

UNITED STATES
DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR
NATIONAL PARK SERVICE

NATIONAL SURVEY OF HISTORIC SITES AND BUILDINGS

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| 1. STATE Illinois | | 2. THEME(S). IF ARCHEOLOGICAL SITE, WRITE "ARCH" BEFORE THEME NO. Th. XIII, Political and Military Affairs, 1830-1860 | |
| 3. NAME(S) OF SITE Sangamon County Courthouse (Old State Capitol) | | | 4. APPROX. ACREAGE |
| 5. EXACT LOCATION (County, township, roads, etc. If difficult to find, sketch on Supplementary Sheet) Center of business district, on square bounded by Fifth, Sixth, Washington, and Adams Streets | | | |
| 6. NAME AND ADDRESS OF PRESENT OWNER (Also administrator if different from owner) Sangamon County | | | |

7. IMPORTANCE AND DESCRIPTION (Describe briefly what makes site important and what remains are extant)
This building, started in 1837, served as the fifth capitol of Illinois, from 1839 until 1876. Here Abraham Lincoln sat in the State Legislature from the time the Hall of the House of Representatives was opened in December 1840, until the session--Lincoln's last--ended in the following March. Here Lincoln argued cases before the State Supreme Court, and used the State and Supreme Court libraries. In the Old State Capitol Lincoln accepted the Republican nomination for senator, in the momentous contest with Stephen A. Douglas. On that occasion, June 16, 1858, he made the noted "House Divided" speech which won him considerable attention in the Nation's press, and which is considered one of his greatest addresses. Here, too, Lincoln's body lay in state before interment at Springfield's Oak Ridge Cemetery. The building also was the scene of Stephen A. Douglas' speech of April 25, 1861, declaring for preservation of the Union. Some authorities credit the speech as a major influence in saving Southern Illinois for the Union.

The building, designed by John F. Rague of Springfield, was constructed of cut stone quarried a few miles from the site. It consisted of two floors, and was surmounted by a dome supported by a tower and columns. Porticos supported by large Doric columns were located over the north and south entrances. There were no side entrances in the original. A rotunda used for public meetings extended from the north to the south doors and contained the stairway leading to the second floor. The west side of the second floor was given over to the Hall of the House of Representatives. All of these interior arrangements have been greatly altered, as discussed later.

Later History of the Old State Capitol

Growth of the State in population and resources made necessary a new and larger capitol. In 1867 the legislature authorized the construction of the present capitol building. The Old Capitol was sold to Sangamon County for \$200,000 in 1869, but the building con-

8. BIBLIOGRAPHICAL REFERENCES (Give best sources; give location of manuscripts and rare works)
Henry A. Converse, The House of the House Divided (Address before the Lincoln Centennial Association, Springfield, Illinois, February 12, 1924, published by Sangamon County Bar Association, Springfield, 1958); Illinois: A Descriptive and Historical Guide, rev. ed. (American Guide Series, Chicago, 1947)

9. REPORTS AND STUDIES (Mention best reports and studies, as, NPS study, HABS, etc.)
"Capitol Guide", pamphlet published by the State of Illinois, issued by Secretary of State

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| 10. PHOTOGRAPHS* ATTACHED: YES <input type="checkbox"/> NO <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> | 11. CONDITION Good | 12. PRESENT USE (Museum, farm, etc.) County offices | 13. DATE OF VISIT April, 1959 |
| 14. NAME OF RECORDER (Signature) Charles E. Shedd, Jr. | 15. TITLE Historic Sites Historian | 16. DATE 9/14/61 | |

* DRY MOUNT ON AN 8 X 10 1/2 SHEET OF FAIRLY HEAVY PAPER. IDENTIFY BY VIEW AND NAME OF THE SITE, DATE OF PHOTOGRAPH, AND NAME OF PHOTOGRAPHER. GIVE LOCATION OF NEGATIVE. IF ATTACHED, ENCLOSE IN PROPER NEGATIVE ENVELOPES.

(IF ADDITIONAL SPACE IS NEEDED USE SUPPLEMENTARY SHEET, 10-317a, AND REFER TO ITEM NUMBER)

NATIONAL SURVEY OF HISTORIC SITES AND BUILDINGS
SUPPLEMENTARY SHEET

This sheet is to be used for giving additional information or comments, for more space for any item on the regular form, and for recording pertinent data from future studies, visitations, etc. Be brief, but use as many Supplement Sheets as necessary. When items are continued they should be listed, if possible, in numerical order of the items. All information given should be headed by the item number, its name and the word (cont'd), as, 6. Description and Importance (cont'd)....

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| State Illinois | Name(s) of site Sangamon County Courthouse (Old State Capitol) |
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7. Importance and Description

tinued to serve as the Capitol until the new, and incomplete, State House was opened in 1876. The Old Capitol then became the Sangamon County Court House.

By 1899 the Old Capitol had become inadequate even for its more limited function as county court house. In that year a move was made to have the old building demolished and a new court house erected. This plan was defeated by individuals who treasured the old building. However, the need for additional office space resulted in a compromise that did great harm to the structure's integrity, both architecturally and historically. The most drastic alteration involved the lifting of the original building and constructing an entirely new first floor; the original first floor becoming the second. The old roof and dome were replaced, and the interior partitioned to make office space. Despite these changes, however, the exterior of the building's second and third floors is essentially unchanged.

Features and Condition

The Old Capitol today houses administrative offices for Sangamon County. It is well maintained and included as a point of interest in the official "Capitol Guide" distributed to visitors. The Springfield Historical Monuments Commission has recommended that the present first floor be removed and the building restored to its original condition. The Commission proposes that the Old Capitol be incorporated in the educational system of the State of Illinois.