

1. Record Nr.	UNINA9910461601103321
Autore	Lincoln Abraham <1809-1865.>
Titolo	Lincoln on race & slavery [[electronic resource] /] / edited and introduced by Henry Louis Gates, Jr. ; coedited by Donald Yacovone
Pubbl/distr/stampa	Princeton, N.J., : Princeton University Press, c2009
ISBN	9786612449338 1-282-44933-8 1-4008-3208-X
Edizione	[Course Book]
Descrizione fisica	1 online resource (416 p.)
Altri autori (Persone)	GatesHenry Louis YacovoneDonald
Disciplina	973.7092
Soggetti	Slavery - United States - History - 19th century Slaves - Emancipation - United States Electronic books. United States Race relations History 19th century Sources
Lingua di pubblicazione	Inglese
Formato	Materiale a stampa
Livello bibliografico	Monografia
Note generali	Includes index.
Nota di bibliografia	Includes bibliographical references and index.
Nota di contenuto	Front matter -- Contents -- List of Illustrations -- Acknowledgments -- Abraham Lincoln on Race and Slavery / Gates, Henry Louis -- 1. Protest in Illinois Legislature on Slavery -- 2. Address Before the Young Men's Lyceum of Springfield, Illinois -- 3. A L to Mary Speed -- 4. Temperance Address -- 5. A L to Williamson Durley -- 6. A L to Josephus Hewett -- 7. Speech at Worcester, Massachusetts -- 8. Remarks and Resolution Introduced in United States House of Representatives Concerning Abolition of Slavery in the District of Columbia -- 9. Eulogy on Henry Clay & Outline for Speech to the Colonization Society -- 10. Speech to the Springfield Scott Club -- 11. Fragments on Slavery -- 12. Speech at Bloomington, Illinois -- 13. Speech at Peoria, Illinois -- 14. A L to Ichabod Coddington -- 15. A L to Owen Lovejoy -- 16. A L to George Robertson -- 17. A L to Joshua F. Speed -- 18. Speech at Kalamazoo, Michigan -- 19. A L to Newton Deming and George P. Strong -- 20. Speech at Springfield, Illinois -- 21. A House Divided, Speech at Springfield, Illinois -- 22. A L to John L. Scripps -- 23. Fragment on the Struggle Against Slavery -- 24. Speech

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Sommario/riassunto

Generations of Americans have debated the meaning of Abraham Lincoln's views on race and slavery. He issued the Emancipation Proclamation and supported a constitutional amendment to outlaw slavery, yet he also harbored grave doubts about the intellectual capacity of African Americans, publicly used the n-word until at least 1862, and favored permanent racial segregation. In this book--the first complete collection of Lincoln's important writings on both race and slavery--readers can explore these contradictions through Lincoln's own words. Acclaimed Harvard scholar and documentary filmmaker Henry Louis Gates, Jr., presents the full range of Lincoln's views, gathered from his private letters, speeches, official documents, and even race jokes, arranged chronologically from the late 1830's to the 1860's. Complete with definitive texts, rich historical notes, and an original introduction by Henry Louis Gates, Jr., this book charts the progress of a war within Lincoln himself. We witness his struggles with conflicting aims and ideas--a hatred of slavery and a belief in the political equality of all men, but also anti-black prejudices and a determination to preserve the Union even at the cost of preserving slavery. We also watch the evolution of his racial views, especially in reaction to the heroic fighting of black Union troops. At turns inspiring and disturbing, *Lincoln on Race and Slavery* is indispensable for understanding what Lincoln's views meant for his generation--and what they mean for our own.
