



Timelines of  
Point  
Pleasant  
History

# History of Point Pleasant Beach Schools



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**Point Pleasant  
Historical Society &  
Museum**

416 New Jersey Avenue  
PO Box 1273  
Pt. Pleasant Beach, NJ 08742  
(732) 892-3091

Web: [www.pphsm.org](http://www.pphsm.org)  
Facebook: @PPHSMNJ  
Twitter: @PointMuseum  
Email:

[ppbhistoricalsociety@gmail.com](mailto:ppbhistoricalsociety@gmail.com)

Prior to the mid 1800s, a formal education was hard to come by in Ocean County. Schoolhouses were few and far between. The first public schoolhouse in Brick Township (which then included Point Pleasant) was erected around 1850 in Burrsville (Laurelton). As was the practice, one teacher and a township superintendent were responsible for educating the children, as well as maintaining the school. This one-room schoolhouse opened the door for a formal education in Brick. Although a far distance from those children living in Point Pleasant, this school was actually built at the center of Brick Township's population.

The first public school in Point Pleasant was built during the summer of 1867. It was also a one-room building, 20 x 34 feet with a six foot portico and a coal burning stove. The school was located on a one acre tract of land on the south side of Arnold Avenue near the intersection with Lincoln Avenue. Prior to this date, an old dilapidated building was used to hold school lessons. A second one-room schoolhouse was built the following year south of Lakewood Road near the present Point Pleasant Canal. According to county school records, this school was designated Point Pleasant Bay in school district number nine, but was known locally as Pine Grove Academy. Both of these schools served the needs of the community, while those seeking a higher education attended schools in the cities.

The opportunity for a more comprehensive curriculum arrived with a new multi-room school in 1888. This wooden two story building was constructed on property at the southeast corner of Trenton and Gowdy Avenues. The first classes in the new school were conducted that September under the direction of Charles H. Knowles, the first principal. Elementary grades were held in the first floor classrooms while seventh and eighth grades were held in a room on the second floor. Next to this classroom was Education Hall, a large assembly room which was frequently rented out for various social events. In 1893 a 450 pound bell was purchased for the school's bell tower, and by 1900 kindergarten through two years of high school were being taught.

In January 1900 the Pine Grove Academy burned to the ground. The school year was completed in Hance's Hall while Brick Township officials contemplated building a new school for Original Ocean Road School West Point Pleasant. This became a reality in 1901 when a new six-room school on Ocean Road was dedicated (left). This wooden school contained grades one through eight. On the second floor was an all-purpose room that was used as a gym and also contained a piano for entertainment. There were two out-houses, one for the boys and one for the girls with a wooden fence between. A bucket of drinking water would be kept in the cloak room with a dipper, as it was unusual for a student to be lucky enough to have his own drinking cup. In the meantime, the old Arnold Avenue schoolhouse was sold to Isaac Cohen for \$92. The building was soon moved east into town and rebuilt into a store.

In Point Pleasant Beach, the first graduation from the two year high school program was held in Arnold Hall in 1901 with seven graduates. A four year high school program was instituted in 1903 and in 1906 its first five graduates received diplomas. In February 1908 the Point Pleasant Beach school was destroyed by fire. Work was started immediately on a new larger school which opened a year later. This four story brick and wood building contained ten classrooms and an auditorium on the top floor. Fire again struck in July 1912 when this school was gutted. That September, classes were held in the Backes Building (now the Antique Emporium) while the school was rebuilt minus the fourth floor.

The Brick Township school in West Point Pleasant also was to meet a fiery fate. In March 1915 this school burned to the ground. A new brick school rose from the ashes and opened a year to the day after the fire. Additions were made to this school, known as the Ocean Road School, in 1930 and 1950. This second Ocean Road School was torn down in 1992 and replaced with the present school. In 1922, a new high school was completed in Point Pleasant Beach, relieving the severely overcrowded conditions (below). The old high school was now used as a grammar school and later became known as the "annex". It was torn down in 1973. An addition to the high school was completed in 1937. Further additions and renovations were made in 1963 and 1976. The grammar school moved into the G. Harold Antrim Elementary School on Niblick Street in 1954. Both schools continue to serve Point Pleasant Beach today.

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