



History for Kids: An Illustrated Biography of Stephen Douglas for Children

Charles River Editors

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Perfect for ages 7-10

Includes pictures

In Charles River Editors' History for Kids series, your children can learn about history's most important people and events in an easy, entertaining, and educational way. Pictures help bring the story to life, and the concise but comprehensive book will keep your kid's attention all the way to the end.

The most famous debates in American history were held over 150 years ago, and today they are remembered and celebrated mostly because they included future President Abraham Lincoln, one of the nation's most revered men. But in the Fall of 1858, Lincoln was just a one-term Congressman who had to all but beg his U.S. Senate opponent to debate him. That's because his opponent, incumbent U.S. Senator Stephen Douglas, was one of the most famous national politicians of the era.

Though Douglas is remembered today almost entirely for his association to Lincoln, in 1858 he was "The Little Giant" of American politics and a leader of the Democratic Party. In particular, it was Douglas who had championed the idea of "popular sovereignty", advocating that the settlers of federal territory should vote on whether their state would become a free state or a slave state. When Congress created the territories of Kansas and Nebraska in 1854, it followed this model, and Douglas believed it was a moderate position that would hold the Union together. But many in the North considered popular sovereignty a deliberate attempt to circumvent the Missouri Compromise, which was supposed to have banned slavery in any state above the parallel 36°30' north. As a result, the Lincoln-Douglas debates would be almost entirely about issues pertaining to slavery.

Douglas would go on to win reelection in 1858, but Lincoln would win the war, literally and figuratively. In the presidential election of 1860, Lincoln would win the Republican nomination and the presidency in large part because Douglas had fractured the national Democratic Party with some of his stated policies during the 1858 debates. When the Democrats ran a Northern Democrat (Douglas) and a Southern Democrat (Breckenridge) in 1860, they split the vote and handed the election to Lincoln.

History for Kids: An Illustrated Biography of Stephen Douglas for Children profiles the life and politics of the Little Giant, his seminal debates with Lincoln, and his lasting legacy. Along with pictures of important people, places, and events, your kids will learn about Stephen Douglas like never before.

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