

# NEWSLETTER

## Friends of Civil War Alcatraz

**November 2018**

**Steve Johnson, Editor**

**California and the Election of 1860** The deep divisions in our country today are reminiscent of strong divisions in 1860. Back then it was due to the issue of slavery. Prior to the presidential election in that year, there had been fistfights in Congress, bloody battles in Kansas, uproar over the publication of Stowe's *Uncle Tom's Cabin*, and talks of secession. Southerners were determined not only to keep slavery but to expand it into the West. The Democratic nominee for president was Stephen A. Douglas, who had introduced the Kansas-Nebraska Bill in Congress; that bill effectively allowed citizens of new states to introduce slavery in their constitution if they chose to do so. This caused outrage among Northerners, who saw this as an expansion of slavery into free-soil territory. It led directly to the formation of the Republican Party which was against any expansion of slavery. Among the Democrats, there was a split between the moderate Douglas democrats, the southern Democrats under former Vice-president John C. Breckinridge who favored a militant pro-slavery agenda, and the Unionist Party under John Bell, who were pro-slavery but also pro-Union. These divisions caused the Democratic votes to split three ways, and allowed Lincoln to win the electoral vote.

**Dates to Remember**

**Saturday, November 3, 2018**  
 Junior Ranger Day on Alcatraz  
 Civil War re-enactors and FOCWA members encouraged to help

**Tuesday, Nov. 20, 2018**  
 Peninsula CW Roundtable  
 Lecture, "Commemorating the end of WWI, 1918-2018" by Dana Lombardy, 11:30 a.m. at Harry's Hoffbrau, Redwood City

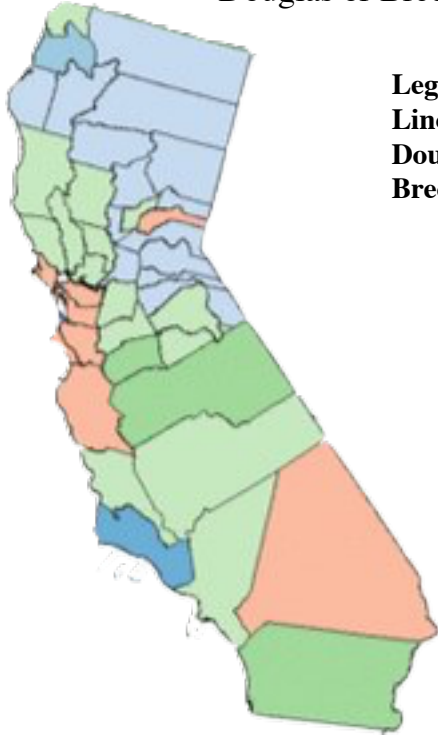
**Saturday, January 26, 2019**  
 Fort Point Living History Day (tentative)

electoral votes                      popular vote

Abraham Lincoln	Republican	180	1,866,452
John C. Breckinridge	Southern Democratic	72	847,953
Stephen A. Douglas	Democratic	12	1,380,202
John Bell	Constitutional Union	39	590,901

In California, the "Pico Bill" was introduced in the state legislature which would have split the state in two, around San Luis Obispo, with the southern state named "Colorado" and allowing slavery. This shows the preponderance of Democratic legislators in both the state assembly and state senate at the time, most having been born and raised in the South. The bill was introduced into Congress but went nowhere, due to the chaotic environment in Washington.

While the bill never passed, it illustrates the division in the state over slavery and the results of the 1860 election in California. The election by county shows that most counties voted for either Douglas or Breckinridge. But these counties had small populations.



**Legend**  
**Lincoln - orange**  
**Douglas - shades of blue**  
**Breckinridge - shades of green**

*fromcivilwartalk.com*

The counties with the greatest populations - mostly around the Bay Area - voted for Lincoln. These were the merchants, immigrants, mid-Westerners, abolitionists, and others who were absolutely against slavery one way or the other.

Lincoln won by a slim margin over Douglas: 38,733 to 37,999. As a result, Lincoln received California's 4 electoral votes.

The map above may have some discrepancies. According to the *Sacramento Daily Union*, (November 15, 1860), these counties voted for Lincoln: Alameda, Contra Costa, Del Norte, Marin, Nevada, San Bernardino, San Francisco, San Joaquin, San Mateo, Santa Clara, Solano, Sonoma, Tuolumne, Yolo.

It will be interesting to compare this years congressional elections in California to the 1860 presidential election. Will we see any patterns?

**Resources:**

<http://www.peninsulacivilwarroundtable.org>

[uselectionatlas.org](http://uselectionatlas.org)

UCR Center for bibliographic Research/California Digital Newspaper Collection

*The California Gold Rush and the Coming of the Civil War* by Leonard Richards

Wikipedia: United States Presidential Election 1860

**Note: There will be no newsletter in December**