



President of the United States of
A Proclamation
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150th Anniversary

OF THE

EMANCIPATION PROCLAMATION

AT THE
NATIONAL ARCHIVES

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“ United States,
“ authority there
“ the freedom of
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THE EMANCIPATION PROCLAMATION

On January 1, 1863, as the nation entered its third year of civil war, President Abraham Lincoln issued the Emancipation Proclamation, declaring “that all persons held as slaves” within the rebellious states “are, and henceforward shall be free.”

Despite this expansive wording, the Emancipation Proclamation was limited in many ways. It applied only to states that had seceded from the Union, leaving slavery untouched in the loyal border states. It exempted many parts of the Confederacy that had already come under Union control. Most importantly, the freedom it promised depended upon Union military victory.



Although its effects were gradual, the Emancipation Proclamation fundamentally transformed the Civil War from a war to save the Union into a war for freedom. It placed the issue of slavery squarely atop the wartime agenda, adding moral force to the Union cause and strengthening the Union militarily and politically. After January 1, 1863,

every Union victory meant freedom for more people.

The Proclamation also announced the acceptance of black men into the Union Army and Navy, enabling the Union to draw additional manpower and encouraging recently freed slaves to join the fight to free others. By the end of the war, almost 200,000 black soldiers and sailors had fought for the Union and freedom.

Within two years of Lincoln’s proclamation, the states had ratified the 13th Amendment to the Constitution, formally outlawing slavery nationwide. In 1870, the 15th Amendment was ratified, giving African American men the right to vote.

Because of its pivotal role in slavery’s destruction and in the history of our nation, Lincoln’s Emancipation Proclamation is revered today as one of the great documents of human freedom.

Preserving the EMANCIPATION PROCLAMATION



The official Emancipation Proclamation, signed and sealed by President Abraham Lincoln 150 years ago, is held in trust for the American people by the National Archives. As one of the great records of our history, it continues to awe and inspire those who view it.

Many people ask why the Emancipation Proclamation is rarely displayed while the much older documents of our nation's founding—the Declaration of Independence, the Constitution of the United States, and the Bill of Rights—are available for viewing daily in the National Archives' Rotunda for the Charters of Freedom.

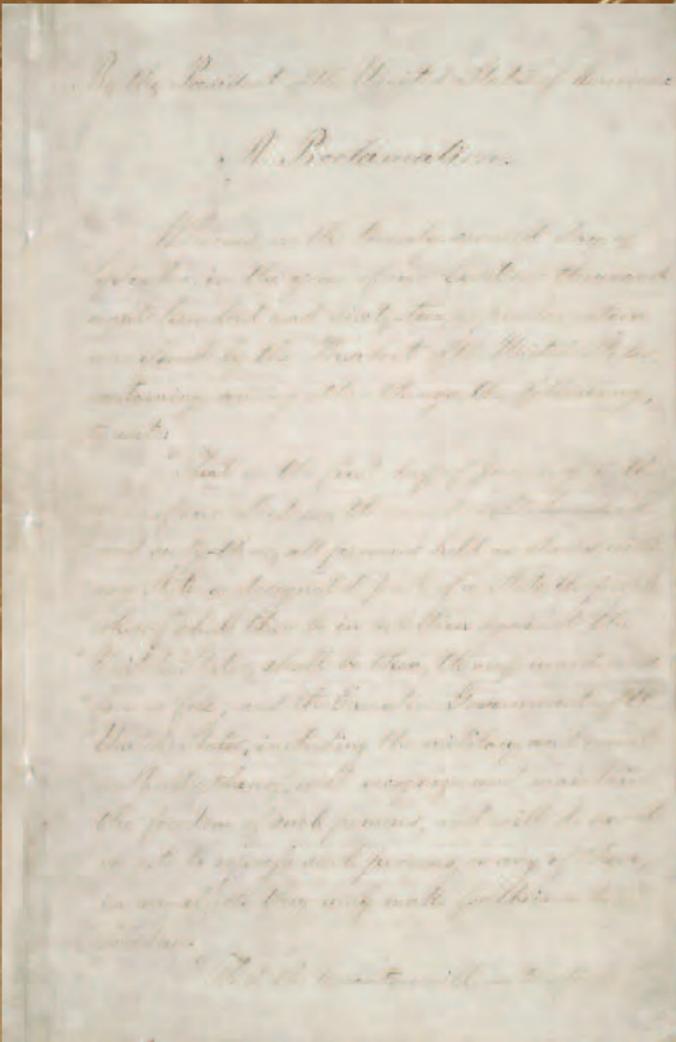
Unlike the Charters, which were written on very durable parchment made from animal skin and are now sealed in an inert gas environment to protect them, the Emancipation Proclamation was written on both sides of poor-quality 19th-century paper.

Since the State Department transferred the Emancipation Proclamation to the National Archives in 1936, the document has been carefully treated and the weak paper support has been mended and reinforced using the latest conservation techniques. But repeated handling and exposure to light had already taken their toll on the document.

To protect the original document from further damage, National Archives conservators work closely with the exhibition team to limit the Emancipation Proclamation's viewing to a few days each year. A high-resolution facsimile of the document is on permanent display in the National Archives' "Public Vaults" exhibition.

Through continued vigilance, the National Archives will be able to exhibit and also protect the Emancipation Proclamation so that it can be preserved for future generations to see.





THE EMANCIPATION PROCLAMATION

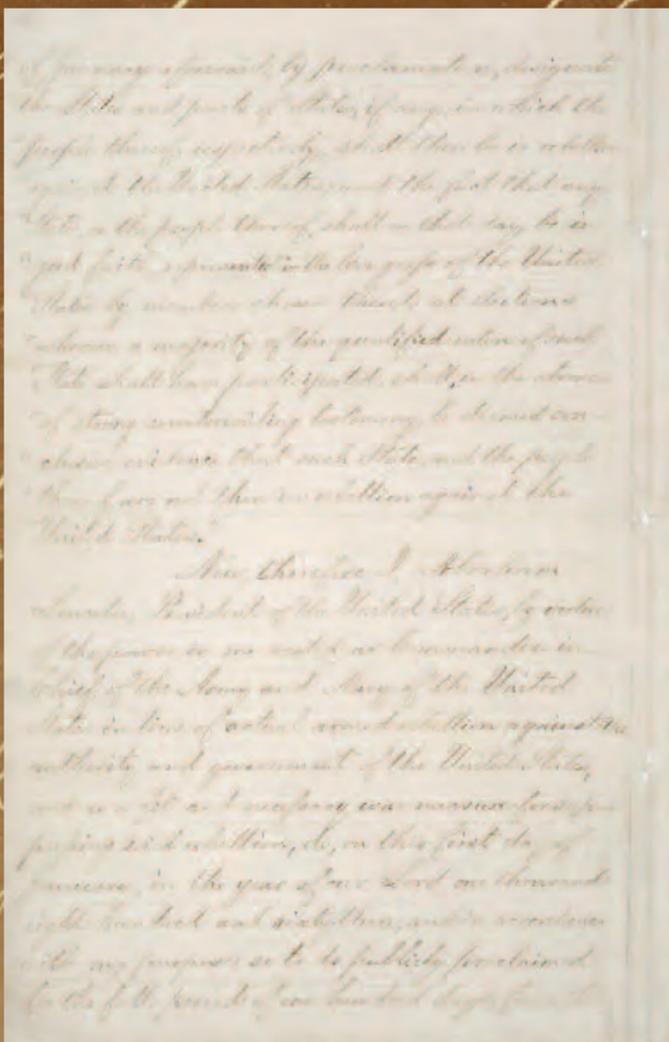
January 1, 1863

A Transcription

**By the President of the United States of America:
A Proclamation.**

Whereas, on the twenty-second day of September, in the year of our Lord one thousand eight hundred and sixty-two, a proclamation was issued by the President of the United States, containing, among other things, the following, to wit:

“That on the first day of January, in the year of our Lord one thousand eight hundred and sixty-three, all persons held as slaves within any State or designated part of a State, the people whereof shall then be in rebellion against the United States, shall be then, thenceforward, and forever free; and the Executive Government of the United States, including the military and naval authority thereof, will recognize and maintain the freedom of such persons, and will do no act or acts to repress such persons, or any of them, in any efforts they may make for their actual freedom.



“That the Executive will, on the first day of January aforesaid, by proclamation, designate the States and parts of States, if any, in which the people thereof, respectively, shall then be in rebellion against the United States; and the fact that any State, or the people thereof, shall on that day be, in good faith, represented in the Congress of the United States by members chosen thereto at elections wherein a majority of the qualified voters of such State shall have participated, shall, in the absence of strong countervailing testimony, be deemed conclusive evidence that such State, and the people thereof, are not then in rebellion against the United States.”

Now, therefore I, Abraham Lincoln, President of the United States, by virtue of the power in me vested as Commander-in-Chief, of the Army and Navy of the United States in time of actual armed rebellion against the authority and government of the United States, and as a fit and necessary war measure for suppressing said rebellion, do, on this first day of January, in the year of our Lord one thousand eight hundred and sixty-three, and in accordance with my purpose so to do publicly proclaimed for the full period of one hundred days, from the day first above mentioned, order and designate as the States and parts of States wherein the people thereof respectively, are this day in rebellion against the United States, the following, to wit:

day first were mentioned, and designat-
ed in the States and parts of States wherein the
people thereof respectively are, this day in solat-
ion against the United States, the following
to wit:

Arkansas, Texas, Louisiana, (except the
Parishes of St. Bernard, Plaquemines, Jefferson,
St. John, St. Charles, St. James, Ascension,
Assumption, Terrebonne, Lafourche, St. Mary, St.
Martin, and Orleans, including the City of New
Orleans) Mississippi, Alabama, Florida,
Georgia, South Carolina, North Carolina, and
Virginia, (except the forty-eight counties desig-
nated as West Virginia, and also the counties
of Berkley, Accomac, Northampton, Elizabeth
City, York, Princess Ann, and Norfolk, includ-
ing the cities of Norfolk and Portsmouth), and
which excepted parts are, for the present,
left precisely as if this proclamation were not
issued.

And by virtue of the power, and for the
purpose aforesaid, I do order and declare that
all persons held as slaves within said designat-
ed States, and parts of States, are, and hence-
forward shall be free; and that the Executive
government of the United States, including the
military and naval authorities thereof, will
recognize and maintain the freedom of said
persons.

Arkansas, Texas, Louisiana, (except the Parishes of St. Bernard, Plaquemines, Jefferson, St. John, St. Charles, St. James Ascension, Assumption, Terrebonne, Lafourche, St. Mary, St. Martin, and Orleans, including the City of New Orleans) Mississippi, Alabama, Florida, Georgia, South Carolina, North Carolina, and Virginia, (except the forty-eight counties designated as West Virginia, and also the counties of Berkley, Accomac, Northampton, Elizabeth City, York, Princess Ann, and Norfolk, including the cities of Norfolk and Portsmouth[)], and which excepted parts, are for the present, left precisely as if this proclamation were not issued.

And by virtue of the power, and for the purpose aforesaid, I do order and declare that all persons held as slaves within said designated States, and parts of States, are, and henceforward shall be free; and that the Executive government of the United States, including the military and naval authorities thereof, will recognize and maintain the freedom of said persons.

And I hereby enjoin upon the people so declared to be free to abstain from all violence, unless in necessary self-defence; and I recommend to them that, in all cases when allowed, they labor faithfully for reasonable wages.

And I further declare and make known, that such persons of

...the United States, and that the
...the military and naval authorities, and
...the Secretary of State, and the Secretary of the
...Department of the Interior.

And I hereby require upon the people in
...to be free to abstain from all violence,
...in support of the Government, and I encourage
...to that effect, in all cases where allowed,
...they labor faithfully for reasonable wages.

And I further declare and make known
...that such persons of suitable condition, will
...be received into the armed service of the United
...States to garrison forts, positions, stations, and
...other places, and to man vessels of all sorts in
...said service.

And upon this act, sincerely believed to be
...an act of justice, warranted by the Constitution,
...upon military necessity, I invoke the considerate
...judgment of mankind, and the gracious
...favor of Almighty God.

In witness whereof, I have hereunto set my hand
...and caused the seal of the United States to be
...affixed.

Done at the City of Washington, this first day of January, in the year
...of our Lord one thousand eight hundred and sixty three, and of the
...Independence of the United States of America the eighty-seventh.

By the President:
Abraham Lincoln
Secretary of State

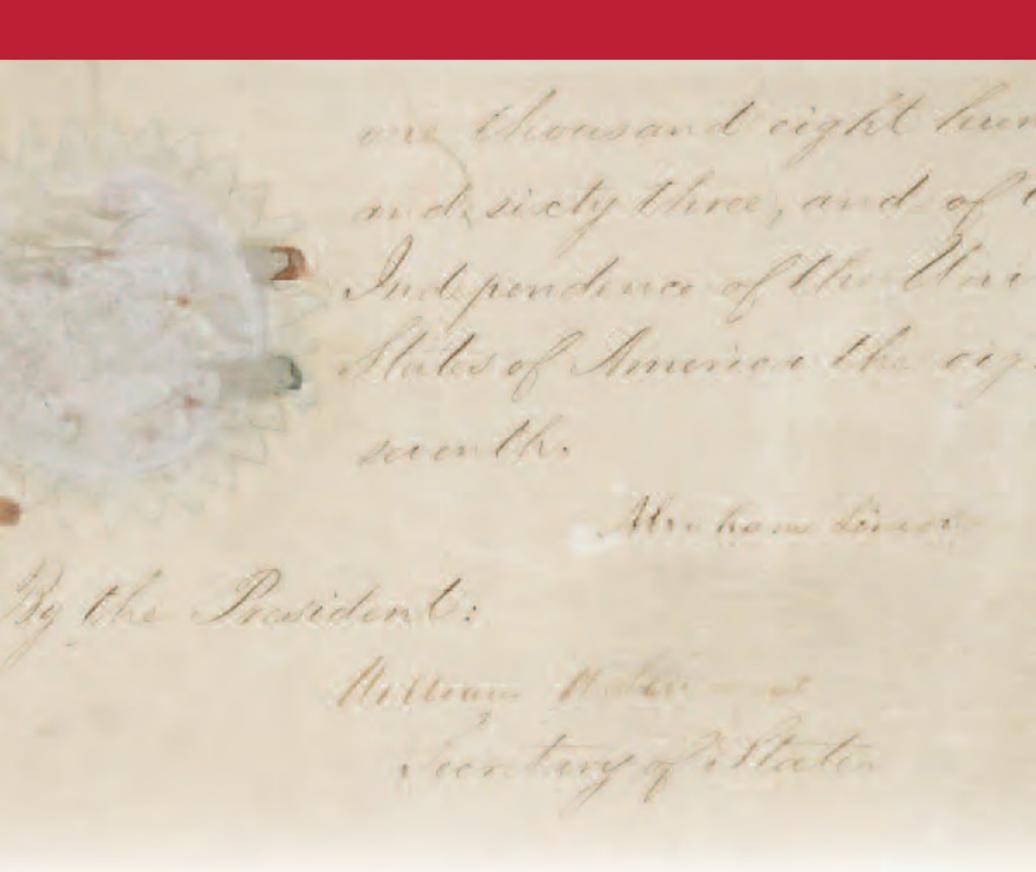
suitable condition, will be received into the armed service of the United States to garrison forts, positions, stations, and other places, and to man vessels of all sorts in said service.

And upon this act, sincerely believed to be an act of justice, warranted by the Constitution, upon military necessity, I invoke the considerate judgment of mankind, and the gracious favor of Almighty God.

In witness whereof, I have hereunto set my hand and caused the seal of the United States to be affixed.

Done at the City of Washington, this first day of January, in the year of our Lord one thousand eight hundred and sixty three, and of the Independence of the United States of America the eighty-seventh.

By the President:
ABRAHAM LINCOLN
WILLIAM H. SEWARD, Secretary of State.



All Emancipation Proclamation anniversary events will be held at the National Archives Building in Washington, DC, on Constitution Avenue at 9th Street, NW. The building is Metro accessible on the Yellow and Green lines, Archives/Navy Memorial/Penn Quarter station.

To verify program dates and times, call the National Archives Public Programs Line at: 202-357-5000, or view the Calendar of Events online at www.archives.gov/calendar

**The 150th anniversary celebration of the
Emancipation Proclamation
is presented in part by the Verizon Foundation.**



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