

Bruce's program at Lincoln Library was introduced by Glenda McNichols, a friend and neighbor of Bruce and Joan Beeman. The Beemans have done much research on the Graham family and on the house at 413 S. Seventh Street which the Beemans purchased in March, 1988. Bruce's law office is in a renovated house next door.

James Graham was born in Ireland in 1852, the son of Hugh and Sarah Graham. In 1868 the family came to Illinois. James studied at Valparaiso Normal School, after which he worked for a time as a mine supervisor, then became a teacher in Champaign County where he met Katherine Wallace. They were married in 1876. Seven children - four boys and three girls - were born to the Grahams. James Graham studied law under William A. Day, who became Auditor for the U.S. Treasury under President Grover Cleveland. When Day moved to Washington, Graham completed his studies with Federal District Judge Creighton of Springfield, and was admitted to the bar in 1885. He served in the Illinois General Assembly for one term, 1885-86, and from 1892-1896 was the States' Attorney for Sangamon County. He then went into private practice with the firm of Palmer, Shutt and Graham. (John Palmer had been the governor of Illinois from 1869 to 1873.) It was in 1897 that the Grahams purchased the house at 413 S. Seventh. In 1908 James was elected to the U.S. Congress and served three terms. Noteworthy in his career as a Congressman were his efforts to uplift the condition of native Americans through improved operation of the Bureau of Indian Affairs. In appreciation the Indians who benefitted from his efforts made him an Honorary Chief. Other causes for which Graham worked involved the investigation and correcting of federal land-leasing activities in Alaska, and the encouragement of conservation programs. His ideology was similar to that of Theodore Roosevelt in matters of conservation. Graham was active in the Springfield Civic Garden Club and was its president from 1929 to 1945. During those years Lincoln Memorial Garden was established. When James Graham died in 1945 the Garden Club planted a tree in his memory on the Courthouse (now Old State Capitol) Square. Graham was remembered for his high moral standards, and honor, respect, and the promotion of conservation and art meant more to him than monetary values. As an outstanding Catholic layman, Graham had been named a Knight of St. Gregory by Pope Pius XI, a unique honor.

Bruce followed his talk on James Graham with a slide program showing the step-by-step renovation of the Graham house which was owned by members of the Congressman's family until 1977. As far as can be determined, the house was built in 1862. While the house was structurally sound when the Beemans bought it, there had been some water damage, partly due to a broken chimney top and the need for some re-mortaring. Architect Bruce Ferry, who was active in the renovation, found much of the structure remarkably intact. The walls do not have merely a brick facade, but are actually three to four bricks thick. The feeling inside the house is one of space and light, even in the large attic. Steps in the renovation included the cleaning of the copper roof and of all walls and ceilings. A back porch was reconstructed, an outside furnace vent pipe, not part of the original house, was removed, and the broken chimney replaced. The wooden parts of the original windows have been reinforced with fiberglass and inside storm windows have been installed. When repairs were made and the water evaporated out of the old bricks they returned to their attractive reddish color. Under the overhanging eaves boxed by dentils the painting was re-done but kept in a lighter neutral shade to avoid garishness.

Introduced at the meeting was a special guest of the Society, Sister Agnes Clare, the only surviving daughter of James Graham. Sister Agnes, now in her nineties, lives at Sacred Heart Convent. The grandson and great-grandson of James Graham, Hugh Graham II and Hugh Graham III, are partners in the Springfield legal firm which bears their name.

Following the program at the Library our Society members and friends enjoyed a tour of the nearby Graham home where a delightful Victorian tea was served by the Co-chairpersons of the program committee, Bette Franke and Sally Robinson. The house, which was placed on the National Register of Historic Places in Nov., 1989, is now the home of Rosario, a boutique offering a quality selection of clothing and home furnishings while still maintaining the character of the historic building.

BOARD MEETING REPORT

The SCHS officers and Board of Directors met at Lincoln Library on Thursday, March 8, at 4:30 P.M., with 25 present. Minutes of the last previous meeting and the treasurer's report were read and accepted. Our total cash assets in all accounts are \$21,593.52. The application made by Fred Hoffmann to have our Pioneer Park property declared tax exempt this year has been approved by the County Board of Review. A letter from Ed Russo thanked the Society for its gift of the microfilm reader for the newly-remodeled Sangamon Valley Collection. The president has appointed a nominating committee with Dr. Floyd Barringer, chairman, and members Robert Larson, Georgia Northrup, Herman Hofferkamp and Margot Kramer, and past president Mary Ellen McElligott as advisor to the committee. The committee asked for a wide range of suggestions for officers from the Board and the general membership. Committee reports followed. Tours - two minor changes were made in the May 19 schedule and an additional site was added to the Bishop Hill tour (See Spring Tour news.) Membership - an increase in membership of both regular and Life Members was noted. Pioneer Park - the committee plans a clean-up day for April 7, with a rain date of April 14, and also is consulting with the Department of Conservation for a possible spring "burn-off" and additional wildflower plantings. The spring picnic is to be held at the park on April 29. (See picnic news.) Publicity - news items have been sent to local and nearby town papers concerning our programs. Historian - Dr. Barringer reported finding information about a murder by another member of the Harrison family, a brother of Peachy Harrison whose murder trial we heard about at our January meeting. Publications - the Sangamon Co. Genealogical Society wants to reprint the 1935 Helen VanCleave Blankmeyer history, "The Sangamon Country," which our Society was credited with reprinting in 1965, and as a courtesy asked our Society's permission, which was granted. Carol Hall has suggested the possibility of a local historical tour. Elizabeth Weir and Kim Efirid will help with this project. The editor of the HISTORICO asked for suggestions for items for future editions of the newsletter. A tape was played from a member proposing a display of pictures taken over 40 years ago by Judge Benjamin DeBoice. Our help in financing the project was asked. The Board voted to delay consideration until the project can be more fully organized. A suggestion was made by a Board member that we consider setting up a grant fund and definite guide lines for its use. Note was taken of the new status of the Vachel Lindsay Home as a state historic site. Word was received from Jacqueline Wright concerning a \$50 award available for high school seniors who are descendants of Civil War veterans. Our Society has been invited again to attend the Lincoln Death Day Association observance and luncheon on Sat., April 14. A representative (to be decided later) will lay a wreath at the ceremony at Lincoln's Tomb. (Ed. note: the Lincoln Death Day Association was established in the 1960's through the efforts of Mr. and Mrs. George Cashman (now deceased) who were then the custodians of Lincoln's Tomb, and among the founders of our Society.) It was announced that the Lincoln Colloquium will be held on Oct. 20 at Sangamon State University facilities. The confusing fee schedule will be eliminated, and one fee set for each registrant whether a member of a sponsoring organization or not. Upcoming programs and Lincoln Home activities were described. (See separate reports.) Regarding opinions on the possible opening of the north side of the Old Capitol Square, it was decided that individuals should express their preferences to their own aldermen. The meeting closed at 5:50 P.M. The next Board meeting will be