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Did You Know...

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DID YOU KNOW

over one hundred and fifty years ago students were reading by "Reader"; i.e., they had to achieve mastery at one level before proceeding to the next

that at one time the Michigan Department of Education issued a course of study for all rural teachers, outlining the requirements to be taught

that even as late as the 1930's all seventh and eighth grade students went to the County Seat each spring to take the state examinations

years ago rural teachers were asking "upper grade" Johnny to help "lower grade" Suzie with her work

a student who was exceptionally good in one subject could "listen in" and/or go to a class that was above his grade level

if a student were below grade level, he could get several re-runs on a skill as it was being taught at the lower level

gold stars were given for excellent work

rural parents who were usually too busy to visit school got a home visit from the teacher

boys and girls learned independent study habits early because the classes were short and many

that every morning for ten or fifteen minutes the teacher read aloud a chapter or two from an interesting book — to be continued each morning until the entire book was completely read to the children

there was a separate penmanship class

all "good" papers were written in pen and ink

poetry was memorized

children did factoring in math

exhibits of academic work were saved for the county fair

And that's the way it was in the one-room rural schools.

by Norma K. Conklin

(Norma K. Conklin is Assistant Professor Emeritus, Ferris State College.)