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Big crowds waited up to 3 hours to see Lincoln document in Syracuse

Published: Friday, September 28, 2012, 12:35 PM Updated: Friday, September 28, 2012, 2:08 PM



By **Rick Moriarty, The Post-Standard**



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Vanessa Glenn, her niece Natalie Glenn with her son Marques Spencer II, all of Syracuse, were among the 3,500 people who viewed the Preliminary Emancipation Proclamation in Syracuse on Thursday.

The Onondaga Historical Association estimates that 3,500 people viewed the Preliminary Emancipation Proclamation during its stop in Syracuse Thursday — far more than local or state officials anticipated.

The **exhibit** of the document hand-written by President Abraham Lincoln in 1862 was scheduled for a rare public showing from 9 a.m. to 9 p.m. at the Nicholas J. Pirro Convention Center. But at 9 p.m., a few hundred people were still waiting in line to see it.

Gregg Tripoli, the OHA's executive director, said officials from the New York State Library, which has possession of the four-page proclamation, brought only 2,200 brochures to hand out.

"They didn't really expect this sort of turnout," said Tripoli, whose organization sponsored the local showing.

He attributed the strong turnout to the fact that the document, the only surviving copy of the proclamation in Lincoln's own hand-writing, is rarely displayed to the public, especially outside of Albany.

"It just doesn't get out much," he said. "It was really inspiring to us to know that many people are interested in history. We're thrilled."

State Library officials agreed to keep the exhibit open until everyone who had entered the convention center by 9 p.m. had a chance to see the proclamation.

It took three and a half hours to get through the line. The exhibit did not close until the last person in line viewed the document at 12:20 a.m. today. State Library officials didn't have the exhibit packed up and on its way back to Albany under state police escort until 1:15 a.m., three hours behind schedule.



Tripoli said he would like to have had a two-day



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People waited in line for up to three and a half hours to see Abraham Lincoln's Preliminary Emancipation Proclamation Thursday at the Nicholas J. Pirro Convention Center in Syracuse.

exhibit. However, the library made the proclamation available for only one day in Syracuse, the second stop on an eight-city tour marking the document's 150th anniversary.

It wasn't just people from Central New York who came to see it. Tripoli said he talked to people who had come all the way from Georgia and California. They had learned of the exhibit from people they knew in Syracuse, he said.

Lincoln issued the document on Sept. 22, 1862, in the midst of the Civil War, announcing his intention to free the slaves in any rebellious state that did

not rejoin the Union within 100 days. When the Confederacy ignored his threat, he issued his final Emancipation Proclamation on Jan. 1, 1863.

Contact Rick Moriarty at rmoriarty@syracuse.com or (315) 470-3148. Follow him on Twitter at [RickMoriartyCNY](https://twitter.com/RickMoriartyCNY) and on Facebook at [rick.moriarty.92](https://www.facebook.com/rick.moriarty.92).

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