



# News Release

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## **The Lincoln connection extends to Hawaii**

### ***Rare Lincoln document related to the Emancipation Proclamation confirmed in the current President's birth state of Hawaii***

*HONOLULU* – Abraham Lincoln never visited Hawaii, but a rare document he signed concerning the Emancipation Proclamation has been confirmed in the Hawaii State Archives by the director of The Papers of Abraham Lincoln, a project of the Abraham Lincoln Presidential Library and Museum in Springfield, Illinois.

“In the birth state of our current president, our first African-American president, it is fascinating to find a document that began the process of emancipation for all African Americans,” said Dr. Daniel W. Stowell, the director of the Papers of Abraham Lincoln.

The one-page document, which authorized the Secretary of State to affix the seal of the United States to the Preliminary Emancipation Proclamation, was partially printed and partially filled in by a clerk, then signed by Lincoln. The document reads:

I hereby authorize and direct the Secretary of State to affix the Seal of the United States to my Proclamation of this date and signed by me and for so doing, this shall be his warrant.

Abraham Lincoln.  
Washington, 22<sup>nd</sup> September, 1862.

Most of the document is printed. Only “my Proclamation of this date” and “22<sup>nd</sup> September, 1862” were written by a clerk, and the signature was written by Lincoln. The document does not specify which proclamation, but since the Preliminary Emancipation Proclamation was the only proclamation issued on that date, researchers are confident that this order refers to it.

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President Lincoln issued the Preliminary Emancipation Proclamation as a war measure, and he gave the seceded states three months to return to the Union to avoid military emancipation of their slaves. This document, issued just days after the Union victory at Antietam, began the process of the destruction of slavery by declaring that all enslaved persons in states still in rebellion on January 1, 1863, would be “forever free.” The ratification of the Thirteenth Amendment to the Constitution in December 1865 completed the destruction of slavery within the United States.

The simple order directing the Secretary of State to affix the seal of the United States to the proclamation gave the president’s action the force of law. Such orders often accompanied diplomatic correspondence and presidential pardons for the same purpose. How this order got into the Hawaii State Archives remains a mystery, although it appears to have been there at least as early as 1935. In the 1860s, Hawaii was an independent kingdom with diplomatic and trading ties to the United States; its 1852 constitution had prohibited slavery in the islands.

“Of the four Lincoln documents at the Hawaii State Archives, the letter of condolences from Lincoln to Kamehameha V on the death of his brother Kamehameha IV has been the document of greatest importance to us as it contains very personal remarks from a remarkable American President to the Monarch of Hawaii,” said Hawaii State Archivist Susan Shaner. “Not being Lincoln scholars, we had no inkling that the seemingly insignificant document dated September 22, 1862 was once associated with the Preliminary Emancipation Proclamation. We are pleasantly surprised and excited to learn of the significance of this rare document and are grateful to Dr. Daniel W. Stowell for his work in identifying this document.”

The Hawaii State Archives in Honolulu has four documents signed by Lincoln. Besides the document referring to the Preliminary Emancipation Proclamation, the others are an appointment of a counsel to the Kingdom of Hawaii; a letter to King Kamehameha IV; and a letter to King Kamehameha V.

The Chicago History Museum owns a document similar to the one confirmed at the Hawaii State Archives - it is dated January 1, 1863, the same date as the final Emancipation Proclamation, and similarly authorizes the fixing of the U.S. seal to that document. The Preliminary Emancipation Proclamation in Lincoln’s hand is owned by the New York State Library in Albany, along with a nineteenth-century photograph of the final Emancipation Proclamation signed by Lincoln. The original Emancipation Proclamation was destroyed while stored in a supposedly “fireproof” building during the Chicago Fire of 1871.

The Papers of Abraham Lincoln is a long-term project dedicated to identifying, imaging, transcribing, annotating, and publishing all documents written by or to Abraham Lincoln during his entire lifetime. The project has thus far identified more than 53,000 documents written by or to Abraham Lincoln in more than 450 repositories and private collections in forty-five different states. The Center for State Policy and Leadership at the University of Illinois at Springfield and the Abraham Lincoln Association serve as the project’s cosponsors. Visit [www.papersofabrahamlincoln.org](http://www.papersofabrahamlincoln.org) for more information.

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