



Quicklet on Henry Louis Gates Jr.'s Life Upon These Shores: Looking at African American History, 1513-2008

Alexandra Townsend

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ABOUT THE BOOK

Life Upon These Shores tells the story of the evolution of life for African-American people in America, starting with the first known Africans to land in the New World in 1513 and concluding with the election of President Barack Obama in 2008.

In creating this book Gates and his assistants meticulously combed through over 400 years worth of documents and artifacts. Gates particularly wanted to include as much information as he could about some of the lesser known figures of African American history, in order to tell as accurate and wide-sweeping a story as possible. Life Upon These Shores contains many stories of significant black women and men who worked hard to improve life for themselves and for black people everywhere, but are not necessarily remembered in most history books. The book is also filled with hundreds of pictures of these people, their achievements, and the frequent tragic results of racist antagonism.

MEET THE AUTHOR

Alexandra Townsend is a recent graduate of the University of Vermont. She enjoys learning and writing about feminism, LGBT stuff, comic books, fairy tales, and tons of other things.

EXCERPT FROM THE BOOK

Life Upon These Shores begins by discussing the origins of slavery and the scant accounts we have of the first black people to ever arrive in the Americas. Gates then delves into the evolution of the slave trade, its causes, structure, and alternative labor systems that were first considered. The lives of the occasional free blacks are compared with those of slaves and examples are given from both categories of people who were able to achieve amazing things despite the racism they faced.

Gates explains the important role that African Americans had during the Revolutionary War, as many of them fought on both sides despite still being enslaved. This conflict became part of a larger fight for liberty after the war as African Americans and white abolitionists throughout the country worked tirelessly for nearly a century to try and gain freedom for black people. This fight for justice eventually led to the Civil War. Unfortunately, although the conclusion of the war gave freedom to all African Americans and the right to vote to black men, black people still found that their rights were frequently denied and infringed upon. Lynch mobs became common, particularly in the South and few black people could hope to achieve prosperous lives. This led to a long, hard struggle to fight against the evils of racism and the increasingly common segregation policies that were being established around the country.

CHAPTER OUTLINE

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2008

- + About the Book
- + About the Author
- + Overall Summary
- + Analysis & Discussion by Section
- + ...and much more

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