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TOWN PUMP

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Our photo, taken in 1917, shows the town pump in Murray. This hamlet located on the historic Ridge Road in the Town of Murray was originally known as Sandy Creek.

The picture looking west here shows the Ridge Road as not much more than a dirt path. This was not paved with concrete until the mid-1920s.

The town pump was located on the south side of the road just west of the Groth Road in front of the hotel. A place such as this provided public water by having a well anyone could use. We note here the pump is a wooden one with a nearby tub for watering thirsty animals.

The Village Inn in Childs, a little farther west on the Ridge, to this day has a well and pump out in front of it, which was intended for public use.

Before the Village of Albion had a municipal water system (1888), wells were located throughout the village for anyone to use. In earlier times, individual property owners did not necessarily have a well.

Today, a good portion of our

county is blanketed with municipal water supply, something which would have been inconceivable to people in the 19th century. These old wells were hand dug, with some not being more than 17 feet deep. If you have never seen one, they are indeed a marvel to look into.

It surely took a skilled workman to lay up the interior of a hand-dug well with stone. I've seen some that used large boulders. This field stone was arranged so that a smaller part of the stone was on the interior, locking all the stones together in a keystone fashion. I've also seen beautifully laid up wells where quarried stone was used.

Stones were stacked so that the interior space (diameter) was at least 3 feet across. Some were a little larger. This allowed room to work in laying up the dry stone interior. It also made it accessible for someone to descend into the well to clean it out, if necessary.

The town pump was also a gathering spot for folks to socialize when going to fetch a pail of water. The story of Jesus and the woman at the well clearly defines the fact that these were meeting places.



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