

MORE GRASS HILL SCHOOL HISTORY

Take a trip down memory lane to a small old schoolhouse in West Millbury. The former Grass Hill School, which became the West Millbury School, opened in 1861 and continued in operation until 1968.

Clara Barton, American Red Cross founder, was one of the school's 19th-century teachers.

When the school closed in 1968, there were four classes in it: first and second grades downstairs in one room, and third and fourth grades upstairs in a second room. However, in the early years of the school there would have been Grades 1-8 in the building, and children would have pretty much taught themselves.

Children only went to school summers and winters because they were needed during the rest of the year for farm work. Families had to provide books and other materials.

There were a variety of rules and regulations and punishments that today would be considered politically incorrect or abusive. If a student was disobedient, he or she would come to the front of the classroom and stand with arms raised to shoulder height, with a piece of firewood in each hand. There was the traditional standing in the corner, also.

Disobedient boys might have to wear a girl's bonnet. Standing with feet apart and touching nails in the floorboards in a kind of Twister position was another punishment.