

The Odyssey of Rye Central School

From early documents and descriptions we know there was a small school located near the triangle that is Grange Park today. This was replaced in 1893 with a great brick edifice called Wedgwood school located on today's playing field and named after the farm on Lang Rd from which the land was secured. It was a sign of the times to have such a sturdy and confident building to grace the center of town. But on a winter night in 1932 the boiler exploded and sent burning textbooks raining down on Dona Berry's house across the street and Rye was again victim of fire. (Some say that bootleggers set the building ablaze to distract authorities from their business at the beach, but that is the stuff of legend since they were more sophisticated than that.) In the depths of the Great Depression with 25% unemployment, the new Rye School arose from the ashes even more impressive than its predecessor, a true consolidated school. What has impressed generations of us over the years is the great staying power of this school and what a significant part of our architectural heritage it has become. Its three additions in 1949, 1965 and 1997 have more than reinforced the wisdom of preserving fine old buildings for modern use. Rye school, with its proud pre-war tower, has stood the test of time and will serve us well into the future.