

## MARTIN P. RINDLAUB Sr.

He was a native of Gettysburg Pennsylvania, born February 15, 1838, but he left that place before his childhood haunts were shredded in the greatest battle of the Civil War. His name was Martin Phillip Rindlaub, and he was a journalist. Educated at Gettysburg College, he subsequently learned the printing trade working in the offices of the Gettysburg Sentinel. He taught school for a few years, but in the spring of 1858 he followed the popular admonition to "go west, young man, go west." He arrived in June of 1858 in Warren, Illinois, accepting a position as a pressman at the Warren Independent. He bought a half interest in the paper in January 1860, and in July of that same year purchased the remainder becoming full owner. In December 1860 he took as a partner D. J. Benner, an old friend from Gettysburg. After the bombardment of Fort Sumter, Benner enlisted in the army, and was made First Lieutenant of Company E, 15th Illinois Volunteers. Benner later moved on to work in the Secret Service and the diplomatic corps. Rindlaub continued to run the paper.

The December 23, 1862 issue of the Adams Sentinel of Gettysburg carried the following in the "Comings and Goings" section: "Married, in Doylestown, Berks Co., Pa., on the 11th inst., by Rev. Mr. Andrews, Martin P. Rindlaub one of the editors of the "Independent", Warren, Illinois (formerly of the Sentinel office) to Kate S. Young of Doylestown." They were to remain man and wife for over 56 years.

In the spring of 1864 M. P. Rindlaub (later to receive the title "Sr." to distinguish himself from his son by the same name, who became a doctor) sold his interest in the Independent and moved to Galena, working a few months for the Gazette, and thence to Lancaster in July 1864 where he worked until March 1867 for J. C. Cover at the Grant County Herald. He then bought the Platteville Witness from George K. Shaw of Lancaster on February 28, 1867. This publication he was to run for the rest of his career.

He was to live to the age of 94, dying on May 19, 1932 at Platteville, and became renowned as the dean of newspaper editors in Wisconsin. In his long life, he accomplished many things (He helped to preserve the First State capitol at Belmont), but one of the most important was attending and recording in detail the great debate between Abraham Lincoln and Stephen A. Douglas that occurred on August 27<sup>th</sup>, 1858. This debate led to the fracture of the Democratic party. Rindlaub was 20 years old at the time. He wrote at least three articles recounting his memories of this event, the most detailed for the Kiwanis Magazine in May of 1926. Following are quotes from his written reminiscences.

# They Heard Lincoln



—State Journal Photo.

This group of old time residents who heard the Lincoln-Douglas debate was among the centers of interest at the Lincoln statue unveiling. It includes William Rosenstiel, Elroy, W. C. Galpin, Minneapolis, Kas., G. W. Smith, Freeport, Mrs. Ann E. Lease, Rideout, Ill., R. M. Telfer, Beloit, A. H. Weir, Elizabeth, Ill., C. B. Noble, Polo, Ill., G. L. Wolf, Dakota, Ill., R. M. Cook, Freeport, M. P. Rindlaub, Platteville, C. J. Tiffany, Stockton, Frank E. Beyer, Rock Grove, Louis Fahlinger, Elizabeth and A. C. Sheadle, Warren.

“I was present in 1858 at one of the celebrated discussions between Lincoln and Douglas, at Freeport. Lincoln and Douglas were the opposing candidates for the United States Senate, and a series of joint discussions at seven different points in the State had been arranged. Meetings were held in advance, by each party, at every hamlet and cross road within a radius of forty miles of the place where the joint discussion was to take place, in order to awaken its adherents to the importance of being present and supporting its champions. They organized themselves into great

delegations which rallied at convenient points, and formed into processions of men and women, in wagons and carriages — but few of the latter as they were not as common then as they became later. Many, too, were on horse-back, and usually starting the night before, headed by bands of music, with flags and banners, hats and handkerchiefs waving, proceeded to the place of meeting.

**AT FREEPORT, THE 27th.**

The day fixed upon for the meeting of  
Lincoln and Douglas, in this city, is  
**FRIDAY, THE 27th inst.**

Lincoln will open the discussion and speak  
for one hour, Douglas will follow and speak  
one hour and a half, and then Lincoln will  
close in a speech of half an hour. Of  
course the mere announcement that these  
two champions are to be here and cross  
swords, will be sufficient to attract the lar-  
gest crowd ever assembled in Stephenson  
County, especially as this is the only point  
in this Congressional District, where they  
are to speak from the same stand to the  
same audience.

Freeport Weekly Journal Aug 17 1858

Many of these processions were half a mile in length. As they advanced the air was rent with cheers in the Republican processions, for "Honest Old Abe," and in the Democratic, for "The Little Giant." The sentiments painted in great letters on the banners carried in each of these processions left no one in doubt as to which party its participants belonged. Over the banners of the Douglas processions were "Squatter Sovereignty"; "Let the People Rule"; "This is a White Man's Country"; "No Nigger Equality"; "Hurrah for the Little Giant." On the other hand, the Republicans carried banners with such mottoes as "Hurrah for Honest Old Abe"; "Lincoln the Rail-Splitter and Giant Killer"; "No more Slave Territory"; "All men are created equal"; "Free Kansas"; "No more compromise."

### Excursion Trip, Morning Train.

#### FOR FREEPORT.—LINCOLN AND DOUGLAS.—

The regular train on the Chicago and Galena road will leave here to-morrow at seven o'clock, instead of 9, to meet the excursion train from Chicago to Freeport. This will give those who wish to hear the debate between Lincoln and Douglas an opportunity to do so.

From The Janesville Gazette August 26, 1858

“Douglas arrived on the scene in a coach drawn by four gaily caparisoned horses, which had been placed at his disposal by his admirers; his coming was greeted by a rousing welcome. Scarcely had the cheering occasioned by his appearance ceased when an old-fashioned Conestoga wagon, drawn by four horses, was driven to the stand. On one of the seats sat Lincoln, accompanied by half a dozen farmers in their working clothes. The driver was mounted on the near rear horse and guided his team with a single rein attached to the bridle of one of the lead horses. The burlesque was as complete as possible and the effort was greeted with a good-natured roar.



“The contrast between Lincoln and Douglas could hardly have been more marked. Lincoln was six feet four inches tall. He was swarthy as an Indian, with wiry, jet black hair, which was usually in an unkept condition. He wore no beard, and his face was almost grotesquely square, with high cheek bones. His eyes were bright, keen, and a luminous gray color, though his eyebrows were black like his hair. His figure was gaunt, slender, and slightly bent. He was clad in a rusty-black Prince Albert

coat with somewhat abbreviated sleeves. His black trousers, too, were so short that they gave an appearance of exaggerated size to his feet. He wore a high stove-pipe hat, somewhat the worse for wear. He carried a gray woolen shawl, a garment much worn in those days instead of an overcoat. His manner of speaking was of a plain, unimpassioned character. He gesticulated very little with his arms, but moved his body from one side to the other. Sometimes he would bend his knees so they would almost touch the platform, and then he would shoot himself up to his full height, emphasizing his utterances in a very forcible manner.

## LINCOLN'S QUESTION TO DOUGLAS LEAD'S TO DEMOCRATIC DIVISION

**Note: The Dred Scott Decision of 1857 had decreed that a man may take his property (a slave) with him into any territory of the United States, thus collapsing the compromise of 1850 allowing for "popular sovereignty" – each territory deciding for itself whether to be a slave or free state. This decision also said that a Negro is not a citizen and has no standing in a court of law.**

“It was during his famous debate with Douglas that Lincoln forced Douglas to make declarations as to his position on the slavery question which rendered the disruption of the Democratic Party inevitable, and robbed Douglas of the Democratic nomination for President in 1860. The specific question he forced Douglas to answer was: "Can the people of a United States territory, in any lawful way, against the wisdom of any citizen of the United States, exclude slavery from its limits prior to the forming of a state constitution?" Douglas replied: "It matters not what way the Supreme Court may hereafter decide as to the abstract question whether slavery may or may not go into a territory under the Constitution, but the people, have the lawful means to introduce it or exclude it as they please for the reason that slavery cannot exist a day or an hour anywhere unless it is supported by local police regulations. These police regulations can only be established by the local legislature, and if the people are opposed to slavery, they will elect representatives to that body who will, by unfriendly legislation, effectually prevent the introduction of it into their midst."

“This answer of Douglas proved his own political death-warrant. It enabled Lincoln to say that "Judge Douglas claims that a thing may be lawfully driven from where it has a lawful right to be." While it won to Douglas in the Senatorial fight the votes of Democrats opposed to slavery, in other states "police regulation" and "unfriendly legislation" became catch phrases which were used to defeat him.

Note to the cartoon below: In the 1860 Presidential election, as a result of conflicting regional interests, the Democratic Party broke into Northern and Southern factions, and a new Constitutional Union Party appeared. In the face of a divided opposition, the Republican Party, which had the most support in the North, secured enough electoral votes to put Abraham Lincoln in the White House with little support from the South. Douglas' answer to Lincoln's query led to this party split.



This cartoon depicts the four candidates of 1860 dancing around Dred Scott, who is seated and playing a violin. In the upper right corner, Lincoln is depicted dancing with an Negro woman, signifying his alleged interest in abolition. In the lower right corner, John Bell dances with a Native American. Bell was a staunch supporter of preserving the Union above all else. Stephen A. Douglas, the presidential candidate from the Northern Democratic Party, is represented dancing with an Irishman and allusion to his sympathy with Catholicism. John C. Brekinridge, the southern Democratic candidate who supported slavery is shown dancing with Preident Buchanan.

## HOW LINCOLN SILENCED THE CROWD

“Douglas spoke first and he was frequently interrupted by vociferous applause. At the close of his speech the cheering and hand clapping was prolonged and tumultuous. When Lincoln rose the crowd broke into cheers again for Douglas, keeping it up for several minutes, Lincoln, in the meanwhile waiting patiently. When at length the enthusiasm subsided, he extended his long right arm for silence. When he had partly gained this he said in an impressive tone, "What an orator Judge

Douglas is!" This unexpected tribute to their friend aroused wild enthusiasm in the audience. When this applause had run its course Lincoln extended his hand again, this time obtaining silence more easily. "What a fine presence Judge Douglas has!" exclaimed the speaker earnestly. Again tumultuous applause followed the tribute. More and more easily the tall, gaunt lawyer won silence as he went on with admiring exclamations: "How well rounded his sentences are!" ending with "What a splendid man Judge Douglas is!" Then, when the audience had again become silent at his call, Lincoln leaned forward and said, "And now, my countrymen, how many of you can tell me one thing Judge Douglas said?" There was no reply and Lincoln proceeded to speak without interruption.

## LINCOLN WINS THE 1860 REPUBLICAN NOMINATION FOR PRESIDENT

"I was also present in the capacity of a reporter at the Republican Convention, in the Wigwam, in Chicago, when Lincoln was nominated for the Presidency the first time.

"It is interesting to compare Lincoln's letter of acceptance when he was nominated for the Presidency the first time, with those of Roosevelt, Taft or Bryan, when they were nominated for the same office. While each of theirs occupied six or eight columns of the average newspaper, Lincoln's was contained in about twenty lines. It was so short that I will give it entire:

SPRINGFIELD, ILL., May 23, 1860.

Sir: I accept the nomination tendered to me by the convention over which you presided, and of which I am formally apprised in the letter of yourself and others, acting as a committee of the convention for that purpose. The declaration of principles and sentiments which accompanies that letter meets my approval, and it shall be my care not to violate nor disregard it in any part.

Imploring the assistance of divine Providence, and with due regard to the views and feelings of all who were represented in the Convention — to the rights of all the states and territories and people of the nation, to the inviolability of the Constitution, and the perpetual union and harmony and prosperity of all, I am most happy to co-operate for the practical success of the principles declared by the Convention.

Your obliged friend and fellow-citizen, A. LINCOLN.



“As soon as it became known that Lincoln was elected President, several of the southern states made preparation formally to separate themselves from the federal union, South Carolina taking the lead in the secession movement; so that by the time Lincoln was inaugurated seven states had done all in their power to dissolve their connection with the Union.

“The next time that I saw Lincoln was in the summer of 1860, after he had been nominated for the Presidency. A great Republican mass meeting was held at Springfield, Lincoln's home. It was said to have been the largest political meeting ever held in this country. A carriage drove up, and Lincoln was escorted forward. Being assisted, he mounted the desk where he stood, his tall form towering far above, his hands folded in front of him, and the multitude cheering to the echo. When quiet was restored, he told the audience that he had not come to make a speech, that he had simply come there to see the people and to give them an opportunity to see him. All he said did not occupy two minutes, after which he entered his carriage, and was driven to other portions of the ground.

### LINCOLN'S CHARACTER AND FAITH

“Simply touching the religious side of Mr. Lincoln, the following incident is told by the late General Sickles. The General lost a leg at Gettysburg and was taken to Washington, where he was soon visited by Mr. Lincoln. The General asked him if he had not been anxious about the result of the battle, and the President replied, "Yes, some precautions were taken, but for my part I was sure of our success at Gettysburg." "Why were you so confident?" the General asked. There was a brief pause; the President seemed in deep thought. Then his pale face lighted up, and turning to the General he said, "When Lee crossed the Potomac and entered Pennsylvania, followed by our army, I felt that the crisis had come. I knew that defeat in a great battle on northern soil involved the loss of Washington, to be followed, perhaps, by the intervention of England and France, in favor of the Southern Confederacy. I went to my room and got down on my knees in prayer. Never before had I prayed with so much earnestness; I wish I could repeat my prayer. I felt that I must put all my trust in Almighty God. He gave our people the best country ever given to man. He alone could save it from destruction. I had tried my best to do my duty, and had found myself unequal to the task. The burden was more than I could bear. God had often been our protector in other days. I prayed that He would not let the Nation perish, and asked him to help us now and give us victory. I knew that God was on our side—I had no misgivings about the result at Gettysburg.”

“Lincoln's heart was as tender as a woman's. During the war he frequently visited the hospitals and addressed cheering words to the wounded soldiers. On one occasion he found a young fellow whose leg had been amputated, and he was evidently sinking rapidly. "Is there anything I can do for you?" asked Lincoln. "You might write a letter to my mother," was the reply. The President wrote at the youth's dictation, "My dear mother, I have been shot bad, but I am bearing up. I tried to do my duty. They tell me I cannot recover. God bless you and father. Kiss May and John for me." At the end these words were added as a postscript: "This letter was written by Abraham Lincoln." When the boy perused the epistle and saw the added words, he looked with astonished gaze at the visitor, as he asked: "Are you our President?" "Yes," was the quick answer: "and now that you know that, is there anything else I can do for you?" Feebly the lad said: "I guess you might hold my hand and see me through."

“Never before in the history of the world was there a leader of men so entirely and so consistently his natural self. He was homely and ungainly and he recognized and spoke jokingly about it. He was ambitious and frankly admitted it. He was so modest, so honest, and so "easy" that not a few men set him down as absolutely simple-minded. But after he was tested and tried it was found that he was unqualifiedly a "Master of Men." Douglas, to whom he put the question, at Freeport, that saved the United States, came to know him as his master, and held his hat for him while he took the oath of office as President. Fremont, the "soldier statesman," whom Lincoln made and unmade, learned the same lesson. So did Seward, who went into the Cabinet prepared and expecting to take the reins of government. So did Chase, the indispensable man, who resigned once too often, and who, thanks to Lincoln's magnanimity, administered to him the second oath of office. Even Stanton, that imperturbable Titan of the Cabinet, who had been in the habit of referring to Lincoln as the "original gorilla" and who prophesied that Jeff Davis would be in the White House within six months, and who believed himself called into the Cabinet for the express purpose of holding up the hands of the impotent Lincoln—even Stanton learned this lesson; and when Lincoln drew his last breath Stanton said: "There lies the most perfect ruler of men that the world has ever seen."

“Each passing year serves to emphasize the fact that the memory of Abraham Lincoln has been more potent than any other influence in bringing the people of the North and the South into more harmonious relations toward each other.

In the language of another:

Heroic soul, in homely garb half hid,  
Sincere, sagacious, melancholy, quaint,  
What he endured, no less than what he did,  
Has reared his monument and crowned him saint.”



Never losing his sense of adventure, Rindlaub took his first flight at age 93 (1931)