

District of Ross Mills Ross Mills Newsletter September 2019

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How did us kids get to school?



For many years in order to get to school they had to walk or there were times when dad took them by horse and ski or buggy. There were school districts every so often — that was so students didn't have so far to go. Up through the 8th grade was what was taught in the districts. If they needed more schooling they had to go to a high school. Falconer had a high school, I remember it being on Work Street. Then about 1929 or 30 a new high school was build

where it is now. By 1920 a lot of kids were going on to high school, so they had to find a way to get there. The train ran through our district so that was a way some of the time. Then in 1931 or 2 Ross Mills got a new bus — it was purchased from Parket Chevy, it was on the corner of Lafayette and Fourth Streets. Kelley Swanson lived in our District and was a salesman there. This was one of the first real school bus around at that time. It had a 6 cylinder engine with a down draft carbonator and had hydraulic brakes. Chains had to be put on the tires during the winter. The roads weren't plowed like they are now. I also remember the emergency door in the back with the light above it. This bus had its work cut out for it. With all the bad roads and all the snow it had bulk.

As time went on more buses started to come to the high school and for a long time our Ross Mills was the only yellow bus. I remember when I was still going to Ross Mills School, the bus picking us up and going on field trips. It was a busy bus and it kept going. I don't know the date, but I was out of school, maybe 20 years or so our district got the 2nd new bus. This was a big bus and when we centralized this one joined the other bus in the Falconer fleet and was #20. All buses were yellow by this time.

~ Emory Holmquist

*We would like to welcome several new families to our Ross Mills
Neighborhood!*





SONGBIRDS "Sings like a bird" is a common saying. It is always meant to be a compliment. And certainly anyone that sings like a thrush or a mockingbird sings very well indeed. But not all birds sing well. Some do not sing at all. And some have unpleasant voices. No one would be happy to be told that he sounded like a crow or a loon or a blue jay.

No one agrees as to which songbird is the very best singer. There are many good ones. The pictures show some of the best singers in the United States. The catbird, rose-breasted grosbeak, goldfinch, and meadowlark are other good singers. In the Old World the nightingale is famous for its magnificent singing.

When birds sing they are not singing to us. Instead they are singing to one another. They do most of their singing during their mating and nesting season. Male birds do almost all the singing.

Some kinds of birds seem to have favorite places for singing. A brown thrasher, for instance, perches himself on the top-most branch of a big tree to sing his song.

A bird produces its song in a voice-box which is a part of its windpipe. This voice-

box is called a syrinx. It is much like the voice-box we have in our throats.

Birds can be told by their songs. No two birds have songs that are just alike.

Bird lovers have tried to write down bird songs in different ways. One way is to write them in words that give the rhythm of the song. The song of the Maryland yellow-throat is written as "Witchery, witchery" or "Which is it? Which is it?" The song of the whitethroated sparrow is "Old Sam Peabody, Peabody, Peabody." This is the brown thrasher's song: "Hurry up, hurry up, plow it, plow it, harrow it, harrow it, hoe it, hoe it, scatter it, scatter it, seed it, seed it, cover it, cover it, rake it, rake it, push it in, push it in, weed it, weed it, pull it up, leave it alone." This way of writing down a song does not give any idea of the song's beauty.

Another way to write down a bird's song is to write the notes just as the notes are written for the songs we sing. The songs of many birds have been written in this way.

Some birds that have no songs play what we might call instrumental music. The woodpeckers are drummers. Grouse beat the air with their wings. The prairie chicken makes a queer booming noise with air sacs at the sides of its head. (See BIRDS; CANARY; ROBIN.)



The following article about the HISTORY OF GERRY is from a book compiled by
Richard W. Holley

The town has gone through many name changes in its short history.

Because the first settlers traveled from Vermont in 1815 it was called Vermont Settlement. This must have meant the town. William Olney was the first to settle in the hamlet area in 1816 when he built a log cabin on the hill behind today's Fire hall. William Olney was truly the founder of the hamlet. Charles Gates, an early historian in Gerry, in 1887 wrote that Olney was the founder. Gates knew a number of the early settlers and related a few stories. Too bad he didn't record much more. James Bucklin, "Old Jim," (kind of a wild one as the story goes) did not come until 1817 when he purchased about 240 acres in the area that is now the hamlet of Gerry, including William Olney's claim. It is not sure what happened to Olney. In 1818 they started calling the hamlet area Vermont. In 1820 Bucklin built a tavern with a low veranda across the whole front on the southwest corner.

Thus in 1820 they started to call it Bucklin's Corners. For a couple of years, in the 1860's, the name was switched to Summerville, probably after the hotel called "Summerville Mansion" located near the corner. An old map indicates it was where Jarvis Wilson built the store. During the second half of the 1800's the name was slowly changing to Gerry. Remember that there is no village in the Town of Gerry. The village area is a hamlet, so Gerry refers to the whole town. During this time the hamlet area was referred to "Vermont in Gerry" because the post office still carried the name of Vermont on it.

During 1811 the Old Chautauqua Road was cut from Mayville to Ellicottville at a price of \$10.00 a mile. The work through Gerry was done by John West, Peter Barnhart and Dexter Barnes.