

Glen Grove School



Glen Grove School, District 6, circa 1910, Turner Family
Photographs, 1999.037.0003.

Glen Grove is an area in central Douglas County along West Plum Creek, near today's Perry Park subdivision. Glen Grove was one of the earliest settled portions of the county, with many of its first families arriving to farm in the 1860s. The area is in a valley near the foothills of the Rampart Range, and is very fertile. In the 1860s, Fort Washington was constructed nearby on Benjamin Quick's ranch.

It provided protection for the homesteaders from raids by angry Native American groups who resisted the settlement of their land.

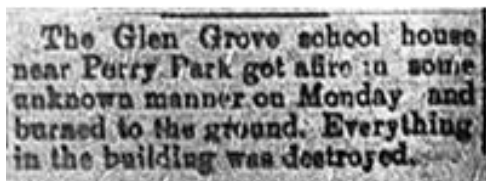
The first school classes in the area were held in the upper storey of Benjamin Quick's home on West Plum Creek. Miss Mollie Boon was the first teacher, probably for the families of Benjamin Quick, Pete Brennan, and other settlers in the West Plum Creek Valley. One day the students came to school, but the teacher was nowhere to be found. Her fiancé had finally persuaded her to marry him, and the two had left the area.

The leaders of the community around West Plum Creek decided in 1868 that it was time to build a schoolhouse. The students usually rode horses and most came from about six or seven miles away, so it was decided to only keep the school open when the weather was good. Thus the "summer school" term began in April and lasted until the first snow. Eventually, school terms ran until January, and much later they followed the more usual school calendar of fall through spring.



Mrs. Wiley, 1880-1910, Turner Family
Photographs, 1999.037.0012.

The first school building was mobile. Whenever the school population shifted, the building was loaded onto a wagon or runners and carted to wherever it was needed. This system worked for quite some time. It initially sat at "George Robinson's place," then moved to "the bank along the creek near John Cantril's house" in 1871, and to "below the John Kenner place" in 1876. Glen Grove District 6 was established in 1880.



By 1882, the building was showing its mileage. After a bull snake came inside the schoolhouse and crawled across one student's foot, legend has it that Benjamin Quick paid a man a pint of whisky to burn it down. A permanent structure was built on "the bank along the creek near John Cantril's house," to the dismay of several other families who lived further away (the Cantril place was along the east side of Highway 105 between Tomah Road and the Perry Park entrance). This frame building burned down on May 17, 1909 when a brush fire blazed out of control.

The school district, always short on funds, was \$300 in debt, so a new school building



would have to wait. School was temporarily held in a cottage on the Quick property until the next year when a contract was let to Ben Saunders for the construction of the new school building. The community helped haul lumber, paint, build fences and a small barn.

One teacher, Mrs. Nell Billings Elting, recalled several stories about Benjamin Quick for the book *Just Reminiscing* by Charles A. Nixon. She stated that:

"Mr. Quick did *not* approve of an organ. [for the school] When I asked him to donate for it - he snorted - 'Hell's Bells! No! We hired you to teach those kids the three R's, not to sing to them!' I replied, 'I *am* teaching them the three R's and I'm not going to sing to them but with them. After attending an entertainment – 25 cents admission – he gave \$10.00 toward the organ."

Like all Glen Grove teachers, Miss Billings (later Mrs. Elting) was paid between \$25 and \$50 per month and lived with families for two weeks at a time. She helped with farm chores, including hauling hay when necessary. Miss Billings helped Ben Quick bring his hay in before a storm and after that "he thought I was tops."

Glen Grove School averaged between 15 and 40 students at a time, but by the 1940s, the population of the school had dwindled to four or five. The school was closed in the early 1950s, and the students were sent to either [Castle Rock](#) or [Larkspur](#). The building is now a barn on private property and is included in the Bear Cañon Agricultural District as part of the National Register of Historic Places.

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