

## The Little Red Schoolhouse in Maple Shade, NJ

The schoolhouse was built in 1811 and deeded by Joseph Burrough to the neighborhood which was farms. (Both sides of the Pennsauken Creek into Pennsauken and Cherry Hill as well) The flag hung outside is an 1812 flag and would be the flag of the time of the first year of the school. The school was named the Chesterford School.

In 1871 came the “Free Schools Law.” (Public School system) Before some people could afford to go to school and some couldn’t. Now everyone could go to school. (Ideally. Some might still keep them home to work.) But it was not actually “free.” This meant people would be taxed. The school then became a district school (tax districts) of Burlington County- Chesterford School District No. 27.

During the 1860s the NJ State Board of Education addressed in their annual reports that many schools did not have cloak rooms, some had poor ventilation and some did not have outhouses and the children were having to go out in the bushes, and this was needing correction. It was perhaps sometime after the school became a district school of Burlington County that the front cloak room addition was added to the school.

In 1894 came the “Township Act.” It was now a tax district school of Chester Township, then including Moorestown, and was- School No. 1. Around that time or soon after it became Maple Shade School No. 1. Also in 1894 was the “Free Text

Books Act.” Before this some could not afford books. Now everyone had books.

The desks in the school are from the Poplar Avenue School which replaced this school in 1909 when the village of Maple Shade began to be suburbanized and wasn't just farms. In early years children had slates to write on as today you could write on paper then throw it away but back then you didn't waste paper. Paper was used with ink pens but not as much as later on.

Cross stitch samplers were made by school girls. Women had to know how to sew in the 1800s as most of your clothes except your shoes could be handmade.

After 1909 when the school was no longer used as a school it was returned to Burrough family descendants because of a deed stipulation that the building was for school purposes. It then became a residence. The house with added additions was seized by the Township during the Depression.

The Maple Shade Historical Society began in 1956. The building had begun to be restored back to a schoolhouse by the Township. They were formed to complete the project and use it as their headquarters. The bell on top of the school is not the original bell but it was once at Maple Shade's first firehouse on South Poplar Ave.

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