

THE STUMP

Publication of the Lincoln-Douglas Society

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The Lincoln-Douglas Society was founded in 1929 for the purpose of perpetuating the memory of the 1858 debates between Stephen A. Douglas and Abraham Lincoln during their race for the United States Senate.

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THE STUMP is an annual publication of the Lincoln-Douglas Society
P.O. Box 58
Freeport, IL 61032

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"The Stump"

The use of the word "stump" as a metaphor for a platform for political discourse goes back to the earliest days of American history. Just as Douglas argued his political ideas "from every stump in Illinois," the Lincoln-Douglas Society seeks to share information and ideas about one of the key events in our history.

SOKUP LECTURE

Ferald Bryan, Ph.D. will deliver the **2021 Richard F. Sokup Lecture** on **Tuesday, October 19 at 6:30 pm** at Freeport Public Library.

Dr. Bryan is an Associate Professor in Communications at Northern Illinois University. His research focuses on political rhetoric and public communications.

The lecture is open to the public free of charge.



PRETZEL LITERARY FAIR

This August you will have an opportunity to meet, chat with and get signed copies of books by some of your favorite authors from the Freeport area. On **Saturday, August 28, 10 am to 2 pm** the Freeport Public Library and the Lincoln-Douglas Society will host the **Pretzel Literary Fair** in Debate Square.

This first time event will give local authors and illustrators a place to meet and greet their readers, as well as sell some copies of their works.

Any author, illustrator or writer wishing to reserve a spot should contact **Dianne Ludwig** at 815-656-2470 or email her at dludwig@freeportpubliclibrary.org to obtain an application form. There is no fee for exhibitors. Deadline for applications of August 1.

Admission to the event is free.

MUSIC AT DEBATE SQUARE

The Lincoln-Douglas Society's popular "Music at Debate Square" series will continue this summer with four Thursday evenings of free music. **All programs begin at 6:30 p.m.**

The **Highland Community College Jazz Band** will kick-off the series on **July 8**.

July 22 The Pretzel City Strummers will make their premier appearance in the series.

August 5 will feature **Southpaw Stance**, a popular rock band returning.

August 12 will bring **Kendra Beth Swanson Masters** back with her lively mix of original folk songs.

All of the programs are free, but a free-will offering will be taken up for the benefit of the musicians.

Attendees are encouraged to bring lawn chairs or blankets.

Tim Connors is the manager of the series and will serve as MC.

MEMBERSHIP RENEWAL

Please remember to renew your Lincoln-Douglas Society membership using the form enclosed. Your continued support is critical to maintaining Debate Square.

“Abe Lincoln In Illinois” An Appreciation

by Alan Wenzel



The decade of the 1930s was a difficult time for the United States. Faced with numerous challenges surrounding the onset of the Great Depression, Americans increasingly looked to strong national leaders to lead them through a slew of issues that, at times, threatened the very existence of the democracy. Seeking to satisfy the appetite of the American people for effective political and presidential leadership, Hollywood released several films in the thirties about real and fictional presidents that presented a hopeful message for the nation. Three of the better-known films of that era were depictions of Abraham Lincoln.

Walter Huston played Lincoln in D. W. Griffith's "Abraham Lincoln" (1930) which dealt mostly with Lincoln's years in the White House. "Young Mr. Lincoln" (1939) featured Henry Fonda as Lincoln and portrayed Lincoln's early years before he became involved in public life. "Abe Lincoln in Illinois" (1940) starred Raymond Massey as Lincoln, in perhaps his greatest movie role, and covered the years between Lincoln's adolescence and the onset of his Presidency.

Like the two previous films about Lincoln from the 1930s, "Abe Lincoln in Illinois" shows that a modest, decent, humble man with failings could persevere and eventually rise to become President and help the Country overcome its struggles in times of crisis by providing strong leadership.

Based on movie critic Robert E. Sherwood's Pulitzer Prize winning stage play of the same name (and also starring Massey), "Abe Lincoln in Illinois" presents a romanticized view of Lincoln. We don't learn much about Lincoln's views or political opinions, but we do see a man who can connect easily to people and believes in compromise. Lincoln is depicted as unpretentious and yet unsure of himself, socially awkward, easily manipulated by those around him, and pushed into a political career by others, especially by Mary Todd (Ruth Gordon).

Sherwood and Massey's version of Lincoln is contrary to what we know from the work of contemporary Lincoln scholars; that Abe was driven, politically ambitious, and extremely skilled at navigating turbulent political waters.

With his rugged stature and facial and vocal interpretations, this was a role that defined Massey's career. Subsequently, he would portray Lincoln in numerous stage and film productions. One of his last movie performances as Lincoln was in 1962's "How the West Was Won."

As with any historical drama or biopic, this film contains fictionalized scenes and dialogue and distorts the chronology of events. And yet as we watch the final scene of the movie and see Lincoln and Mary fading from view as their train leaves Springfield for Washington, we can't help but be inspired by the greatness of the man to come.

MEMBERSHIP MEETING

The Annual Membership meeting of the Lincoln-Douglas Society will be held at 5:00 pm in Freeport Public Library. Election for Board of Directors will be held in addition to a report on the financial status of the Society.

OLGA CARLILE

The Society notes with great sadness the passing of long-time Society Board Member **Olga Carlile**.

An appreciation of her contributions to the Society will appear in the next issue of *The Stump*.

The Lincoln-Douglas Society

President: Nicole Bauer

Treasurer: Mindy Borgmann / **Secretary:** Edward Finch

Board of Directors: Tim Connors, Carole Dickerson, Ned Furst,, Ashley Huffines, Scott Leiser, Mickey Martin, Sally Noble, Michael Perry,, Jim Shankland, Connie Sorn, Danairo Thomas, and Alan Wenzel

President Emeritus: Robert Plager

Ex Officio Directors: Honorable Jodi Miller, Mayor of Freeport.; Nicole Haas, Greater Freeport Partnership

HONORING MICKEY MARTIN



Mickey Martin began expanding and developing the debate site when she was elected to the Freeport City council in 1979. She became chairwoman of the Public Relations committee. As chair of the committee Mickey asked the city to eliminate the existing parking places at the site so it could be developed into a park like setting. The city approved the committee's request. The Lincoln Douglas Society renewed its charter under the presidency of Robert Plager. Ned Furst donated the rest of the area Furst McNess owned on Clark Street that adjoined the debate site. A park like area was designed and grass was planted.

Mickey then began exploring possibilities of creating a memorial that would be able to highlight the events that took place in Freeport in 1858. Her efforts were realized when she contacted Lily Tolpo who agreed to create a historical biographical painting of the Freeport Doctrine. She then formed the Lincoln

Douglas Art Foundation and made the first donation and elicited her parents and some of her siblings to raise the seed money necessary to start the project and commissioned Lily Tolpo to do the painting. The 4' by 6' painting of "The Freeport Doctrine" hangs outside the Library on the Highland Community College campus..

Mickey spent 12 years visiting Lily weekly at her studio in Massbach watching the artist at work. She observed the development of the painting and saw the figures of Lincoln and Douglas that Lily had created in the painting were exactly what was needed to bring to life the debate for the U.S. Senate seat between Lincoln and Douglas that day in Freeport in 1858. The images would go on to become the first statuary of Lincoln and Douglas in debate ever done according to Ralph Newman Illinois foremost Lincoln scholar. Lily and Mickey shared our progress with him by checking the accuracy of the historical information of both the painting and the statue Lily began developing for the debate site.

James Bruehler, Director of the Freeport Chamber of Commerce, met with Lily and Mickey and told them he was very interested in supporting the project and applied for a state grant from the Department of Commerce and Community Affairs. Through the efforts of the Lincoln Douglas Art Foundation and the Lincoln Douglas Society the promotion and sale of the prints of "The Freeport Doctrine" and a small bronze statue of "Lincoln and Douglas in Debate" were sold to raise the local match for the state grant. The grant was then awarded to the Lincoln Douglas Art Foundation to commission Lily Tolpo to do the life size statues title "Lincoln and Douglas in Debate" and for the foundry costs to make them in bronze. Mickey continued to coordinate the many facets involved until the installation and unveiling of "Lincoln and Douglas in Debate" at the Freeport site in 1992.

The "Lincoln and Douglas in Debate" statues are dedicated to the people of Freeport who celebrate yearly on the anniversary of the August 27, 1858 in Freeport. The Freeport debate site is a lasting legacy to that historical moment in history when, "the fate of the nation was decided in Freeport" that day. It will continue to remind us of the important role Freeport played in 1858 in the history of our nation for generations to come.

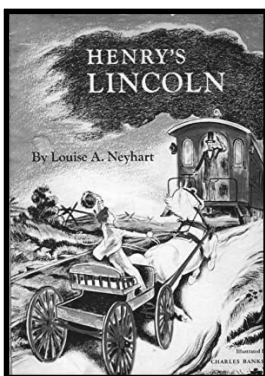
ANNUAL PROGRAM — A NEW APPROACH

On **August 28**, when the Lincoln-Douglas Society marks the 163rd anniversary of the Freeport Debate,. A new program format will be unveiled this year. In keeping with the Society's Mission Statement to enhance and encourage public discussion of important issues, the Society will host a "debate" on the issue of the Electoral College.

Sally Noble, John Whiton, Alan Wenzel, and Ed Finch will pair up to discuss in a "civilized" manner the question of whether or not the Electoral College currently meets the needs of the American People.

The program will begin at 5:30 pm in Debate Square. Attendees are encourage to bring lawn chairs or blankets upon which to sit. Society President Nicole Bauer will moderate the event.

The Lincoln-Douglas Society
P.O. Box 58
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HENRY'S LINCOLN — A CLASSIC

By Carole Dickerson

When seven-year-old Fritz Neyhart asked his mother Louise about “that big old stone” and tried to read the inscription on its bronze plaque, Louise offered a perfunctory explanation about the boulder marking the Lincoln-Douglas Debate that took place in Freeport in August of 1858. Fritz’s interest was piqued, and he asked to hear more. It occurred to Louise afterwards that this was an important event, right here in her and Fritz’s town, that shaped the course of American history, and that other children should know about it.

For the next five years, Louise wrote and rewrote the facts until Henry, a ten-year old nineteenth century Illinois farm boy, emerged to tell the tale she relates in *Henry’s Lincoln*.

August 27, 1958 turns out to be a big day in Henry Oaks’s life. His parents allow him to drive his horse alone up to Freeport to hear the great debate between Stephen A. Douglas, the Little Giant, and “Honest Abe” Lincoln. Henry is captivated by the holiday atmosphere, the crowds, the banners, the badges, and all the talk swirling around from an enthusiastic and highly partisan audience. Henry himself is a Douglas man and is sure Douglas is going to cook Lincoln’s goose in the debate. By the end of the day and the arguments, Henry is won over by the rightness of Lincoln’s position on slavery. As another of the children there on that day says, “Douglas was the best speaker all right, but I kind of thought Lincoln told the truth best.” So did Henry.

Henry’s Lincoln was published by Holiday House in 1945 with illustrations by noted artist and illustrator Charles Banks Wilson. Holiday House was founded with the purpose of publishing only quality children’s books by talented authors and illustrators. Its long history of award-winning books continues to the present day.

Henry’s Lincoln was included in *Horn Book Magazine’s* Best Books of 1945 list for children and young adults. It enjoyed many reprintings, and a new edition came out in 1958 for the Lincoln-Douglas Centennial Year.

Author Louise Neyhart died in 1998; Frederic (Fritz) in 2014 at the age of 93. Rights to *Henry’s Lincoln* was transferred to the Lincoln-Douglas Society following Louise’s death. Hardback (\$10) and paperback (\$5) copies are available for purchase at the Stephenson County Historical Society and will be among the Lincoln-Douglas Society books featured at this summer’s Pretzel Literary Fair on August 28, just over 163 years after Henry’s big day.