

Mount Moriah Masonic Lodge (formerly Pond Mills School) Original Structure / Reconstructed Interior

This structure, which is currently interpreted as a reconstructed Masonic Lodge, was once Pond Mills School.

Pond Mills School, formally known as School Section #7, comes from the village of Pond Mills, Westminster Township. Pond Mills is now a subdivision in south east London. Pond Mills School was in existence from c1825-1966.

The school started as a one-room schoolhouse on land which is now part of Pond Mills Cemetery. In 1844 this log structure was replaced with a wooden frame structure. In 1860 the one-room brick structure, the building now at the Village, was built on an adjacent lot. Students learned reading, writing and arithmetic in this schoolhouse up until 1956 when a “modern” two-room school was built beside it to meet the demands of increased enrollment.

In 1973 the Board of Education of the City of London resolved to demolish the brick building if Fanshawe Pioneer Village would accept the materials to reconstruct the school.

The dismantled school was re-erected at the Village in the summer of 1975. The reconstruction, however, was not fully faithful to the original structure. Sometime before 1956 the belfry and bells had been removed from the school. It also appears that not all of

the original parts made their way to the Village. Where the original school had four windows on each side, the Village version only has three.⁷⁸

In 1995 London area Freemasons approached Fanshawe Pioneer Village with a proposal to renovate the school and turn it into Mount Moriah Lodge. Mount Moriah Lodge is the name of the first pioneer Masonic Lodge, which was also located, appropriately enough, in Westminster Township. It was formed in 1820. From 1820 to 1829 the Lodge held its meetings in Siddal House, a two-storey white frame building which still stands at 1184 Hamilton Road in London. The Lodge used to hold its regular meetings Tuesdays, prior to the full moon. Meetings were held at 3 p.m. in the summer and 6 p.m. in the winter months.⁷⁹

By January 2000 the Masons had raised sufficient funds for the project to commence. The interior of the school was gutted, so while the structure itself is original the interior is a reconstruction. New walls and an insulated ceiling were installed and a partition wall was added to form an anteroom. On May 25, 2002 the doors of old Pond Mills School were once again officially opened, this time as Mount Moriah Lodge.

The interior of the building now offers visitors to the Village a view of what a late nineteenth century Masonic Lodge would have looked like. Furnishings for the Lodge were donated or made by various Masons and lodges.⁸⁰ Interpretation of the Lodge is provided by volunteer Masons.

Word Count: 450 words

⁷⁸ Internal, handwritten document in FPV files comparing the two structures.

⁷⁹ Sydney, H. Grant, historian of St. John Lodge No. 20. "Mount Moriah Lodge" (no year given).

⁸⁰ "Furnishings" An enumerated list of furnishings in Mount Moriah Lodge and their source. FPV files.