

# THE LITTLE GIANT



A NEWSLETTER of the STEPHEN A. DOUGLAS ASSOCIATION

Volume IV, Number 1, May 1992



Saturday, June 6, 1992



Commemoration of the  
131st Anniversary  
of the death of  
Senator Stephen A. Douglas



11:00 a.m.

Ceremonies at the Douglas Tomb  
636 East 35th Street



12:30 p.m.

Annual Luncheon of the  
Stephen A. Douglas Association  
Prairie Restaurant  
of the Hyatt Hotel on Printers Row  
Burnham Room  
500 South Dearborn Street



Reenactment of a Lincoln-Douglas  
Debate and an Address by  
Ernest A. Griffin

on

"The History of Camp Douglas"



\$27.50 per person



Public parking across the street from  
the restaurant.

Valet parking is also available.



Please return the enclosed  
reservation form, with remittance,  
by June 1.



## Ernest A. Griffin to Address Annual Luncheon on "The History of Camp Douglas"

by Barbara Hughett

Of his experience at Camp Douglas, a Confederate prisoner wrote, "...there was absolutely nothing to do

but to brood over our positions, bewail our lots, catch the taint of disease from each other, and passively abide in our prison-pens ... we were soon in a fair state of rotting, while yet alive." Established as a training camp for Illinois volunteers in 1861, Camp Douglas became a prisoner-of-war camp for captured Confederate soldiers in February 1862.

The sixty-acre Camp Douglas, located on the South Side of Chicago, included land which was part of the estate of the late Senator Stephen A. Douglas. Surviving Camp Douglas has been called "a triumph of spiritual as well as physical endurance." Food was scarce and the buildings are said to have "swarmed with vermin." The barracks, built of inch-thick wooden planks, provided scant protection against Chicago's frigid winter tem-

peratures. William Bross, lieutenant governor of Illinois from 1865 to 1869, said in his *History of Camp Douglas* that most Confederate deaths in the camp could be attributed to a lack of

warm clothing. Over the nearly five years of its existence, some 26,000 prisoners were incarcerated at Camp Douglas; 6000 died there.

"The History of Camp Douglas" will be the topic of Ernest A. Griffin's address at the eighteenth annual luncheon of the Stephen A. Douglas Association. Griffin, vice president of the Douglas Association and Honorary Life member of The Civil War Round Table, has done much in recent years to enhance public awareness of the sacrifices made by the men in blue and gray more than 125 years ago.

His grandfather, Private Charles H. Griffin, served in

Company B, 29th Infantry Regiment of the United States Colored Troops during the American Civil War. Knowing this as a child, Griffin developed an

(continued on page 2)



Ernest A. Griffin in front of the Heritage Memorial Wall



**THE STEPHEN A. DOUGLAS  
ASSOCIATION**

175 East Delaware Place  
Suite 5112  
Chicago, Illinois 60611  
312 / 787-1860

*Officers*

Ralph G. Newman  
Chairman of the Board  
Brooks Davis  
President  
Ernest A. Griffin  
Vice President  
Faye Schwimmer  
Secretary  
C. Robert Douglas  
Treasurer

*Directors*

Ellsworth H. Brown  
John B. Duff  
Barbara Hughett  
Jerry Slechta

*Honorary Directors*

Cornel Davis  
Robert W. Johannsen  
Madeline Nash  
Damon Wells

...

Barbara Hughett  
Newsletter Editor  
Muriel Underwood  
Designer/ Typographer



*Keep the Ball rolling—arouse  
the country on the great issues  
of self government & all will  
end well.*

*S. A. Douglas*

February 15, 1858

**ADDRESS** (continued from page 1)

interest in the Civil War. But only after he had owned the Griffin Funeral Home, at 3232 South Martin Luther King, Jr. Drive, for fifteen years did he learn that it was located on land that had been part of Camp Douglas.

This knowledge prompted further research, and Griffin discovered it was at this site that his grandfather had enlisted in the Union Army on January 5, 1864. Private Griffin, who served with the 29th Regiment until the end of the war, was one of the survivors of the July 1864 Battle of the Crater. He was mustered out on November 6, 1865.

Two years ago, Ernest Griffin commissioned the construction of a Heritage Memorial Wall on the grounds of his establishment to honor his grandfather and all those who fought "in that tragic period often called 'the brothers' war"—North and South. One side of the wall honors Union soldiers; the other side commemorates those who served the Confederacy. The wall was dedicated on May 26, 1990, in an impressive and moving ceremony that included addresses by Lincoln scholar Ralph G. Newman, who is chairman of the board of directors of the Douglas Association, and Chicago Mayor Richard M. Daley, and a performance by the Kennedy-King College Chorus.

Since that time, Griffin, the Heritage Memorial Wall, and the nearby tomb of Senator Douglas have received considerable attention from local and national media. Thousands of people who had never heard of Camp Douglas have been made aware of this important Civil War site in Chicago.

Griffin has continued his research on the history of the prison camp and of those who served and died there. People throughout the country contact him seeking information on ancestors they believe might have died at the camp. He has given numerous talks to community groups and has organized several special events at the Heritage Memorial Wall and the Douglas Tomb State Historic Site. In honor of his contributions to Civil War history, last winter Griffin was appointed a captain in the Illinois State Militia by the Reactivated Illinois Volunteers.

**Lincoln-Douglas Debate  
Exhibit and Reenactment  
to be Featured**

The annual luncheon this year, in addition to the address, will include a reenactment of an 1858 Lincoln-Douglas debate and the presentation of an exhibit which was featured at the Metro History Fair. Part of the Chicago Historical Society's "Voices From History" series of dramatizations, "The Rail Splitter vs. The Little Giant" will feature Harry Hutchinson as Stephen A. Douglas and Lawrence Jahn as Abraham Lincoln.

Those attending the luncheon will also have an opportunity to view "The Lincoln-Douglas Debates—1858," a display created by Cari Owens, a tenth-grade student at Von Steuben High School, for the Metro History Fair. The display focuses on the role of the media of the day in influencing public opinion, with an emphasis on reports which were published by newspapers in Chicago and northern Illinois.



**Morning Ceremonies  
at Douglas Tomb to be  
Held on June 6**

The program at the Douglas Tomb State Historic Site on Saturday, June 6, will feature the participation of Company K, Reactivated 58th New York Infantry, with Captain Kenneth Pacanowski commanding, along with several members of the newly-organized Company B, Reactivated 29th Infantry, USCT, with Captain Ernest A. Griffin commanding. This will be the first appearance at the Douglas Tomb ceremonies for Captain Griffin's men; Captain Pacanowski's group has been participating in the summer programs at the site since 1986.

The reenactors will appear in period costume and will fire three volleys from Civil War-era muskets. The ceremonies, commemorating the 131st anniversary of the death of Stephen A. Douglas (on June 3, 1861), will begin at 11:00 a.m.

## Lincoln-Douglas Statue to be Dedicated in Freeport, Illinois

by Barbara Hughett

To commemorate the 134th anniversary of the famous Lincoln-Douglas Freeport Debate, a life-sized statue will be unveiled and dedicated August 27 on the site where the debate took place in downtown Freeport. The sculpture, which portrays a seated, attentive Abraham Lincoln and Stephen A. Douglas, standing with his hand extended as if to emphasize a point, is the only such work ever done of the two leaders in debate.

President George Bush has been invited to the event and has indicated a willingness to attend if his schedule permits. On August 27, 1903—the forty-fifth anniversary of the debate—President Theodore Roosevelt dedicated the only existing monument to the debate at the site, a boulder with a plaque, at an event sponsored by the Freeport Women's Garden Club.

The debate in Freeport is considered by many historians to be the most important of the series of seven debates between Lincoln and Douglas during the 1858 Illinois senatorial campaign. For this second of the Great Debates, trains offering special excursion fares carried thousands of passengers to Freeport from Galena, Rockford, Chicago, and other locations in northern Illinois. Fifteen thousand people—nearly twice the population of the town—crowded into Freeport on a damp and chilly day to witness the verbal contest between the two politicians.

A torchlight parade greeted Douglas when he arrived in town the night before. Lincoln arrived the morning of the debate and rode to the speaking stand in a covered wagon drawn by six white horses.

Focusing on the issue of slavery, Lincoln asked how Douglas could support the Dred Scott decision and yet advocate popular sovereignty. Douglas



"Lincoln and Douglas in Debate" by sculptor Lily Tolpo

answered in a practical vein that slavery could not exist anywhere unless it was protected by local law. His reply became known as the "Freeport Doctrine" and it did not sit well with Douglas supporters in the Southern states.

While Douglas, the incumbent, won the senatorial election that year, it was as a result of these debates that Lincoln became nationally-known, thus paving the way for his presidential nomination and election two years later.

"Lincoln and Douglas in Debate" is the work of sculptor Lily Tolpo, a resident of Stockton, Illinois. Tolpo is noted for her "Great American" series of sculptures, which concentrates on historical figures from the Civil War period. She has also done a painting of the debates which will be on display at the Freeport Art Museum. Her husband, the late Carl Tolpo, sculpted a heroic-sized Lincoln head for Ford's Theatre in the nation's capital.

The August 27 program will feature musical presentations, a reenactment of the Freeport Debate by local actors, and speeches by local, state, and national dignitaries. Historian Ralph G. Newman has been invited to deliver an

## Douglas Association Announces New Officers and Directors

President Brooks Davis and Chairman of the Board of Directors Ralph G. Newman have announced the election of several new officers, directors, and honorary directors. Ernest A. Griffin and Faye Schwimmer, both of whom have served on the board of directors for several years, have been elected vice president and secretary, respectively. C. Robert Douglas, former Douglas Association secretary, has been elected treasurer. Newman and Davis will retain their current offices.

Four new directors have been named: Ellsworth H. Brown, president and director of the Chicago Historical Society; John B. Duff, current commissioner of the Chicago Public Library, who has recently been named president of Columbia College; Barbara Hughett, historian, writer and editor, and author of *The Civil War Round Table: Fifty Years of Scholarship and Fellowship* (1990); and Jerry Slechta, Wisconsin attorney, Lincoln collector, and Civil War historian.

Honorary directorships have been awarded to three people: Robert W. Johannsen, J.G. Randall Distinguished Professor of History at the University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign and author of several books, including *Stephen A. Douglas* (1973), which received the Francis Parkman Prize for Literary Distinction in the Writing of History, and *The Frontier, the Union, and Stephen A. Douglas* (1989); Madeline Nash, senior correspondent for *Time* magazine and great-granddaughter of Stephen A. Douglas; and Damon Wells, author of the critically-acclaimed *Stephen A. Douglas: The Last Years, 1857-1861* (1971).

address. A banquet, to which the public will be invited, is being planned for the evening before the dedication.

For additional information, contact Mickey Martin, president of the Freeport Lincoln-Douglas Art Foundation, 547 West Empire Street, Freeport, Illinois 61032, (815) 235-7464.



## Upcoming Events

### SATURDAY, JUNE 6

**11:00 a.m.:** Ceremonies at the Douglas Tomb, 636 East 35th Street. The honoree will be Ernest A. Griffin.

**12:30 p.m.:** Annual luncheon, Prairie Restaurant

*Summer ceremonies at the Douglas Tomb: the first Sunday of each month, unless indicated otherwise, at 5:00 p.m.*

**July 12:** (Please note: this is the **second** Sunday of July.) The honoree will be Reverend Michael Louis Pflieger, pastor of St. Sabina Catholic Church.

**August 2:** Honoree to be announced.

**September 6:** Honoree to be announced.

## Father Michael Pflieger to be Honoree at July 12 Ceremonies at Douglas Tomb

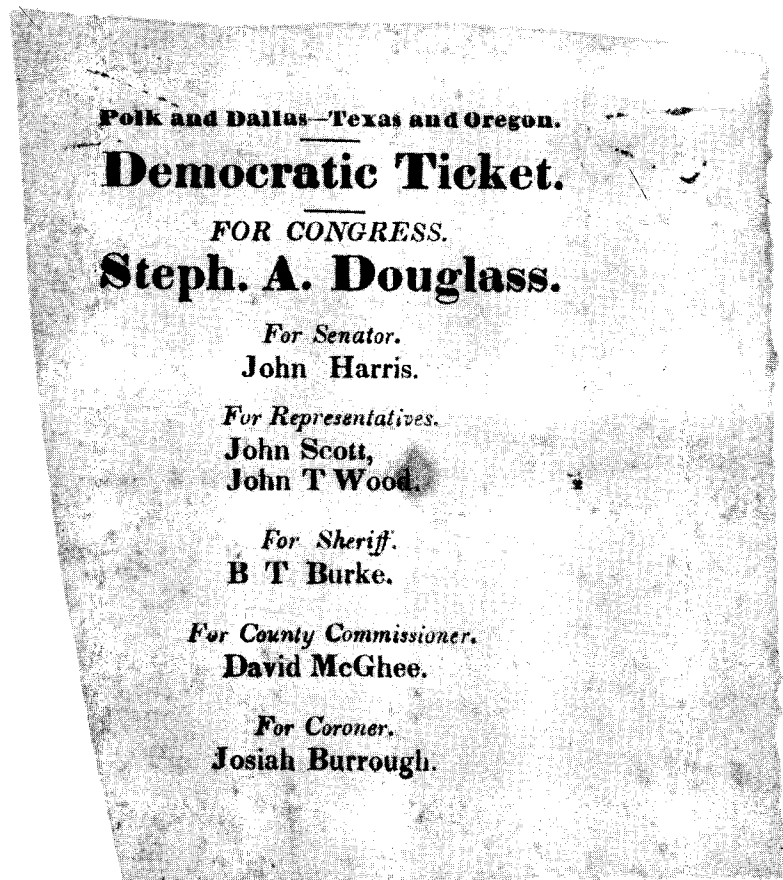
Reverend Michael Louis Pflieger, pastor of St. Sabina Catholic Church and well-known civic activist, will be the honoree at the ceremonies at the Douglas Tomb site on Sunday, July 12. Since 1968, Father Pflieger has lived and ministered in the African-American community on the West and South Sides of Chicago. He



Reverend Michael Louis Pflieger

spent two summers working in a Native American community in Oklahoma and did a portion of his seminary internship as a chaplain at the Cook County Jail.

He is known for his recent campaign to stop the saturation of African-American and Hispanic communities with alcohol and tobacco billboards and his aggressive attack on the sale of drugs and drug paraphernalia in Chicago. Among the many awards he has received are the Humanitarian Award of the Latin American Task Force (1991) and the Bahai House of Worship's David Kellum Award for outstanding influence on youth of all races. In 1990, he was named "Citizen of the Year" by three different groups: the Lions Club of Chicago-Chatham, WBBM-AM Radio, and the Southwest Community Congress.



1844 Illinois Democratic campaign poster advocating the reelection of Douglas to the United States House of Representatives

Illinois State Historical Library

## DOUGLAS AND JOHNSON.



THE UNION  
NOW AND  
FOREVER.

1860 Democratic campaign banner promoting the election of the Stephen A. Douglas/Herschel V. Johnson ticket

Illinois State Historical Library