Lincoln's Civil War brilliance: The real story of the political savvy that helped end slavery

The president walked a careful line, sometimes imperfectly. But his political skills ultimately won emancipation - **JAMES M. MCPHERSON**

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The Thirteenth, Fourteenth, and Fifteenth Amendments to the U.S. Constitution abolished slavery and barred states from abridging the equal civil and political rights of American citizens, including former slaves. Abraham Lincoln's native state of Kentucky was the only state that refused to ratify all three amendments. The region of southern Indiana, where Lincoln had lived from the age of seven to twenty-one (1816–30), was among the most proslavery and anti-black areas in the free states during those years. Its representative in Congress also voted against the Thirteenth Amendment. So did the congressman from central Illinois, where Lincoln had lived for three decades. Lincoln himself had represented this district in the state legislature for eight years and in the U.S. Congress for one term in the 1830s and 1840s. And in 1842 he married a woman from a prominent Kentucky slaveholding family.

One might therefore expect that the cultural influences surrounding Lincoln during the first half century of his life would shape his convictions about slavery and race in the same mold that characterized most politicians of his time and place. Instead, he was one of only two representatives in the Illinois legislature who presented a public "protest" against a resolution passed in 1837 by their colleagues that condemned abolitionist doctrines of freedom and civil equality and affirmed the right of property in slaves as "sacred to the slave-holding states."

Lincoln's protest acknowledged that the Constitution did indeed sanction slavery in those states but declared that nevertheless "the institution of slavery is founded on both injustice and bad policy."

In 1854 Lincoln made an even stronger protest, this time in the form of eloquent speeches against the Kansas-Nebraska Act. Illinois senator Stephen A. Douglas, Lincoln's longtime political rival, had rammed this law through a divided Congress. It repealed the earlier ban on the expansion of slavery into territories carved out of the Louisiana Purchase north of latitude 36° 30'. Douglas's actions opened these territories to slavery and sparked the formation of the new "anti-Nebraska" Republican Party, which would nominate Lincoln for president six years later. Douglas had said that if the white people who moved to Kansas wanted slavery there, they should be allowed to have it. "This *declared* indifference, but as I must think, covert real zeal for the spread of slavery, I cannot but hate," said Lincoln in 1854, "because of the monstrous injustice of slavery itself" and also "because it deprives our republican example of its just influence in the world—enables the enemies of free institutions, with plausibility, to taunt us as hypocrites."

When he ran for the Senate in the famous contest against Douglas in 1858, Lincoln declared: “I have always hated slavery I think as much as any Abolitionist.” Six years later he said, with feeling: “If slavery is not wrong, nothing is wrong. I can not remember when I did not so think, and feel.” As Eric Foner makes clear in "The Fiery Trial: Abraham Lincoln and American Slavery," however, Lincoln was antislavery but not an abolitionist. That is, he considered slavery a violation of the natural rights to life, liberty, and the pursuit of happiness enunciated in America’s founding charter (written by an antislavery slaveowner).

Like Thomas Jefferson, Lincoln expected slavery eventually to die out in America. Preventing its spread into the territories was the first step, said Lincoln in 1858, toward putting it “in course of ultimate extinction.” But unlike the abolitionists, Lincoln and most Republicans in the 1850s did not call for the immediate abolition of slavery and the granting of equal citizenship to freed slaves.

Having grown up in Kentucky and the border regions of Indiana and Illinois, Lincoln also felt a degree of empathy with the South that was not shared by abolitionists of Yankee heritage. Although he hated slavery, he did not hate slaveowners. “I think I have no prejudice against the Southern people,” he said at Peoria, Illinois, in 1854. “When Southern people tell us they are no more responsible for the origin of slavery, than we; I acknowledge the fact.” Lincoln also said he could “understand and appreciate” how “very difficult” it would be “to get rid of” slavery “in any satisfactory way. . . . If all earthly power were given me, I should not know what to do” about the institution where it then existed.

“My first impulse would be to free all the slaves, and send them to Liberia. But a moment’s reflection would convince me” that even if such a project was feasible in the long run, “its sudden execution” was impossible. “What then? Free them all, and keep them among us as underlings? Is it quite certain that this betters their condition?”

What about the abolitionist proposal to “free them and make them politically and socially our equals?” Lincoln confessed that “my own feelings will not admit of this; and if mine would, we well know that those of the great mass of white people will not. Whether this feeling accords with justice and sound judgment, is not the sole question. . . . A universal feeling, whether well or ill-founded, can not be safely disregarded.” The abolitionist program of immediate freedom was therefore unrealistic. “It does seem to me that systems of gradual emancipation might be adopted; but for their tardiness in this, I will not undertake to judge our brethren of the south.” Lincoln could not “blame them for not doing what I should not know how to do myself.”

Proslavery Southern whites did not reciprocate Lincoln’s expressions of empathy. To many of them, especially the radical disunionists known as fire-eaters, the divergence between “antislavery” and “abolitionist” was a distinction without a difference. In their view, anyone who considered slavery a monstrous injustice and spoke of placing it in the course of ultimate extinction was as dangerous as those who demanded its immediate extinction. When the “Black Republican” Lincoln was elected president in 1860, they led their states out of the Union to prevent the feared extinction of their “peculiar institution.” This preemptive action put in train a course of events that by 1864 brought about precisely what they feared.

By that time the nation was facing, as imminent realities, the same alternatives Lincoln had outlined as abstract possibilities in his famous Peoria speech ten years earlier: 1) free all the slaves and send them to Liberia (or elsewhere); 2) free them and keep them as "underlings" in the United States; or 3) free them and make them the political and social equals of white people (civil equality, in modern terms). In 1864 Lincoln had a much more definite idea of "what to do" and a great deal more "earthly power" to do it than in 1854. His "brethren of the south" were now "rebels" whose war against the United States had given him that power as commander in chief of an army of a million men, one hundred thousand of them the former slaves of those rebels.

Lincoln had tried a version of the first alternative (free slaves and send them abroad), but few wanted to go, and now that they were fighting so "gallantly in our ranks" their commander in chief no longer wanted them to go. By 1864 Lincoln therefore rejected that alternative and was looking beyond the second one of freeing them only to "keep them among us as underlings." In 1862 the president had proposed gradual emancipation during which most black people would indeed have remained as underlings for an indefinite period. But he was now moving toward a belief in immediate abolition and equal rights for all citizens. According to Foner, Lincoln "began during the last two years of the war to imagine an interracial future for the United States."

When he was sworn in for his second term on March 4, 1865, writes Foner, "for the first time in American history companies of black soldiers marched in the inaugural parade. According to one estimate, half the audience that heard Lincoln's address was black, as were many of the visitors who paid their respects at the White House reception that day." For "Lincoln opened the White House to black guests as no president had before."

The central theme of "The Fiery Trial" is Lincoln's "capacity for growth" in his "views and policies regarding slavery and race." Foner does not doubt the sincerity of his statement in 1858 that he had "always hated slavery." By the time of Lincoln's death, however, "he occupied a very different position with regard to slavery and the place of blacks in American society than earlier in his life." In 1837 Lincoln described slavery as an injustice; by 1854 it was a monstrous injustice; in 1862 he told a delegation of five black men he had invited to the White House that "your race are suffering in my judgment the greatest wrong inflicted on any people." This was good abolitionist rhetoric. But Lincoln's purpose at this meeting in 1862 was to publicize his program for government assistance to blacks who volunteered to emigrate.

Like his political heroes Thomas Jefferson and Henry Clay, Lincoln could not yet in 1862 imagine a future of interracial equity in the United States. "Even when you cease to be slaves," he told the five delegates, "you are yet far removed from being placed on an equality with the white race." Moreover, "there is an unwillingness on the part of our people, harsh as it may be, for you free colored people to remain with us. . . . I do not propose to discuss this, but to present it as a fact with which we have to deal. I cannot alter it if I would. . . . It is better for us both, therefore, to be separated."

Despite overtones of empathy with the plight of blacks in a racist society, the condescension shown by these presidential remarks provoked widespread condemnation by abolitionists both black and white.

“Pray tell us, is our right to a home in this country less than your own?” wrote one black man to the president. “Are you an American? So are we.” Few blacks offered to emigrate, and a pilot project supported by the Lincoln administration to colonize several hundred black volunteers on a Haitian island was a failure. A good many Republicans agreed with one of their number who branded Lincoln’s “scheme” of colonization as “simply absurd” and “disgraceful to the administration.”

Lincoln also came to see the “scheme” of colonization as unjust and impractical, though perhaps not disgraceful to his administration. As Foner points out, after the president issued the Emancipation Proclamation and committed the government to the recruitment of black soldiers, Lincoln “abandoned the idea of colonization.” He could scarcely ask black men to fight for their country and then tell them that they should leave it. “Black soldiers played a crucial role not only in winning the Civil War but also in defining its consequences,” writes Foner, by putting “the question of postwar rights squarely on the national agenda.” Because of Lincoln’s admiration for the courage of black soldiers and their contribution to Union victories, his “racial views seemed to change” and his “sense of blacks’ relationship to the nation also began to change.” Their military service “implied a very different vision of their future place in American society than plans for settling them overseas.”

Foner is right on the mark here. Indeed, perhaps he could have emphasized even more the timing as well as the importance of Lincoln’s praise for black soldiers. In August 1863 the president wrote one of his forceful public letters that served a purpose similar to a modern president’s prime-time televised speech or news conference. This letter appeared in print just one year after Lincoln’s colonization speech to blacks in the White House, and a month after white antidraft rioters in New York City lynched black men at almost the same moment black soldiers were dying in the attack on Fort Wagner in South Carolina (dramatized in the movie "Glory"). Figuratively looking those draft rioters in the eye, Lincoln declared: “You say you will not fight to free negroes. Some of them seem willing to fight for you.” When the war was won, Lincoln continued, “there will be some black men who can remember that, with silent tongue, and clenched teeth, and steady eye, and well-poised bayonet, they have helped mankind on to this great consummation; while, I fear, there will be some white ones, unable to forget that, with malignant heart, and deceitful speech, they have strove to hinder it.”

A year later that “great consummation” seemed more distant than ever, as military stalemates on all fronts after enormous casualties that summer caused Northern morale to plummet to its lowest point yet. Lincoln came under intense pressure to retreat from the abolition of slavery as one of his publicly stated prior conditions for negotiations to end the war. He refused. To back away from the promise of freedom would be an egregious breach of faith, declared Lincoln. “Could such treachery by any possibility, escape the curses of Heaven?” More than a hundred thousand black soldiers were then fighting for the Union.

Lincoln expressed contempt for those who "have proposed to me to return to slavery [these] black warriors.I should be damned in time & in eternity for so doing. The world shall know that I will keep my faith to friends & enemies, come what will. . . . Why should they give their lives for us, with full notice of our purpose to betray them?"

What Lincoln and everyone else believed would come of this principled stand was his defeat for reelection in 1864. Two years after he had told African Americans that they should leave the country for the good of both races, he now staked his career and reputation on defending the freedom they had earned by fighting for their country. Northern battlefield victories in the fall of 1864 turned around both the military and political situations by 180 degrees. Instead of being "badly beaten" at the polls in November, as he had expected in August, Lincoln was decisively reelected. He then invoked his mandate and threw all of the resources of his administration into a successful fight to get the Thirteenth Amendment through Congress.

Two days after Confederate general Robert E. Lee surrendered his army at Appomattox, Lincoln gave a speech to an interracial crowd on the White House lawn. In this address he looked toward the future problem of reconstructing the war-torn South. At a time when black men could not vote even in most Northern states, the president expressed his preference for enfranchising literate blacks and all black Union military veterans in the new South. "This was a remarkable statement," Foner rightly asserts. "No American president had publicly endorsed even limited black suffrage."

Lincoln's secretary of the interior considered this endorsement a critical step toward full and equal citizenship for all blacks. So did John Wilkes Booth, who was in the crowd that heard Lincoln's words on April 11. "That means n***r citizenship," uttered Booth. "Now, by God, I'll put him through. That is the last speech he will ever make."

Three days later Booth fulfilled his dark oath. Lincoln did not get the chance to continue the trajectory that had propelled him from the gradualist and colonizationist limitations of his antislavery convictions in earlier years toward the immediatist and egalitarian policies he was approaching by 1865. "Lincoln had changed enormously during the Civil War," Foner concludes. Most strikingly, "he had developed a deep sense of compassion for the slaves he had helped to liberate, and a concern for their fate."

The nation's foremost black leader, Frederick Douglass, recognized this compassion in a memorial address he delivered in 1865. Lincoln was "emphatically, the black man's president," said Douglass, "the first to show any respect for their rights as men." A decade later, however, in a speech at the dedication of an emancipation monument in Washington, Douglass described Lincoln as "preeminently the white man's President." To his largely white audience on this occasion, Douglass declared that "you are the children of Abraham Lincoln. We are at best only his step-children." Later in the same speech, Douglass brought together his Hegelian thesis and antithesis in a final synthesis.

Whatever Lincoln's flaws may have been in the eyes of racial egalitarians, "in his heart of hearts he loathed and hated slavery." His firm wartime leadership saved the nation and freed it "from the great crime of slavery. . . . The hour and the man of our redemption had met in the person of Abraham Lincoln."

As James Oakes notes in his astute and polished study "The Radical and the Republican: Frederick Douglass, Abraham Lincoln, and the Triumph of Antislavery Politics," Douglass's speech in 1876 "mimicked his own shifting perspective" on Lincoln over the previous two decades.

Born a slave on Maryland's Eastern Shore, Douglass escaped to the North and freedom in 1838 and soon emerged as one of the nation's leading abolitionists. During the Civil War he spoke out eloquently and repeatedly to urge expansion of this war for union into a war for black freedom. Because Lincoln seemed to move too slowly and reluctantly in that direction, Douglass berated him as a proslavery wolf in antislavery sheep's clothing. "Abraham Lincoln is no more fit for the place he holds than was James Buchanan," declared an angry Douglass in July 1862, "and the latter was no more the miserable tool of traitors than the former is allowing himself to be." Lincoln had "steadily refused to proclaim, as he had the constitutional and moral right to proclaim, complete emancipation to all the slaves of rebels. . . . The country is destined to become sick of . . . Lincoln, and the sooner the better."

In Douglass's Hegelian dialectic attitude toward Lincoln, this was the time of his most outspoken opposition. He could not know that at the very moment he was condemning the president as no better than the proslavery Buchanan, Lincoln had decided to issue an emancipation proclamation that would accomplish most of what Douglass demanded.

When Lincoln did precisely that, two months later, Douglass was ecstatic. "We shout for joy that we live to record this righteous decree," he announced.

But in Douglass's view, Lincoln backslid after issuing the Proclamation. Just as the president had seemed too slow in 1862 to embrace emancipation, he now seemed similarly tardy in 1864 to embrace equal rights for freed slaves. For a time Douglass even supported efforts to replace Lincoln with a more radical Republican candidate for president in the election of 1864. In the end, however, when the only alternative to Lincoln was the Democratic nominee, George B. McClellan, whose election might jeopardize the antislavery gains of the previous two years, Douglass came out for Lincoln. "When there was any shadow of a hope that a man of more anti-slavery conviction and policy could be elected," he wrote, "I was not for Mr. Lincoln." But with the prospect of "the (miscalled) Democratic party . . . clearly before us, all hesitation ought to cease, and every man who wishes well to the slave and to the country should at once rally with all the warmth and earnestness of his nature to the support of Abraham Lincoln."

James Oakes believes that Lincoln possessed as much "anti-slavery conviction" as Douglass himself. The difference between the two men was one of position and tactics, not conviction. Douglass was a radical reformer whose mission was to proclaim principles and to demand that the people and their leaders live up to those principles. Lincoln was a politician, a practitioner of the art of the possible, a pragmatist who subscribed to the same principles but recognized that

they could only be achieved in gradual step-by-step fashion through compromise and negotiation, in pace with progressive changes in public opinion and political realities. Oakes portrays a symbiosis between the radical Douglass and the Republican Lincoln: "It is important to democracy that reformers like Frederick Douglass could say what needed to be said, but it is indispensable to democracy that politicians like Abraham Lincoln could do only what the law and the people allowed them to do."

Looking back in 1876, Douglass acknowledged that while from the standpoint of the abolitionists "Lincoln seemed tardy, cold, dull, and indifferent," he was considerably to the left of the political center on the slavery issue. "Measure him by the sentiment of his country," a "sentiment he was bound as a statesman to consult," and Lincoln "was swift, zealous, radical, and determined." Oakes carries this point a step further. Lincoln the politician was a master of misdirection, of appearing to appease conservatives while manipulating them toward acceptance of radical policies.

Douglass and many other contemporaries failed to appreciate or even to understand Lincoln's political legerdemain. Many historians have similarly failed. But Oakes both understands and appreciates it, and he analyzes with more clarity and precision than anyone else what he describes as the "typically backhanded way" in which Lincoln handled slavery, a tactic that "obscured the radicalism of his move."

Some examples. In August 1861 General John C. Frémont, commander of Union forces in the border slave state of Missouri, issued an edict freeing the slaves of all Confederate activists in the state. Radicals like Douglass rejoiced, but conservatives and border-state Unionists threatened to turn against the Union war effort if Frémont's decree was sustained. Lincoln ordered Frémont to modify his edict to conform to legislation enacted a few weeks earlier that "confiscated" (but did not specifically free) only those slaves who had actually worked on Confederate fortifications or on any other military projects. Radicals denounced Lincoln's action, especially the distinction between confiscation and emancipation. But Lincoln's main concern was to retain the loyalty of the border slave states. "Without them," as Oakes recognizes, "the North would probably have lost the war and the slaves would have lost their only real chance for freedom." Three months later, in his annual message to Congress (which we today call the State of the Union Address), Lincoln "let slip, as if in passing, one of the most important announcements of the war" when he casually referred to the slaves, now numbering in the thousands, who had been confiscated by coming into Union lines as having been "thus liberated." From then on, confiscation meant freedom; Lincoln accomplished this momentous step so subtly that nobody complained or even seemed to notice.

By May 1862 the Union government had gained military and political control of the border states. Lincoln urged them to consider voluntary and compensated emancipation of their slaves (they ultimately rejected his appeal). In that month another of Lincoln's generals, David Hunter, issued an order abolishing slavery not only along the South Atlantic coast where Union forces had secured a foothold but also in the entire states of South Carolina, Georgia, and Florida—90 percent of which were under Confederate control.

Lincoln knew nothing of this order until he read it in the newspapers. He promptly rescinded it, stating privately that "no commanding general shall do such a thing, upon *my* responsibility, without consulting me." Publicly, however, he phrased it differently in his revocation of Hunter's order: "Whether it be competent for me, as Commander-in-Chief . . . to declare the slaves of any state or states, free" and whether at any time "it shall have become a necessity indispensable to the maintenance of the government, to exercise such power, are questions which, under my responsibility, I reserve to myself " and not to commanders in the field. One does not have to read between the lines to discern the hint of possible future action—it is in the lines themselves.

As Oakes comments, any diligent reader of Lincoln's words "might have found it odd that a proclamation ostensibly designed to overturn General Hunter's emancipation order" contained a paragraph "declaring the President's authority to free the slaves in the rebel states whenever 'military necessity' required it."

The military-necessity argument took on added urgency in the summer of 1862 as Confederate counteroffensives in Virginia and Tennessee reversed earlier Union gains. Slaves constituted the majority of the Confederacy's labor force. They sustained the South's war economy and the logistics of Confederate armies. A strike against slavery would be a blow against the Confederacy's ability to wage war.

Such a strike would have to be justified politically in the North not on abolitionist but on military grounds. The cause of the Union united the North; in 1862 the issue of emancipation still deeply divided it. In August 1862 the influential New York Tribune published a signed editorial by Horace Greeley urging Lincoln to proclaim emancipation. The president had already decided to issue an emancipation proclamation but was waiting for a propitious moment to announce it. Greeley's editorial gave him an opportunity to respond with what Oakes describes as "a masterpiece of indirect revelation." "My paramount object" in this war "*is* to save the Union," wrote Lincoln in a public letter to Greeley, "and is not either to save or destroy slavery." If "I could save the Union without freeing *any* slave I would do it, and if I could save it by freeing *all* the slaves I would do it; and if I could save it by freeing some and leaving others alone I would also do that." Here was something for both radicals and conservatives—another hint that emancipation might be coming, but an assertion that if so, it would happen only because it was necessary to save the Union. Lincoln had again cloaked a radical measure in conservative garb. Many people then and since missed the point, including Douglass, who saw it only "as evidence that Lincoln cared a great deal about the restoration of the Union and very little about the abolition of slavery."

Lincoln's racial attitudes were also a target of Douglass's criticism until 1864. On this subject, Oakes offers some original and incisive insights. The main charge of racism against Lincoln focuses on his statements during the debates with Stephen A. Douglas in 1858. Lincoln rejected Douglas's accusation that he favored racial equality—a volatile issue in Illinois that threatened Lincoln's political career if the charge stuck. Goaded by Douglas's repeated playing of the race card, Lincoln declared in one of the debates that "I am not, nor have ever been in favor of bringing about in any way the social and political equality of the races."

It would be easy, comments Oakes, "to string such quotations together and show up Lincoln as a run-of-the-mill white supremacist." But in private, Lincoln was much less racist than most other whites of his time. He was "disgusted by the race-baiting of the Douglas Democrats," and he "made the humanity of blacks central to his antislavery argument." In a speech at Chicago in 1858, Lincoln pleaded: "Let us discard all this quibbling about . . . this race and that race and the other race being inferior, and therefore they must be placed in an inferior position," and instead "once more stand up declaring that all men are created equal."

Lincoln's statements expressing opposition to social and political equality, Oakes maintains, were in fact part of his antislavery strategy. Extreme racism was at the core of the proslavery argument: If the slaves were freed, they would aspire to equality with whites; therefore slavery was the only bulwark of white supremacy and racial purity.

Lincoln "wanted questions about race moved off the table," writes Oakes, and "the strategy he chose was to *agree* with the Democrats" in opposition to social equality. Lincoln understood that most Americans—including most Northerners—believed in white supremacy, "and in a democratic society such deeply held prejudices cannot be easily disregarded." Thus the most effective way to convert whites to an antislavery position, Lincoln believed, was to separate the issue of bondage from that of race.

The same strategy of taking race off the table elicited Lincoln's proposals for colonization of freed slaves in 1862. Frederick Douglass was outraged by the president's statement to the delegation of black men who came to the White House in August—that because whites did not like the presence of black people among them, "it is better for us both, therefore, to be separated." Douglass publicly rebuked Lincoln for his "pride of race and blood, his contempt for Negroes and his canting hypocrisy."

But again Douglass missed the point, according to Oakes. Lincoln was painfully aware that his forthcoming emancipation proclamation would provoke a racist backlash. By signaling the possibility of colonizing some freed slaves elsewhere, Lincoln hoped to defuse part of that backlash. Some Republicans understood the strategy. "I believe practically [colonization] is a damn humbug," said one, "but it will take with the people." Lincoln's remarks to the black delegation were a staged performance. The president had invited a stenographer from the New York Tribune to report his words. Lincoln "was once again using racism strategically" to "make emancipation more palatable to white racists," writes Oakes, who admires Lincoln's skill but acknowledges that this time he may have overdone the tactic. "It was a low point in his presidency."

After issuing the Emancipation Proclamation on January 1, 1863, Lincoln stopped using racism as a strategic diversion. By March 1863 he strongly endorsed the recruitment of black soldiers to fight for the Union, and in response to prodding by Douglass and other abolitionists he supported the successful passage of legislation to equalize the pay of black and white soldiers. Lincoln's refusal to back away from his insistence on the abolition of slavery as a precondition for peace negotiations in 1864 convinced Douglass that the president was the black man's genuine friend. Lincoln twice invited Douglass to the White House for private consultations on racial policies and also invited him to tea at the Lincolns' summer cottage. Douglass discovered at these

meetings “a deeper moral conviction against slavery than I had ever seen before in anything spoken or written by him.” Douglass also found that Lincoln in person had none of that “pride of race” he had earlier accused him of possessing. “In his company I was never in any way reminded of my humble origin, or my unpopular color,” wrote Douglass. The president received him “just as you have seen one gentleman receive another.” Lincoln was “one of the very few Americans, who could entertain a negro and converse with him without in anywise reminding him of the unpopularity of his color.”

Douglass outlived Lincoln by thirty years. In the latter half of that period the nation receded from its Reconstruction promise of racial justice, and Southern blacks were forced into second-class citizenship. As this trajectory spiraled downward, the Civil War president looked better and better in retrospect. If Lincoln were alive today, Douglass said in 1893, “did his firm hand now hold the helm of state . . . did his wisdom now shape and control the destiny of this otherwise great republic,” the national government would not be making the “weak and helpless” claim that “there is no power under the United States Constitution to protect the lives and liberties” of Southern blacks “from barbarous, inhuman and lawless violence."

Seventy years later, Martin Luther King Jr. stood in front of the Lincoln Memorial in Washington and described his dream that one day the nation would live up to the ideals of Douglass and Lincoln.

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