

Opening Quotes

Directions: Read the selected quotes from *Lincoln's Dilemma*. Choose the one that most closely reflects your current point of view on the relevance of studying Lincoln, emancipation, and the Civil War today.

Quote One

"For me, it's important that we understand who our leaders have been, where they succeeded, where they failed. It's important to understand what the institution of slavery was really about. It's important to understand what the Civil War did and didn't. It's important to understand our history from Reconstruction until the 1960s. It's important to understand what the experience of Blackness and being a person of color is like in this country today. With that understanding, I think we can get where we're trying to go."

– Bryan Stevenson

Quote Two

"So, part of me, even as my admiration [for Lincoln] developed, I also felt this simultaneous need to tamp down a little bit on the hyperbole, right? He didn't free all the slaves with the stroke of his pen, he wasn't a bloodthirsty monster, he wasn't a reactionary white supremacist, he wasn't any of these extreme things that we say of him. And he didn't have the power to do the kinds of things that we sometimes attribute to him, but was he as great as the president gets? Yeah, he was. He really was."

– James Oakes

Quote Three

"Slavery is an indelible stain that has saturated so many parts of American life, that in many ways, it's hard to separate from how we see America today.

I think part of being an American citizen is critiquing the system under which we live. The founders surely did it with one another. And in many ways it makes our democracy run. And so, I think it's a crucial part of American life and American citizenship."

– Justene Hill Edwards