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Thursday, September 27, 2012

History

9:00 AM - 9:00 PM, September 27

Traveling Exhibit: Abraham Lincoln's Preliminary Emancipation Proclamation

[Onondaga Historical Association](#)

Price: Free

OnCenter

800 South State St., Syracuse

To mark the sesquicentennial of Abraham Lincoln's Preliminary Emancipation Proclamation, a traveling exhibit will offer an unprecedented display of the document, written in Lincoln's own hand, in eight cities across New York State. **For one day only**, "The First [Step](#) to Freedom: Abraham Lincoln's Preliminary Emancipation Proclamation" exhibition will come to Syracuse. Also central to this exhibition will be Rev. Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr.'s original manuscript of a speech he delivered in 1962 in celebration of the Emancipation Proclamation's centennial. The documents included in this exhibition stand as important markers in the path to freedom for African Americans and are among New York State's greatest treasures.

A ribbon-cutting ceremony will be held at 9:00 am at the entrance to the exhibit at the Nicholas J. Pirro Convention Center. In attendance will be state and local officials. Welcoming remarks will be by Onondaga Historical Association Executive Director Gregg Tripoli.

"The First Step to Freedom: Abraham Lincoln's Preliminary Emancipation Proclamation exhibition" was designed and developed by the New York State Museum using collections and images from the New York State Library and the New York State Archives with the intention of having these unique documents available for viewing by New Yorkers in every region across the state. The exhibit launches a three-year commemoration of the sesquicentennial of the Civil War and Lincoln's issuance of the Preliminary Emancipation Proclamation on September 22, 1862.

Lincoln's handwritten 1862 Preliminary Proclamation is the only surviving copy of this document in the President's hand. Lincoln donated it to the U.S. Sanitary [Commission](#) which raffled the document at an Albany Army Relief Association Fair in 1864, where it was won by abolitionist hero Gerrit Smith, and later purchased by the New York State Legislature. Though Lincoln's final proclamation burned in the Chicago fire, this Preliminary Proclamation survived the State Capitol fire of 1911 and has been

preserved by the State Library.

On September 12, 1962, civil rights leader Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. delivered the speech contained in the exhibition to the New York State Civil War Centennial Commission. Dr. King contended that the 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.

For more information on the central New York stop of The First Step to Freedom: Abraham Lincoln's Preliminary Emancipation Proclamation, contact Lynne Pascale, Director of Development at OHA at 315-428-1864, ext. 314, lynne.pascale@cnyhistory.org, or visit the State Education website, EngageNY.org.

[Back](#)

[This week's events](#)

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