

UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR  
NATIONAL PARK SERVICE

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**NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES  
INVENTORY -- NOMINATION FORM**

SEE INSTRUCTIONS IN *HOW TO COMPLETE NATIONAL REGISTER FORMS*  
TYPE ALL ENTRIES -- COMPLETE APPLICABLE SECTIONS

**1 NAME**

HISTORIC Old State Capitol

AND/OR COMMON

Old State Capitol (Sangamon County Courthouse)

**2 LOCATION**

STREET & NUMBER Springfield Square

CITY, TOWN

Springfield

VICINITY OF

NOT FOR PUBLICATION

CONGRESSIONAL DISTRICT  
020 (Twentieth)

STATE

Illinois

CODE  
17

COUNTY  
Sangamon

CODE  
167

**3 CLASSIFICATION**

CATEGORY	OWNERSHIP	STATUS	PRESENT USE
<input type="checkbox"/> DISTRICT	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> PUBLIC	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> OCCUPIED	<input type="checkbox"/> AGRICULTURE <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> MUSEUM
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> BUILDING(S)	<input type="checkbox"/> PRIVATE	<input type="checkbox"/> UNOCCUPIED	<input type="checkbox"/> COMMERCIAL <input type="checkbox"/> PARK
<input type="checkbox"/> STRUCTURE	<input type="checkbox"/> BOTH	<input type="checkbox"/> WORK IN PROGRESS	<input type="checkbox"/> EDUCATIONAL <input type="checkbox"/> PRIVATE RESIDENCE
<input type="checkbox"/> SITE	<b>PUBLIC ACQUISITION</b>	<b>ACCESSIBLE</b>	<input type="checkbox"/> ENTERTAINMENT <input type="checkbox"/> RELIGIOUS
<input type="checkbox"/> OBJECT	<input type="checkbox"/> IN PROCESS	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> YES: RESTRICTED	<input type="checkbox"/> GOVERNMENT <input type="checkbox"/> SCIENTIFIC
	<input type="checkbox"/> BEING CONSIDERED	<input type="checkbox"/> YES: UNRESTRICTED	<input type="checkbox"/> INDUSTRIAL <input type="checkbox"/> TRANSPORTATION
		<input type="checkbox"/> NO	<input type="checkbox"/> MILITARY <input type="checkbox"/> OTHER:

**4 OWNER OF PROPERTY**

NAME Illinois Department of Conservation, Division of Parks and Memorials

STREET & NUMBER

100 State Office Building

CITY, TOWN

Springfield

VICINITY OF

STATE

Illinois 62706

**5 LOCATION OF LEGAL DESCRIPTION**

COURTHOUSE,  
REGISTRY OF DEEDS, ETC. Sangamon County Courthouse

STREET & NUMBER

CITY, TOWN

Springfield

STATE

Illinois

**6 REPRESENTATION IN EXISTING SURVEYS**

TITLE Historic American Buildings Survey

DATE

1935

FEDERAL  STATE  COUNTY  LOCAL

DEPOSITORY FOR  
SURVEY RECORDS

Library of Congress/Annex, Prints and Photographs Division

CITY, TOWN

Washington

STATE

D.C.

# 7 DESCRIPTION

CONDITION		CHECK ONE	CHECK ONE
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> EXCELLENT	<input type="checkbox"/> DETERIORATED	<input type="checkbox"/> UNALTERED	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> ORIGINAL SITE
<input type="checkbox"/> GOOD	<input type="checkbox"/> RUINS	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> ALTERED	<input type="checkbox"/> MOVED      DATE _____
<input type="checkbox"/> FAIR	<input type="checkbox"/> UNEXPOSED		

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DESCRIBE THE PRESENT AND ORIGINAL (IF KNOWN) PHYSICAL APPEARANCE

The 1837 design for the Old State Capitol was drawn by John Rague of New York. It called for a building 123' X 89' X 44' high with a stone basement and two storeys of brick topped by a slender "lantern dome" whose top was 85' from the floor of the basement. So handsome was the dolomite limestone used for the stone base that the local populace convinced the building commissioners to complete the structure in that stone.

Later Rague redesigned the interior room dimensions to accord with the commissioner's requirements to include a State Library as well as the original Law Library. The basement was to be lighted by a light-well or moat around the structure and was to include 8 committee meeting rooms, one fire-proof vault, and 10 rooms for fuel and privies.

Rague's design was in the Greek Revival style then in vogue for government buildings. For the north and south entrances he used the dignified proportions of the pillared portico to the Agora in Athens, Greece. Within the building he adapted the handsome entablature of the Choragic Monument of Lysicrates to the column capitals and various cornices.

The building was completed in 1853, but rapid population growth had already made a new and larger capitol necessary. In 1869 the Old Capitol was sold to Sangamon County to be used as their Court House. By 1899 the need for additional office space had grown acute. The county lifted their courthouse with screw jacks and inserted a new first floor. The building interior was repartitioned and floor levels were modified; the cupola, roof, and attic were remodeled in 1900.

In 1962 the State of Illinois bought back the Old State Capitol from Sangamon County for \$975,000. Their purpose was restoration of the original capitol, and in 1966 the project began with the removal and preservation of the original exterior stone. The original dimensions were reconstructed, and two floors of modern office space were built underground for the Illinois State Historical Library, which became official custodian in 1971. In 1969, the Old State Capitol was opened to the public with furnishings purchased by the Abraham Lincoln Association.

# 8 SIGNIFICANCE

PERIOD	AREAS OF SIGNIFICANCE -- CHECK AND JUSTIFY BELOW			
<input type="checkbox"/> PREHISTORIC	<input type="checkbox"/> ARCHEOLOGY-PREHISTORIC	<input type="checkbox"/> COMMUNITY PLANNING	<input type="checkbox"/> LANDSCAPE ARCHITECTURE	<input type="checkbox"/> RELIGION
<input type="checkbox"/> 1400-1499	<input type="checkbox"/> ARCHEOLOGY-HISTORIC	<input type="checkbox"/> CONSERVATION	<input type="checkbox"/> LAW	<input type="checkbox"/> SCIENCE
<input type="checkbox"/> 1500-1599	<input type="checkbox"/> AGRICULTURE	<input type="checkbox"/> ECONOMICS	<input type="checkbox"/> LITERATURE	<input type="checkbox"/> SCULPTURE
<input type="checkbox"/> 1600-1699	<input type="checkbox"/> ARCHITECTURE	<input type="checkbox"/> EDUCATION	<input type="checkbox"/> MILITARY	<input type="checkbox"/> SOCIAL/HUMANITARIAN
<input type="checkbox"/> 1700-1799	<input type="checkbox"/> ART	<input type="checkbox"/> ENGINEERING	<input type="checkbox"/> MUSIC	<input type="checkbox"/> THEATER
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> 1800-1899	<input type="checkbox"/> COMMERCE	<input type="checkbox"/> EXPLORATION/SETTLEMENT	<input type="checkbox"/> PHILOSOPHY	<input type="checkbox"/> TRANSPORTATION
<input type="checkbox"/> 1900-	<input type="checkbox"/> COMMUNICATIONS	<input type="checkbox"/> INDUSTRY	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> POLITICS/GOVERNMENT	<input type="checkbox"/> OTHER (SPECIFY)
		<input type="checkbox"/> INVENTION		

SPECIFIC DATES                      1839-1865                      BUILDER/ARCHITECT                      John F. Rague

STATEMENT OF SIGNIFICANCE

The Old State Capitol served as Illinois' fifth, 1837-1876. Abraham Lincoln sat in the State Legislature here, 1840-41, and in 1858 made his famous "House Divided" speech in accepting the Republican nomination for Senator. Stephen Douglas was a State Supreme Court Justice here, 1841-43.

The Old State Capitol served as Illinois' fifth capitol from 1839 until 1876. Abraham Lincoln sat in the State Legislature here from the time the Hall of the House of Representatives opened in December 1840 until the session--Lincoln's last--ended, the following March. Lincoln pleaded more than 200 cases in the capitol's Supreme Court room. Stephen A. Douglas served as a justice there, 1841-43. In the Old State Capitol Lincoln accepted the Republican nomination for Senator. On that occasion, June 16, 1858, he made his famous "House Divided" speech from the floor of the Hall of Representatives. It read in part: "A house divided against itself cannot stand; I believe this government cannot endure half slave and half free. I do not expect the Union to be dissolved--I do not expect the house to fall-- but I do expect it will cease to be divided."

During the Presidential campaign of 1860, Lincoln spent much of his time in the Governor's office, and after that election it was his headquarters until he left for Washington. In 1865, Lincoln lay in state in the Capitol the night before his burial on May 3.

The Old State Capitol is also closely associated with Lincoln's rival, Stephen A. Douglas. Three times the state legislature meeting here elected him to the United States Senate. The first time he was only thirty-four years old, and the third, in 1859, Lincoln was his opponent. On April 25, 1861, Douglas made a speech here at the request of his former rival and rallied support for the Union cause. This speech did much to keep southern Illinois safe for the Federal government.

A third Illinoisan associated with the Capitol is Ulysses S. Grant. His first Civil War assignment was a clerk in the Illinois adjutant general's office, but it was not long before he was made colonel of the 21st Illinois and sent into the field. The building continued

# 9 MAJOR BIBLIOGRAPHICAL REFERENCES

"Old State Capitol, 1839-1876" informational pamphlet published by Illinois Department of Conservation, Division of Parks and Memorials.

# 10 GEOGRAPHICAL DATA

ACREAGE OF NOMINATED PROPERTY 2.5

UTM REFERENCES

A	1 1 6	2 7 3 2 8 0	4 4 0 8 8 3 0	B			
	ZONE	EASTING	NORTHING		ZONE	EASTING	NORTHING
C				D			

VERBAL BOUNDARY DESCRIPTION The boundaries include the whole of Springfield Square in Springfield, Illinois. The Old State Capitol was the first building erected on the square and no other building has ever intruded into that plot. The Square is defined by the intersections of the curb lines of Fifth and Sixth Streets, running north and south, and Washington and Adams Streets, running east and west.

LIST ALL STATES AND COUNTIES FOR PROPERTIES OVERLAPPING STATE OR COUNTY BOUNDARIES

STATE	CODE	COUNTY	CODE

# 11 FORM PREPARED BY

NAME / TITLE Stephen Lissandrello, Historian, Landmarks Review Project

ORGANIZATION	DATE
<u>Historic Sites Survey, National Park Service</u>	<u>4/28/75</u>
STREET & NUMBER	TELEPHONE
<u>1100 L. Street, N.W.</u>	
CITY OR TOWN	STATE
<u>Washington</u>	<u>D.C. 20240</u>

# 12 STATE HISTORIC PRESERVATION OFFICER CERTIFICATION

THE EVALUATED SIGNIFICANCE OF THIS PROPERTY WITHIN THE STATE IS:

NATIONAL  STATE  LOCAL

As the designated State Historic Preservation Officer for the National Historic Preservation Act of 1966 (Public Law 89-663), I hereby nominate this property for inclusion in the National Register and certify that it has been evaluated according to the criteria and procedures set forth by the National Park Service.

FEDERAL REPRESENTATIVE SIGNATURE

TITLE

Designated: July 4, 1961  
date

Boundary Certified  
DATE George Scherer  
2/15/77 date

FOR NPS USE ONLY	
I HEREBY CERTIFY THAT THIS PROPERTY IS INCLUDED IN THE NATIONAL REGISTER (NATIONAL HISTORIC LANDMARKS)	DATE
DIRECTOR, OFFICE OF ARCHEOLOGY AND HISTORIC PRESERVATION	DATE
ATTEST: <u>[Signature]</u>	DATE <u>2/15/77</u>
KEEPER OF THE NATIONAL REGISTER	

UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR  
NATIONAL PARK SERVICE

**NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES  
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CONTINUATION SHEET

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ITEM NUMBER 8

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to serve as the State Capitol until 1876 and then as the Sangamon County Courthouse until 1961. In 1968 the reconstructed building was dedicated as a museum and memorial to Abraham Lincoln.