The "Lincoln for African-Americans Gift Set"

By Mary Godwin
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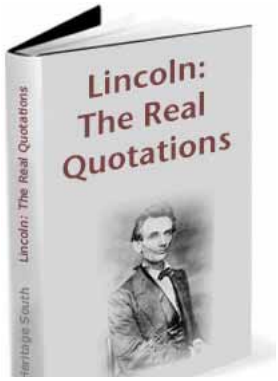
Thanks to the good folks at Heritage South Aggregated, black Americans now have a treasure to remember the 16th president of the United States of America, Abraham Lincoln. In offering their new "Lincoln for African-Americans Gift Set," Heritage South acknowledges the tremendous role which Lincoln played in the history of blacks in America. Granted, the Gift Set is a bit unusual, in that its different parts are not exactly the standard fare; yet every bit of it is documented by the actual words of Lincoln himself, and therefore, politically correct!

My advance-review copy of the Lincoln Gift Set included a large-size, frameable picture of Lincoln, a stirring collection of famous (and not so famous) quotations by Lincoln, and even a set of antebellum Lincoln Logs.

The portrait of Lincoln, entitled *Sic Semper Tyrannis*, was admirably executed, showing the lamentable assassination of Lincoln by John Wilkes Booth on 16 April 1865 at 10:15 PM (Eastern Standard Time). The picture comes with instructions on how to frame it, or you can take it to your local framing store as well. I had mine framed, since I wanted it to look aesthetically appealing on my wall at home.

The "Quotations by Abraham Lincoln" came attractively bound in leather, making it the ideal coffee-table book to entertain your guests. The quotations found within it come each fully documented as to accuracy (perhaps to preclude the usual "Lincoln-bashing" charge of the McPhersonites).

This first quotation is simply a list of the Native Americans mass executed by Abraham Lincoln on 26 December 1862 in Minnesota. I was surprised to find out that Lincoln is the only president in history to order the mass execution of Native Americans, but it turns out true, as the historian David Nichols, as well as Hank Cox, show in their books on the subject. The names of the Sioux hung by Lincoln are even given in the Gift Set:



Te-he-hdo-ne-cha, Tazon (Plan-doo-ta), Wy-a-teh-to-wah, Hiw-han-shoow-ko-yaz, Mwz-za-bonv-a-dis, Wah-pey-du-ta, Wa-he-hud, Snas-ma-ni, Ta-te-mi-na, Rda-in-yaw-kna, Do-waw-sa, Ha-pen, Shooos-ka-ska (White Dog), Toow-kew-e-cheh-tey-mano, E-tay-hoo-tay, Am-da-cha, Hay-pee-dow (or Wamme-omau-ha-tas), Mehpo-o-ko-na-ji, Henry Miloroo, Cheskay-dow (or Cheskey-etay), Baptists Camplotes, Tah-ta-kay-gey, Ha-pinha-pa, Hypolite Ango, Na-pay-Shue, Wa-kaw-taw-ka, Toow-kaw-ka-yag-e-na-jiw, Ma-kat-e-na-jiw, Pa-zee-koo-tay-ma-na, Ta-tey-hdo-dow, Wa-She-choow (or Toow-kaw-shkan-shkan-mano-hay), A-e-cha-ga, Ha-taw-iw-koo, Chay-tow-hoow-ka, Chew-ka-hda, Hda-hiw-hday, O-ya-tay-a-koo, Maz-hoo-way-wa, and Wo-kew-yaw-na.

The list is signed at the end: "*Abraham Lincoln, President of the United States*."

It turns out that 67 more Native American Sioux died in Lincoln's prisons, but, of course, Lincoln had that bothersome war to wage

against other Native Americans, like the Choctaw and Cherokee of the Confederate States of America, so I suppose you can't blame Lincoln for any old mass execution which comes along.

(Source: Cox, Hank H. *Lincoln and the Sioux Uprising of 1862*. Cumberland: Nashville, 2005)

Another fascinating quotation in the "Quotations by Abraham Lincoln" book was this one, taken from a letter from Lincoln to his Secretary of War from New York, William Henry Seward (whose name is on the famous "Emancipation Proclamation"):

> "As to fugitive slaves...slave trade among the slave states, and whatever springs of necessity from the fact that the institution is amongst us, I care but little...."

"I care but little" about the slave trade and fugitive slaves. I must admit, I was a bit taken back by this authentic Lincoln quote. But then, I remembered that Lincoln was a big proponent of shipping all African-Americans back to Africa (part of the "colonization effort," according to Jeffery Rogers Hummel's history book, "*Emancipating Slaves, Enslaving Free Men*).

(Source: *Lincoln Abraham. "Letter to William Henry Seward, 1 February 1861." Lincoln and His Circle, University of Rochester, Rare Books and Special Collections, <library.rochester.edu.> 5 March 2008.*)

Finally, a quotation documented by a black historian, Lerone Bennett, proved highly poignant:

> Lincoln wasn't quoting anybody when he denied before some fifteen thousand people at the sixth Lincoln-Douglas debate that he wanted a "Nigger wife,"...nor was he quoting anyone when he told a crowd of some four thousand White Illinois citizens at the last debate in Alton, Illinois, that he supported the notorious Fugitive Slave Law although he personally had "no taste for running and catching niggers."

At first, I was surprised by this quotation, but Bennett's book explained that Lincoln was a racist: "To say that [Lincoln] was a racist is to understate the case and to divert attention from the fact that racism was the center and circumference of his being and that one cannot say a single true word about him that is not informed by that fact." Coming from an African-American, I guess it made me breathe a little easier; it's always good to get one's historical facts straight.

(Source: *Bennett, Lerone, Jr. Forced Into Glory: Abraham Lincoln's White Dream. Chicago: Johnson Publishing Company, 1999.*)

The Gift Set also comes with a delightful, old-fashioned set of...Lincoln logs! The perfect gift for the kids!

Lincoln Logs go back to the early 20th century, when John Lloyd Wright, son of architect Frank Lloyd Wright, brought out the line of sturdy, interlocking logs in 1916. Wright claimed that the foundation of Ford's Theatre, which he saw while on vacation, inspired the shape of his logs, an interesting fact which I had never heard before. The Gift Set's Lincoln Logs enable your kids to build all sorts of different buildings, of course, not just the Kentucky (real "land of Lincoln"!) antebellum-style "Manse and Slave Quarters" pictured here, which portrays the neighbourhood in which Lincoln grew up in Kentucky.

As a gift set which focuses attention on the real history of the relation between African-Americans and Lincoln, the Heritage South's "Lincoln for African-Americans Gift Set" should provide every African-American with a true historical portrait of Lincoln, while also providing a set of Lincoln memorabilia at the same time. Who could ask for more?

About the Author

Mary W. Godwin was born in Mobile, Alabama. She graduated from the University of Oklahoma with degrees in Journalism and Ceramics.

Mary currently resides in Gadsden, Alabama, with her husband, William, and their two children, Noccalula and Coosa. When not busy reporting on current events, Mary's hobbies include drag-boat racing, quilting, and gun-smithing.

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