

Ford School Landmarking Ceremony

**WEDNESDAY, OCTOBER 23,
2019
SIX O'CLOCK IN THE EVENING**



Presented by:

*The Village of Lake in the Hills, The
McHenry County Board*

and

The McHenry County Historic Preservation Commission

INTRODUCTION OF PUBLIC OFFICIALS



REENACTMENT— KAREN PARKS



HISTORY OF
THE FORD SCHOOL
— ROBERT SPOONER



MCHENRY COUNTY
HISTORIC PRESERVATION COMMISSION
— STEVEN GREELEY, CHAIRMAN
COMMENTS



PLAQUE PRESENTATION
— SUZANNE NESS, MCHENRY COUNTY
BOARD MEMBER
DISTRICT 2



In 1886, a log school was replaced by the Ford School, a new 20ft x 36ft frame schoolhouse. Consolidation of schools caused Ford School to be closed in 1939. When the surrounding farmland was sold to a developer, the schoolhouse was sold and moved up Algonquin Road. The building was placed on a basement foundation, the vestibule wall was removed, the ceiling was lowered from 11ft to 9ft, steps down to the basement and up to the main floor were added along with 2 small bedrooms, living room, kitchen and bathroom. Sometime later, an enclosed side porch was added. Around 1989, new owners removed the bedroom walls and turned the schoolhouse into an office for a nursery and landscaping business.

With the closure of Stonegate Nursery in 2009, the owner decided to remove all buildings on the property and in 2011, offered to donate the schoolhouse to the Village of Lake in the Hills. In December 2011, the Lake in the Hills Village Board accepted ownership and agreed to let the Historical Society move and restore Ford School.

On June 15, 2012 the schoolhouse was returned to its 1886 location at Ford School Park. The school was placed over a 4ft crawl space foundation, the porch and 2 side doors were removed, the ceiling was raised back to its original 11ft height and a vestibule wall was reconstructed in the original location using markings on the interior bead-board walls. Because the walls had been covered with carpet (perhaps for insulation purposes), much of the original bead-board underneath was found to be well preserved. During the restoration, 7 of the 8 original windows, 90% of the exterior cedar siding, 75% of the bead-board walls and 25% of the original maple flooring were used: the rest was replicated with identical wood and design.

For 96 years, Ford School provided education for children living within a 2-mile radius. But the schoolhouse was much more than just a classroom ... it was an entertainment center where school programs would be presented to families (particularly the ever popular Christmas Program), a meeting house where the neighbors would discuss relevant issues, a site for School Board meetings and elections, a place for Sunday morning services, and a community event location for family gatherings, basket socials, pot lucks, card clubs and fund-raisers. The importance of the local one-room schoolhouse was not diminished by its size ... It was indispensable to the community. The schoolhouse was also significant on a personal level. The unanimous response from interviews with Ford School students was that their fondest and most cherished childhood memories came from experiences that centered around their rural one-room school.

