

member of our Board of Directors) will speak on "Keeping Illinois a Free State: the Work of Governor Coles and Morris Birkbeck." (Further details in the Nov. HISTORICO).

### A LOOK BACK - AN INSIDE VIEW OF THE STATE CAPITOL

On September 25 Sangamon County Historical Society members and guests met in Room 212 (the Senate Hearing Room) at the Illinois State Capitol to hear Mark Sorensen speak on the history of the present building and its predecessors used by state government since the establishment of Illinois as a state in 1818. Mr. Sorensen is the Assistant Director of the Illinois State Archives and is a member of the Illinois State Historical Society as well as several other historical organizations, holds a master's degree in history from Sangamon State University and has taught American History at Richland Community College in Decatur. With his slide-illustrated program he told the story of Illinois capitols since 1818 when the state's constitution was approved by Congress on August 26, the date on the state seal. (Illinois' "birthday" is celebrated on December 3 in observance of that December date in 1818 when President James Monroe signed the resolution making Illinois the 21st state.) The first capitol, a rented house in Kaskaskia, was succeeded by a new capitol in Vandalia in 1820. It burned in 1823, was replaced by a second building, and eventually a third (1836-37) which was barely used by the legislature before the move to Springfield, which had won the vote as the seat of state government. Construction of the new capitol on Springfield's town square began in 1837 but was not fully completed until 1853. It was outgrown by the 1860's and there were several efforts to move the capital to other cities -- Peoria, Chicago, Jacksonville, or Decatur. However, Springfield's offer of \$200,000 and the present site won in the legislature and construction began in March, 1868 under the supervision of the firm of Cochrane and Piquenard. Alfred H. Piquenard, who had come to America from France in 1848, moved to Springfield in 1870 and supervised the Capitol construction until his death in November 1876. The Capitol still was unfinished, although it was partially occupied in early 1877. Architect W. W. Boyington, who had designed the Chicago Water Tower, was appointed to oversee the construction, which he did until its completion in 1888. By that time several changes had been made in the design of the dome, the steps at the main entrance, and parts of the interior. When completed the building contained offices for all officials, the supreme court, the legislature, military leaders, and, in addition, housed the archives, state libraries and several museums! The great dome was 74 feet taller than that on the United States Capitol in Washington.

Following Mark's program on the history of the building he led us on a tour of several of the more important rooms, including the Senate and House chambers and their galleries. He also pointed out some notable examples of the many beautiful works of art - paintings, statuary, murals and stained glass. Much of the decoration in the building is made of "carton pierre," a unique type of decorative material which had been used in Europe in a number of famous structures. The name means "stone cardboard" and it is sometimes described as an improved form of papier-mache.

This short review of the evening's program cannot begin to cover all of the interesting details of our State Capitol's history and architecture. Our thanks go to Mr. Sorensen for a fine "inside look" at our magnificent capitol.

### A FINE FALL TOUR

SCHS members who went on the Fall Tour report that they had an especially fine day.

The arrangements by Tour Chairman Kim Efird and his committee were very good, the meals were good and the weather cooperated beautifully! Fred and Evelyn Adams reported on many of the details and brought back a number of interesting pamphlets and booklets they'd received - plus a generous sample of genuine Galesburg popcorn, ready to be put in the popper on one of these chilly autumn nights!

In Galesburg our travelers were greeted by a member of the Knox County Historical Society at the Carl Sandburg Home, a State Historic Site. A tour of the house and a film on Sandburg's life were enjoyed here. It was in this three-room cottage on East Third Street that the poet and author Carl Sandburg was born in January, 1878. The cottage, now maintained by the Illinois Historic Preservation Agency, is typical of the homes of the working-class families of that time, and is restored and furnished in the style of the late 19th century. Sandburg never forgot his humble birthplace, although he lived in many other places. After his long life, during which he worked as a laborer, farm hand, soldier in the Spanish-American War, political organizer, reporter, and writer, his ashes were returned, as he had requested, to his birthplace in Galesburg, where they rest beneath the red granite boulder called Remembrance Rock in a little park behind the cottage on Third Street.

The next stop was at the Galesburg Railroad Museum where a group of retired railroad men greeted our members and led the tour of the locomotive and the various cars built in the early 1900's. The construction and use of each car was explained and demonstrated. Half of one car was used as a Railway Post Office, with the Railway Express Agency occupying the other half. The caboose, or "waycar," was used both for a work center and for living quarters for the crew. Two "motor cars" or "speeders" carried track inspection crews or repair gangs, and the Pullman Parlor Car once used for passengers now houses the Museum's railroad memorabilia. It also contains a replica of a typical railroad telegrapher's office of the type once found in any railroad station. The huge Baldwin Locomotive was the biggest and most powerful of its type.

A mid-day dinner stop was made at Jumer's, which lived up to its good reputation. Following dinner, our group was met at Knox College by one of the college's history professors who spoke on the background and character of the school, which was founded in 1837. Knox was the first Illinois college to have a Phi Beta Kappa chapter, and one of the first to take a stand against slavery, discrimination against women, and racial prejudice. The college's "Old Main" building was the site of one of the Lincoln-Douglas debates in 1858.

In Knoxville our members were hosted by the Knox County Historical Society for a tour of their museum and the Old Knox County Courthouse. Included in the visit to the courthouse complex was a stop at the old stone jail with its tiny cells.

The next stop, 15 miles west of Peoria near Brimfield, was at Jubilee College, established by Bishop Philander Chase as a seminary for the training of Episcopal ministers. The cornerstone of the chapel and dormitory building, which is still standing, was laid in 1839. The school was planned for training both young men and young women, and with its saw and grist mills, farms and a large flock of sheep, was intended to be self-sufficient. Liberal donations also came from wealthy supporters both in the United States and England. However, the saw and grist mills burned in 1849, and Bishop Chase died in 1852, leaving in charge his cousin, Samuel Chase, who was not as strong a leader. An 1857 fire destroyed another part of the school, and eventually Jubilee College closed in 1862. A brief re-opening (1865-71) after the Civil War was not successful and eventually the school closed again and