

not communicate well with the common citizen and it was here that his friendship with Morris Birkbeck was most helpful. Birkbeck had been a successful farmer in England, was well-educated, and experienced in writing. He had come to America at age 50, possibly influenced by his meeting with Coles in France, and by 1821 was living in a 9-room house in the settlement he named Wanborough, near the town of Albion founded by his friend George Flower. Governor Coles visited him here, and Birkbeck began to write under the pen name of Jonathan Freeman a series of articles and letters which appealed to the common citizen. They contained good arguments against slavery and were easy to understand, and eventually the final vote of the people in 1824 was against the constitutional convention and its proposed changes, and Illinois remained a free state.

Morris Birkbeck was appointed secretary of state by Governor Coles, but, after he had already served for three months, a spiteful legislature refused his confirmation. However, in those three months he had organized the secretary of state's office and brought order out of chaos. Birkbeck was Illinois' first man of letters.

Morris Birkbeck had only seven years in his new country. In June, 1825, he drowned in a river crossing on his way home from New Harmony, Indiana.

In his last two years in office Governor Coles suffered much unpleasantness because of the hostile legislature, but had at least one happy experience when the Marquis de Lafayette visited Illinois and was escorted and entertained by the governor in April, 1825. Coles, a polished gentleman, was the perfect host to guide Lafayette's party on their visit to the rough frontier. At the end of his term of office even those who had opposed him commended his courage and perseverance, and recognized that he had been "the governor of a state, not of a party." He remained courteous and refined, but projected a control and coldness that did not make him popular. He was "ruined by his political victories." He remained in Illinois for a time, where he owned considerable property. Eventually, he moved to Philadelphia where, at age 47, he married Sally Logan Roberts. They were the parents of three children. Coles continued his fight against slavery, and wrote many letters and also a book. The Civil War brought personal tragedy - his son was killed fighting on the side of the Confederacy, where he had property - but Coles lived until July, 1868, long enough to know that all slaves were freed.

Kathleen's tribute to Edward Coles and Morris Birkbeck ended with the observance that both had been "men of principle and courage - compatriots in the cause of freedom."

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Following our program refreshments were served by Ruth Friedman's committee.

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Your editor, not understanding that Kathleen's English forefather was not George Flower (as stated in the November HISTORICO) but was a friend and neighbor of the founder of Albion, must apologize for attempting to give her a whole new set of ancestors!

## BOARD MEETING REPORT

The SCHS Officers and Board met at Lincoln Library on November 3 with 22 members present. Minutes of the previous meeting and the treasurer's reports were read and accepted. The total balance in all of our accounts is \$22,936.89. President Cullom Davis reported on upcoming membership meetings. Kathleen Friedman will give the program on November 19, with Ruth Benjamin as hostess for the hospitality period. Tom Teague will speak on December 18, with Mary Ellen McElligott as hostess, and the January 27th program will be given by Ed Russo, with Carl Volkmann as host. Hughes Diller reported that the Pioneer Park committee had met with the county tax office members in consultation re: Pioneer Park taxes. The Park is described as a charitable exemption and taxes paid will be refunded. The report on the Sixth Lincoln Colloquium indicated that it had been very successful, drawing over 200 participants. For Publications, Mary Ellen McElligott reported on the proposed new membership brochure and a book in preparation by Wayne Price. A book featuring Lincoln pictures is under consideration by Ed Russo and Dick Hart. Tour Chairman Kim Efird announced the proposed dates for two tours - to the Cahokia Mounds area on April 25, 1992, and a May 30 local tour of Springfield and Sangamon County. The new application form for requests for project funds from our grant program was reviewed. The program has been approved by the Board, and a committee is being set up to screen applications. President Davis appointed Gil Pilapil to chair the Projects Review Committee, with Theresa Faith Cummings as a member. A third person from the general membership will be appointed, also. The Annual Meeting in June, 1992, will be co-chaired by Polly Myers and Polly Roesch. There was a general discussion of local events involving renovation, restoration or demolition of Springfield historic structures. The tentative date for the next Board meeting is set for Wednesday, January 22, 1992, at 4:30 P.M. The meeting adjourned at 5:30 P.M.

Several days ago Treasurer John Macpherson reported that refund checks for county taxes paid on Pioneer Park have been received. The Park Committee's application for exemption was approved. The Pioneer Park Committee members involved were Hughes Diller, Fred Hoffmann and John Macpherson. (Thanks, guys!)

## VACHEL LINDSAY HOME

A well-attended party was held at the Lindsay Home on November 10, celebrating the birthday of Vachel Lindsay. Members of the Vachel Lindsay Association and the Illinois Historical Preservation Agency provided costumed guides and attractive refreshments. During the afternoon actress Rose Buckner Ahart, portraying Lindsay's close friend, Sara Teasdale, read from the works of the poetess. Although the house is closed to the public at present, upkeep and renovation continue while both agencies work toward a time when it can be re-opened on a regular basis. A beautiful booklet containing some of the poet's works and pictures of his prints, as well as of his family, is available, as are other Lindsay items, by writing to the Association at 603 S. Fifth St., Springfield, IL 62703, or by calling 528-9254. The booklet is by Janel Lundgren and Lucas Persinos. Janel is a past president of our Society, and the long-time Executive Secretary of the Vachel Lindsay Association.