



History of Old Pond School

The history of the building in which we now call The Old Pond School is one of unique interest and encompasses the entire 20th Century. The Old Pond School was built on land originally donated by the Dreinhofer Family who were one of Wildwood's earliest pioneering families emigrating here from Germany. The Dreinhofer Family had originally reserved this one-acre tract of land in the latter 1800s for the purpose of building a school for the children of the area. At that time, the acre of land was located near the southeast corner of their farm field next to Manchester Road that was also known as Market Street.

The Old Pond School is actually the third of four Pond Schools. The first known Pond School was built near the intersection of Pond Road and Manchester Road. From all estimates, sometime possibly around 1880, the second Pond School was constructed on the land that the Dreinhofers had donated where the current Old Pond School now sits. This wooden schoolhouse caught fire sometime just after the turn of the century and burned to the ground. It was after this disaster that plans were made by community leaders to construct a new 'modern' Pond School on the same property. Obviously this was accomplished with the permission of the Dreinhofer Family again to utilize their land for the school.

Several accounts place the date of the construction of this new Pond School sometime around 1914. Built by the Seithel Construction Company of Manchester, Missouri, this new school featured many modern improvements from the original wooden schoolhouse such as the extensive use of fire resistant materials. While constructing the new school, the builders obviously kept in mind the fire that had destroyed the original Pond School and planned ways to prevent another fire from occurring. The new schoolhouse was constructed directly in front of the site that the original school had been. It was constructed primarily of concrete, clay, and stucco, three components known for their strength and fire proofing capabilities. Even the school's new roof was constructed with clay tile shingles again to add to its fire proofing characteristics and its longevity.

The Pond School was active as a school throughout much of the 20th Century. Classes were being held at the school during World War I in 1918 and Prohibition during the 1920s. The Old Pond School was operational when Manchester Road was improved and designated Route 66 in 1926. It was in session during The Great Depression Era of the 1930s, World War II in the 1940s, the happy days of the 1950s and even the turbulent times of the 1960s.

With the reorganization and consolidation of the area school districts in the 1950s, a decision was made to construct a new more modern fourth Pond School just west and within sight distance of the old school. It is this Pond School that is still in operation as an elementary school today and operated by the Rockwood School District.

After the children from The Old Pond School were transferred into this new school, the school district utilized the old schoolhouse as a school for children with special needs. This "Special School" would last for over a decade at which time the school district constructed administrative offices in the old schoolhouse around 1970. These administrative offices would occupy The Old Pond School for some years to come at which time the school began to fall into serious disrepair from maintenance neglect and was used only for equipment storage.

Planning Tomorrow Today

16860 Main Street | Wildwood, Missouri 63040 | (636) 458-0440 phone | (636) 458-6969 fax

cityofwildwood.com



Around 1998, a group of concerned citizens approached the Rockwood School District with the idea of obtaining the building in an attempt to save it by renovating and restoring it for the purpose of converting it to a small meeting and museum facility for possibly a local historical group. While investigating this possibility, the school district learned that the school property had a deed restriction placed upon it by the Dreinhofer Family which prevent them from selling or transferring ownership of the property to someone other than the Dreinhofer Family. This restriction was placed on the property by the Dreinhofers when they originally gave the property up for the original school to be built before 1900 and remained legally binding. In 1999, the school property was finally returned to Ms. Loraine Conreux by the Rockwood School District since the school district was no longer utilizing the property for educational purposes. Ms. Conreux is a descendant and legal heir to the Dreinhofer Family.

For the next three years, officials from the City of Wildwood negotiated with Ms. Conreux in an attempt to possibly purchase the property from her in order to save and preserve the school since it was one of Wildwood's last remaining unaltered turn of the century schoolhouses left in the City. In 2001, Ms. Conreux through her generosity and devotion to the original concerns and commitment that her ancestors had made in establishing the earlier Pond Schools, she decided to donate the property to the City of Wildwood. The City made a commitment to her and the family that the school would be renovated and restored as it had once appeared and it would be eventually opened to the public as a meeting facility and small museum. The surrounding outdoor property would also ultimately become a public park operated and maintained by the City for everyone to enjoy.

The building's renovation and restoration is now complete. The City of Wildwood's Summer Concert Series, as well as various other events and meetings are currently held on the grounds of the Old Pond School. Check with the City's [Parks and Recreation Department](#) for further information on these events.

Planning Tomorrow Today

16860 Main Street | Wildwood, Missouri 63040 | (636) 458-0440 phone | (636) 458-6969 fax

cityofwildwood.com