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Long Grove History

LONG GROVE LIVING
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Abe Lincoln Didn't Sleep Here

This year the Long Grove Historical Society turns 40. Every Society can trace itself to a cause — for ours, it was a tavern with a wrecking ball pointed at it.

By **Aaron Underwood** · Long Grove Historical Society



1974 The ol' **Drexler Tavern** as it stood in 1974, slated for destruction. The threat to this building was the last straw — and the spark that formed the Long Grove Historical Society.

Back in 1974, an increasing number of villagers were concerned about the number of historic structures being lost to the wrecking ball. When word got out that the ol' Drexler Tavern was slated for destruction, it was the last straw — the Society was officially formed to receive the Tavern as a donation and move it to a different site. But a newly formed society has no money, so all was not rosy.



FROM A NEWSPAPER ARTICLE · 1976

Long Grove, Illinois — Abe Lincoln didn't sleep there and Ulysses S. Grant wasn't born there. Ethel Potts' father was. And Ethel Potts, of Long Grove, recently joined a group of fellow residents to make sure people spend time there again. The place: Drexler's Tavern in Long Grove, a small Lake County community known for its covered bridge, antiques, and its early American buildings.

It all started in March, 1974, when Long Grove resident Leonard Van Dermuellen donated the tavern to the Long Grove Historical Society. Van Dermuellen's offer was simple — the Historical Society could have the building if it would move it off his land.

The Historical Society took him up on the offer. So did a majority of Long Grove residents, who, when surveyed in December, said they would support a move by Village Board members to help provide the \$44,000 needed to move and restore the building.

At first, raising the money was simple. The Society pledged \$7,500; the Illinois Bicentennial Commission provided a \$4,000 grant. Even the Long Grove Park District was interested for a while, and offered to sell the village an acre in the center of town for a building site. The balance was to be paid for with village funds.

But village funds had since become scarcer, and the village board and park district began throwing up temporary walls in the path of restoration. An additional wing for the building had been discussed — to provide space for a meeting hall — increasing the cost and site needs. The Park District objected that the wing would require a large parking lot, which wasn't appropriate for the "open space" site under consideration. The mounting costs alarmed some residents.

It all worked out in the end.

An arrangement with Kildeer Countryside School provided some land to the rear of the school, which allowed ample space for the new meeting-room wing — as well as space for a few more historical buildings seeking a new home (**Ruth Barn** and **Archer School**). By using the old tavern to house the village's offices, the Village's portion of the refurbishment costs could be justified.

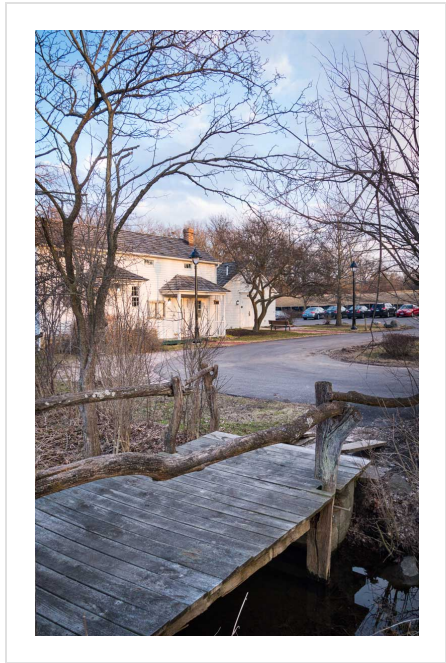
The Long Grove Historical Society continues to have as its primary function the care and maintenance of Long Grove's historical artifacts, as well as the fundraising required to carry out such activities — the Society receives no public funds. While the Village Government looks after Drexler Tavern, the Society maintains Ruth Barn, Archer School, and an 1850's farmhouse that was also relocated and restored back in the day.

In recent years, the Society's scope has expanded to include more public outreach — property tours, historical programs, and the like.

VOLUNTEERS ALWAYS WELCOMED.



If you like history and would be interested in getting more involved, contact AARON@UINNOVATE.NET



RESTORED · TODAY

Drexler Tavern, viewed from the wooden foot-bridge — now home to the Village's offices.



AT THE OFFICE DOOR

Village Trustee Wachs on the step of the restored Tavern — the 1859 plaque still on the wall.