



THE YORKVILLE CITY HALL COMES HOME TO THE FARM

**YORKVILLE CITY HALL
and the
FIRE BARN**

The third, and last move, for the Yorkville City Hall was one of the few sunny days this Spring: Wednesday, May 29. Everett Hyatt movers of Sandwich, with the help of the City of Yorkville and many others, moved the old building to Lyon Farm.

The move began shortly after 9 a.m. Commonwealth Edison and Jones Intercable had to take down cables that were in the way, and city workers had to cut branches of trees that blocked the path of the old hall.

Streets that were closed included Madison, Main, and Ridge, and sections of Rtes. 47, 126, and 71 were also closed for the move.

After a painstakingly slow move, the old city hall, flanked by police squad cars and city vehicles, rolled into Lyon Farm by early afternoon.

Work will begin soon on the foundation for the old building, which will again be a fire barn. It's new home will be behind the Corrigan Store.

**BRISTOL-KENDALL
FIRE DEPARTMENT**

The village of Yorkville shows the mention of a fire department in a note of July 1877 directing two trustees to buy fire equipment.

A fire house was built in 1888 two doors south of the library building on the east side of Bridge Street just south of Van Emmon St.

The village board soon began meeting in the building. The structure was moved in 1905 to the north side of Madison Street, across from the Courthouse. Until a few years ago it was still used as the meeting place of the Yorkville City Council.

Other records show a Yorkville Fire Department as an independent department of firefighters backed up and supported by 125 stockholders (subscribers) living within a radius of about eight miles of Yorkville.

It's first president was George Dickson and Dick Houck served as the first chief. The first piece of equipment was a Model T Ford with chemical equipment on it. While early records are sketchy, the first

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Yorkville's present city hall at Madison and Jefferson Streets began life as the Yorkville Fire Department building. A 1905 map of the town shows the building originally located on the east

side of Bridge Street in the area of the present Yorkville National Bank drive-up. (Photo courtesy of Mae Houck)

A century-old building that served as Yorkville's fire station and City Hall was uprooted from its former location at Madison and Jefferson streets

Wednesday and transported along Route 47 to nearby Lyon Farm. The process blocked traffic in the downtown area.

Century-old civic building retires to country

■ **Traffic stopper:** The former Yorkville City Hall is moved from downtown to Lyon Farm

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By Jeremy Olson
BEACON-NEWS STAFF

Yorkville — Hapless drivers caught in traffic on Route 47 here Wednesday afternoon could only peer out their windows in amusement at the cause of the jam.

The old city hall building was being rolled out of town.

City officials were considering demolishing the building last fall, but community and Kendall County Historical Society leaders rallied support and funds to have the landmark moved to Lyon Farm, a history center on Route 71 that already features several old buildings.

The century-old structure, built in 1888, was a fire station on the east side of Bridge Street originally, but was moved uphill to the intersection of Jefferson and Madison streets in 1905 and used as the Yorkville City Hall as recently as last year.

In a parade of flashing police cars, scrambling utility workers and a tow truck dragging the structure on a trailer, the building was taken

south on Route 47 out of town.

Workers stayed ahead of the transport, elevating and disconnecting power lines so the building could make it safely through the streets. City employees also cut branches that hung out over the roadways on the two-mile trip so they wouldn't upset the building from the trailer.

"Naturally, I was getting nervous because you never know what could happen," said J.T. Johnson, director of public works, who helped to organize the move. The motorcade never exceeded 8 mph during its two-mile trip.

Exceptional planning by city officials and the helpfulness of utility company employees ensured a safe ride for the building, Johnson said.

"It was quite a procedure," he said.

The building was left on its trailer at Lyon Farm because heavy rains last week prevented workers from building a new foundation for it. Once it is grounded, the building will be restored to look like a turn-of-the-century firehouse, said Jack Jenkins, president of the Kendall County Historical Society.

Kendall County Coroner Ken Toftoy, a contributor to and supporter of the move, enlisted the help of Oswego and Yorkville firefighters to renovate the structure in upcoming months. And Toftoy said he will donate historical firefighting

memorabilia and uniforms from his collection for the building.

But those finishing touches — which will likely include the addition of a 1940s fire engine — are still a year or two from completion, Jenkins said. The society still needs to find some funds to pay for the restoration project.

Much of the \$11,000 needed to move the building was provided by area banks, fire department companies and private donations. Yorkville Mayor Bob Johnson helped lower the costs by convincing utility companies to waive their usual fees for such activities, Jenkins added.

Vic Smith, a Yorkville resident with historical interest in the building, said the resilient structure has undergone many changes and additions. In the 1940s, a car accidentally drove through its front double-doors, which were replaced by a single door, Smith said.

His father helped do that renovation, and his son helped repair the building's roof about 10 years ago, Smith said.

"My family is kind of tied to it really ... (The building) gave a character and a flavor to our community."

According to Jenkins, "It's a pretty worthwhile project to be making history for people that will remain after we're gone."