

"The Little French School By The Wayside"



Wayside School is gone now, but hundreds of Bedford residents attended the little one room building which stood on the northwest corner of Crabb and Substation Roads. Clarence Lange, now of Harrison, Michigan, sent this photograph of the Wayside students of 1915

The students are identified as (First row, 1 to r) Ormond Fosgate, Howard Meinhart, Robert Fosgate, Richard Mills, Clarence Lang, Clarence Blair, (Second row 1 to r) Ted Fosgate, Albert Lewis, Forrest Kinney, Ruby Dull, Leona Mills, Beulah Lewis, Eina Meinhart, Goldie Lewis, Ralph Fosgate, Wada Dull, (Third row, 1 to r) Milford Dull, Elmer Roberts, John Lang, Leon Montrie, Lucille Hackman, Rodolph Roberts, Helen Meinhart, Wilbur Meinhart. The teacher was Harry Eisenmann.



French Wayside School

Nearly a hundred years ago children hurried to the summons of the French School bell and the words they used to greet their teacher were not "good morning" but "bonjour."

Among the first teachers were Grace Kerstetter board member and other families prominent in the early days of the school were LaPointe, Cousino, Peatie, Montrie, Lewis, Forgate and Hackman.

His letter reads, "The Wayside School has been torn down and a park has been made in memory of Ralph Miller, deceased son of Ida and Erwin Miller of Crabb Road. He was the husband of Noreen Miller."

during her first stint as the teacher of French School (1921-25) she began to call the building "The Little French School by the Wayside." As years went by it became simply Wayside School.

"there was no school when that occurred."

The building was last used in 1952 and most appropriately the teacher who locked the door for the last time was Grace Kerstetter Stratton.

In 1928 the enrollment had grown and a portable classroom was added. According to Mrs. Stratton after several years "a strong wind blew it down."
"Fortunately," she added,

On Nov. 15, 1967 the Bedford Fire Dept. No. 1 burned the French-Wayside School to the ground and the site became the Ralph Miller Park, named for a descendant of the family who had donated the land.

school is centered around the French families whose children walked to the frame building on the corner of Crabb and Substation Roads.

Several generations of the Welti family attended the school and served on its board. According to Grace Stratton last teacher George Welti served on the board for fifteen years, and John Welti, the first school graduate, for twenty years.

Jim Kinney was another

(later Stratton), Rosanne La Pointe, Elma Hubble, Alta Halt, June Black, Harry Eisenmann, Chris Rooh, and Ferne Mealy.

Grace Kerstetter was of a poetic turn of mind and