

LINCOLN LORE

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SEVENTY-FIFTH ANNIVERSARY OF THE LINCOLN-DOUGLAS DEBATES

QUINCY, OCTOBER 13, 1858

The site of the sixth joint debate, located upon the Mississippi River, drew delegations from both Iowa and Missouri. The attendance was estimated at between ten and fifteen thousand.

Mr. Lincoln was entertained at the home of his friend, Hon. O. H. Browning, while Judge Douglas made his headquarters at the Quincy House.

A platform was constructed for the speakers in front of the court house and seating accommodations were provided for about eight hundred ladies. Just before the debate started some of these seats fell and a few people were injured, but none seriously.

Speech of Lincoln

Introduction

Republican platforms adopted against which no word of condemnation has been brought (Paragraph 1-3).

Judge Douglas has discussed certain foreign resolutions made at Springfield in preference to authorized platform of party (4, 5).

Although in no way accountable for the Springfield resolutions, Judge Douglas continues to hold me responsible for them (6, 7).

A. The Sectional Party.

Not guilty of double dealing with the public by making statements in one part of the state that he (Lincoln) would not make in another part (8).

His remarks about racial equality at Charleston and Douglas's reply reviewed (9-11).

Conclusions at Ottawa reviewed with argument that they were not in contradiction to his remarks at Charleston (12-14).

B. The Dred Scott Decision.

Judge Douglas asked for third time to answer the third question put to him at Freeport (15).

The Court nowhere in its opinions said that the states have the power to exclude slavery (16-17).

C. Personal References.

Engaged in personal controversy as to which one of them started using the word "forgery" referring to the Republican Resolutions (18, 19).

Recalled accusation of Douglas that there was a bargain between Lincoln and Trumbull (20).

Would not push this matter to the point of personal difficulty (21-24).

D. The Moral Issue in Slavery.

Contest between those who think slavery wrong and those who do not think slavery wrong (25).

We have due regard to its presence, the difficulty of getting rid of it, and the constitutional obligations thrown about it (26).

Not to be bound by the Dred Scott Decision as a political rule (27).

Republican and Democratic policies with respect to the right and wrong of slavery compared (28).

Douglas has never admitted slavery is wrong (29).

Democrats object to opposing slavery where it is and where it isn't (30, 31).

The real difference between Democrats and Republicans on the slavery question is the opinion of whether it is right or wrong (32-34).

Speech of Douglas

A. Personal References.

It is to be regretted that Mr. Lincoln should have deemed it proper to again indulge in the gross personalities with reference to the Republican Resolutions (Paragraph 1, 2).

He (Douglas) made a mistake with respect to the place Resolutions were made but immediately corrected error on own initiative (3, 4).

Attacked Lincoln's integrity in both the alleged conspiracy compact and Dred Scott Decision (4, 5).

B. Popular Sovereignty.

Lincoln asked again whether or not he endorses the principle of no more slave states whether or not the people want them (6).

Lincoln asked if he will vote for the admission of any territory with just such a constitution as the people want (7).

Lincoln's answers heretofore have been evasive and equivocal (8).

C. The Sectional Party.

Lincoln will not express same opinions at Chicago that he will at Charleston (9-12).

Negroes and Whites are made equal at Chicago but at Charleston he makes the Whites superior (13, 14).

The party to which he belongs is bounded and limited by geographical lines (15).

The party appeals to the North against the South and Lincoln preaches a crusade against slavery in the Free States (16).

D. The House Divided Question.

How does Lincoln hope to save the Union unless by compelling all states to become free (17, 18)?

Under the Constitution each state has a right to do as it pleases upon the subject of slavery (19).

E. The Dred Scott Decision.

Lincoln wishes to discuss merits of Dred Scott Decision when under the Constitution a Senator has no right to interfere with the decision of judging tribunals (20, 21).

After a decision of the Supreme Court is announced it is not for me to enquire whether I like it or not (22).

The Supreme Court would not degrade itself so low as to make a decision known to be in direct violation to the Constitution (23, 24).

Taney's decision that slave property stands on same footing with other property and local laws must either reject this property or protect it (25-27).

Would not vote in Congress for any code of laws either for or against slavery in the territories (28).

F. The Washington Union Controversy.

The Washington Union reads me (Douglas) out of the Democratic party because I hold that the people of a territory have the right to have slavery or not as they please (29, 30).

Attitude towards Clay Compromise Measures and Kansas and Nebraska Bill reviewed by Union and discussion by Douglas (31-36).

The position of President Buchanan on territorial domestic questions discussed (37-40).

G. Constitutional Rights of the Territories and States.

The principle of self government on which our institutions are based is the right of each state, each territory to decide the slavery question for itself (41-42).

It does not become Mr. Lincoln or any one else to meddle with the moral problems of other states (43).

People thanked for their kind attention during address (44-45).

Mr. Lincoln's Rejoinder

Douglas thanked for his public announcement that his policy with respect to slavery "contemplates that it shall last forever" (Paragraphs 1, 2).

When Douglas stated the fathers made this Government part slave and part free he assumed what is historically a falsehood (3).

We should put slavery on the same basis that our fathers put it and not "put it on the cotton-gin basis" (4).

No inclination to interfere with slave states about their institutions or the controversy within the Democratic party (5, 6).

Judge Douglas himself helped to reverse decision of Supreme Court and also helped to overthrow decision of Illinois Supreme Court (7, 8).

Does Judge Douglas claim by withholding laws or passing unfriendly laws territorial legislatures may nullify constitutional rights (9-11)?

Personal controversies referring to sectional speeches, Republican Resolutions, and Dred Scott case reviewed (12-20).