

Conservation Corner

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School days, school days, dear old golden rule days . . .

Across Iowa students and teachers are buying school supplies and getting ready to head back to the classroom. Here at Conservation, we're painting and roofing the schoolhouse and getting ready to head back to the Wiegert Prairie Farmstead. We hope you'll join us on Sunday, August 28, as we celebrate *Schoolhouse on the Prairie*.

Gates will open at 10:00 a.m. and close at 5:00 p.m. Join us for worship at 10:30 at the Pioneer Church as together we sing God's praises. Catch up with your neighbors and friends while listening to old-time country and bluegrass music by Frank Tuma. The PAC FFA will be grilling hamburgers and hot dogs from 11:00 a.m. to 1:00 p.m. For dessert, enjoy a cup of cowboy coffee and homemade pie and ice cream. Other treats to enjoy include fry bread, kettle corn, and root beer floats.

The farmhouse, smoke house, barn, crib, hog house, tool shed, and church will be open throughout the day. Ongoing activities will include pets and farm animals, organ music, blackpowder shooting, hammering contests, and old-fashioned games. Afternoon activities will include pony rides, potato digging, and prairie wagon rides.

The highlight of this year's celebration will be the 1:00 p.m. re-dedication of the Lincoln #5 Schoolhouse. It's been quite the project! The schoolhouse was lifted in June of last summer. In November of last fall the sill plate was replaced, and in December trenches were dug and footings and foundation poured. The schoolhouse was moved to its new foundation in January of this year, and this summer it received a new coat of paint and a new roof. Next summer's project will be to work on the inside. We appreciate everyone's support. We salute and thank the Pocahontas County Foundation for their generous grant and Vote House Moving, Roger Eichelberger, and the PCCB staff and summer staff for their expertise and efforts. Lincoln #5 is looking great!

While researching Lincoln #5, I came across some interesting facts. Did you know that in 1901 there were 12,623 one-room schoolhouses in Iowa? A century later, 2,900 former one- or two-room schools were still standing, 180 as museums. No other state could match that total. Here in Pocahontas County, I counted 131 one-room schoolhouses on a 1904 map. A century later, some 39 one-room schools were identified as still standing in the county - 18 had been converted to homes, 17 to garages or farm buildings, and 4 as museums or shops. Did you attend country school?

I'll close with the rest of the chorus written by Will Cobb and Gus Edwards in 1907:

*Readin' and 'ritin' and 'rihtmetic,
Taught to the tune of a hick'ry stick,
You were my queen in calico,
I was your bashful barefoot beau,
And you wrote on my slate, "I Love You, Joe,"
When we were a couple of kids.*

See you at the farm!



