

# AS THE KROW FLIES Exploding the Myth

By LEON HARRIS

One of the bigger lies that America has given the World is that Lincoln freed the slaves, and that Blacks should be grateful from can to can't because Mr. Lincoln was so generous. It is true that Lincoln affixed his signature to a proclamation giving the slaves their freedom and that the slaves, thereby, were free to "get hat." It is not true that Lincoln did so out of the goodness of his heart or that we have to be grateful to him. What does it matter why he did it? Isn't it sufficient that he did it? No, because white folks never miss an opportunity to tell us "what we did for you people."

The Black school child grows up feeling half-guilty for even thinking about cussing out a white man, because he's been taught that it was a white man who gave us freedom. How many times has the photograph been reprinted of the small Negro boy staring up at the statue of Lincoln at the Lincoln Memorial? What is the catechism the Black Child learns from grade one on? "Class, what did Abraham do?" "Lincoln freed the slaves," and the point is driven home that you'd still be down on Mr. Charlie's plantation working from can to can't if Mr. Lincoln hadn't done your great-great-grandmama a favor. (Every black person in America can trace his ancestry back to Africa by way of a bill of sale. It's easier to trace the history of a piece of furniture than the family history of a black person.) Blacks have no reason to feel grateful to Abraham Lincoln. Rather, they should be angry at him. After all, he came into office in 1861. How come it took him two (2) whole years to free the slaves? All he had to do was get up one morning and say, "Doggonit! I think I'm gonna free the slaves today. It just ain't right for folks to own other folks." It was that simple. Mr. Lincoln, however, like other presidents moved politically, not morally. He said that if he could keep the Union together by maintaining slavery, he'd do it. He was in office to preserve the Union, not free the slaves. (Nowadays they say preserve law and order, not see that Blacks get a little justice.)

The Civil War is represented in school text books as a war to free the slaves. It turned out that way but that ain't the way it started out. (Let's be serious. White folks ain't gon' engage in four years of bloody fighting over the conditions of Blacks. We're supposed to believe that nonsense though.) At the beginning of the war, the union army was under strict orders not to interfere with slavery. When one general seized two counties in Virginia, he immediately issued a proclamation to this effect to the local white people. Concisely speaking, any Blacks heading North that were captured by the Union Army were returned to the slave owners, irrespective of whether they were slaves or freemen, but that never entered the captains' minds. They were black - and if they weren't previous slaves, they were after they ran into the Union Army.

On July 4, 1861, Colonel Pryor of Ohio, went so far as to deliver a speech to the people of Virginia, saying, "I assure you that the relation of master and servant as recognized in your state shall be respected. Your authority over that species of property shall not in the least be interfered with. To this end, I assure you that those under my command have preemptory orders to take up and hold any Negroes found running about the camp without passes from their masters."

History tells us much about the reasons for this Civil War, but what it fails to mention was that the Civil War was begun in the interest of slavery on both sides. The South was fighting to take slavery out of the Union and the North was fighting to keep it in the Union; the South was fighting to get it beyond the limits of the United States Constitution, and North was fighting for the old guarantees, both de-

spising the Negro, both insulting the Negro.

Once the war was over and the slaves freed, everybody had the same questions; What shall we do with the Negro? Lincoln had an interesting proposal. Send them back to Africa. (Most of them were born in America; so he really meant send them back to Africa.)

"Your race suffers greatly, many of them, by living among us, while ours suffers from your presence. In a word we suffer on each side." If this is admitted, it affords a reason why we should be departed. If not for the institution of slavery and the race as a basis the war could not have an existence.

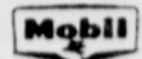
Frederick Douglass told him like it was. "A horse thief pleading that the existence of the horse is the apology for his theft, or a highwayman contending that the money in the traveller's pocket - is the sole first cause of his robbing, are about as much entitled to respect as is the President's reasoning at this point. No, Mr. President, it is not the innocent horse that makes the horse thief, nor the traveller's purse that makes the highway robber, and it is not the presence of the Negro that causes this foul and unnatural war, but the cruel and brutal crepitivity of those who wish to possess horses, money and Negroes by means of theft, robbing, and rebellion."

So who really freed the slaves? We are reminded of the old Indian connotation, "White man speaks with forked tongue," as being more truth than poetry.

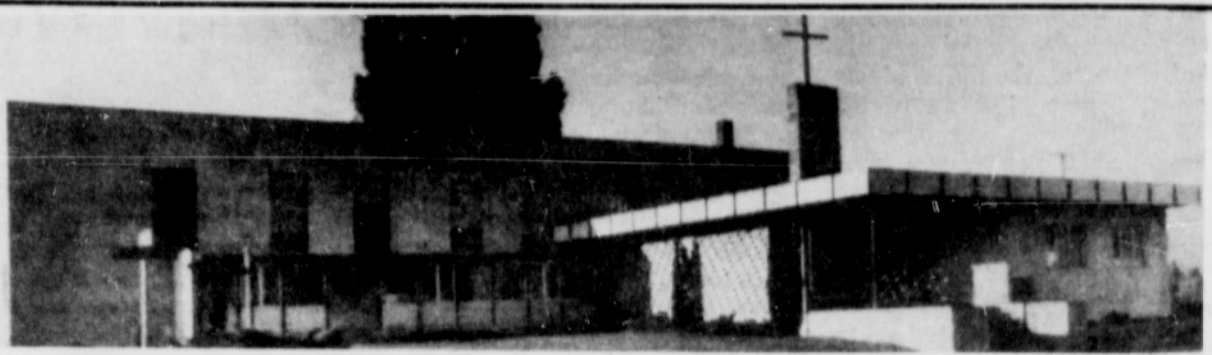
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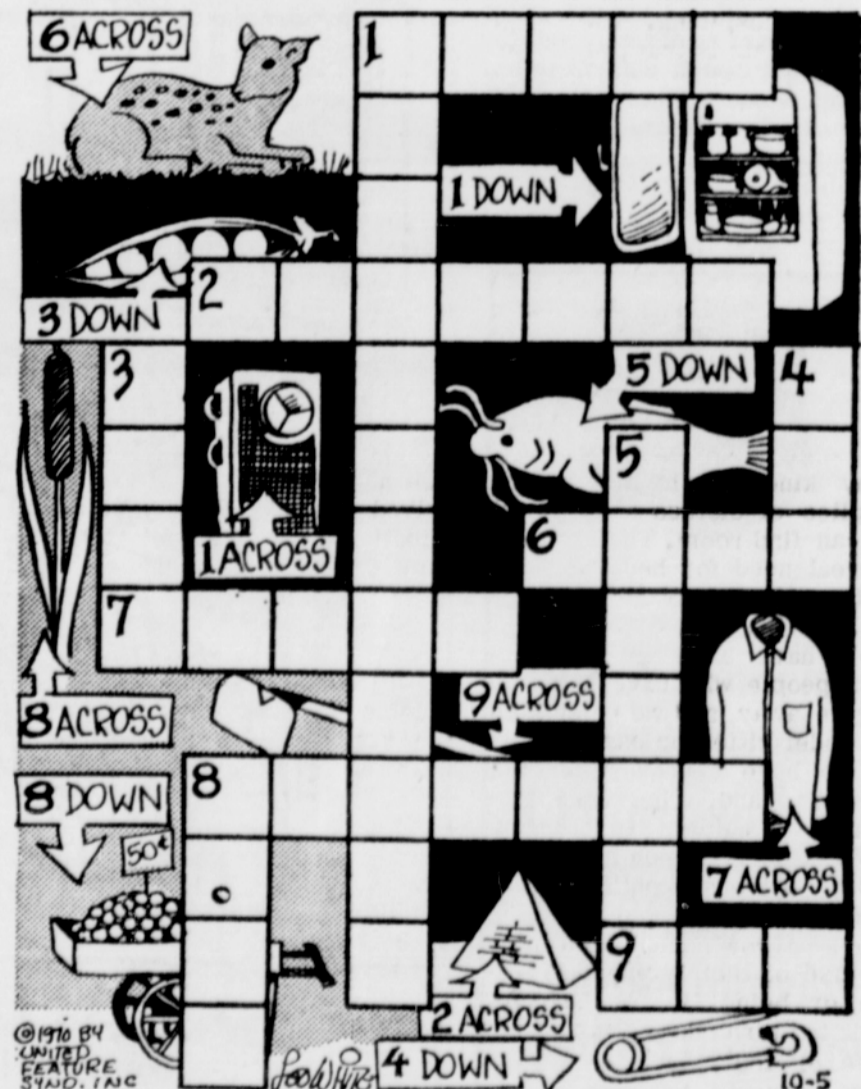
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