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LOOKING AHEAD - THE JAMES GRAHAM HOUSE

The next meeting of the Sangamon County Historical Society will be held in the Carnegie Room at Lincoln Library on Tuesday, March 20, at 7:00 p.m. when we will hear Springfield attorney Bruce Beeman speak on the renovation of the James Graham home. The house at 413 S. Seventh St. was built in the Civil War era, and Springfield directories of the 1860's show the owner as Richard Young. It was sold in 1881 by a member of the Young family to Mrs. Ann Bourne, who in turn sold it in 1897 to James M. Graham. Mr. Graham was a teacher, attorney, state legislator and U.S. Congressman, and the grandfather and great-grandfather of attorneys Hugh Graham II and Hugh Graham III of this city. James Graham's only remaining daughter, Sister Agnes Clare, lives at Sacred Heart Convent. In November, 1989, a National Park Service ceremony celebrated the awarding of a plaque to be placed on the home in memory of James M. Graham, and establishing it on the National Register of Historic Places.

Mr. Beeman, whose law offices are next door at 415 S. Seventh, will speak on the renovation of this historic house. Although he was born in California, Mr. Beeman has lived in Illinois since he was a young boy and attended Southern Illinois University at Carbondale. There he met an art student from Springfield, Joan Scott, and after graduation they were married. They lived in Cook County while Bruce attended law school and Joan taught junior high school art. In 1975 Bruce passed the bar exam and they moved to Springfield. After serving as an Assistant State's Attorney and later as a Public Defender, Bruce entered private practice. The Beemans have two sons, Brian and Bruce. In 1989 Joan became the art director at Sacred Heart-Griffin High School. Both Bruce and Joan are actively interested in the historical and architectural heritage of Springfield. We are looking forward to Bruce's program on the renovation of one of our city's historic homes.

A LOOK BACK - THE U.S. COURT SYSTEM

On Feb. 20 SCHS members met at Lincoln Library to hear Judge Harlington Wood, Jr., speak on some of the history of the U.S. Courts and his experiences in the system. Woody, as he is known (especially to his friends in this, his home town) followed in the career footsteps of his father, Harlington Wood, Sr., who was a county judge here for 16 years. Woody's years as a law student at the University of Illinois, his service in the Armed

Forces in WW II, private practice with his father, and his experiences in a number of positions in the U.S. Justice Dept. have provided him with an unique background for his present position as judge on the Seventh Circuit U.S. Court of Appeals. His numerous travels abroad helped to further both his professional and personal education. For his love of travel, Woody credits his Lawrence School geography teacher, Opal Rippey, one of our SCHS members, who was present in the audience.

Judge Wood related the story of his appointment to his present position. As a lover of horses and a member of the Illinois 7th Cavalry, a reactivated Civil War company from this area, he was riding with his unit along a street in Athens on the way to a dedication ceremony for the Long Nine Museum in 1976. Seeing Senator Charles Percy walking to the ceremony, he dismounted and went to speak to Percy and introduce him to other members of the unit. After the day's activities were over and Woody was at home late in the evening, he received an unexpected telephone call from the Senator, from Chicago, telling him that Justice John Paul Stevens of Illinois had been called from the Seventh Circuit Court of Appeals to the Supreme Court - and asking Wood to consider replacing him on the 7th Circuit! Woody thinks that the earlier meeting that day near the Long Nine Museum while he was riding with the Cavalry prompted Percy to think of him. He says, "I believe that I owe my present position to Abe Lincoln and my horse!" Soon thereafter Wood's nomination (by President Gerald Ford) was sent to the Senate and a hearing date was set. He found he was to expect opposition by a man who was a stranger to him. A friend recognized the name as that of a fellow for whom Wood's predecessor, Judge Poos, had issued a warrant, but it had not been served. At the hearing he heard all the serious allegations put forth by this man - but they were intended for Judge Poos! Woody took much satisfaction in informing him that (1) he had the wrong man, (2) none of the allegations were true, and (3) he was glad to find him for the court as he had a warrant for his arrest - and the man was promptly served! Following this episode, Woody won appointment.

Judge Wood related some of the history of the U.S. Judicial system, the third branch of the government, established by the Constitution. The Constitution provided for the Supreme Court and "such inferior courts as the Congress may from time to time ordain and establish." The "inferior courts" include the Circuit Courts, one step below the Supreme Court, and District Courts, such as we have here in Springfield. However, Congress didn't provide judges for the Circuit Courts, and for about 100 years Supreme Court justices had to travel all over the country to sit with District judges every time the Circuit Court of Appeals met, each spring and fall. This was indeed a hardship in days when travel was by horseback, stagecoach and ferries. It was beneficial for the young country, however, as the justices, the most eminent lawyers in the U.S., traveled to all areas and in conducting their duties also were educating the people as to the laws necessary to maintain this new form of government, a democracy. John Jay was the first Chief Justice of the Supreme Court, appointed in 1789. Under Chief Justice John Marshall (appointed 1801) the U.S. judicial system really came into its own, when the judiciary began to have a real impact on government. With constitutional decisions and restrictions on the executive and legislative branches, the third branch, the judicial, became co-equal with the other two.

Illinois became a state in 1818 and our first federal district judge was Nathaniel Pope. When Springfield became the capital (1837) the federal judge's office was moved here. The court first met in the Christian church, then moved to the second floor of the Tinsley Building, which we know as the Lincoln-Herndon Law Office.

Eventually, in 1891, Congress created a new circuit court plan to relieve the Supreme Court. Even now a justice of the Supreme Court is responsible for circuit court judges, but administrative duties are handled from Washington. There are 13 circuits in the country. Judge Wood sits in the 7th District, which includes Illinois, Wisconsin and Indiana. Eleven judges serve full time, but there are no women or minorities