



# THE LITTLE GIANT

A NEWSLETTER OF THE STEPHEN A. DOUGLAS ASSOCIATION

Volume XII, Number 1, May 2000



SATURDAY, JUNE 3, 2000



Commemoration of the 139th anniversary of the death of Senator Stephen Arnold Douglas on June 3, 1861



11:00 a.m.  
Stephen A. Douglas  
State Historic Site  
636 East 35th Street

Comments by David Richert,  
Treasurer, Stephen A. Douglas  
Association



12:30 P.M.  
COCKTAILS AND LUNCHEON  
Holiday Inn Mart Plaza  
350 North Orleans Street  
Brio Lounge, 15th Floor



Address by

**GERALD J. PROKOPOWICZ**  
Lincoln Scholar, Director of Public Programs  
The Lincoln Museum, Fort Wayne, Indiana

**"STEPHEN A. DOUGLAS AND  
THE PRESIDENTIAL  
CAMPAIGN OF 1860"**



Cost: \$30 per person. Cash bar.  
Your Guests are Welcome!  
Parking: \$8 with validated ticket

To make reservations,  
please contact

David Richert, 312-558-6900, x 119, or  
dirichert@ajs.org  
by Wednesday, May 31



## GERALD J. PROPOCOWICZ TO ADDRESS ANNUAL DOUGLAS ASSOCIATION LUNCHEON ON "STEPHEN A. DOUGLAS AND THE PRESIDENTIAL CAMPAIGN OF 1860"

by Barbara Hughett

THE presidential campaign and election of 1860 were milestones in this nation's history. The election would plunge the United States into a war of brother against brother, the bloodiest in all our history—a war which ended slavery and which, we hope, proved that we were capable of self-government.

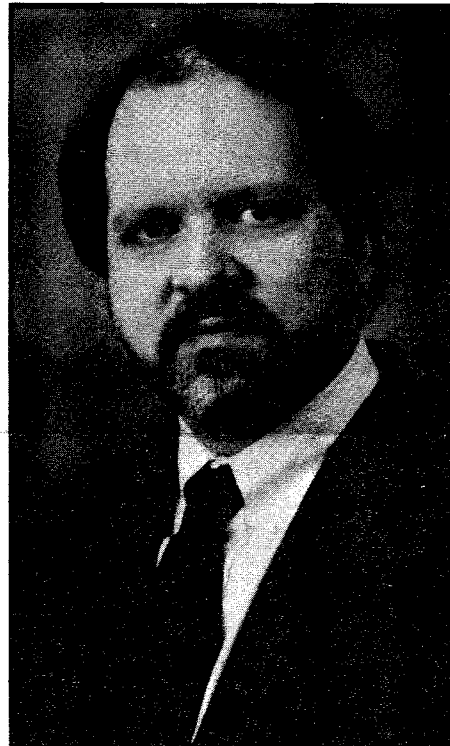
"Only events can make a president," Abraham Lincoln would later say, and the events certainly conspired in an astounding way. The Democrats brought their troubles on themselves. At their April convention in Charleston, South Carolina, a bitter quarrel developed between the Southern and Northern wings of the party, the divisive issue being slavery in the territories.

The majority of the delegates to the Democratic convention favored a platform which would advocate nonintervention by Congress in the institution of slavery in the territories. This view was represented by the popular-sovereignty argument of Sena-

tor Stephen A. Douglas of Illinois in his debates with Lincoln in 1858. Douglas's followers would support the Compromise of 1850, which ended the Missouri Compromise, and endorse the Supreme

Court decision that denied asylum to slaves, even in free territories.

But that was not enough for the Southern Democrats. Led by William L. Yancey of Alabama, they insisted on a platform that would make it the positive duty of Congress to establish and protect slavery in the territories. This would have meant that even if the people in a territory opposed slavery, Congress would impose it upon them against their will. A deadlock ensued. Douglas supporters had a majority, but not the necessary two-thirds vote to carry their candidate.

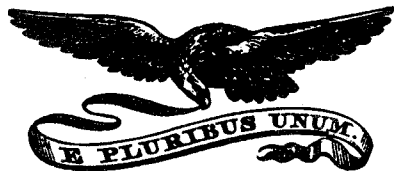


Gerald J. Prokopowicz

After numerous heated sessions, the convention adjourned to meet in Baltimore in June. Meanwhile, the Republican convention, held at the Wigwam in Chicago in May, nominated Abraham

(continued on page 2)

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## THE STEPHEN A. DOUGLAS ASSOCIATION

c/o David Richert, Treasurer  
6959A North Hamilton Avenue  
Chicago, Illinois 60645

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Association programs and ceremonies at the Stephen A. Douglas State Historic Site are supported by the Illinois Historic Preservation Agency,  
Susan Mogerman, Director

# GERALD J. PROPOCOWICZ ADDRESS

(continued from page 1)

Lincoln as president and Hannibal Hamlin of Vermont as vice president. This was accomplished after much political maneuvering and political promising without consultation with the candidate.

When the Democrats reconvened in Baltimore, the rift only widened. The Northern wing of the party nominated Stephen A. Douglas as president and Herschel V. Johnson of Georgia as vice president. The Southern wing slated John C. Breckinridge of Kentucky as president and Joseph Lane of Oregon as vice president. At a moment begging for unanimity, the Democrats were hopelessly divided. A oft-repeated joke of the time was that "Stephen A. Douglas was a greater man than Abraham Lincoln, for while Lincoln split rails Douglas split the Democratic party."

To confuse the issue further, the American Party containing remnants of the old Whigs and some Democrats, calling themselves the Constitutional Union party, gathered and nominated John Bell of Tennessee as president and Edward Everett of Massachusetts as vice president.

At that time, it was not the custom for the presidential candidates themselves to actively campaign. Most campaigns were implemented by the party organizations, while the candidate said very little. Douglas changed this custom in the 1860 campaign. He was the only candidate to actively campaign, traveling throughout the country giving speeches.

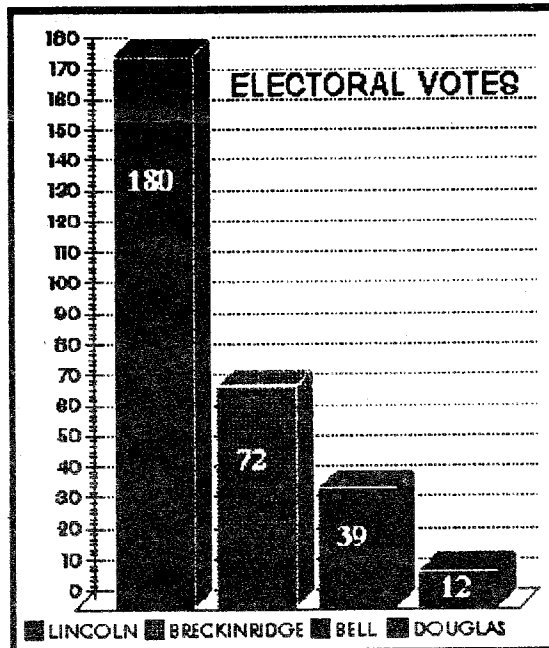
The splitting of the Democratic party foretold the November election. Lincoln won, with 180 electoral votes, compared to 72 for Breckinridge, 39 for Bell, and 12 for Douglas. However, Lincoln only received 39% of the popular vote, but still a larger percentage than any of the other three. Secession began on December 20, when South Carolina seceded from the Union.

Gerald J. Propocowicz will address the annual luncheon of the Stephen A. Douglas Association on Saturday, June 3. His topic will be "Stephen A. Douglas and the Presidential Campaign of 1860." Propocowicz's title at The Lincoln Museum in Fort Wayne, Indiana, is Lincoln Scholar/Director of Public Programs. In his position, he is responsible for all of the research and educational programs of the nation's largest privately-owned collection of materials related to the life and times of Abraham Lincoln.

He holds a B.A. degree from the University of Michigan, a J.D. from the University of Michigan Law School, and a Ph.D. in history from Harvard University. Propocowicz is still a member of the bar in the state of Illinois, where he practiced law for several years. He is editor of The Lincoln Museum's publication, *Lincoln Lore*, and is co-author of the Museum's award-winning permanent exhibit, "Abraham Lincoln and the American Experiment."

His book, *All For the Regiment: the Army of the Ohio, 1861-62*, will be published in 2001 by the University of North Carolina Press. It is based on his doctoral thesis, for which his advisors were David Herbert Donald and Ernest May. He is the author of a brief biography of Abraham Lincoln and the editor of *The Reform Era and Eastern U.S. Development, 1815-1850* (1998).

Gerry Propocowicz lectures widely throughout the country and has taught at Harvard, Brandeis, Johns Hopkins, and Indiana/Purdue University at Fort Wayne, where he currently serves as adjunct professor. He received an honorary doctoral degree in 1998 from Lincoln College in Lincoln, Illinois, and serves on the board of the Abraham Lincoln Association and the Lincoln Forum. In the 2000 November election, he is a Democratic party candidate for the Indiana State Senate, in the 16th District.



## A BRIEF, BUT COLORFUL, HISTORY OF THE STEPHEN A. DOUGLAS ASSOCIATION

by Brooks Davis and Barbara Hughett

### PART I

**T**HE Stephen A. Douglas Association was founded in 1975. It was because Richard J. Daley, mayor of Chicago from 1955-1976, admired the Little Giant that it came into existence. There is much to commend in the accomplishments of Senator Douglas. His public career extended from 1835, when he was elected to the position of state's attorney by the Illinois legislature, to his death in 1861, while serving as a United States senator.

In the intervening years, he had served as a representative in the Illinois legislature; registrar of the Federal Lands Office in Springfield, Illinois; Illinois secretary of state; justice of the Illinois Supreme Court; and congressman in the United States House of Representatives. He is probably best remembered for his debates with Abraham Lincoln during the campaign for the United States Senate in the election of 1858, which he won.

Stephen Arnold Douglas was a resident of Chicago for the last fourteen years of his life. His tomb is an Illinois Historic Site. It is located in a beautiful little park at the eastern extremity of 35th Street in Chicago. Just east of and below the tomb are the Illinois Central tracks and Lake Michigan. It was in this area that Camp Douglas, the United States Army's recruiting camp and prison for captured Confederate soldiers, was located.

Mayor Daley shared his admiration for Douglas with his friend, Ralph G. Newman, who at that time was president of the board of directors of the Chicago Public Library. It had become a custom of the two men to visit the tomb on the anniversaries of Douglas's birth on April 23 and his death on June 3.

The first luncheon meeting was held on April 23, 1975, and was hosted by Mayor Daley, with Ralph Newman serving as

master of ceremonies. Those assembled heard an address by John Y. Simon, professor of history at Southern Illinois University. Dr. Simon opened his address with this observation: "At SIU, I teach a course on 'Illinois History, from Father Marquette to Mayor Daley.' Now, at last, I have met one of those men."

The first officers of the Association included Mayor Daley as chairman of the board, Ralph Newman as president, and Brooks Davis as treasurer. Among the other original board members were Lieutenant Governor Neil F. Hartigan, Judge Abraham Lincoln Marovitz, and John R. Robling. The Association was founded for two reasons: to promote the legacy of Stephen A. Douglas and to call attention to his tomb, the Stephen A. Douglas State Historic Site.

Several previous ceremonies had honored the Little Giant in the 1960s and early 1970s. The one hundredth anniversary of his death was honored with a ceremony at the Chicago Historical Society. It was sponsored by the CHS and the City of Chicago Civil War Centennial Commission, headed by Ralph Newman. Paul Angle, then director of the CHS, spoke on "Stephen Arnold Douglas: Chicagoan and Patriot." This was followed by a program at the Douglas Tomb. Participants included the mayor, the armed forces, and representatives of the governor and the president.

A similar event had been held at the tomb in 1963 to mark the 150th anniversary of Douglas's birth. Illinois Governor Otto Kerner spoke about the Senator's successes with internal improvements, the Illinois Central railroad, and educational projects. Children from the St. Joseph's Home for the Friendless were among those attending. The home, located across the street from the tomb, was originally built during the Civil War as a soldiers' home.

Mayor Daley participated in another program at the tomb on April 23, 1973, to commemorate the 160th anniversary of Senator Douglas's birth. That was the year of the publication of the master work on the life of Stephen A. Douglas by Robert Johannsen, professor of history at the University of Illinois. Members of Mayor Daley's cabinet reported on various chapters of the book as part of a luncheon given by the mayor, to the concealed amusement of

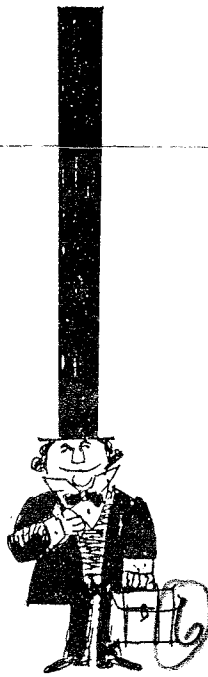
all. According to a newspaper, the guest of honor, Nicaraguan President Anastasio Somoza—a dictator—told those gathered at the LaSalle Hotel luncheon, "I congratulate Mayor Daley and all of you for making Chicago one of the great democratic cities in the world, a city that works."

*Chicago Tribune* interviews with Herman Williams, longtime custodian at the tomb, published in 1969, 1970, and 1971, told of his dedication to the maintenance of the tomb and beautification of the area surrounding it. Williams was the father of recent tomb custodian Patrick Williams, who inherited his father's gardening skills. A 1976 *Chicago Sun-Times* article praised Herman Williams's gardening talents at the only State Historic Site in Chicagoland.

Ralph Newman launched a recruiting drive that year, stating that the organization was open to women (as opposed to The Civil War Round Table of Chicago, which did not admit women as members until the next year), would consist of around 100 members, and that dues would be only \$50 for a lifetime membership (a dollar figure that the Association's board would later lament!). He advised that ceremonies would be held that year on April 23, and that an exhibit would open at the Chicago Public Library that day—the 115th anniversary of the Senator's death.

Invitations for April ceremonies and a June program at the Douglas Tomb in 1977 show that Mayor Michael A. Bilandic had carried the torch forward for the late Richard J. Daley. Later that year, the Chicago City Council began considering Chicago Landmark status for the tomb.

(Part II of this series of articles on the history of the Stephen A. Douglas Association will appear in the next issue of *The Little Giant*.)



## ON THE WEB:

## A VISIT TO THE STEPHEN A. DOUGLAS HOME PAGE

by Barbara Hughett

I RECENTLY discovered a wonderful site on the Internet: The Stephen A. Douglas Home Page! The complete address is [www.ameritech.net/users/dsadowski/littlegiant.html](http://www.ameritech.net/users/dsadowski/littlegiant.html), but you can get there simply by clicking [dsadowski.com](http://dsadowski.com).

After exploring the variety of offerings and links at the site, I contacted its webmaster, David Sadowski, via e-mail. He didn't know about the Stephen A. Douglas Association—but he does now. Hopefully, he will be able to attend our luncheon on June 3 and tell us more about the site and plans for future additions to it.

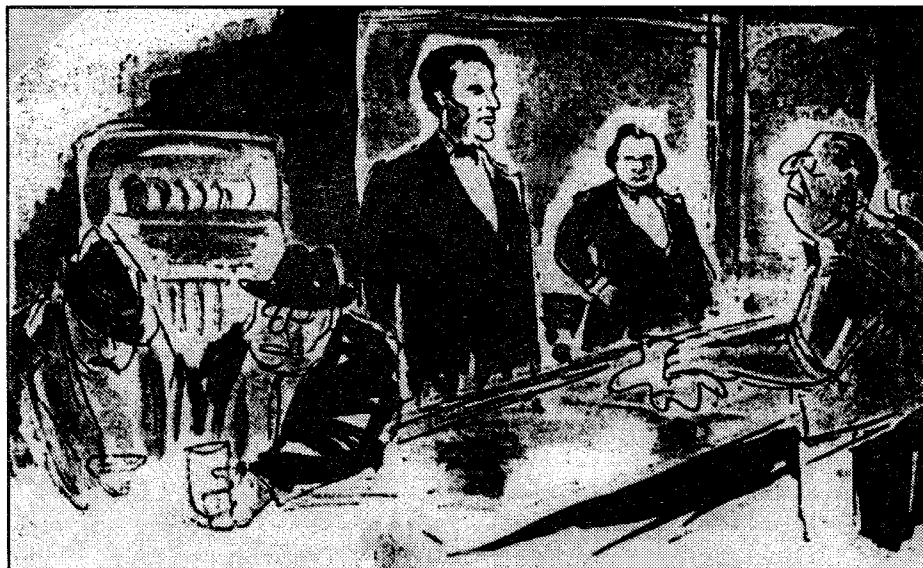
The site, also called "The Little Giant," has many features. Sadowski has posted Douglas's *magnum opus* to the web: a 19,000-word essay, titled "The Dividing Line Between Federal and Local Authority, Popular Sovereignty in the Territories," originally published in the September, 1859, issue of *Harper's New Monthly Magazine*. Also posted is a 6,500-word essay, explaining the article's historical context in the period leading up to the Civil War. There are links to thousands of pages of original source documents related to Douglas and the Civil War era.

You can find numerous quotes from Stephen A. Douglas and a section on Douglas's speeches and writings about the Compromise of 1850. High school students all over the country use the site as a reference resource, as evidenced by the extensive correspondence which is posted.

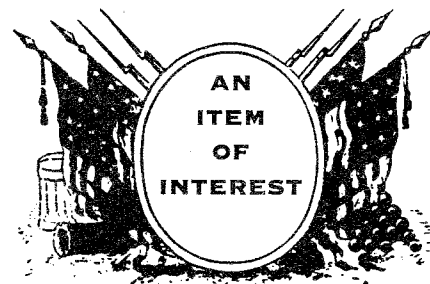
A resident of Oak Park, Illinois, David Sadowski is a writer and a student of American history. In his "real life" (as he phrases it), he is the office manager for a large national corporation. His interest in Douglas was inspired by his father, who admired Stephen A. Douglas. In 1961, he brought young David to visit the Douglas Tomb on the 100th anniversary of the death of The Little Giant.

Sadowski said that at that time he was "intrigued to find out that someone so important and famous in his own time could be so near to being forgotten in our own time."

We are sad to report the death of Douglas Association member Elmer Gertz, who died on April 27. He would have been 94 on September 14. Elmer was a nationally-renowned attorney, author, and civic leader and a very-loved champion of the underdog and worthy causes. Elmer Gertz was the last living founder of The Civil War Round Table. He attended our annual luncheon last June with Betsey and Brooks Davis. Our deepest condolences go to his family.



"If you two don't quit arguing with each other, I'm gonna throw you both right out of here!"



**The Freeport Lincoln-Douglas Society** will hold a commemoration of the Freeport, Illinois, Lincoln-Douglas Debate (August 27, 1858) on Sunday, August 27. This year will mark the 71st anniversary of the dedication of the Lincoln statue in Taylor Park. It was dedicated in 1929, on the 71st anniversary of the Lincoln-Douglas Freeport Debate.

The statue is the work of French sculptor Leonard Crunelle. Participating in this year's festivities will be Freeport businessman and philanthropist Bill Koenig, grandson of W.T. Rawleigh, who commissioned the sculpture. Koenig, who was a child at that time, was present at the unveiling of the statue. For additional information, call Rich Sokup at 815-235-4121.



## HIGHLIGHTS IN THE LIFE OF DOUGLAS

- 1813 Born 23 April at Brandon, Vermont
- 1831 Student at the Academy, Canandaigua, New York; studied law
- 1833 Admitted to the Illinois bar
- 1835 Elected State's Attorney by the Illinois legislature
- 1836 Elected to the Illinois legislature
- 1838 Defeated for Congress
- 1841 Appointed Secretary of State of Illinois; elected justice of the Illinois Supreme Court
- 1842 Elected to the United States House of Representatives
- 1847 Elected to the United States Senate by the Illinois legislature; became Chairman of the Committee on Territories of the Senate; married Martha Denny Martin
- 1850 Instrumental in drafting the Compromise of 1850
- 1853 Death of Martha Douglas
- 1854 Directed the Kansas-Nebraska Act through Congress
- 1856 Defeated for the Presidential nomination; married Adele Cutts
- 1857 Supported the Dred Scott Decision; broke with President Buchanan over the Lecompton Constitution
- 1858 The Lincoln-Douglas debates in Illinois; reelected to the Senate
- 1860 Received Democratic nomination for President; defeated by Lincoln; went South in support of the Union cause
- 1861 Died 3 June at Chicago