








# The Taylor One-Room Schoolhouse

This one-room schoolhouse originally stood on the farm of Edwin Taylor in Rockville Township (near DeSelm, west of Manteno). Built in 1904, the school taught children living on farms in the surrounding two-mile area. It was the second schoolhouse to sit on the Taylor property. The school was open until 1954 when the students began attending schools in Manteno. In 1976, the Taylor Schoolhouse was relocated to the Small Memorial Museum Campus as part of the area's Bicentennial Celebration.

The furnishings and school materials within the school have been gathered from one-room schools that once existed in Kankakee County. Students from first to eighth grade were all taught together in this classroom. The desks in the school increase in size to accommodate the different aged students. The holes in the desktops were for inkwells. Students used ink and stick or quill pens made out of feathers. The smallest desks do not have an inkwell hole. These children were too young for ink; instead, they would use chalk and slate boards.

The stove would be filled with either coal or wood each morning to heat the school. The teacher would have to visit the well and pump all the water for the students to share during the day. Lunches were brought from home in tins and parchment paper wrappings.

Students studied reading, writing, and arithmetic (math.) Older students would often assist the younger ones. A large portion of their learning consisted of oral recitation. The ringing of the teacher's bell signaled the beginning of the school day. There were no school buses in those days, so students would have walked from their neighboring farms, probably hearing the bell on their walk to school.



If a student entered the classroom, they bowed or curtsied to their teacher. The bell would also be used to call the students in from recess. Children usually had a short break in the morning and the afternoon. In the cold months, students might play indoors with marbles, jacks, or paper dolls. During the warmer months, the children would go outside, to play games such as hide and seek, hopscotch, and red rover.

Music was not part of the formal curriculum in early 1900 schoolhouses. However, if a piano or an organ, such as the one on display was available, music may have played a role in the student's daily learning. Songs such as "America the Beautiful" or Polly Wolly Doodle" may have been sung.

Students wore their best clothing to school. Going to school was a privilege, not a requirement as it is now. On family farms, children were needed to help with the household and farm chores. During the planting and harvest seasons, older children (particularly boys) were at home working on the farm, not attending school.

One teacher was employed to teach all eight grades. He or she was paid approximately 45 dollars a month. Women who married were no longer eligible to teach. Marriage was seen as a distraction from teaching duties.

A teacherage was a room, often at the back of the one-room schoolhouse, where the teacher would live during the school year. Common practice was that the male teachers would live in the teacherage, while female teachers boarded with the family on the property or with another family close by.

Teachers, both those living in the teacherage and those boarding with families, had many duties pertaining to the upkeep of the schoolhouse. The teacher was responsible for arriving at school early to make sure the stove was started well before the students arrived and to make sure there was water in the pail for the students to drink throughout the day. He or she was essentially the school's janitor and was responsible for sweeping and scrubbing the floors, cleaning the chalkboards and erasers, and filling the lamps.

Teacherages provided more privacy for the teacher. It allowed for a quieter place to plan lessons and read academic books and the Bible. Small meals could be prepared in the teacherage, though the teacher would have had many meals with the family who owned the property on which the school stood.