

## Churches in Millersburg

### The Methodist Church

Over the years the village of Millersburg has seen some churches come and go but one church has remained a constant the entire time, the Methodist church. In fact, it came before the village was even incorporated.



It was in the spring of 1898 when Mrs. Sandy Hamilton opened up a Sunday school in the little one-room schoolhouse overlooking the Ocqueoc River. Ministers of all denominations were invited to come and hold preaching services. Rev. Orin Doolittle was the first to respond, as did several others. This arrangement held through 1898 and 1899 when it was decided to have one denomination take over. The men gathered to vote, no women were allowed to vote at that time, and after three votes it was decided to go with the Methodist denomination.

The church was organized on February 21, 1900 and the task of building a church was started. By October the new church was dedicated. The church was on Gardner Street, just down from where the Woodwinds II restaurant is today.

The church building was used for more than church services. It was a vital part of the new community. Social gatherings were conducted, theatrical plays were produced, and high school graduation ceremonies were celebrated all at this community church in addition to the standard weddings, baptisms, and funerals.

It was at one such funeral that spelled the demise of the first Methodist church. As preparations were being made for the funeral of John Maynard on April 26, 1926 a spark ignited the cedar shingles on the roof. The structure burned, but the contents were saved. A decision would have to be made on what to do now.

After purchasing the Baptist Church and moving it to the present location work was done to enlarge it immediately. Over the years much has been done to keep the building in wonderful condition. A basement was added during the 50s to provide needed Sunday school rooms and a kitchen. Stained glass windows purchased from a demolished church downstate also added to the beauty of the church.

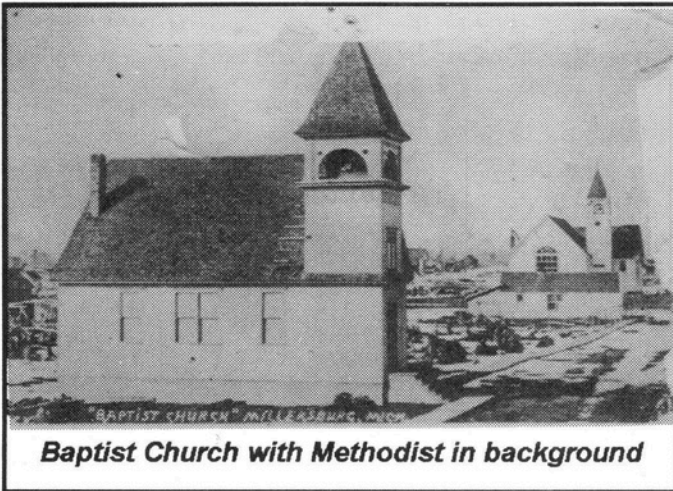
This church became the gathering point for the community both for social occasions and spiritual needs. It has been used for weddings, funerals, plays, graduations, and even as a place for school when the one in town had burned.

### The Baptist Church

In November of 1904 church services were conducted for the first time at the new Baptist Church just built in Millersburg. It was in the vicinity of where the original Methodist church was. It had taken quite a task for the congregation to bring the church to completion. The following is the description of the building as described in the November issue of the Presque Isle County News.

*The edifice is modern in style, 34 feet by 40 feet, a recess on the north for choir and pulpit. The tower is constructed with belfry and furnishes a convenient vestibule to the auditorium.*

*The inside is finished in ash, oiled and polished, with maple floor. Noiseless folding doors open between the vestibule and the auditorium. The walls and ceiling will be used for the present as they are to be decorated later.*



*The location is proving more and more satisfactory. The village council has opened Elm and Hawks streets leading to it, constructed a sewer on Elm and ordered sidewalks on both streets with a street lamp at the corner.*

*The edifice will be an ornament to the village and has been built through great sacrifice on the part of the limited number of members.*

Dedication services were held on the 13<sup>th</sup> of November 1904.

The Baptist church eventually closed due to lack of parishioners. In 1926, when

the Methodist church burned it was sold to that congregation and the structure was moved to the present location on Main Street.

The present day Ocqueoc Baptist Church is located about a mile north of town on Millersburg Road at the "Y." Its roots come from the original church on Ocqueoc Road in Ocqueoc Township.

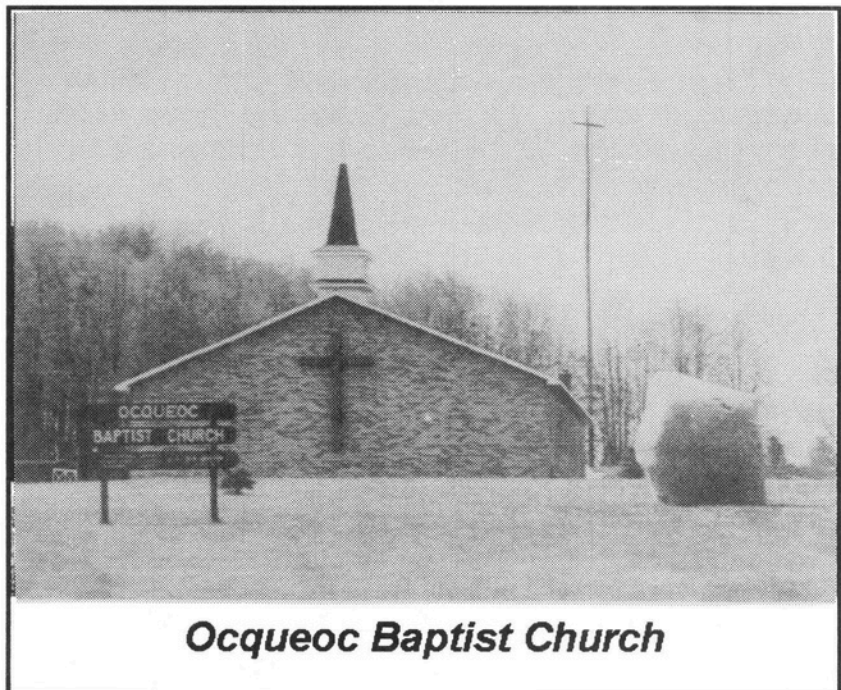
In June of 1934 Pastor Steve H. Houbolt and his wife, Francis attended a one-day conference in the old Methodist church building. After the evening service seven local families asked them to return in August for consideration to become their minister.

In September they started their ministry above the Richie General Store. The conditions were less than ideal. Benches without backs, no electric lights, and a wheezy pump organ, a shaky library table for the pulpit, and a potbelly stove for heat.

The home of the minister and his wife was an old tool shed out in a pasture in Silver Creek. It was converted into living quarters with no electricity, and water was hauled from the creek for drinking and other purposes. The next spring they moved into Millersburg but living conditions didn't improve.

Services were conducted in both Millersburg at the town hall, and in Ocqueoc. Sometimes services also were conducted in Rogers City at the German Aid Hall.

Eventually the services were moved into the old school on North Allis Highway and continued there for many years. Then in 1941 on land donated by the Alex King family, a small church was built seating 140 people.



In 1980, land was purchased from Winnie Inglis, part of the old Brenner farm at the "Y." In October a groundbreaking ceremony was held to begin work on the new church. It would be large enough to seat 300 people.

As work commenced on the building it should be noted no money was borrowed and the members donated a lot of the work. At the completion the building was free and clear from debt. Quite an accomplishment!

### **The Catholic Church**

In the June issues of the Presque Isle County News it mentioned that Fr. Albin, of the Onaway Catholic Church, made arrangements that a Catholic Church would be erected in Millersburg. Charles R. Miller had donated the site, one acre between the bridge and the Whiteley residence.

This apparently didn't work out and by July it was reported that the society owned two good sites and couldn't decide which one to use. Most churches didn't have this kind of problem. These lots were located in the Willings addition on the hill overlooking the village.

In May of 1906 the lots were being stumped and by June the timbers were being brought in for the new building. Sometime in between 1906 and July of 1909 the church building were finally built. The following is the article published in the Presque Isle County News, July 17, 1909:

#### ***New Catholic Church opened and used for first time***

*Bishop Richter of Grand Rapids, accompanied by Father Albin of Onaway, and Father Kaplanowski of Metz, paid Millersburg an official visit Wednesday afternoon, confirming class and opening the new Catholic Church. The church was not formally blessed at this time, the Bishop stating that such a ceremony could only be performed during mass and that mass could only be celebrated in the morning. On his next visit this ceremony will take place.*

*Bishop Richter and Fathers Albin and Kaplanowski drove in from Ocqueoc, where the Bishop had blessed the new church and the cemetery, besides confirming a class, arriving here about 12:30 o'clock. S.F. Derry, who took them to Mrs. Stevenson's, where an elegant brook trout dinner was in waiting, met them. Besides the Bishop and party, those present were Messrs. S. F. Derry, C. R. Willings, H. L. Abraham's, J. L. Scowten, Chas. Atkins and H.H. Whiteley. After doing ample justice to the meal and enjoying a pleasant conversation, the Bishop and attending Fathers drove at once to the church, where a large audience, which taxed the capacity of the structure, was in waiting.*

*Bishop Richter addressed the congregation briefly and simply, thanking the people of Millersburg, for the interest they had shown in the new church and expressing his gratitude to those not of the Catholic faith who helped liberally in its construction. He then went on to discuss religion, the need for it today, its relation to morality and the present day tendency toward infidelity, which he urged his people to combat strongly.*

*For the benefit of the Protestant part of his audience he explained the sacrament of confirmation, which he then administered to the following: John Garney, Mrs. Angus Wilder, Miss Vene Rose, Mrs. S. V. Spencer.*

*Bishop Richter announced that the new church would bear the name "St. Stephen."*

*From Millersburg the Bishop and party went to Metz, Rogers and Posen, which latter place he has been visiting regularly for twenty-six years. He is now seventy-three years old but very active and in apparent good health.*

*The new Catholic Church will be a handsome building both within and without when completely finished. It is located on Sarah Street in the Willings addition on a lofty site, which gives it a commanding view. It is rectangular in shape with the sacristy at the rear. The interior finishes of Georgia pine, which, with the hardwood floor, are finished in the natural color. The altar and rail are handsome and give a particularly fine and churchly effect to the interior.*

*indefatigable zeal for which he is noted, set himself to the task. Adlor Prevo was one of those who early put their shoulder to the wheel and started the undertaking. Father Albin was successful in raising some money and then S. F. Derry took hold and with that facility for which he is famous and from his wide acquaintance was able to raise a goodly sum. He also helped liberally himself and for the past year has been personally supervising the construction and finishing of the church and great credit must be given him.*

*The Catholic ladies have also assisted as far as was in their power. Considerable yet remains to be done but Mr. Derry has every hope that ways and means will shortly be forthcoming to complete the edifice.*

Mamie Dalton Heibel in a letter sent to the Presque Isle Advance described the church as a small white building with three windows each containing red and yellow circles of glass on each side.

On May 8, 1930 Mrs. Krauth purchased the Catholic Church and had Archie Schuler tear it down. He planned to remodel his home and build some new porches with the material salvaged from the church.

### **Assembly of God**

At one point in the 1950s there was a small church in the village that housed the congregation of the Assembly of God. It was started in the old Roadhouse store occupied by Mina and Fred Freel. This church only lasted a few years before closing.

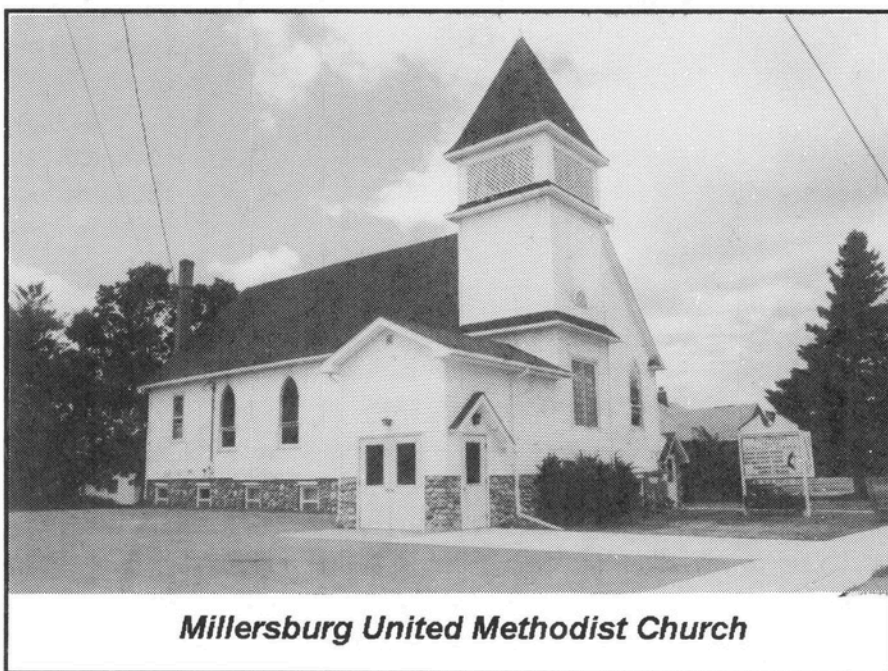
A man by the name of Bill Roderick conducted Pentecostal services for several years. Then an Assembly of God preacher came to Millersburg to hold services. He worked as the station agent in Onaway to be able to earn a living as there wasn't enough money in a small church to keep him and his family. These services were held in the upstairs of the old bank building.

The next minister was Harry Farmer sometime in the late 50s. By this time there were several families attending the church. The congregation hauled logs from out by Jay Trafelet's farm to build a small church across from the Roadhouse home.

The last minister was Pastor Tillitz. The congregation couldn't quite see eye to eye with him and a lot of the people stopped attending. It was because of the lack of parishioners that the church eventually closed for good in the 60s.

### **Present day churches**

At the present day there is only one church in the village proper. It is the Millersburg United Methodist Church. The congregation just recently celebrated 100 years of worship in the community and hopes to continue for many more. There is no one living in the parsonage, as the church is part of a district, which includes the Onaway Methodist Church, and the minister lives in that community. There are about 65 members of the congregation at this time.



**Millersburg United Methodist Church**

## The Detroit & Mackinac Railroad Depot

The first depot in Millersburg was finished on October 6, 1898 by the Detroit and Mackinac Railroad line. It was in use until after the fire of 1911 went through and was eventually destroyed by fire. The cause is unknown but most likely from sparks from a passing engine. The entire building was made of wood and probably destroyed around 1914.

The rumors that have gone around for close to one hundred years, is that the villages of Providence and Millersburg were in a contest to see which would win out in getting a depot. When it was certain that Millersburg was to have it, Providence slowly dried up and disappeared. Not sure if these rumors are true but it is known that Providence never had a depot.

In June of 1917 there was a small one-line notice in the Presque Isle Advance under the Millersburg Local News that a work crew was in town and work was progressing on the new depot. Depots didn't get much notice in those days, as every little town seemed to have one.

The new depot was built of concrete blocks much the same as those used in the Willing's Bank and house. It was roofed with slate that still stands to this day. There was a loading dock all around three sides of the building and four cargo doors in the cargo area.

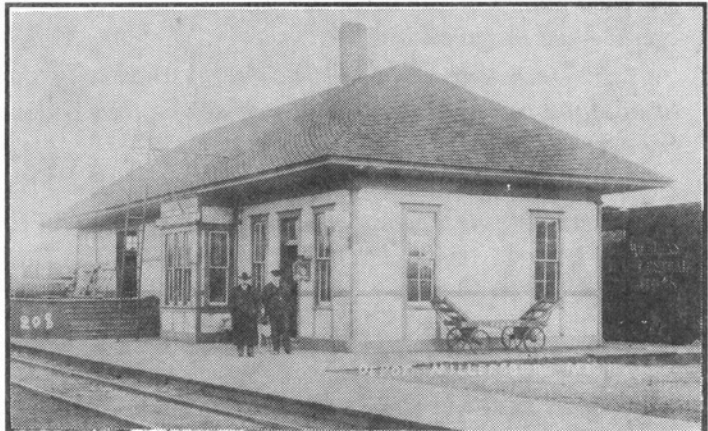
The inside of the office was paneled in virgin yellow pine paneling with no knotholes. Some of this is still in the office in the ceiling. Some time after the closing of the depot in 1949, Mr. Pinkerton, president of the railroad, had his workman remove the paneling. In fact, he came and counted every board to make sure no one made off with any.

The ticket window and interior walls were removed and the building has been lying vacant over the years except for storage of building supplies for Pine Lumber, which has had the lease on the building for the past 50 years. The ticket window with glass intact has been found and hopefully will be back in its rightful place in the near future.

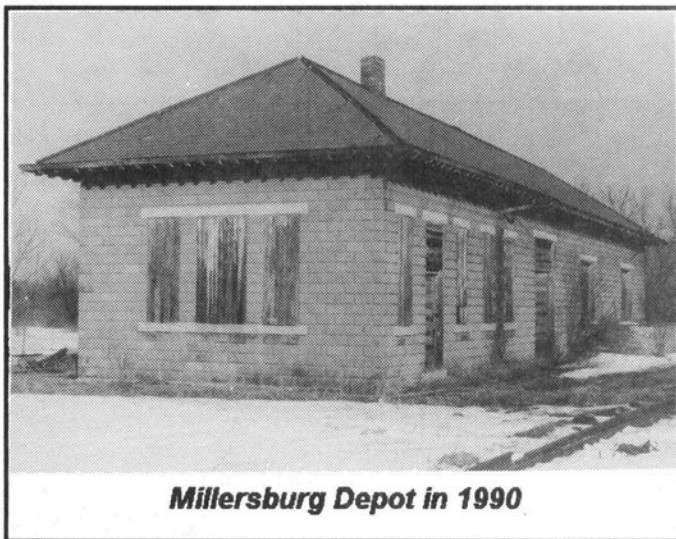
In the 1990s the D&M Railroad sold the land to the DNR as part of the "Rails to Trails"

program for snowmobilers.

The Millersburg Historical Society in conjunction with the Millersburg Village Council are trying to obtain ownership of the building and surrounding area to preserve it from further damage and to restore it to its former glory. The society is publishing this book with support from the surrounding community and all the proceeds from this book will be used to help with the restoration of the building.



*First Millersburg Depot- 1912*

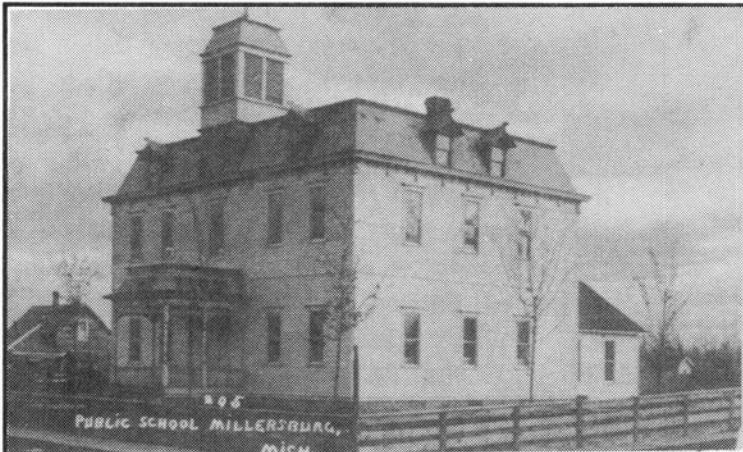


*Millersburg Depot in 1990*

## Millersburg School

Much has been written about the beginning of the Millersburg School (see history of Case Twp. and Millersburg) but not the years after it got its start.

The first school building was just a small one-room log cabin built in May of 1898 on top of a hill overlooking the Oqueoc River. It soon overflowed. The next year a large one-room facility was constructed on a better site. That fall 125 students in grades 1-10 were enrolled in classes and taught by Lucy Steele and Judson Selleck.



**The third Millersburg School, burned in 1911 fire**

adequate facilities for grades one through 11. This building was destroyed in the 1911 fire. The school board agreed that the present site was too small and talk was of building a new school on the north side of town. In the end it was decided to stay on the same block as Mr. Holihan gave the school board his five lots where his house had once stood. They decided to build a two-story brick building with five rooms. It was built in 1912.

A gymnasium/auditorium was constructed next to the school in 1948. The school building was to stand for 41 years and many of the people still living in the "burg" have fond memories of attending it. On February 13, 1953, a Friday, it was gutted by fire. The cried went out "the school house is on fire" and the village came to life. The fire started in the furnace room but the interior was too badly burned to save.

It was decided to wait till spring before tearing it down and rebuilding. The students were sent to several different building around town for their classes. Some were placed in the Methodist Church, some in the old fire hall, and some in the gymnasium.

In early 1953 plans had been completed for building a two-room addition to the brick building, in fact the contract had been let and some of the material purchased. The fire changed all the plans and a new contract was entered into. More money had to be voted. Everybody chipped in and helped.

A large two-story four-room structure was added to the front of the existing school. The small one-room part was moved back a little to accommodate the new addition. This structure is still standing as part of the Herb Stock home on the corner of Cedar and Millers Streets.

The board hired five new teachers; all of them graduates of the State Normal School in Ypsilanti. Harry Thoms was the school's first principal.

The new building provided

### Millersburg School

District No. 6

Millersburg, Case Township,

Presque Isle Co., Mich.

1912-1913

NINA JACOB, Teacher

#### PUPILS

##### FIFTH GRADE

Mildred Dalton	Pearl Duval
Clare Friers	Della Fortier
Sadie Hart	James McKee
Marion McKee	Leora Moore
Elizabeth Nowland	Earl Robbins

##### SIXTH GRADE

May Adams	Lena Domke
Anna Krest	Donald McQuaid
Harry Moran	William Nowland
Harry Phelps	Freeda Robbins
Homer Robbins	Roy Robbins
Walter Robbins	Manilla Waltanburg
Ethel Burnham	Florence Stedman

##### SEVENTH GRADE

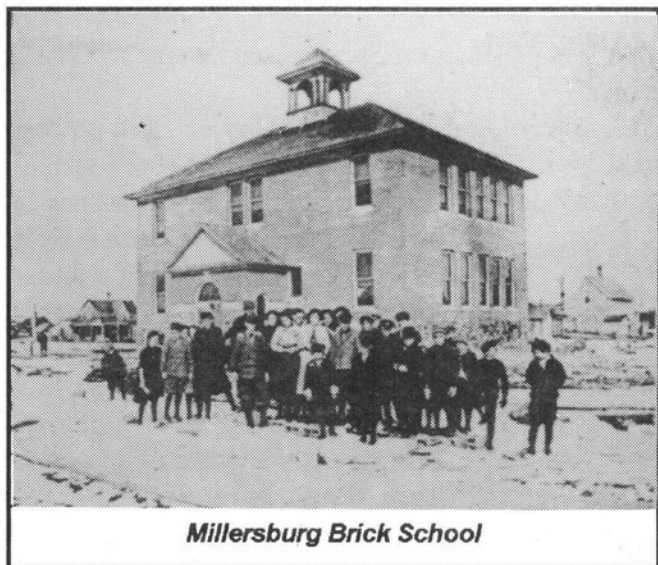
James Archambaul	Foster Burch
Helen Craig	R. J. Crow
Emma Domke	Lester Douglas
Clifford Friers	Sarah Hill
Conrad Kroening	Lee Schuler
Florence Whitsitt	Gertrude Willings

Bert Duval

#### SCHOOL OFFICERS

C. M. Robbins, Pres.	W. B. Grambau, Sec.
H. H. Whitely, Treas.	Amos Lowm
	Chas. Atkins

The new building cost \$95,000 of which a bond issue, to be retired in ten years, raised \$52,000; the rest was insurance on the old building and the money in the building fund. The new school was started in August of 1953 and completed in five months.



*Millersburg Brick School*

On February 13, 1954 the folks in Millersburg were invited to the dedication of a new, modern school. The formal opening included speakers and members of the various committees being called upon to give remarks. They included: Roy McIntosh and Charles Walter of the building committee; Neil Whitsitt, president of the board of education; Felix Heron, supervisor of Case township; and Fred Heron, county school superintendent.

Prominent in the drive for better school facilities was the board of education members, Frank Schweisow, Clinton McDonald, Floyd Devitt, Felix Heron, Neil Whitsitt, and Elmer Banks; the men's building committee, Cliff Roadhouse, Charles Walter, Chester Winfield, Felix Heron and Roy McIntosh; women's building committee, Leora Thomas, Leta Fitch, Beulah Brenner, Albina Freeman, Lucy Mills and Lorena Russell.

The building was made of cinder block construction with steel beams, doors and equipment, reinforced gypsum poured roof and very little wood to make it more fireproof.

A one-floor building, well lighted with windows on all sides (later covered up to conserve energy.) It housed six classrooms, a cafeteria, toilet and shower facilities, and special accommodations for younger children. The kitchen was well appointed for its time.

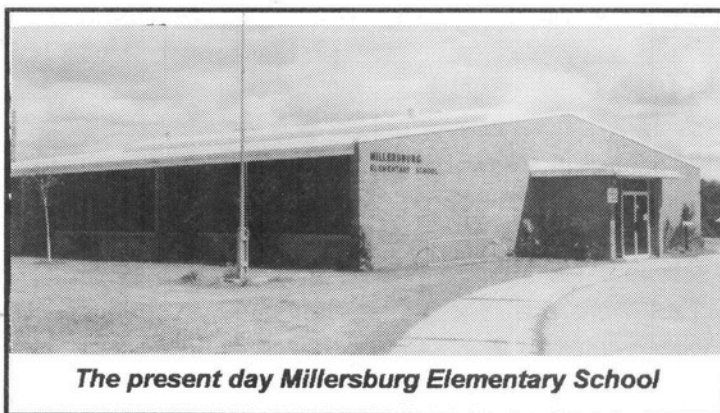
The school is heated with steam, the boiler having stoker with electrical control. The school is attached to the community hall for use as a gymnasium.

The teaching staff of the school at this time was Lucy Mills, kindergarten and first grade, Grace Atkins, second and third grades, Lucille Rogers, fourth and fifth grades, Donald Mercer, sixth, seventh, and eighth grades, and Supt. E. W. Phelps who also taught ninth and tenth grades.

Three years after the fire that destroyed the school, another fire did damage to the stage end of the community hall. Damage was confined to the stage area, which had been undergoing extensive improvements. It was estimated the fire started from welding sparks under the stage area. This happened three years and three days after the fire that destroyed the school.

During the early 1960s the school was consolidated with the other schools in the area and became part of the Onaway Area School District. In recent years it has resisted attempts to close the school permanently and send all the area children to the Onaway School.

The school at this time has kindergarten through fourth grade, and houses about 100 students.



*The present day Millersburg Elementary School*