

THE LINCOLN - DOUGLAS DEBATES

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PRESENTED TO THE CHIT CHAT CLUB

SAN FRANCISCO, CALIFORNIA

NOVEMBER 4, 2002

THE GREAT AMERICAN SPEECHES

OPENING

Two years ago at the San Francisco Antique show, I walked into to one of the booths of a rare book dealer. Looking through the stacks I came across what is known in the trade as a -First Addition-First Issue –of the Political debates between the Hon. Abraham Lincoln and the Hon. Stephen A. Douglas-In the celebrated Campaign of 1858, Illinois; carefully prepared by the reporters of each party, and published at the times of their delivery. I bought it!!!

Lincoln lost that 1858 Illinois senatorial election to Judge Douglas then the sitting senator from Illinois, but Lincoln wisely compiled and preserved the texts of the debates. He had them published in book form- and used the compiled speeches as his major campaign piece two years later for the 1860 Presidential election-where- once again his major opponent was none other than Judge Douglas.

Sometime shortly after the Gore-Bush debates of 2000 in order to prove to myself that not all political debates were constructed to fit 30 second sound bites I made the decision to sit down and re-read the Lincoln/Douglas speeches. By the time I finished, it became evident to me that Lincoln's growth – both in his ability to construct and deliver speeches as well as the development of his oratorical and political self -paralleled the period of the seven debates. His use of grammar- his choice of words – his humor- and his delivery cadence as well as his thought process dramatically changed as he moved from one speech to another.

In tonight's paper I thought I would also relate how the seven debates helped formulate and develop Lincoln's political positions- there is a definite metamorphous during this August to October 1858 time frame. These positions were the ultimate catalyst to his 1860 presidential victory as well as the formation of many of his major presidential decisions implemented from 1861 through April 1865 including the issue of emancipation. Had he lived for what would have been the reconstruction period in the South- the

later debate speeches give an indication as to how he would have tried to manage the healing process.

I have attempted to be even handed in preparing tonight's paper. We have to remember that in 1858 Douglas was by far the better recognized of the two debaters. Known as The Little Giant, he had been a well known judge-a sitting senator-not just any senator but one who had been a king maker at the national level. He wraps himself in senatorial prestige. He had introduced or helped create some of the most important and controversial legislation enacted in the 1850's, a period of time in our history where the possibility of the dissolution of our government was in constant debate across the country. Douglas, as we will see in the debates, prided himself in holding the government together during this perilous time. Time and time again he falls back on his personal involvement with the Nebraska bill, and the Dred Scott decision as choices he made in order to save the union.

Lincoln, though not unknown in the state of Illinois, did not have the national recognition that Judge Douglas has been assigned. He may have portrayed himself as –nothing but a country lawyer, but by 1858 he had acquired several large industrial clients, had fees that generated \$5,000 a year, not a miserly sum in the late 1850's- but he was not the national figure of Douglas.

Lincoln had only one year of formal education however his intellect was apparent even in his early years. He devoured the great works of history and literature. He read Gibbon- Paine-, Aesop, and Weems lives of Washington and Franklin. He practiced POLEMICS, recited poetry and when he read he read aloud!! From 1832 until 1854 he was either campaigning for others or running for office himself. He was not a neophyte on he political circuit at the time of the debates. He was a shrewd master of indirection, speaking in homespun homilies rather than rigid directives But by the time he reached mid age, as we shall see he had honed his style and in his two most memorable speeches – -the Gettysburg address and his second inaugural.

,delivered late in his life -the message was delivered in less than 1000 words.

Nicolay and Hay said of Lincoln's rhetorical abilities "Lincoln's poetical fervor and vision often raised him to heights of eloquence.. He is direct, and his logic is unswerving. He uses the debate tactic of admission of statement from his adversary but then takes those statements and turns them into his favor or his cause." When Lincoln goes second, as he does in four of the seven, he is at his eloquent best.

Lacking the constructive logic, Douglas was ingenious in restating the thoughts of others and turning these thoughts into his own political thinking.

He delighted in enlarging on his opponents assertions to a forced inference ridiculous in form. He was combative, tireless, and energetic, sometimes giving 2 long drawn out speeches in a day

Politically for Lincoln the years from 1849 until 1854 were the darkest moments in his career..But in 1854 Douglas opened the door for Lincoln's political re emergence onto the national stage. In early 1854 Senator

Douglas became the primary author in the senate of the Kansas –Nebraska Act, an act that over rode the Missouri compromise of 1820. The gist of the Nebraska act allowed territories, through majority vote to individually decide whether to include or exclude the extension of slavery in their respective areas either prior to becoming a state or upon introduction into the union. Lincoln hopped on the back of this issue, along with The Dred Scott decision, and Douglas vote on the Lecompton Constitution in Kansas and used these issues as the catalyst to challenge Douglas to the Senate seat in the 1858 election. Lincoln's theme? –Douglas was championing the extension of slavery.

Most politicians are remembered for one- at most two major themes running through their political life. In Lincoln's case it was the issue of slavery.

You may say it was States rights vs. a strong centralized government- you may say it equality of all mankind- but in the end it was servitude –slavery by and of people of any race. Initially he was not a champion of giving all of the same rights to all races- but – he was always against the institution of

slavery and the servitude of one man to another. From 1854 until his run for the Presidency in 1860, Lincoln, even during the most heated debates with Douglas, never pushed for abolition in the Southern States. He simply opposed the extension of slavery into any of the new territories- no matter their geographical placement.

Let me give you quick over view of the 4 issues that are mentioned through out the debate, because both debaters are constantly referring to them during all of the debates.

A. The Missouri Compromise enacted in 1820.

B. The Dred Scott Case

C. The Nebraska Compromise

D. The Lecompton Constitution

On June 16th, 1858 Lincoln is endorsed by the Republican state convention in Springfield for the Senate seat held by Douglas. During the convention Lincoln delivers his now famous House Divided Speech-. We cannot live

half free and half slave. Three weeks later, on July 9th, Lincoln attends a speech delivered by Douglas in Chicago, attacking Lincoln's House Divided Speech. He charges that the Republicans are intent in abolishing slavery even in the states where it is already existing. He claims that the republican opposition to the Dred Scott case was a desire for Negro equality and Douglas rebuts this theme with his own theme of Popular Sovereignty—proposing this as the panacea for the ills growing out of slavery.

Lincoln replies the following day. It is not the Republicans intention to abolish slavery in states where it already exists, but to exclude it from the free territories. The Republicans do not object to the Dred Scott decision in so far as it affected Dred Scott- but they would not accept it as a political decision.

He begins to follow Douglas throughout the state, occasionally riding as an ordinary passenger on the same train as Douglas-Douglas riding in his private car. The Republican parties political leaders decide in order to

compete with Douglas – Lincoln should challenge him to joint public debates. On July 24th, Lincoln invites Douglas to divide time on the same platform for the remainder of the campaign, but Douglas politely declines. Depending which source of material you read – Douglas does agree to seven debates. Held from August 21 through October 15th with set rules of alternating openings and closings and time for rebuttals, the debates attract between ten to fifteen thousand citizens in at least 6 of the venues. During this 8-week period both candidates deliver scores of other speeches throughout the state- however it is the 7 debates I would like to address tonight.

Speech I. On August 21, 1858 in Ottawa, in the Northern or anti slavery part of the state, Douglas alleges that Lincoln and the states Republican party- a party he refers to as the Black Republican party-has taken part in drafting and passing several anti slavery resolutions. Douglas pushes Lincoln to acquiesce or refute these allegation so that Douglas may then bring them up in future debates in the Southern part of the state –

Speech II. Douglas – “I ask Abraham Lincoln to answer these questions, so that

when I trot him down to Lower Egypt, I may put the same questions to him.”

Then he maintains that the Democratic Party and Whig party, had both endorsed the principle of the Kansas /Nebraska act. Douglas defends his own wording in the Nebraska bill- saying ‘it is the true intent and meaning of this act NOT to legislate slavery into any State or territory, OR to exclude it therefrom, but to leave the people form and regulate their domestic institutions in their own way, subject only to the federal Constitution.

Douglas continues to emphasize throughout the first speech that Lincoln is hesitant in committing himself on the slavery issue.

Lincoln’s reply is somewhat evasive –however he does introduce into the debate a reading of a speech he had made in 1854 – commenting on the repeal of the Missouri compromise in which he lays out plain and clear that he is against the introduction of slavery into any of the territories, but is not for the abolition of slavery in the states where it already exists. More at ease with humor Lincoln introduces his homilies in answer to Douglas accusations- one insisting that Lincoln was nothing but a grocer keeper –

(11)

Lincoln answered-"I never was a grocer -it is true that Lincoln -referring to himself in the third person-Lincoln did work the latter part of one winter in a small STILL up at the head of a Hollar.!!! This method of introducing humor in the first debates was in a way a defensive tactic- his inability to answer Douglas charges was evident- but another reason was to offset the stiffness of Judge Douglas and swing sentiment in the printed work over to his side. He knew the debates were going to be published in Illinois and he correctly figured that readers would form their opinions based on personality as well as knowledge of the issues.

Judge Douglas's rejoinder to Lincoln's reply is stilted, but does address Lincoln's stance on the repeal of the Missouri compromise. This is also the first time that Douglas refers to the BLACK REPUBLICAN PARTY- insinuating that there is a part of the republican party that is truly abolitionist. The word Black for sure is used in the pejorative sense.

The Second Debate was held on August 27 in Freeport Illinois a city on the Mississippi in the northern part of the state. Unlike today Lincoln probably did not have any “Handlers” to assess his performance during the first debate but we do have copies of letters he sends off to two friendly lawyers, imploring them to show up at the next debate –words to the effect – meet me at Freeport without fail.” He must have realized his T.V. ratings were not all that Good!!!

Lincoln opens directly answering questions he failed to address in the first debate-- and he spends the first hour answering one by one the questions . He must have realized when reviewing the initial confrontation his lack of directness.

However he introduces three questions of his own for Judge Douglas to answer – one becoming the turning point in Douglas political career- what has now become known as the Freeport Doctrine. - “Can the people of a United States Territory in any lawful way, over ride a judicial decision -and

~~has now become known as the Freeport Doctrine. - "Can the people of a United States Territory in any lawful way, over ride a judicial decision and exclude slavery from its limits -PRIOR to the formation of a State constitution, even if some its citizens are against the right to exclude slavery.. I am not here to argue the judicial effect of this question, but Lincoln was attempting to force an admission from Douglas that the Dred Scott decision-a decision that Douglas had helped broker-had annihilated the popular sovereignty issue. The key to this question was – Can a people in a territorial legislature have the right TO EXCLUDE SLAVERY? How Douglas answers this question is of utmost importance.. Douglas says, "in my opinion the people of a Territory can, by lawful means exclude slavery from their limits, prior to the formation of the state constitution. IT~~

MATTERS NOT WHAT WAY THE SUPRME COURT MAY
 HEREAFTER DECIDE AS TO THE ABSTRACT QUESTION
 WHETHER SLAVERY MAY OR MAY NOT GO INTO A TERRITORY
 UNDER THE CONSTITTUION-THE PEOPLE HAVE THE LAWFUL
 MEANS TO INTORDUCE IT OR EXCLUDE IT- that slavery cannot exist

a day or an hour anywhere unless it is supported by local police regulations.

HENCE NO MATTER WHAT THE DECISION OF THE Supreme Court

MAY BE THE RIGHT OF THE PEOPLE TO MAKE A SLAVE

TERRITORY OR FREE TERRITORY IS PERFECT UNDER THE

NEBRASKA BILL. Douglas's defense of this stance- is the turning point of

his career. Lincoln immediately jumps on Douglas firmly taking the stance

that it is not a constitutional right to hold slave in a TERRITORY of the

United States.

A bit of history - prior to the second debate- a group of Lincoln's supporters

gather in his room and warn him about putting Douglas on the spot - - the

group commenting that if Lincoln forces Douglas to answer-Lincoln- could

never be elected Senator.. Lincoln's reply was -"Gentlemen- I am killing a

larger game; if Douglas answers (yes- as he did) he can never be president

and the battle of 1860 worth is over 100 of this." (Sic) This is the first time

we see that in the back of Lincoln's mind- he and Justice Douglas may be on

the same schedule for the White House. -

The third debate occurs 4 days later in Jonesboro, Illinois, in the southern part of the state, known then and now as Little Egypt. Douglas's opening remarks give a short history on the three political parties that existed in the U.S. in the 1850's- Democrat- Republican- and Whig. His intention is to show the transformation of the parties – by asserting that in the early part of the decade the Union Democrats and the Union Whigs worked together in order to unite the country and forestall the split over the issue of slavery. He announces that the great contest of 1850 resulted in the establishment of the Nebraska compromise- ~~rest~~^{is} on the great principle that the people of EACH state and each territory of this Union ought to be permitted to regulate their own domestic institutions subject to no other limitation that which the Federal Constitution imposes. With this statement he is trying to carry the discussion into two areas- one a re affirmation of his Freeport Doctrine outlined in the second speech and second he trying woo the old line Whig supporters from the Republican Party.. Listen to the following rhetoric from Douglas. “It is true that the Whigs claimed special

merit for the issues in the compromise- because- “their great Clay originated them--their God like Webster defended them--and their President Fillmore signed the bill making it the law of the land..” He then concludes that Lincoln’s position on the Nebraska bill of 1854 arrays all free states in hostile array- against the slave states.” In the Jonesboro speech, Douglas begins to pin the label of abolitionist onto Lincoln. Jonesboro is in the southern part of the state- his intention is to – look for the conservative Whig voters who still existed in that part of Illinois- and whom I am sorry to say still existed in my day. I remember as late as 1954 - 100 years after the compromise- The University of Illinois did not have one black basketball player - All of the high school coaches in the southern part of the state warned the University coach that if he recruited black players into the University system from Chicago, the southern high school coaches would send there players elsewhere. The shame --he listened to them!!!.

Douglas aims his remarks at the southern constituency by quoting Lincoln’s 1856 House Divided speech.. He says Mr. Lincoln objects to the Dred Scott

decesion first and mainly because it deprives the Negro of the rights of citizenship.” Douglas - “I hold that a Negro is not and never ought to be a citizen of the United States.” (the crowd yells out Good-Good- to tremendous cheers) –“When you ask me what are the rights of the Negro - we ought to extend to the Negro every right, every privilege every immunity, which he is capable of enjoying –here is the catch phrase- CONSISTENT WITH THE GOOD OF SOCIETY.“Those rights are a question which each state of this Union must decide

Lincoln now replies- and of course he is in a part of the state where he has little strength. -“In so far as he –Douglas-has insisted that all the States have the right to do exactly as they please about all their domestic relations, INCLUDING THAT OF SLAVERY, I agree entirely with him. “ He then for the first time delves into his comment- ‘cannot live have free and half slave’ answering “the way our fore fathers had inserted the issue of slavery in our constitution- –I say in the way our fathers originally left the slavery questions, the institution was in the course of ultimate extinction.”when this

government was first established it was the policy of its founders to

PROHIBIT THE SPREAD OF SLAVERY INTO THE NEW

TERRITORIES of the United States where it has not existed.

Douglas's – in his rejoinder lays out once and for all his feelings on the expansion of slavery by stating-“ I should be exceeding glad to know that there would never be another slave state admitted into the Union; BUT I must add that if slavery shall be KEPT OUT of the territories during the territorial existence of any one given territory, and then the people having a fair chance and clean field when they come to adopt a constitution, do such an extraordinary thing as adopt a slave constitution, uninfluenced by the actual presence of the institution among them, I SEE NO ALTERNATIVE-- IF WE OWN THE COUNTRY--BUT TO ADMIT THEM INTO THE UNION.”

Nov 11- First

The fourth debate takes place in Charleston Illinois, a mid state city within a days buggy ride of Springfield,

Lincoln -opening comments clarifies his stance on the equality issue

between the races restating that he has never been in favor of bringing about in any way the social and political equality of the white and black races- this bring on heavy applause. He immediately introduces a gambit that attacks the veracity of Judge Douglas.

Lincoln begins to read notes taken from Judge Trumbull, the other sitting senator from Illinois, notes charging that during the senate debate in 1854, the original bill introduced to the senate requiring the Kansas territory to have a constitution vote on by the settlers of Kansas, prior to their admission to the Union. When the bill finally came to the Senate for a vote, the bill no longer had that provision and Trumbull accused Douglas of removing that section during a senate conference in which Judge Douglas was quite active. Judge Douglas had denied that the bill, when he had received in conference,

had the constitutional provision, and Lincoln spends much of his hour-^{1/2} *A*
well-organized, step by step reffutation of Douglas' denial

TO THE

Douglas responds to the accusations and ask the audience- "isn't today's joint discussion supposed to be about political questions agitating the whole country. He asks the assembled public- why did Lincoln spend his whole hour reading a speech of Judge Trumbulls, instead of creating his own arguments. Douglas is forced to defend himself step by step and then moves to what I am guessing had been his primary goal **IN THE** debate- to try and sway the ex Whig party members to his cause.

He begins his soliloquy as follows; Did Whigs and Democrats differ about the slavery question in 1850.. On the contrary did we not, unite man for man in favor of that system of compromise measures which Mr. Clay introduced, Mr. Webster defended, Cass supported and Fillmore approved and made the law of the land." For nine months we each assembled, each day in the council chamber, Clay in the chair, with Cass upon his right hand and Webster upon his left, and the democrats and Whigs gathered around,

forgetting differences, and ^{BROUGHT TOGETHER} ~~only animated~~ by one common, patriotic sentiment to devise means and measures by which we could defeat the mad and revolutionary scheme of the northern abolitionists and southern disunionists. I will ask every old line Democrat and Whig within hearing of my voice, if I have truly stated the issues as they presented themselves to the country. Some how this prose over shadows the words –Evil Axis.

Douglas inquires of Lincoln whether he is in favor of Negroes citizenship?

He accuses Lincoln of being of the Black republican party --the party of and

he slowly reads out the name Fred-- Douglas-referring to Fredrick Douglas

the firebrand black activist. He has moved from defending himself to asking

Lincoln to define himself. Lincoln in his rejoinder once again states he is not

in favor of Negro citizenship. -- We do see for the first time Lincoln's

introduction of "the practice of slavery even in the states where it is now

practiced, sooner or later must face extinction. ..

The last three debates occur within an 8-day period and are quite repetitious in content.. The present day Illinois license plates – say “Land of Lincoln”- in the 1858 time warp this is where the motto earns its reputation) The fifth debate take place in Galesburg Illinois, and a Republican /Whig strong hold. Douglas opens with a defense of the compromise of 1850 and the Kansas / Nebraska Bill. He begins to distant himself from the blunt issue of slavery, and Whites vs. Blacks- makes an effort to switch the discourse to his National importance and specifically his methods of negotiation in the decade of the 1850’s that led to the compromises- and saving the nation from cleaving.

Douglas restates his position on the Nebraska bill – - The bill’s true interest and meaning was not to legislate slavery into any state or territory, nor to exclude it therefrom, but to leave the people thereof perfectly free to form and regulate their own way, subject only to the Constitution of the United States.. ”From there he then segways into propping up his reputation “- For four years I have devoted my energies, in private and public, to commend

that principle to the American people. Whatever else may be said in condemnation or support of my political course, I apprehend no honest man will doubt the fidelity with which, under all circumstances, I have stood by.

And I can appeal to all men, friends and foes, democrats and Republicans, Northern Men and Southern men, that during the whole fight I carried the banner of Popular Sovereignty aloft, and never allowed it to trail in the dust, or lowered the flag until victory perched upon our arms.

Douglas accuses Lincoln declaring one thing in the North- as Douglas refers to it as The Abolitionist area.-quoting Lincoln-Let us discard all thoughts of one race being inferior or superior and unite as one people throughout this land and once again say – all men are created equal. And in the southern counties- He quotes Lincoln - I am not nor never have been in favor of bringing about in any way, the social and political equality of the white and black races: -in the North the meetings held for Lincoln are reported as republican meetings, but in the South they are listed as Lincoln meetings.”

Douglas finally ends his opening hour and a half by referring back to the Constitution –he brings up Jefferson’s slave holdings then asks- how could Jefferson have included in the constitution the equalness of slaves. He closes –I say to you there is but one path of peace in this republic and that is to administer this government as our fathers made it, divided into free and slave, allowing each state to decide for itself.”

Lincoln’s begins his reply by saying he would like to address Judge Douglas’s arguments in reverse order-taking the last first. He refutes Douglas argument about the constitution, saying no where in the context of the body is there one mention of the slavery/black issue.. He then counters Douglas accusation that he- Lincoln- says one thing in one end of the state and something else in a different section. Lincoln reminds Douglas that all of the speeches would be seen by all and the communities would see them all and know my opinions. Lincoln, as did Douglas, throughout the debates, made sure that a favoring newspaper took down the debates word for word,

and certainly at this juncture, Lincoln had begun to think about collating the debates and publishing them sometime down the road.

Lincoln, knowing now he is in friendly territory, takes a different tact with regards to the Nebraska compromise. He ask- what compromise? The original territorial laws-laws which controlled the questions of slavery during territorial existence –excluded slavery -- so why would allowing the constituents of the territory to vote up or down on the issue of slavery be a compromise?? He then lashes out at Douglas’s condemnation of the republican party as being a sectional party and or an abolitionist party and says- “There is a difference between Judge Douglas and the Republican party not between free and slave states, but between Slavery and Liberty, THAT HE IS IN FAVOR OF ERADICATING, OF PRESSING OUT OF VIEW, THE QUESTION OF PREFERENCE IN THIS COUNTRY FOR FREE OVER SLAVE ISNTITUIONS, AND CONSEQUENTLY EVERY SENTIMENT HE UNTTERS DISCARDS THE IDEA THAT THERE IS ANYTHING WRONG WITH SLAVERY.

Lincoln returns to the Dred Scott case-in a brilliant soliloquy takes apart Douglas statement. ‘The right of property in a slave is distinctly and expressly affirmed in the Constitution. He asks- “what is to be affirmed?”

”Made firm in the constitution-? Lincoln –I believe that the right of property in a slave IS NOT distinctly and expressly affirmed in the Constitution and Judge Douglas does. I believe that the Supreme Court and advocates of that decision may search in vain for the place in the Constitution where the right of property in a slave is distinctly and expressly confirmed. Lincoln then takes issue not only with the decision in the Dred Scott case, but claims that the decision would never had been made in its form if the party that made it had not been sustained in the previous election.

He quotes President Jefferson – “Judges are honest as any other men-and not ^{more so} -that whenever a free people should give up absolute submission to any department of government, retaining for themselves no appeal from it, their liberties were gone.” Lincoln closes -Judge Douglas and whoever like him teaches that the Negro has no share, humble though it may be, in the

Declaration of Independence is going back to the era of our liberty and independence, and so far as in him lies, muzzling the cannon that thunders its annual joyous return-that he is blowing out the moral lights around us, when he contends that whoever wants slaves has a right to own them, that he is penetrating, so far as lies in his power, the human soul, and eradicating the light of reason and the love of liberty, when he is in every possible way preparing the public mind by his vast influence, for making the institution of slavery perpetual and national.

This debate propels Lincoln into the forefront of the Republican party and he knows he will have to make his stand on his view with regard to slavery and the rights of the Negro. He cannot go back- it may have cost him the senatorial election of 1858, but made him the leading Republican candidate for the presidency in 1860. It also was the death knell for Douglas' run in 1860- his stance on the Lecompton constitution and on then Nebraska compromise cost him support from both the Northern and Southern factors of the democratic Party.

#6 Nov11 1st. Rev

The sixth debate takes place in Quincy, Illinois, a city on the Mississippi, in the northern part of the state. Lincoln reviews the evolution of the Republican Party, reminding the audience that the party's only 6 years old, and he is aware in this part of the state the party is already in a strong position. He restates his position on the black and white races, once again reassuring the listening public that he is not in favor of bringing about the social or political equality of the races - he is in favor of having the SUPERIOR position assigned to the white race- but then goes on to reaffirm his previous comments that notwithstanding his feeling on race- the Negro is entitled to all the rights enumerated in the Declaration of Independence.

He returns to familiar territory- the Dred Scott case-quoting his own speech in Galesberg, "I tried to show that by the Dred Scott decision pushed to its legitimate consequences, slavery would be established in all states as well as in the Territories.-"I said that on that former occasion because I had asked Judge Douglas whether, if the Supreme Court should make a decision

declaring that the State's had not the power to exclude slavery from their limits, he would adopt and follow that decision as a rule of political action."

And he did not answer that question but sneered at it.. Now Lincoln

advances the argument that because the court DID NOT SAY in the decision

that the states had the power to exclude slavery and not one of the

concurring judges has said that the states can exclude slavery, then in fact

that is the result of the case." He asks Douglas to put a finger on anyplace in

the decision where a judge says the contrary

Then he switches to the question of emancipation- for the first time. He

begins with distinguishing the difference between those who believe slavery

is wrong and those who do not think it is wrong. He forges ahead – saying

"We deal with any wrong, in so far as we can prevent it from growing larger,

and so deal with it that in the run of time -there may be a promise of an end

to it." He continues - we don't want to disturb- the wrong- where it exists-

except maybe where the constitution permits it—in the District of

Columbia."Still we are not ready to do that UNLESS we can come up with

the terms to make emancipation gradual - compensating unwilling owners.

We don't suppose that in doing this we violate anything due to the actual presence of the institution or any thing due to the constitutional guarantees thrown around it. He concludes - "You say it-slavery- must not be opposed in the free states because it is not here-- it must not be opposed in the slave states because it is there--it must not be opposed in politicks because it will make a fuss' --it must not be opposed in the pulpit because it is not religion.

Then where is the place to oppose it? Loud cheers!!!

.Douglas defends his position of not saying whether slavery is wrong-" , the constitution does not say mention slavery so why must he say."- Mr. Lincoln wants to revoke the Dred Scott decision. How can he revoke it- isn't it the law of the land? You can go no higher than the Supreme Court. What court or judge ever held that a Negro was a citizen- and the Dred Scott case only affirms that."

Douglas closes with a flourish-the country has to grow in order to attain all of the elements of greatness and in order for that to happen we can not

preclude certain practices. Under that principle the United States can perform its great mission that destiny and Providence has marked for us. Under that principle we can receive with entire safety that stream of intelligence from the old world to the new, filling up our prairies, clearing our wilderness, and building cities, towns, railroads and other improvements, thus making this the asylum of the oppressed.”

Lincoln’s rejoinder begins with thanking Judge Douglas in clarifying his statement on slavery- we now know Judge Douglas contemplates slavery lasting forever. Of course Douglas has said nothing like that- but Mr. Lincoln’s twisting of word would make him very competitive in this past weeks elections. Lincoln in an indirect way refers to the ultimate eradication of the slavery system.”Our fathers did not make this nation half slave and half free or part slave and part free instead they found it here-they did not make it so, but left it because they know of no way to get rid of it AT THAT TIME.

Lincoln once again introduces a little levity by saying that although he believes in the ultimate demise of slavery – he is now aged 50 and has never had a Negro wife and “I think I can If I lived another 50 centuries, live without having one.”

Speech #7

The seventh and final debate takes place in Alton, Illinois, directly across the Mississippi River from St. Louis and certainly southern sympathizers..

Douglas opening remark refers to Lincoln's three platform principles. First:

The government cannot endure permanently divided half free-half slave.

Second Lincoln's crusade against the Supreme Court and its decision in the

Dred Scott case, and third-- that Negro equality was an inalienable right of

which they could not be deprived. Douglas recounts that over the past

seven weeks the candidates went before people in all parts of the state- and

he in answering Lincoln never varied from his argument. He states his

position on Lincoln's three points-probably clearer than at any time in the

debates- one that the government CAN endure half free-half slave- two -that

each state has the right to prohibit, abolish or sustain slavery- and three the

Negro does not have rights under the law of the land.. These are Douglas's

opening comments in his last debate- delivered in the part of the state that is

not in Lincoln's camp -where slavery has many advocates

Late into his opening remarks he attempts to gather in the vote. First, he woos the Whigs- referring to them as the old line Whigs composed of Kentuckians and Virginians residing in the southern part of the state. He then attempts to heal the split in Democratic Party. He defends his Lecompton vote even though he broke ranks with President Buchanan. Douglas reflects on conversations he had with Buchanan who threatened Douglas by saying if you vote against the Lecompton piece I will take off the heads of your friends-meaning political appointees in Illinois. Douglas – “I told him- you did not elect me, I represent Illinois and I am accountable to Illinois as to my constituency, and to God, but not to the president or to any other power on earth. I will not abandon my constituency and I will not receive orders from the executive authorities how I should vote in the senate hold that to control the Senate on the part of the executive is subversive of the principles of our constitution. I stand by the platform of the Democratic Party and by its organization and support its nominees. If there are those of you who choose to bolt then it show you are not as good democrats as I am.”

He closes: The abolitionist party really thinks that under the Declaration of Independence the Negro is equal to the white man- I- hold that the signers had no reference to Negroes at all when they declared all men are created equal. They did not mean Negro, or the savage Indians, or the fejee Islanders or any other barbarous race!!!They were speaking of the white man. I hold that this government was established by white men for the benefit of white men and their posterity forever, and should be administered by white men, and none other. But it does not follow, by any means, that merely because the Negro is not a citizen, and merely because he is not our equal, that therefore he should be a slave.

It is now Lincoln's turn and he realizes this will be his last time in the box.. He returns to his humorous ways reminding the audience that this is the seventh time he and Judge Douglas have met ant that with each successive debate .He mentions that Judge Douglas has improved on his war with the Buchanan administration- I flatter myself now knowing Douglas has taken my advice on this subject. Lincoln reverts to the attack mode and once again

reviews Douglas views on the Missouri Compromise- the Nebraska act and the Scott decision. Lincoln first clarifies his views on the Scott decision, claiming that he does not say the Negro should be a citizen. His argument with the Scott decision is that it purports to make slavery national in this country. He adds, I suppose it also deprives the Negro under all circumstances of the remotest chance of ever becoming a citizen, leaving the listener to judge – Is Lincoln saying the Negro can become a citizen in the future?

Lincoln begins to review his comments on slavery over the seven debates.

- A. The institution of slavery has caused the agitation that has come closest to breaking up the nation.

- B. The framers of the constitution, by inserting the clause that the importation of slaves would have to cease after 1808 meant that they had assumed at some point the institution would die out.

- C. That in the constitution was a provision that in all the new territories we owned at that time slavery should be forever inhibited!

D. "The word slave is not mentioned any where in the Constitution.

Lincoln then concludes from this that at some time the Negro would have some sort of free standing in our country. The fathers of this country – so Lincoln says- expected and intended that it- slavery- should be in the course of ultimate extinction..

Lincoln takes a half turn and becomes philosophical. He reminds us that "the real issue in this controversy-the one pressing upon every mind –is the sentiment on the part of one class that looks upon the institution of slavery AS A WRONG and of another class that DOES NOT look upon it as a wrong."The sentiment that contemplates the institution of slavery in this country as a wrong is the sentiment of the Republican party."""""They insist that it should be treated as a wrong and one method of treating it as a wrong is TO MAKE SURE IT GROWS NO LARGER." Lincoln concludes his portion of the seven debates: That is the real issue: That is the issue that will continue in this country when the poor tongues of Judge Douglas and myself shall be silent. It is the eternal struggle between two principles-right and

wrong- through out the world. They are the two principles that have stood face to face from the beginning of time; and will ever continue to struggle. The one is the common right of humanity and the other the divine right of kings. It is the same sprit that says, You work and toil and earn bread and I'll eat it." Loud applause.

THE N WORD- During this close, Lincoln professes to have no taste for running and catching niggers- a word I found in many of his early writings. . Having thoroughly read these debates at least twice, I find no where in the seven deliveries the use of that word by Douglas.

Douglas begins his closing by reminding the audience of the differences between the two candidates. Lincoln is looking forward to the time when slavery shall be abolished everywhere. I am looking forward to a time when each state shall be allowed to do as it please. Douglas says that Lincoln's containment policy would sooner or later starve the salve states into submission. His final words are an appeal to the southerners. "You

slaveholders of Missouri might as well understand what you know

practically, that you cannot carry slavery where the people do not want it.

All of you have the right to ask is that the people shall do as they please; if

they want slavery let them have it; if they do not want it, allow them to

refuse to encourage it. My friends, if we only live up to this great

fundamental principle there will be peace between the North and the South.

In the November election, the republicans gained a plurality of new electors- but because of a high incidence of holdovers from the democratic party- Douglas retains the Illinois Senate seat - the state legislators re electing Douglas 54 to 46. The debates catapulted Lincoln to national fame- fame he would never have achieved without the benefit of his race against Mr. Douglas. An editorial in a major Chicago Newspaper observed- "You are like Byron, who woke up one morning and found himself famous

In an invitation to speak at a festival in Boston in honor of Jefferson's birthday Lincoln declines but composes the following letter. "Soberly it is now no child's play to save the principles of Jefferson from total overthrow in this nation. The principles of Jefferson are the definitions and axioms of free society. And yet they are denied and evaded, with no small show of success. One dashinglly calls them 'Glittering generalities. Another calls them self -evident lies. And another insidiously argues that they only apply to a superior race. These expressions in, differing in form, are identical in object and effect-and supplanting the principles of

free government. They are the vanguard -the miners and sappers of returning despotism. We must repulse them, or they will subjugate us." Compare that to his usage of aint and the "N" word in his speeches in 1856 and then the first two or three of the debates against Douglas in 1858.

In October 1859 is a race for the Ohio Governor. The Republicans gain control of the state and base this success to a large extent on two speeches Lincoln delivered during the canvassing. The state committee decided to print these two speeches and asks Lincoln to submit copies of his 1858 debates. Lincoln responded by sending copies of not only his speeches but also Douglas's. The initial publication was immediately successful and a Columbus firm under took the publications on a mass scale -three large editions were sold directly to the public- with the third edition dated June 16, 1860, thirty thousand copies had already been circulated. Lincoln uses this published account of the debates -what we would in today's world of politics call a marketing piece- in his quest for the nomination for the Presidency for the Republican Party and ultimately for the Presidency in 1860.