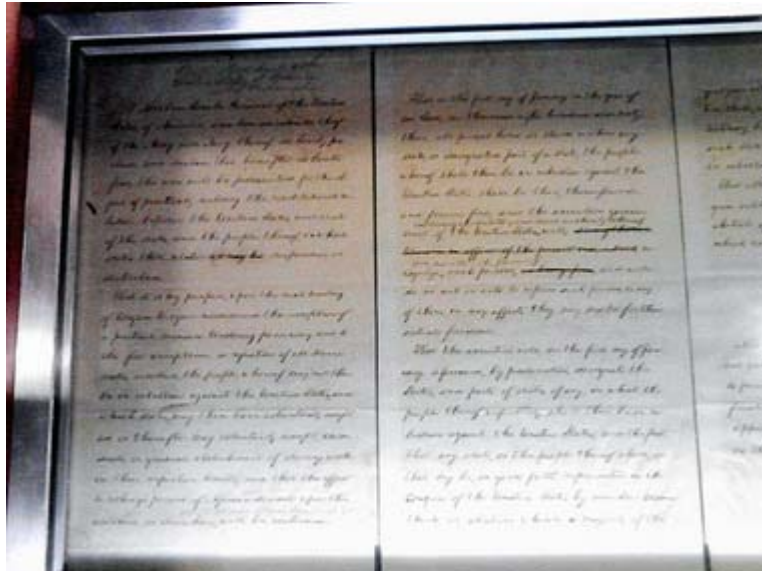


# Historical document on display in Syracuse may contain Lincoln's fingerprints

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By Rick Moriarty, The Post-Standard



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Officials of the New York State Library believe three smudges on the Preliminary Emancipation Proclamation may be President Abraham Lincoln's fingerprint. One of the smudges can be seen on the upper left side of the first page of the document.

President Abraham Lincoln not only left his fingerprint on history by freeing the slaves, he may have literally left it on his instrument of emancipation.

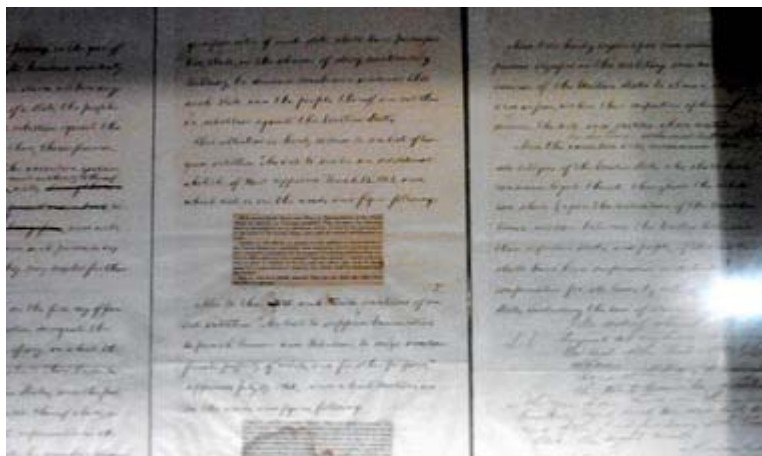
Officials of the New York State Library, which has possessed Lincoln's hand-written Preliminary Emancipation Proclamation since 1864, say they believe three smudges on the document are Lincoln's fingerprints.

The document, which will be on display in Syracuse on Thursday, was written by Lincoln in the summer of 1862 and issued on Sept. 22, announcing his intention to **free the slaves** in 100 days.

Lincoln apparently got a little ink on his fingers as he wrote the proclamation and inadvertently left

his fingerprints on it, library officials said.

The most obvious smudge is on the top left side of the first page of the four-page document. A close look reveals lines that resemble those of a fingerprint.



The smudges are among a number of interesting details that visitors to the exhibit will get to see.

Lincoln wrote the proclamation as a military order to avoid the likelihood of a successful court challenge accusing him of exceeding his constitutional authority. To make that clear, he cut out military articles of war and pasted them onto the document in two places.



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A smudge believed by state archivists to be President Abraham Lincoln's fingerprint appears in the middle of the third page of his hand-written Preliminary Emancipation Proclamation (shown as the middle page in this photograph).

And as if to emphasize the document's historical importance, Lincoln signed his full name rather than the usual "A. Lincoln."

Through an arrangement with the Onondaga Historical Association, the proclamation will be displayed in a special climate-controlled case from 9 a.m. to 9 p.m. at the Nicholas J. Pirro

Convention Center at 800 S. State St.

Part of an eight-city tour marking the document's 150th anniversary, the one-day exhibit is free and open to the public.

Loretta Ebert, director of the research library at the state Library, said the proclamation, which is in remarkably good condition for its age, is publicly displayed every several years but only rarely outside of Albany.

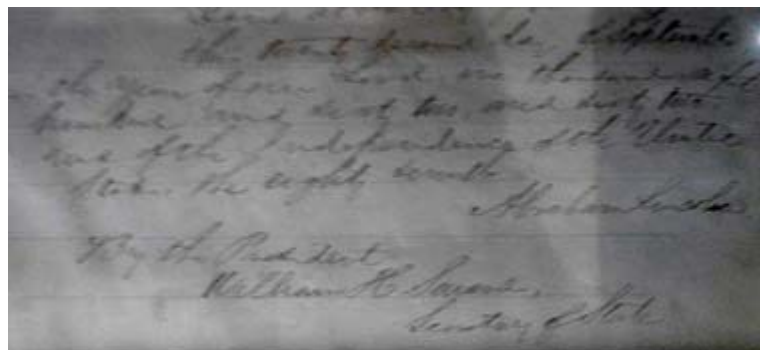
Also on display at the exhibit will be the original manuscript of a speech the Rev. Martin Luther King Jr. gave in 1962 on the proclamation's 100th anniversary.

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Lincoln signed his full name, rather than the usual "A. Lincoln," to the Preliminary Emancipation Proclamation. The signature below his is that of Auburn's William Seward, Lincoln's secretary of state.