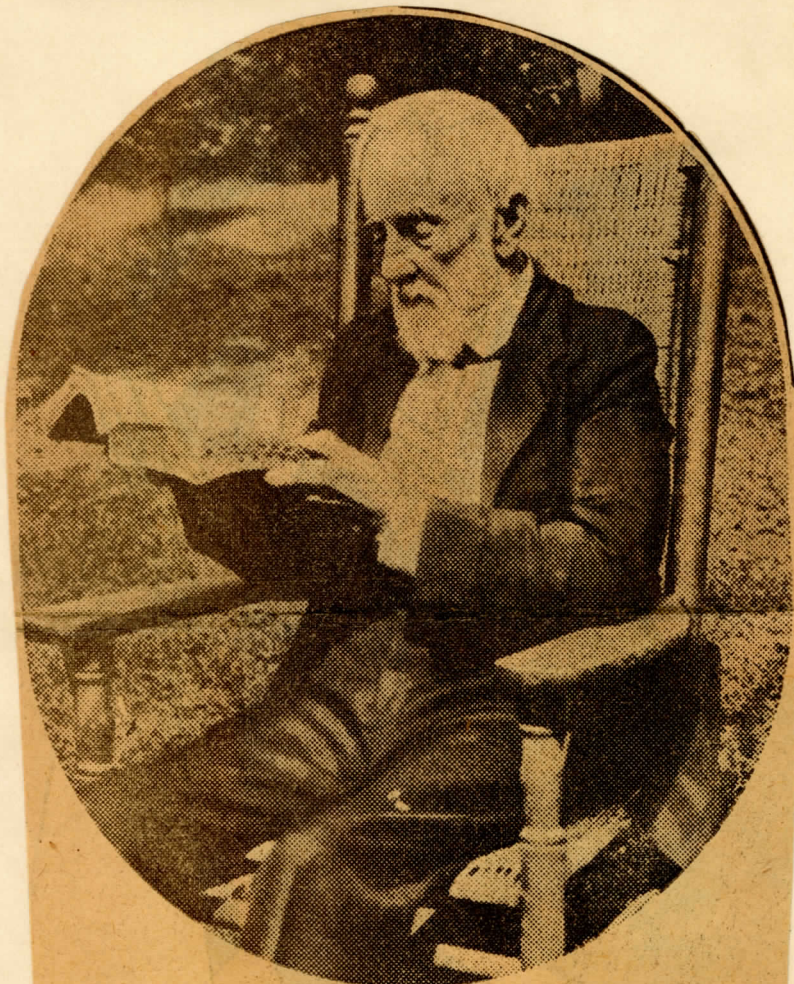


WHEN LINCOLN CROSSED  
SWORDS WITH 'LITTLE GIANT'

Last of Famous Debates Recalled  
By Newspaperman Who Reported It



DANIEL M. GRISSON WHO  
REPORTED THE SPEECHES

"THE seriousness of the theme of the debates and the spectacular manner of their staging a series of out-of-doors arguments at seven different points in Illinois, beginning at Ottawa, near Chicago, and continuing at Freeport, Jonesboro, Charleston, Quincy, Galesburg and Alton, was sufficient to warrant their being given considerable attention by the public and the press. At that time few dreamed of the far-reaching results that this challenge, issued by Abraham Lincoln July 24, 1858, and accepted by Stephen A. Douglas, would eventually bring.

"Douglas' life, as it were, was at stake, threatened by the young lawyer from Springfield who had scarcely been heard of. The whole country knew of Douglas. He was a Democratic Senator with a large following in his own state, Illinois, and elsewhere. A commanding figure in politics, his eminence and ability in Congress was recognized to such an extent that Horace Greeley and many other distinguished Republicans wanted to have him returned for a third term, which he was then asking. In fact, Douglas had so controlled Illinois that it annoyed him that Lincoln, or any other man, so far as that was concerned, should come between him and his State.

#### CHAMPION OF PEOPLE.

"From newspaper and other accounts of the preceding debates, we were all convinced that Douglas

was the great speaker, and it was to hear him in particular that I was interested in going to Alton that day. The opening debate in Ottawa, where Douglas had framed for Lincoln a series of questions to be answered and which was attended by 12,000, 17 carloads of whom were from Chicago, had brought out such headlines as 'Lincoln's Heart Fails,' 'Lincoln's Legs Fail,' 'Lincoln Fails Entirely.'

"Douglas was champion of the people. There was a torchlight procession for him at Freeport, the next debate town where thousands stood in a drizzling rain to hear the debates and particularly Lincoln's answers to Douglas' questions at Ottawa.

"I'll never forget the crowds that poured into Alton that Oct. 15—some 6,000, I believe—to hear that final debate. It was a picturesque audience that greeted the debaters there, as in the other debate towns. Prairies were lighted up by the campfires of the hundreds that poured into the little villages from 40 and 50 miles around. County folk from a distance came the night before in wagons, by horseback and afoot, many carrying bedding and

cooking utensils with them. A gay cavalcade it was en route, but a sobered audience when assembled because of the import of the theme of discussion.

"On the street corners and throughout the little villages there was hubbub and confusion—much the same as a public out-of-doors event of today occasions. There were fakers of all kinds selling pain-killers, and vendors of watermelons and lemonade. It was before the day of pennants and gay-colored balloons.

"THE arrival of Douglas in Alton that day, as it had been in the other debate towns, was a ceremonious occasion. It was a sort of triumphal procession, for he traveled in great state in the private car of George B. McClellan, a high official of the Illinois Central Railroad. He carried with him a band of musicians and a flat car in the rear with a cannon to proclaim his coming. His wife, a brilliant and beautiful woman, was along. Lincoln's arrival was not so spectacular. He had to content himself on this journey through the State with a half seat in a common car, and was thankful for that.

"At the Alton debate, Douglas opened the argument with a one-hour speech. Lincoln followed with an hour and a half. Then Douglas followed with a half hour. They had followed this plan throughout, taking turns in the opening.

"The audience which greeted the debaters was hardly more picturesque than the debaters themselves. It would have been difficult to have found a greater contrast in personal appearance between two men. Douglas, styled the 'Little Giant,' was a small man, scarcely 5 feet 4 inches, with broad shoulders and a stalwart neck. His head was massive and majestic-looking and his voice could deepen into a roar. He was well groomed and prosperous-looking and strode the stage as one at ease. At all times he seemed sure of himself.

"Lincoln's clothes hung loosely on his 6-foot-4-inch frame. His small, twinkling gray eyes shone from beneath shaggy brows. His face was thin and furrowed and his coarse black hair tumbled in reckless abandon. He clasped his hands at the back of his stooping figure somewhat awkwardly. Sometimes he seemed all legs and feet and again all hands and neck. He had no stage manners, no studied art. His speech was full of short, homely words. There was an earnestness about it one couldn't forget. His very homeliness, modest bearing, air of mingled sadness and sincerity excited sympathy and won the hearts of the plain, quiet people.

#### SLAVERY THE ISSUE.

"It was in that closing argument at Alton, standing on free-soil Illinois, looking across the Mississippi into slave-soil Missouri and before there had been any thought of civil war, that Lincoln spoke those lines: 'Is slavery coming? That is the real issue. That is the issue that will continue in this country when these poor tongues of Judge Doug-

las and myself shall be silent. It is the eternal struggle between two principles—right and wrong—throughout the world.' Lincoln and Douglas were the best of friends throughout the debates.

"My paper—the St. Louis Evening News—had at that time ceased to be a Whig paper. It was a sort of free paper—anti-Democratic without being Republican. It went out of publication during the Civil War.

"I wrote up the day's proceedings, but not the speeches in full. The Missouri Republican—forerunner of the St. Louis Republic, now the Globe-Democrat—reported the speeches in full.

"When the November election came Douglas was re-elected. However, his election later proved his undoing. It is said that Lincoln, as he walked home in the gloom of the rainy election night after hearing the reports of election, lost his footing in the muddy street. Recovering his balance, he said, 'It's a slip and not a fall.'

THERE is many another event Mr.

Grissom vividly recalls of early days in the Middle West, then the "Far West." Many are the events associated in his mind with the old Planters House and the Old Southern Hotel in St. Louis, where he dined upon different occasions with Grant, Jackson, Gen. Sherman and Gen. A. P. Stewart, second in command in Robert E. Lee's army and who had previously been his tutor when he was a student at Cumberland University, Tennessee.

In spite of his 97 years, Mr. Grissom seems as much interested in life and events today as he was 76 years ago when he landed in St. Louis as a young man from Davis County, Kentucky, and started in on his newspaper career, first on the old Evening News and later on the St. Louis Republican, a work he followed the rest of his working days and which today holds for him an absorbing interest.

In the quiet, restful atmosphere of the Old People's Home in the suburbs of St. Louis where he has been living now for several years Mr. Grissom finds life today anything but joyless. Although the past holds for him rich memories and associations, it is the present and future in which he is most interested.



STATUE OF ABRAHAM LINCOLN.  
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**A**MONG those who attended the Lincoln-Douglas debate in Alton, Ill., just 70 years ago, was a young newspaperman, there for the purpose of reporting it for his paper, the St. Louis Evening News, of which he was then editor. That same newspaperman, Daniel M. Grison, now 97, and still a resident of St. Louis, recalls vividly this great debate—the last of the famous series of Lincoln-Douglas debates, destined to go down as one of the most important events in American history.

"It was a beautiful day in October," said the nonagenarian, his small, dark eyes, which have never yet known glasses, twinkling as he recalled the events of that memorable day. "I remember it as if it were yesterday. A party of us from St. Louis went to Alton that morning by steamboat for the occasion, for at that time, 1858, there was no railroad from Alton to St. Louis.

"It was about an hour's ride up the river, and a delightful trip, for in those days Mississippi River boats were well furnished and splendid meals were served. There was

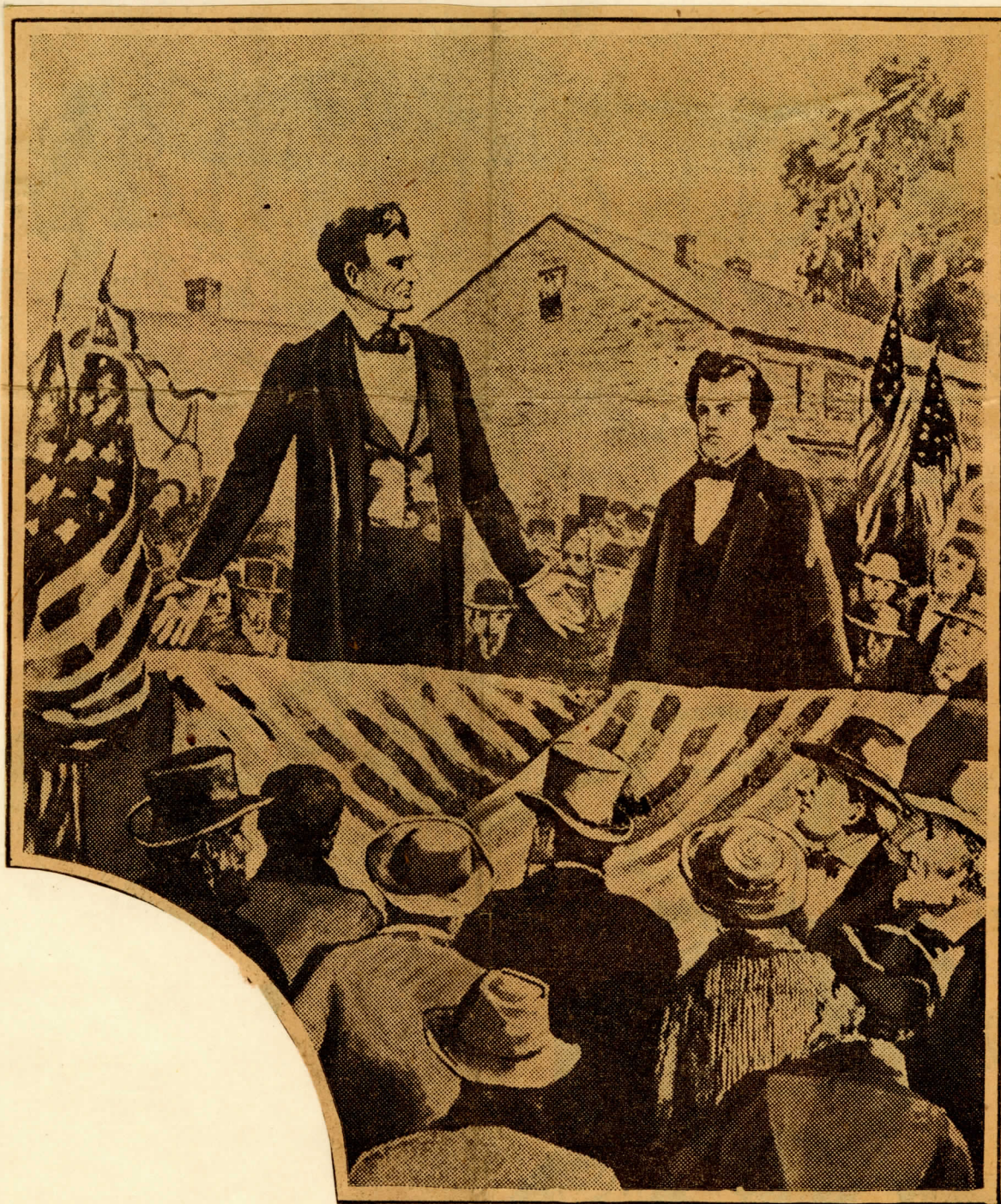
### Tells Tactics of Debaters

**T**HE platform manners of the two great debaters is contrasted by Ellis Paxton Oberholtzer in his biography of Abraham Lincoln. "Douglas was trivial," he writes. "He did not hesitate to call attention to the fact that if Lincoln failed to consume the time allotted him and concluded, when this was the case to the amusement of the crowd, that he had stopped because he could think of nothing more to say.

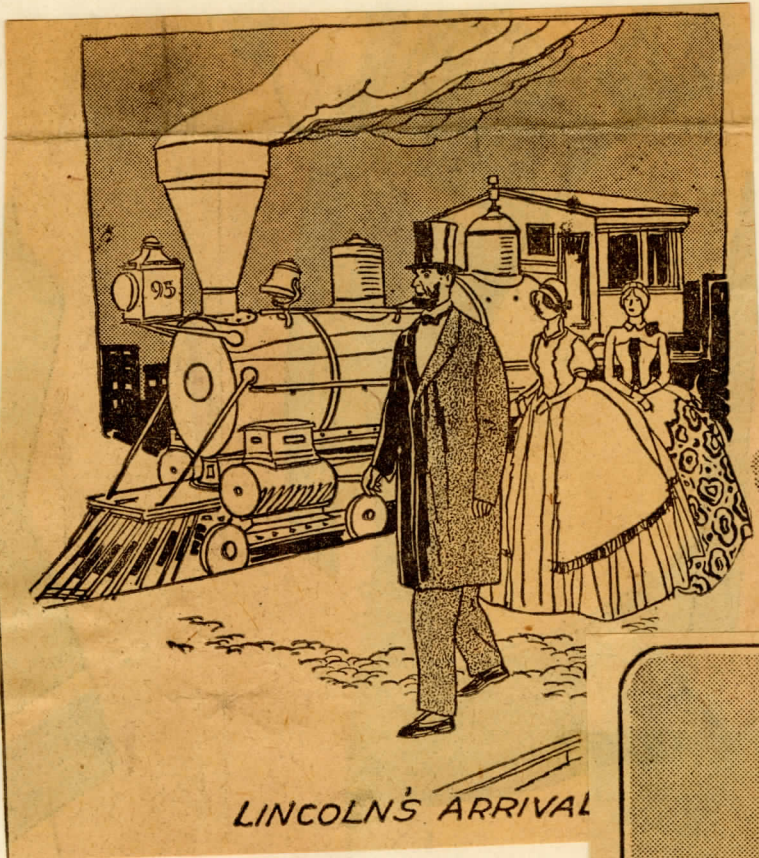
"Lincoln, more careful in statement, but aggressive and bold in attack, and absolutely inflexible in position when it was a question of defending his rights, was far less likely to be led into passionate utterance. At Jonesboro, however, Lincoln remarked with considerable force: 'I don't want to have a fight with Judge Douglas and I have no way of making an argument up into the consistency of a corn cob and stopping his mouth with it.'"

manifestly much interest among the various groups on the boat in this closing debate, in which all expected a sort of climax following the preceding arguments, which had been widely discussed throughout the nation.

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"UP AND DOWN THE STATE THESE TWO MEN TRAVELLED" FROM "TRUE STORY OF ABRAHAM LINCOLN," BY BROOKS.



STEPHEN A. DOUGLAS