

Old Broad Rock School - A Short History

By Jim Scott (jkmscott@earthlink.net) - November 2014

In early 1955, when I was 12 years old, my family moved to Richmond. We lived at McGuire Hospital, and I attended Old Broad Rock School through the spring of that year to finish out the seventh grade. My teacher was Mrs. Rayburn. One fellow student, Mike Hirsley, became a life-long friend. The building was a two-story cube, with four classrooms downstairs and four classrooms upstairs.

Many years later, when I realized that the school was no longer there, I began to wonder about its history. But I could find very little mention of it anywhere. Even Google turned up very little. Eventually I discovered online newspaper archives, some of which go back to the nineteenth century or earlier. I searched these archives and found many articles that at least mentioned the school. The following history is what I could piece together from those articles and a few other sources. I can furnish the articles themselves to anyone interested.

In general, the quotes are from the cited news articles. Occasionally, they include wording that would raise eyebrows today, but the wording reflects the historic times depicted.

Eons ago, a large expanse of rock was formed that would eventually lie exposed at what is now the intersection of Broad Rock Boulevard (formerly Broad Rock Road, also known as State Rt. 10) and E. Belt Boulevard.¹ This is near the southwest corner of Hunter Holmes McGuire VA Medical Center, and just north of the CSX railroad track. A race track, a community, two schools, numerous civic organizations and subdivisions, and the road itself, would be named for this "broad rock". In 1958, this eponymous rock was buried, so a gas station could be built on top of it². Today, the site is occupied by Fatty's Auto.

In the early nineteenth century, the Broad Rock race course was located just north of the rock for which it presumably was named. It was a major venue for horse racing at the time. For example, Major William Ball, "a noted turfman and proprietor of the old Broad Rock race-course, in Chesterfield county", purchased the renowned race horse Ball's Florizel in 1803.³ Five years later, his horse was pitted against Peacemaker in a sensational race. "The old Broad Rock course near Richmond was the scene of this remarkable race, which so excited the people generally that ladies

¹ There are two intersections that meet this description, because Broad Rock and E. Belt Boulevard run together for a few blocks. It's the southern intersection that concerns us. The other one, the northern intersection, is at the main entrance to the current McGuire Medical Center.

² "Chesterfield Landmark Goes Under", *Richmond Times-Dispatch*, January 24, 1958.

³ "Horses and Horsemen", *The Times* (Richmond), February 5, 1893.

staked bracelets and rings, boys bet their marbles, and the gentlemen planters their negroes."⁴

The nearby CSX railroad track, by the way, apparently dates from the late nineteenth century. "General Manager Walters, of the Atlantic Coast Line, is anxious to secure a new route for through freight in order to obviate the necessity of its passing through the streets of Richmond. Several days ago a corps of engineers located this route, which starts from near Ballards, on the Fredericksburg railroad, a short distance above the city, and passes across the country just west of the New Reservoir to the river, which will be bridged, and continue through Chesterfield county to a point on the Petersburg railroad near the old Broad Rock race course."⁵

Old Broad Rock School was built in 1916⁶, at what is now the intersection of Broad Rock Boulevard and Warwick Road. It became "Old" when a "New" Broad Rock School was built in 1937. Now that there's no "Old", "New" Broad Rock School is just Broad Rock School (or Broad Rock Elementary). But in 2012-2013, a new building was built for Broad Rock School, and then the 1937 building was demolished. During the overlap period, the building about to be demolished was confusingly referred to in a news report⁷ as "Old Broad Rock Elementary School" (with "Old" capitalized).

In 1933, Dorton's Market opened across from Old Broad Rock School. It was to last until 1979.⁸

As part of my research, I spoke with Mr. Tuck Perkins, who lived most of his life in the vicinity of Old Broad Rock School. He attended the sixth grade at Old Broad Rock in 1936. The next year, when New Broad Rock opened, he was transferred there.

The earliest news item I could find related to the school was from August 30, 1938: "The newly organized Broad Rock Athletic Club (boxing) will open Wednesday night at the old Broad Rock School."⁹

The original McGuire hospital was built as an army hospital in 1943 on the site of the old Broad Rock race course. In the 1980s, most of the old hospital was demolished and replaced by the current hospital.¹⁰

⁴ "The Turf", *Stanton Spectator*, November 13, 1877.

⁵ "New Freight Route for the Atlantic Coast Line", *The Morning Star* (Wilmington, NC), September 2, 1888.

⁶ "School Situation In Chesterfield", *Richmond Times-Dispatch*, February 22, 1961.

⁷ WTVR CBS 6 online, <http://wtvr.com/2013/01/21/richmond-employees-put-on-leave-amid-theft-investigation/>

⁸ "Grocery Becomes History", *Richmond Times-Dispatch*, December 30, 1979.

⁹ "Broad Rock A. C. Organized", *Richmond Times-Dispatch*, August 30, 1938.

¹⁰ "Memories of McGuire Hospital", Jim Scott, March 2011 (privately published).

Mrs. Elizabeth Douglas Redd was principal of Old Broad Rock Elementary School from 1949 until 1951, when she was named principal of the newly-opened Forest View Elementary School. In 1969 Forest View was renamed for her as Elizabeth D. Redd Elementary School.¹¹

In August 1949, Chesterfield County school superintendent E. S. H. Greene announced that schools would open September 8. "All white schools will be closed September 23 and all Negro schools will be closed September 30 for the respective county fairs."¹² That article defined the "zone limits" for the schools, including Old Broad Rock School. Chesterfield schools had what was "probably a record enrollment in both elementary and high school units."¹³ (This foreshadowed the overcrowding that would plague the school system for years to come.) Enrollment at Old Broad Rock was 241. By the end of that month, Greene told the school board that one new teacher, above the anticipated requirements, had been placed in each of four schools - New Broad Rock, Old Broad Rock, Bellwood and Midlothian High School.¹⁴

In March of 1950, preschool clinics were held at Chesterfield schools, including Old Broad Rock. Physical exams were done for prospective first graders for the following fall, as well as diphtheria and smallpox shots.¹⁵

In May 1950, a horse show was held at McGuire Hospital for the entertainment of the patients. ". . . The hospital was erected on the site of the old Broad Rock race course, where America's most famed thoroughbreds raced nearly a century ago."¹⁶

In September of that year, charges of "very serious" overloading of Chesterfield County school buses were reported. "One resident reported that a bus carrying children to new and old Broad Rock Schools had 117 passengers on the vehicle on a trip to school this week. . . . By actual count, 67 got off at Old Broad Rock and another 50 at New Broad Rock, he said."¹⁷ Soon thereafter, Chesterfield and Henrico said they would add a total of ten school buses.¹⁸

¹¹ "Mrs. Redd, Ex-Principal, Private Rite Is Scheduled", *Richmond Times-Dispatch*, January 16, 1988.

¹² "Chesterfield County Schools Open September 8", *Richmond Times-Dispatch*, August 21, 1949.

¹³ "6,538 Students Enroll in Chesterfield Schools", *Richmond Times-Dispatch*, September 9, 1949.

¹⁴ "Chesterfield School Board Asks Funds", *Richmond Times-Dispatch*, September 29, 1949.

¹⁵ "Preschool Clinics Set In Chesterfield", *Richmond Times-Dispatch*, March 16, 1950.

¹⁶ "Fun at McGuire's", *Richmond Times-Dispatch*, April 30, 1950.

¹⁷ "School Bus Overloading Is Charged", *Richmond Times-Dispatch*, September 17, 1950.

¹⁸ "Two Counties Will Add Ten School Buses", *Richmond Times-Dispatch*, September 19, 1950.

In June of 1952, Chesterfield decided to install a new drainage field in the sewer system at Old Broad Rock School, and agreed "to renovate the school for use as an elementary school next Fall, when a large influx of students is expected."¹⁹ The following September, an article reported that schools were overcrowded and that Old Broad Rock School was not in good condition. "When the school board members visited Old Broad Rock School yesterday, they were met by a group of parents upset over conditions for two third grade and three fourth grade classes. The delegation of parents, headed by C. E. Woodfin, pointed out inadequate facilities, noting that plaster had fallen, a fire door had jammed and wash basins were unsatisfactory. [Superintendent E. S. H.] Greene said the building would be renovated and put into good condition. He remarked that the school board did not feel a large expenditure for the building was warranted, for when new schools are constructed, Old Broad Rock would not be used."²⁰ (This would not happen until 11 years later.)

In March 1953, students at Old Broad Rock School, with the help of their teacher, Mrs. Hattie Moschler, wrote song lyrics to the tune of "Yankee Doodle" to encourage their parents to vote for an April 7 school bond referendum. "Old Broad Rock School has long been considered one of Chesterfield's antiques. For years, the school board has tried to keep from using the school, but overflowing enrollments from other schools force its use. To remedy such overcrowded conditions, Chesterfield officials have proposed a \$3,000,000 bond issue."²¹

The bond issue passed, but of course that wasn't an instant cure. In August 1953, school officials were studying a plan to use 42 temporary classrooms to relieve crowding. Twelve of the temporary classrooms proposed would be in community churches. Manchester would have ten temporary classes: one in the school lobby, two in Old Broad Rock School, and seven in Ramsey Memorial Methodist Church. Greene said use of temporary classes would eliminate the need for double shifts in any county school in the next session, when another record enrollment was expected. "The housing shortage will continue to exist until new school construction is completed under a \$3,000,000 school bond issue that provides for four new elementary schools and additions and improvements at 13 other schools."²²

¹⁹ "Chesterfield Bond Issue Held Needed", *Richmond Times-Dispatch*, June 26, 1952.

²⁰ "Chesterfield Schools Reported Jammed", *Richmond Times-Dispatch*, September 10, 1952.

²¹ "Chesterfield Teacher, Pupils Offer Vote Song", *Richmond Times-Dispatch*, March 22, 1953.

²² "School Officials in Chesterfield Study Plan to Use 42 Temporary Classrooms", *Richmond Times-Dispatch*, August 6, 1953.

In October 1953, the Chesterfield County School Board "turned down a request of the Broad Rock Baptist Church that it be allowed to use old Broad Rock School for services until a church building is obtained in about three months."²³

Two days later, E. S. H. Greene, Chesterfield County's superintendent of schools, died unexpectedly of a heart attack at the age of 57. His obituary said that early in his 35-year career as an educator, he had been principal of "Chesterfield's old Broad Rock Junior High."²⁴

In October 1954, the new superintendent, Fred D. Thompson, said the school board had a balance of \$671,000 remaining from the first \$1,500,000 worth of bonds sold from the approved \$3,000,000 school issue. He said the board would probably authorize the sale of the remaining \$1,500,000 in early 1955. On top of that total of \$2,171,000, they would need another \$1,664,500, to be raised through another bond issue or loans. In a summary of currently available classrooms, Old Broad Rock School was listed as having eight classrooms.²⁵

Mrs. Marguerite H. Hancock was appointed principal of the new E. S. H. Greene School in May 1955. She had joined the faculty of Old Broad Rock School in 1929, and became its principal three years later. When New Broad Rock School was completed in 1937, she became its principal, but was also still in charge of the old school, the "use of which relieved congestion at other schools."²⁶

In the summer of 1955, with opening day three weeks off, Thompson was concerned about still needing five teachers and three principals. The schools without principals were Old Broad Rock School and two "Negro" schools, Union Grove and Kingsland.²⁷ At about the same time, it was announced that fifth, sixth, and seventh grade pupils from Manchester would be enrolled in Old Broad Rock School, except that one section only of seventh grade pupils would be at Manchester High School.²⁸

When school started in September 1955, twenty-six first and second grade classes at the Greene, Old Broad Rock, New Broad Rock, Forest View and Beulah schools

²³ "Manchester District School Site Purchase Is Approved", *Richmond Times-Dispatch*, October 27, 1953.

²⁴ "Final Rites Set For E. S. H. Green", *Petersburg Progress-Index*, October 29, 1953.

²⁵ "Chesterfield Will Build 6 Schools", *Richmond Times-Dispatch*, October 21, 1954.

²⁶ "26 Years at School", *Richmond Times-Dispatch*, May 4, 1955.

²⁷ "Chesterfield Needs 5 Teachers And 3 Principals", *Richmond Times-Dispatch*, August 16, 1955.

²⁸ "26 Chesterfield Classes Will Be on Shift Basis", *Richmond Times-Dispatch*, August 31, 1955.

had to be placed on morning and afternoon shifts.²⁹ Enrollment at Old Broad Rock was 254.³⁰

In October 1955, Chesterfield County's polio vaccine booster shots began at five schools, including Old Broad Rock School. Students attending temporary classrooms at Ramsey Memorial Methodist Church were transported to Old Broad Rock clinic.³¹

In November 1955, a county-wide Parent-Teacher Association meeting was held at New Broad Rock School. Old Broad Rock School pupils gave a demonstration of reading skills. One of the major topics discussed was fluoridation of county water.³²

Later that same month, the Parent-Teacher Associations at New Broad Rock, Manchester, and E. S. H. Greene (but not Old Broad Rock or Forest View) threatened to seek an injunction to halt homebuilding in the Manchester District until school facilities there were expanded. School construction had been halted by a judge's decision that prevented the Hanover County School Board from building integrated schools with money from bonds approved for construction of segregated schools.³³

Three months later, in February 1956, Thompson said the school board was working on ways to alleviate crowded classrooms. He acknowledged receipt of a letter from the Manchester League for Civic Progress, saying that three churches were considering lending space for 14 classrooms to avoid additional double shifts. The churches were Walmsley Boulevard Methodist, Decatur Street Methodist, and Branch's Baptist. The letter also suggested that Old Broad Rock School could house the eighth grade from Manchester School to prevent half-day programs at Manchester.³⁴ A news item in March of that year said, "The Manchester League for Civic Progress repeatedly has suggested shifting the eighth graders to Old Broad Rock Elementary School. Thompson said this is not feasible since Old Broad Rock can accommodate only about 200 additional students and 400 eighth graders are anticipated at Manchester next Fall."³⁵

In May of that year, the Chesterfield county school board heard a report on expected classroom needs at 13 schools for the 1956-57 school year. "The board decided to

²⁹ "Chesterfield Schools to Open Doors to 10,000 on Tuesday", *Richmond Times-Dispatch*, September 4, 1955.

³⁰ "10,254 Students Are Enrolled In Chesterfield County Schools", *Richmond Times-Dispatch*, September 7, 1955.

³¹ "Polio Shots Start At Five Schools", *Richmond Times-Dispatch*, October 12, 1955.

³² "County-Wide PTA Meeting Planned", *Petersburg Progress-Index*, November 8, 1955.

³³ "Officials Not Too Disturbed By P-TA Injunction Threat", *Richmond Times-Dispatch*, November 19, 1955.

³⁴ "New Policy May Solve Overcrowding in Schools Of Chesterfield County", *Richmond Times-Dispatch*, February 15, 1956.

³⁵ "Manchester May Avoid Class Shift", *Richmond Times-Dispatch*, March 15, 1956.

try to eliminate one shortage by negotiating for a lease of five rooms at the Manchester Community Center. The rooms probably would be used for students of New Broad Rock, Old Broad Rock and Greene Schools. W. W. Gordon, assistant to the superintendent, pointed out that these three schools together are expected to need an additional seven rooms this September, even with Greene and New Broad Rock continuing to run two shifts a day for first and second-graders. Old Broad Rock must add additional sections in the fifth and seventh grades."³⁶ By July, the lease had been obtained for the rental of the space at the community center.³⁷

On January 8, 1957, three meetings were held at three locations to discuss a proposed \$4.5 million school bond issue. One of the three meetings was at Old Broad Rock School, where the speaker was J. E. Whitford.³⁸

A May 1957 news article reported that citizens were urging the county to support the new school bond referendum. That article had a list of classrooms needed at various schools, including seven at Old Broad Rock.³⁹ The following month, another news article said, "Spurred by the newly formed Better Schools for Chesterfield organization, residents of Chesterfield are talking of another bond issue to relieve crowded classroom conditions."⁴⁰

A year later, in June 1958, Chesterfield received bids for \$4.5 million in bonds. "School officials hope the money will buy a new high school, four new elementary schools, additions at seven schools and furnishings." But it would not be until the fall of 1959 that these benefits would be available. In the meantime (1958-59 school year), "at Manchester High School, the 8th grade will be taught on a shift basis. But Manchester's 8th grade won't be at Manchester High School. This grade will use the building, *at one time abandoned*⁴¹, known as Old Broad Rock School."⁴²

A year after that, in August 1959, the county began another bond issue, citing a need for another \$5.5 million for school construction. That news item said, "Eighth grade students attending Old Broad Rock School, an annex of Manchester High School, . . .

³⁶ "Chesterfield School Board Hears of Classroom Needs", *Richmond Times-Dispatch*, May 24, 1956.

³⁷ "More Double-Shifts Seen Needed in Chesterfield", *Richmond Times-Dispatch*, July 19, 1956.

³⁸ "3 Meetings Set On Bonds Issue In Chesterfield", *Petersburg Progress-Index*, January 8, 1957.

³⁹ "Chesterfield Citizens Urge County To Back School Bond Referendum", *Richmond Times-Dispatch*, May 4, 1957.

⁴⁰ "Crowded Schools In Chesterfield Spur Talk of Another Bond Issue", *Richmond Times-Dispatch*, June 3, 1957.

⁴¹ (Italics mine.) I was unable to confirm that Old Broad Rock had actually ever been "abandoned" before this time.

⁴² "Chesterfield to Receive Bids For 4 1/2 Millions in Bonds", *Richmond Times-Dispatch*, June 15, 1958.

will attend on shifts."⁴³ Chesterfield was expecting an enrollment of 14,000 students when school began the following month.⁴⁴

In February 1961, an article headlined "School Situation in Chesterfield" included a list of the 29 Chesterfield County public schools. The first 20 in the list were for white students, and the other nine were "for Negroes". The list included this entry: "Old Broad Rock. Built 1916. (Houses Manchester eighth grade.)"⁶

The next summer, in August 1961, it was announced that "the Old Broad Rock eighth grade will be expanded to handle some students who would normally attend Manchester High School".⁴⁵

By 1963, the overcrowding had been accommodated. In October, the Chesterfield County Board of Supervisors discussed converting Old Broad Rock School to a library.⁴⁶ One news article said, "The county fathers have proposed that the Old Broad Rock School be converted to a public library rather than be disposed of as the School Board is considering. The school, now 47 years old, was last used as a school during the 1962-63 year. At that time, about 200 eighth grade students from Manchester attended classes in the eight-room structure. The opening of Meadowbrook High School last month, however, eliminated overcrowding at Manchester and Old Broad Rock is now used for storage. School Supt. Fred D. Thompson said the building, located at the corner of State Rt. 10 and Warwick Road, is insured for \$72,000. School Board members earlier had suggested that the old school be traded for property elsewhere in the county. At the supervisor's suggestion, however, the board agreed to consider [the possibility] of converting the building into a library. If formed, Chesterfield would follow Henrico County, which is in the process of establishing public library facilities."⁴⁷

In January 1964, the school board discussed the possibility of replacing the decaying Ettrick Elementary School with a new building. One news article compared Ettrick to Old Broad Rock: "'Ettrick,' [Matoaca District member C. C.] Wells added, 'is the oldest school building still in use in Chesterfield County.' Another school - old Broad Rock Elementary - was build at the same time as the Ettrick structure but it was closed last year."⁴⁸

⁴³ "Chesterfield Starts Bond Issue Action", *Richmond Times-Dispatch*, August 20, 1959.

⁴⁴ "Chesterfield Eyes 14,000 Enrollment", *Richmond Times-Dispatch*, August 31, 1959.

⁴⁵ "School Days Lie Ahead" , *Richmond Times-Dispatch*, August 27, 1961.

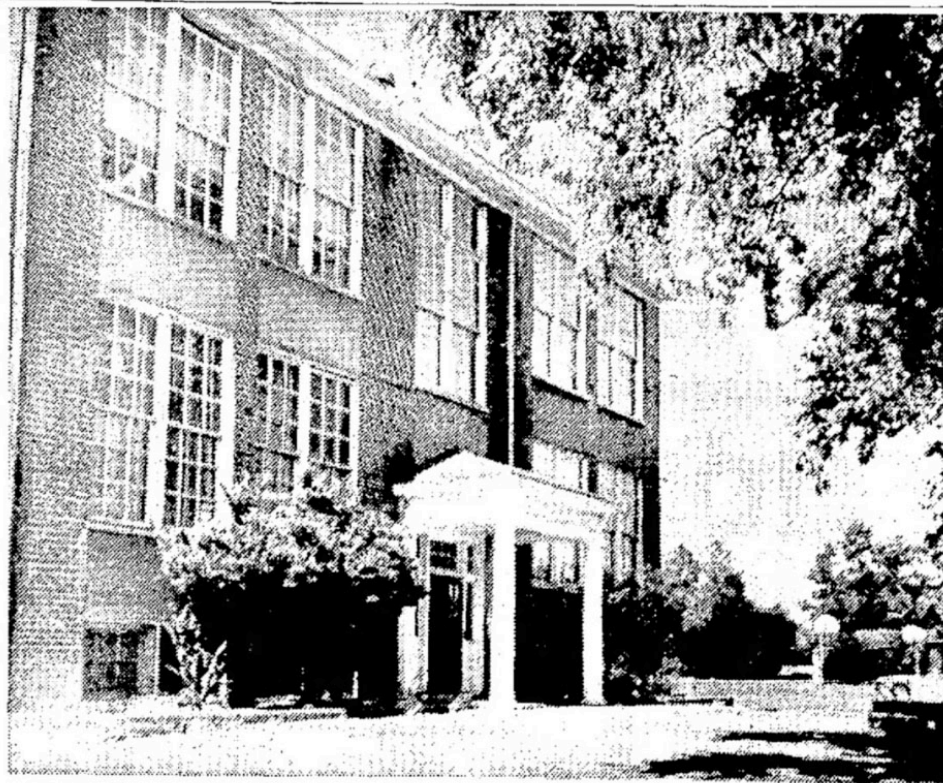
⁴⁶ " Plant Denied Building Permit By Chesterfield", *Richmond Times-Dispatch*, October 10, 1963.

⁴⁷ "Chesterfield Board Faces Busy Agenda", *Petersburg Progress-Index*, October 8, 1963.

⁴⁸ "New School Seems Likely For Ettrick", *Petersburg Progress-Index*, January 23, 1964.

In September of that year, the Chesterfield County Board of Supervisors voted to establish a public library system for the county. "Library proponents favor - and several supervisors have indicated tentative approval - a system built around a central library at the Old Broad Rock School on Old Broad Rock Road (State Rt. 10) with branches at existing small libraries in Chester and Bon Air. . . . One first task would be securing the 50-year-old Broad Rock School for a central location. The school was abandoned and closed two years ago and is now used by the school system for storage. It is similar to the present Ettrick Elementary School."⁴⁹

A few days later, the only known photo of Old Broad Rock School was published.⁵⁰



Proposed Chesterfield Library Home

This is the closed Old **Broad Rock Elementary** School on **Old Broad Rock Road** (State Rt. 10) in Chesterfield, proposed as the most desirable site for a central county library with branches established in Chester and Bon Air. Chesterfield supervisors last week voted to form a county library system after a petition containing more than 600 names was presented asking for a

referendum on the question. Board action eliminated the need for a referendum and the petitions were withdrawn. **Old Broad Rock** School, nearly 50 years old, was abandoned two years ago by the School Board and is now used for storage. It is similar to the present Ettrick Elementary School. (Staff Photo by H. Hugh Moore)

⁴⁹ "Chesterfield Board Establishes System Of Public Libraries", Petersburg *Progress-Index*, September 25, 1964.

⁵⁰ "Proposed Chesterfield Library Home", Petersburg *Progress-Index*, September 28, 1964.

In June 1965, a five-member library board of trustees was appointed to prepare plans for the operation of a county public library system. "The committee urged the establishment of a central library at the Old Broad Rock Elementary School on State Rt. 10 with branch facilities in Bon Air and Chester. . . . The Old Broad Rock school building, a 43-year-old⁵¹ structure, is no longer used for school purposes but is, instead, now being used for storage by the school administration. The School Board has retained the site awaiting the county's decision on its use as a library building."⁵²

In September 1965, the school board agreed to allow Old Broad Rock School to be used as part of the new library system. "The Chesterfield Public Library has a permanent site today, the first step in the formation of a central library system for the county. It is the Old Broad Rock Elementary School on State Rt. 10 which had repeatedly been suggested as the location for the facility and which had been recommended by a library advisory board. The Chesterfield School Board Wednesday night agreed to a library board request for the use of the structure for library purposes. Currently the school system uses the building only for storage purposes."⁵³

But in November, the use of the school as part of the library system didn't seem so definite. The board of directors of the Chesterfield Free Library System was still "considering" the offer by the school board of the Old Broad Rock School by the school board for use as a central facility, along with the Hazen Memorial Library of Bon Air and a building then under construction for the Chester library. "If the three buildings were incorporated into the system, the facilities would be well distributed geographically. The two libraries are at opposite ends of the county, and the Broad Rock school is about a mile south of McGuire Veterans Administration Hospital on Broad Rock Rd."⁵⁴ By February 1966, the Chester library building was about to be completed, but would not open right away. No final action had been taken yet on the Hazen library or Old Broad Rock.⁵⁵

In 1966, library plans dragged on. "An offer of the old Broad Rock School on State Rt. 10 is pending as a temporary central location . . ."⁵⁶ "The system has at its disposal

⁵¹ It was actually about 49 years old then.

⁵² "Library Board Of Trustees Appointed In Chesterfield", Petersburg *Progress-Index*, June 27, 1965.

⁵³ "County Gets Library Site", Petersburg *Progress-Index*, September 30, 1965.

⁵⁴ "Chesterfield Is Offered Library", *Richmond Times-Dispatch*, November 13, 1965.

⁵⁵ "Use of Library to Wait", *Richmond Times-Dispatch*, February 22, 1966.

⁵⁶ "Supervisors To Act On \$12,000 Chesterfield Library Request", Petersburg *Progress-Index*, February 24, 1966.

the new Chester Library, a completed structure costing about \$20,000, the old Broad Rock School building and the Hazen Memorial library at Bon Air."⁵⁷

Oddly, a year after that, and four years after the last use of Old Broad Rock as a school, in 1967, "Old Broad Rock School" was reported to be one of seven locations for rabies clinics, with shots costing \$1.50 per animal.⁵⁸

By 1968, annexation had reared its (depending on ones viewpoint) ugly head. "Richmond has put a \$26,429,135 price tag on the 23 schools it intends to take in by annexing a portion of Chesterfield County. . . . The filing of the appraisal sets the stage for a court battle over the value of the property to be annexed." The report set the value of Old Broad Rock at \$35,800.⁵⁹

In 1970, the City of Richmond annexed a large portion of Chesterfield County. The Old Broad Rock School building was now located within the city limits.

In March 1972, "[Acting City Manager William J.] Leidinger told [City Council] that the administration will recommend proceeding with plans to acquire about 60 acres west of Broad Rock Road at Warwick Road for the development of a public service complex. He said a delay will be suggested in the planned construction of a swimming pool and gymnasium. A community center, library, health clinic, soccer, football and baseball fields are proposed. Acting Planning Director James C. Park told council that nine single-family residences and one small store would be displaced by the acquisition of the property. *The old Broad Rock School building would be razed*⁶⁰ and old Warwick Road would be moved to a position north of the present school. A new Warwick Road would be built south of the complex. Walmsley Boulevard and State Rt. 10 will be the best location for a permanent fire station, Park said."⁶¹ (Actually, the fire station would eventually be located at the same intersection as the library, just north of Warwick Road.)

In May of 1972, Leidinger reported to the City Planning Commission "a plan for saving \$177,000 in the purchase of land for city operations near the old Broad Rock School." He and the commission's staff recommended "changing acquisition plans so that open land rather than six homes and a store would be purchased. . . . The new planning study shows the location to be ideal and, with the acquisition of open land

⁵⁷ "Library Board Position Open, No Applications", Petersburg *Progress-Index*, July 1, 1966.

⁵⁸ "Chesterfield's Rabies Clinic Set For 2 Days", Petersburg *Progress-Index*, August 23, 1967.

⁵⁹ "City Places Price Tag On Annex Suit Schools", Petersburg *Progress-Index*, August 16, 1968.

⁶⁰ (Italics mine.) I have been unable to find any news report about its destruction.

⁶¹ "\$5.8 Million Increase In City Revenue Seen", *Richmond Times-Dispatch*, March 22, 1972.

west of the site and south of Warwick Road to replace that which would have been taken along with the homes, the city cost is estimated at \$293,000 for 61 acres. A library, health clinic, ball fields, community center and other facilities would be built on the site if City Council approves."⁶²

At a City Council meeting the next year, in April 1973, in a discussion of Leidinger's proposed 1937-74 budget, "Howard Smith, city librarian, was asked if a proposed \$335,800 library planned in the vicinity of Broad Rock and Warwick Roads could be eliminated by enlarging the Westover Hills branch. No, said Smith. The Westover branch, with only 6,000 square feet of space, is already too small, he said. The new Broad Rock library would have 7,500 square feet and is needed at that site, Smith said."⁶³

Somehow a workable library plan was worked out. Despite all the plans for using the Old Broad Rock School building for the central library, it was demolished sometime in the early 1970s, apparently with little attention. The Broad Rock Branch Library of the Richmond Public Library System was built on the site, and was opened December 31, 1976. It was dedicated on April 15, 1977.⁶⁴

Mr. Tuck Perkins, mentioned previously, had a friend who went to the demolition site and salvaged several bricks from the old school. He gave some to Tuck, who built them into the patio of his house.

In December 1979, Dorton's Market closed. "The store, located in the annexed area, is across the street from the site of the old Broad Rock School. Broad Rock branch library is there now, but Dorton remembers the school. Men, who are now grandfathers, who went to Broad Rock as boys would come to the store for bubble gum or penny candy, Dorton said. 'You'd think it [the school] was a jail. They'd wait to the very last minute,' Dorton said, and then when the bell rang, they would scoot across the street so as not to be late."⁸ Today a 7-Eleven store is there.

As far as I've been able to determine, Old Broad Rock's early decades, as well as its last few years, are lost in history. For all I know, it was seen in the early twentieth century as a shining example of educational architecture. But in its later years it was considered second string among schools in the area, a backup plan to help with the overcrowding remembered so vividly by baby boomers. It was so little regarded that when it succumbed to the wrecking ball, there was little notice. It now exists only in the memory of those aging former students who once occupied its eight classrooms.

⁶² "New Plan For Land Is Offered", *Richmond Times-Dispatch*, May 16, 1972.

⁶³ "Leidinger Budget For '73 Praised", *Richmond Times-Dispatch*, April 12, 1973.

⁶⁴ Website for Broad Rock Branch of Richmond Public Library, <http://www.richmondpubliclibrary.org/content.asp?contentID=54>