

**WHAT THE ARDEN SCHOOL CAN TEACH US:
HARD LESSONS IN COMMUNITY BUILDING**

by
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A synthesis submitted to the Faculty of the University of Delaware
in partial fulfillment of the requirement
for the degree of Master of Arts in Liberal Studies

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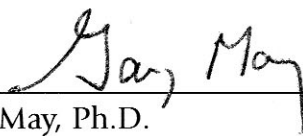
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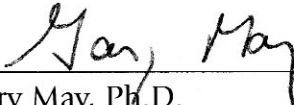
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ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

To Gary May, for saying, "You can do it."

This manuscript is dedicated to
the children of Arden: past, present and future

They are not distinguished-looking. What such buildings have instead is an off-hand, haphazard-seeming mastery, and layers upon layer of soul. Time has taught them, and they teach us.

–Steward Brand, *How Buildings Learn*

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ABSTRACT

The first Arden School was completed in 1924. That school gradually deteriorated and, then, burned down on Saturday, March 10, 1945. A new Arden School was opened in 1946. As a result of the consolidation of public education, the Arden School was closed in 1969 and then used as a public kindergarten until 1973. For the next twenty years, the building was rented to the Wilmington Montessori School. In 1993, the Montessori School moved to a new facility. The building had slowly established itself as a community center. The Arden School has been at the center of many of the challenges that the experimental Single Tax in Arden, Delaware, has faced: educational controversies, fiscal crises, and apathy are a few. All seemed to loom as threats to Arden's community life at the time. Against all odds, the community and the Arden School, now the Buzz Ware Village Center, has endured. The history of the school is told using extensive school and town records located in the Arden Archives, the Historical Society of Delaware, the Public Archives of Delaware, and private collections. Oral interviews with former students, parents, and teachers from the old Arden School and the new Arden School are included. The paper incorporates the thinking of architectural historians who see buildings as more than bricks and stucco, but as organic structures that can evolve and breathe life into their communities. Because the village evolved with a history of community decision-making, institutions were in place or could be created to address the ever-changing needs of the community and the needs of the building.

CHAPTER 1

TESTING A COMMUNITY OVER TIME

The Arden School, located on the Sherwood Green in Arden, Delaware, has evolved as a community building over the last 70 years (Fig. 1.1). Because of Arden's history of political activism, the community was engaged in issues that were part of the broader national social upheavals of the twentieth century: public funding of education in the 1920s, financial instabilities and insecurities during and after the Depression, desegregation and McCarthyism in the 1950s, school consolidation and suburbanization during the 1960s and onward. Through periods of controversy and cooperation in this experimental village, the presence of the Arden School, now the Buzz Ware Village Center, was key to building a sense of community (see Fig. 1.2 and Fig. 1.3 for activities outside of the old and new Arden Schools). By writing a community history, we can see how national developments affected one small, but important, town in Delaware.

The construction on the first Arden School was completed in the fall of 1924, and the school was dedicated April 25, 1925. Over the next 2 decades, that school gradually deteriorated and, then, burned down on March 10, 1945. In 1945–46, a new Arden School, designed by a woman architect, was constructed on the foundation of the old school and classes began on September 4, 1946. As a result of the consolidation of public education, the Arden School was closed in 1969. It was used as a public kindergarten until 1973. The building was renamed the Buzz Ware Village Center in honor of a long-time community leader and

Arden trustee, Hamilton D. "Buzz" Ware, who died in 1968. For the next twenty years, the building was rented to the Wilmington Montessori School with some community access during the school year and available for community use all summer. In 1993, the Montessori School moved to a new facility, and, gradually, the building has established itself for use, primarily, as a community center.

Arden has a rich and intriguing history. Its community life is vibrant, and, as an experimental village, it maintains a feeling of a work in progress—constantly evolving. At its best, Arden is tolerant, generous, and full of high spirits; however, the Arden School has been at the center of many of the challenges that the village has faced: educational controversies, fiscal crises, and apathy are a few. All seemed to loom as considerable threats to Arden's community life at the time. Against all odds, the community and the Arden School, now the Buzz Ware Village Center, keeps ticking. I am challenged to answer the question: Why?

APPENDIX A

Villages of Arden, Ardentown, & Ardencroft, Delaware

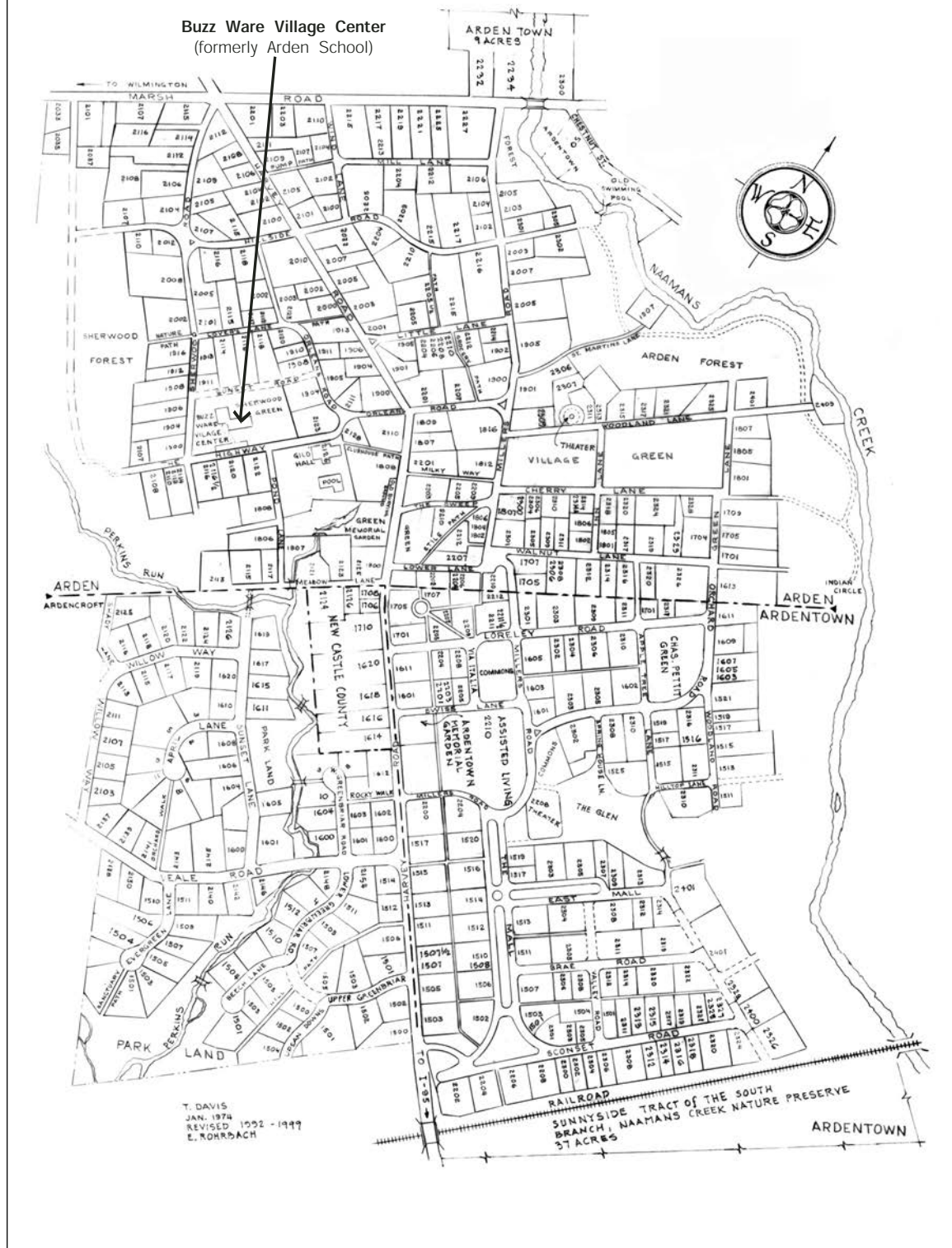


Fig. 1.1. Map showing location of Arden School, now the Buzz Ware Village Center, Arden, Delaware. Modified by the author to show school site, 2004.



Fig.1.2. The First Arden School Arbor Day, 1931. Left to right, back row: Elva B. Kerr (teacher), Eleanor Draper, Sara Bonsall, Helen Talley (hat), Ellen Zebley, Mary Callar, John Callar (cap), Margaret Callar, Robert Huber (cap), Henry Smith, Joe Agostini (cap), Walton "Tote" Wood, Arnet DeLong; front row, Billy Brooks, Don Talley, Frances Buck (hair clip), Franklin Burns (cap), Oscar Burns (cap), Tommy Hanby (cap), Richard Huber (cap), Grover Bonsall, Fred Huber (cap), Steve Chinchilla (hood), Walter Chinchilla (shovel). Photo by Earl Brooks.



Fig. 1.3. Outside of the New Arden School, A.C.R.A. Summer Program, 1982. Left to right, at table, Stephanie Enie (camp director), Kelly McKean, Kate Moore, Amanda Luker, Josette; walking to right, Damian Satinover, unknown, Robin McKinney. Photo by the author.

CHAPTER 2

A GATHERING PHILOSOPHICAL STORM, 1900–1920

The founders of Arden, G. Frank Stephens (1859–1935) and Will Price (1861–1916) were passionate campaigners for the economic theories of Henry George (1839–1897) and his Single Tax (see Fig. 2.1–2.3). The Single Tax system was seen as a way to equalize workers' wages by taxing only land and not the fruits of a person's hard work and effort. Land was the precious natural resource that should be taxed in full and not the improvements on it. "Tax Land, Not Labor" was the Georgists's battle cry. In 1895–96, Stephens and a group of Georgists, many from Philadelphia, lost a campaign to win over the state of Delaware to the Single Tax system (Fig. 2.4). The percentage of votes for the Single Taxers was meager. Discouraged but not defeated in spirit, Stephens and Price decided to demonstrate the principles of Single Tax by founding a community based on land value taxation principles. On June 12, 1900, with financial backing from a wealthy Philadelphian, Joseph Fels, they bought three parcels of farmland owned by David F. Derrickson in northern Delaware (Fig. 2.5) (The territorial limits of the Village of Arden are described in the "Act to Reincorporate," enacted by the General Assembly in October, 1967.) The farm was located within walking distance of a Baltimore and Ohio (B&O) railroad stop (Fig. 2.6). Fels, who was a fellow Georgist, offered to hold the \$9,000 mortgage for 162 acres. Under the terms of the Fels's deed, all land northeast of Grubb's Lane (now Harvey Road) other than woodlands, was exempt from the mortgage.¹ In 1909, Fels exempted all

cleared land on the southern side (Sherwood Green side). By 1909, all Arden land had been leased and, by 1910, there were "70 homes, no debt, \$1000 to spend on improvements, and no landlords."² From a small colony of summer residents in 1900, Arden gradually became a year-round community with permanent residents by the 1940s and an example of land-value taxation.

Early summer residents were mainly progressive thinkers from the Philadelphia area, some of whom were regulars at the Ethical Society of Philadelphia, who regrouped and rekindled the discussions in the heady atmosphere of a new kind of planned community. As a pamphlet from 1915 stated: "Arden is the capital of the State of Uncritical Friendliness; it belongs to the Federation of Mutual Helpfulness, under a Constitution of Equal Opportunity."³ The *Arden Constitution* from the period stated that "no discrimination shall be made on account of "age, color, or sex."⁴ Early colonists were by no means united by one political point of view be it as socialists, single tax theorists, or anything in between, but they did share a reformist spirit to work for a better world.⁵ Early supporters were creative seekers and dreamers of a more just and more beautiful society. Inspired by the Arts and Crafts Movement championed by England's William Morris, many residents brought their gifts as musicians, painters, jewelry makers, and weavers to the community to try something "new." What they found initially were the day-to-day challenges of sleeping in tents, cooking over campfires, and living in a work in progress (see Figs 2.7, 2.8).

Small private education was part of the Arden landscape from the beginning. Arden educators generally were inspired by the "modern" educational philosophies of the time: organic education to encourage "spirit and harmony" (Cora Potter's fresh-air camp in the early 1900s), Montessori methods of open classrooms, co-operative schools to teach children "to see the good in life," and

home tutors. In the *Arden Leaves*, an early publication in the town, a teacher, Emma Dewees, is praised for her spontaneous lessons and "lack of regimentation in the classroom."⁶ In fact, a child could vote at town meeting up until 1916 when a "verbal battle" brought the practice to a vote "which resulted in the abolition of children sufferance in Arden."⁷ As a prelude to the town battles over public education and its perceived stress on conformity, the January 1911 *Arden Leaves* reports that, at the Red House school in the Craft Shop (Fig. 2.9) on Cherry Lane, "play is the business of life to a child and some of life's most important lessons are learned at this time. Children are free to leave the school room at any time ... and self-reliance and social consciousness will be of far greater value to them ... than book knowledge ... and nothing is required in the way of attendance and nothing is ever said about tardiness."⁸ In 1913, for a fee of \$1.50 per child per month, teachers there aimed at "maximum of expression and initiative and the minimum of repression."⁹ In 1969, Ardentown resident Mayda Brandner in researching her history of *Education in the Ardens* lists eight different locations offering educational opportunities in Arden's early days, some with enchanting names, such as The Strawberry Box (Walnut Lane), The Red House (Millers Road), The Bluebird (Cherry Lane), or the Corner-of-the-Woods Summer School (Sherwood Road).¹⁰

Although Arden had its own idiosyncratic history, it existed within the context of educational reform taking place throughout Delaware as the surrounding areas developed (Fig. 2.10, 2.11). Influential leaders in the state were pushing to increase literacy and educational standards in the city and rural districts. By 1907, in Delaware, compulsory attendance was mandated for grades 1–12.¹¹ By the 1920s, Delaware was gradually establishing a statewide system of public education and consolidating state oversight on the many small rural schools and special districts (Fig. 2.12). Rural schools presented a special problem: they were under local

control, funded locally, and attendance was loosely enforced. That often resulted in underfunded and substandard conditions, particularly in “colored” schools.

The former chairman of the board of the Dupont Company, Pierre du Pont, pledged substantial funds to upgrade the educational program and educational facilities in the state. In the 1920s, he organized the Service Citizens of Delaware and donated \$90,000 in one year to improve elementary schools. Over the next few years, his donation totaled \$6 million, much of that spent on school construction.¹² According to an article in the *Sunday Morning Star* on January 25, 1925, as a result of du Pont’s effort, “10 permanent schools for white children, 84 for colored children, and 9 portable schools were constructed.”¹³

In the 1920s and 1930s, Arden elementary-age children went to a variety of schools: private schools in Philadelphia, Bucks County, or Wilmington, informal education at home, or local public schools. From 1910–1924, elementary-age children of year-round residents could attend public school at the old Forwood School on Silverside Road (Fig. 2.13) or the old Hanby School on Marsh Road and Naamans Road (Fig. 2.14). Students above sixth grade were bused to Claymont or Wilmington at the State Board of Education’s expense. In 1920, the State School Board approved Arden Special School District #3. That designation lasted until 1969. From 1920–1924, county-supervised classes began in the Red House of the Craft Shop and, later moved to the basement, or Lower Gild Hall, of the Arden Club, a converted barn. Classes for twenty-nine Arden children and thirty-one children that lived outside of Arden were held there in 1924.¹⁴ This space was shared with other Club activities and not used exclusively for classrooms. In 1922, the 109-acre Village of Ardentown (Fig. 2.15) was established to the east of Arden. Ardentown families soon began to send their children to classes in the Lower Gild Hall by 1924.¹⁵ As a temporary space, the Lower Gild Hall was not

ideal. Some residents began to voice their concerns that the community should provide a better space for educating its children and asserted that a new public school would attract new leaseholders. As the push for a separate building for a community public school gained momentum, some residents spoke out against the idea of a public school in Arden: they characterized the public school curriculum as "limited and restricted."¹⁶ When the State Board of Education withdrew its underwriting of transportation costs, the political storm that had been gathering force arrived. A full-scale philosophical debate began about building the first Arden School. Arden town meeting was the forum for debating this issue. The town meeting format had its flaws: the meeting often lacked a quorum and Arden Socialists and Arden Single Taxers had fierce differences, frequently more personal than political; however, town meeting did provide a political process to solve the Arden's education problem.

APPENDIX B



Fig. 2.1. Arden founder, sculptor G. Frank Stephens (1859–1935). Courtesy Arden Archives-Museum.

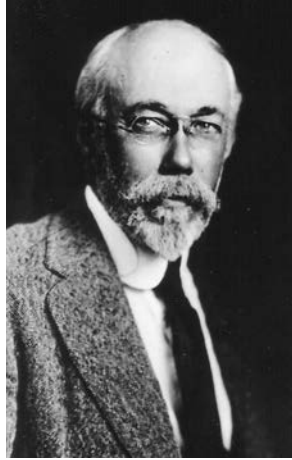


Fig. 2.2. Arden founder, architect Will Price (1861–1916). Courtesy Arden Archives-Museum.

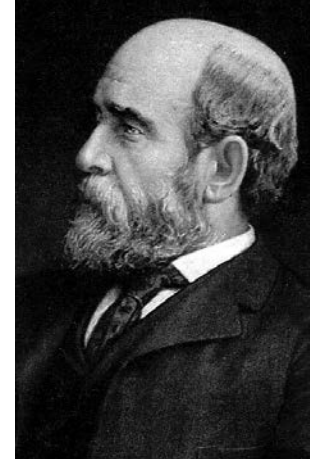


Fig. 2.3. Economic theorist Henry George (1839–1897) and advocate for land value taxation.



Fig. 2.4. The Dover Jail Single Tax Club, 1896. Posing after their unsuccessful campaign to win Delaware voters over to the Single Tax and after some spent a night in jail for their efforts. Standing back: W. H. Keegan, C. W. Kane, H. D. Albright, G. F. Stephens; standing second row: F. W. Moore, Samuel Melville, A. D. Stirlith, Victor Durand, J. J. Haggerty; seated back: P. F. O'Hara, B. F. Longstreet, Aug. Dellgren, A. H. Stephenson, C. A. Brothers, H. B. Tawresy, William Horan; seated front: Joseph O'Neill, Thomas Graham, W. S. Pike, J. W. Gross. Henry George portrait and above courtesy Henry George School of Social Science, Philadelphia, Pennsylvania.

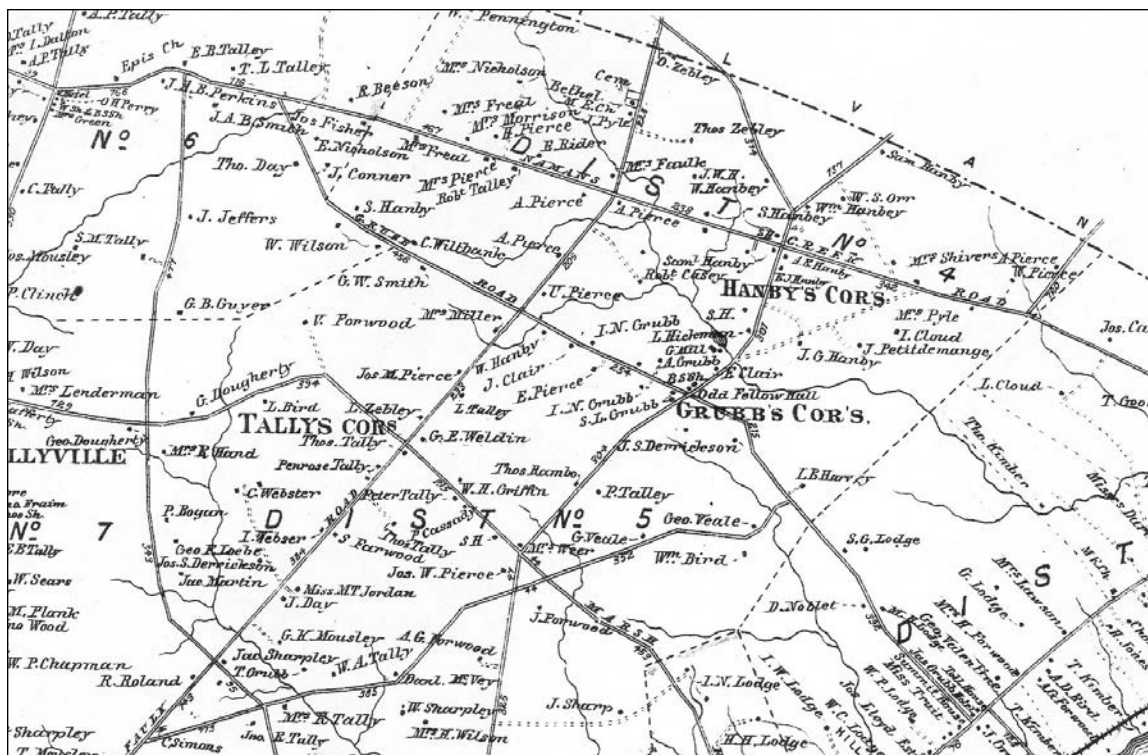


Fig. 2.5. Detail showing Grubb's Corner, 1867. Future location for Arden as part of the Derrickson farm parcels. Beers, D. G. (Daniel G.), *Atlas of the State of Delaware*: Philadelphia: Pomeroy & Beers, 1868, ca. 1867 (Philadelphia: F. Bourquin). [2], 96 p.: col. maps, plans; 41 cm, Special Collections Delaware G1265.B44x 1868 <<http://delcat.udel.edu/ALEPH>> Accessed 25 January 2003.



Fig. 2.6. Access road to the southbound track on the Arden side of the B&O train stop at Harvey Station, ca. 1900. Later called Arden Station. View looking up toward Harvey Road. Photo courtesy Robert Pyle Collection (see *Notes on Chapter 2* regarding the source of photos from this Collection).



Fig. 2.7. The Hurlong summer camp, Woodland Lane, early Arden. A three-sided shelter was used for cooking and storage. Photo courtesy the Hurlong Family Collection.



Fig. 2.8. A neighboring summer campsite, early Arden. Photos courtesy Arden Archives-Museum and Robert Pyle Collection.



Fig. 2.9. The Red House at the corner of Cherry Lane and Millers Road, Arden, Delaware, 1902. The Red House (with split rail fence) was one of the first private schools in Arden. Photo courtesy Robert Pyle Collection.



Fig. 2.10. Left, Philadelphia Pike at the Wilmington city line, March 4, 1918; Fig. 2.11. Right, The completed brick-surfaced road at Penny Hill, 1919. Photos courtesy State of Delaware Web site <www.state.de.us/sos/dpa/exhibits>. Accessed 27 Mar 2004.

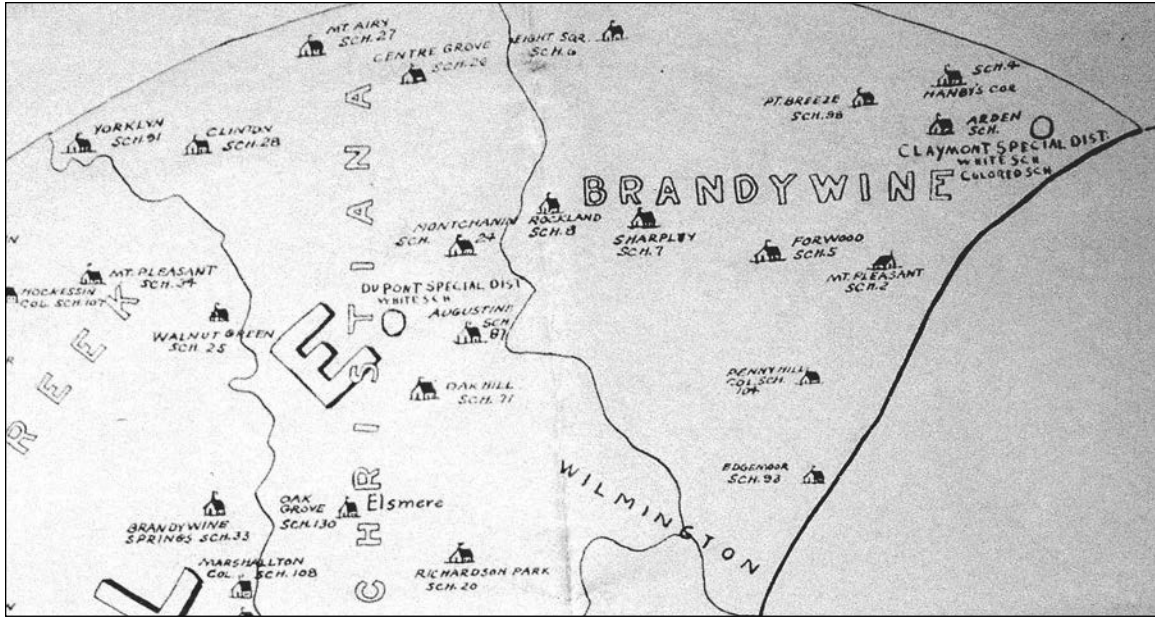


Fig. 2.12. Detail, map showing rural schools, New Castle County, State of Delaware, 1921. By G. Lloyd Collins, 1921, #16.1. The map (upper right) shows the Hanby, Forwood, and Arden (in Gild Hall), and Claymont Schools ("white" and "colored"). Courtesy the Historical Society of Delaware.



Fig. 2.13. Hanby School, 1928. Formerly located at corner of Marsh and Naamans Roads, 1928, #634bp.



Fig. 2.14. Forwood School, ca. 1928. Located on Silverside Road northeast of Marsh Road intersection, #620ap.

Photos courtesy of the State Board of Education Photograph Collection c. 1920–1959, Box 2, Folder 7.



Fig. 2.15. Detail showing the newly founded Ardentown in 1922. East of Grubb's Corner. Brandywine Hundred, Map of New Castle County, 1930 [fG3833 N4 1930 b]. Photo courtesy Hagley Museum and Library.

NOTES TO CHAPTER 2

Chapter 2: A Gathering Philosophical Storm, 1900–1920

When photographs are sourced from the Robert Pyle Collection, the original photographer is credited when known. Mr. Pyle has written permission to use the photographs of Earl Brooks. Many of the photos in Mr. Pyle's collection were acquired when his friend, Donald Holcomb, sought him out to copy his family album for a memorial exhibit at the Gild Hall for his wife, Ruth, at the 1989 Arden Fair. Other residents offered their family albums for Mr. Pyle to include in the collection. His collection has helped preserve many early images of Arden that surely would have been lost. The author is grateful for his kind offer to use them in this research.

1. "Arden . . . A brief history," booklet from ca. 1909, [p. 1]. When pagination is supplied by this author for documents that have none, the citation will have the page number in square brackets.
2. *The Arden Leaves: The Voice of the Village*, January 1911, inside from cover. *The Arden Leaves* was one of the first publications in Arden. Various writers submitted their news and opinions for publication. The *Leaves* is the source for the town meeting minutes before 1943 since no official records are on file. Frank Stephens probably wrote some of them. Until the 1920s, a chairperson was elected for each town meeting. In the decades prior to incorporation, trustee Buzz Ware chaired town meetings. When the town incorporated in 1967, town meeting was officially designated as Arden's legislature. The by-laws require a chairperson to be elected for a one-year term.
3. Briggs, George A. "The Spirit of Arden," pamphlet, ca. 1915, p. 5.
4. *Arden Constitution*, pamphlet, p. 12.
5. *Arden Book*, p. 5.
6. The Craft Shop was built and was owned by one of the founder's of Arden, Frank Stephens. When he died in 1935 at age 75, the building was passed on to his son, Don Stephens. The newly established Arden Archives-

Museum, Inc., a non-profit organization, has now purchased it, and the Red House (a section of the building) along with a portion of the first floor of the Craft Shop has been renovated for a permanent home for the Arden Archives-Museum. The Arden Archives was previously located at the Buzz Ware Village Center in the areas formerly used for a stage and kitchen-office.

7. "Arden Children Denied Franchise," *The Morning News*, 9 Aug. 1916.
8. *Arden Leaves*, September 1923, p. 2.
9. *Arden Leaves*, September 1923, p. 2-3.
10. Brandner, Mayda. *Education in the Ardens*, Board of Trustees, Arden School District #3, 1969, p. 4.
11. Munroe, John A., *A History of Delaware*, 1984, p.199. According to Munroe, after Pierre du Pont retired from DuPont in 1918 at 41, he served on the State Board of Education and used that as a platform for social reform. The University of Delaware was given over a million dollars between 1914-1920 (197-198). According to an article on page 6 in the January 25, 1925 *Sunday Morning Star*, du Pont organized the Service Citizens of Delaware to upgrade the elementary schools of Delaware because he linked a good educated citizenry with a strong country.
12. Munroe, John A., p. 198.
13. Munroe, John A., pp. 1, 6.
14. Brandner, Mayda, p. 5.
15. The single tax Village of Ardentown was founded in 1922 and is northeast of Arden on the north side of Grubb-Harvey Road.
16. *Arden Leaves*, August 1922, p. 2.

CHAPTER 3

THE ARDEN SCHOOL IS BORN, 1923–25

From its beginnings in 1925, the Arden School and its importance to the community evolved slowly. The building had to adapt to changing needs: survival was not guaranteed. It began its life in 1925 as a community school, only to vanish in a fire in 1945, was reborn anew the next year, held its own as a private school despite talk of demolition, and was reborn as a community center. By examining the community's participation in the creation of the building, the school design, and pivotal points its history, we can better understand how the presence of a community building can be a significant factor in enhancing the cultural life of a town. The Arden School is an example of how a building exists in dynamic circumstances where a physical space enhances community spirit and a sense of community engenders a need to care about that physical space.

Because Arden residents used town meeting for community decision-making, a mechanism was in place for residents to forge a plan to build a public school in the Arden community. The debate that followed centered on two intertwining issues, one financial, the other philosophical: how could Arden fund construction and not violate the Deed of Trust and was there a place for public education and its perceived stress on conformity in a community of freethinkers?

Town meeting was the stage for these public debates. The town meeting forum in Arden appears in its earliest records and continues today as an on-going example of direct democracy. Until Arden incorporated in 1967, town meeting

lacked legal authority over many enforcement issues, but it did provide the community with a method to resolve important issues at the local level. That is not to say the process was easy. In *Community Participation Methods in Design and Planning*, author Henry Sanoff maintains an optimistic attitude when he writes of the value of grass-root movements and how they reinforce participatory democracy. Sanoff quotes Saul Alinsky, a well-known community organizer who wrote *Reveille for Radicals* (1946) and *Rules for Radicals* (1977): citizen action should be a drive to achieve “decentralization, local control, and consumer power”.¹

Arden could have used a little of this optimism at the start of the town meeting debates — the implementation of the principles of direct democracy were put to a substantive test and the decision-making was hard earned. Stories relayed by residents recall that early debates at town meeting were rancorous. Early town meeting minutes mention the factionalism.² Individual grievances made political debate at town meeting personal and some “free-for-all” discussions ended in fist-fights. Socialists and Single-Taxers fought for control.³ Some residents challenged the power of the trustees. Some residents argued that the trustees’ power in establishing the dollar amount of land rents was arbitrary. They argued that, without an independent system to assess land rents, new residents would be unlikely to settle in the community. The viability of the town was in doubt. The debate about expenditures for public education pushed the democratic process to the limit — the Arden School was in the center of it. Was a consensus possible?

Participation can bring genuine empowerment and a sense of partnership to a community. Henry Sanoff tempers his optimism about empowerment with a description of what he calls “participationitis disease” or the need to question and check everything before a decision is possible. This would be an apt diagnosis for the political dynamic that was, and continues to be, alive and well in Arden.

Sanoff makes it clear that community participation sometimes can be a sham. It can be an empty display of “pseudoparticipation” that is more about manipulation and placation⁴; discerning the difference can be difficult and challenging. Beginning at the September 1923 town meeting, participatory democracy was going to be tested. An official School Committee, reporting to the Arden town meeting, was formed.⁵ Ideas were expressed about what an Arden school would look like, such as using moveable partitions so rooms could accommodate a gym class or community assembly. Some residents wanted a school, but were concerned that the state would build the new school in another location which would mean Arden children would still need transport to get there. Philosophical arguments surfaced about consolidating private education into public education. Some residents wanted a school so adamantly that they were willing to put up \$1,000 each as a private donation.⁶

An organizational meeting of the first Arden School Association was held on October 7, 1923. They determined that the Association’s purpose was to “crystallize interest in the Arden School District and to find a way to acquire a school building.”⁷ The Town meeting minutes from November, 1923, show that residents favored purchasing a \$4,000 portable school building. Fourteen members of the Arden School Association and the district school board inspected a model in use in New Castle, Delaware.⁸

At the December 1923 town meeting, a letter arguing against using Arden land rent for a public school was read. The letter, written by Arden trustee Katherine “Kittie” Ross, explained her reasons for resigning from the Arden School Association. Ross stated that she was adamantly opposed to the expenditure of Arden land rent for public education: “Because we are all obliged under our present laws to help maintain an institution which is opposed to freedom of the indi-

vidual by dictating what and how he shall study.”⁹ Her grandson, Patrick Thaddeus, in an phone interview in 2003, clarified what he considers the Ross position: Ross held what could be described in 2004 as “libertarian” views asserting individual liberty. She was not opposed to public education, but she did have misgivings about standardized teaching and its place in Arden.¹⁰ She did not support compulsory education. In addition, Ross adamantly opposed the use of Arden land rent for such purposes because she believed that, to do so, would be in violation of the terms of the “Arden Deed of Trust,” i.e. using land rent surpluses to benefit the families who would be using school. The passage from the Deed that Ross cited reads as follows:

“ [T]he said trustees shall . . . apply all sums of money received as rents, in excess of the amount needed for the purposes of paying the taxes, to such common uses, desired by a majority of the residents as in the judgment of the trustees, are properly public, in that they cannot be left to individuals without giving one an advantage over others.”

“Deed of Trust,” *Arden Book*, p. 13

At the February 2, 1924 town meeting (a decisive one), a resolution was introduced to authorize an expenditure of \$2,000 from current revenues and to borrow \$5,000 to purchase a building. The discussion about where the funds would be coming from sparked the debate.¹¹

With the introduction of the resolution, a heated philosophical argument began: Trustee and Arden founder, Frank Stephens, and his son, Don Stephens, in agreement with Kittie Ross, tried to block the use of land rent for funding a public school which, in their opinion, would violate of the terms of the Deed of Trust.

Frank Stephens was a powerful orator and highly persuasive in causes he was passionate about. He was, after all, the “father” of the community. He is

quoted in the minutes of the meeting: "We have no right to divert funds to maintenance of School or Church; trustees would fight any action in the courts as long as money remained in the Treasury."¹² The trustees, Kittie Ross, Robert P. Woolery, and Walter E. Sweeting, were unanimous that trust funds could not be used unless by court order.¹³ The minutes are sparse in revealing the counterarguments except for two statements that proved persuasive when the votes were taken: Arthur Andrews observed that if a community did not provide for the education of its children it was "retrogressive." Some residents felt that the common good of Arden was served by having a school to attract leaseholders with or without children. Haines Albright stated that, in order to respect the "covenant" of the trustees to protect the terms of the trust, the town should have the state initiate a referendum to approve a 20-year bond to pay for the school. This approach would allow a separate school tax assessment for leaseholders and not be extracted from the land rent. A vote on the resolution was taken and the resolution passed 23-7.

Delayed by the Esperanto Congress that met in the Gild Hall on July 9, 1924, the referendum was held the next week to approve a \$9,000 bond issue¹⁴ and, according to Arthur N. Andrews, secretary of the Arden School Board, the bond was approved unanimously.¹⁵ To repay the bond, the county would assess Arden and Ardentown approximately 80% and 20%, respectively, for the bond and the interest.¹⁶ The process to build an Arden School for elementary-age children began. A Transcript of Deed¹⁷ from September 27, 1924, records that a portion of Sherwood Green was condemned and for damages of \$1.00 transferred by the trustees for the construction of a two-room schoolhouse for "white children."¹⁸ The Delaware Constitution maintained separate "white" schools and "colored" school districts. African American children had to travel long distances past "white-only" schools to reach a school in their Special District. Carol E. Hoffecker

notes in her *Delaware: a Bicentennial History* that it was not until 1965 that the state ended its Negro Special School Districts and closed those special schools.¹⁹ The challenge to this “separate but equal” education constitutional provision surfaced at the Arden School in 1952 and is discussed as part of the racially integrated Ardencroft community and its role in the desegregation of Delaware public schools (see this paper *Chapter 5: The Founding of Ardencroft*).

Twenty-five-year bonds, totaling \$6,000 or \$640/year, were sold and added to the \$2,000 for current revenues to pay for the construction. Two prefabricated buildings were acquired for the basic structure which was set on a stone foundation. Circle A Products Corporation from Newcastle, Indiana, provided the “interchangeable unit school houses” for a cost of \$5,038 (Fig. 3.1–3.3). The building was 68 feet in length, 28 feet wide, and 12 feet high from the foundation and built at a cost of \$8,690. The building contained two classrooms for grades one through eight, later reduced to grades one through six in 1931–32. Additional money for school ground equipment was solicited by the Arden School Board and appeals were made for volunteers to beautify the lot. Forty dollars was raised to purchase a Victrola.²⁰ The Arden School Association reported that they held their first meeting in the new school on November 12, 1924.²¹ On April 27, 1925, the *Wilmington Morning News* reported that over one hundred residents attended the ceremony laying the cornerstone, carved by resident John Gordon.²² Classes at the Arden School began September 1925 and continued until a fire destroyed the school in March 1945. Thereafter, the philosophical argument continued in town publications, such as the *Arden Leaves*, but the utopian village survived a dramatic philosophical split.

This controversy, as often happens, surfaced again in the 1940s with the founding of the Arden Community Recreation Association (A.C.R.A.). Little did

the residents from the 1920s know, the on-going struggle to keep the Arden School functioning was just beginning.

APPENDIX B

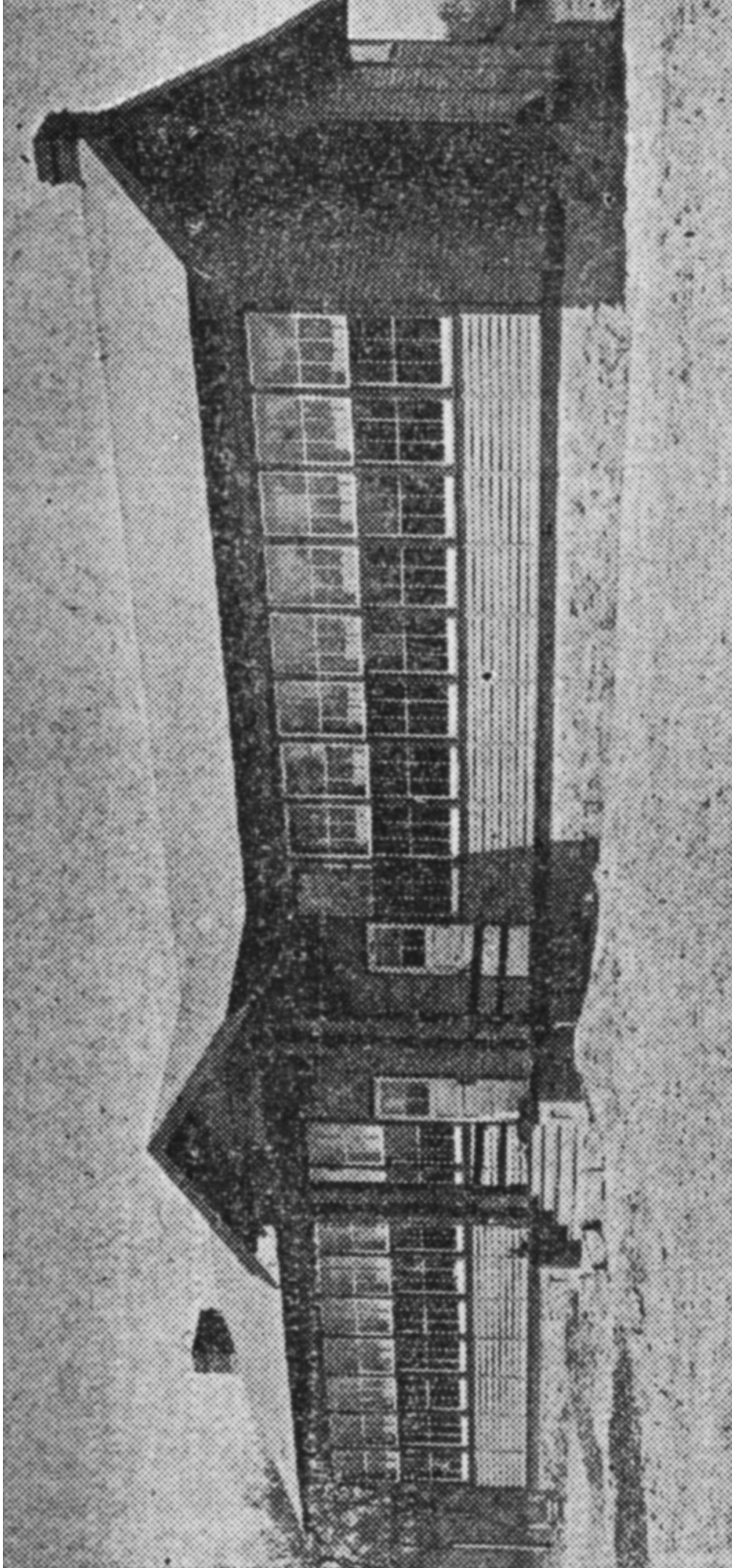


Fig. 3.1. The first Arden School, 1925. A photo taken at the Arden School dedication that appeared in the *Wilmington Sunday Morning Star*, 16 April 1925, pg. 1.

---- Statement --			
Arden, Del., Nov. 26, 1924.			
Statement of bills paid and remaining unpaid in connection with the erection of the Arden schoolhouse.			
<u>Bills paid</u>			
Order No.			
1	Frank Harrison (on account of labor employed in erection of building, and materials furnished,.....	\$300.00	
2	J. J. Cochran, hauling,.....	111.00	
3	William E. Williams, copper box for cornerstone,.....	2.50	
4	William Worthington, Jr., insurance.	100.00	
5	A. R. Saylor Printing Company, for printing and binding order blanks,	4.00	
6	William S. Hilles, Bonds, \$75.00 Seal, 4.50 Expense, 25.00	104.50	
7	Arden Water Co., service connections and base rate for one-quarter year,	86.77	
8	News-Journal Co., affidavits covering advertisements of bond referendum,	.50	
9	H. S. Vandever, hauling desks,.....	3.00	
10	Gaetano Del Cogliano, digging trench and filling in trench for water connections.....	7.75	
11	John Gordon, foundations and chimneys, (on account).....	500.00	
12	William A. Kimney, survey of site.....	26.00	
13	Frank Harrison, in full of account.....	435.50	\$1681.52
<u>Bills outstanding</u>			
	Circle A. Corporation.....	\$4665.00 @	
	John Gordon, balance due.....	500.00	
	Filing land condemnation papers with Recorder of Deeds and Prothonotary,	14.25	
	Circle A Corporation (Dargan's wages and expenses.....	383.00)
	Thompson (plumbing).....	500.00	
	Coolery (aseptic tank).....	300.00	
	Del. Hardware Co. and Julian B. Robinson,.....	10.00 @	
	Florence Garvin (6 affidavits).....	1.50	
	Theo. Kuntz Co., desks and ink wells...	570.00 @	\$2008.75
	Wincott and Co. (curtains).....	65.00 @	\$8690.27

Fig. 3.2. Statement of bills paid and unpaid dated November 26, 1924. Shows total building expenses for the first Arden School. Courtesy Arden Archives-Museum.

STATEMENT
IN ACCOUNT WITH
CIRCLE A PRODUCTS CORPORATION
INTERCHANGEABLE UNIT SCHOOL HOUSES
INTERCHANGEABLE UNIT RESIDENCES

CLERICAL ERRORS SUBJECT TO CORRECTION

A

INTERCHANGEABLE UNIT BLEACHERS
INTERCHANGEABLE UNIT PARTITIONS

NEWCASTLE, IND. August 31 1925
Board of Education,
Arden, Delaware.
Wilmington R.D. #2.

INTEREST CHARGED ON PAST DUE ACCOUNTS
NET CASH NO DISCOUNT

1924	Sept 16	Inv. 2034 - 0#60x0	4655.00		
	Oct 28	" 4757 0#60x0	383.90		
	Dec 29	Cash		4500.00	
	Feb 14	Cash		383.00	
	12	Telegram		90	
	Aug 11	9m. #1-A		97.50	
			5038.90	4981.40	
	Sept.	Balance	57.50		

9-21-25

H. A. Lincoln
Auditor
Shawnee

Fig. 3.3. Circle A Statement, Arden School, August 31, 1925. Shows total building expenses and remaining balance for the first Arden School. Courtesy Arden Archives-Museum.

NOTES TO CHAPTER 3

Chapter 3: The Arden School Is Born, 1923–1925

1. Sanoff, Henry, *Community Participation Methods in Design and Planning*, p. 3.
2. *Arden Leaves*, July 1916.
3. *Arden Book*, p. 5.
4. Sanoff, Henry, *Community Participation Methods in Design and Planning*, p. 8.
5. *Arden Leaves*, September 1923.
6. Brandner, *Education in the Ardens*, p. 1.
7. "Arden School Association," handwritten minutes, [pp. 9–12].
8. *Arden Leaves*, November 1923.
9. "Notes from the *Arden Leaves*: Historical Background," compiled by A. Andrews and G. M. Frank, secretary, Arden School Committee, 1944, p. 3.
10. Thaddeus, Patrick, Personal Interview, 2003.
11. "Arden Town Meeting," February 2, 1924.
12. *Arden Leaves*, March 1924.
13. *Arden Leaves*, June 1924.
14. The total bond issue was for \$9,000 at 5 percent interest, \$7,500 for the building and \$1,500 for future additions.

15. "Cornerstone Laid for Arden School, " *Wilmington Morning News*, 27 April 1925.
16. "Statement Balance in Farmer's Bank, Arden, Delaware, August 1, 1926."
17. "Transcript of Deed, Arden School District #3, Record book W, Volume 32, page 473," received for record October 1, 1924, [1_5]. Sherwood Green (2.377 acres more or less): Beginning at the intersection of the northerly side of The Highway at 37' wide and the easterly side of Sherwood Road at 40' wide, then by said side of Sherwood Road north 36 degrees 45' west, 103 1/3' to north 14 degrees 3' west 147.1' to the southerly side of Sunset Road at 36' wide, then north 55 degrees 15' east 397.5', south 38 degrees 35' east 228.85' to The Highway to south 53 degrees 45' west 461.8' to beginning of said bounds.
18. Delaware was a slave state, but did not fight with the Confederacy. Under Article X of the 1897 Constitution of the State of Delaware, the state would provide funds for the education of Negro and white children, but they would be educated in separate schools. This separation provision later became the grounds for Delaware NAACP court challenge in the 1950s that came before Chancellor Collins J. Seitz in a suit against Claymont and Hockessin schools. Seitz ruled that the State-imposed segregation in education resulted in unequal education and was therefore unconstitutional. This decision became part of the national case, *Brown v Board of Education*, that went to the Supreme Court Case in 1954. For reference, see booklet "Text of the opinion by Chancellor Collins J. Seitz in suits relating to schools in Claymont and Hockessin, Del., and the Chancellor's comments regarding the constitutionality of segregation," Delaware Fellowship Commission, Wilmington, Delaware, 14 pages.
19. Hoffecker, Carol E. *Delaware: A Bicentennial History*, 1977, p. 131.
20. "Arden School Assoc.," [89].
21. "Arden School Assoc.," [56].
22. "Cornerstone Laid for Arden School, " *The Morning News*, 27 April 1925.

CHAPTER 4

GROWING PAINS, 1925-1943

Challenges to the school's survival continued unabated. Arden and Ardentown were still summer communities with only a few hundred year-round residents. There was always the threat that under enrollment or costly maintenance bills would push the State Board of Education to discontinue and consolidate the Arden School District with the Claymont School District. Through good times and bad, community organizations were integral to the community's positive response to the Arden School.

The Arden Parent Teachers Association (P.T.A.) and Arden town meeting nourished the school by financing on-going programs such as lectures, folk dances, and music. To retain good teachers, the Arden P.T.A. provided additional funds for salaries when possible. When petitioned by the P.T.A., Arden and Ardentown Trustees made small donations.

During the 1930s, commencement exercises were opportunities for artistic expression with children singing and performing piano and violin solos (Fig. 4.1). Two former students of the brand new Arden School, Robert Pyle Jr. and Donald Holcomb, recall in an interview in 2003 that their teachers were firm, but loving in their teaching methods.¹ Two of their teachers taught four grades each. The two-room Arden School held about forty children. Frances Govatos was one of their teachers. The Arden Archives-Museum has a copy of her teaching contract to teach grades 5–8 for \$875 per year (Fig. 4.2). Holcomb remembers that the

grades were divided by rows with the youngest closest to the front of the classroom. If you listened carefully to what was being taught in the row behind you, you could master that material and have a chance to skip that grade the next year.

A former student from the 1940s, Robert Cunningham, was from an impressive Arden School class of only six students, two of whom were Fulbright Scholars. Cunningham spent a year at the University of Leeds in England on a Fulbright Scholarship and graduated from Lehigh University. He remembers that, as a child growing up in Arden, he never felt separated from adults and that "kids involved were never treated as kids."³ A fellow classmate who began at the Arden School in 1938, Patrick Thaddeus, studied at Oxford for two years as a Fulbright Scholar. He is currently a professor of astronomy and applied physics at Harvard University. Thaddeus considers his time at the Arden School "one of the formative influences in my life."³ Another student from that class was Robert Bloodwell who is a noted cardiothoracic surgeon.

Holcomb and Pyle remember that the teachers encouraged participation in theatrical performances in the community. In the summers in the late 1920s and early 1930s, Arden School children and adults were active in elaborate theater productions at the Gild Hall and at the outdoor field theater. "Pageant of Peace," "Pageant of Progress," and "Pageant of Civilization," were some of the plays written by a summer resident from New York, Fidonia H. Leitner (Fig. 4.4, 4.5). To benefit the school, she wrote a play called the "Pageant for Education" that involved a cast of sixty and was staged in the Gild Hall.

In contrast, in the winter, a quorum at town meeting was difficult to muster. Frank Stephens complained in a December 1927 letter to Walter Sweeting that quarreling was the reason for low attendance at town meeting.⁴ Keeping the community spirit alive was an on-going challenge and often fell short of utopian

ideals. Former trustee Kittie Ross wrote an editorial in the *Sunday Morning Star* in 1937, expressing her concern that many of the current residents in Arden had “no real love for the good and welfare of Arden” but were more concerned about extracting maximum economic return for themselves and power.⁵ She also argued that socialists urged residents to distrust and ignore the trustees and “run the town to suit ourselves.”

Through the 1930s and 1940s, inadequate funds weakened the Arden School. The Depression years hit Arden hard and many of its small crafts businesses failed. As an Ardentown child in the Depression years, Thaddeus remembers that “everybody was poor”.⁶ Volunteers from the Board of Trustees and the P.T.A. spent countless hours trying to hold the structure together: roof leaks were patched, plumbing was not upgraded, lighting remained limited, and coal was sometimes in short supply. Money to pay for janitorial services was a constant challenge and payment was slow in coming and patchwork: the town paid for part of the janitor’s salary, the Arden P.T.A. augmented with funds when they could, and the state of Delaware provided a small allotment. Despite the efforts to keep the school going, maintenance costs kept mounting. A State of Delaware Insurance Report evaluation of the Arden School in 1941 describes the school with its coal stove heater and beaverboard walls in a “state of disrepair” (Fig. 4.6). The Arden School Board of Trustees had to push for funds from the state while, at the same time, feared that, if pushed too hard, the state could close down the school.

Pressure for change was mounting, but, during wartime conditions, the troubles of a small rural school could easily be ignored. Funding and attention was focused on the war in Europe, or in the case of Stephens family and other Quakers and pacifists in the community, protesting it. Rationing and victory gardens on the Village Green were the day to day part of residents’ lives. The parents’

continued their efforts and complained about unsanitary conditions and suspected that many of their children's illnesses were linked to the school environment. By the early 1940s, the crisis pushed residents to seek a solution to improve the physical space and "modernize." Through the Arden School P.T.A., parents kept up the pressure on the Arden School Board of Trustees to address their complaints. Complaints were strong enough that the Community Planning Committee, chaired by "Jimmie" Ware, proposed the "development of a better Arden School."⁷ At town meeting, an Arden School Committee was formed to investigate that possibility and appointed Frances Harrison to that committee.

APPENDIX C

ARDEN SCHOOL

Arden, Delaware



CLASS FLOWER—ROSE

CLASS COLOR—PINK



Commencement Exercises



1. Period of Silence
2. Piano Duet—"Quips and Quirks" Dorothy Broadbent, Anne Russell
3. Class History Sara Bonsall
4. Song—(a) "At Summer Morn", (b) "Lightly Row" Class
5. Essay—"Robin" Earl Proth
6. Song—"Ice Cream Cones" Lower Grade Boys
7. Violin Duet—Waltz Joseph Smith, Joseph Agostine
8. Essay Richard Levy
9. Song—(a) "The Spring", (b) "Lovely Evening" Class
10. Class Prophecy Dorothy Broadbent
11. Song—"The Dolls' Fashion Show" Lower Grade Girls
12. Class Presentations Donald Holcomb
13. Song Class of 1930
14. Violin Solo—"Air" by Handel Margaret Russell
15. Presentations of Diplomas Chairman of School Board
16. Presentation of Prizes Chairman of School Board
17. Piano Duet—"Carmen" Dorothy Broadbent, Anne Russell

Fig. 4.1. Arden School commencement program dated June 4, 1930. Courtesy Collection of Anne Smock.

STATE OF DELAWARE
Department of Public Instruction
Teacher's Contract

It is agreed between the Board of School Trustees of Arden District
No. 3 Newcastle County, and Francis A Govatos
.....
(Name of Teacher)
who holds a First Grade State Certificate in full force, and has a
rating, that the said Board of School Trustees has employed and does hereby employ the said
Francis A Govatos to teach 5 6 7 & 8 th
.....
(Subjects or grades to be taught)
in the Public School under the control of the said Board of School Trustees for school days
between the 6th day of Sept 1927 and the 30th day of June, 19... at a
salary of \$ 875 per year to be paid monthly, not later than the 10th day of each calendar
month succeeding that for which the salary is due, provided all current records are accurately and
correctly kept and all required reports are made and approved.

It is further agreed that if the school term shall be set at 180 days or over by the Board of
School Trustees, the annual salary as fixed by the salary schedule shall be paid in ten (10) equal
monthly installments, and for each day of unexcused absence there shall be deducted from the
salary of that month in which the absence occurs, a sum equal to one one-hundred-eightieth
(1/180) of the annual salary, multiplied by the number of days of unexcused absence.

It is also agreed that should the term be fixed at 160 days, 9-10th of the annual salary as
fixed by the salary schedule shall be paid in nine (9) equal installments, and for each day of unex-
cused absence there shall be deducted from the salary of that month in which the absence occurs,
or ~~unexcused absence~~.

The said salary to be paid in the following manner:
That portion which is provided for in the salary schedule adopted by the State Board of Education
will be paid by the State Treasurer on order of the President and Clerk of the said Board of School
Trustees; the remainder, if any, is to be paid by the County Treasurer on order of the said Board
of School Trustees out of funds raised for the purpose by local taxation or otherwise.

The said Francis A Govatos hereby accepts the employment aforesaid and
undertakes that she will faithfully perform duty and observe and enforce the school laws
(the or she) (his or her)
of Delaware and the rules and regulations of the State Board of Education.

It is hereby agreed that either of the said parties to this contract may at any time during the
life of the same, terminate said contract by giving the other party thirty (30) days' notice in
writing. It is understood, however, that the suspension or dismissal of the teacher shall be only
in accordance with the provision of Art. 11, Sec. 15, Par. 3, of the School Laws of Delaware. Fail-
ure to give notice as provided shall constitute on the part of the teacher, forfeiture of any unpaid
balance of salary. The right of appeal shall in all cases be to the State Board of Education.

Dated this July 9 day of 1927, 19....

BOARD OF SCHOOL TRUSTEES.

M. Francis Pyle
.....
President.
George Morley
.....
Francis A. Govatos
.....
Teacher.

Fig. 4.2. Teacher's contract for Frances A. Govatos, 1927-28. She taught grades five through eight at the Arden School. Donald Holcomb and Robert Pyle were two of her students. Courtesy Arden Archives-Museum.



Fig. 4.3. Arden School class photo, 1931. George "Dad" Newcombe, a community volunteer at the school with teachers Frances Govatos and Mrs. Denby. Photo by Earl Brooks.

Left to right, first row, sitting: William Thomas, unknown, Eleanor Draper, Mary Draper, Margaret Talley, Marie Jane Holcomb, Mary Jane Pyle, Marjorie Russell, Helen Broadbent;

Second row: Richard Huber, Richard Levy, unknown, Charles Harlan Pyle, unknown, Walton "Tote" Wood, Bucky Campbell, Robert Pyle, unknown, Lewis "Reds" Thomas, Donald Holcomb, Robert Holcomb;

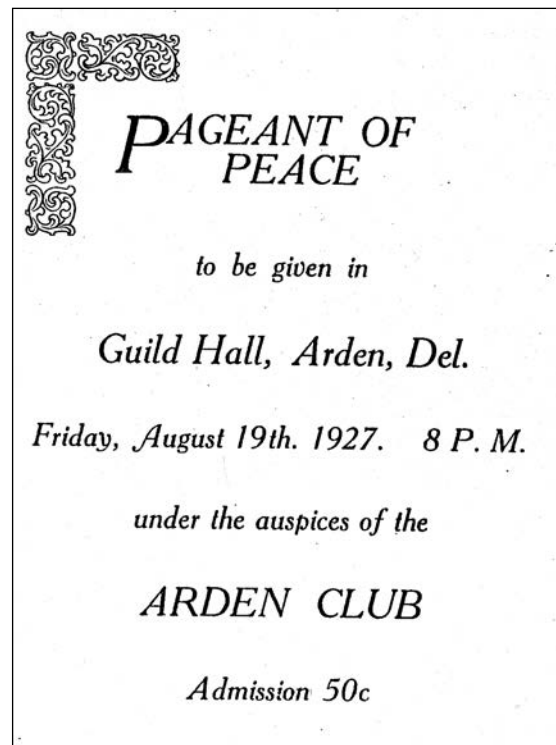
Third row: Robert Broadbent, unknown, Francis Price, unknown, Hayward Pennington, Esther Proth, Nora McDonald, Ann Russell, Martin Diamond, Frances Buck, Helen Talley, unknown, Milton Gerstine, Eugene Snyder, unknown, unknown;

Fourth row: Sylvia Levy, Clara Pierson, unknown, unknown, Dorothy Broadbent, Edna Oskins, Dorothy Pyle, Robert Huber, William Levy, Wilmer Talley, George Morley;

Back row: Eugene Shaw, unknown, George "Dad" Newcombe, Frances Gavatos, Ethel Gordon, Mrs. Denby, unknown, unknown.



Fig. 4.4. Above, "Pageant of Civilization" ca. 1920–1930. Taken by Earl Brooks in the Field Theater; To right. Fig. 4.5. Program cover from the "Pageant of Peace." In 1927, noted musician from the Philadelphia Orchestra, Lucius Cole, conducted the performances with the Arden Chorus. Fidonia Leitner wrote many of the plays. Buzz Ware, William Frank, and others directed various tableaux which involved children and adults in the productions. Photo courtesy Robert Pyle Collection. Program courtesy the Public Archives of the State of Delaware, Leitner Collection.



ARDEN PUBLIC SCHOOL

ARDEN, DELAWARE

This is a one and one half story no basement portable frame clapboard two classroom school building, peaked asbestos shingle roof, interior finish, beaverboard walls and ceiling, wood floors, trim and doors, heat is furnished by coal stoves, desks and seats attached, electric lights; building is in a state of disrepair

Total cubic feet	31,058
Cube factor .196 =	\$6,087.39
Depreciation 25%	<u>1,521.85</u>
Estimated Value	\$4,565.54
Call	\$4,565.00

The above estimate does not include cost of desks and seats; they may be insured under the building item when attached to the floor.



Fig. 4.6. Insurance Report, Arden Public School, from 1941. State of Delaware Digital Library, Public School Insurance Evaluation Reports, 1941 <<http://www.state.de.us/sos/dpa/exhibits/document/index.shtml>> Accessed 28 March 2004.

NOTES TO CHAPTER 4

Chapter 4: Growing Pains, 1925–1943

1. Pyle, Robert Jr. and Donald Holcomb, Personal Interviews. 9 Sept. 2003.
2. Cunningham, Robert. Personal Interview. 16 November 2003.
3. Thaddeus, Patrick. Personal Interview by telephone. 25 January 2003.
4. Stephens, Frank, Letter to Walter Sweeting, December 30, 1927, [1].
5. Ross, Katherine. "Is Arden varying from Founder's Idea?," *Sunday Morning Star*, 28 November 1937, p. 12.
6. Thaddeus, Patrick. Personal Interview by telephone. 25 January 2003.
7. Arden Town Meeting Minutes, August 30, 1943.

CHAPTER 5

FRANCES HARRISON AND THE SCHOOL COMMITTEE, 1944-46

By early February 1944, parents threatened a demonstration to jolt the Arden School Board and the Arden School Trustees to “modernize” the school. They claimed that the school lacked good ventilation, had broken desks, overflowing bookshelves made of orange crates, leaking roofs, two rickety heaters, thin walls and rattling windows, and the playground had broken swings.¹ In response, the first of many letters from community activists was sent to Dr. H. V. Holloway, Superintendent of Schools, apprising him of the community revolt and to plea for help citing that, in February, twenty students out of fifty-six were absent due to measles, chicken-pox, and “head ringworm.”² Although the demonstration was called off, the P.T.A. organized a cleaning brigade (Fig. 5.1).³ They reported to the School Committee which closed the school for two days while three shifts of men and women, parents and non-parents, and the entire Gardener’s Gild scrubbed the school. They were “shocked at the filth” they found. Water pressure was so low that, to get a drink, children’s mouths had contact with the water fountain. In one desk, they found a mouse nest with four live mice.⁴

When the State Board of Education told the town that no more additional funds for janitorial service were available, the Arden P.T.A. held a “Janitor Drive” at the Gild Hall in March to raise \$1,200. Residents came dressed as janitors or janitresses with prizes awarded for the best costumes, a Janitors’ Quartet sang, and Maria “Bunni” Hurlong performed South American and Spanish dances.⁵

From the beginning of her tenure on the 5-person committee, Frances Harrison was active, thorough, articulate, and solution-oriented as the committee worked to sort out the problems and present a plan to the town. After holding their first meeting on February 10, 1944, at Harrison's home, they agreed to examine the condition of the school, its history, financial statements going back 20 years, and the intricacies of state school laws. Numerous letters were sent to the Department of Instruction and the State School Board's Holloway asking how to petition for emergency funding and to determine what realistic options the community had. The state responded to her politely and promptly but always floated the possibility of closing the school if costs increased or enrollment dropped. The School Committee worked with Edmond Hurlong, chair of the Arden P.T.A. Investigating Committee, to completely inspect the school and prepare a report. In the spring of 1944, the Committee submitted a 10-page report to Town Assembly. The report included an 8-page Appendix with correspondence with state officials, yearly budget summaries, and the steps necessary to apply for more state financial support. Harrison summarized the choices that faced the town:

- Consolidate with Claymont School District
- Make temporary repairs now and remodel after the war
- Build a new school
- Solicit approval from neighboring areas to enlarge Arden School District #3.

Harrison's committee was commended for their efforts at town meeting.⁶ The Committee supported the report unanimously—a hard-won achievement in such a fractious debate.

This initial report was optimistic and appealed to the whole community to understand that the "entire community would be affected by the welfare of the

school."⁷ She emphasized that these conditions were correctable and that real upgrades would have to be delayed until after the war. The report listed the health improvement recommendations from Rural School Supervisor Ella J. Holley: she suggested weatherstripping, paving the muddy front yard, screens on the furnace to hold down the dust, and a coat of paint to freshen up the "gloomy" interior. Holley also disputed the charge that the "epidemic" at the school was unique and caused by uncleanness since all of the Delaware schools had similar illnesses that year. The School Committee concluded that the building could be repaired, but emergency funds from the state were vital and the need for a fair allotment of funds to augment the janitorial service was essential. Frances Harrison concluded the report: "The Arden School is now facing the most critical period in its history [...] and only the deepest interest and effort on the part of the Town Assembly, its committees and its trustees, the P.T.A. and the School Board, working together, will see it well set on a long-term program."⁸

The optimism soon vanished: delays in funding by the State School Board for repairs exasperated the School Committee chair. At the May 1944 town meeting, Harrison reported that factionalism had surfaced between the Arden P.T.A. and Arden School Board of Trustees which meant that "they failed to cooperate." She had complaints from parents about apathy on the part of some Arden School Board Trustees about the condition of the school.⁹ The Delaware Historical Society has what appear to be hand-written notes of extensive interviews that Harrison conducted with Arden School parents about their views of the "school situation." The interviews show the high level of parental frustration: lack of coal which closed the school for 3 days, unruly playground behavior, illnesses of children which caused many missed days at school and how the "deplorable" conditions affected their children and "disheartened" the parents who were tired of

“unproductive bickering.” Several parents were going to withdraw their children from the school if conditions did not improve.¹⁰

Harrison argued in her School Committee report for teachers’ salaries to be supplemented to retain good staff and students and pushed the Arden School Board to submit a plan for repairs. She urged residents to see the school as a “social asset” which built a sense of community with parents, teachers and neighbors “working together.” She saw the value of the modest-sized school as a benefit: “Modern educators favor the small school for the small child.”¹¹ The *Wilmington Morning News* ran an article that quoted the committee’s report about the small state allotment for janitorial service and noted that the janitor had not been paid for three months¹²: “The Arden School received only \$80 from the state for janitorial service for the school year 1942–43, while other two-teacher schools in the state with a similar number of pupils received more than three times as much.”¹³ Accusations of do-nothing attitudes and negligence continued to pressure the Arden School Board Trustees to act—which they did. School Board Trustees pleaded for emergency funds from the State and asserted that the \$80 per year for janitorial service should be increased to \$420 to be in line with the support given to other Delaware rural schools with similar enrollments.¹⁴ The State finally relented and granted the funds.

As 1945 began, Arden concerns were marginalized by the more compelling story of World War II. The young boys and girls in Arden School classrooms were leaving for World War II postings far and wide—some never returned. While more residents were living in Arden year round, community attendance at town meeting dipped below a quorum many times. At the February town meeting, no quorum meant the meeting was cancelled. As the crises mounted, serendipity played its part: 9 a.m. on Saturday, March 12, 1945, the first Arden School went up in

flames and education in Arden went back to the barn (Fig. 29). With the front page news of the Pacific War Campaign and Allies Tokyo bombing raids, classes had to move back the basement in the Arden Club.

The Arden School Trustees and Arden P.T.A. met immediately to garner support for a new school. Perhaps because the town had been through all the discussion before and the arguments had played themselves out, a decision at the Arden town meeting on May 6, 1945 was quickly made to design and plan for a new structure. The money for the construction of a new Arden School, financed by a \$18,750 bond was quickly approved by an Arden and Ardentown referendum on May 12. The support for the bond was resounding success: 213 for the bond, 10 against.¹⁵ Talk of “possibly acquiring a trailer” used by the Arden Civilian Defense quickly died.¹⁶

Although the news of the nation was focused on the dramatic events of WWII, the community of Arden could not ignore the needs close to home: the efforts of parents to “modernize” their local school. It involved a community-wide effort that made use of existing community institutions as well as the vision of certain community leaders. With the help of an active Arden P.T.A., Arden School Trustees, Arden Town Meeting, and the individual efforts of Frances Harrison and her School Committee as part of Town Meeting, the Arden School was going to be upgraded. When the first Arden School school went up in flames, the organizations were in place to replace it quickly and with solid community support.

APPENDIX D



Fig. 5.1. Arden 'Bucket Brigade' cleans the Arden School, 1944. From an article in the *Wilmington Morning News*, February 4, 1944. Left to right: Edith "Jimmie" Ware, organizer; Cora Trump; Mrs. Victor Lance; Mrs. William T. Trump; Mrs. John G. Stone; and Maria "Bunni" Hurlong.



Fig. 5.2. Shell of Arden School after the fire, March 12, 1945. Photo courtesy Anne Smock Collection.

NOTES TO CHAPTER 5

Chapter 5: Frances Harrison and the School Committee, 1944–1946

1. "Demonstration being held Monday morning in front of Arden School in protest of inactivity of the School Board and to bring to public attention the condition of the school" flyer, [p. 1].
2. Hurlong, 5 Feb. 1944, [p. 1].
3. "Arden Bucket . . . ," *Wilmington Morning News*, 4 February 1944, [p. 1]
4. "School . . . Special Delivery," 7 Sept. 1952, p.3.
5. "*Town Crier*, March 4, 1944," p. 1.
6. Arden Town Meeting Minutes, April 25, 1944.
7. Arden School Committee, April 1, 1944.
8. Arden School Committee, April 1, 1944, p. 10.
9. Arden Town Meeting Minutes, June 26, 1944.
10. "Interviews attributed to Frances Harrison," [pp. 1–42.]
11. Arden School Committee, April 1944, p. 1.
12. Arden School Committee, April 1944, p. 4.
13. "Temporary Plan," [p. 1].
14. Kumme, July 3, 1944, [p. 1].

15. The school district bond referendum was held on May 12, 1945 from 1 p.m. – 8 p.m. There was approval to sell nineteen bonds: 18 at \$1000 each and one at \$750. According to town meeting minutes of June 25, 1945, the interest was 2-1/2 per cent per year and would be retired in 18-3/4 years by adding \$1,000 to Arden's annual county taxes and \$500 to Ardentown's. The Trustees of Arden and Ardentown added an annual school tax to the land rent bill so that there was no effect on land rent individually. Construction would begin July, 1945.
16. Arden Town Meeting Minutes, June 25, 1945.

CHAPTER 6

THE NEW ARDEN SCHOOL, 1945–1969

A building is not something you finish. A building is something you start.

Steward Brand, *How Buildings Learn* (188)

A New School Is Born

Now school-less, the community had to come up with a solution: What to do and for what cost? The Village of Arden with its history of direct democracy, did what they did best: they talked about it. After all, the town had been through all of this before in 1925, when slowly, agonizingly slow to some, the town forged a plan to pay for that structure. There was even talk of forming a nursery school and kindergarten in the fall of 1946.¹

Arden now entered into a period of cooperation, of sorts, in an effort to quickly erect a new school to accommodate 90 students. In the process, the town created a structure that offered many of the positive features that community-oriented architects and community planners seek to implant into their designs today: open and multi-use rooms, natural light, and the use of a simple structure and materials.

Frances Harrison (for no fee) submitted sketches and drawings to the State Board of Education. A state-approved architect created new drawings. Estimates for construction were .45–.50 cents per cubic foot. When the sealed bids arrived, however, the estimates exceeded the construction budget. In addition, the build-

ing design was a disappointment. The state's design came from a reused pattern or "stock school" look. Looking for something better, the Arden School Board turned to Frances Harrison to design a new structure that was special and to fit within the town's budget. Although Harrison had to resign from the School Committee to avoid charges of a conflict of interest, she had the approval to build the new Arden School. Construction began on November 10, 1945 with the new school sitting on the old school's foundation (Fig. 6.1, 6.2). The construction costs for the new school were approximately \$30,500 (Fig. 6.3, 6.4).

Integral to the fondness that many residents have with the current structure is Harrison's layout of the building (Fig. 6.5–6.7) and its location centered on the Sherwood Green. While no notes exist as to whether or not Harrison was aware of the original Will Price plan for Arden or whether she knew of the influence of Ebenezer Howard's Garden City influences in the design of Arden, the architecture of the school does reinforce those ideas. The floors have radiant heating through pipes embedded in the floor which was a feature used in European designs, but innovative at the time in the United States. The system worked well for an elementary school—on snowy days the children could leave their coats and mittens on the floor to dry. The radiant heating system worked until a unrepairable leak forced replacement by a conventional baseboard system in 1985.

The three classroom rooms were flexible to accommodate multiple uses by the students and the community. Classrooms exit directly to a Village green. Two large rooms (25.5 ft. x 32 ft. each) have an accordion-type divider between them that allows for large assemblies and which face a small stage for school or community performances. Floor-to-ceiling windows flood the rooms with light and have deep low sills to provide additional seating. Because funding was tight in 1946, an additional classroom (Room 4) and stage lighting that were part of the original

plan were not added until 1950.

In an essay on the psychology of spaces, Roderick J. Lawrence says: "Buildings of all kinds are handed down as a legacy from one generation to the next; they illustrate the permanence and elasticity of the spatial configuration of societies [...] space has not only history but a life-history."² Countless children, parents, and town residents have moved in, out of, and through the Arden School to participate in many events held there: all of these memories are part of the enduring relationship that has grown between the community and the building. A letter to parents from the Arden School Board shows the pride that many in the community had about their school: "Our school population reflects a rich diversity of racial and national origins, a wide variety of socio-economic, cultural and educational backgrounds [...] where children who are not alike in background learn to live together harmoniously."³

Designed with an adaptable layout and space design, the Arden School has been able to evolve as the community needs change. The 1946 building has served over its 58-year history as a school, summer camp, meeting space, concert hall, set studio, art and craft classroom, and daycare center. Several key events in the life of the building helped to secure an enduring relationship of building to community and community to building: the founding of a community organization in 1948 based at the school, desegregation of the school in 1952, and the ongoing cultural events held there.

Home for the Arden Community Recreation, 1948–present

In the 1940s, Arden continued to attract more year-round residents who not only pressed for a community school, but also for year-round activities to engage the children. Some parents with young children were looking for ways to

keep their children active over the summer and not “running wild.” They decided to organize a summer program for Arden and Ardentown children (Ardencroft was included when it was founded in 1950). The Arden School had the flexible space to meet that need. When the classroom desks and chairs were put away for the summer, the Arden School provided the open space suitable for that informal use.

To meet that need, a group of residents created a non-profit community organization, the Arden Community Recreation Association (A.C.R.A.) (Fig. 6.8–6.9). A.C.R.A. based their free summer camp for preschoolers to sixth graders at the Arden school. In the summer afternoons and evenings, residents volunteered their talents to teach at the school, in a resident’s home, or by making use of the common land for sports or nature walks. Astronomy, sculpture, dancing, and cooking classes were just a few of the supplemental programs. The free 5-week summer camp continues today along with year-round activities such as a Pancake Breakfasts in the Woods, Halloween Parties, and House and Garden Tours, and plays. There is no charge for the program, and, to register, a child only needs to be a resident of the three Ardens. The program was and continues to be funded by a door-to-door solicitation campaign every spring and by modest contributions from the three town governments. The founding of A.C.R.A. was not without controversy. Harkening back to the arguments of the 1930s about funding the first Arden public school, some residents choose not to contribute to A.C.R.A, like the founder’s son, Don Stephens. He would not contribute because, in his opinion, A.C.R.A. only benefited children which was in violation of the Deed of Trust which stated that land rents cannot be used to give “one an advantage over others.”

The A.C.R.A. program operates with an air of informality and the doors are left open to allow for a easy transition from inside to the outdoors. Children are

free to flow from painting a cardboard set inside to tie-dying on the picnic tables outside. Swim team members stroll from the pool across the street to see what interests them today. Kick ball teams burst in from the side of the green to raid the popsicles from the freezer. Parents come and go as volunteers for the day. Memories are set from such familiar and intimate exchanges over time.

The program has 50-year continuity at the Arden School (now called the Buzz Ware Village Center) and found a permanent home at the Arden School (Fig. 6.10). While the strength of the program has waxed and waned over its 50-year plus history, it has endured. The strength of the A.C.R.A program is in its founding principle of welcoming the children of the three Ardens and for charging no fee to attend the camp. Although the school has since closed, the building continues to serve the community by housing this program. Over the years, hundreds of children have attended A.C.R.A. and the snapshots of events held there fill many photo albums. This long-term relationship with A.C.R.A. secures the building as an integral part of Arden's community life.

Ardencroft Founded in 1950 and Its Role in School Desegregation

Delaware civil rights leader and later Ardencroft resident Pauline A. Young wrote in the 1940s about the dismal educational opportunities for "colored" children in Delaware resulting from the racial separation in the schools mandated by the 1897 Delaware State Constitution.⁵ Despite millions of dollars later spent to construct "Negro" schools in the 1920s, historian Harold Livesay echoes Young's assessment: Negro education constituted one of the most disgraceful chapters in Delaware history.⁶ The founding of new community called Ardencroft was a catalyst for Arden's part in breaking down segregation barriers in Delaware.

In 1949, Don Stephens began work on establishing the community adja-

cent to Arden. The mission of Ardencroft was to create an integrated community with members from diverse economic backgrounds. In October, a meeting was held at the Arden School to adopt by-laws for this experimental community. The community was modeled on experimental communities that the American Friends Service Committee had established elsewhere, in particular, a self-help group formed in Lorraine, Ohio. In the New Arden, members would pool their labor and financial resources to purchase lots and then help one another build homes on them. A nearby farm came on the market for \$55,000 in October. By mortgaging his own land, Don Stephens contributed the majority of the funds needed to buy the 63 acres. The community, called Ardencroft,⁷ was set-up as a non-profit corporation administered by an association with a board of directors. Don Stephens was president of the corporation; Dr. Henry George III, a Wilmington doctor, secretary; and Buzz Ware, treasurer. Ninety-four quarter-acre lots would be assigned by a lottery. Members would be recruited from diverse backgrounds and economic levels. A sign erected at the entrance said: "You are welcome hither, for here in Ardencroft we do not ask about a man's religion nor his beliefs nor do we hold any theory of racial superiority."⁸

A lottery was held on Saturday and Sunday, August 26–27, 1950 and all lots were assigned. Many Arden residents and Ardentown residents participated in the lottery. No money to purchase a leasehold was necessary, but lottery winners had to sign an agreement to pay the land rent which would be due on March 24, 1951. With the establishment of Ardencroft, the three Ardens now comprised a total of 334 acres of land in Delaware based on the principles of Henry George's land-value taxation—or Single Tax communities.

Ardencroft made the June 1950 *Journal Every Evening* for its principle of being founded on no racial restrictions of any kind.⁹ As families began building

homes in Ardencroft, Don Stephens and other Ardencroft supporters invited African American families from Wilmington to purchase leases with the hope that those families would eventually be able to afford to build a home on the leasehold. That invitation brought the national debate over school segregation to an emerging community in Delaware.

In 1952, as part of a national campaign strategy to use the legal process to breakdown racial segregation in the public schools, the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People (N.A.A.C.P.) was encouraging African American parents to try to enroll their children in their local public schools. If the children were refused admittance, the N.A.A.C.P. and other organizations were ready to sue the school districts on their behalf. By these test cases, civil rights organizers hoped to win enough cases to begin to break down the racial segregation of public schools that was U.S. law and state law in over a dozen states.¹⁰ The N.A.A.C.P. chapter in Delaware succeeded in recruiting parents willing to register their children at Claymont High School and in the Hockessin Special School District. The Delaware State Attorney General, the Delaware State School Board, and some school administrators found themselves caught between the desire to admit the children and the fear of violating the State Constitution mandating racial separation. No doubt, many school boards had no desire to change a word of the U.S. or their state's constitution to integrate the schools.

That same year, a Wilmington physician, Leon V. Anderson (Fig. 6.11),¹¹ his wife, and their young children moved to Ardencroft. Dr. Anderson approached the Arden School Board about registering his three elementary-age children at the Arden School. If the children could not attend the Arden School, they would be bussed to a "colored" school in Wilmington—the Arden School was within walking distance of the Anderson home. In a letter from an Arden School Trustee

Edmond Hurlong to the State Superintendent of Public Instruction, Hurlong states that Dr. Anderson and his wife made it clear that they would take court action if their children were denied admission (Fig. 6.12). The Arden letter informed the State School Superintendent that the community supported the Arden School Trustee's decision to admit the children and that a petition was in circulation to show community support.

On September 15, the Delaware State Attorney General Albert H. Young issued an opinion that the Ardencroft African American children had been admitted to the Arden School illegally and the Arden School Board was "without authority" to do so.^{12, 13} A powerful message was sent by the state board to abide by the law. Edmond Hurlong's wife, Bunni Hurlong remembers that, at the time, she was afraid that her husband was going to be arrested for the Arden School Board Trustees action allowing the children to register.¹⁴

In response to Young's ruling, a community meeting was held to back the decision of the Arden School Board to admit the children. The trustees of Arden led by Buzz Ware voiced support for the Arden School trustees, and a letter supporting that position was sent to State Board of Education. In September, the children began classes at the school and no action was taken by the state. As a result of welcoming the Anderson children to the school, the Arden School District did not become part of the Delaware case that, in 1954, became part of *Brown v Board* argued in the Supreme Court.

A national movement was in place to eliminate the "separate but equal" court decisions of century past, and, while controversy and heated debate come easy to the small village, Arden offered no resistance to integration. Individuals, such as Edmond Hurlong, Buzz Ware, and others were willing to state their support for integration. The community responded with a petition to stand behind

the position of the School Board. While court-ordered integration was only two years away, it would be a proud moment in the history of the Arden School. Reflecting back on that time, reporter William Frank wrote in the *Sunday News Journal*: "Apparently, the State Board of Education took the attitude that it had enough problems on its hands without fighting Arden."¹⁵

McCarthy Years, 1950s

During the darkest days of the House Committee on Un-American Activities and Wisconsin Senator Joseph McCarthy, the Ardens were not spared the intrusion of rumor of communist plots as part of the Red Scare. At that time, Arden had residents from many other countries. Many of them contributed their expertise to the school by teaching foreign languages, art, music, and folk dances. This exposure to other cultures was an accepted part of enriching the curriculum at the Arden School. With Arden's history of support for progressive causes, some residents in Arden had already had their patriotism questioned. Kittie Ross mentions in her autobiography that, as a pacifist, rumors spread that she was a communist sympathizer. Rumors got back to her that some neighbors accused her of washing her floors with the American flag.¹⁶ Also caught in the Red Scare web was the Hurlong family who were active participants in cultural programs at the Arden School. The memories of those times are painful for Bunni Hurlong even today and were recalled with expressed reluctance. Edmond Hurlong often brought films to the school to educate the children about other countries. His wife, Bunni, taught Spanish and Mexican dances to the children at the school. Unfortunately, a small group of residents criticized Edmond Hurlong for showing films at the school that described the culture of other countries. As his wife Bunni remembers those times: their reasoning was based on a concern that, if we had to fight these

countries in a future war, the children should not see those people as friendly and as too much like ourselves.¹⁷ Undeterred by pressure from that point of view, the films of other cultures did not cease. During the period of the McCarthy hearings in the early 1950s, Edmond Hurlong traveled extensively in South America and Europe for his dentistry supply business, Arden Brands, based in Ardentown. Without explanation, when Hurlong applied for a passport to travel to Sweden to establish a branch for his dental supply business, his passport application was denied. The impact on Hurlong's business was devastating. Without explanation, the Hurlongs were left to wonder why the State Department made that decision. In the 1980s, under the Freedom of Information Act, the Hurlong's acquired their F.B.I. file. The conclusion of the extensive investigation was that the Hurlong case was based on mistaken identity (Fig. 6.13).

Post-WWII international realignments aroused anxiety of internal threats in the United States, real or imagined. Arden was as not immune to the anti-communist fervor that gripped the United States in the late 1940s and 1950s. Because of the Arden School's acceptance of diversity and an embracing of other cultures, the School was vulnerable to such accusations at that time. While much time has passed and memories fade, it is a sad that such fervor tried to find a foothold at the Arden School. In a close-knit community, such misplaced passion only divides neighbor from neighbor.

Cultural events sponsored by community organizations

The Arden School was the source of many cultural events in the community — events that involved the participation of parents and children. Programs and plays involved the entire community and tapped into the improvisational spirit and resourcefulness of the community. The artistic and musical talents in the

community enhanced the productions. As a new resident to the Ardens in the late 1950s, Dr. Erhard "Hardy" Hoegger was impressed by the time parents gave to the school and the quality of the talents they offered: language programs, and "music all the time," violin lessons by Estelle Frankel and folk dances by Earl Brooks and Joan Colgan to name only a few. In the 1950s, "The Magic Castanets," was just one of the many plays for Arden School children that Bunni Hurlong directed. Hurlong remembers with fondness the cooperation that she received from parents in those productions: she would send the children home with sketches of costumes and suggestions for fabrics. On schedule, the children would arrive with the completed costumes and props in hand (Fig. 6.14). To create the Mexican "Old Man's Dance" for a children's performance at the Arden Gild Hall, Hurlong and Arden sculptor, Marcus Aurelius Renzetti ("Renzi"), collaborated on making folk-style masks.

There was a seamless blend between the activities at the school and the community, and many activities allowed families and teachers to share experiences both inside and outside of the classroom. Arden School secretary and resident, Barbara Fenske, reminisced many years ago about the performance of the "The Wizard of Oz " at the school. To transform the school for the performance, parents were asked to send in "flashy" costume jewelry, which was then strung throughout the building. When the lights were dimmed that evening, the jewelry glittered throughout the school to dramatize the magical city of Oz.

A play was performed every year at the school, and some plays were written by the students and performed on the small stage. A resident, Dorothy Verne, remembers a story from her sister: on rainy days, the teacher had the children racing around the classroom to the "William Tell Overture" (or theme music from the "Lone Ranger," a popular TV program in the 1950s) — no doubt to release

some bottled up energy. At one P.T.A.-sponsored program in February 1960, children performed piano solos, tap-danced, sang, and played the flute. Family pet shows were eagerly anticipated and drew in the whole community.

Although many fine teachers worked at the Arden School, countless stories of Arden School alumni center on the excellent teaching of Walter Hosler (teacher-principal 1953–1963). He is remembered as extremely fair and kind. Brenda (Andrews) Washington, then a student from Ardencroft, remembers Mr. Hosler's kindness when she broke her leg a few days before her performance in "Pooh of His Friends." To keep her in the play, Hosler built a tree support platform for her so that she could still be in the play.¹⁸ Her mother, Ann Andrews, mentioned that, as the lone African American child at the school, that special treatment meant a lot to her and her daughter. Another former student, Coie Morley, had a wonderful memory of Mr. Hosler strolling around his fifth and sixth-grade classroom with his pet iguana, St. George, on his shoulder.¹⁹

Coie Morley has fond memories of another teacher who knew that Coie aspired to be a teacher some day. When the teacher had a brief appointment elsewhere, she let Coie conduct her first-grade class. It was a thrilling experience for a sixth grader. Coie later graduated from the University of Delaware in education. She did her student teaching at the Arden School and then taught there.

The P.T.A. kept the community involved in their work at the school. Support remained strong for the P.T.A.'s fundraising efforts and, through the many activities held there, the school was fully integrated into Arden's community life. A map prepared by P.T.A. president Frances Furman in the 1950s has the name of every family that lived in the Ardens handwritten in for him to contact.

Residents of the three Ardens had no blueprint for "How to Build a Community." It was a community of diverse opinions and economic backgrounds.

The school offered the common ground for mutual experiences and, through continued use for cultural events, provided a reserve for the memories for each generation. These bonds go deep in enhancing community spirit and offer times to regenerate and regroup when discord threatens to undermine community spirit. The Arden School has played not only an educational role in the community, but has served as a space for common ground to restore and rebuild a strong sense of community.

Consolidation 1969

In the 1960s, schools around the state were being reorganized and consolidated: all Special School Districts that did not offer a first through twelfth-grade education were being closed. After the Russians surprised many Americans by launching the first space capsule "Sputnik," math and science education quickly became a top priority with many Americans. Arden was not immune to that pressure. In 1962, a group of Arden parents were concerned that their children would not be able to compete academically at the middle school and high school level when they left the Arden School at sixth grade.

This initiative sparked a vigorous debate within the community that mainly centered on the Arden School Board elections. As Hoegger remembers it, the Arden School Board understood that consolidation was going to happen, but the Board wanted to fight to slow down the pace of that consolidation and, in time, negotiate the best school for the Arden children. The high regard that the community and professionals had for the building is summarized in the 1964 Arden School Evaluation conducted by the School of Education at the University of Delaware. The report lists the school's positive features: (1) outstanding home-school-community relationship; (2) Arden children; (3) Board of Trustees which

represents the community and is an outstanding group; (4) size of school which allows flexibility, experimentation, informality, and individualized instruction.²⁰

Although this was a positive report card for the school, some areas that were "needing improvement" are mentioned which foretold the fate of Arden School District #3. The Arden School report noted that the school was weak in details of educational objectives, updating the curriculum, stressing individual instruction, updating supplies and equipment, and "systematic" community involvement.²¹ The Arden School had four classrooms for six grades which was seen as inadequate.

A candidate for the Arden School Board that year expressed concern that, in addition to lacking facilities and services found at the newer consolidated schools, the Arden School was "too close to the community" which meant that confidential information about students could leak out to the community.²² The parents brought a petition to the State Board of Education to hold a referendum asking parents to choose consolidation so that Arden would be absorbed into another school district.

Rallying to the other side was the president of the Arden P.T.A., Marti S. Berger, who spoke for retaining the Arden School District: "Those who urge consolidation have some happy dream that, upon being annexed by a larger district, our Arden School would be enlarged, the faculty increased, and the curriculum 'standardized,'"²³ Hardy Hoegger, a long-time Ardentown resident, was president of the Arden School Board at that time and later became a member of the Mt. Pleasant School Board. He remembers that consolidation was seen as inevitable by the Arden School Board, but members of the Board wanted to insure that the Arden School children would be placed in the best possible situation given the close-knit and more informal environment that characterized the school.²⁴ Despite

a vigorous campaign to keep the school open, on July 1, 1969, Arden was absorbed into the Mt. Pleasant School District and the school was closed.

In a fine tribute to the contribution the Arden School made to the community, resident Pat Liberman wrote that “the small school did thrive — not always smoothly—but it served as a natural molder of strong bonds of community identity, of a realized participation in their children’s education by many individuals who offered their talents and skill to the enrichment of Arden School life.”²⁵

The *Morning News* columnist and Arden “expatriate,” William Frank, also wrote of the closing of the school: “Long before the term, ‘cultural enrichment,’ was a by-word in education, the people of Arden were enriching the curricula. The children were tied to the traditions and culture of the village. Residents volunteered as part-time teachers in the languages, arts, theater, dance and nature study.”²⁶ A way of life in Arden was ending and a building that had brought so many memories to the families moving in and out of its spaces now needed to evolve a new reason to be, to find its place in a world of “Sputniks” and competitive science education. Many in the community were ready for the change and were positive about their children expanding their horizons at a larger and more modern school. Fortunately, the days of the building were not over and its adaptability would be its saving grace.

Architectural historian Brand writes that “[t]he space plans of vernacular buildings are typically generic and general-purpose [...] are found to be the most adaptable over time.”²⁷ He uses the term “loose-fits” to describe the flexibility that gives a building resiliency. In 1969, the Arden School began a 20-year period of transition that meant that the building would change from a community school, to a leased space for a private school, and, finally, to a community center with some rental space. It foundered, another controversy burst open, and then it

evolved to bring the community together in its new life transformed as the Buzz Ware Village Center (B.W.V.C.). It is as the B.W.V.C. that the design and integration with the community slowly came together.

APPENDIX F



Fig 6.1. (top) The new Arden School under construction, 1945; Fig 6.2 (bottom) The new school near completion, 1945. Photos courtesy Anne Smock Collection.

PHONE HOLLY OAK 2015

GEORGE A. MORETON CONTRACTOR AND BUILDER

REPAIRS .. REMODELING .. NEW CONSTRUCTION

WISTER STREET

CLAYMONT, DEL.

November 30, 1945.

Board of Trustees,
Arden and Ardentown Elementary School,
Arden, Delaware.

WORK TO DATE ON ARDEN AND ARDENTOWN ELEMENTARY SCHOOL

<u>ITEM#</u>		<u>AMOUNT</u>
1	Wrecking .100%	252.00
3A	Masonry blocks and bricks 75%	3300.00
2	Excavating, Grading and Fill 65%	491.40
5	Footings 100%	346.50
3B	Concrete work including steel in stock	155.00
7	Millwork on hand	607.00
7	Lumber on hand	<u>1231.84</u>
		\$ 6383.74
	Less 10%	<u>638.37</u>
		\$ 5745.37

Fig. 6.3. Work-to-date, November 30, 1945. Partial bill for the new Arden School, Moreton Contractors. Courtesy Arden Archives-Museum.

CONTRACTOR AND BUILDER

WISTER STREET

REPAIRS .. REMODELING .. NEW CONSTRUCTION

CLAYMONT, DEL.

November 30, 1945.

Board of Trustees,
Arden and Ardentown Elementary School,
Arden, Delaware.

COST BREAKDOWN ON ARDEN SCHOOL

<u>ITEM #</u>	<u>TITLE</u>	<u>BY WHOM DONE</u>	<u>COST</u>
1	Wrecking	General Contractor	252.00
2	Excavating, Grading and Fill	General Contractor	756.00
3 A	Masonry, Blocks, Brick	Walter E. Cleaver	4410.00
3 B	Masonry Concrete work	Gen. Contractor	2315.00
			6725.00
4	Structural Steel	Savery & Cooke	113.40
5	Footings	General Contractor	346.50
6	Misc. Material	Delaware Hardware Co.	194.00
7	Carpentry & Millwork and Glazing	Bresius & Smedley) Delaware County Supply) Silverside Supply) General Contractor)	9928.00
8	Roofing		987.90
9	Lathing, Plastering	Guy C. Long	1628.00
10	Painting	J Bacon	1260.00
11	Hardware	Delaware Hardware	747.00
12	Heating	George S. Bigger	4278.00
13	Plumbing	George S. Bigger	1827.00
14	Electrical	G.W. Corbett	1140.00
15	Insulation	General Contractor	321.20
			<u>\$30,500.00</u>

Fig. 6.4. Cost breakdown on Arden School, November 30, 1945. Total cost was \$30,500. Courtesy Arden Archives-Museum.

Arden School / Buzz Ware Village Center Floor Plan

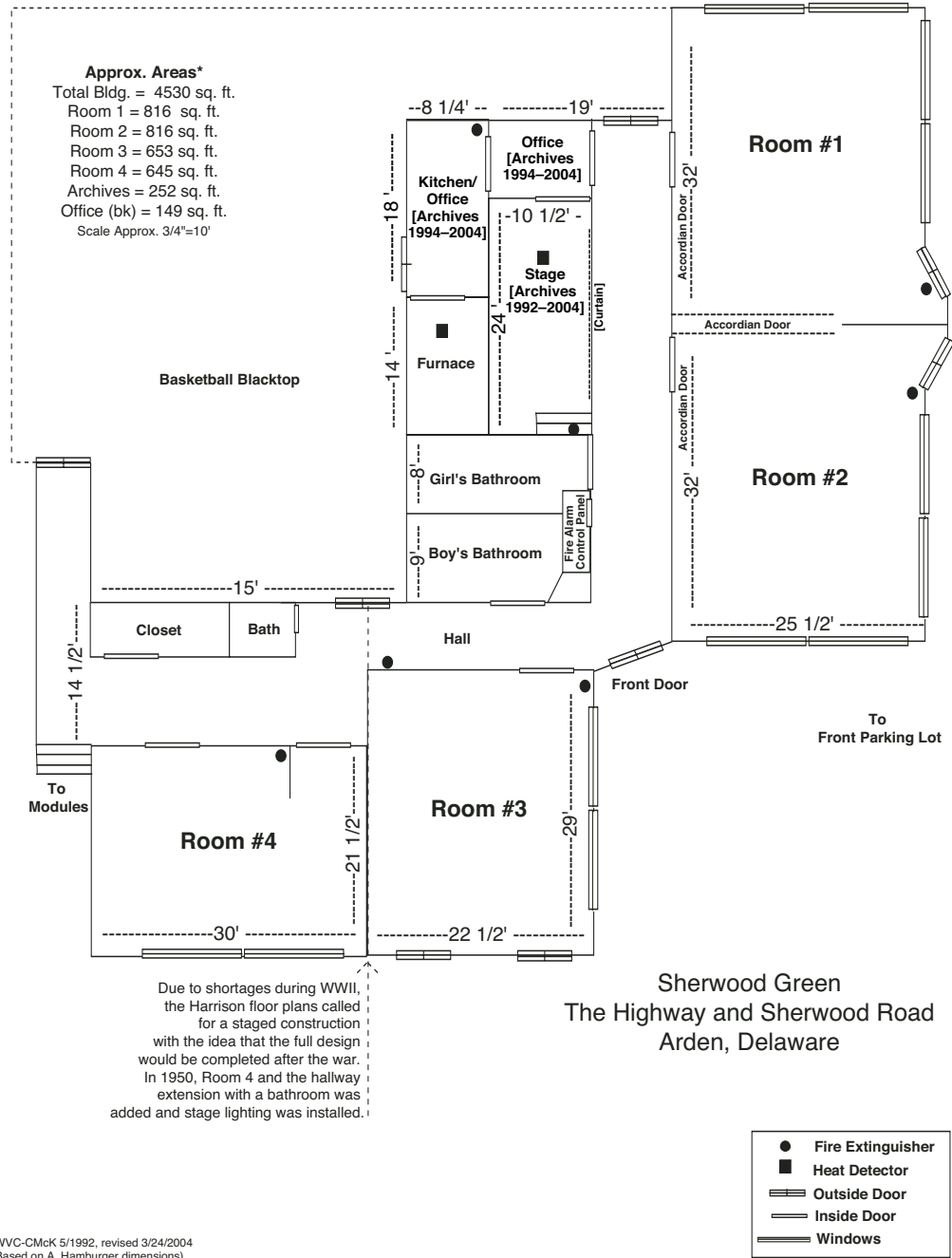


Fig. 6.5. Floor Plan for Arden School/ Buzz Ware Village Center. Room 4 and hallway were added in 1950. The Arden Archives-Museum was located on the stage until April, 2004.

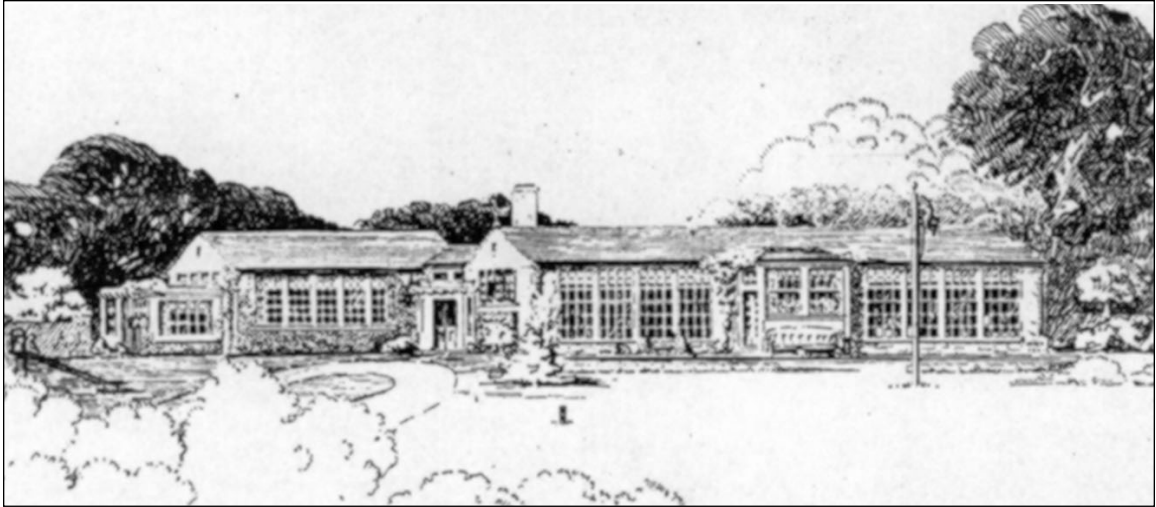


Fig. 6.6. Architect's drawing of a completed Arden School, 1946. Sketch attributed to Frances Harrison showed possible approaches to landscaping after construction. The sketch appeared in the *Wilmington Suburban News*, Thursday, 5 September 1946, "New Arden School Open for Classes."



Fig. 6.7. The new Arden School with Room 4 addition, 1950. The new school is built on the foundation of the original Arden School. Photo courtesy Anne Smock Collection.



Fig. 6.8. The ACRA logo was designed by Buzz Ware who was a commercial artist and illustrator. His logo is still used by the organization today.



Fig. 6.9. Left to right, in the 1950s, Don Stephens with Buzz Ware and Jimmie Ware at their home on Green Lane with the Ware's ever-present St. Bernard. Photo courtesy Historical Society of Delaware.



Fig. 6.10. A.C.R.A. children, staff, and volunteers pose for the annual photo on the jungle gym on the Sherwood Green. Photo courtesy Katherine "Cookie" Kelly.



Fig. 6.11. Physician Leon V. Anderson, 1968. His family moved to Ardencroft in the 1950s.

ARDEN, DEL.

Special Delivery

September 7, 1952.

Dr. George R. Miller, Jr.,
State Superintendent of
Public Instruction,
Dover, Del.

Dear Sir:

We are enclosing a copy of the Minutes of a Meeting held this evening by the Arden School Board which are self-explanatory.

Earlier this evening a meeting of the Residents of Arden was held at the School and as a result a motion was passed and signed calling upon the Board of Trustees of the Arden School to enroll the negro children who had already registered. Also petitions are being prepared and circulated by committee formed at the meeting of the residents, these petitions, with signatures, to be presented to the School Board and the State Board.

At the meeting of residents referred to above, Dr. and Mrs. Anderson stated that if the State Board were to deny admittance into the Arden School to their children, they would immediately take Court Action. This was reiterated directly to the members of the School Board.

The Board is anxiously awaiting a ruling on this matter.

Sincerely,

EDMOND F. HURLONG
Trustee & Clerk for the
Arden School Board

Fig. 6.12. Special Delivery letter sent September 7, 1952. Letter sent by Edmond Hurlong, Arden School Board, seeking guidance from the State Superintendent of Public Instruction. Courtesy Hurlong Family Collection.

STANDARD FORM NO. 64

Office Memorandum • UNITED STATES GOVERNMENT

TO : DIRECTOR, FBI (100-353624)(100-356245) **DATE:** 3/31/53

FROM : SAC, BALTIMORE (100-12519)(100-12518)

SUBJECT: EDMOND FUSCO HURLONG
SM - C

MARIA EMILY HURLONG, nee Bundrock
SM - C

ALL INFORMATION CONTAINED
HEREIN IS UNCLASSIFIED
DATE 2-28-80 BY [REDACTED] b7c

Enclosed herewith are five copies each of reports
of captioned individuals by SA [REDACTED], dated
3/31/53 at Baltimore, Maryland.

Reports previously written by the Baltimore Office
reflect that EDMOND and MARIA HURLONG were believed to be
[REDACTED]

Current investigation by Baltimore has determined
that background information concerning EDMOND and MARIA
HURLONG does not appear to coincide with descriptive data
appearing [REDACTED]

Philadelphia letter to the Director, dated 3/11/53,
advised that [REDACTED] and [REDACTED] are now believed to be
the individuals to whom [REDACTED] further advised
that information concerning the [REDACTED] coincides exactly
with what information the Philadelphia Office possesses
regarding [REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

In view of the foregoing information, no further
investigation is contemplated by the Baltimore Division
concerning EDMOND and MARIA HURLONG. Investigation disclosed

Enclosures (10)
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63 MAY 18 1953

118

Fig. 6.13. Cover page for final FBI file, dated March 31, 1953, The investigation on the Hurlongs concluded that the investigation was based on mistaken identity. Courtesy the Hurlong Family Collection.



Fig. 6.14. Sketches for the "Magic Castanets." A play written by William Frank and directed by Bunni Hurlong. Courtesy the Hurlong Family Collection.

NOTES TO CHAPTER 6

The New Arden School, 1945–1969

1. The Arden School P.T.A. began discussions to form a nursery school and kindergarten that were reported in *The Town Crier*, Vol. VI, No. 3, Feb, 1946. Another attempt at forming a co-operative pre-school and kindergarten surfaced in the mid-1960s.
2. Lawrence, Roderick J. "A Psychological-Spatial Approach for Architectural Design and Research," p. 242.
3. Arden School Board, [p. 1].
4. The Arden Community Recreation Association was founded in 1948. Joan and Tom Colgan and Jean and Bernie Brachman were part of the founding group. A.C.R.A. offers a free summer camp and is supported by a door-to-door fundraising drive in Arden, Ardentown, and Ardencroft and some financial support in the three towns' budgets. In 2001, \$9,747 was raised from the door-to-door campaign which underwrote 83% of A.C.R.A.'s annual budget.
5. Young, Pauline A., "The Negro in Delaware, Past and Present." *Delaware: A History of the First State*, ed. H. Clay Reed, Vol. II, p. 583.
6. Livesay, Harold C. "Delaware History: Delaware Negroes, 1865–1915," Historical Society of Del., Wilmington, DE, October 1963, Vol. XIII, No. 2., p. 103.
7. This was the second Ardencroft. In the summer of 1930, Don Stephens's father, Frank Stephens and others purchased 120 acres of land across Naamans Creek in the area now called Highland Woods and Indian Field. In part because these were the Depression years, the first Ardencroft failed after two years because Arden residents balked at the cost of building a footbridge across Naaman's Creek and disagreements arose of how land rent was collected ("The First Ardencroft," *The Arden Book*, 4th ed., p. 10.; "Ardencroft: Death of a Dream," *Brandywine Crossroads*, 6 Oct. 1983.)

8. *Journal Every Evening*, 12 June 1950, p. 2.
9. *Journal Every Evening*, 12 June 1950, p. 2.
10. *Plessy v. Ferguson* (1896) case which legalized "separate but equal" education for African American children and white children prevailed in the U.S. Supreme Court. This case legalized what became to be known as Jim Crow laws. *Brown v. Board of Education* (1954) later argued and prevailed in the U.S. Supreme Court that "separate but equal" education violated the Fourteenth Amendment (Equal Protection Clause) of the United States Constitution. The States of Kansas (Oliver L. Brown of Topeka, Kansas), South Carolina, Virginia, and Delaware (Claymont and Hockessin school districts) were part of the case. Earl Warren was the new Chief Justice. For the plaintiffs, Thurgood Marshall was the lead attorney arguing the case at the U.S. Supreme Court. He later became a member of that court. On May 17, 1954 the U.S. Supreme Court ruled unanimously in favor of the plaintiffs.
11. Leon V. Anderson was a general practitioner who had offices at 102 E. 7th St, Wilmington, Delaware, and, according to a physician's roster in 1968, resided with his wife and 6 daughters at 2128 Veale Road, Ardencroft, Delaware. He was a graduate of Howard University School of Medicine in 1929. He was also the founder with 12 other members of the Gamma Theta Lambda Chapter (Wilmington, Delaware) of the Alpha Phi Alpha Fraternity, in 1945. As quoted on the APA Web site: "Alpha Phi Alpha has long stood at the forefront of the African-American community's fight for civil rights through leaders such as: W.E.B. DuBois, Adam Clayton Powell, Jr., Edward Brooke, Martin Luther King, Jr., Thurgood Marshall, Andrew Young, William Gray, Paul Robeson, and many others" <<http://www.gtl-alphas.org/Alpha%20History.htm>> Accessed 20 March 2004.
12. "Education Board," p. 8.
13. "State Board," p. 1, 4.
14. Hurlong, Bunni. Personal Interview, 1 September 2003.

15. "Arden Didn't Wait," *Sunday News Journal*, p. C-2.
16. Copeland, Elizabeth Ross. Excerpt from unpublished autobiography, *Arden: A Personal History*, p. 8.
17. Hurlong, Bunni. Personal Interview, 1 September 2003.
18. Washington, Brenda (Anderson). Personal Interview, 22 Sept. 2003.
19. Morley, Coie. Personal Interview, 8 January 2004.
20. Harootunian Report, p. 1.
21. Harootunian Report, p. 2.
22. Tanzer, [p. 1].
23. "State OKs," [p. 1].
24. Hoegger, Hardy. Personal Interview, 8 January 2004.
25. Liberman, Cy. Personal Letter, 2003.
26. Frank, William, "One-of-a-kind Arden School in its last weeks," p. 30.
27. Brand, Stewart, *How Buildings Learn*, p. 134.

CHAPTER 7

A BUILDING IN SEARCH OF A PLACE

Buzz Ware Village Center, 1970–1990

Transitions are hard. Over the next twenty years, the building was located in Arden, but it was not central to the community. It was a faded reminder of how at the core of community life it once was. It was used for three years as a public kindergarten, but that ended in 1973. Mount Pleasant School District returned the school building to the trustees of Arden in June, 1973. In July of that year, the trustees conveyed the land to the Village of Arden for future use as a civic center—a function not yet realized (Fig. 7.1). The use and the disuse of the building, now called the Buzz Ware Village Center, was an often-argued topic at town meeting. Was the B.W.V.C. an asset or a liability to the village? If we don't have need of it, why not just tear it down and plant grass seed? Who is going to pay for the upkeep unless we have a tenant? The school was still available for A.C.R.A.'s summer camp, but, beginning July 1, 1973, it was rented to a private, non-profit school, the Wilmington Montessori Association, initially for five years, but through renewals became a 20-year stay. The association used most of the building during the school year and community use was basically limited to one room for meetings in Room 4 in the evenings, the stage, and the 5-week A.C.R.A. summer camp. On the positive side, funds from the association helped to underwrite the on-going operating expenses of the building, but, its place as a force for community building was diminished greatly. By the early 1980s, a movement to re-

establish a stronger community presence in the building began to grow.

Controversies surfaced over the need for such a space—the costs of taking over the building quickly dampened the spirits for community control. Ever so slowly, the community offered more programming in the building and the B.W.V.C. was ready to begin its new life as a community center.

Free at last, 1990–present

Community spirit ebbs and flows along with the energy levels of the volunteers involved. Highly charged individuals move their commitments to other causes and programs wither away. While it is difficult to have a clear perspective on events so close in time, the B.W.V.C. does appear to have found a new role at last—as a community center. By the time the Wilmington Montessori Association left in 1993 to a new, expanded building out of Arden, the community had gradually increased its interest in the building through attendance at small manageable events, such as concerts, coffee houses, art shows, and films. These small-scale cultural events gave the building a new purpose and offered an alternative size space to the larger scale performance space down the street, the Arden Gild Hall. These small-scale events could be presented on a limited budget and with a small crew of volunteers. After being used briefly as a day-care center, it has now been reborn. Events are held at the center year-round and a dedicated group of friends of “The Buzz” volunteered to refurbish the interior with hardwood floors, track lighting, and have donated furniture for informal gatherings. The Archives-Museum left for their renovated space at the Craft Shop in April 2004. That could free up space for a town office—the civic center or town hall idea may actually be realized. Many residents have established new relationships with the B.W.V.C. The B.W.V.C. has

transformed itself so completely that new residents don't even know that it was ever a school: they only know it as a community center.

Lessons Learned

The Arden School was a flashpoint for prolonged and bitter controversies within the community. Debates about principles, frustrations over lack of funding, anxiety about the quality of the education, and concerns about operating costs divided the community and caused resentments that lingered. Somewhere along the way, Arden's roots as a young colony of seekers and dreamers seemed to be part of a remote and quaint past. The thrashing out of these difficult and thorny issues are part of the process—a delicate dance that, when functioning at its best, involves the interweaving of open debate with uncoerced decision-making. The efforts to bring public education to Arden, the desire to have a better building than a “stock school,” the fine cultural experiences offered to the children, and the solid support for a desegregated school were key moments in the history of the Arden—moments that the community could be proud of. At its core, community spirit comes out of a caring spirit. After the school closed, the community did retain its spirit. The B.W.V.C. has been given a role as a community center that can still echo with the sound of children's laughter, resonate with the notes of fine music, and offer the community an opportunity to say, “See you at The Buzz.”

APPENDIX G

This bill appears as Chapter 14
Volume 59 Laws of Delaware
Approved by the Governor 4/12/73



HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES
127TH GENERAL ASSEMBLY
FIRST SESSION - 1973

HOUSE BILL NO. 39

AS AMENDED BY

HOUSE AMENDMENTS NO. 1 AND 2

AN ACT RETURNING ARDEN SCHOOL AND ITS SITE TO THE TRUSTEES OF ARDEN.

WHEREAS, the site of the Arden School was secured by the Board of Education
of Arden School District No. 3, New Castle County, State of Delaware, from the
Trustees of Arden in 1924 for the sum of one dollar; and

WHEREAS, a schoolhouse was constructed thereon by the Arden School District
No. 3 and maintained by them until the merger of said School District with the
Mount Pleasant School District in July, 1969; and

WHEREAS, due to the loss of enrollment, the small size of building and site,
and the approaching need of costly major electrical and heating renovations, the
Board of Education of the Mount Pleasant School District deems its continued use
as an instructional facility not feasible; and

WHEREAS, the building and site could serve as a cultural and civic center
for Arden;

NOW, THEREFORE:

BE IT ENACTED BY THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY OF THE STATE OF DELAWARE (THREE-
FOURTHS OF THE MEMBERS ELECTED TO EACH BRANCH THEREOF CONCURRING THEREIN):

Section 1. In consideration of the sum of one dollar (\$1.00) to be paid by
the Trustee of Arden to the Treasurer of the State of Delaware, the site and
school building of the Mount Pleasant School District located in Arden shall be
transferred to the Trustees of Arden, in accordance with the provisions of
§4520 (d), Chapter 45, Title 7 of the Delaware Code.

Section 2. This Act shall become effective June 30, 1973.

Fig. 7.1. The Act giving the Arden School to the Arden Trustees for use as a civic center, 1973. The Arden Trustees transferred the Buzz Ware Village Center to the Village of Arden. Courtesy Arden Archives-Museum.

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