jr.** delivered in 1962 in observance of the Emancipation Proclamation's 100th anniversary.

The **Onondaga Historical Association** is organizing the Syracuse stop of the exhibition's

eight-city statewide tour. New York State Museum used collections and images from the New York State Library and the New York State Archives for the exhibition.

The Preliminary Emancipation Proclamation was issued 150 years ago as America was engaged in civil war over slavery. On September 22, 1862, five days after a Union victory at the **Battle of Antietam**, Lincoln issued a Preliminary Emancipation Proclamation as a military order. He declared all slaves within Rebel territory — the 11

states of the Southern Confederacy — would be freed on Jan. 1, 1863, unless the states returned to the Union.

On New Year's Day, 1863, Lincoln signed the final Emancipation Proclamation. The handwritten 1862 Preliminary Proclamation is the only surviving copy of this document in Lincoln's hand. The president donated it to the U.S. Sanitary Commission which raffled the document at an **Albany Relief Bazaar** in 1864. Central New York abolitionist hero **Gerrit Smith** won it. The State Legislature later bought the document, which survived the State Capitol fire of 1911.

After the signing of the final proclamation, African-American residents in Syracuse wanted to celebrate with an "Emancipation Jubilee" at City Hall, but the request was denied because of expectations of trouble from local foes of Lincoln, according to OHA curator Dennis Connors. The celebration was moved to the Wesleyan Methodist Church on Columbus Circle, which today is the Mission Restaurant.

On Sept. 12, 1962, civil rights leader Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. delivered the speech in the exhibition to the New York State Civil War Centennial Commission. He said descendants of slaves were still waiting for full civil rights.

"He argued that the document proved that government could be a powerful force for social justice and urged Governor Nelson Rockefeller and President John F. Kennedy to hasten integration and progress towards full civil rights," according to an OHA press release.

THE DETAILS

What: An exhibition of Abraham Lincoln's handwritten 1862 Preliminary Emancipation Proclamation and an original manuscript of a speech given by Martin Luther King Jr. in 1962 on the 100th anniversary of the Emancipation Proclamation.

When: 9 a.m. to 9 p.m. Sept 27. Onondaga Historical Association Executive Director Gregg Tripoli will welcome visitors during a ribbon-cutting ceremony at 9 a.m.

Where: Nicholas J. Pirro Convention Center (Oncenter), 800 S. State St., Syracuse

Admission: Free

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