

THE LITTLE GIANT

A NEWSLETTER of the STEPHEN A. DOUGLAS ASSOCIATION

Volume XV, Number 1, May 2003

SATURDAY, JUNE 7, 2003

Commemoration of the 142nd Anniversary of the death of Senator Stephen Arnold Douglas on June 3, 1861

5:00 p.m.

Stephen A. Douglas State Historic Site
636 East 35th Street
Wreath-laying Ceremony at the Douglas Tomb

6:00 P.M.

COCKTAILS AND DINNER
Holiday Inn Mart Plaza
350 North Orleans Street
Brio Lounge, 15th Floor

Address by

DR. JOHN Y. SIMON
*Professor of History
Southern Illinois University*

**“DOUGLAS, LINCOLN,
AND POPULAR
SOVEREIGNTY”**

Cost: \$30 per person
Your guests are welcome!

To make reservations, contact David Richert, 6959A North Hamilton Avenue, Chicago, Illinois 60645/773-761-6937 or, via email, Barbara Hughett, at linbarb@aol.com by Monday, June 2

OPTIONAL ARCHITECTURAL TOUR OF CHICAGO AT 3:00 P.M.
for an additional \$25

(Parking available at the hotel lot for reduced rate of \$7 for the evening)

JOHN Y. SIMON TO ADDRESS DOUGLAS ASSOCIATION DINNER ON “DOUGLAS, LINCOLN, AND POPULAR SOVEREIGNTY”

By Barbara Hughett

THE DOCTRINE of popular sovereignty held that people in a territory had the right to decide for themselves, through the territorial legislature, whether they wanted their territory to allow slavery or not. The expression was first made famous by Lewis Cass in his campaign for the Democratic presidential nomination in 1848.

Senator Stephen A. Douglas announced his version of the doctrine in an 1850 speech. In it, he asserted that the North had a right to regulate slavery in the territories through Congress, but it should not do so because it embittered the South and threatened disunion. The South wrongly insisted on a right to dictate policies in the territories, in which it had as much at stake as the North. The only people, according to Douglas's policy, with a genuine right to dictate policy in the territories were those who lived there. He stated that the “great and fundamental principle of free government” was that “each community shall settle this and all other questions affecting their domestic institutions by themselves, and in their own way.”

When Douglas applied his new principle to Nebraska Territory in the Kansas-

Nebraska Act, negating the Missouri Compromise line, Abraham Lincoln reacted strongly. He held that the sacred right of self-government ended when another man's rights were involved, and the right to slavery in the territories was such a right only if the Negro was not a man, but a mere piece of property.

After 1857, Lincoln often referred to popular sovereignty as “squatter sovereignty,” equating it with the notion that people who “squatted” on Western lands, with no legal right of ownership by purchase, had the right of possession. When the Dred Scott decision, issued by the U.S. Supreme Court that same year, up-

held the right of Southerners to take their slaves to the territories, Lincoln argued that it eradicated popular sovereignty because local will could not then keep slavery out. And so the debate between the two politicians continued.

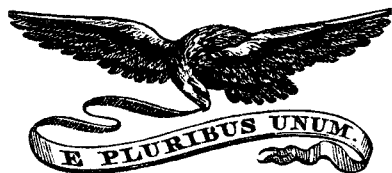
Professor John Y. Simon, who spoke at the very first annual meeting (a luncheon) of the Stephen A. Douglas Association on April 23, 1975, and at the Twentieth Anniversary Dinner on April



Dr. John Y. Simon

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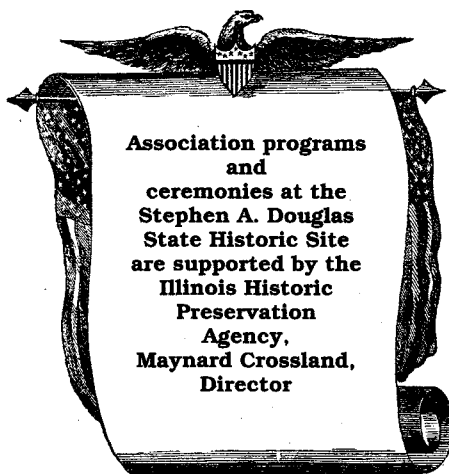
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DR. JOHN Y. SIMON

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23, 1995, will return to address our 28th Anniversary Dinner on June 7, 2003. His topic will be "Douglas, Lincoln, and Popular Sovereignty."

A native of Highland Park, Illinois, John Y. Simon earned his bachelor's degree at Swarthmore College and his master's and doctoral degrees at Harvard University. In the summers during his undergraduate years, he worked as a stock boy in the book shop of Douglas Association founder, the late Ralph G. Newman.

John served as a teaching fellow at Harvard University before teaching at Ohio State University. He began editing *The Papers of Ulysses S. Grant* in 1962, and in 1964 moved to Southern Illinois University, where he is now professor of history as well as editor of *The Papers of Ulysses S. Grant*. The first volume of the *Papers* appeared in 1967, and twenty-one more have been published since then. Simon's Grant project is noted both for its prodigious output and its quality. He is the dean of documentary editors, a founder of the Association for Documentary Editing, and a spokesperson for the craft before

groups ranging from committees of the United States Congress to interested students.

In addition to his diligence as an editor, he is also a prolific writer. He has written many articles and reviews for professional journals; is the author of *Ulysses S. Grant Chronology* (1965), *General Grant by Matthew Arnold with a Rejoinder from Mark Twain* (1966; reprinted 1995); and is the editor of *The Personal Memoirs of Julia Dent Grant* (1975; reprinted 1988). He is the co-editor of *Ulysses S. Grant: Essays and Documents* (1981) and *The Continuing Civil War: Essays in Honor of the Civil War Round Table of Chicago* (1992).

John Y. Simon has served as Executive Director and Managing Editor of the Ulysses S. Grant Association since 1962, and has served on the boards of numerous historical associations too numerous to list here. Among his awards are the Harry S. Truman Award of the Kansas City Civil War Round Table (1972), the Distinguished Service Award of the Association for Documentary Editing (1983), the Nevins-Freeman Award of the Civil War Round Table of Chicago (1985), and the Julian P. Boyd Award of the Association for Documentary Editing (1998).

OPTIONAL ARCHITECTURAL TOUR

AN OPTIONAL Architectural Tour of Chicago river cruise is being offered to those interested for an additional \$25. It begins at 3:00 p.m. at Michigan Avenue and the Chicago River, at the southeast corner of the Michigan Avenue Bridge.

Participants will enjoy the grace and comfort of "Chicago's First Lady," while Chicago Architecture Foundation (CAF) trained volunteer docents provide insightful commentary on more than fifty historic and modern buildings. The CAF is a not-for-profit organization dedicated to advancing public interest and understanding of Chicago's architectural legacy.

Please indicate when you make your dinner reservation (by June 2) whether you are coming on the architecture tour.

Following the tour, there will be a brief wreath-laying ceremony at the Douglas Tomb, 636 East 35th Street, which will include some comments by Douglas Association Chairman Brooks Davis. The cocktail hour and dinner will follow that at 6:00 p.m. at the Holiday Inn Mart Plaza.

"I am not for the dissolution of the Union under any circumstances."

Freeport, August 27, 1858

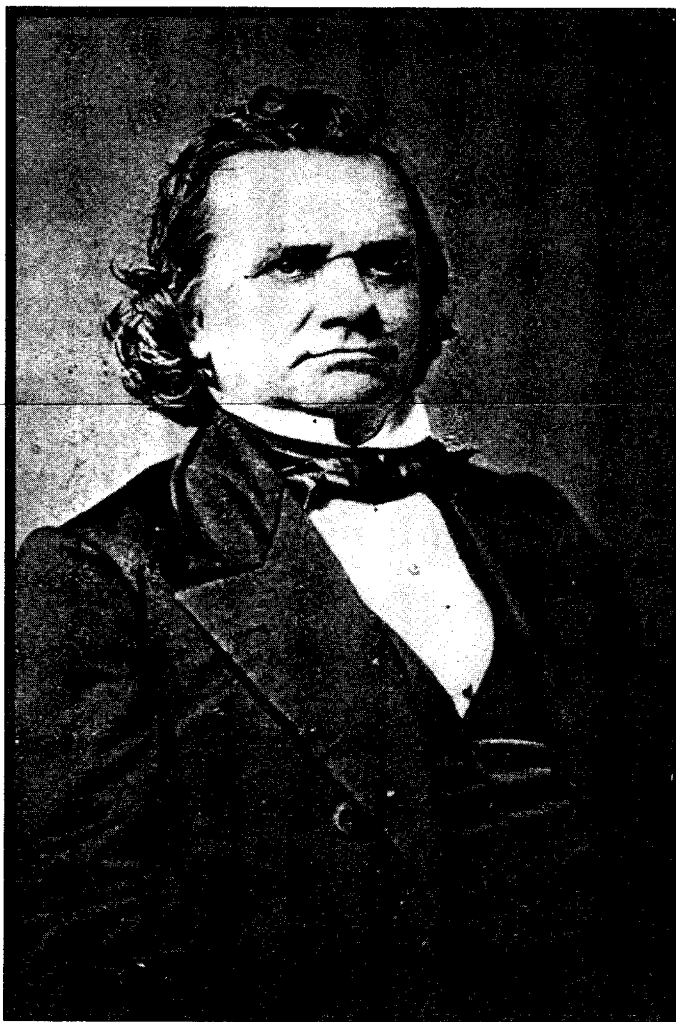
STEPHEN A. DOUGLAS AND ISAAC N. MORRIS

By John Y. Simon

IMMEDIATELY after the end of the senatorial campaign of 1858, Stephen A. Douglas wrote an exultant letter to his friend and ally, Congressman Isaac N. Morris of Quincy. This previously unpublished letter was recently acquired by Southern Illinois University along with other letters addressed to Morris, most of them from another close friend, Ulysses S. Grant. Douglas wrote from Chicago on November 8:

I congratulate you upon the result of the recent election and upon your own glorious triumph. Our victory is complete in this state. We have a majority of ten on joint ballot in the Legislature, although we may have lost the State ticket by a few hundred votes. While I regret the defeat of Fonday and French, still we have secured a victory which ensures a permanent Democratic ascendancy in the State. Our friends have a grand celebration here on Wednesday a week, and while no special invitations will be sent to any one, we will be glad to see you and as many more of our friends as can make it convenient to be here on the occasion. Present my kind regards to my friends in Quincy. . . .

Six days before Douglas wrote, Morris had defeated Republican Jackson Grimshaw for Congress in the Fifth District by a vote of 13,529 to 11,648. In two statewide contests, James Miller, Republican, defeated William B. Fonday, Democrat, for superintendent of public instruction by a vote of 124,556 to 122,413. In the election for members of the legislature, which would choose the new senator, Democrats elected forty six, Republicans forty-one; and these would join thirteen holdover state senators, eight Democrats and five Republicans. When they voted in January 1859, Douglas received the good news: "Glory to God and the Sucker Democracy. Douglas 54, Lincoln, 46." Douglas's



Stephen A. Douglas, about 1859-60

original estimate of a majority of ten on joint ballot proved only slightly optimistic.

Born in Ohio in 1812, Morris was the son of Thomas Morris, U.S. Senator (1833-39) and candidate for vice president in 1844 of the abolitionist Liberty Party. Isaac Morris settled in Illinois in 1836 and two years later began to edit a Democratic newspaper in Quincy, where political opponents taunted him about his "Abolition Dad." While serving two terms as Democratic U.S. Representative (1857-61), Morris was a staunch ally of Douglas, yet Morris is best remembered as a friend and ally of the two most prominent Illinois Republicans of his day.

After South Carolina seceded in 1860, Morris offered a resolution to the House reaffirming "the immense value of our national Union," which brought a letter from President-elect Lincoln expressing thanks for "views upon which we never were, and I trust, never will be at variance." During the war, Morris presented Illinois claims in Washington, gaining assistance and some support from his new friend Lincoln.

War brought to prominence an old friend, Grant, whose father Jesse had been a political ally of Thomas Morris. Senator Morris assisted in getting Ulysses an appointment to the United States Military Academy. In 1864, Isaac Morris wrote an anonymous newspaper biography of Grant, incorporating verbatim a sketch by Jesse. Knowing that Morris hoped to launch Grant's political career, Grant wrote that he was "not a politician, never was and hoped never to be" and election as president was "the last thing in the world I desire."

Four years later, when the tumultuous Andrew Johnson presidency had forced Grant to accept the Republican nomination for president "in spite of myself," he had Morris's support, which Grant acknowledged by appointing Morris a commissioner of the Union Pacific Railroad. Morris

was a former Democrat, but so was Grant, who favored Douglas for president in 1860 and appointed his son Robert as White House secretary. The small but choice collection of letters to Morris at Southern Illinois University should assist in bringing into sharper focus a man with a significant role in the political careers of Douglas Lincoln, and Grant."

(Editor's Note: This article first appeared in the January, 1991 issue of The Little Giant.)





STATUE GRACES DEBATE SQUARE IN FREEPORT

"Lincoln and Douglas in Debate," located at the site of the famous Freeport meeting, was dedicated on August 27, 1992. The first sculpture of Lincoln and Douglas together, it is the work of noted 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.

The work depicts a seated, attentive Abraham Lincoln, with Stephen A. Douglas standing with his hand extended as if to emphasize a point. Tolpo has also done a painting of the debate, which has been on display at the Freeport Art Museum. Her husband, the late Carl Tolpo, sculpted a heroicized Lincoln head for Ford's Theatre in the nation's capital.

FRANK WILLIAMS TO ADDRESS RECEPTION IN FREEPORT ON JULY 12

THE STEPHENSON COUNTY Historical Society in Freeport recently announced that they have the only known original photograph of Abraham Lincoln's stepmother, Sarah Bush Lincoln. The Historical Society will host a reception on the evening of Saturday, July 12, for a private showing of the photograph and other Lincoln-related memorabilia, and a program featuring an address by Judge Frank J. Williams, chief justice of the Supreme Court of Rhode Island.

Judge Williams is a well-known Lincoln scholar and collector and a founding co-chair of The Lincoln Forum. He will speak about the women in Abraham Lincoln's life.

The reception will be held at the Stephenson County Historical Society in the Oscar Taylor Home, an Italianate stone mansion built in 1847 and now on the National Register of Historic Places. The program will take place at Freeport's historic Winneshiek Theatre, home of the Winneshiek Players, the oldest continuously running amateur theatrical company in the country.

A limited number of reception tickets will be available. The \$50 reception ticket includes both the reception and the program. For additional information, contact **Suzy Beggin**, executive director of the Stephenson County Historical Society, at **815-232-8419** or, via email, at director@stephcohs.org.

HAROLD HOLZER TO SPEAK AT FREEPORT DEBATE ANNIVERSARY ON AUGUST 27

RICHARD SOKUP, president of the Lincoln-Douglas Society of Freeport, has announced that Harold Holzer will be the featured speaker at Freeport's celebration to commemorate the 145th anniversary of the Second Lincoln-Douglas Debate, which was held in Freeport. Festivities will begin at 5:00 p.m., with a short commemoration at Debate Square on the corner of State and Douglas in downtown Freeport.

The river birch, planted at the debate site nearly ten years ago, continues to transform the site to the "grove of trees" historians wrote of in the last century-and-a-half since the two gladiators met in Freeport. A reception at 6:00 and dinner at 6:30 will follow, with Harold Holzer's keynote address closing the festivities.

Holzer, vice president for communications and marketing at The Metropolitan Museum of Art in New York City, is one of the country's leading

authorities on the political culture of the Civil War era. He is co-chairman of the United States Lincoln Bicentennial Commission, appointed by President Clinton in September 2000, and elected co-chairman in 2001. He has authored or co-authored over twenty books relating to Lincoln and the Civil War. Among these are *The Lincoln Image* (1984); *Mine Eyes Have Seen the Glory: The Civil War in Art*; and *The Lincoln-Douglas Debates* (1993).

It was Harold Holzer's appearance on C-SPAN's Booknotes program that inspired the re-creation of all seven Lincoln-Douglas Debates in 1994. He served as historical consultant and on-air commentator for the televised debates.

For further information about the August 27 program, contact **Richard Sokup** at **527 Elm Street, Freeport, Illinois 61032** or, by phone, at **815-232-4408**.

