



# XAVIER

UNIVERSITY of LOUISIANA

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*Xavier students soak in history while viewing the traveling Smithsonian Institute exhibit "Changing America: The Emancipation Proclamation, 1863 and the March on Washington, 1963" which is currently on display in the main foyer of the Xavier University of Louisiana Library Resource Center.*

## **SMITHSONIAN TRAVELING EXHIBIT ON THE EMANCIPATION PROCLAMATION AND THE MARCH ON WASHINGTON DISPLAY AT XAVIER UNIVERSITY OF LOUISIANA LIBRARY RESOURCE CENTER**

New Orleans LA - Step into the main foyer of Xavier University of Louisiana Library Resource Center, veer right and there you will see traveling exhibits from the Smithsonian Institute

entitled; "Changing America: The Emancipation Proclamation, 1863 and the March on Washington, 1963."

"We are pleased to have been selected as a site for the exhibitions," said Lynette Ralph, library director. "The dramatic story of how these two pivotal events came into being, a century apart and how each helped put the nation on a course toward fulfilling its commitment to liberty and justice for all, is one that can inspire all Americans. Decades of work, struggle and sacrifice by many dedicated individuals and groups preceded both of these events. The exhibitions tell the story of these struggles and their impact on American history and on the extension of equal rights to all Americans."

The exhibits are a collage of photos and sayings of actual events that occurred during a tumultuous time in American history where freedom and equal rights for people of color hung in the balance.

According to Irwin Lachoff, associate archivist in the Archives, the exhibits were shown in 50 venues before arriving on campus and will remain until May 5. The next stop is Alabama.

The collection was made possible by Lachoff who applied four years ago to the American Library Association and was recently awarded a \$1,700 National Endowment for the Humanities grant.

"I'm a history major, especially the civil war and I thought our campus would find it interesting," he said.

Xavier students, faculty, staff and the public attended a reception on March 22 for the official arrival of the prized pieces. Dr. Ronald Doris, professor of English spoke about what the exhibits mean today.

"I had no idea that in the constitution, it was prohibited to ban slavery," said Dallas-native, Ayanna Brown a freshman majoring in business sales and marketing. "Abe Lincoln used an executive order to protect the citizens, particularly the slaves."

"This was really an eye-opener for me," said Baton Rouge native, Mikayla Bates a junior majoring in accounting. "I gain some valuable information about my history."

On September 22, 1862, President Abraham Lincoln issued the preliminary Emancipation Proclamation which ordered that as of January 1, 1863, all enslaved individuals in all areas still in rebellion against the United States 'henceforward shall be free,' and under the protection of the military.

The U.S. Congress responded with Constitutional amendments abolishing slavery, expanding citizenship rights and giving Black men the right to vote.

According to some historians, the emancipation set the stage for the national push for freedom in the 20<sup>th</sup> century. On August 28, 1963, an estimated 250,000 Americans gathered at the Lincoln Memorial in the District of Columbia to mark the 100<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the Emancipation Proclamation.

In the months following the march, demonstrations and violence continued to pressure political leaders to act and eventually the Civil Rights Act of 1964 and the Voting Rights Act of 1965 became law.

Lachoff said having the exhibits is a well-spent investment; an investment that is sure to have a profound impact on Xavier's students for generations.

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