



LINCOLN'S DILEMMA

LESSON FOUR - LINCOLN'S RELEVANCE TODAY + FINAL PROJECT



ESSENTIAL QUESTIONS

- **Why has Abraham Lincoln remained such an important and relevant American president?**
- **How does *Lincoln's Dilemma* add to our knowledge about Abraham Lincoln, the Civil War, and our nation's struggle for freedom *and* equality?**

In this lesson, students will watch excerpts from the fourth episode of *Lincoln's Dilemma* and the Interview Archive, reflect on Abraham Lincoln and the role he continues to play in our collective memory, and consider how they would represent his role in the period of the Civil War and emancipation by completing a final project titled "America's Struggle for Freedom *and* Equality."



LESSON OBJECTIVES

Students will:

- **Listen** to and learn from historians discussing why it remains important to study Lincoln and his leadership during the Civil War
- **Synthesize** their learning and support with clear evidence why Lincoln remains such an important figure in American history
- **Complete** a final project that demonstrates their understanding of the dynamics and complexity of this period of American history



Two 55-minute class periods plus time outside of class to complete the final project.



American Studies,
African American
History, US History
(Honors/AP),
Government (Honors/
AP)



- Equipment to screen film clips and interview threads
- Copies of Handouts:
 - Handout One: Opening Quotes
 - Handout Two: *Lincoln's Dilemma* Learning Log
 - Handout Three: Film Clips Transcript
 - Handouts Four, Five, and Six: Interview Thread Transcripts

ACTIVITIES



“
Being American is more than a pride we inherit,
it’s the past we step into
and how we repair it
We’ve seen a force that would shatter our nation
rather than share it
Would destroy our country if it meant delaying
democracy
And this effort very nearly succeeded
”

AMANDA GORMAN
FROM PRESIDENT BIDEN’S INAUGURAL POEM “THE HILL WE CLIMB”¹

¹ <https://www.nytimes.com/2021/01/19/books/amanda-gorman-inauguration-hill-we-climb.html>



OPENING

Organize students into small groups of three or four students

Distribute Handout One: Opening Quotes

Have students independently read the quotes and choose one that is most closely aligned with their own perspective.



DISCUSS

- > What do these quotes express about the importance of studying Abraham Lincoln and the Civil War?
- > How do you think the events of that time relate to what is happening in our nation today?



Distribute and review Handout Two: *Lincoln's Dilemma* Learning Log

Give students a few minutes to record their thoughts.

A CLOSE VIEW: INTERVIEW THREADS



Teacher Note: The filmmakers conducted over 30 interviews to produce *Lincoln's Dilemma*. The full interviews are available in the [Interview Archive on the Kunhardt Film Foundation website](#). A selection of these interviews, edited together here to create *Interview Threads* and aligned to the specific lesson topic, are available for your students' learning.

Explain to students that they are going to continue learning about different perspectives on Lincoln's administration through completing a [jigsaw model](#) using three Interview Threads as the "text" to study. Students can follow along and take notes using the transcripts available in Handouts Three, Four, and Five.

Step One

Using a jigsaw model split students into groups of three. (Remember Jigsaw works best when you have the same number of students in each team.)

- **Thread One: The Second Inaugural and the Meaning of the Civil War**
In this thread, historians discuss Lincoln's second inaugural address and the impact it may have had on how we perceive the meaning of the Civil War, the pathway of Reconstruction, and their legacy today.
- **Thread Two: The Complexity of Abraham Lincoln**
Historians present different perspectives on why Lincoln took the positions he did, how he evolved over time, and the influences on his actions.
- **Thread Three: Why a Nuanced View of History Matters**
In this thread, historians discuss how our perceptions of Lincoln have changed over time, and what the stories we tell about history reveal about who we are today.

Step Two

Assign one student to an individual Interview Thread and distribute the relevant Interview Thread Transcript.

Step Three

Have students watch their Interview Thread underlining details that catch their attention and jot down questions and insights that come to mind.

Step Four

Have "Expert" groups get together to share what they learned from their historians. For example, all students who watched Thread One will come together and prepare a short presentation to share in the jigsaw group using these prompts:

- What was the main idea of your Interview Thread?
- What perspectives did the historians offer on Lincoln's actions, administration, or legacy?
- In what ways did they suggest that Lincoln and this time period have relevance today?

**Remind students the importance of expert groups preparing themselves well so that everyone can learn from all of the Threads.*



Step Five

Students return to their original Jigsaw group to share their presentation.

After completing the exercise, offer students time to record their thoughts and reflections in their Learning Log.

ANALYZING FILM AS TEXT



Teacher Note: Transition to sharing with students that they will be watching two clips from Episode Four of *Lincoln's Dilemma*. Let students know that Episode Four chronicles the end of the Civil War, Lincoln's re-election in 1864, the passage of the 13th Amendment abolishing slavery, and Lincoln's assassination in 1865.

Remind students to use **Handout Three: Film Clips Transcript** to follow along, underlining or highlighting ideas, names, or concepts that stand out as important, or that spark curiosity.

At the end of both clips, have students use the discussion prompts in pairs or small groups.

Clip One: A Welcoming Physical Geography (3:09)

This clip discusses the controversy around the creation and removal of Confederate monuments across the country. It also introduces the thinking behind the construction and meaning of the Lincoln Memorial in Washington, D.C.

Clip Two: Remembering Our History (3:11)

This clip features different historians' perspectives on how Lincoln can be remembered.

Divide the class into small group or pairs and have them discuss these questions:



DISCUSS

- What did you notice or learn from these clips about historical monuments and memorials?
- Why do you think memorials matter in the landscape of a nation?
- What different perspectives did you hear about how Lincoln has been represented and remembered in our history?

Offer students time to record their thoughts in their Learning Log.



TRANSITION TO FINAL PROJECT

Step One

Have students collect their four Learning Logs and review their notes.

After students have finished, explain the following:

(Sample Script)

"Congratulations class! You have been selected to be part of a committee tasked to create a new site of public memory in your city. Be creative and thoughtful – your memorial or monument can take any form and be located anywhere you like. It can be made of any material. The only limitation is that it will be called "America's Struggle for Freedom and Equality."

As a class, watch **Thread Four: Memorializing the Struggle for Freedom and Equality**. Students can follow along using the transcripts in **Handout Six**.



DISCUSS

- Share one monument, memorial or other structure that communicates something from history that you have visited. What makes it memorable?
- What is the purpose of public memorials, monuments, or other sites of public memory?
- When you think about creating your own such site of public memory to this era, what do you think is important to communicate?
- Is a memorial or a monument the only kind of physical structure that can be a site of public memory? What other structures can be created?

Step Two

Have students return to their Learning Logs and review their notes once again. With this task before them, have students generate a proposal for their project.

Each proposal should include the following elements:

- A description of the site of "America's Struggle for Freedom and Equality," This should include its subject (person/people and/or event(s), proposed location, and the materials you will use. Students will be encouraged to draw or build a small model prototype to accompany their proposal.
- Explain in one paragraph the narrative this site will honor and/or represent.

Step Three

Have students present their proposals to the full class or in small groups. Employ these suggestions for further engagement, using the students' ideas:

- Students present their proposals (in an oral presentation, in Google Slides, through a short video, etc.) to one another and the class can collectively develop and agree on one to build and place somewhere in the school.
- Students build models and host an exhibit for the school and community.
- Students collaborate with a local artist or community-based organization to build a prototype for their local community.

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

Opening Exercise

Which quote did you choose? In a brief sentence explain how it best reflected your point of view on the importance of studying Lincoln today.

Film Clips

One: A Welcoming Physical Geography

Two: Remembering Our History

Interview Threads

Thread One: Lincoln and the Republican Party

Thread Two: The Complexity of Abraham Lincoln

Thread Three: Why a Nuanced View of History Matters

Reflection Question

After all this exploration, what about Lincoln and his time as President is relevant to us as a nation today?

Questions and Notes for Final Project

What additional ideas did you take away about the struggle for freedom and equality in our nation from this lesson with regard to:

Abraham Lincoln?

Individuals and activists around Abraham Lincoln?

Ideas, concepts, and events that led to the Civil War and emancipation?

If you were to represent these ideas as a memorial, monument, or other site of public memorial, what would you create?

Where would it be built?

Why this location?

Film Clips Transcript

Clip One: A Welcoming Physical Geograpy

Chris Bonner: And so I think that when we take down Confederate monuments, what we do is eradicate that history of white supremacy that has been placed on the landscape not only in the South, but across the country.

[TEXT ON SCREEN]

NEW ORLEANS, LA
1900

NEW ORLEANS, LA
2017

RICHMOND, VA
1890

RICHMOND, VA
2021

Chris Bonner: It's a good project to make the physical geography of the nation available and accessible and welcoming to American people.

Narration: In 1922, Abraham Lincoln was memorialized with his own monument in Washington, D.C. But unlike the Confederate statues that were erected after the Civil War, every inch of it was designed to reinforce Americans' common bond.

David Reynolds: The Lincoln Memorial was a symbol of unity. It has 36 columns, representing the 36 states in 1865. There's Georgia marble. There's Massachusetts granite. Alabama marble in the ceiling. So, bringing formerly hostile sections together.

Jelani Cobb: There's an inclination to seek out Lincoln in trying times. That Abraham Lincoln had to be smuggled into Washington, D.C. under threat of his life ahead of inauguration. And we saw an inauguration in 2021 of an American president in which the city was occupied by 20,000 National Guard troops to protect the life of the incoming president. We've seen the accusations of elections that are thought to have not been representative. And, you know, all of these dynamics that are extremely dangerous in a democracy. And in that moment, you think about the first president who was tasked with navigating that kind of situation in the crucible of major conflict – and it's Lincoln.

to come to prominence within the Republican Party.

Clip Two: Remembering Our History

WASHINGTON, D.C.

January 20, 2021

Amanda Gorman, v/o from inaugural poem, The Hill We Climb:

*being American is more than a pride we inherit,
it's the past we step into*

and how we repair it

*We've seen a force that would shatter our nation
rather than share it*

*Would destroy our country if it meant delaying
democracy*

And this effort very nearly succeeded

Narration: In his goal to save the Union, Lincoln was unwavering. Obsessive. Imperfect. Sometimes ahead of his time, and inevitably well behind ours. So the question falls to each new generation: How should Abraham Lincoln be remembered?

Edward Widmer: The "Great Emancipator." Today, we are uncomfortable with the idea of saviors, especially white male saviors. It just feels hollow after so much injustice.

Jelani Cobb: There's been a need for a redemptive vision of how the country handled slavery. And so, in focusing on Lincoln as the grand emancipator, it allowed the United States, and more specifically allowed white people to emphasize the way that slavery ended without thinking about the ways in which slavery was created in this country and the ways in which it endured.

Kellie Carter Jackson: I think [Lincoln] reminds us how much struggle, how much activism how much leadership is required to make these monumental transformative changes that we all live in right now. You don't just stumble upon emancipation. People fought for that. Emancipation does not die with Lincoln. Freedom was never about Lincoln – it's so much bigger than that.

Eric Foner: I do not want to denigrate Lincoln's role in changing the nature of the Union war effort from preserving the Union to [ending slavery]. That was a crucial change. But in and of itself, it certainly did not guarantee that slavery would end. To end an institution [like slavery], it's not just a question of emancipating individual people. It's destroying a very deeply entrenched institution, and that required the action of everybody.

Lincoln, v/o: *Let us discard all this quibbling about this man and the other man – this race and that race and the other race being inferior. Let us discard all these things, and unite as one people throughout this land, until we shall once more stand up declaring that all men are created equal.*

The Second Inaugural Address and the Meaning of the Civil War Interview Thread Transcript

Chris Bonner

So one of the things that Lincoln says that's most profound to me and that sticks with me is the idea from the second inaugural address that if God would will that the war should continue until all of the wealth that slavery generated was lost. And all of the blood that was shed by the whips of overseers was shed by the guns and the cannons of soldiers. If God willed that that would be the case then this would be just. Then the Civil War would be a just repayment for the suffering of slavery.

And so I think that this is a really incredible statement from a president about the foundational reality that slavery was injustice and the reality of what slavery actually meant to enslaved people. Slavery was not only the suffering of bodies. Slavery was not only the compulsion to labor. Slavery was the deprivation of opportunity. Enslaved people were denied access to the fruits of their labor for generations. And one of the things that Lincoln is sort of suggesting, I think, in this second inaugural address, by talking about the extensive injustice of slavery, I think what he's suggesting is that the U.S. government was responsible in some ways for rectifying that, for repaying the debt that is owed to enslaved people and really to the descendants of enslaved people for the horrific centuries of bondage and deprivation that slavery meant to African Americans.

James Oakes

The great historian Richard Hofstadter once commented that Lincoln was horrified by the amount of death in the war. Maybe Hofstadter said, "More horrified than a person in a position of power can afford to be." And I do think, I do think the increasingly serious, sober tone of his public messages, culminating in his second inaugural address, is a function of his recognition that a valuable, invaluable service to the freedom of humanity has come at a cost that neither he, nor anyone, could have imagined would be necessary.

Lincoln was never much for organized religion, but he wasn't an atheist. He was something closer to a deist, which meant that he believed there was a God and that human events were designed providentially, but that we human beings were incapable of knowing what the inscrutable will of God was. And that's what his final statements about God's will in this war indicate, that both Northerners and Southerners pray to the same God, but neither of us really can figure out what God actually intends in this war. Right? And if God wills that every drop of blood drawn from the lash shall be paid for by another

drop drawn by the sword, so let it be said, God's will be done. Who are we to say otherwise? It's quite remarkable.

What's remarkable about that second inaugural address is that this terrible war has ended with a victory by the North, and there is not even a hint of gloating on Lincoln's part. And that also is quite remarkable. There is no... He doesn't get up on a platform with a banner that says "Mission accomplished" behind him. Right? He just wasn't going to gloat. He was too conscious of, first, the fact that now that the war is over the North and the South are going to have to live together somehow, and gloating isn't going to help. But also, I just think he wasn't inclined to gloat under any circumstances. He was, as I say, he was way too conscious of the price that had been paid for this victory.

Edward Widmer

The mood in Washington on March 4th, 1865 is festive. Everyone knows it's a matter of weeks before the rebellion is suppressed or the war is over. You could say it either way. And Lincoln uses the phrase Civil War in the speech, although earlier in the war he didn't want to use that because even that phrase suggests legitimacy for the other side and at the beginning, he preferred to call them rebels. and so a lot of people are coming into Washington to hear what Lincoln has to say. It's been a while since he gave a major speech in public. A couple orations at charity events in late 1864 or remarks to regiments or some pretty interesting speeches to Ohio regiments, but not really since the Gettysburg Address, which is November 19th, 1863, has Lincoln given a major speech and everyone knows he has to give one on March 4th, 1865, but they feel like history is closing in. So they want to be there.

So farmers, civilians, political employees in the much larger U.S. government than the one he came in to direct four years earlier – they're all there outside the east front of the Capitol. We have photographs. The photographs have become better over four years. So in 1861, you can't see Lincoln. The crowd you can see, but you can't see the person on the lectern. In 1865, he's right there and you can see the people around him, and you can almost put yourself in the scene itself, and many people believe they can see John Wilkes Booth in some of those photographs.

The weather was overcast in the morning, but it becomes sunny right as he begins to speak, incredibly. And there were all kinds of other unusual signs that people noticed at the time. Walt Whitman noticed a tiny little cloud right above Lincoln as he was speaking, and an unusual pattern in the sky that you could see the planets in the middle of

the day. It starts at noon and you could look up and see a few planets, including Venus, and Whitman remembered it and later put it into one of his greatest poems, *When Lilacs Last in the Dooryard Bloom'd*, which is this haunting poem about Lincoln's death, that these were all portents of what was coming. Right after the speech, John Burroughs, a naturalist, bird lover, nature lover, who's a good friend of Whitman's, felt this tremendous wind blowing over the assemblage – felt supernatural to him. So there all these things people are noticing.

But then there's the speech itself, which is a kind of history of the war. It's really, it's almost like the first draft. And Lincoln being the politician he is, understands that it's important to tell the story your own way, and he begins to do that and he stops. He actually... In a way, it's a corrective to himself because he says, "All knew that the slaves were somehow the source of the war." He doesn't say it as a criticism of them, what he's trying to say is that slavery caused this war. And that's a correction because four years earlier, he was going to some length to say that's not at all what we're fighting over, we will protect slavery, we just are fighting against an illegal secession. But now he's saying it really was about slavery. And then that haunting pretty long paragraph in which he talks about the scale of the suffering caused by slavery and the need to redeem that sin and how the suffering of the war has offered that redemption and how we can never understand the ways of God completely, but it does appear that we have gone some distance toward settling this great debt that we owed generations of people who'd been treated so sinfully by earlier Americans. And then it ends – that might've been the end and that's a pretty stark message like something out of the *Old Testament*: you have sinned and now I am punishing you. That's a lot of the Old Testament is like that. But then it goes into a language that's a lot like the language of Jesus in the New Testament and says "with malice toward none, with charity for all" – it's all about forgiveness, which is really is the message of Jesus. "Love thy neighbor as thyself." And the South was the neighbor of the North. Often in towns, Southerners and Northerners lived next door to each other, and as a country, we lived next door to each other. And so Lincoln calls for forgiveness and says a few specific things that are highly important, including calling for aid to be given to the widows of soldiers and to their children.

Which is a way of saying we will need to have benefits for veterans or in case the veteran was killed, for the families of veterans, which will call in to being a huge new federal bureaucracy to administer the payment of veterans benefits, which will continue into the 21st century, actually, because there are young women who married old Civil War veterans, and who got their vet checks until very recently, but more importantly, it's even a precedent for the New Deal because Lincoln is saying when people can't take care of themselves, we need the federal government to step in and send checks out to people, and so in the 1930s, people remembered what Lincoln said at the end of the second inaugural and even some other language at the end saying we now will act in a spirit of peace toward all nations.

And that was important because Mexico was in rough shape and had been invaded by France. We were too distracted to stop it from happening. We had once said the Monroe Doctrine means no European powers should interfere in our hemisphere. Well, guess what? France takes over Mexico in the middle of our Civil War and we're too weak and distracted to stop them, but we might've started to intervene in Central America. We had a huge military at the end of the Civil War. Even Europeans were afraid of the American Army, and in fact, they were studying it. The Prussians especially were studying our very rapid advance in military technology, in guns, railroads, artillery, naval vessels, and all of these ways Americans had really reinvented modern warfare over four years, and so there was a fear even in Europe that the Americans might come over and start fighting. And by saying we will now be at peace with all nations, Lincoln was saying something really important and in the spirit of George Washington, who also assured peace at the end of his presidency. So for all these reasons, it's a very heavy speech loaded with significance for the 20th and 21st centuries as well as the 19th.

The Complexity of Lincoln Interview Thread Transcript

Lonnie Bunch

What's important to understand about Lincoln is Lincoln is both a product of his time and he's a wonderful lens to look at the contradictions, to look at the challenges of that period. And I think that it's fascinating just to look at how we've thought about Lincoln over time. He was the "Great Emancipator," freed the slaves; he was the martyred president who gave his life to move a nation forward. But then there have been questions about, well, was Lincoln really somebody that cared about slavery and the African American community? There have been scholars who have said Lincoln was racist, Lincoln didn't care about these issues, that freeing the slaves were really just a sort of military necessity.

In many ways, what I find fascinating is that by looking at the way Lincoln has been depicted through the memories we have, it allows us to understand the contradictions in this country. It allows us to understand the challenges we face. And, in essence, what we're looking for is a useful and usable Lincoln. A Lincoln that allows us to sort of better understand that you can make profound change in a nation. Because remember, very few people thought slavery would ever end. Very few people were abolitionists. but yet Lincoln's efforts led to something that most people wouldn't believe. And so in a way, Lincoln's story, Lincoln's history, the way we use Lincoln in our memory, really tells us about the challenges the country still faces.

In essence, for me, the Lincoln story is both a story of possibility, but it's also a story of limits. It's also a story of an unfinished revolution. And I think that's the way I like to think about Lincoln – as a foundation for change, but not something that happened without the leadership of African Americans, without the struggle of African Americans. So he created a process that helped to lead to emancipation, but emancipation was really done on the backs of African Americans.

Jelani Cobb

I think the reason why you have such contradictory takes on Lincoln is that one, he was the embodiment of highly contradictory times. And as a politician, he was trying to navigate the currents of really irreconcilable ideas. And if you add into that equation his own personal growth and development, and the fact that he's a politician who may or may not believe 100% of what he's saying in public at any given time, what you have is the makings of an enigma.

01:01:01:11

You know, a person who is so layered and so complicated that if you try to summarize him in any single sentence, you're likely leaving out something that is equally important and completely the opposite, and also true about him. And so I think that's one of the reasons why people have never tired of discussing Lincoln, even his critics. He's not the type of person like, you know, it's his successor, Andrew Johnson, whom history cast a verdict on, and he's rarely revisited. There's no real kind of question about, did we get Andrew Johnson wrong? But with Lincoln, even the people who don't like him can't stop talking about him. And I think that says something about who he was.

I think it's possible to tell a true story about Lincoln, or it's possible to tell a truer story about Lincoln, and – to get at the exact truth of any human being, much less one as complicated and tested and really layered as Lincoln, that's a daunting task. That may not be possible. But it's like the idea of a more perfect union. You know, you don't get a perfect union. You're not going to have a perfect union. But the ideal is to establish a more perfect union. And so we can try to strive for a truer idea of who Lincoln was and what he did, and what he stood for, but the truth, I think that'll always remain at least partially an enigma. I think it's crucial to try to get to who Lincoln was, in the context of his time and in the moment that he existed in, because that's the only real way that we can make use of him as an example. You know, we can't really learn anything from -- certainly we can't learn anything from as sterile and antiseptic a depiction of Lincoln as we have now, but it is in understanding the trial and error and the failures and the shortcomings and the contradictions that he becomes most useful to us. And really, only by understanding the things he got wrong can we really grasp the magnitude and importance of the things that he got right.

01:48:45:19

In our popular reference now, we think of abolitionists as people who thought that the races should be equal. That wasn't true necessarily. There were people who did think this way, and then there were people who had a kind of animal rights approach to the institution of slavery, that they didn't think that it was right to treat people the way that they'd been treated, or to hold them in bondage, or to sell them, or to do any of the things that went with the institution of slavery, but that should not be taken to mean that Black people and white people are equal. That's an abolitionist camp. Lincoln was not in the abolitionist camp, if we say, by abolitionism, people who

were actively fighting for the eradication of the institution of slavery. Southerners preferred to think of him as this. You know, certainly by 1860, by the election, it would've been hard to shake them of the sense that Lincoln was no different than William Lloyd Garrison, but his ideas were contradictory in our modern sensibilities. He had a general disdain for the institution of slavery. He did not think that it was defensible to subject people to the kinds of depredations that were inherent in slavery.

01:50:29:18

At the same time, racial equality, he says in the course of the Lincoln–Douglas debates famously that if there's a superior and inferior position to be assigned in this society, he, as any white man, would prefer that whites be assigned to the superior position. You know, his defenders have argued that this was political rhetoric or this was an attempt to get elected and so on, but, at the very least, he's willing to play to that cause. The more indicting idea about Lincoln is, toward the end of his life, where he's sketching out his plans for what a reconstruction might look like. You know, the war has freshly ended and there has to be some mechanism for bringing the feuding halves of the country back into one whole. And he does recognize that Negro suffrage is going to be key to this. And he kind of muses that perhaps the Black vote could be restricted to former soldiers or, quote, very intelligent Blacks, which in a country that made no intelligence bar for white suffrage, inherently states that he may believe that there's something suspect about Black intelligence and Black capacity to utilize the ballot. And so he's riddled with the contradictions of men of his era. And I've maintained that the argument for Lincoln's heroism is not that he got everything right. It was his willingness to grapple with the questions, even the questions he got wrong. And so, no, those two things are not the same though. His disdain for the institution of slavery did not automatically connote a belief in interracial equality.

after the Crosswhites make it to Detroit, where one of the white abolitionists who was involved in the mob confronts one of the slave catchers in jail. And he says, the court record suggests that this white abolitionist essentially says, "Your Negroes are gone." And he's sort of like gloating, like mocking this slave owner in this moment that the people that you're trying to get are out of your reach. And so you can kind of see in this case that Black folks knew that their freedom was tenuous and that they had been cultivating, before the Fugitive Slave Act, they'd been cultivating networks of support, networks of self-defense that would enable them to ensure their freedom. And so those kinds of networks are – I don't even want to say being revived – they're being redeployed in the 1850s in the aftermath of the Fugitive Slave Act. But these are practices that were years, if not decades old, by the time of things like the Anthony Burns incident.

Edna Greene Medford

I think first and foremost, we sort of venerate Lincoln to the extent that people still do because he did show compassion, not always in the way we would have liked him to. But he was someone who tried to be measured, who did show sympathy from time to time, always to individuals, but understood what the country was involved in at the time. So, I think that that's primarily why he's still so beloved in certain circles today. But I think we need to also recognize that as great a person as he was as a human being, he was also a flawed human being. He was not perfect. Neither should he have been. You know, he was not Jesus Christ and some people think that he was. I mean, they put him on that level.

But this was a man who was flawed. I think he probably did the best he could given the circumstances. I still don't understand, though, why he did some things. I just shake my head sometimes when I read certain things that he did that I think he could have done differently, because I know that because of some of his decisions more people died than needed to have died. When he's allowing the Union commanders to return runaways to their owners, they're going back to their deaths in some instances, or they're being sold away from their families. If he had put something in place earlier and said, "Any enslaved person who makes their way to the Union lines, they're free. Don't return them." But he didn't do that initially, and so it's those kinds of things, you know, that really do bother me.

I remember being told once by a senior faculty member when I was young and still wet behind the ears that I expected Lincoln to be something that he could not be, and perhaps I should sort of let it go and realize this is a person who did the best he could under the circumstances. I don't know that I'm there, but I have certainly a different appreciation for what he was having to deal with. Not just a war, but dissension in his own party, loss of his friends because of his stance on emancipation. So he was going through a lot. The death of his children, a wife who was frustrated in her own right because she was a woman and could not express herself in the way that men could politically, so he was dealing with a lot.

I think that if you can appreciate his complexity, he becomes greater, only because you know that he's a human being like the rest of us. And despite that, I mean, he was flawed, but he found a way around some of those flaws. He was not perfect, not at all, but he was able to accomplish some things that someone who was less great or with less ambition or with less skill would not have been successful at.

And so he was the right person at the right time for the nation and for African Americans, too. I don't give him credit for everything that happened with African Americans during this period, because we did a lot of it ourselves as well, but I do give him part. He was central to

the whole thing. And so to suggest that what he did was not significant is not to understand that period of history, I think. He was important to the cause, central to the cause, but he's not the only one.

So the term "Great Emancipator," for instance, not if you're suggesting by Great Emancipator that he single-handedly ended slavery. No, he did not. But in terms of having the courage to do what was right and what was necessary, because what he did was not just right, it was necessary to save the Union. But there's some people who would have allowed the Union to just split forever rather than do what he was willing to do, and so I think that's what makes him great.

When I first started studying Lincoln, I looked primarily at the LincolnDouglas debates. That's how I was introduced to Lincoln. And I remember the Charleston debate was what we would call very racist during this day because he used the N-word and he said some things, other things that were not flattering to people of color. But then when I really started digging deeper into his speeches and into his private correspondence with friends and allies in the Republican Party, I noticed that there was more to him than that. So I came to the conclusion that he was a very complex individual. This is someone who was Southern born, actually, born in Kentucky. He was a man of the South in many ways and he certainly was a white man of his time. But there were things that were different about him, I think. He certainly could see beyond what the average white American could see in terms of the ability of people to make themselves better. And so I came to appreciate that complexity more and more as I read more of what he had actually said.

Initially I thought that he moved extremely slowly, at a snail's pace. After having studied him longer for years and years, there are things I would've liked that he could have changed that he didn't. I think he spent too much time trying to get the border states to emancipate. I think he put too much effort into trying to protect the property of people who had rebelled against the nation.

We're not talking about American citizens who are behaving like American citizens, we're talking about people who are in open rebellion who are killing Northern soldiers and sailors, and he still had compassion for them. I couldn't have done that. I don't know that I would want anyone to do that. I just think that he was a little bit too magnanimous to people who were causing the problem. So I think that's where I'm stuck. Why would he do that?

Why a Nuanced View of History Matters

Interview Thread Transcript

Edward Ayers

Lincoln's reputation, his understanding, has vacillated wildly over generations. But in many ways it was seared into the American consciousness with his assassination. There's a strange alchemy on that. Obviously the people who believed that the end of slavery was a great purpose of the war celebrated Lincoln. Obviously, too, the people who saw the preservation of the United States celebrated Lincoln. What's surprising, in some ways, is that over time, white Southerners came to believe that Lincoln was a great man. It was what happened after his death, in some ways, that made that happen because they certainly hated him at the time he was killed. What happened was "Radical Reconstruction." Lincoln never used those phrases. Matter of fact, his last words were something much like, "I'm thinking about what we might do now. I will be back to you soon." And it's open-ended. So people have imagined that he would have used this great moral capacity for understanding and generosity, that we hear in the second inaugural, that he would have not taken the South through Reconstruction.

We don't know, but by being followed by Andrew Johnson, and then being followed by the radical Republicans and radical reconstructionists – even white Southerners often romanticized Abraham Lincoln and forgot what they'd said about him just months before. So it's a kind of a triangulation.

Black Southerners had complicated ideas as well. Being told that he was the "Great Emancipator," belying all the risks of life that they had made to free themselves. And not only that, but to save the United States has been an unstable identity. There's an admiration for him, but a sense that he's too much of a coherent symbol for white America – that it's white America saving Black America and they know that it's just not the case. So it always feels as if, "Now we figured out Abraham Lincoln. That now we've got all the pieces in place." I think that his identity will always change, as different facets of his accomplishments are seen in a lot of our own time.

Mary Francis Berry

It's important if you want to understand what's going on in the country today, and the kind of future we will have if we do nothing to change it, is to understand that there were conscious decisions made by the people who founded the colonies. When questions were raised about these Black people and what are we going to do with them, that at each step of the way, they had to decide that if they had, if they were a mulatto, they were still

a slave. If they were a Christian, they were still a slave, whatever they were, they were still a slave. If they had to decide that the child follow the condition of the mother, when a white plantation impregnated a slave woman, and there was a child, they made all these conscious decisions and to use Blacks as inputs into their economic system, in order to prosper.

And these decisions one by one were reinforced to make slavery legal and to make the definition of inequality for Black people and inferiority something real. And then it was perpetuated at each point when the question was raised again, as time went on, do we want to do anything about this? And when the answer was no, let's just perpetuate it, or the answer was, as time went on, let's make excuses for it, or let's, you know, whatever – ignore it. Until finally you fast forward to today and you still have people today who cannot accept that this is what the history of the country has been. And when you have them, some of them even try to redefine Lincoln to make him be a person who wasn't doing whatever it was he was doing. But you have to understand that there is a reality. Lincoln stands for acknowledging reality too, and trying to do something about it. And finally, when he came to the conclusion that the whole cause of the war and everything else had been slavery, he acknowledged that there was this race question at the heart of what was going on in the country. And so you have people still today who refuse to acknowledge that if you don't acknowledge it, then you can't solve the problem. If you make excuses, you push it away. You say, well, it really is this way. You have to acknowledge the history.

Lonnie Bunch

As historians, we call this that the North won the war but lost the peace. In many ways, what you see is a conscious effort immediately after the war of returning the South to the way it once was to create a "lost cause" – that this was in essence their version of Camelot. What you see happening, and it's really led often by white Southern women, the Daughters of the Confederacy, they begin to think about – how do you change the narrative? How do you memorialize these stories? Suddenly people like Robert E. Lee and Stonewall Jackson are not people who were traitors who lost the war, they were heroes fighting for a "lost cause." That notion really resonated with the South, it brought many Southerners together, but it also resonated with the North that this was really... And it led to the myths that this was not a war about slavery but a war about brother fighting brother, trying to understand what the United States should be.

In essence, what you see now throughout history, but especially today, is a real need to reckon with those myths, to reckon with the fact that Confederate statues are about white supremacy, not about really the Civil War. To recognize that the challenge is to no longer celebrate the Confederacy as a noble cause, but to help people recognize that if the country is going to heal, if the country is going to find true understanding, then the country has got to really look at its past and shine a bright light on all those dark corners, and to basically say that the Confederacy lost the war. How do we make sure that we tell a truer history so that people can understand that there has been a sometimes quiet insurrection throughout the last 150 years of people trying to undermine Black progress, undermine helping the country live up to its stated ideals. That's a struggle that's going to happen for many years to come.

Justene Hill Edwards

I think it is important to, on the one hand, understand historical figures such as Lincoln in terms of the times in which they lived. I think at the same time, it's not our job to excuse their moral failings. It's to add complexity to a human being that dealt with a wide variety of influences, whose ideas about race and slavery evolved over his lifetime. To understand who he interacted with and how those interactions took place, I think is a really important part of an understanding, not just this history, but the historical figures that created it. And Lincoln is no exception.

I think that that is America's original sin. The fact that it was founded on ideas of freedom, of liberty, of justice. And those ideas were enshrined in founding documents while at the same time the creators of those documents held people of African descent in bondage and profited off of those investments in bondage and in slavery.

I think that this is the fundamental American dilemma, that a part of, I think, being an American citizen is critiquing and debating and criticizing and at times embracing, but being very critical of this original sin. The idea that this nation founded on these lofty ideas will never fully live up to them because of this history. 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.

Bryan Stevenson

I think the era of single leaders guiding us through difficult moments has largely passed. I just think

governance in the United States is no longer entirely in the hands of a president. You've got a tech sector that has huge sway over how people act and think. You have local leaders that can shape attitudes and thoughts at the local level. You have corporations, you have influencers, you have media, all of these institutions are stronger and more influential. I think the idea that a single national leader can address these fundamental challenges is simply not credible, at least to me. I think we all have an obligation to learn our history and to reckon with it. When we do that, we all become equipped to actually achieve the kind of just society that we want, to achieve movement of this country toward that place, where we have equality where there's freedom.

I don't think we can wait any longer for another King or another Lincoln or another anybody. I think the burden is now on us. We've gotten to this place where all of us have access, most of us have access to information. We just have to commit to it. That's why 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 do. 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. I'm really persuaded by that.

I don't think you can achieve equality. I don't think you can achieve a healthy community, unless you're willing to engage in truth telling about it. I come from a faith tradition that is rooted in a central idea, and they believe that every... My people believe that all of us can achieve redemption, salvation, fulfillment. They invite people into these spaces where they offer that. They say, "You cannot achieve these things unless you are first willing to confess, to repent." If you come to my church and you say, "I want the heaven and the redemption – I want all that good stuff, but I don't want to talk about anything bad." They'll say, "It doesn't work like that. You've got to first confess. You've got the first repent." It's not just to make you feel bad, but it's because it is a process. When you acknowledge the mistake and the error and the harm and the wrong, you then appreciate the remedy, the repair, the restoration, the reconciliation, the redemption means something to you that you hold on to.

Societies that have moved forward, have moved forward precisely because they've been willing to engage in that truth telling. I wouldn't go to Germany if it was a place where Adolf Hitler statues were everywhere. If they were still celebrating the architects and defenders of the Holocaust and the Third Reich, I wouldn't go there. I'm sorry. I just wouldn't. It wouldn't matter what else they were doing. I would not feel safe in that space. Because there is a reckoning with the Holocaust, because there

are memorials, because you can't go 200 meters without seeing the stones and the other emblems, because there are no Adolf Hitler statues, I'm prepared to go. I'm prepared to respect what's happening there. I know it's not a perfect space, but I understand that there's been some progress. I think that's the reason why you have to commit to truth telling. You commit to truth telling, because you want the reconciliation, you want the restoration, you want the redemption, and you commit to truth and justice because I believe there's something better waiting for us. I really do. I don't talk about this stuff because I want to punish America for lynching and slavery and all of these terrible things. I'm not interested in getting people to confront the realities of slavery because I want to punish America for this. I'm interested in talking about these things because I want to get us to liberation. I really believe there's something better waiting for us. There is something that feels more like freedom, feels more like equality, feels more like justice than anybody in this country has seen collectively. To get there, we have to stop this false history. We have to push back against these false ideas. We have to deal honestly. We have to tell the truth about our history, about who we are and about how we get here.

When we do that, that's when we open ourselves up to the kind of reconciliation, restoration, redemption repair, that I think any broken society needs, any fallen society needs. And we have been broken by this history. There's just no two ways about it. I think the idea that you can overcome an injury, overcome a lethal disease without care and treatment, is just a misguided idea. People die every day holding on to that idea. The people who commit to the care, to the treatment, those are the ones that live and thrive and actually create new hope and new and a new future.

I think what we're seeing today is really dramatic evidence of what happens when you fail to talk honestly about your history. When you actually believe that the best time in American history was 150 years ago, was a hundred years ago, was 50 years ago. If some German leader comes along and says, "Make Germany great again," and they started invoking the Germany of the 1930s, we know enough about what happened to understand

what that represents. But in this country, we are actually so uninformed about our history that we actually think our best days were in some prior past. Well, as a Black person, I'm really confused by it because I really want to know, are you saying our best days were when Black people were enslaved or when we were lynched? When we were excluded and segregated? When we were denied opportunities? Help me understand it. For women, when were the best days? Before they had the right to vote, when they weren't in positions of leadership? When they couldn't have the opportunities that other men had?

It's only because of that false history that you can say some of these things. And I'm less interested in political beliefs and values, but I am interested in a true understanding of who we are. It's like everything else. If you think that smoking doesn't cause cancer, doesn't hurt you and you just keep..., then you're going to see elevated death rates. You just are. When you confront the truth of it, you begin to understand some things about that habit that will cause you to shift your behavior. If you think cancer doesn't kill you and you won't get treatment for it, you're going to die. You're going to see death rates increase. The same is true for a healthy democracy. If you think that you can leave unaddressed this fundamental question of equality and justice and freedom and racial injustice and racial inequality, and be a thriving, healthy democracy, you're going to be sadly mistaken.

We're at a moment in our nation's history where I think that reckoning is upon us. This is an opportunity. We do a lot of things to kind of make it easy for people to not have to talk about this, to not look at this. Well, we see Black people achieving over here, we see Black people achieving over there. We see Black people— that's happening so we don't have to deal with this. It doesn't work like that. This is the fundamental issue. Yes, I do think truth telling about our history has never been more urgent. Truth telling generally, I mean, this is such a time of disinformation and confusion that if we don't commit to truth telling in a really profound way, we're not going to preserve this democracy. We're not going to have the kind of just free America that many of us want to see.

Chris Bonner

The argument that I hear most often in favor of keeping Confederate monuments is that by taking them down, by destroying them, we are destroying history. I would say that that's wrong for a couple of reasons. One, the monuments, you know, a monument to Robert E. Lee that stands in Richmond does not really reflect the history of Robert E. Lee. It shows you an image of a guy on a horse, high up on a pillar in the former capital of the Confederacy. What that shows you is not a history of Robert E. Lee or of the Confederacy, it shows you an image, an idol to be worshiped. So taking down that image does not destroy the history of Robert E. Lee, a person who I talk about in history courses and offer a really complex portrait of.

Another reason why this sort of idea that Confederate monuments represent history is inaccurate or incorrect is that the history that they actually reflect is not being depicted in... part of the history that they reflect is not being depicted in the monuments, right? Again, a monument to Robert E. Lee in Richmond is not a product of the Civil War era. It is not a product of Confederate veterans placing this monument there in the immediate aftermath of the war because they want to reflect on this image that they had of Lee. These images, most Confederate statues, were erected in the era of Jim Crow in the late 19th and the early 20th centuries by white southerners who were trying to reassert their dominance of Black people and re-secure white supremacy by making the landscape look like it was unwelcoming to Black people. So a way to make Black southerners feel uncomfortable is to put up a bunch of statues of former Confederate soldiers. People who fought for the bondage of Black people and their ancestors.

And so I think that when we take down Confederate monuments, what we do is eradicate that history of white supremacy that has been placed on the landscape of the United States, and not only in the South, but across the country. And so I think that it's a good project to make the physical geography of the nation look like a place that is available and accessible and welcoming to the people who might move through those spaces. And statues of white supremacists, statues of men who fought for slavery, are not a way to really make that landscape open to American people.

I think there is one possibility of countering Confederate memorials with statues of enslaved people, or statues of activists or abolitionists, whoever it might be, you know, a statue of Frederick Douglass next to every statue of Robert E. Lee. The problem with that is that statues and

memorials and monuments do not educate. And if our goal is to help people understand the past, a bunch of idols popped up across the country, idols of Frederick Douglass, are not really going to educate people beyond saying, "Oh, Frederick Douglass was an important guy," which yes, more people should know that Frederick Douglass was an important person, but more people should also know more about Frederick Douglass. More people should also know more about Robert E. Lee. They should know more about the Confederacy and what its cause was. The cause of slavery, the cause of white supremacy. And so if that is our project, we need to think about things other than memorials to try to convey the complex history of this country.

Kellie Carter Jackson

I've always had an issue with the statue [Emancipation Memorial {Freedman's Memorial}], but I appreciate it because it's teachable, it's useful. There's a way that we can look at the statue and we can deconstruct all of the things that we see in it, and I think art is never intended for us to just look at it and pass it by. It's meant for us to sit in front of it, to stare at it, and to really think about the message that's trying to be conveyed. And to figure out how we can interpret how we each individually see art in a particular way. So there are certain statues, and Confederate statues included in this, that I'm conflicted... I'm conflicted over how they're presented. There's sometimes I wish there were a disclaimer underneath the statue that sort of gave you the historical context or gave the viewer the moment in which it's being created and the moment in which we're seeing it right now, a breakdown of that, so that people would be able to understand what was happening in a historical context and why this statue had meaning and who funded the statue and how much did they pay for it, and who created it and what were they thinking when they sculpted it? All of that is so important to understanding art that it's too easy or too simplistic to just sort of dismiss it because we don't like it or because it doesn't fit our cultural narrative anymore. I think art requires that we grapple with it.

01:57:14:07

This statue [Emancipation Memorial] was funded by Black people, not entirely, but a big portion of it is funded by Black people. Frederick Douglass gives a speech, an unforgettable speech, while the unveiling of the statue takes place, and it sort of baffles my mind because Douglass is standing at the statue and he's like, "We aren't Lincoln's children. We're his stepchildren. You're his real

know about the dimensions, like how tall it is – but the statue, it's a large sculpture of Abraham Lincoln towering over an enslaved person who is in a kneeling position that has chains around their ankles, chains around their feet. And it looks as though Lincoln is not just sort of towering over them, but sort of presenting this enslaved person with the world, with their freedom.

01:58:49:09

There's a really good art history essay on the sculpture that also talks about how the image and what it looked like, an enslaved person giving Lincoln a shoeshine because they're bent over at his feet. But there's a lot about the image that speaks of subservience and servitude, what it means to be in deep gratitude to Lincoln, and to see Lincoln as the sole emancipator, or the one person responsible for Black liberation. It's also, I think, interesting that Lincoln is, you know, fully clothed and the enslaved person is wearing nothing more than his chains and sort of a loincloth. And I wonder, too, if they had, like, sketches of the statue. I imagine they thought it would probably look completely different than what the final product was. I think of the abolitionists' symbol that is the, "Am I not a man and a brother?" It is like a circular emblem of an enslaved man who's kneeling with his chained hands out, like, in prostrate, but out as a way of sort of, like, asking for his liberation. And the top part of the crest said, "Am I not a man?" And the bottom part says, "Am I not a brother?" That was probably one of the most popular symbolic, like, portraits or medallions that was used at the time. So Frederick Douglass and the National Republican newspaper in 1876 says, "Admirable as the monument by Mr. Ball in Lincoln Park. It does not, as it seems to me, tell the whole truth. And perhaps no one monument could be made to tell the whole truth of any subject, which it might be designed to illustrate." Facts. Facts.

02:00:47:11

I think Douglass is absolutely right. There is no monument, no portrait, no symbol – There is no one thing that can encapsulate the leadership of Lincoln, the 400-plus years of enslavement of chattel slavery, the amount of death of people that were lost during the Civil War, the casualties of the Civil War. There's no one thing that can encapsulate that. But I think what we can do is we can try to get people to remember things that happened, things that were important, and to think about how these major events, and major people, have an impact on us today. "The negro here, though rising, is still on his knees and nude. What I want to see before I die is a monument representing the negro not crouching on his knees like a four-footed animal, but erect on his feet like a man." What I think about when I read a quote like that is so much about the abolitionist movement. It's not necessarily about abolishing the institution of slavery. That's part of it. But the major thrust is Black humanity. Acknowledging,

recognizing, affirming Black humanity. Yes, Black people are human beings. And so much of the movement has had to push back on the ideas that Black people aren't people. Even within the abolitionist movement that has been a struggle.

02:02:32:09

So, you know, I talk about this in my classes, that I... one of my professors said that the abolitionist movement was like a free the whales campaign. It's like "free the whales, don't hurt the whales." But whales can't vote and whales can't marry my daughter and whales aren't people. And I think that everything that Douglass is saying in that quote is so representative of the fights that Black people have to get their humanity recognized and affirmed. But also nowhere is it seen in which the enslaved took their freedom themselves, that it was not given to them, they took it. They saw the writing on the wall, as I said earlier, and they left the plantation and they fled, and they fought. And to me, I think we are so used to pinpointing, like, major moments to white male leadership and denying Black activism, Black agency, that it dismisses the work of so many people that helped to make slavery a thing of the past. And so, yeah. I mean, there's a lot that goes into that quote, but I think what he is essentially saying is that, like, we forget about... We want to put this all on Lincoln. This is not about Lincoln. Lincoln is not the "Great Emancipator" that we all think he is. And I don't think Lincoln himself saw himself in that way.

Edward Widmer

The Freedman's Memorial is tough and all of these memories are tough right now. They've actually become tougher in the last few years. You think everything would get easier. In fact, they got tougher. And there are so many people I cannot speak for. I cannot speak for any group of Americans who feel the pain of an ancestor who was enslaved. I cannot speak for them. I can only ask for their understanding and to apologize on behalf of whatever group of Americans I represent. And I too am a mixture of some immigrants and some Americans who were here longer.

But the Freedman's Memorial is a really complicated story because it's an unfortunate statue. It looks bad now. The African American is in an inferior role, kneeling. Lincoln is standing up almost as if he has a magic wand in his hand, but he doesn't. But it just looks bad, and it even looked bad at the time. Frederick Douglass commented that it was not his favorite pose he would have chosen. But he still went. He still gave the most important speech at the dedication. And a great deal of thought went into that statue from the African American community. They contributed to it, knowing the design that was coming. A former slave posed. It's a realistic sculpture based on a real slave, a former slave, freedman. They were really

trying their best by the light that was available to them in the 1860s and '70s and early 1880s, and they also dedicated a huge park, the statue's in the center of, in the Capitol Hill neighborhood, which is where Frederick Douglass lived at the time. And so I truly believe their intention was good, but it is an unfortunate-looking statue.

There are replicas of that statue in other parts of America, including Boston, where I was born, and there was a movement that succeeded in bringing down that statue in Boston, and I supported that movement because it didn't do anything where it was. It was not in a neighborhood associated with Lincoln or the African American community, and I thought it was giving some pain to people and it should come down, and it did. In Washington it's harder because it's in the center of a park named after Lincoln, and there was this famous dedication by Frederick Douglass with a huge number of African Americans there.

So, I support a recommendation that Douglass' biographer, David Blight, made, which is that we should keep the statue but contextualize it. And let's put up lots of other statues all around. Certainly, the biggest one should be to Frederick Douglass, I think, but then how about a few statues to the women who endured so much trauma during the Civil War? The women of the North, the women of the South, African American women, and Native Americans, and let's get committees from the neighborhood, committees from around the country to think about how to make a new set of messages in Lincoln Park. It's actually a very beautiful park that most tourists don't go to, but it is in the middle of a great neighborhood not too far from the Capitol and the Supreme Court. So let's reclaim that neighborhood in a really creative new way, and put new markers and new statues around that statue.



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