



They Never Said It: A Book of Fake Quotes, Misquotes, and Misleading Attributions

Paul F. Jr. Boller, John George

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Abraham Lincoln never said, "You cannot fool all the people all the time." Thomas Jefferson never said, "That government is best which governs least." And Horace Greeley never said, "Go west, young man." In *They Never Said It*, Paul F. Boller, Jr. and John George examine hundreds of misquotations, incorrect attributions, and blatant fabrications, outlining the origins of the quotes and revealing why we should consign them to the historical trashcan.

Many of the misquotes are quite harmless. Some are inadvertent misquotes that have become popular (Shakespeare actually said, "The best part of valor is discretion"), others, the inventions of reporters embellishing a story (Franklin Roosevelt never opened a speech to a DAR group with the salutation, "My fellow immigrants"). But some of the quotes, such as Charles Darwin's supposed deathbed recantation of evolution, falsify the historical record with their blatant dishonesty. And other chillingly vicious ones, filled with virulent racial and religious prejudices, completely distort the views of the person supposedly quoted and spread distrust and hatred among the gullible. These include the forged remarks attributed to Benjamin Franklin that Jews should be excluded from America and the fabricated condemnation of Catholics attributed to Lincoln.

An entertaining and thought-provoking book, *They Never Said It* covers a great deal of history and sets it right. Going beyond a mere catalog of popular misconceptions, Boller and George reveal how rightists and leftists, and atheists and evangelists all have at times twisted and even invented the words of eminent figures to promote their own ends. The ultimate debunking reference, it perfectly complements handbooks of quotations.

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