

Albion's Mrs. Ruth Curtis Wells

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Mrs. Ruth Curtis Wells, a 1950 graduate of Albion High School first attended District No. 9 School of the Town of Gaines and Murray. This schoolhouse was located at the northwest corner of Transit Road and West Transit Church Road. The building is now a residence.

Mrs. Wells has written an interesting account of her school days memories for her grandchildren which I asked her to share with us in this column. It is as follows:

"Until I began 8th grade, I attended a one room school house with one teacher for all grades K-8. The school was located approximately 3/4 mile from our house. We all walked to school as there were no buses. There were many county schools at that time. When I began 8th grade since the districts were beginning to centralize we took the bus into Albion. Riding the bus that first day was quite scary as we did not know what to expect.

"The heat in the country school was provided by a pot belly stove. Until the teacher started the fire and the room began to warm up, we all stood around in our

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I'm sure there were others. "During the Second World War, milk weed pods were used in the manufacturing of parachutes. Therefore some days we'd have a special project of going out in the fields and collecting these pods. One day we had off from school and another country school not too far from ours did also so we had a "contest" to see which school could collect the most. My uncle came to our school with a parachute and talked to us about how they were made and the importance of collecting these pods. Since most of us had relatives in the war, we were pleased to be able to help this way. I can remember seeing many Gold Star banners in windows which meant they had lost a member of the family in the war.

"One time they had to close the school for a few days because one of the students came down with meningitis. If I remember right (and I may not), I think

coats, boots, etc. On really cold days that took quite some time. I can recall one particularly harsh winter and the walk to school. One day our hands got so cold, we dug holes in a drift and left our lunch boxes there - we just couldn't carry them any longer. Roads weren't plowed by the time we had to go to school in the morning. When you're little those snow drifts sure look very large.

"Bathroom facility at first was a two holer "privy" out back of the school. It was not heated so the teacher knew we would not linger there any longer than necessary. Eventually, an addition was added to the school but it was not heated.

"Music and art teachers would come once a week or every two weeks. Since I could not draw very well, any time I drew something that actually looked something like it should I was pleased. As for music, instruments I can recall were triangles and tambourines.

we all had to take medicine for few days. Another time the oldest student rubbed poison ivy all over our faces saying it would be good for our skin. Since he was older, we believed him. Big mistake. His popularity after that was about zero. Not a fun time.

"I remember the one room school house with fond memories (most of the time) and often wonder where some of the other students ended up, etc. The teachers were all very nice - if I remember right we had three different ones during those years. They had a hard job teaching so many grades but they did a good job.

"My brother and I would get home from school and then go to work on the "farmette" our folks had. Would sit on the setter and plant tomatoes, potatoes, cabbage, etc. Also picked apples, cherries, raspberries, tomatoes, whatever needed to be done. I'm sure we didn't think it was what we wanted to be doing at the time but looking back on it now, it sure didn't hurt us."