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QUOTE FOR THE DAY:

“Let’s concentrate on correcting the many injustices committed against oppressed groups in our society and stop fiddling with language in ways that do little to help people, and emphasize our differences rather than our common humanity.” Anthony Mancini, professor, Brooklyn College in response to NY Times deciding that, henceforth, every time the word “blacks” appears in the paper, it shall be spelled, “Blacks.”

COULD THE NY TIMES BE WRONG?

Mancini makes some good points. “ ‘Black’, first it is an adjective describing a color and not a noun and thus inaccurate and imprecise as applied to a group of people. Also it reinforces the false narrative that people who are black comprise a monolithic entity when,

in fact, they come from areas as diverse as Ethiopia and the Andaman Islands.”

Jesse Jackson prefers, “ African-American” and objects to capitalizing “black” saying, “Any term that emphasizes the color and not the heritage separates us from our heritage as victims of the slave trade.”

Mancini goes on, “Imagine if we identified Indigenous Indians as “Reds” or Asian-Americans as “Yellows”. How does that sound? And, how do we adequately explain the double standard of capitalizing “Black” but not “white”. I am firmly convinced that changes in language arising from political motives are de facto suspect.”

THE LINCOLN-DOUGLAS DEBATES:

In the segment after this the reader will come across some surprising quotes attributed to Abraham Lincoln regarding black people. Several are said to have come out during the Lincoln-Douglas debates- 1858. I have been unable to confirm several of these quotes, nor have I found them in other on-line sources.

I read quite a bit about the seven debates. Guess who put the document together which encapsulated the debates and became, “One of the most celebrated in American history”, and helped send Lincoln to the White House? It was Lincoln himself.

Lincoln took coverage from the Republican partisan newspaper, The Chicago Press and Tribune, to recount his role in the debates and, in quite a fair manner, took the coverage of Douglas from the Democratic partisan paper, The Chicago Times. This served as the definitive version of what went on in the debates for over a hundred years.

In 1993, the Lincoln historian, Harold Holzer, published, “The Lincoln-Douglas debates: the First Unexpurgated Text.” The book is reported on at great length in “The Journal of the Abraham Lincoln Association” in 1994, as written by Douglas Wilson.

What Holzer had done, which was unique, was to exactly reverse what Lincoln had done. He took how the Douglas partisan press reported on Lincoln and how the Lincoln partisan press

reported on Douglas and then compared the two versions – speak about conflict! The comparison was like the proverbial four blind men describing an elephant. Holzer could only conclude, “The Lincoln-Douglas Debates largely have been lost to us because of the partisan press.” Sound anything like today?(read CNN and FOX). In any event, I was unable to find some of the corroboration I sought, but peeled back a bit of interesting history about which I had no previous knowledge.

ABRAHAM LINCOLN, THE BLACK DILEMMA AND THE BALTIMORE SUN:

Medium.com published an article with the above title in May, 2016. I don’t know how it was that I had never heard of Medium as it has 60 million unique followers, was founded by Evan Williams who was also the founder of “Blogger” and “Twitter” and has such famous contributors as Jeff Bezos. Mediabiasfactcheck. Com categorizes Medium as, “left center biased.”

I go into the lengthy preamble because of a major concern I have with the article- the author, B.W. Durham. My antenna goes up anytime I can't identify an author. I've searched hard, but by that name find only a 1933 Princeton graduate, an aquatic ecology college professor and a religious blogger, none of whom are the author. So, reader, beware!

Durham begins by unmasking the Author of "The Black Dilemma." It was said to have been written by Ian Duncan and published in the liberal, Baltimore Sun. Neither was correct and it caused a huge furor when people thought the Sun had published it.

In actuality, the true author was Anthony Bryan who wrote it in 2014 under the title, "Ten Percent is not enough." It was published in the journal, "American Renaissance", a very conservative, some have even said, "White Supremacist" publication. Who ever pulled off this masterful bit of misattribution accomplished the goal of getting a broader readership for Bryan's views.

Early on in the article he ropes the reader in by covering a number of indisputable facts regarding blacks and their treatment, but you also get an early inkling as to what is coming when he writes, “The hypothesis to be tested: Can a people taken from the jungles of Africa and forced into slavery be fully integrated as citizens in a majority white population?”

You can see the hand writing on the wall as he later states, “The experiment has failed. Not because of white culture, or white privilege, or white racism. The fundamental problem is that American black culture has evolved into an unfixable and crime ridden mess.”

And, further on, “You can’t legislate the poor into freedom by legislating the wealthy out of freedom. What one person receives without working for, another person must work for without receiving.” – a totally plagiarized statement from Thomas Sowell, well known black Social Theorist at Stanford’s Hoover Institute.- how ironic!

**So how does this all segue into Lincoln?
Returning to the Durham article. There is no**

question that Lincoln was anti slavery, but Durham would have you believe that the Emancipation Proclamation was not just about freeing slaves. “president Lincoln justified the Emancipation Proclamation as a war measure intended to cripple the Confederacy.” Durham cites his source as www.civilwar.org.

Durham continues, “The Ashbrook Center at Ashland University states that ‘Emancipation had the effect of transferring labor from South to North, increasing the fighting potential of Union Armies while decreasing that of the Confederate armies. The manpower boon to the Union was substantial. Some 180,000 black soldiers served in the Union Army.’ “

Now that Durham has the reader hooked, he gets into the really dicey stuff you never read about Lincoln in the history books. According to Durham, while abhorring slavery, Lincoln did not favor equal rights for blacks. Durham states that, during the Lincoln-Douglas Debates in 1858, Lincoln said, “There is a physical difference between the white and black races which I believe will forever forbid the two races living together on terms of social

and political equality. And, inasmuch as they cannot so live, while they do remain together there must be the position of superior and inferior, and I, as much as any other man, am in favor of having the superior position assigned to the white race.” And if that’s not enough, Durham continues to quote Lincoln, supposedly from the same debate, “Our Republican system was meant for a homogeneous people. As long as blacks continue to live with the whites they constitute a threat to the national life...that may someday challenge the supremacy of the white man.”

Wow! Very heavy stuff. You can see why I am suspicious, being unable to determine the identity of B.W. Durham and not having been able to verify quotes from the actual debates.

What we do know was that Lincoln was a segregationist and at one point an advocate of transporting blacks back to Africa and other destinations, as well.

To bring additional perspective to the topic, Wick Murray, one of our readers and a

foremost authority on American history, warfare and the Civil War, writes:

“What one has to remember about Lincoln is his views towards African-Americans altered steadily over the course of his life. Before he became president he had little or no experience with people of color. His first experience had come as a short-time observer in the South and, my guess is that he never had a chance to converse with any of them. In particular you have to remember how little intercourse Northerners had with blacks until they invaded the confederacy. Admittedly, in one of his early meetings with blacks, Lincoln did suggest helping them to return to Africa. However, he was astonished at the vehemence with which they declared themselves American. But as the war continued and Lincoln had greater experience with blacks his views underwent substantial change. Here Frederick Douglas was particularly important. When he first met Lincoln he was not impressed, but the more he saw of him as president the more impressed he was...”

Wick Murray next trains his thoughts on “The Black Dilemma” article: “This is indeed a fundamentally dishonest piece that like all falsehoods has bits of truth scattered throughout. The author is right that slaves were suddenly given their freedom with virtually no preparation. What he fails to mention is the fact that the Northern victors did make some substantial efforts with church missionaries and eventually the Freedman’s bureau to bring a modicum of education to the freed slaves. And, he certainly does not mention the massive efforts of Southern whites to destroy those efforts, including programs and mass murders. The Reconstruction period was viciously misrepresented by the Southern white narrative, one of its worst perpetrators, Woodrow Wilson.”

“After the Southern whites regained ‘their right’ to hideously mistreat their black population we enter into a desert of American history where no American president after Grant until Franklin Roosevelt did anything to help American blacks. The educational and cultural difficulties that America’s blacks have

had in adjusting to the white culture is very much the result of that period.”

“The second traumatic break came with the success of the Civil Rights movement. I would guess that 30 to 40 percent of the skilled, ambitious and lucky blacks suddenly left the black world in one way or another, leaving behind the ghettos. Their flight was thoroughly understandable. And then came the drug culture, driven by whites as much as blacks that finished turning the ghettos into the hopeless places they have become...”

Bill Polk, another of our readers; Union Theological Seminary and for decades Headmaster of Groton School, has this to add:

“While reading ‘The Black Dilemma’- Duncan, article, I was reminded of a cartoon that got some play when Goldwater was running for president: It showed an African-American lazily sitting on a stoop. The caption read, ‘Where’s your ambition? Get up, go out and inherit a clothing store!’ Duncan writes: ‘Black culture has evolved into an inflexible crime ridden mess.’ No where does he blame for the

mess the systemic racism which, 'keeps them in their place.'"

Bill goes on, "As for Mr. Lincoln, in an 1854 debate with Douglas, during which each spoke for three hours, Lincoln spoke of his hatred for the Kansas-Nebraska Act for making democracy into 'an abomination of despotism.' He said, 'if the Negro is a man, why then my ancient faith teaches me that all men are created equal, and, there can be no moral right in connection with one man making a slave of another.'"

Closing, Bill adds, "I think Lincoln's view of slavery and the Negro evolved. In the summer of 1862, Lincoln affirmed that the purpose of the war was to save the Union. He wrote Horace Greeley, 'If I could save the Union without freeing any slave, I would do it, and if I could save it by freeing the slaves, I would do it, and if I could save it by freeing some and leaving others alone, I would do that.' By 1864 he had changed his mind. 'Victory means the abolition of slavery as well as preservation of the Union.' That lay at the heart of the Emancipation Proclamation. The timing of the

announcement may have been strategic, but the impulse was not a military strategy.”

A lot of issues worth pondering.

Your faithful scribe,

PB