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## President Lincoln Finds a Permanent Seat on Campus: The Dedication of the New Abraham Lincoln Statue Outside Stevens Hall

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# President Lincoln Finds a Permanent Seat on Campus: The Dedication of the New Abraham Lincoln Statue Outside Stevens Hall

## **Abstract**

Students, faculty, and visitors to Gettysburg College have likely noticed the most recent addition to our campus. Last Friday, a brand new bronze statue of President Abraham Lincoln was dedicated outside Stevens Hall. The statue, which stands nine feet tall, depicts a seated President Lincoln signing the Emancipation Proclamation and was designed by Stanley Watts, who also designed the Lincoln statue outside the Gettysburg Public Library on Baltimore Street. The statue unveiling comes almost 153 years to the day when President Lincoln issued the preliminary Emancipation Proclamation, which gave the Confederate States 100 days to return to the Union before emancipation would become law [*excerpt*].

## **Keywords**

The Gettysburg Compiler, Civil War, 150th Anniversary, Gettysburg, Civil War Memory, Sesquicentennial, Abraham Lincoln, Abraham Lincoln dedication statue

## **Disciplines**

History | Political History | Public History | United States History

## **Comments**

This blog post originally appeared in [The Gettysburg Compiler](#) and was created by students at Gettysburg College.

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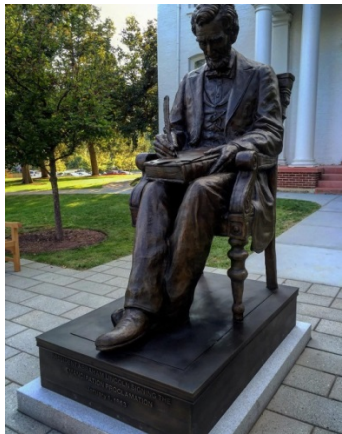
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### President Lincoln Finds a Permanent Seat on Campus: The Dedication of the New Abraham Lincoln Statue Outside Stevens Hall

*September 21, 2015*

*By Jeff Lauck '18*

Students, faculty, and visitors to Gettysburg College have likely noticed the most recent addition to our campus. Last Friday, a brand new bronze statue of President Abraham Lincoln was dedicated outside Stevens Hall. The statue, which stands nine feet tall, depicts a seated President Lincoln signing the Emancipation Proclamation and was designed by Stanley Watts, who also designed the Lincoln statue outside the Gettysburg Public Library on Baltimore Street. The statue unveiling comes almost 153 years to the day when President Lincoln issued the preliminary Emancipation Proclamation, which gave the Confederate States 100 days to return to the Union before emancipation would become law.



The brand new Abraham Lincoln statue was just dedicated outside Stevens Hall. Stay tuned for a new blog post on it by yours truly on the Gettysburg Compiler!

A photo posted by Jeffrey Lauck (@jeffreylauck) on Sep 18, 2015 at 3:16pm PDT

The statue dedication was preceded by a luncheon and panel discussion on the significance and legacy of the Emancipation Proclamation. Dr. Michael Birkner moderated the panel, which featured Dr. Scott Hancock, Dr. Jill Oglie Titus, and Dr. Peter S. Carmichael. Dr. Carmichael began the discussion by explaining the context for the Emancipation Proclamation. According to

Dr. Carmichael, as the war carried on, Lincoln realized that slavery was severely undermining the Union war effort and that emancipation was therefore a necessary tool to achieve victory. On September 22, 1862, a few days after the Union victory at Antietam, he issued the preliminary Emancipation Proclamation. Upon issuing the final document on January 1, 1863, Lincoln declared: "I never, in my life, have felt more certain that I was doing right, than I do in signing this paper."

Dr. Hancock followed Dr. Carmichael, explaining how the Emancipation Proclamation granted the right of freedom to slaves and paved the way for additional rights in the future. Citing Stokely Carmichael, Dr. Hancock also cautioned us to dismiss the notion that white men bestowed freedom onto slaves and the accompanying implications that African Americans should feel indebted to white politicians. Dr. Titus added to the discussion with an analysis of the Emancipation Proclamation in memory. She compared the centennial celebration of the Civil War to the recent sesquicentennial commemoration. According to Dr. Titus, the Civil War centennial was used as a tool for martial celebration and nationalism in the face of the threat posed by the USSR. The theme of the sesquicentennial, however, emphasized "the war as a rebirth of freedom." Dr. Birkner closed the discussion by remarking that "Lincoln was the beginning and not the end of questions raised by the Civil War."

The statue was formally dedicated later that day in a ceremony outside Stevens Hall. Dr. Titus once again spoke, reminding the audience of the significance of the Emancipation Proclamation and highlighting that the process of emancipation began long before its signing, with the efforts of many slaves through escape and other means of retaliation. Bruce Gordon, a Gettysburg alumnus and former president of the NAACP, spoke next, emphasizing that the struggle for black equality and liberty has been a long road and that it continues to this day. The statue's donor, Scott Higgins, another Gettysburg alumnus, then spoke, adding that he hoped the statue would promote the discussion of race relations in America today. Gettysburg College President Janet Morgan Riggs then thanked Scott and his family for their generous donation and officially dedicated the statue.



Associate Director Jill Titus gave remarks this afternoon at the dedication of the new Lincoln statue outside Stevens Hall #gburpod #Lincoln #gettysburggreat #americanhistory

A photo posted by Civil War Institute (@cwi\_gc) on Sep 18, 2015 at 1:11pm PDT

<http://gettysburgcompiler.com/2015/09/21/president-lincoln-finds-a-permanent-seat-on-campus-the-dedication-of-the-new-abraham-lincoln-statue-outside-stevens-hall/>