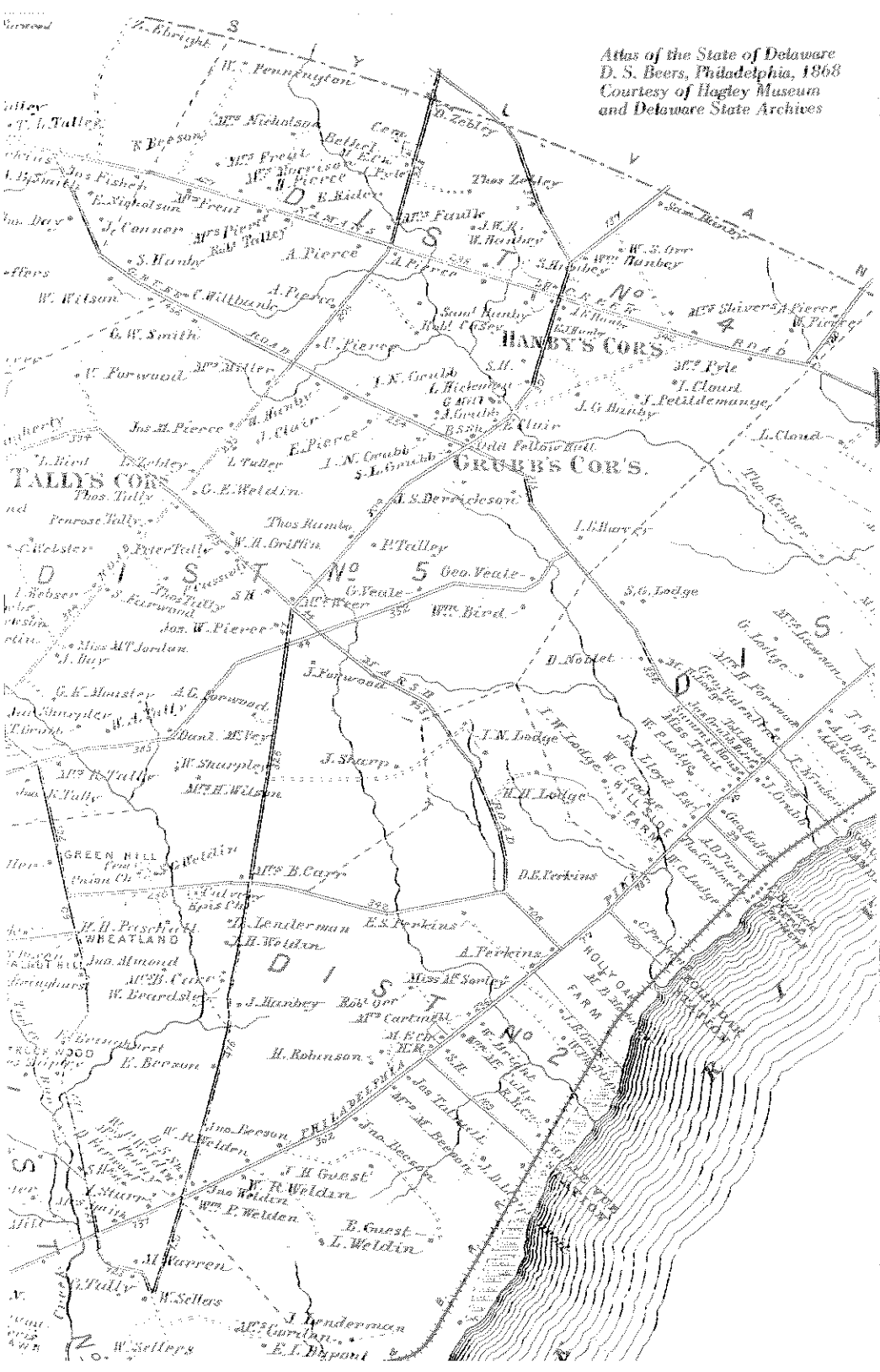


Atlas of the State of Delaware  
D. S. Beers, Philadelphia, 1868  
Courtesy of Hagley Museum  
and Delaware State Archives



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# EDUCATION IN THE ARDENS

Arden, Delaware

May 1969

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of Arden School District #3

Prepared and written by Mrs. Mayda Brandner

We ask the forbearance of the reader for any omissions or inaccuracies. Written records prior to the year 1945 are largely unavailable or non-existent.

*The picture on the front cover is an artist's conception of the Arden School taken from the original plans. It includes an alcove at the end of the building that was later deleted from the plans.*

## EDUCATION IN THE ARDENS

Arden School history is worth recalling for several reasons. One is the fact that the school developed in an unusual community, alive with cultural and esthetic interests. In more general ways, events in the Arden School District reflected trends over the years in Delaware education and conflicts in educational policies which rise to the surface everywhere.

One such trend is consolidation. Some of the disagreements relate to basics—the three R's—in the curriculum as contrasted with so-called “frills,” and the relative merits of discipline and individual freedom, or self-expression.

Arguments regarding consolidation were with the district from the beginning of its history in the early 1920's. Some of the earliest residents thought it was a mistake to have a small community school. In fact, there were hopes after the district was established that it would be enlarged and take in some of the developments nearby, such as the areas between Arden and Silverside and Foulk Roads. But the district remained inclusive only of Arden and Ardentown, with certain variations through the years regarding Ardencroft's status.

Although proponents of consolidation increased through the years, supporters of the Arden School District, devoted to the ideals they envisioned, and often realized, in their small neighborhood school, held out for survival until legislation requiring consolidation of small school districts was enacted.

In the 1920's, when the first bond issue for a school building in Arden was proposed, opponents included more than the individuals who favored larger districts. Some of Arden's single-taxers, followers of the economic theories of Henry George, were against the school, on the basis that taxation for education would be socialistic and against the principles they were attempting to demonstrate in this community. Education, they believed, should be handled privately. And as a matter of fact, there were and continued to be private educational enterprises in the Ardens.

But certain other residents were so eager to have a local school that they offered to put up \$1,000 each toward it. In those days, and in this place, \$1,000 was hard to come by. They were saved the necessity of raising the money when the 1924 referendum for a school bond issue received a favorable vote.

And so the Arden School District #3 started with controversy. Some Arden residents never sent their children to the local school, because they felt schools in nearby larger districts, or in Wilmington or Philadelphia, were better. On the other hand, when it was allowed, many families outside Arden and Ardentown were happy to have their children attend Arden's eight-grade, and later six-grade school.

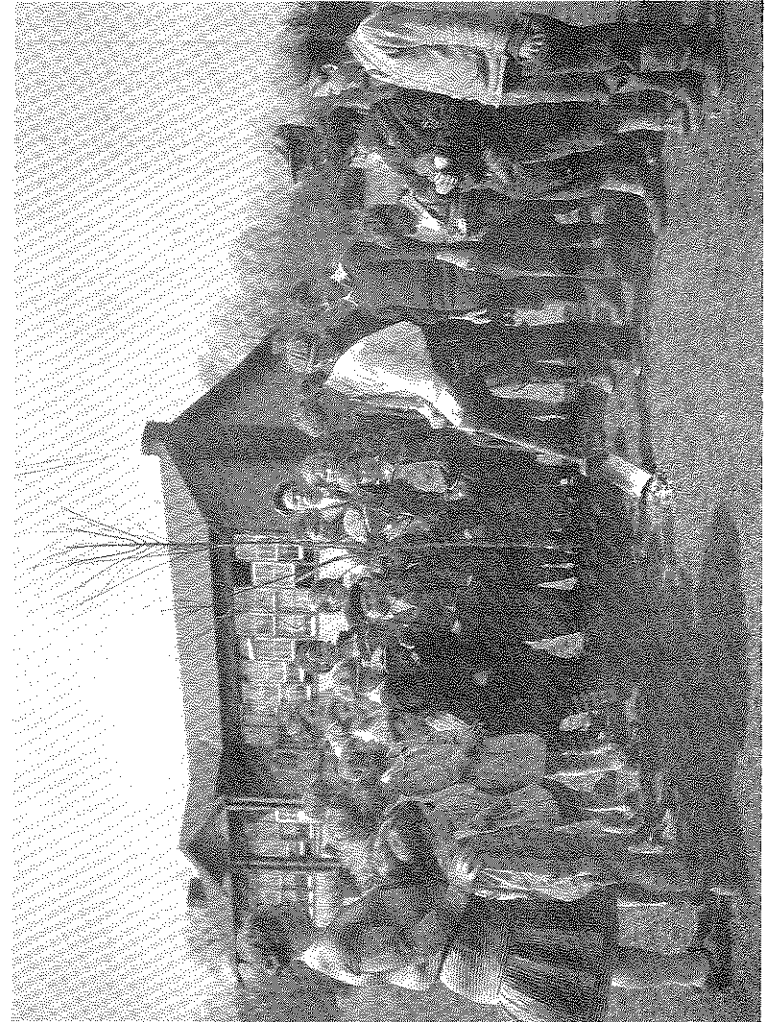
The Arden School program was always enhanced by the artistic and cultural life of the community. Children who saw and participated in the weekly Shakespearean productions, the many musicales and campfires with their poetry readings and music, and even the town meetings and forums with heated discussions of social theories and problems, brought appreciations which enriched the school life. Many of their parents, and other residents, voluntarily contributed their talents to the school program.

Over the years disputes over personnel and policies were plentiful. Most of the arguments which are heard in connection with any school or school system raged intensely here, since the intimacy of community life and the vital concern of many people with educational matters magnified all views. Yet some matters distressing in other areas were handled quite peacefully, such as racial integration in advance of the Supreme Court decision requiring desegregation and in spite of state policy against it at the time.

There were always dedicated staff members, school trustees and others in the community convinced of the advantages of our small neighborhood school for elementary pupils. During the years 1924-45 when the old school building presented innumerable problems, PTA members struggled persistently to provide the repairs, clean-up details and supplies needed. The town meetings cooperated by paying for custodians' services.

With the completion of the new building in 1946, some of the struggles abated. But the towns continued to assist with contributions. The PTA continued to be exceptionally active, providing speakers, study groups and special services. And Arden School graduates went forth to make, many of them, outstanding records in their later schooling and fields of work, and all of them, we believe, enriched by the enthusiasms and democratic ideals which the school as well as the community nurtured.

We have had a vigorous educational history in the Ardens. As part of the Mount Pleasant School District, residents of this district will certainly continue to work actively for the best in education for all the children in the area. We know the community has an educational future, as well as a past, in which to take pride.



Mrs. Kerr and pupils planting tree in front of the Arden School about 1929.

— Photograph by Earl Brooks

## PRIVATE EDUCATIONAL ACTIVITIES

- Early 1900's** Mr. & Mrs. E. S. Potter's Arden Summer Camp School of Organic Education at the Highway and Sherwood Road. This was patterned after the School of Organic Education at Fairhope, Alabama. Potter's camp was later called the Corner-of-the-Woods Summer School.
- Before 1920** Mrs. Emma Dewees' pre-school at 1911 Sherwood Road.  
Mrs. Rachel Shanklin's kindergarten at the Red House and on the large lot of Millers Road between Hillside and Little Lane.  
Mrs. Margaret Spicer's home tutoring.
- Early 1920's** Mothers' Cooperative School at the Red House, the Strawberry Box (small house in front of 2308 Walnut Lane) and Mrs. Hadassah Roberts' home on Millers Road. This was both pre-school and early elementary grades. Teachers included Mrs. Frances Pyle, Mrs. Hadassah Roberts, Mrs. Margaret Broadbent, Mrs. Jimmie Ware, Mrs. Elizabeth Gray and Mrs. Adelaide Criswell. Mrs. Broadbent introduced Montessori equipment and methods.  
Pre-school and elementary grades at Mrs. Cora Potter's house, the Bluebird, on Cherry Lane. Mrs. Potter taught pre-school downstairs and Mrs. Broadbent taught elementary school children upstairs.
- 1929-30** Mrs. Ian Wolff's kindergarten at 2201 Milky Way.
- 1930-31** Mrs. Hadassah Roberts' summer and winter kindergartens at her home on Millers Road.
- During 1930's** Mrs. Amy Smolens' kindergarten at 1900 Sherwood Road.
- 1930-60** Mrs. Dora Gordon Johnson's Playschool at various locations and times. With Mrs. Charlotte Curtis at her home on Harvey Road. At the Gordon home on Sherwood Road and later at 2123 Meadow Lane. For two years in the early 50's with Mrs. Ethel Gordon Monfort at the Arden School. Later for several years at 1517 Woodland Road.
- Late 1940's** Delaware Pre-School Association conducted a kindergarten in the Arden School for one year.
- Middle 1960's** Mrs. Joan Ware Colgan and Mrs. Rose Schein conducted a pre-school at The School on the Green.

## SIGNIFICANT EVENTS IN THE HISTORY OF ARDEN SCHOOL DISTRICT #3

- 1900** Arden founded as a single-tax colony.
- 1910-24** Several Arden school-age children attended the old Forwood School on Silverside Road while some went to the old Hanby School on Marsh Road. A summer camp school and various private schools were offered in Arden, which pre-school and some elementary school children attended. Such schools were held at the Red House (Craft Shop), the Strawberry Box and the Bluebird. Other Arden children were privately tutored; some attended school in Philadelphia and in Wilmington.
- 1919** New state school code passed; gave authority to the State over the 425 existing school districts.
- 1920** Arden School District #3 was formed from the Arden portions of District #4 (Hanby School) and District #5 (Forwood School). In March, classes under the new District were begun in the Craft Shop.
- 1920-24** Elementary grades were taught in the lower Gild Hall. Arden Leaves issue of June 1924 reported that "there are 19 families outside of Arden who are sending children to school here (31 children in these families), whereas only 11 Arden families contribute 29 children to the list."
- 1922** Ardentown founded and included in the Arden School District.
- 1924** First bond issue floated for Arden School building consisting of two surplus war structures put together on a stone foundation. Grades 1-8 were housed there between 1924 and 1931; thereafter grades 1-6 were held in the school.
- 1944** Arden School PTA voted to join the national parent-teacher organization.
- 1945** Arden School building burned to the ground. Bond issue for new school building approved.
- 1945-46** Arden School classes again held in Arden Gild Hall.
- 1946** Arden School opened in new building praised for its modern features, such as radiant heating, abundance of windows, direct access to outside from each room.  
Local PTA began to have programs of general interest; no longer having to occupy itself strictly with details of upkeep, repair, etc., of old building.
- 1950** Ardencroft established.  
Addition of fourth classroom to Arden School completed.
- 1952** Arden School became racially integrated two years prior to Supreme Court decision barring segregation in schools.
- 1956-57** Arden area parents secured over 200 signatures on petitions to have a public kindergarten at the Arden School or in the Gild Hall. Kindergarten was not secured because the State, while prepared to furnish supervision, did not have funds for pre-school teachers.

- 1959** Arden School graduates were given a choice of attending the Alfred I. du Pont or the Claymont School Districts for secondary schooling.
- East Ardencroft declared by the State Board of Education to be part of the Arden School District, after years of requests from the Ardencroft Association, and agreement of the Arden and the Mt. Pleasant School Boards. (The Alfred I. du Pont School District Board refused to cede to Arden School District the part of Ardencroft which lies west of Veale Road.)
- 1960** Arden School graduates now required to begin junior high in Alfred I. du Pont District.
- Arden School District held election for a school board member for the first time. (Previous school trustees had been appointed by judges.)
- 1961** Arden School District required to begin making annual tuition payments for secondary pupils; therefore the Arden school tax rate more than tripled (50¢ tuition charge was added to the 22¢ charge for Arden School costs).
- 1962** Legislation passed to permit Ardencroft residents in the Alfred I. du Pont District a choice of sending their elementary children to either Arden School or to the Alfred I. du Pont District school.
- 1964** Last payment made on Arden School District's bonded indebtedness.
- 1964-65** Evaluation of the Arden School program conducted by Dr. Berj Harootunian, assisted by other staff members of the Department of Education, University of Delaware.
- 1966-67** Census of the three Ardens undertaken by the Division of Urban Affairs, University of Delaware, arranged for by the Arden School Board and paid for partly by Federal funds, partly by the school funds and partly by the three towns.
- 1967-68** As a result of a ruling by the Attorney General that the 1959 decision was not based on legal procedures, the State Board of Education declared East Ardencroft should return to Mount Pleasant Special School District.
- The Arden School Board expressed preference for merger with Mount Pleasant Special School District in the event of mandatory district consolidation.
- 1968** Passage of Educational Advancement Act, requiring consolidation of school districts not offering education for grades 1 through 12, within the district schools.
- 1969** July 1 – Arden School District consolidates with Mount Pleasant School District. State of Delaware now has 22 school districts.
- September – Arden School building to be used for public kindergarten, under control of Silverside School of the Mount Pleasant School District.



Mrs. Danby, Miss Gavotos, George Newcombe and pupils in front of the Arden School about 1926.  
— Photograph by Earl Brooks

## OTHER ARDEN SCHOOL EVENTS OF INTEREST THROUGH THE YEARS

ACRA use of building and grounds for summer program for children. (some activities for adults also)

PTA sponsorship of Boy and Girl Scouts, Cub Scouts, and Brownie troops.

PTA-sponsored annual Book Fairs

Great Books Program monthly for several years for the upper grades (5 and 6).

Basketball court on school grounds, lighted at night for use of local young people.

Use of the school building for numerous regular events, such as Ardencroft Association meetings, discussions of current topics, show rehearsals, classes in arts, crafts, dance, etc.

Participation of many members of the community in school activities, adding enrichment in art, music, drama, dancing, etc.

Exceptionally active PTA and close home-school cooperation.

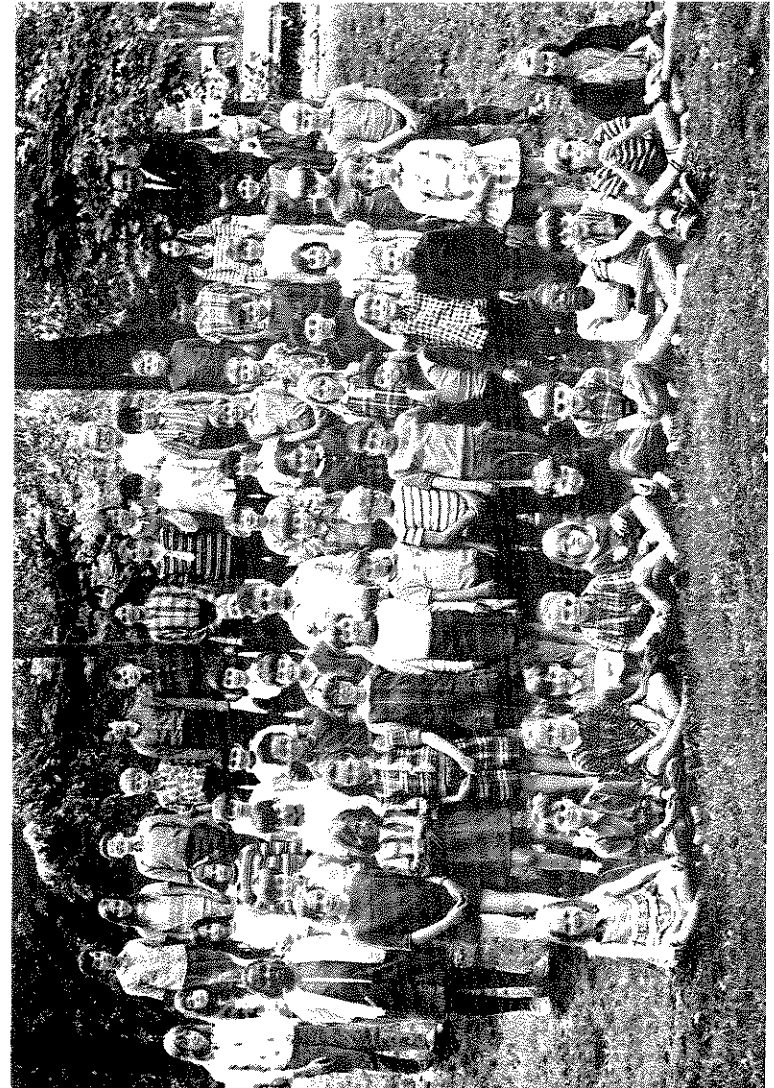
Outstanding school productions of shows such as "Cowboy on the Moon", "The Wizard of Oz", and "Pooh and His Friends"; also annual mid-year and year-end musical programs.

Since 1962 Thanksgiving dinners have been provided by the Arden School children for the Layton Home for Aged Persons.

Annual sixth grade graduation services with presentation of inscribed loose-leaf binder to each graduate from the school board. Also at these exercises, the present first graders have introduced the next year first graders to the community.

## THE ARDEN SCHOOL DISTRICT SCHOOL TAX STORY

<u>Year</u>	<u>Tax Rate per \$100 Assessed Valuation of Real Estate</u>
pre 1957	\$0.07 — current expenses only
1957-59	\$0.17 — current expenses only
1960-63	\$0.72 — \$0.22 current expenses plus \$0.50 tuition
1963-64	\$0.87 — \$0.22 current expenses plus \$0.65 tuition
1964-65	\$0.82 — \$0.32 current expenses plus \$0.60 tuition
1965-66	\$0.84 — \$0.34 current expenses plus \$0.50 tuition
1966-67	\$1.007 — \$0.407 current expenses plus \$0.60 tuition
1967-68	\$1.22 — \$0.62 current expenses plus \$0.60 tuition
1968-69	\$1.282 — \$0.682 current expenses plus \$0.60 tuition
1969-70	\$1.62 — \$1.319 current expense and tuition plus \$0.301 debt service



Miss Scanton, Miss Morley, Mrs. Cavanaugh and Mr. Devlin with Arden School pupils in May 1969.

—Photograph by Margaret Kazan

## TEACHING STAFF

THESE ARE THE TEACHERS WHOSE KNOWLEDGE, ATTITUDES AND ENTHUSIASMS HELPED SHAPE THOSE OF ARDEN YOUNG PEOPLE:

The first teacher authorized and paid by the State in Arden School District # 3 was:

March – June, 1920 – Mrs. Marguerite Woodward Nearing, whose schoolhouse was the Red House (Craft Shop)

The first district teacher to serve for a year was:

1920-21 – Mrs. Jeanne Young, who taught all the grades in the lower Gild Hall.

Teachers since then (1921-24 in the Gild Hall, 1924-45 in the first Arden School building on Sherwood Green, 1945-46 in the Gild Hall again, and 1946-69 in the present school building) include:

Mrs. Emma Dewees	Miss Jane Hoch
Miss Alice Apple	Mrs. Madeline Pfeiffer
Miss McAllister	Mrs. Helen Wilson Scone
Mrs. Madeline Kenworthy Souder	Miss Helen Reed
Mrs. Thelma Gray	* Pete Hallberg
Mrs. Florence Evans	Miss Mary Scanlon
Mrs. Danby	Mrs. Adele Arnold
Miss Frances Gavatos	* Walter W. Hosler
Mrs. Margaret Broadbent	Mrs. Rosalia H. Schorr
Mrs. Elva Kerr	Mrs. Mary Burslem
Miss Helen Levy	* Patrick Devlin
Mrs. Mildred Gee	Mrs. Nancy Gay Carson Payne
* Mrs. Miriam Howell	Mrs. Mary Ann Cavanaugh
Mrs. Rachel Dickerson	Miss Cosette L. Morley
Mrs. Jayne Simpson Huntington	

\* Chief school officers (teaching principals)

### OUR STATE SUPERVISORS HAVE INCLUDED:

Most recently,  
Mrs. Virginia Mason Neave

And in previous years,  
Miss Ella Holly  
Mrs. Felicia Beverly

### PART TIME EMPLOYEES OF THE SCHOOL DISTRICT HAVE INCLUDED:

As nurse: Mrs. Elizabeth Pione (also secretary)  
Mrs. Dorothy Houes  
Mrs. Minnie Johnson

As secretary: Mrs. Ann C. Solway  
Mrs. Barbara Fenske

As teacher's aide: Mrs. Doris Davis

For physical education: Miss Barbara Washam  
Mrs. William D. Hjalmer  
George Poe

Music Teacher: Mrs. Marilyn DeMarski

Languages: Mrs. Lena Hurlong  
Mrs. Cecily Trehu  
Mrs. Colette Isakoff

Custodian: Alfred Bratten  
Nikolaas VanderLek  
Karlis Ostups

Crossing Guards: Mrs. Pat Press  
Mrs. Charlotte Curtis  
Glen Streevey  
Mrs. Janet Sutton  
Mrs. Tika VanderLek  
Mrs. Jean Ginn  
Mrs. Helen Chase  
Mrs. Leona Oakes

In addition to all the above mentioned teachers and part time staff members, others who have served frequently as substitutes or volunteer assistants in special areas such as art, music, folk dancing, library, nature study, etc. include:

Mrs. Bunni Hurlong	Mrs. Charlotte Curtis	Mrs. Kay Ringer
Mrs. Dottie Goldich	Mrs. June Kleban	Mrs. Marjory Jobson
Marcus Aurelius Renzetti	Mrs. Pat Liberman	Mrs. Gladys Morris
Ross Santee	Mrs. Lil Downing	Mrs. Bluma Goldberg
Miss Grace Kuschan	Mrs. Anne Smock	Mrs. Jimmie Ware
Mrs. Elizabeth Eberlin	Mrs. Lorraine Cook	Mrs. Jane Aughey
Mrs. Vera Berk	Mrs. Pat Press	Mrs. Viola Hanby
Mrs. Joan Ware Colgan	Mrs. Dora Johnson	Mrs. Kay Furman
Mrs. Betty Hahn		Mrs. Lillian Balick

And for assisting in many ways, the following should also be mentioned:

George Newcombe	Charles Till	Mrs. Alice Beacham
Earl Brooks	Woodrow Vandever	Mrs. Margaret Kazan
Andrew Gallagher	Dr. John H. Bengé	Mrs. Ruth Estes
James McKee Robertson	Frank Starr	Robert Solway

AND MANY, MANY OTHERS – We wish we could mention all who have helped to give the Arden School its special community-relatedness and spirit including the organizations such as The Arden Community Recreation Association, The Arden Club and the Boy Scout and Girl Scout groups who have given benefits and carried out projects for the School.

## BOARD OF SCHOOL TRUSTEES

School Board members are among those who grapple with matters such as referenda for school bonds and for increased operating expense taxes, boundary disputes, legal complications and long-range planning. In addition, small school district trustees often find themselves involved in details which in larger districts would be handled by special departments, such as business or public relations.

The following are among those who have, as trustees, worked to help the district meet its challenges:

George C. Morley	George Newcombe	Mrs. Elizabeth B. Ritter
Mrs. Katherine F. Ross	Sylvan Levy	William A. Morley
Earl Broadbent	Henry Aughey	Harold Monfort
Captain R. W. Wood	Mrs. Frances Harrison	Dr. J. Ambrose McAlely
A. N. Andrews	Robert Bloodwell	Charles Zunser
Dr. George Hallett	Fritz Giessler	Edmond F. Hurlong
Mrs. Marguerite Nearing	Mrs. Dorothy MacCorquodale	Lloyd E. Estes
Russell Ramsey	Clement Wood	Mrs. Mayda Brandner
Walter Sweeting	Herman Kummer	Larry L. Lipstein
Robert Woolery	Mrs. Gladys Frank	Dr. Erhard F. Hoegger
Mrs. Frances Pyle	William May	Mrs. Joan Ware Colgan
Mrs. Maude Holcomb	Mrs. Helen McClure	Reese P. Davis
	Dr. Esther Vik	

Dr. Hoegger was selected by the Arden School Trustees to serve on the Interim Mount Pleasant - Arden School Board from February through June 1969. He was uncontested for reelection as an Arden School Trustee in 1969, and as such will serve a full term on the Board of the consolidated District.

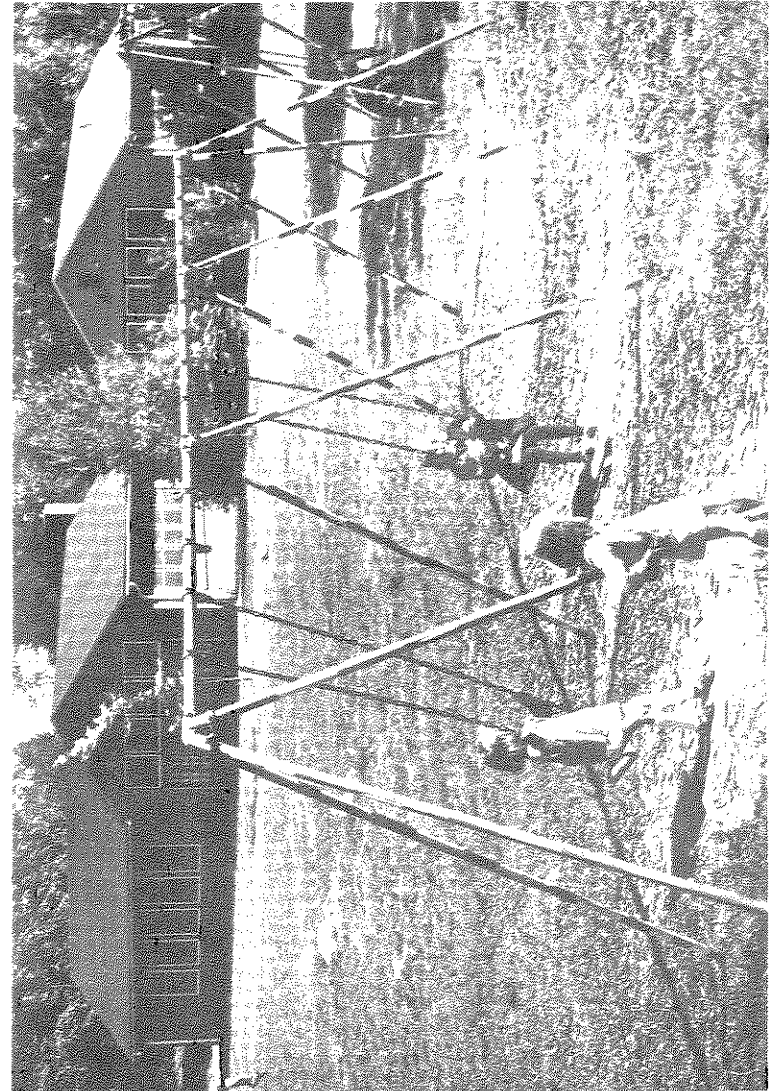
## PARENT-TEACHERS' ASSOCIATION

We can't begin to name the hundreds of members of the Arden Parent-Teachers' Association who have devotedly worked through the years on fund raising, equipment for the school, transportation for school trips, clean-up and painting projects, adult education, hospitality, getting out the votes, etc. — and in the case of our small school, especially in the early days, the PTA members who often performed regularly the most menial jobs of upkeep and repair.

We can name the individuals who have been president of this organization from 1943 to 1969. Earlier records have not been located, except that we know that Miss Amy Wood in the early twenties was head of what was then called the Arden School Association, and Hamilton D. Ware at one time also was PTA president.

Since 1943, presidents of the PTA have included:

Edward Downs, Jr.	Joseph S. Patterson	William Press
Alan Oemler	Mrs. Mayda Brandner	Mrs. Marti Berger
Mrs. Alice Beacham	William Pasfield	Charles R. Conner
Mrs. Lou Tarkenton	Bates McClean	Mrs. Elizabeth Pione
Robert W. Smock	Richard Dolmetsch	Mrs. Ruth F. Bean
Paul Smith	Dr. Yoh Han Pao	Reese P. Davis
David Coglan	Francis Furman	Mrs. Marcia Hoopes
Morris Rosin		



The Arden School in 1969  
— Photograph by Margaret Kazan