

^{George} 11. Beatty is now a retired business man.
He has lived in Ottawa all his life and is
sixty years old.

Mr George Beatty says;

"The Lincoln - Douglass debate was an
event of tremendous importance in this
section. It really then meant something very
different than jumping on an excursion train
and going a few miles to another town, idling
about, listening to the speeches for a half
hour or so, and spending the remainder of the
short stop in gossip with chums. Now a days,
we watch a stump speaker for a little while
and then calmly stroll away with the thought;
'oh, what's the use listening to that chap! I can
get his speech in to morrow's paper'. But in
those days, the thing was much different. This
was a new state and this and adjoining
counties had been settled by a lot of newly
arrived immigrants. They had to work hard

very day in order to get their houses and farms in shape. When evening came, men were too tired to read much and papers ^{that did happen to be around} were very scarce. A newspaper, was loaned about from house to house and read over until it was worn to ^{almost} tatters. The way the people learned was, solely from mouth to mouth. Some school master or smart man of the township got all he could from the political discussion and then he met the settlers at the country store or at their homes and was questioned and re-questioned until he had given out all the information he possessed. Then the farmers, in turn, discussed it among themselves. When the bills announcing the Lincoln - Douglass debate came out, the settlers all over this and surrounding counties planned on coming to Ottawa. If they began coming into town, the day before the debate and, early in the afternoon,

The streets were crowded with people. Many
 drove farm wagons and women and children
 were brought along. Hundreds were on horse-
 back. It was a matter of but a short
 time until the few hotels, the livery stables,
 and private houses were crowded and then
 were no accommodations left. Then the cam-
 paiguers spread out about the town and
 camped in whatever spot was most con-
 venient. They went out along the bluffs
 and on the bottom lands and that night
 the campfires that spread up and down the
 valley for a mile made it look as if an
 army was gathered about us. Next morn-
 ing, when I crossed the Illinois River, I
 saw that the numbers had been greatly in-
 creased. Every road was filled with horses
 and wagons. I have never seen such a
 crowd in Ottawa. It seems as if there
 must have been twenty thousand people in the

by that day. Drinking was prevalent then and there was considerable drunkenness but, still, all was good natured. There was little fighting and brawling. ¶

¶ About ten o'clock, Lincoln and Douglass got here. By this time the delegations and clubs had got out into line. There were bands and all sorts of banners, though the most of them were of a pattern that would be common enough these days. They had such legends as these "Troy Grove delegation, 500 strong," "Wide Awakes of Wallace Township," "Douglass Club of Morris," "Hurrah for the Little Giant," "Honest Abe," "Lincoln Club from Mendota," etc. After a drive around the square and some of the principal streets, Lincoln and Douglass were brought to Washington Park where the speaking was to begin. There was a perfect sea of faces and it was with some difficulty that

could make way for Lincoln and Douglass.
 Their adherents crowded about them and many
 men who have become prominent in this
 part of the State were there as leaders of
 clubs and organizations. Among the Lincoln
 supporters were; Burton C. Cook, later Congressman,
 member of Peace Congress, intimate friend and adviser of Lincoln in Washington,
 the lamented W. H. L. Wallace, later a Brigadier
 General in the Union Army and who was killed
 at Shiloh, Judge J. Lyle Dickey, Judge Edwin Leland,
 Washington Bushnell, the distinguished lawyer,
 E. Y. Briggs, Samuel R. Lewis, Dr. Joseph Stout,
 a noted abolitionist, later Associate Judge of Territory of Idaho,
 Judge E. W. Hollister, George Stebbins, Joseph Hart,
 David Strawn, Wm. W. True, Dr. H. W. Hopkins,
 Thomas J. Wade, B. C. Gray, A. D. Butterfield,
 John Hosack, John Nash, Wm. Crumpton,
 Herman Silver, Wm. Cullen, Judge Eldredge,
 Elmer Baldwin, author of "Baldwin's History of
 La Salle County," George Rice, Charles H. Hook.

Among the Democratic leaders were: Col. D. F. Pitt, E. S. Hallowell, Lucien Delano, Charles Delano, ^{Editor Ottawa Free Press, now oldest living editor in State of Illinois} Wm. Osman, John Hise, Col. Wm. Gibson, Col. W. H. W. Cushman, Wm. Reddick, ^{a nephew of Martin Van Buren,} Washington Armstrong, Col. William Barber, J. B. A. Hoos, Jackson R. Shaver, Samuel Raymond, the late ex-Chief Justice John Dean Caton, Capt. Moses Osman, Julius Avery, John Green, Jesse Green, the oldest living settler in La Salle County, Lorenzo Leland, John Spicer, Samuel Milliken, ~~Sam~~ William R. Milligan, and James Clark. ¶

¶ The speaking began about 2.30 in the afternoon and lasted until 5.30. Judge Douglas opened and spoke for an hour. Lincoln followed. Both men were desperately in earnest and, from the way they talked, their gestures, and general style of speaking, it could be seen that each seemed to realize that success or failure in this debate before the people in this part of the

seats meant a great deal in the final political fate of the defeated man. I remember that when Douglass started in to speak there was a tendency to interrupt him with loud cheering and he had gone but a little way when he stopped and told the audience that quiet, earnest attention would be more acceptable to him than cheering would be. Before he had finished his first or opening speech, he had made such an impression on the great crowd that was no disposition whatever to interrupt him ^{by} a show of enthusiasm or to miss one word of what he had to say. It did not take long for this crowd of farmers to realize that the question that was before them was one that demanded sober, solemn decision, if they were to vote rightly. Douglass' favorite gesture when he wanted to especially emphasize some point was to raise his hand diagonally up toward the Heavens.

In this gesture, his fist would be closed with the exception of the index finger. His arms were short and he made this movement with such force that it never failed to add in driving in his idea. I was a democrat in those days and an eager Douglass man, but when 'the little Giant' had finished, I must say that I think it was undoubtedly true that, somehow, Douglass had not made quite so convincing a speech as was expected. I think his more ardent followers among us felt that he had not quite over whelmed us with the candor and justice of his views.

¶ When Lincoln got up and said in his slow, frank style that when a fellow showed himself misrepresented a little, he felt ugly, but when he was misrepresented a good deal, it seemed funny, it was plain to see he had caught the crowd considerably better than did Douglass in his opening. Lincoln's gestures were awfully awkward but, at the same

him, weighty. There was, true as you live,
 a sincerity about Ab that carried you with
 him. You could not help it, for he made you
 feel that he was so honest. When he got
 through, it was pretty clear that, in the mind
 of the crowd, he was ahead. Douglass finished
 in a half hour the closing speech of the debate
 and Lincoln was carried from the platform
 over to the residence of J. O. Glover, just
 across the street. Glover was ^{Mayor} ~~Postmaster~~ of
 Ottawa at the time and was one of the head
 men in arranging the details for the Rep-
 ublican side of the rally that day. Douglass
 was taken over to the Geiger House where his
 party gathered, as many as could, to shake
 hands with him. In the evening, he made a
 short talk from the veranda of the hotel.

If I tell you that debate set folks to think-
 ing on these important questions in way they
 hadn't dreamed of. I heard any number of men

This thing is an awfully serious question and I am about concluded Lincoln has got it right. My father, a thoughtful, God-fearing man, said to me, as we went home to supper, 'George, you are young and don't see what this thing means, as I do. Douglass's speeches of 'squatter sovereignty' please you young men, but I tell you that with us older men, it's a great question that faces us. We've either got to keep slavery back or it's going to spread all over the country. That's the real question that's behind all this. Lincoln is right. And that was the feeling that prevailed, I think, among the majority, after the debate was over. People went home talking about the danger of slavery getting a hold in the North. This territory had been Democratic, La Salle County, the morning of the day of debate, was Democratic and under the dictation of Wm. Reddish of Ottawa, the founder

the Reddick public library of later years, but
when the next day came around, hundreds
of democrats had been made Republicans
owing to the light in which Lincoln had
brought forward the fact that slavery threat-
ened.



Ex - congressman, Hon. Wm Cullen says:

"The day of the great debate between Lincoln and Douglass found a tremendous crowd of people in Ottawa for the weather was fine and the roads too. Ottawa was a small place then, but there must have been fully 15,000 thousand people at Washington Park (this is right in what is now Central Ottawa) and the surrounding streets. Folks came in big, long wagons, hay racks, on horse back, and, in short, I guess all known means of travel were exercised. There were marching clubs, bands and banners everywhere. There was a good deal of rivalry among the different clubs and factions but, still, there was not any fighting or anything of that kind, so

for as I know. People in those days went to 'rally' to have a good time and hear some ^{fighting} thing; not to get drunk. ||

|| The speaking was opened by Douglass who spoke an hour. The style of speaking of the two antagonists differed greatly. Douglass spoke in a quick, jerky, fiery way. He would emphasize a point by shaking his head and seeming to dart forward. It was something like the spring of a panther. Of course, his sympathizers were out in force and they whooped and cheered at the little man's witty jabs and sallies. ||

|| Then Lincoln got up. Actually, for a moment, as he stood there, I believe he seemed the most awkward, lanky character I ever saw. He began to speak in a calm, good natured, honest appearing sort of way that could not help but make a man listen with attention.

whether ^{he} favored his views or not. He used his ^{arms}
 with all the sweep of a windmill. He would
 bring his right arm over his head and then
 down. He followed the same move with his left.
 then, he'd use both together. But there was an
 honest, straight forward way about him that appeal-
 ed to you in a way that Douglass' charging
 did not. Lincoln spoke an hour and a half, and
 then Douglass took a half hour to close in.
 I believe that when the two men had finished
 that it was the general feeling of those who
 had listened that Lincoln had gotten the best of
 the argument. Both men had shown that they
 were doing their utmost to down each other
 and were desperately in earnest. ¶
 ¶ At the end of the debate, Lincoln
 was taken over to the Glover residence which
^{stands}
~~there~~ on La Salle street, near the park. ~~then~~

Richard Hughes who lives in Marseille (seven miles East of Ottawa) was a settler in La Salle County in 1849. He was the first man to seize hold of Lincoln in assisting to carry him from the platform at Washington Park, after debate was over, to the residence of the Hon. J. O. Glover. He says: ¶

¶ "As soon as Lincoln stopped speaking,

jumped forward with the crowd and, as he got to the edge, J. O. Glover looked down on from the platform and said 'Pick him up boys. Pick him up.' He stepped down and as he did so I grabbed ahold of him. He says 'out! out!', but I did it mind and, getting a good grip on his arm, W. K. Stewart, a carpenter, who is now living in Ottawa, grabbed

min on the other side and boosted ^{him} up and
 than Milo Cushing and Bradford Fields helped
 and we put Lincoln on our shoulders
 and started over toward Glover's house. ^{and}
 others who were with us were lawyer Henry Mayo, Thomas Reedy and
 F. P. Marsh. There was a big crowd following and all
 the time Lincoln was saying 'out boys! Let
 me down!', but we didn't till we got to
 the door of the house. We took him into
 the parlor and then he looked pleased and
 and as he turned to us, he shook his finger and said good naturedly,
 "you rascals!" He yet even with you, you rascals!"
 shook each one of us by the hand.

¶ The way we done with Lincoln
 was a good deal different that what they
 done with Douglass. When they seen us
 coming up to Abe, there was a lot made
 a real for Douglass. I heard him say
 'no! no!' quite firm and they see he
 won't object pretty strong. All they could do

was to walk with him over to the
Geiger house. "

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Richard Hughes was the first man to pros-
pect for coal through this State. Soon after
coming here, he started with pick and knapsack
and covered the bluffs down the Illinois from
Joliet to Peoria, over a hundred miles. Now in
this region, there must be 15,000 miners em-
ployed.