

One-Room Schoolhouses

in Monmouth and Ocean Counties



The classroom display at the Giffordtown School House Museum in Tuckerton features the original desks, books, and chalkboards from the the Giffordtown School.

several one-room schoolhouses have survived and can be found throughout Ocean and Monmouth counties. Many date back to the late 1800s and have maintained their original design elements.

MONMOUTH COUNTY

GEORGIA ROAD SCHOOL HOUSE, FREEHOLD

Corner of Jackson Mills and Georgia Roads, Freehold

www.oakleyfarmmuseum.org/west-freehold-schoolhouse

The Georgia Road School House is one of two original schoolhouses still standing in Freehold Township. The school was originally established by a royal charter of King George II in 1735. A stipulation in the original deed states that the property must always be used for education. The school operated continuously from 1735 until 1935. The first school building on the site was a log cabin that was replaced in 1842. However, a fire destroyed that building twenty years later, and it was replaced by the current schoolhouse building. A woodshed and outhouses on site were built in 1993 by Kiva High School, Monmouth County Vocational School, for the Freehold Township Centennial Project 1693-1993. Today, it is a historic landmark and main-

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Picture, if you will, a medium-sized room with tall windows, wood walls, a pot-bellied stove in the middle, and a chalkboard near the front. You scamper into the room after hearing the teacher ringing the bell to signal the beginning of the school day and take your seat on a hard wooden bench that is anchored to the floor. As you prepare to learn reading, writing, and arithmetic, you inhale the musty odor created by the combination of chalk, dust, and dirt and wish for a drink from the pail of water—so fresh from the stream it is still chilled.

These were normal conditions students encountered more than a century ago in New Jersey's one-room schoolhouses. Through the early to mid-1900s, in stark contrast to today's schools, boys and girls would enter through separate doors and use separate cloakrooms and outhouses as well. Female teachers at the time were prohibited from marrying or keeping company with men and from wearing dresses more than two inches above the ankle. Teachers' lessons had to be relevant to students of all ages regardless of ability since

students were taught together in the same room. Much to the dismay of today's student, school was rarely, if ever, cancelled for inclement weather, and the old adage of "I walked a mile through a foot of snow to get to school" appears to have been, at one time, true.

From after the Civil War through the early twentieth century, the design of one-room schoolhouses evolved from an octagon shape, to mirroring the rigid, rectangular construction of meeting houses and churches, and eventually to the fronts featuring a porch and gable and the sides featuring large, single-frame windows to allow in enough light.

As towns grew, students were consolidated into larger districts and multi-room, newly built school buildings, thus rendering the one-room obsolete. Yet



Georgia Road School House in Freehold.

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tained by the Freehold Township Heritage Society. It is currently closed to visitors except for special events.

WEST FREEHOLD SCHOOL HOUSE, FREEHOLD

Corner of County Road 537 and Wemrock Road, Freehold
www.oakleyfarmmuseum.org/west-freehold-schoolhouse

The West Freehold School House is the second original schoolhouse still standing in Freehold Township and is located at what was once known as Mount's Corner. The school, which was originally named the West Freehold Collegiate and Seminary Institute, was built in 1847 on land purchased for \$25. Pieces of original furnishings and school supplies, as



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West Freehold School House.

well as original documents such as an attendance sheet from 1881 and the original flooring, can be found inside the school, which is staged for a typical school day in the late 19th century and stands upon its original foundation. Fifty to sixty students attended the school at any given time and studied math, reading, writing, and science. The schoolhouse closed in 1937 when schools in Freehold Township were consolidated and students were moved to other school buildings. An Eagle Scout project added replica outhouses to the site behind the school building in 2005. Today, it is a historic landmark/museum and maintained by the Freehold Township Historic Preservation Commission. It is currently closed to visitors except for special events.

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School Records from Barnegat Light Students

Photos courtesy of Barnegat Light Museum

One of the holdings of the Barnegat Light Museum, formerly the Barnegat Light School House, is the book of "School Records." Dating back to the early 1900s, the book contains transcribed, typewritten copies of the original pages that were written by the students in pen and are kept safe in the museum's archives. The instructions to students were as follows:

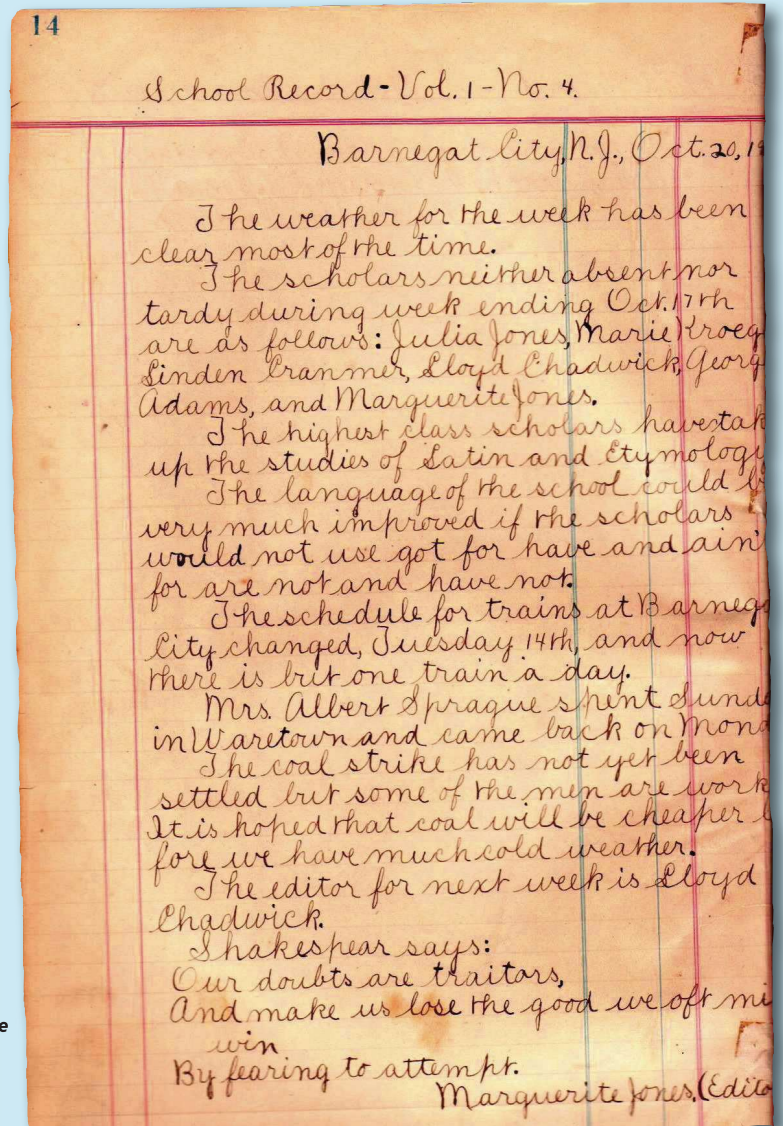


Barnegat Light School House.

The School Record of Barnegat City School: Introductory Instructions For Entries

It having been decided that a weekly school record of Barnegat City school be kept, herein will be found the items which such record should or may contain:

- 1st The weather for the week.
- 2nd Record of attendance for week, together with those scholars named who deserve special mention for good lessons and deportment.
- 3rd Anything new in school work.
- 4th Local news of interest.
- 5th National news of interest.
- 6th Criticism of any grammatical errors noticed at school.
- 7th Name of the editor for the following week.
- 8th Quotation or selection from some good author



A handwritten page from the weekly school record, October 20, 1902.

Significant Legislation Affecting One-Room Schools

- 1817:** State fund created for schools
- 1820:** Townships authorized to raise money for the education of those unable to pay
- 1824:** One-tenth of state taxes allocated to school funds
- 1845:** Provision made for State Superintendent of Public Instruction
- 1846:** Established public schools, created office of Town Superintendents, required licensing of teachers
- 1853:** Licensing of teachers began (replaced system of applying to local school committee)
- 1855:** State Normal School established in Trenton; law provided for state purchase of Webster's Unabridged Dictionary for each school
- 1867:** County Superintendents replace Town Superintendents; County Boards of Examiners created for issuance of teaching certificates
- 1871:** Free public schools established (tuition/rate bills abolished)
- 1876:** Constitutional amendment: Legislature to provide for maintenance and support of thorough and efficient system of free public schools...between the ages of 5 and 18 years
- 1885:** Compulsory school law: Children between 7 and 12 years of age to attend school for twenty weeks a year.
- 1894:** Township School Act sets township lines as school district lines; Free Textbook Act passed; reorganization of State School Board
- 1900:** Kindergarten made an integral part of school systems
- 1902:** Children between 7 and 12 years old must attend school every day school is open; those between 12 and 15 years old must attend at least sixteen weeks of the year
- 1903:** Districts required to provide two out-houses on school grounds, one for boys and one for girls
- 1906:** First Teacher Tenure Law (amended in 1909)
- 1911:** State Teaching Certificate replaces County Teaching Certificates
- 1913:** Compulsory school attendance for students aged 7 to 16 years old

From Chickaree in the Wall: A history of one-room schools in Ocean County, N.J. by Carolyn M. Campbell, M. Peryl King, and Martha T. Smith. Published by the Ocean County Historical Society, 1987.

OLD ARDENA SCHOOLHOUSE, HOWELL TOWNSHIP

Corner of Old Tavern and
Preventorium Roads, Howell
[www.howellheritagehistorical
society.org/ardena-schoolhouse](http://www.howellheritagehistorical
society.org/ardena-schoolhouse)

The Old Ardena School replaced Ardena School in 1855 and was one of the first educational buildings in Howell Township. The original fifteen-foot by sixteen-foot school was located across the street from the present-day Ardena Baptist Church on Adelpia Road. The school welcomed students from kindergarten through eighth grade. The Old Ardena School closed in 1938 when schools were consolidated, and the building was sold to a neighbor, Roy Matthews, in 1939 for \$300. Mathews used it to store his carpentry tools. The school



Old Ardena School House in Howell.

was then sold in 1946 to Victor Griffin, who moved the building to Freehold Township. A push by the Howell Heritage and Historical Society in 1973 to purchase and preserve the building was successful, and the building was relocated again in 1974 to its present location. Today, it is a historical landmark. The museum in the Old Ardena Schoolhouse offers visitors a slice of what life in a one-room schoolhouse was like during the 1800s through a myriad of artifacts on display. It is open the last Sunday of each month from 12:00 PM to 4:00 PM.

BLANSINGBURG SCHOOLHOUSE, WALL TOWNSHIP

1663-1669 New Bedford Road, Wall
www.facebook.com/owhsmuseum

Built in 1885, the Blansingburg Schoolhouse was originally located four miles away from its current site on New Bedford Road. The school welcomed ninety-six students from



Blansingburg Schoolhouse in Wall.

kindergarten through eighth grade the following year. When Blansingburg Schoolhouse closed its doors in 1936, students were transferred to a two-room schoolhouse. The building was sold for \$200. and used as a lawn mower repair shop for years until it was donated to the Old Wall Historical Society in 1999. The society moved the building to the Allgor-Barkalow Museum property and opened it as an additional museum filled with original, historic artifacts including double desks and a chalkboard. Some of the students who were enrolled in the school in 1936 attended the museum's grand opening in 2001. Check their Facebook page for current hours as they vary by season and fluctuate due to staffing.

OCEAN COUNTY

BARNEGAT LIGHT SCHOOL HOUSE, BARNEGAT LIGHT

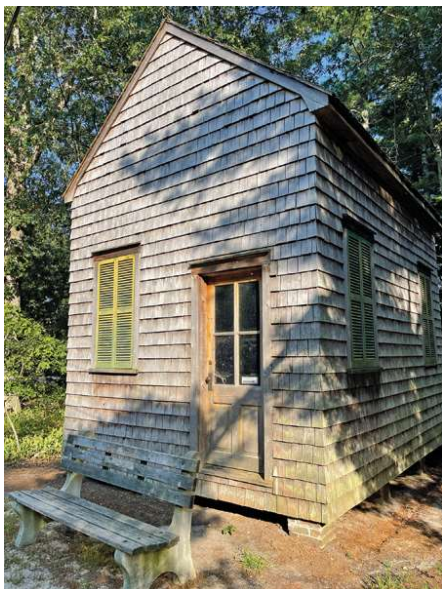
501 Central Avenue, Barnegat Light
[www.bl-hs.org/about_the_museum.
htm](http://www.bl-hs.org/about_the_museum.
htm)

The Barnegat Light School House operated from 1903 through 1951 and served students from first grade through eighth grade during its years as a school. While the original schoolhouse was located on 3rd Street



Barnegat Light School House is now the Barnegat Light Museum.

in Barnegat City, the only remnants from that building is a photograph of it on fire after the Barnegat Light School House was built. Like other era schoolhouses, it was heated by a stove that burned either wood or coal. An interesting component of the schoolhouse is a “compass rose” created by nails in the wood floor to teach students directions of a compass. The school also had a sink and water fountain for both student use and to teach about sanitation. The Barnegat Light School House was added to the National Register of Historic Places in 1976. Today, it is the Barnegat Light Museum. The museum has original desks, chalkboards, and the stove from the school on display along with a wealth of other artifacts, including the First Order Flashing Lens from the Barnegat Lighthouse, relics and photographs from hotels in town, and displays depicting the rich fishing industry that is a part of the area economy. The Museum is open June through October on weekends from 10:00 AM to 1:00 PM and in July and August daily from 10:00 AM to 1:00 PM. The Museum Gardens are open all year.



Double Trouble School in Bayville.

DOUBLE TROUBLE SCHOOL, BAYVILLE

581 Pinewald Keswick Road, Bayville
www.nj.gov/dep/parksandforests/parks/doubletroublestatepark.html

The sawmill and cranberry bogs attracted many families to Double

Trouble during the late 1800s. The school operated from 1893 to 1915 to serve the children of both the lumbering and cranberry workers. Today, the building still stands as part of Double Trouble State Park’s Historic Village and is the oldest remaining structure. The park is open 8:00 AM to dusk. Visitors cannot enter the school building, which is the small building near the parking lot.



Prospertown Schoolhouse in Jackson.

PROSPERTOWN SCHOOLHOUSE, JACKSON TOWNSHIP

95 West Veterans Highway, Jackson

Records show that a school in the Prospertown section of Jackson Township existed as early as 1835, but the Jackson Township school district didn’t acquire the building until 1858. The school was originally located on Route 537 near the intersection of Cassville-Prospertown and Hawkin Roads, between the lake and the sawmill. The building served as a Sunday School and a community hall after the school closed in 1923. It was donated to the Jackson Heritage Preservation Society and moved in the 1980s to its present location behind the Jackson Township Municipal Building and next to a replica of the original Jackson Township Town Hall. Today, the building stands as a museum and is open by appointment only. Call (732) 928-1200.

FORKED RIVER SCHOOL, LACEY TOWNSHIP

126 South Main Street, Forked River
[www.laceyhistorical.org/about#](http://www.laceyhistorical.org/about#SchoolhouseHistory)

SchoolhouseHistory

The Forked River School was built in 1868 as a one-room schoolhouse.



Forked River School in Lacey.

A second room was added in 1884. The school was used for many years but sat abandoned after it closed well before the 1960s. After the Lacey Historical Society was formed in 1962, the Lacey Township Committee approved their petition to turn the schoolhouse into a museum. Today, the building is the Old Schoolhouse Museum and headquarters of the Lacey Historical Society. It is open mid-June through Labor Day on Wednesdays 1:00 PM - 3:00 PM and on Saturdays 10:00 AM - 12:00 PM.

FULTON STREET SCHOOL, LAKEWOOD

201 Dr. Martin Luther King Drive, Lakewood

Fulton Street School was built in 1907 to serve the African American residents of its neighborhood. It operated as a one-room school until 1922, when a second room and a second teacher were added. The school closed sometime during the 1930s when students were transferred to Clifton Avenue Grade School. The building still stands today as the Greater Bethel Church of God in Christ and is not open to the public except for church services and events.

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Fulton Street School in Lakewood is now the Greater Bethel Church of God in Christ.

courtesy of Ocean County Historical Society

courtesy of Ocean County Historical Society

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Ocean Gate School.

**OCEAN GATE SCHOOL,
OCEAN GATE**

126 West Arverne Avenue, Ocean Gate
www.oceangateschool.net

The Ocean Gate School was built in 1914 as a one-room school and was originally known as “School Number 4” in Berkeley Township. When Ocean Gate became a separate borough in 1918, the school continued to serve the community until it closed as a one-room school in 1941. Today, the building houses the kindergarten classes of the Ocean Gate School District, making it the only original one-room schoolhouse in Ocean and Monmouth counties that is still used as a part of a public school system. The building is not open to the public.

**GIFFORDTOWN SCHOOL,
TUCKERTON**

35 Leitz Boulevard and Wisteria Lane,
West Tuckerton, Little Egg Harbor
[www.tuckertonhistoricalsociety.org/
our-museum.html](http://www.tuckertonhistoricalsociety.org/our-museum.html)

The Giffordtown School was deeded by Eli Gifford in 1884 as a one-room building, and a second room was added a few years later. All students from West Tuckerton and Little Egg Harbor Township attended through eighth grade, with four grades learning in each room. A hand pump in the cloak room provided water and pot-bellied stoves fueled by wood and coal provided heat. The school closed in 1951, and the building sat vacant for years. In June 1977, the building, along with the tract of land it currently sits upon, was donated to the Tuckerton Historical Society by the Lietz family. In August 1977, it was relocated and renamed the “Giffordtown School House Museum” and is the home of the Tuckerton Historical Society. The museum boasts a large collection of historic town artifacts as well as Clamtown and Quaker memorabilia and the last surviving section of the Tuckerton Wireless Tower. Also on display are original desks, books, chalkboards, and photos of students who attended. It is open year-round on Wednesdays 10:00 AM - 4:00 PM and also on Saturdays, June - September, 2:00 PM - 4:00 PM.

**THE LITTLE RED SCHOOL
HOUSE MUSEUM, WARETOWN**

182 Wells Mills Road, Waretown
www.waretownhistoricalsociety.org

Waretown’s original Little Red School House was located where the Waretown First Aid Building stands today at the corner of Route 9 and Bryant Road. It served the Waretown community from 1875 to 1958 and had a large bell tower. Grades one through eight learned together in one room. Waretown Elementary School opened in 1958, forcing The



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The Little Red School House in Waretown.

Little Red School House’s doors to close. The original building was used for a time by the Waretown First Aid Society, but as needs increased, it was demolished in 1969. In the late 1990s, the Waretown Historical Society voted to make their new home and museum a replica of the school that was cherished by so many. Built with entirely donated funds, The Little Red School House Museum officially opened its doors in 2004 and has the original desks, chalkboard, and bell as a part of its collection. The museum is open for meetings and events; check their website for a current schedule.

**DIVISION STREET SCHOOL,
WEST CREEK**

146 Division Street, West Creek
www.eagleswoodtpnj.usr

In 1888, a two-room school building was built on Division Street to replace a one-room school building that had become too small for the area’s increasing student population. Technically a two-room schoolhouse,



courtesy of Ocean County Historical Society

Giffordtown School in Tuckerton.

the Division Street School was used from 1888 to 1968 and today houses the Eagleswood Township Municipal Offices. The building is open weekdays during operating hours, 8:30 AM - 4:30 PM.



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Cedar Run School in West Creek is now the activity center for the Cedar Run Assembly of God Church.

CEDAR RUN SCHOOL, WEST CREEK

562 South Main Street, West Creek

Cedar Run School opened in 1907 as a two-room school to replace the one-room school that sat behind it and served students from the village of Cedar Run (formerly called Poplar Neck), which is today part of West Creek. At times, one teacher had to serve students in both rooms. The school closed in 1927, and the building was purchased by the Cedar Run Assembly of God Church, who renovated it as their activity hall. The original



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Division Street School in West Creek now houses the Eagleswood Township Municipal offices.

water pump from inside the school is displayed outside the hall. Today, the building is the activity center for the Cedar Run Assembly of God Church. It is not open to the public except for church services and events.

WHITINGS SCHOOL, WHITING

Whitings School was built sometime between 1870 and 1872 and operated as a one-room school until 1912. At that time, a second room was added to accommodate the students from the Pasadena section of town, and during the Depression Era, a lunchroom was constructed on the rear of the building. Students

transferred to a new school building in 1954, which still operates today as Whiting Elementary School in Manchester Township. The original Whitings School building is now a part of Whiting Bible Church and was renovated in 2017. The building is not open to the public except for church services and events.

—Jill Ocone

Special thanks to the Ocean County Historical Society and Reilly Sharp, curator of the Barnegat Light Museum, for their generous assistance with this article.



courtesy of Ocean County Historical Society

Whitings School in Whiting.

Teacher Salary Information 1869-1906

1869: Ocean County - Monthly Salary
Male: \$47.25; Female: \$22.03

1872: New Jersey - Monthly Salary
Male: \$62.11; Female: \$34.66
Ocean County - Monthly Salary
Male: \$54.65; Female: \$30.11

1890: New Jersey - Monthly Salary
Male: \$76.02; Female: \$43.62

1895: New Jersey - Monthly Salary
Male: \$82.59; Female: \$47.04
Ocean County - Monthly Salary
Male: \$48.36; Female: \$35.57

1906: Ocean County - Annual Salary
Male: \$461.23; Female: \$402.39

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