

School Days

by Lynne Belluscio

Dorothy Bater and Mrs. Costa brought in some great photos a couple of weeks ago and they included pictures taken of students at the Limerock School. The wooden two-room Limerock school was built about 1898 on the Northeast corner of Route 5 and Church Road. It replaced a stone school that was on the South side of the road. (Parts of the stone school are now part of another building.)

The wooden Limerock School was torn down in the 1950s. The district number changed. In 1866 the school was in District 7 but after that it had changed a couple of times. None of the students in the photograph are identified but it is probably from the 1920s or 30s. Many of the boys are wearing knickers and one young man in the front row has both knees of his pants torn. He is standing next to a boy with a very nice jacket and high button boots. It appears that there are only five girls in the picture.

The pictures came in while we were teaching in our "one room school" in LeRoy House. Over the years we have acquired a number of old school desks and once a year they are taken out of storage and arranged in the basement kitchen so we can hold class.

Brenda Beal, a member of the Board of Trustees of the Historical Society, and a former teacher agreed to be the school marm this year. The fourth grade students participate in an hour of strict, traditional reading, writing and arithmetic. As we explain to them what school was like "in the old days" they are reminded to be on their best behavior.

They take turns reading from a story in the *McGuffey's Reader* about Ray and his kite, while other students try their writing skills on the stone slates. Other students try writing with steel pointed pens and discover that blotters are very necessary. Luckily no one spilled the black ink. The writing is done at two tables under the window where the light is very good because, as we explain to them, schools did not have electric lights and the



large windows were important.

After reading and writing, we try a little arithmetic, with multiplication tables memorized from a little book *Marmaduke Multiplies*. Finally, the lesson ends with an old fashioned spelling bee. The words are taken from the story in the *McGuffey's Reader*. Each student is asked to stand up, repeat the word and then spell the word. It's a little intimidating for some students, but everyone has a good time and a round of applause is given to the winner.

I found a list of 101 rules and regulations, some of which are quite interesting:

1. Boys shall not chew, smoke tobacco, nor spit on the floor.
2. Girls shall not use snuff.
9. For a large room six brooms will be found sufficient to be in use. When half worn out, they will serve for sweeping the yard and when well worn down in that service, they will be useful for scrubbing with water or sand; and if properly used by the sweepers, will be evenly worn to the last.
16. To bow gracefully and respectfully on entering and leaving the schoolroom and any recitation when a teacher is present.
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27. Show two fingers when a pen is needed.
38. Rest the body on the left arm while spelling and keep eyes

directed toward their own slate.

55. No one should nick name anyone.

80. Every school house should have its own well with suitable arrangements for drink and for the cleanliness of the pupils.

81. No personal notes should be interchanged between male and female members of the school.

84. Tall trees should partially shade the school grounds.

87. There should be a wood box or closet large enough to hold several cords of wood.

91. Provision might be made for the teacher's residence in the schoolhouse and thus be a part of the teacher's compensation.

96. Fill the wash basins every morning and wash them twice a week.

100. A cellar might be paved with bricks and serve as a ply room in inclement weather.

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