

ESSENTIAL CIVIL WAR CURRICULUM

The Federalism of Stephen A. Douglas (1813-1861)

By **Martin H. Quitt**, University of Massachusetts Boston

Resources

If you can read only one book

Author	<i>Title</i> . City: Publisher, Year.
Quitt, Martin H.	<i>Stephen A. Douglas and Antebellum Democracy</i> . New York: Cambridge University Press, 2012.

Books and Articles

Author	<i>Title</i> . City: Publisher, Year. “Title,” in <i>Journal</i> ##, no. # (Date): #.
Ankrom, Reg	<i>Stephen A. Douglas: The Political Apprenticeship, 1833-1843</i> . Jefferson, NC: McFarland, 2015.
Bordewich, Fergus M.	<i>America's Great Debate: Henry Clay, Stephen A. Douglas, and the Compromise That Preserved the Union</i> . New York: Simon and Schuster, 2012.
Davis, Rodney O. & Douglas L. Wilson, eds.	Lincoln, Abraham, and Stephen A. Douglas. <i>The Lincoln-Douglas Debates</i> . Urbana, IL: Knox College Lincoln Studies Center and The University of Illinois Press, 2008.
Guelzo, Allen C.	<i>Lincoln and Douglas: The Debates that Defined America</i> . New York: Simon & Schuster, 2008.
Huston, James L.	<i>Stephen A. Douglas and the Dilemmas of Democratic Equality</i> . Guilford, CT: Rowman and Littlefield, 2006.
Johannsen, Robert W., ed.	<i>The Letters of Stephen A. Douglas</i> . Urbana:

	University of Illinois Press, 1961.
_____.	<i>Stephen A. Douglas</i> . New York: Oxford University Press, 1973.
McArthur, Debra L.	<i>The Kansas Nebraska Act and “Bleeding Kansas” In American History</i> . Berkeley Heights, NJ: Enslow Publishers, 2003.
Quitt, Martin H.	“In the Shadow of the Little Giant: Abraham Lincoln before the Great Debates,” <i>Journal of the Abraham Lincoln Association</i> , 36:1 (Winter 2015), 18-46. This will be available for free on line before the next issue is printed.
Waugh, John C.	<i>On the Brink of Civil War: The Compromise of 1850 and How it Changed the Course of American History</i> . Wilmington, DE: Scholarly Resources, 2003.

Organizations

Organization Name	Description, Contact information including address, email
The Stephen A. Douglas Association	The Stephen A. Douglas Association is devoted to the study and memory of Douglas. Their website is: http://stephenadouglasassociation.com/

Web Resources

Other Sources

Name	Description, Contact information including address, email
Stephen A. Douglas Tomb	The Stephen A. Douglas Tomb is located in Douglas Park 636 E. 35 th St. Chicago Il. 60616. When the Bronzeville Historical Society is open the park offers a feature-length film on Douglas. The Bronzeville Historical Society telephone number is 312 428 8033.
Stephen A. Douglas Papers 1764-1908	Douglas’ papers are collected at the University of Chicago Library Special

	Collections Research Center 1100 E. 57 th Street, Chicago, IL 60637 773 702 8705. For operating hours see http://www.lib.uchicago.edu/e/scrc/using/visiting/hours.html . The papers are only available for viewing at the Library and the collection is open for research. The Guide to the collection is found at: https://www.lib.uchicago.edu/e/scrc/findingaids/view.php?eadid=ICU.SPCL.DOUGLAS_SA
--	---

Scholars

Name	Email
Martin Quitt	martin.quitt@umb.edu

Google Keywords

Stephen A. Douglas's believed that the central government should exercise only expressly delegated powers under the Constitution and as a rule should defer to the majority judgment of local populations. In June 1833 Douglas travelled west to study law in Illinois where he was admitted to the bar in 1834 at the age of twenty. He became an organizer and officeholder of the fledging pro-Jackson Democratic Party in Illinois. His meteoric rise in the party saw him serving in the Illinois House of Representatives in 1838. He was elected to the US House of Representatives, serving from 1843 to 1847 when he was elected to the US Senate serving until his death on June 3, 1861. The catchphrase that Douglas came to use to encapsulate his philosophy was “popular sovereignty”; Douglas claimed to be indifferent to whether a territory adopted or rejected slavery, as long as the choice was registered honestly by the majority of inhabitants. Douglas and Henry Clay brokered the Compromise of 1850 to deal with the territories acquired in the Mexican-American War. In 1854 Douglas sponsored the Kansas Nebraska Act which applied his principle of popular sovereignty and triggered bloodletting in Kansas. Abraham Lincoln ran against Douglas in the 1858 Senate election and gained prominence in the Lincoln-Douglas debates, though Douglas retained his Senate seat. In 1860 Douglas won the Democratic Party nomination for President, but Southern Democrats left the convention, nominating their own candidate, and Lincoln won the election. A bout of rheumatic fever in his twenties had weakened Douglas’ heart and he died less than two months after the start of the Civil War at the age of forty-eight.
