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# COOK-WITTER REPORT

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## A Look Back...

In the middle to late 1800s, entrepreneurial photographers traveled from town to town throughout America selling their goods and services. In addition to taking photographs of locals for a fee, they would sell souvenir photo albums, sometimes of important local or regional sites. It was this type of album that left us with the following glimpses into our state's Capitol from more than 100 years ago.

The photo album is in the Abraham Lincoln Presidential Library's collection of audio-visual materials. It's battered and tattered, with warped pages that are no longer bound and corners that are worn away or rounded. The fabric covering peels away at the edges, but the faded, embossed gold title is still visible: "Views of the Illinois State Capitol, 1887."

On the first inside page, the photographer wrote: "Album of 20 views - \$6, of 40 views - \$11.50. Leave your order soon or you will be left as my time here is limited." And then he (it was probably a man) signed his now barely legible name, "Sweet." All but two of the photos are interior shots of the Statehouse, the other two feature Abraham Lincoln's tomb and home in Springfield.

Who bought this souvenir album and why? Sadly, we don't know. Perhaps it was civic pride, a sense of history, or an impulse purchase to impress a sweetheart. Regardless, it provided us with rare images of scenes long gone.

The Statehouse photos showcase a relatively new building (although construction began in 1868, it wasn't completed until the year after the photo album was created -- 1888). The building had plenty of room to accommodate the few occupants it housed, compared to today. The offices were incredibly spacious and equipped with one of the necessities of the time -- spittoons. Even the Capitol's hallways were littered with these foul containers, evenly placed at intervals on the floors for easy access.



*This photo shows then Governor Richard J. Oglesby who was elected three times (this was taken during his last term). Mark Sorensen, vice president of the Illinois State Historical Society and author of articles about the Statehouse's history, believes this was the Governor's private office, located in the northeast corner of the east central part of the Capitol's second floor. The camera is facing south. Originally, the main entrance to the Statehouse was on the building's east side, on the second floor, where the Governor's Office is now located.*

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**A Look Back...**

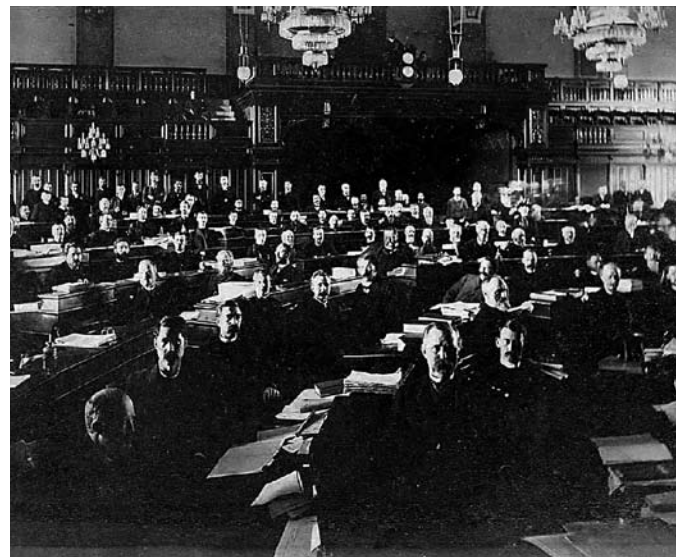
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*This photo shows the newly refurbished Room 114, which was recently expanded into a larger House committee room. Sorensen says the camera is facing east. “We have no documentation as to the use of the room early on, but it clearly looks like it was used to organize bills and for storage. In November 1908 it became the John A. Logan War Museum and stayed such until 1923 when it most likely reverted to a shipping room until the 1960s. A 1905 newspaper article referred to it as the ‘shipping room.’ ” (Learn more about the room’s recent renovation and its use as the Logan Museum at [www.ilstatehouse.com](http://www.ilstatehouse.com).)*



*Republican Speaker of the House William F. Calhoun and Clerk John A. Reeve (for the 35th Illinois General Assembly) are seated at their desks in this photo of the House of Representatives. Sorensen believes the other people pictured are probably House staff and pages.*



*Here is a photo of the “Republican side of the Hall of the House,” according to its caption.*

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Then Treasurer John R. Tanner is shown here in front of the former vault on the second floor of the northwest side of the Capitol; this location is currently a bank. “By my recollection the vault was either sealed into the wall or was taken out when they put the elevator shaft in that office,” says Sorensen. State Treasurer spokeswoman Sara Wojcicki says it could have been sealed into the wall, but it’s unclear what happened to the vault. The Treasurer’s current vault is in the basement of the Statehouse.

To see how the Statehouse exterior has looked over its many years, go to:

[www.ilstatehouse.com/exterior\\_views.htm](http://www.ilstatehouse.com/exterior_views.htm)

When this photo was taken, the ten-year-old Illinois State Museum was located in a room on the west side of the Statehouse’s third floor. It featured geology and biology collections. “This was taken just before the Museum was replaced by the Illinois State Library,” Sorensen says.



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## A Look Back...

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*George Hunt, the 1887 Illinois Attorney General is pictured here. Sorensen says that this office was most likely located on the west side of the second floor, just west of the men's rest room. That's where the Attorney General definitely had a suite of offices by 1901. The Attorney General moved offices out of the Capitol 30 years ago.*

## Statehouse Didn't Impress Some

While Springfieldians in 1888 were proud of their newly finished Capitol, which had the tallest Statehouse dome in the country, not everyone shared their feelings.

In the nationally popular Harper's Magazine of July 1888, writer and traveler Charles Dudley Warner described our state's crowning glory in less than glorious terms.

While the building's rooms were "spacious and very well planned," the rest was atrocious, he said. "It is an incongruous pile externally, mixing many styles of architecture...and generally losing the impression of a dignified mass in details. Within, it is especially rich in wall casings of beautiful and variegated marbles, each panel exquisite, but all together tending to dissipate any idea of unity of design or simplicity. Nothing whatever can be said for many of the scenes in relief, or the mural paintings...nor for most of the statues in the corridors, but the decoration of the chief rooms, in mingling of colors and material, is frankly barbarous."



## Transitions

On November 5, **Senator Frank Watson** announced that he will not seek re-election as the Illinois Senate Republican Leader due to his health; Senator Watson recently suffered a stroke. The Greenville Republican has been the Minority Leader since 2003.

**Tom Jennings** was appointed Director of the Illinois Department of Agriculture on October 8. Most recently Jennings was the Department's Acting Director, prior to that he was its Assistant Director. He has worked at the Department for 30 years. Jennings and his family live in Springfield and are actively involved in a small farming operation raising cattle, horses, forage, and row crops.



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