The Dickinson & Slavery initiative began as an outgrowth of a course on American slavery taught in fall 2017 by Professor Matthew Pinsker, director of the House Divided Project. Over the next few years, various students, faculty and staff members increasingly devoted themselves to finding out more information about the college’s long history with slavery and antislavery. In early 2019, the House Divided Project launched a permanent exhibit at its studio. Later in that year, it also produced a comprehensive report for the community. By spring 2020, the college trustees endorsed a plan to begin renaming select buildings on campus to honor Dickinson’s diverse past, including recognition of the formerly enslaved people who made notable contributions to the college.

The House Divided Project at Dickinson College began in 2005 as a wide-ranging effort to create multimedia classroom resources that could help teachers and students commemorate the 150th anniversary of the Civil War (2011-15) and Reconstruction (2015-27). The project’s YouTube channel now has over 1 million views, and more than 5,000 K-12 educators from 48 states have participated in training sessions with director Matthew Pinsker. America’s Civil War magazine has praised House Divided as “one of the most compelling sesquicentennial online projects.”

House Divided Project
PO Box 1773 / 61 N. West Street
Dickinson College, Carlisle, PA 17013
hdivided@dickinson.edu
717-245-1865

STOP 1 Slavery & Dickinson’s Founding
Marker describes contributions of enslaved people to the college’s founding and the contradictory views of the founders regarding slavery.
Location: Old West

STOP 2 Dred Scott Case
Marker explains the role of Dickinsonians on both sides in the controversial Dred Scott Case (1857).
Location: Behind East College

STOP 3 House Divided Studio
Outdoor markers and murals help commemorate the role of free Blacks and formerly enslaved people in Dickinson history.
Location: 61 N. West Street

STOP 4 Pinkney Gate
Marker honors both Carrie and Noah Pinkney, popular Carlisle food sellers during the late 19th and early 20th century.
Location: West Street, facing East College

STOP 5 Black Employees
Marker highlights the contributions of various Black employees during the late 19th and early 20th century.
Location: Bosler Hall

STOP 6 Spradley-Young Hall
Banner marks the rededication of this residence hall in honor of Henry W. Spradley and Robert C. Young, two longtime employees of the college and noted community leaders.
Location: Former Cooper Hall, High Street
Robert Young was a formerly enslaved man who worked for decades at the college as a janitor and security officer. He also fought bravely to get his son admitted to the school as a student in the 1880s.