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TEACHER'S GUIDE

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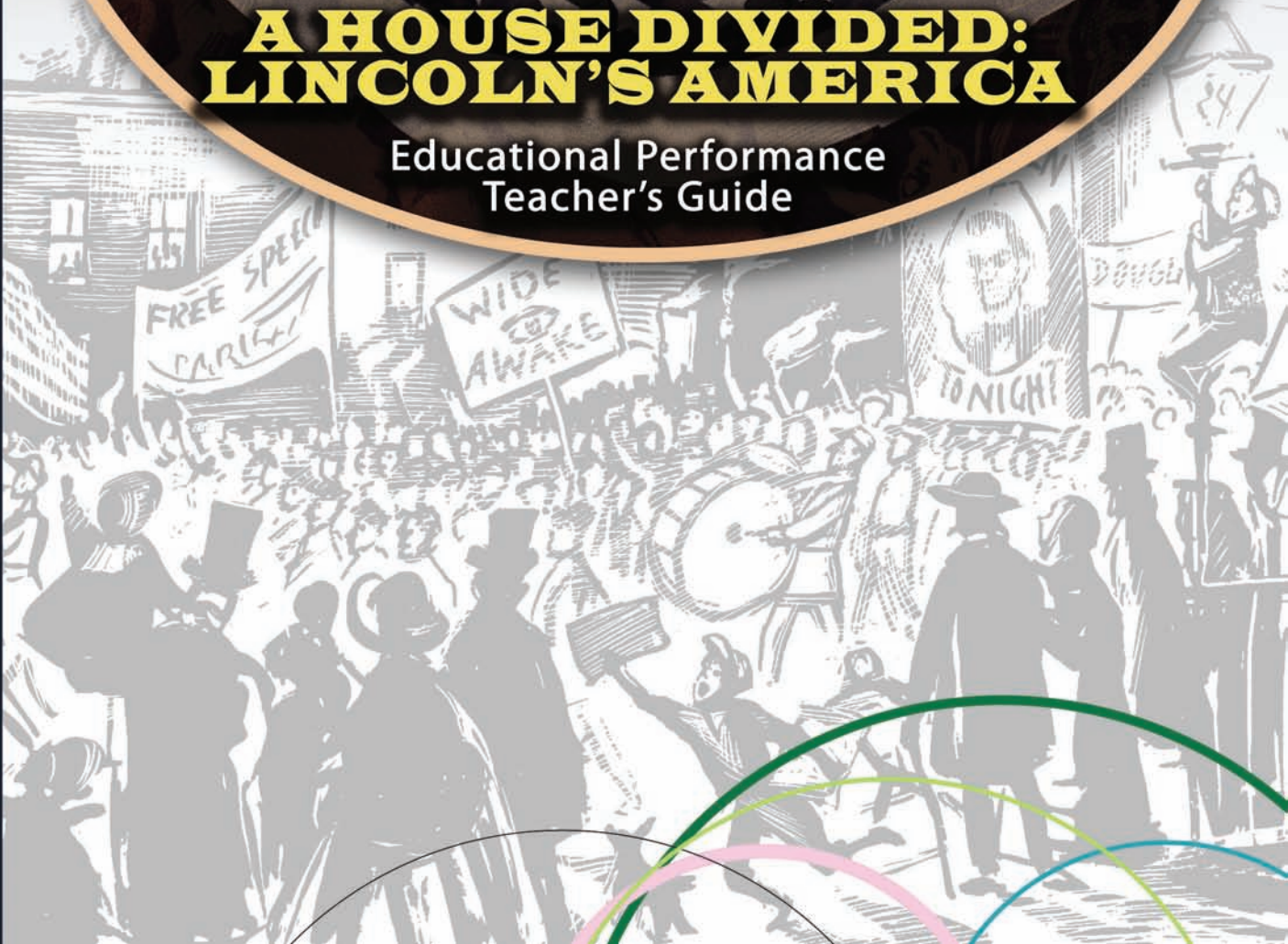


**THE
RIVALRY**

BY NORMAN CORWIN

**A HOUSE DIVIDED:
LINCOLN'S AMERICA**

Educational Performance
Teacher's Guide



www.latw.org

alive & aloud TEACHER'S GUIDE

A HOUSE DIVIDED: LINCOLN'S AMERICA

Based on **THE RIVALRY** by Norman Corwin

Director, Shannon Cochran Executive Producer, Susan Albert Loewenberg

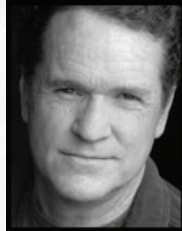
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TEACHER'S GUIDE by Michael Aspinwall with contributions from Vicki Pearlson and Elizabeth Bennett

Starring: (in alphabetical order)



DIANE ADAIR
Various Characters



JOSH CLARK
Stephen A. Douglas



REBECCA MOZO
Adele Douglas



ROBERT PARSONS
Abraham Lincoln

About L.A. Theatre Works

L.A. Theatre Works (LATW), a non-profit organization founded in 1974, is the foremost radio theatre company in the nation. Our mission is to present, preserve and disseminate classic and contemporary plays, using innovative technologies to make high quality theatre widely accessible at little or no cost and promoting theatre as an educational tool and a vehicle to examine issues of national and global importance.

The multi-award winning company performs a successful live radio theatre series each season in Los Angeles, CA. An LATW performance is immediate and spontaneous, featuring world class actors recorded in state-of-the-art sound, complemented by intricate sound designs and on-stage effects. LATW transforms works by playwrights such as Arthur Miller, Eugene O'Neill, and Neil Simon into intimate, compelling and sound-rich audio plays. LATW works with leading film and television stars including Annette Bening, Paul Giamatti, Alfred Molina, and Hilary Swank.

Our weekly radio show airs on National Public Radio stations serving over 10 million annually and is aired internationally on the BBC, CBC and others. On the road, LATW has presented live radio theatre performances in over 200 cities nationwide as well as internationally, specializing in original docudramas about the American experience.

Our library of over 400 works is collected by over 9,000 libraries worldwide in both digital and conventional formats. To ensure further access, LATW annually distributes titles free of charge to more than 5,000 underserved U.S. public schools and libraries each year. Visit L.A. Theatre Works' website at www.latw.org for more information about us and our ALIVE & ALOUD program for middle and high schools.

We welcome your comments and inquiries regarding the ALIVE & ALOUD recordings and study guides. To reach us or to request a free catalogue of L.A. Theatre Works plays, docudramas and novels available on CD, contact:

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Introduction

A House Divided: Lincoln's America was designed as a special educational performance in concert with L.A. Theatre Works' National Tour of *The Rivalry* by Norman Corwin.

At the time the Lincoln-Douglas debates took place, Abraham Lincoln was an ambitious, passionate and virtually unknown candidate in the Republican Party. Featuring select scenes from *The Rivalry* mixed with additional performances of America's most important governing documents, *A House Divided* is a unique opportunity for students to participate in one of history's most infamous political debates, meeting Lincoln in the early stages of his political career, well before he matured into the measured, stoic 16th President of our nation, and to gain insight into Lincoln's guiding principles. The performance aligns with 8th and 11th grade history standards.

Another fascinating element of this presentation is its genre. Different from a traditional play, *A House Divided: America's Lincoln* takes many of its elements from LATW's docu-drama *The Rivalry*, which brings an actual historic event to life on stage. From a teaching perspective, the docudrama allows students to not only appreciate the live performance, but also to witness a moment in history.

Play Notes

LOOKING BACK AT A HANDSHAKE ACROSS THE AISLE

Friendship? Wasn't the political rivalry of "Honest Abe" and "The Little Giant" one of the best-documented in American history? Lincoln and Douglas famously faced each other in seven debates during the 1858 senatorial race in Illinois. Douglas – the incumbent Democratic senator – was a national figure. Lincoln had served one term in the U.S. House of Representatives. The three-hour long debates were well documented: numerous reporters took down the candidates' words in shorthand before converting the texts for publication in newspapers across the country. The candidates were also well remembered by the crowds of 15,000 to 20,000 who cheered, booed, and heckled at each event. Lincoln, the underdog at the start of the debates, emerged with a very different public image by the time the candidates finished up.

The Lincoln-Douglas debates set a standard of excellence in American political discourse that has never been equaled. The contest helped Lincoln to win the popular vote, but it was Douglas who was elected by the state legislature to continue as an Illinois senator. The debates had longer-lasting consequences. Douglas' remarks on popular sovereignty later caused the Democratic Party to split along regional lines – the first steps towards creating the Confederacy. The debates spotlighted Abraham Lincoln's shrewd thinking and brought him to national prominence, setting the stage for the 1860 presidential race and Lincoln's eventual election.

Perhaps what remains most interesting about the Lincoln-Douglas debates is what came after. Lincoln and Douglas put principle above personal feeling and worked for the stability of a country they both loved. They formed an alliance to preserve the Union. In a 19th century version of "the handshake across the aisle," Douglas held Lincoln's hat at his Inauguration and escorted Mrs. Lincoln to the First Inaugural Ball. Shortly after, Douglas worked hard to confirm for Lincoln the loyalty that Illinois citizens held to the Union.

More than 150 years later, the power and meaning of their words can be experienced onstage in Norman Corwin's play *The Rivalry*. It draws on the words and message of this political rivalry turned friendship. In an essay entitled "The Tangled Weave," Corwin expressed his conviction that the inclusion of the play's Epilogue – depicting the outcome of the debates – was necessary because without it, the full story of Lincoln and Douglas would not be told.

The structure of political discourse might sound like dull theatrics but not when drawn directly from the words of these two candidates. The words of Lincoln -- who was well known for telling a droll yarn to illustrate a point -- are full of playful banter. Douglas often comes off as a passionate showman as well as statesman and patriot. *The Rivalry* brings these men to the stage not just to illuminate fundamental issues about freedom, government, and equality. Corwin brings together their shared humanity and willingness to put principles above any personal issues there may have been between them.

~ Elizabeth Bennett, Dramaturge

Author Notes

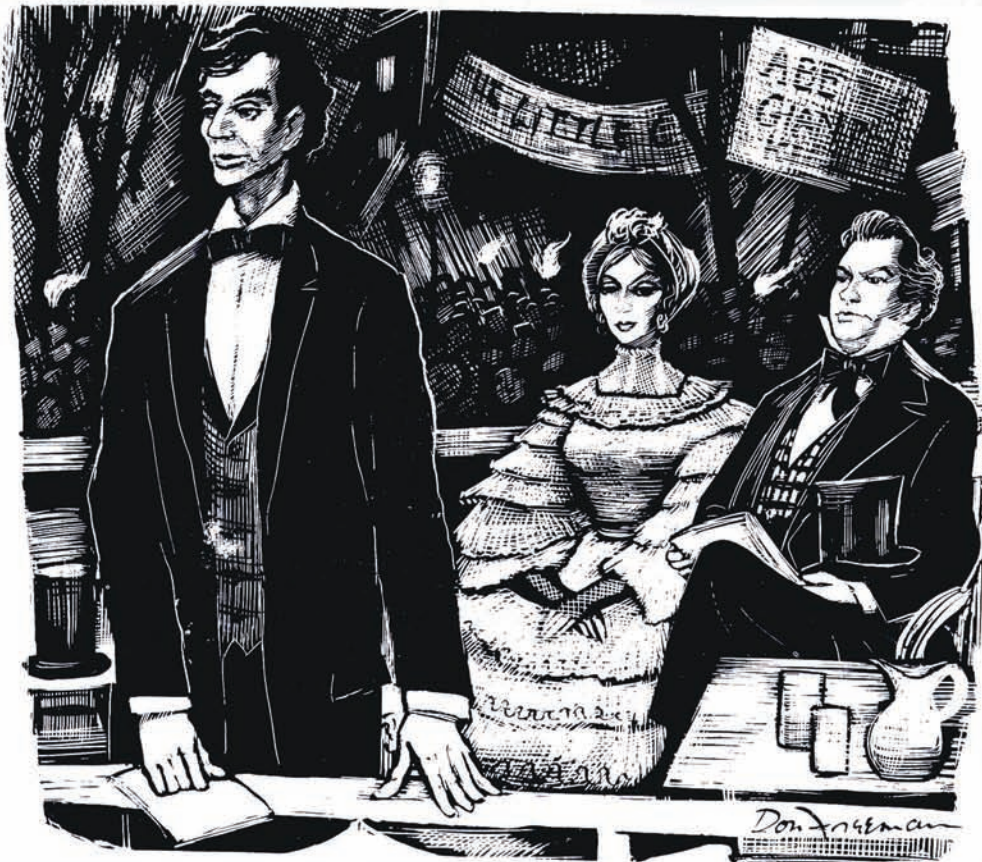
THE TANGLED WEAVE by Norman Corwin

(Excerpted from the original 1958 THE RIVALRY program notes.)

Before I started work on *The Rivalry*, I thought I knew a fair amount about Lincoln, and was only vaguely aware of my ignorance about Douglas. All I knew was that he was a short, dynamic man, who tangled with Lincoln in two vital contests. The rest was over-simplification and ignorance. I had no idea of Douglas' rank in his own time - a rank not nearly indicated by his office; I tended to classify him among various enemies of progress, simply because he was an enemy of Lincoln.

I was not prepared for the stature of the man, which becomes apparent not so much through the debates, as through the events in his life which preceded and followed the Senatorial campaign of 1858. Before the debates, Douglas had completely overshadowed his adversary. Lincoln was strictly local stuff; Douglas was the most conspicuous figure in national politics; his prestige was beyond the reach even of the then President of the United States, the uninspired James Buchanan; the home that Adele made for Stephen far outranked the White House as the social cynosure of Washington.

But the debates are Lincoln's triumph, after all; and these comments are not meant to throw the weight of consideration to Douglas. They are simply intended to index the degree to which history has reversed the field. The Lincoln of 1858 was the rookie, the relative unknown.

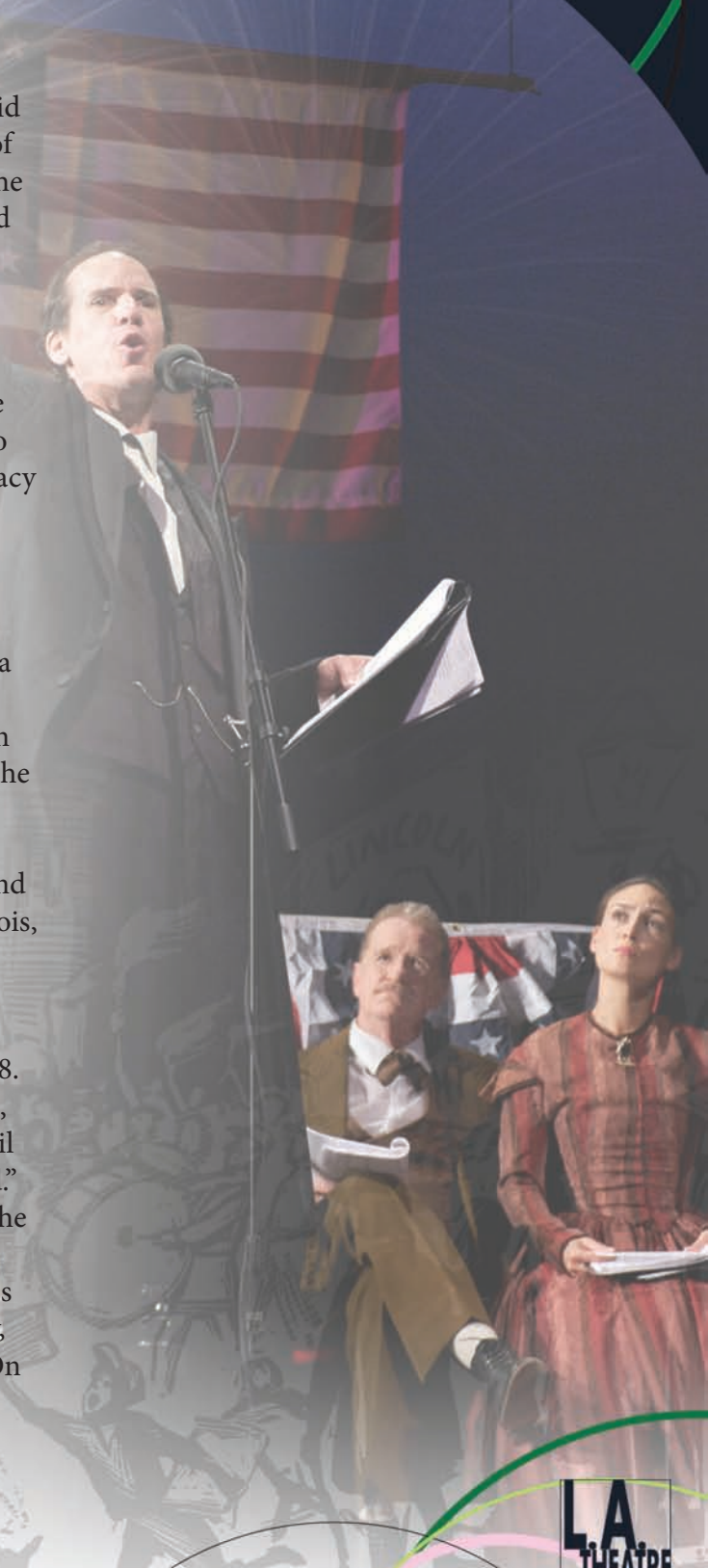


Character Glossary

ADELE DOUGLAS (1836-1899) was the daughter of James Madison Cutts, and great-niece of former president James Madison. She was an acclaimed beauty of Washington, D.C. Adele married Stephen Douglas, 23 years her senior, at the age of 20 years old. She was Douglas's second wife. Many people said that she cured Douglas's melancholy, brought on by the death of his first wife. The two shared a profoundly close relationship. She helped raise Douglas's two sons from his first marriage, and had them baptized into the Catholic Church. The Douglases never bore a surviving child.

STEPHEN A. DOUGLAS (1813-1861) was nicknamed the "Little Giant" for his short stature and giant political nature. He was the leader of the Democratic party and was elected twice to Congress. Douglas was a deep supporter of American democracy and the rule of the American people, believing that Popular Sovereignty should settle important political issues. Douglas was an absolute powerhouse in the Senate of the 1850s. He was a principal architect of the Great Compromise of 1850. In 1854 he reopened the issue of slavery with the Kansas-Nebraska Act, allowing the will of the people in the new territories to decide whether or not to hold slaves. Douglas was the Northern Democratic Party nominee for President in 1860, a race which he lost to his "Great Debate" opponent.

ABRAHAM LINCOLN (1809-1865) was a voracious reader and self-educated man. Born into a poor family in Springfield, Illinois, Lincoln went on to become a country lawyer, an Illinois state legislator, and a member of the U.S. House of Representatives for one term. He married Mary Todd in 1842, with whom he had four children, only one of whom survived past the age of 18. Lincoln was elected 16th President of the United States in 1860, just prior to the secession of the South and the onset of the Civil War in 1861. In his term, he sought to reunify a "house divided." He issued the Emancipation Proclamation in 1863, promoted the passage of the Thirteenth Amendment to the U.S. Constitution (which abolished slavery) and delivered the Gettysburg Address in 1863, promoting American nationalism, equal rights, liberty, and democracy. He was re-elected for a second term in 1864. On April 14, 1865, just six days after the surrender of Confederate General Robert E. Lee, Lincoln was shot and killed by John Wilkes Booth at Ford's Theatre in Washington, D.C.



Chronology & Glossary

1820: When Missouri sought to be admitted to the United States, the question of whether it would be admitted as a “free” state or a “slave” state set off a huge controversy resulting in “The Missouri Compromise.” Legislators were faced with the challenging of maintaining a balance in the number of free and slave states. Statesman Henry Clay worked out the “compromise:” Maine separated from the state of Massachusetts and was admitted as a free state, Missouri was admitted as a slave state, the all territories acquired during the Louisiana Purchase would be closed off to slavery.

1828: Democratic Party founded by factions of the former Democratic-Republican Party. Martin Van Buren (later a U.S. president) built the party in large part to support the campaign of Andrew Jackson, who became the 7th U.S. President. The Democrats advocated westward expansion and many of its members were farmers who upheld the philosophy of Manifest Destiny. The party advocated greater equality for all men – as long as they are white. Under Andrew Jackson’s leadership, party members opposed the formation of a national bank. By the time Stephen A. Douglas became a Democratic senator from Illinois, the Democratic identity was shifting – largely under Douglas’ leadership and with the addition of dynamic writers such as Herman Melville and Nathaniel Hawthorne. The new breed of Democrats abandoned the emphasis on an agrarian American economy and instead advocated commerce, technology, and internationalism. Most Democrats were pro-slavery.

1854: The Kansas-Nebraska Act overrode the Missouri Compromise. Slavery spread into the territories of the Louisiana Purchase as states were allowed to determine their status by “popular sovereignty.” This policy enabled settlers in the new territories to determine the status of free state or slave state. The unfortunate result was violence committed by those on both sides of the slavery argument, as well as a scramble to settle the territories. This Act was pushed through Congress by Stephen A. Douglas in his role as Chairman of the Senate Committee on Territories.

1854: The Republican Party founded by a coalition of people opposed to slavery, in reaction to the Kansas-Nebraska Act. Its first members came primarily from the Northeast and Midwest and were businessmen, wealthy farmers, factory and industrial workers and African Americans. The first Republican president in 1860 (Abraham Lincoln) began a reign of Republican presidential dominance that lasted until the Great Depression and included leaders such as Theodore Roosevelt and General Ulysses S. Grant.

March 1857: The United States Supreme Court pronounces the highly controversial Dred Scott decision. In it, the Court determined that people of African ancestry – slaves as well as those who were now free or born free -- were not protected by the Constitution and could never become American citizens. The case began in 1847, when a Virginia-born slave named Dred Scott sued for his freedom. Scott believed that his extended stays in the free states of Illinois and Wisconsin gave him the legal claim to buy his freedom from the widow of his master. His case was tried in multiple courts in Missouri – and with varying outcomes -- before being heard by the Supreme Court. The Court ruled that since slaves are considered

private property, they could not be taken away from their owners without a due process. Because Scott was black, he was not a U.S. citizen and did not have the right to sue. The Court also declared the Missouri Compromise unconstitutional. Scott and his wife were later set free by a former master's sons.

June 16, 1858: Upon accepting the nomination by the Illinois Republican Party as its candidate for state senate, Abraham Lincoln delivers his famous "House Divided" speech. He speaks of the growing schism in the United States, brought on by differing opinions on slavery. He felt that the federal government would not endure the strain of states' self-determined status as free or slave-holding states; eventually, the states in the union would have to choose one status. The speech referred to the dangers posed by this position. It has become one of Lincoln's best known speeches.

The Lincoln and Douglas Debates

August-October, 1858: The Lincoln-Douglas Debates take place across the state of Illinois. Douglas, the Democratic senator from Illinois, was challenged to the series of joint public appearances by Lincoln, who was returning to public politics after losing re-election to the U.S. House of Representatives in 1849. Lincoln had been following Douglas around the state and making comments from the audience.

This series of debates would be the first debates with national significance. Lincoln and Douglas presented physically contrasting views: Douglas – short and blustery – as “the Little Giant – and Lincoln as a tall, thin railsplitter. They also presented sharply contrasting views on many issues, but most of all on the main issue in all seven debates: slavery. Douglas saw blacks as inferior to whites and he as strongly opposed to the idea of blacks being recognized fully as American citizens. He argued that slavery was a dying institution that couldn't thrive in inhospitable climates and soils. He felt it should be treated as a local problem. Lincoln saw slavery as a thriving institution that threatened to expand into the country's new territories. He feared that all laborers – black and white --- would become slaves. Lincoln also argued for the rights of black Americans to life, liberty, and the products of their hard labor.

August 21: Ottawa (*Lincoln loses*)

August 27: Freeport (*Lincoln challenges Douglas to reconcile popular sovereignty with the Dred Scott decision*)

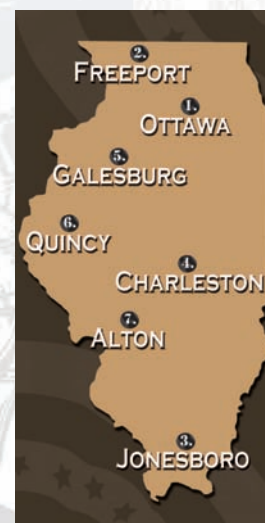
September 15: Jonesboro

September 18: Charleston

October 7: Galesburg

October 13: Quincy (*Lincoln declares slavery "a moral wrong"*)

October 15: Alton



November 2, 1858: Lincoln wins the popular vote but state legislators choose Douglas to continue on as state senator.

May 18, 1860: Lincoln nominated to be the Republican candidate for president.

November 6, 1860: Lincoln wins election as the first Republican president of the United States. Douglas is among the 3 candidates he beats.

March 1861: Lincoln inaugurated. Seven states – led by South Carolina -- have seceded from the Union and the new president's inaugural address attempts reconciliation.

April 12, 1861: The Civil War “officially” begins when South Carolinians fire on Fort Sumter in the Charleston harbor, attacking federal authority. Four more states join the Confederacy.

June 3, 1861: Douglas dies of typhoid fever.

January 1862: Lincoln issues a war order, authorizing the Union to take aggressive action against the Confederacy.

November 8, 1864: Lincoln wins re-election.

January 31, 1865: Congress passes the 13th Amendment to the Constitution, which will officially abolish slavery. It states: “Neither slavery nor involuntary servitude, except as a punishment for crime whereof the party shall have been duly convicted, shall exist within the United States, or any place subject to their jurisdiction.”

April 15, 1865: Lincoln assassinated.

April 18, 1865: The Civil War ends when the Confederate Army surrenders. A total of 617,000 Americans died during the war.

December 6, 1865: The 13th Amendment is ratified by the states and declared officially adopted on December 18. Four million African Americans are now free.

Glossary

Major Stuart: a.k.a. James Ewell Brown “Jeb” Stuart (February 6, 1833 – May 12, 1864) was a U.S. Army officer from Virginia and a Confederate States Army general during the American Civil War. Stuart was a cavalry commander known for his mastery of reconnaissance and the use of cavalry in support of offensive operations. While he cultivated a cavalier image (red-lined gray cape, yellow sash, hat cocked to the side with a ostrich plume, red flower in his lapel, often sporting cologne), his serious work made him the trusted eyes and ears of Robert E. Lee’s army and inspired Southern morale.

Know-Nothing Party: The Know-Nothing movement was a nativist American political movement of the 1840s and 1850s. It was empowered by popular fears that the country was being overwhelmed by German and Irish Catholic immigrants, who were often regarded as hostile to Anglo-Saxon Protestant values and controlled by the Pope in Rome. The origin of the “Know-Nothing” term was in the semi-secret organization of the party. When a member was asked about its activities, he was supposed to reply, “I know nothing.”

Dick Merrick: a.k.a. Richard Thomas Merrick (January 28, 1828–June 23, 1885) was a lawyer and Democratic political figure. Born in Charles County, Maryland, Merrick was the son of William D. Merrick, a member of the Maryland legislature and the United States Senate. He later moved to Chicago and represented Illinois at the 1860 Democratic National Convention as a delegate for Stephen Douglas. He defended John Surratt, Jr. against allegations that he was involved in Abraham Lincoln’s assassination.

Mexican War: a.k.a. Mexican-American War, was an armed conflict between the United States and Mexico from 1846 to 1848 in the wake of the 1845 U.S. annexation of Texas, which Mexico considered part of its territory despite the 1836 Texas Revolution. An American army captured Mexico City, and forced Mexico to agree to the cession of its northern territories to the U.S. However, the war was highly controversial in the U.S., with the Whig Party and anti-slavery elements strongly opposed. Heavy American casualties and high monetary cost were also criticized. The major consequence of the war was the forced Mexican Cession of the territories of Alta California and New Mexico to the U.S. in exchange for \$18 million. In addition, the United States forgave debt owed by the Mexican government to U.S.

President Buchanan: a.k.a. James Buchanan, Jr. (April 23, 1791 – June 1, 1868), was the 15th President of the United States (1857–1861). He represented Pennsylvania in the U.S. House of Representatives and later the Senate, and served as Minister to Russia under President Andrew Jackson. He also was Secretary of State under President James K. Polk. Buchanan was viewed by many as a compromise between the two sides of the slavery question. His election victory took place in a three-man race with John C. Frémont and Millard Fillmore. As President, he was often called a “doughface”, a Northerner with Southern sympathies. He battled with Stephen A. Douglas for the control of the Democratic Party. Buchanan’s efforts to maintain peace between the North and the South alienated both sides, and the Southern states declared their secession in the prologue to the American Civil War. Buchanan’s view of record was that secession was illegal, but that going to war to stop it was also illegal.

Abolitionists: In eleven States constituting the American South, slavery was a social and powerful economic institution, integral to the agricultural economy. By the 1860 United States Census, the slave population in the United States had grown to four million. American abolitionism labored under the handicap that it was accused of threatening the harmony of North and South in the Union. The abolitionist movement in the North was led by social reformers such as William Lloyd Garrison, founder of the American Anti-Slavery Society; writers such as John Greenleaf Whittier and Harriet Beecher Stowe; former slaves such as Frederick Douglass; and free blacks such as brothers Charles Henry Langston and John Mercer Langston, who helped found the Ohio Anti-Slavery Society. The 1860 presidential victory of Abraham Lincoln, who opposed the spread of slavery to the Western United States, marked a turning point in the movement. Convinced that their way of life was threatened, the Southern states seceded from the Union, which led to the American Civil War. In 1863, Lincoln issued the Emancipation Proclamation, which freed slaves held in the Confederate States; the 13th Amendment to the U.S. Constitution (1865) prohibited slavery throughout the country.

Tall Sucker/Little Giant: The nicknames for Lincoln and Douglas, respectively, that emerged during the Great Debates.

Barouche: A barouche was a fashionable type of horse-drawn carriage in the 19th century. Developed from the calash of the 18th century, it was a four wheeled, shallow vehicle with two double seats inside, arranged vis-à-vis, so that the sitters on the front seat faced those on the back seat. It had a soft collapsible half-hood folding like a bellows over the back seat and a high outside box seat in front for the driver.

Black Republican: During the civil war era, the term was a slur directed at white Republican politicians, especially to allies of Abraham Lincoln.

“From 1854, when the Republican Party was founded, Democrats labeled its adherents “black” Republicans to identify them as proponents of black equality. During the 1860 elections Southern Democrats used the term derisively to press their belief that Abraham Lincoln’s victory would incite slave rebellions in the South and lead to widespread miscegenation. The image the term conveyed became more hated in the South during Reconstruction as Radical Republicans forced legislation repugnant to Southerners and installed Northern Republicans or Unionists in the governments of the former Confederate states.”

Ideas for the Classroom



Equality

Objective:

Students will have a greater understanding of equality in our society, and whether or not it can be controlled by legislation. They will experience first hand the challenge of removing themselves from a situation and still participating actively in that situation.

Introduction:

Students will each be given a stack of five 3x5 note cards. The facilitator will then ask students to write five moments in their own personal history when they felt as though they were treated unfairly. They should summarize each moment in a single sentence written in first person point of view; and write one sentence per note card. Once students are finished, the facilitator should collect and shuffle all of the cards.

Activity:

Ask students to form a single horizontal line, so that the entire class is standing shoulder to shoulder. The facilitator will then read statements off of the cards. As each sentence is read, student should take one step backward if they have been a similar situation or encountered something like what is being described. For example, if a card said, "I was bullied, and the person who bullied me was not punished," each student who felt they had been bullied. Additionally, the facilitator may ask students to step forward who have bullied people without being punished.

As the cards are read, the gaps between the students will increase and decrease depending. At a natural stopping point, the facilitator should ask students to look around and ask them, "Is everyone created equal?"

Evaluation:

The students return to their desks, and facilitator asks them the following questions:

- o Was anyone surprised by where they ended up in that activity?
- o Was it ever difficult to move one way on any particular statement? Why?
- o Did any of the cards cause an emotional reaction for you?

Then the facilitator asks students to choose a statement they wrote or heard and write a rough draft of a rule or law that would prevent that situation from happening.

Time and Materials:

- LATW recording of *The Rivalry*
- Note Cards
- One class period

Oration and Emotion

Objective:

Students will understand how speech is influenced by emotion and delivery. Students will be able to apply what they have learned directly to the world around them.

Introduction:

Play for students selections of Lincoln's speeches in *The Rivalry*. Ask them the following questions:

- o Do you understand everything he is saying?
- o Does his speech affect you emotionally?
- o How does it make you feel?

Without disclosing the source or speaker, play an audio recording of Hitler speaking to a crowd. Repeat the same questions.

Then disclose the source of the second recording. Discuss with students what happens as a result of effective public speaking.

Activity:

For this activity, students will work in pairs. Each pair of students will pick a topic. Their topics can be anything, but should be generally mundane or ordinary. Students should then download information on their topic from Wikipedia. For example, if a pair of students picked Spiderman as their topic, they would print information about Spiderman from the Internet.

Students should organize their information so that each student reads an unedited section of the Wikipedia. One person will read their section in an effort to get their audience to like Spiderman and the other person will read their section in an effort to get listeners to dislike Spiderman. Since the material cannot be altered, students will have to rely on delivery and emphasis to achieve their goal of affecting the audience.

Evaluation:

Students will take turns reading their selections to their audience. After each pair has read, the audience will vote as to whether or not they like the subject based on the speeches they just heard. In other words, the class will decide who best used the delivery of the speech to be persuasive.

Time and Materials:

- LATW recording of *The Rivalry*
- A CD player
- Recording of Hilter's Speech(es)
- Internet / Printer Access
- One – Three class periods

Lincoln / Douglas Debate

Objective:

Students will look critically at their own value system and the value system on which their school functions. Students will also examine the difficulty involved in creating or changing policies.

Motivation:

Generate a discussion with the whole class about the state of the school.

- o What things about the way the school is run are effective?
- o What things about the way the school is run would you change? Why?
- o How do you think this school functions when compared to other schools?

Directions:

As a class, students will select a school rule. The students will be asked to independently research and create a case for why that rule should be changed. They should be encouraged to identify a civil rights issue that (depending on interpretation) is infringed upon.

Each student should develop a research-based argument as to why and how this rule should be changed. They should also develop a research-based argument as to why this rule should stay as it is.

Evaluation / Rubric:

The facilitator will host Lincoln/Douglas-style debates either in class or after school for a larger audience. Student should have to draw just before the debate starts whether they will argue for or against the rule change. The students should be prepared for:

- o Introductory speeches
- o Cross Examination
- o Rebuttal Speeches
- o Closing Speeches

Time and Materials:

- LATW recording of *The Rivalry*
- A CD player
- This assignment can take between two and seven days depending on whether or not the teacher chooses to teach the writing and publishing process with students.

Discussion Questions and Quick Write Ideas

The Lincoln Douglas debates helped to shape the way Americans of that era voted. How do we gain information about presidential candidates today?

If you were present at the debate, what do you imagine you would have thought? What questions would you have had?

What kinds of things shape our values today? Are you affected by the Declaration of Independence in your everyday decisions? Should you be? Why?

What reminders of our founding fathers do we have here at school? Why are they here?

Do you think a person can believe in equality and still mistreat people? Can you think of a real-life example?

Essay Prompts

In a well-developed, multi-paragraph essay, compare and contrast the cases made by both parties in *The Rivalry*.

The Declaration of Independence says 'All Men are Created Equal.' In a well-developed, multi-paragraph essay, support or refute that statement.

In a well-developed, multi-paragraph essay, discuss the role history played in the Lincoln Douglas debates.

Questions to Think About Before and After Seeing the Play

Here's a list of discussion questions to use with your class. They can be done as whole class discussion, small group discussion, journal entries, or writing assignments.

Before the Play

1. What were the major issues surrounding the elections of 1860? How did each of the presidential candidates feel about the issues?
2. Read the preamble of the Declaration of Independence. Our nation was founded on this document. Do you think that everyone who lives in the United States has the right to life, liberty and the pursuit of happiness today? Do you think that everyone who lived in the United States in 1859 had the right to life, liberty and the pursuit of happiness? Why or why not?
3. When you are old enough to vote, how will you decide for whom to vote? How do your parents decide for whom to vote? Do you always agree with them? Do they always agree with each other?
4. In the last presidential election, do you remember President Obama's campaign? How did you first hear about him? Did you hear the Will.i.am song about him? Did that influence your feelings?
5. If you were running for office, who would you want to endorse your campaign? What kind of message would you want to send? What kind of message would you hope his/her endorsement would send?
6. If you had to do an impression of a classmate, whom would you choose? How about a teacher? Would you do an impression of that teacher in front of him/her? How about your principal?
7. Would you do an impression of a current celebrity? What about a beloved historical figure?
8. Why or why not? Is there addition pressure involved?

After the Play

9. What did you learn about President Lincoln? Did you like the way in which he was portrayed? Why or why not?
10. What did you learn about Stephen Douglas? Did you like the way in which he was portrayed? Why or why not?
11. If you were approached and asked to play a historical figure in a play, would you do it? How much would you need to get paid? How much rehearsal would you need? Would it matter who you were being asked to play?
12. What about the Declaration of Independence stood out to you during the play? Compare and contrast the Declaration of Independence and the Emancipation Proclamation? What similarities do you see?
13. How has the way we choose our leaders changed since the 1850's? Do you think this is good or bad? Why?

Additional Resources

The following information is meant to supplement the play's life in the classroom.



alive & aloud TEACHER'S GUIDE

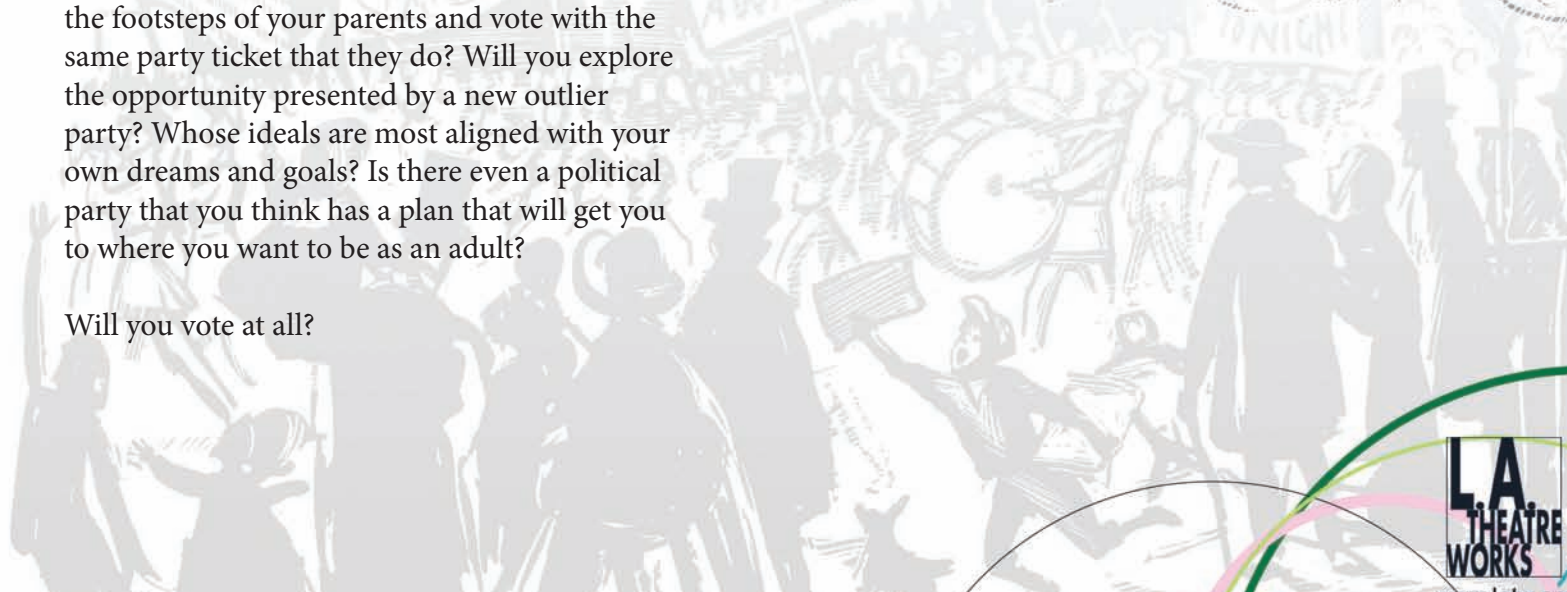
(Excerpted from the original 1958 THE RIVALRY program notes.)

“One Nation...”

The United States might be one nation originally seen as indivisible. But the Civil War proved that there are issues and opinions that can destroy the union. More recently, the fighting between the dominant political parties (Republican and Democrat) has led to the formation of factions that splintered off from the major parties. There are now almost as many national political parties as there are the number of states – and that doesn't include the number of regional parties formed for the ongoing interests of different geographic regions. Is the nation unified or divided?

It can all be confusing. And cause anxiety for the future. Which party has the brightest ideas; whose ideas will solve the economic problems the country is having? Which foreign policy approach will bring peace to troubled areas and bring home the troops stationed overseas? Young voters facing their first time voting in an election might find their heads spinning from the choices available. Will you follow in the footsteps of your parents and vote with the same party ticket that they do? Will you explore the opportunity presented by a new outlier party? Whose ideals are most aligned with your own dreams and goals? Is there even a political party that you think has a plan that will get you to where you want to be as an adult?

Will you vote at all?



History of Presidential Debates

In 1858, Illinois senatorial candidates Abraham Lincoln and Stephen A. Douglas took to the road for a series of seven debates. Lincoln was a little-known lawyer; Douglas (known as “the Little Giant”) had been an Illinois senator since 1847. Lincoln proposed the debates after having followed Douglas around the state, heckling him from the audience. His proposition was an unusual one for the time: although politicians made public appearances, candidates were expected to keep quiet when not on the floor of the House or Senate. Moreover, Douglas was a well-known politician being challenged by a man too unpopular to be re-elected to the U.S. House of Representatives.

The Lincoln-Douglas debates were structured to highlight the eloquence of each candidate, giving them a chance to speak their views clearly and seriously. Each candidate took turns in opening the debates, which were structured as a 60-minute long speech, after which the other candidate was allowed a 90-minute rebuttal, and then the first candidate was allowed 30 minutes to respond and close the event. In all of the debates, both candidates focused on the controversial issue of slavery and whether or not it should be allowed. Lincoln dug further than the legal issues, questioning the morality of the practice itself.

The debates were free, held outdoors, and drew crowds of up to 15,000 people. The candidates themselves traveled approximately 10,000 miles to reach the seven locations, but it was notable that spectators even traveled from neighboring states. Despite the huge number of people attending, the events were orderly. Newspaper coverage was intense: newspapers printed in full transcripts of the debates, though the texts were sometimes cleaned up (or not) by editors favoring a particular candidate. These were the first debates of national significance. They have been memorialized as “the most famous war of words in history.”

What a contrast those events were to our current-day style of political debates! Lincoln and Douglas had 60-30 minutes to articulate their thoughts; presidential debates now allow a candidate two minutes to answer a question and one minute for the opponent’s rebuttal. Moderators – who have included Bill Moyers and Barbara Walters – supervise, referee, and guide the event. How did we get from the Lincoln-Douglas senatorial road show of 1858 to the 57 million television viewers who tuned in for the first McCain-Obama presidential debate that took place 150 years later?

It might surprise you to hear that regularly-scheduled presidential debates are a relatively new addition to the campaign process. In 1960, Democratic candidate Senator John F. Kennedy and Republican Vice President Richard M. Nixon faced each other and 60 million television viewers in a debate that changed how the American public viewed the campaign process. The four debates were the first ever shown on television. The good looks, youth, and confident polish of Senator Kennedy contrasted with the sickly appearance of the vice president, who had just undergone a hospital stay. Although radio listeners felt differently, polls showed that television viewers felt Kennedy won the first debate – and he moved from second place in the polls to having a lead over Nixon.

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The campaign of 1976 featured three televised presidential debates between President Gerald Ford and his Democratic rival, Jimmy Carter and one vice presidential debate between Senators Walter Mondale and Bob Dole. This campaign season marked the first time that debates became a fully established expectation for candidates. Since 1976, the public debates on domestic and foreign policies have become events integrated into the campaign schedule -- and the voting habits of viewers. No longer offering direct contact with the candidates, the debates nonetheless reach wide audiences around the world through a variety of media including television, newspapers, and the Internet. The wide distribution of words and image has changed how candidates present themselves. Candidates seem to have learned a few lessons from John Kennedy's charm and speechwriters preparing the candidates recognize the ice-breaking appeal of a good joke.

Although the next presidential election isn't being held until 2012, Republican candidates have recently begun holding inter-party debates. A wide field of candidates will be arguing with each other until the presidential primaries are held in the summer of next year. No one knows which candidates will be facing each other at podiums by the time the presidential candidates are chosen for what will be a very heated race. But whoever they are, they will owe a great deal to the Lincoln-Douglas debates.



Memorable Quotes from Debates on the Campaign Trail

“There is no Soviet domination of Eastern Europe, and there never will be under a Ford administration.” (President Gerald Ford, October 6, 1976)

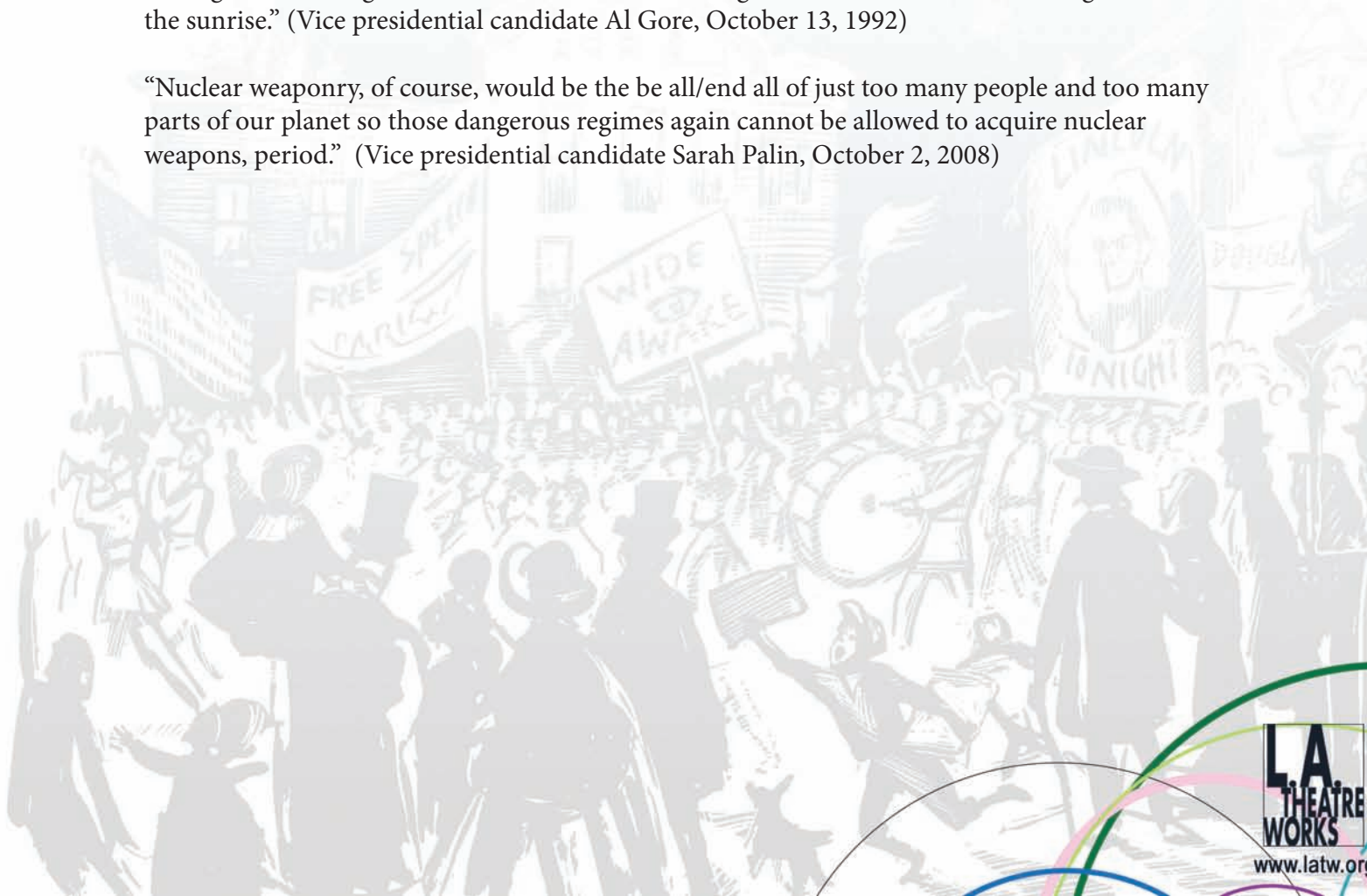
“I want you to know also I will not make age an issue of this campaign. I am not going to exploit for political purposes my opponent’s youth and inexperience.” (President Ronald Reagan about his opponent Vice President Walter Mondale, October 7, 1984. Reagan was 73 at the time he made this joke.)

“I knew Jack Kennedy; Jack Kennedy was a friend of mine. Senator, you’re no Jack Kennedy.” (Vice presidential candidate Lloyd Bentsen, responding to Dan Quayle’s claim to have as much experience as John F. Kennedy when he ran for president; October 5, 1988)

“Who am I? Why am I here? I’m not a politician.” (Vice presidential candidate Admiral William Stockdale, October 13, 1992)

“George Bush taking credit for the Berlin Wall coming down is like the rooster taking credit for the sunrise.” (Vice presidential candidate Al Gore, October 13, 1992)

“Nuclear weaponry, of course, would be the be all/end all of just too many people and too many parts of our planet so those dangerous regimes again cannot be allowed to acquire nuclear weapons, period.” (Vice presidential candidate Sarah Palin, October 2, 2008)



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