

## Amitie connection is perfect reason for impromptu country school reunion

Written by Darci Tomky

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An array of “Do you remember when...” and “Do you remember so-and-so...” could be heard at Regent Park and Carriage House last week. Several Amitie schoolmates got together Thursday, Aug. 26 for a “class reunion” of sorts.

Whether they attended Amitie school or had ties to the students, loads of memories were exchanged about the old country schoolhouse southeast of Holyoke.

Annie (Jinkens) Bahler organized the reunion because her two sisters, Edna (Jinkens) Stanley and Mary (Jinkens) Holtman, were in town for a visit. Other schoolmates attending were Bernice (Colglazier) Thompson and Marjorie (Conger) Colglazier.

They were joined by Lucille (Linnenbrink) Miles and Nadene (Douglas) Colver. Miles’ husband L.B. went to Amitie while Colver, Miles and Stanley all graduated from high school in Holyoke together.

Even though they attended school decades ago, all seven ladies had fond memories of Amitie and their school days. Bahler said, “Those were the best years of our lives, going to school, and we didn’t even realize it!”



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***Even though their school days have long passed, a group of women gather for a fun impromptu reunion to reminisce about the Amitie country school last Thursday. Pictured from left are Marjorie Colglazier, Nadene Colver, Lucille Miles, Edna Stanley, Annie Bahler, Mary Holtman and Bernice Thompson. □ □  
—Enterprise photo***

The school district was organized in 1888 with its first school, called Fairview, located in a sod house. The name changed to Amitie in 1895-96 when another sod school was built on a different site. A frame building was constructed in 1903-04.

The final two-story school was built in 1919 four miles south and six miles east of Holyoke where it sat until the school closed 40 years later.

The ladies said it was a fairly big school for a country school back then. “Oh it was a beautiful school building,” said Colglazier.

They attended Amitie through the eighth grade, and Bahler pointed out there was even a high school there for a short time. Two teachers were employed for many years, one for the upper grades and one for the lower grades.

Colglazier remembered boarding one of the teachers, Miss Thomas, at her house.

Living in the country, the women pointed out how great it was when neighbors helped their neighbors. “That was the good ole days—everybody had a big family and it was good country life,” said Bahler.

“None of us had fancy food in our school buckets like the kids do today,” she added. Vegetable

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soup day was a treat for the students.

They explained how each child was told to bring a vegetable to school that day. They were all combined into a soup, and even if the soup was all potatoes or all carrots, it was still a fun, special meal.

“Times were hard then too,” said Colglazier.

“It was hard times but there were some people that had it a lot harder than others,” added Bahler.

Amitie students rode their horses to school and might have even had a few horse races on the way home.

“We had fights plenty going home from school,” said Stanley. Everyone was full of orneriness, and she recalled how she got the reputation of kicking other kids in the shins. “I wasn’t ornery,” Stanley defended herself. “I was just holding my own.”

There was a lot of mischief, but kids weren’t mean, said Bahler.

““You get a whippin’ at school and you get one at home,’ said Dad, so you were careful not to get the first one,” pointed out Stanley.

The ladies all painted the humorous picture of the Amitie schoolhouse when the teacher had to leave for a while. They remembered how, as one of the older students, Thompson would be the one left in charge. She would have to enforce the rules when the other kids got caught throwing paper wads.

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After several other fun stories, it was easy to see how Bahler and her best friend ended up missing a lot of recess because of all their shenanigans during school.

Even with all the trouble-making, those Amitie students still got a great education. “When we left school we could all read, write, add, subtract, multiply and divide without a machine!” said Holtman.

Many of the Amitie schoolmates stayed friends after school, something evident during this informal reunion.

A 1933 autographed yearbook album from Amitie is one of Stanley’s most treasured possessions. “I wouldn’t part with that for love or money.”

The ladies talked about how some of the Amitie boys were lost in the service in WWII. The boys were older, but it still hit the community, they said.

Even though Amitie school is no longer there today, the memories carry on its tradition. As one of the many country schools in Phillips County, it plays an important role in the history of the community.