

Free Admission Saturday At Abraham Lincoln Presidential Library And Museum For Gettysburg Address Anniversary

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Abraham Lincoln

PRESIDENTIAL LIBRARY AND MUSEUM

SPRINGFIELD – An original, handwritten edition of the Gettysburg Address is going on display at the Abraham Lincoln Presidential Library and Museum, which will offer free admission Nov. 19, the anniversary of Lincoln's historic speech.

The presidential library's copy of the Gettysburg Address will be exhibited Nov. 18 through Nov. 28. After that, it returns to a climate-controlled vault for safekeeping.

To give more people the opportunity to appreciate this powerful document, admission to the museum will be free on Nov. 19, the 159th anniversary of Lincoln delivering the speech at a military cemetery in Gettysburg, Pa.

The Gettysburg Address is not just Abraham Lincoln's most famous speech, it's one of the most famous speeches ever given. Its stirring prose and historic impact have been studied by everyone from schoolchildren to scholars.

"In 272 powerful words, Abraham Lincoln captured the pain of the Civil War and the truth of what was at stake: a new birth of freedom," said Christina Shutt, executive director of the Abraham Lincoln Presidential Library and Museum. "This handwritten copy of his address is a national treasure. We hope offering free admission allows more people to appreciate it in person."

The display includes features to assist people with visual impairments. By scanning QR codes with their mobile phones, visitors will be able to hear a reading of the speech and the display label that explains the speech's significance or see an easy-to-read text version of the speech.

For anyone who can't visit in person, the ALPLM offers a webpage (www.PresidentLincoln.Illinois.gov/gettysburgaddress) that provides an up-close look at the presidential library's copy of the speech, explaining its history and how it differs from other copies. It also examines the meaning and impact of Lincoln's words. Just click on key words in the speech and up pop boxes full of helpful information.

The page also includes educational resources for teachers and parents, a photo gallery and links to other sources of information about the address.

The State of Illinois has owned this edition of the address, known as the Everett Copy, since 1944, when the state's children helped raise money to buy it from private owners. It is one of just five surviving copies written by Lincoln himself.

Lincoln delivered the Gettysburg Address on Nov. 19, 1863, at the dedication of a national cemetery for the thousands of Union soldiers killed at the Battle of Gettysburg. It opens with the famous phrase "Four score and seven years ago" and finishes by describing the Civil War as a battle to preserve government "of the people, by the people, for the people."

"Most people know a few famous phrases from the Gettysburg Address, but they haven't thought much about what the words mean or how they influenced the nation's ideals.

Seeing the document in person offers a rare chance to connect personally and reflect on what it asks of us as individuals and as a country,” said Brian Mitchell, the ALPLM’s director of research and interpretation.

