

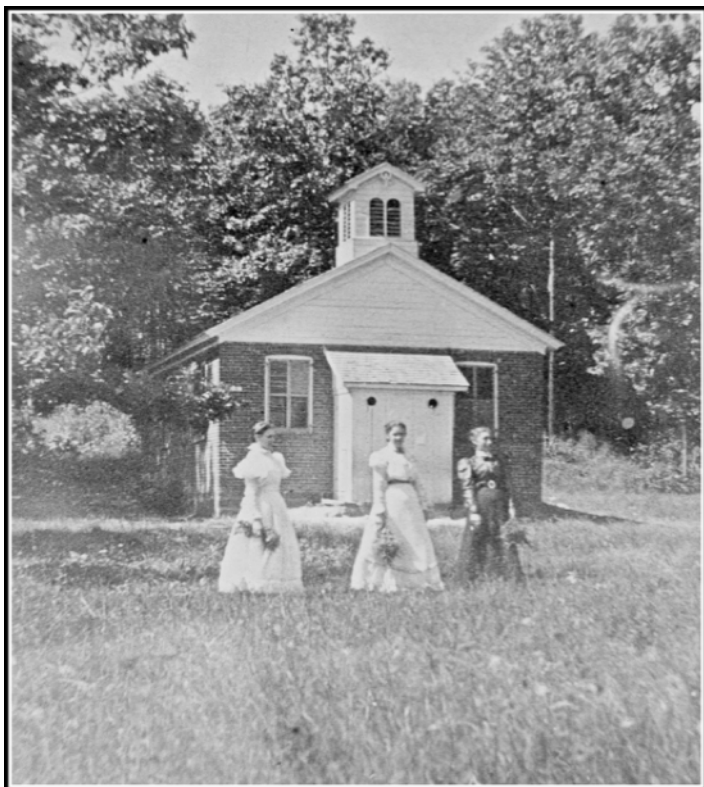
GLEN ROCK HISTORICAL & PRESERVATION SOCIETY PRESENTS:

GLEN ROCK HISTORY

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BACK TO SCHOOL, CIRCA 1890s



*Jean Edwards
(in the center)
poses with two
of her cousins
in front of the
Ridgewood-Grove
School #44
around 1890.*

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Schools have always been front and center in Glen Rock life. In fact, it was a disagreement with an education plan that spurred the town fathers to form an independent borough in 1894. At that point in time, the area that became Glen Rock formed parts of Ridgewood Township and Saddle River Township, with the majority of children attending the rural one-room schoolhouse (School #44) located at the intersection of Rock Road and Ackerman Avenue.

In the early 1890s, Ridgewood Township in particular was undergoing growing pains. The improvements in train services to Jersey City and ferry service into New York City made the area more attractive to home buyers, and the population began to increase steadily. More families resulted in more children for the local schools. The Township Board decided to build a modern, centrally located eight-room school on Beech Street (now Cottage Place) in Ridgewood and close the three small rural schools that previously educated the area's children. When the new school plans were amended to build a brick structure, instead of a wooden building, the price tag skyrocketed to the sum of \$50,000. The practical and frugal soon-to-be Glen Rockers rebelled; a swift house to house survey by lantern light was conducted, followed by the filing of incorporation papers in Hackensack to form an independent borough (just hours ahead of papers filed to create the Village of Ridgewood, which included the Glen Rock land).

(continued from Page 1)

Aside from the increase in taxes resulting from the Beech Street School, Glen Rock residents were concerned with the distance to the new school over unpaved and rutted roads without sidewalks. The increased travel time would also take too much time away from chores; this was a farming community and the smaller family farms, in particular, depended upon the work of young and old alike.

The original survey submitted to Hackensack with the incorporation paperwork in September 1894 referred to "So. Ridgewood", but on second thought that name was scratched out and "Glen Rock" was handwritten in its place to avoid any future confusion with neighboring Ridgewood.

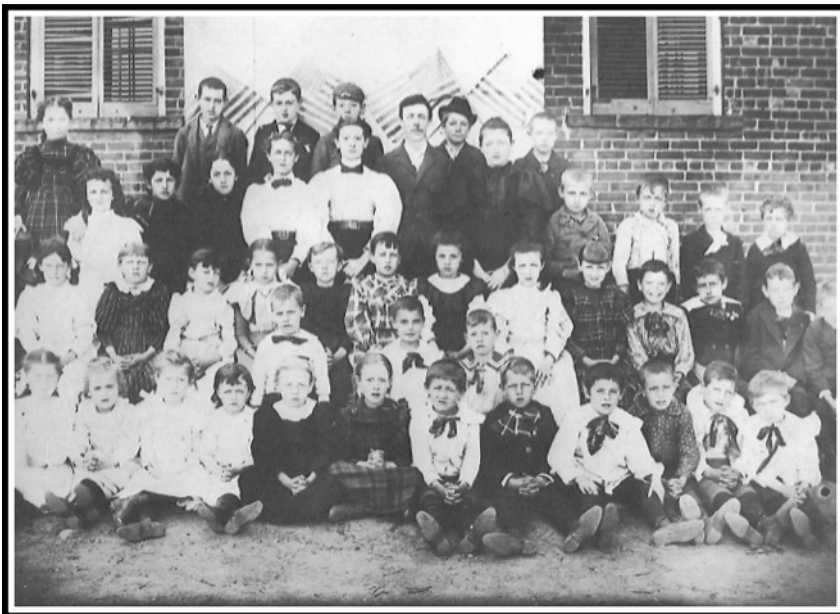


The Beech Street School, now the offices of the Ridgewood Board of Education. It was added to the National Register of Historic Places in 1998.

RIDGEWOOD-GROVE SCHOOL #44

Free public education for rich and poor alike did not exist in New Jersey until 1871. Until that time, schools operated through tuition fees for both religious and private schools; education of the poor was left to charity.

The one-room School #44, known affectionately as The Little Red School House, provided instruction through the 8th grade. It was built in 1866 on land loaned by Henry I. Hopper with the stipulation that, if it was no longer to be used for a school, the land would revert to private ownership. The school entrance was on Ackerman Avenue and children were called to class by the teacher ringing a hand bell. In the early 1890s, enrollment varied between 55 and 75 pupils, ages 4 and up, with one teacher instructing across the grades. In September 1899, a second teacher was hired to help with a student body numbering 90 (school capacity was officially 50). The overcrowded conditions convinced Glen Rock residents to fund a new school. The school board considered several sites and decided to purchase land along Maple Avenue from John H. Robinson, who offered to accept \$500 for the property (half the price of his closest competitor).



*Mr. Charles Carter and his students at School #44 in 1899.
This was the last class to attend the school.*

The front lobby of School #44 held a water pail with tin dippers. A school well was dug in 1900 but until then the water had to be carried to the school from a private well several blocks away. The older boys carried the water, as well as the wood for the pot-bellied stove providing heat in the winter. The girls pitched in with the sweeping and dusting until a janitor was hired by the new Glen Rock Council in 1894.

Desks were usually two-seaters (two pupils per desk), although as the student population increased there were often three pupils to a desk. The teacher's desk was raised on a platform across the front of the room, with a slate blackboard on the wall behind the desk.

The school day began at 9 a.m. and ended at 4 p.m., with an hour break for lunch (brought from home) and recess games such as tag and blind man's bluff. The school year began on September 1st each year. Summer vacation started in the middle of June.

School attendance fluctuated with the seasons as farm duties kept many of the boys at home during planting and harvest times.

The Ridgewood-Grove School #44 was also used for borough council meetings and church meetings. New ideas such as graded schools coupled with the growing school population resulted in the construction of a new, modern (wooden) school on Maple Avenue in 1900. This new school, School #1, was located in today's Central School parking lot.

SCHOOL #1

The first classes were held in School #1 on March 8, 1900. There were two classrooms on the first floor plus a small meeting room upstairs. A double sliding door divided the classrooms and the door could be opened to make one large room for morning exercises and for evening entertainment. Entrance to the building was on the left for boys, on the right for girls. Likewise, the playground behind the school was divided into a boys' play area and a girls' play area, bisected by a low stone wall. The wooden privies (one for boys, one for girls) were also located outside in the back.



School #1, showing the girls' entrance door on the right and the large bell tower on the roof.

Classroom light was from hanging oil lamps. Gas lights were installed in 1908 and electric lights in 1910. The school expansion in 1910 also provided for the first sanitary toilets in the building.

In his memoirs, George Hubschmitt remembers a frightening day soon after the new school opened when he helped his relative, David Courter (who was the janitor at the school) douse burning embers on the shingle roof by throwing pails of water from the school's bell tower. A fire had been sparked by a passing steam locomotive, spewing hot coals that set to flame the woodlands between the upper railroad tracks and Maple Avenue. This event underscored the need for a Glen Rock Fire Department, which was organized in 1910; it is not surprising that the first firehouse was located adjacent to the school grounds.

REPORT CARD, 1907

The Historical Society's collection includes a 4th grade Report Card for Lilly Hubschmitt from 1907. Report cards were sent home monthly for parental signatures. Lilly received grades for the following disciplines: Reading, Writing, Drawing, Spelling, Arithmetic, Language, Geography and Hygiene. "Hygiene" was defined as: "Anatomy and physiology sufficient for understanding the laws of health; simple experiments; effects of the use of alcoholic drinks, tobacco, tea & coffee." She was also marked for Deportment and ranked each marking period. Lilly finished the 1907-8 school year ranked #1 in the class.

G.R.H.P.S.

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The GRHPS Mission Statement:

To heighten the public's awareness of, and
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development of Glen Rock, Bergen County,
New Jersey

Meetings are held on the THIRD Thursday of
the month at 7:30 p.m., September through
June, at the Main Line Station

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Nov. 27, 2016 Dec. 18, 2016