

BEMENT, ILL.

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ILLINOIS TOWNS

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Illinois

Illinois Towns

Bement

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LINCOLN-DOUGLAS MEMORIAL



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Bement, Illinois



Lincoln-Douglas Memorial

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William Cullen Bryant, and pioneer settlers of Illinois, Mr. Sprague gives herewith a brief history of the memorial, part of which was given before the "Art Extension Caravan" Monday.—Editor Bement Register.

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We trust your visit, though brief, will be enjoyed and that you may carry away some pleasant memories.

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"A party asked recently as the old house was being returned to its original position: "Why was the conference held in the old house? Why didn't they go to the hotel?" Bement did have a modest hotel "The Sherman House," built in 1856, but the reason was: Our Grandfather Bryant, as a member of the Illinois legislature from Schuyler county in the early days, took no small part in sending Stephen A. Douglas to the United

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"When Lincoln returned to Bement he went to the place agreed on, entering the little parlor in the Bryant home where Senator Douglas awaited him, going over in detail for some two hours, regarding the seven joint debates which took place at Ottawa, Freeport, Jonesboro, Charleston, Galesburg, Quincy and Alton.

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"It is a special privilege and pleasure to have with us today Mrs. S. B. Hawks, "Aunt Kate," an old friend of our family, who is the only one living in Bement today that was here when the meeting took place. Mrs. Hawks came in 1857.

"Samuel McDowell of Los Angeles, Calif., as a lad, who at the request of our grandfather carried messages for Mr. Lincoln and Senator Douglas to the telegraph office which was being kept open that night, was recently laid to rest in our cemetery.

"At this time I want to thank those members of the Bement Woman's Club who so graciously assisted in your entertainment, though the program was somewhat marred by the rain.

"Trusting you may come our way at some future time and will pardon me if seemingly too many personal references in this story.

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Dedicated July 29, 1925

The foregoing is an historical sketch of this memorial which was fittingly dedicated on July 29, 1925, with exercises in the city park before an interested and patriotic audience, and the following are some paragraphs relating to the dedicatory services:

Atty. Geo. M. Thompson of Miami, Fla., but formerly of Bement, acted as chairman. The program opened with prayer by Rev. C. J. Adams, followed by a quartet composed of Roy Jones, Harry Hays, T. O. Tiffin and W. R. Camp, with Mrs. Camp at the piano.

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"Lincoln-Douglas" was the subject of the formal address of the dedication by Henry R. Rathbone of Chicago, representative in congress at large for Illinois. Mr. Rathbone was eminently fitted by both inheritance and talents for the task set for him that day, his father and mother being so closely associated with the tragedy of President Lincoln's death.

He graphically portrayed and contrasted the two leading men of Illinois of that day, Lincoln and Douglas. He read Lincoln's letter of formal acceptance of the terms of the debate, in his own handwriting. He briefly reviewed the history of the debates and their far reaching consequences.

Mayor Sprague then, in the following brief address passed the memorial on to the community to which it belongs:

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may have, with us, a part in paying honor to the memory of these two outstanding Americans, Abraham Lincoln and Stephen A. Douglas.

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"In behalf of my absent brother myself and our families I entrust you humble cottage, the early home of our grandparents, to you, the citizens of this city and community, and especially to those of you who are the descendants of those early friends and neighbors of our ancestors when Bement was in its infancy, to hold as a sacred legacy and trust, a sort of beacon light to impress on coming generations the lives and influence of these two pre-eminent statesmen.

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H. W. Fay, Esq., custodian of the Lincoln Tomb, was a distinguished guest.

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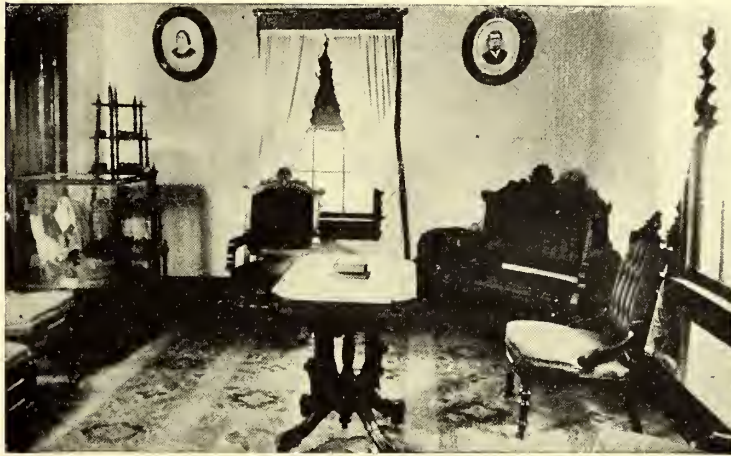
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BRYANT HOUSE, BEMENT, ILLINOIS
Exterior

Photograph by the Author



BRYANT HOUSE, BEMENT, ILLINOIS
The Room in which Mr. Douglas and Mr. Lincoln formally agreed to meet in Joint Debate

[Handwritten scribbles]

41,

THE BRYAN HOUSE, BEMENT, ILL. The Republican State Convention met at Springfield, June 16, 1858 and nominated Lincoln for United States Senator. Lincoln delivered his "House Divided" speech in the stately Hall of Representatives and the fight with Douglas was begun. Beveridge, vol2.p.633 gives the story of the meeting of Lincoln and Douglas on the road near Monticello, where they agreed to meet at the house of F.E. Bryant in ^BBement to ~~arrangange~~ arrange the details of the debates, which had been the subject of an interchange of letters.



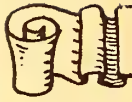
42,

PARLOR OF THE BRYANT HOUSE, BEMENT, ILL. Here Douglas is said to have written the letter in which the times and places of the Debates were designated as follows:

Copy NIL 157

Copy from book, dark - YOLJ!





THE MILWAUKEE JOURNAL



THE FORMER residence of F. E. Bryant at Bement, Ill., in the southwest room of which Abraham Lincoln and Stephen A. Douglas held their formal meeting to arrange their famous debate.



★
LINCOLN and Douglas met on this spot July 29, 1858 (one and one half miles west of Monticello, Ill.), and agreed to a joint debate. They arranged here for the formal meeting held in the house pictured at the upper left.



Courier-Journal Jan. 31, 1961



By SERGEANT DALZELL

Lincoln visits Illinois log home

A BRAHAM LINCOLN had a private pilgrimage to make before leaving Illinois. From Springfield on January 30 he traveled east by rail to Charleston, Coles County, Illinois. There he spent the night with friends. Then, 100 years ago today, he went into the country with horse and rig.

The President-elect drove to the door of a log farmhouse out on Goose Nest Prairie. It had been the last earthly home of his father, the migrant Thomas Lincoln. Living in it was Sally Bush Lincoln, the good stepmother, awaiting with open arms the boy who had grown so tall in the world.

People would always remember how Sally had encouraged, and defended, when necessary, the gangling young Abe in his efforts "to make something out of himself." Now 72 years old, she laughed and wept as they talked of old times.

Word of the nation's crisis had reached even Goose Nest Prairie. Some would say later that, on parting, Sally sobbed, "They'll kill you, Abe."

Lincoln also visited the grave of the unlettered backwoodsman who was his father.

After a last look at the log house, the man bound for the White House retraced his journey. In Charleston that night, an impromptu reception was staged. People gathered to shake the hand of this man who would always belong to them.

