

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES
REGISTRATION FORM

RECEIVED
JUL 24 2015
by SHPO
RECEIVED 2280
AUG 28 2015
Nat. Register of Historic Places
National Park Service

This form is for use in nominating or requesting determinations for individual properties and districts. See instructions in How to Complete the National Register of Historic Places Registration Form (National Register Bulletin 16A). Complete each item by marking "x" in the appropriate box or by entering the information requested. If any item does not apply to the property being documented, enter "N/A" for "not applicable." For functions, architectural classification, materials, and areas of significance, enter only categories and subcategories from the instructions. Place additional entries and narrative items on continuation sheets (NPS Form 10-900a). Use a typewriter, word processor, or computer, to complete all items.

1. Name of Property

historic name Grant Vocational High School

other names/site number Grant High School; Board of Education; Cedar Rapids School District Central Office

2. Location

street & number 346 2nd Avenue SW not for publication N/A
city or town Cedar Rapids vicinity _____
state Iowa code IA county Linn code 113 zip code 52404

3. State/Federal Agency Certification

As the designated authority under the National Historic Preservation Act of 1986, as amended, I hereby certify that this X nomination request for determination of eligibility meets the documentation standards for registering properties in the National Register of Historic Places and meets the procedural and professional requirements set forth in 36 CFR Part 60. In my opinion, the property X meets does not meet the National Register Criteria. I recommend that this property be considered significant nationally statewide X locally. (See continuation sheet for additional comments.)

Stuckey 13 AUG 2015
Signature of certifying official Date
STATE HISTORICAL SOCIETY OF IOWA
State or Federal agency and bureau

In my opinion, the property meets does not meet the National Register criteria. (See continuation sheet for additional comments.)

Signature of commenting or other official Date
State or Federal agency and bureau

4. National Park Service Certification

I, hereby certify that this property is:
✓ entered in the National Register
 See continuation sheet.
 determined eligible for the
National Register
 See continuation sheet.
 determined not eligible for the
National Register
 removed from the National Register
 other (explain): _____

Edson H. Beall 10-13-15
Signature of Keeper Date of Action

Grant Vocational High School
Name of Property

Linn County, Iowa
County and State

5. Classification

Ownership of Property

(Check as many boxes as apply)

- private
- public-local
- public-State
- public-Federal

Category of Property

(Check only one box)

- building(s)
- district
- site
- structure
- object

Number of Resources within Property

Contributing Noncontributing

- | | |
|--------------|------------------------|
| <u> 1 </u> | <u> </u> buildings |
| <u> </u> | <u> </u> sites |
| <u> </u> | <u> </u> structures |
| <u> </u> | <u> </u> objects |
| <u> 1 </u> | <u> </u> Total |

Name of related multiple property listing
(Enter "N/A" if property is not part of a multiple property listing.)

Number of contributing resources previously listed in the National Register

 N/A

 0

6. Function or Use

Historic Functions

(Enter categories from instructions)

EDUCATION/school

Current Functions

(Enter categories from instructions)

VACANT/NOT IN USE

7. Description

Architectural Classification

(Enter categories from instructions)

LATE 19TH & 20TH CENTURY AMERICAN
MOVEMENTS/Prairie School

Materials

(Enter categories from instructions)

foundation CONCRETE
roof SYNTHETICS, METAL

walls BRICK
 CONCRETE
 CERAMIC TILE

other _____

Narrative Description

(Describe the historic and current condition of the property on one or more continuation sheets.)

Grant Vocational High School
Name of Property

Linn County, Iowa
County and State

8. Statement of Significance

Applicable National Register Criteria

(Mark "x" in one or more boxes for the criteria qualifying the property for National Register listing)

- A** Property is associated with events that have made a significant contribution to the broad patterns of our history.
- B** Property is associated with the lives of persons significant in our past.
- C** Property embodies the distinctive characteristics of a type, period, or method of construction or represents the work of a master, or possesses high artistic values, or represents a significant and distinguishable entity whose components lack individual distinction.
- D** Property has yielded, or is likely to yield information important in prehistory or history.

Areas of Significance

(Enter categories from instructions)

EDUCATION

Period of Significance

1915-1936

Criteria Considerations (Mark "X" in all the boxes that apply.)

Property is:

- A** owned by a religious institution or used for religious purposes.
- B** removed from its original location.
- C** a birthplace or a grave.
- D** a cemetery.
- E** a reconstructed building, object, or structure
- F** a commemorative property.
- G** less than 50 years of age or achieved significance within the past 50 years.

Significant Dates

1915

1924

Significant Person

(Complete if Criterion B is marked above)

N/A

Cultural Affiliation

Architect/Builder

Brown, William J.

F.P. Gould Company

Narrative Statement of Significance

(Explain the significance of the property on one or more continuation sheets.)

9. Major Bibliographical References

Bibliography (Cite the books, articles, and other sources used in preparing this form on one or more continuation sheets.)

Previous documentation on file (NPS)

- preliminary determination of individual listing (36 CFR 67) has been requested.
- previously listed in the National Register
- previously determined eligible by the National Register
- designated a National Historic Landmark
- recorded by Historic American Buildings Survey # _____
- recorded by Historic American Engineering Record # _____

Primary Location of Additional Data

- State Historic Preservation Office
- Other State agency
- Federal agency
- Local government
- _____ University
- Other

Name of repository:

Grant Vocational High School
Name of Property

Linn County, Iowa
County and State

10. Geographical Data

Acreage of Property less than 1 acre

UTM References (Place additional UTM references on a continuation sheet)

Zone Easting Northing
1 15 609593 4647750
2

Zone Easting Northing
3
4

See continuation sheet.

Verbal Boundary Description (Describe the boundaries of the property on a continuation sheet.)

Boundary Justification (Explain why the boundaries were selected on a continuation sheet.)

11. Form Prepared By

name/title Jan Olive Full, Historian
organization Tallgrass Historians LC date June 2014

street & number 2460 S. Riverside Drive telephone 319.354.6722

city or town Iowa City state IA zip code 52246

Additional Documentation

Submit the following items with the completed form:

Continuation Sheets

Maps

A **USGS map** (7.5 or 15 minute series) indicating the property's location.

A **sketch map** for historic districts and properties having large acreage or numerous resources.

Photographs

Representative **black and white photographs** of the property.

Additional items (Check with the SHPO or FPO for any additional items)

Property Owner

(Complete this item at the request of the SHPO or FPO.)

name Stephen L. Emerson, Progression, LC

street & number 221 2nd Ave. SE. Ste 400 telephone 319-310-6600

city or town Cedar Rapids state IA zip code 52401

=====
Paperwork Reduction Act Statement: This information is being collected for applications to the National Register of Historic Places to nominate properties for listing or determine eligibility for listing, to list properties, and to amend existing listings. Response to this request is required to obtain a benefit in accordance with the National Historic Preservation Act, as amended (16 U.S.C. 470 et seq.).

Estimated Burden Statement: Public reporting burden for this form is estimated to average 18.1 hours per response including the time for reviewing instructions, gathering and maintaining data, and completing and reviewing the form. Direct comments regarding this burden estimate or any aspect of this form to the Chief, Administrative Services Division, National Park Service, P.O. Box 37127, Washington, DC 20013-7127; and the Office of Management and Budget, Paperwork Reductions Project (1024-0018), Washington, DC 20503.

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

Grant Vocational High School
name of property

**NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES
CONTINUATION SHEET**

Linn County, Iowa
county and state

Section 7 Page 1

7. Description

Summary Paragraph

Constructed and opened in 1915, Grant Vocational High School is located on the west side of the Cedar River, in the southwest part of Cedar Rapids, Iowa. Cedar Rapids is an industrial city and the Linn County seat of government. It is the second largest city in the state, centrally located in the second most densely populated county in Iowa.¹ The school is three blocks southwest of the river, within the central part of the town, which has streets oriented to the river rather than cardinal points. The city's main retail shopping district begins just on the other side of the river. Once within a thoroughly residential neighborhood, now the school's surroundings include, in addition to dwellings, the elevated Interstate 380 a block to the northeast, modern low commercial businesses across the alley to the northwest, and a few paved and graveled parking lots to the southwest. Mature trees, older dwellings, and plenty of green space in nearby front and back yards help preserve the school building's educational feeling, which is also enhanced by the relatively low volume of traffic motoring past the school. By comparison, the widened, arterial 1st Avenue paralleling 2nd Avenue a block to the northwest carries vastly more cross-town traffic. The overall footprint of the building is rectangular with dimensions of 194 by 100 feet. The main three-story portion originally contained class rooms, a gymnasium, and an auditorium. Its shape is an angular or squared U shape with the base of the U fronting 2nd Avenue SW and side street wings stretching back to the rear alley along 5th Street SW on the southwest and L Street SW on the northeast. The interior of the U is filled in with lower one and one-and-a-half story sections that contained the more fire-prone foundry, forge, and machine shop. Off the northeast wall of the main block is a one-story garage addition built in 1944 to service the school district's buses.² The building exhibits little obvious architectural styling except for its front vestibule structure, which is clearly influenced by the Prairie School, not surprising since the architect visited Chicago as homework for this building. A similar vestibule structure on the northeast end of the façade was removed, probably in the late 1930s or early 1940s, and the former interior wall surface that was exposed by the removal was rebuilt with either salvaged original bricks and stone panels or materials ordered from the same supplier as the original building.³ Clad in red paver-like bricks with white stone (or cast stone) trim, the horizontal lines of the building are accentuated by the mortar, which is red to match the brickwork, and by the protruding courses of brickwork along primary elevations. The original windows were replaced in the 1980s⁴ but are scheduled by the new owner to be replaced again with more historically-appropriate windows. The original fenestration included double-hung windows grouped in doubles and triples, as well as singles. The current replacements have dark glazing and dark sashes with the main horizontal cross piece below center. Vacant and unused by the school district (which had used it for administrative offices since 1940) since the massive city floods of 2008, the interior has been stripped to the brick and tile-block walls, and concrete and wood floors, because of the flood damage and the presence of asbestos in the plasterwork and some modern floor coverings. Original *wood floors* in the class rooms off the main corridors are all extant, as is a minor amount of *wood window trim* on the upper floors. There also are large areas (many rooms) of *pressed-metal ceilings* still in place, minor amounts of *staircase handrails* and all the "*mortar board*" *rail caps* of the main staircases. Most of the corridors' dark grey *composite wall trim/molding* appears to be in place, and the *quarry tile* inside the main entrance is intact as well. Also intact is the mansard-roof structure at the north (alley) end of the gymnasium wing (west side). This structure is glass (painted now) and metal-framed and

¹ In 2000 Cedar Rapids had 120,758 residents; in 1990 it had 108,772 residents. Approximately 65% of the county's 1990 population (168,767) lived in the city. Only Des Moines is larger than Cedar Rapids and Polk County, once the Des Moines suburbs are included, has twice as many residents as Linn County. Iowa's other largest cities in 2000, in descending order were: Davenport, Sioux City, and Waterloo. For county statistics, see <http://www.census.gov/population/cencounts/ia190090.txt> (accessed on 5/14/2014). For city data, see <http://data.iowadatatcenter.org/> (accessed on 5/22/2014).

² Cedar Rapids Board of Education, "Educational Service Center" (typescript history provided by Marcia Hughes, Community Relations Supervisor, Cedar Rapids Community School District, 6/5/2014).

³ The exterior bricks are unusual and look like scaled down paver bricks of the type used in streets and railroad platforms. The stone paneling appears identical to the stonework on the overall building.

⁴ Jo Ellen Johnson, unofficial school historian, to author, 3/12/2015.

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

**NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES
CONTINUATION SHEET**

Section 7 Page 2

Grant Vocational High School
name of property

Linn County, Iowa
county and state

functioned to bring in natural north light for the mechanical drawing room. The *floor plan* is essentially the same as well, being determined by load bearing internal walls except for the original partitions in the classrooms, eighty percent of which were removed and relocated by the school district in order to create smaller offices. These later school district partition walls have now been removed also.

Exterior: Primary Southeast Façade: The primary façade along 2nd Avenue SW (Figs. 1 & 2) consists of eight large windows openings on each of the three floors. Each opening is filled with three separate windows. At either end of this long



Figure 1 Grant Vocational High School, soon after its completion in 1915. Collection of the owner.



Figure 2 Grant Vocational High School, 2014. The 3rd story areas over the two entrances framed by white masonry are going to be returned to their original appearance; the roofline arch is going to be rebuilt. Tallgrass Historians L.C.

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

Grant Vocational High School
name of property

**NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES
CONTINUATION SHEET**

Linn County, Iowa
county and state

Section 7 Page 3

central section is an entrance doorway at grade (accessed on the southwest through the Prairie School style vestibule structure). There is no second-story fenestration directly above these entries, but on the third story a large masonry outline or "frame" detail over each contains a small window. These window openings, which illuminate the main staircases within, originally were larger and each was filled with three tall windows. The current owner is going to return these two stairwell window areas to their original larger configuration. Over the top of the masonry outline, the roofline is slightly stepped upward. The arched top portion of this parapet has been removed over both front entrances but is going to be rebuilt by the current owner. Single windows are found near the front corners, just beyond the entryways, Façade window openings have masonry sills and flat brick headers. A couple of the windows are missing their glazing and are filled with plywood.

Horizontal lines are emphasized on the façade, beginning with the large masonry (stone or cast stone) panels that clad the foundation at grade. Above that, the red, paver-like brick walls have a course of headers followed above by four courses of stretchers and a fifth stretcher course that protrudes slightly from the wall surface. This alternating pattern of headers, stretchers, and protruding stretchers continues to the bottom of the second story windows where there is a thin masonry beltcourse. Bricks above this to the roofline lack the protruding courses and instead have a pattern of a single header course alternating between five stretcher courses. Another beltcourse is found above the third story windows and there is masonry coping at the roofline. Between the coping and the beltcourse are regularly spaced masonry "diamonds" (upended squares). The third-story masonry "frames" that hold the small windows above each entryway (and inside, the main staircases) have segmental arched headers that are pierced by the upper beltcourse. The "frames" have a quoin like detail for vertical sides.

The 30-foot wide southwest entry vestibule structure, which suggests the strongest stylistic influence in the building, covers the first two stories and extends outward from the wall by 12 feet. It has the same masonry foundation material as the main building and its brick walls are laid in a decorative pattern of headers and stretchers as well. The narrow front walls on either side of the large modern glass doors (which have side lights and a glass transom⁵) have an inset panel of half-header⁶ bricks surrounded by stretchers. Above the doors, white masonry panels are outlined by full headers with corner masonry squares. The words "GRANT VOCATIONAL HIGH SCHOOL" still appear etched into the stone signboard over the door (Fig. 4). The shallow, hipped roof over this entry structure has a copper gutter that has oxidized to *verdigris* green. The wide eaves of this roof have coffered soffits supported by shallow carved brackets spaced relatively close together.

The northeast entrance, which originally had an identical entry vestibule, projects but a foot or 18 inches from the plane of the wall and is clad with what appears to be the same paver bricks and stone paneling seen in the rest of the building. Again, this suggests the same brick manufacturer or brick and stone dealer was still in business when the vestibule structure was removed, or, at least, the bricks and stone panels from the vestibule structure were salvaged and reused. The beltcourse at the base of the second story is carried across this second entry area and a similar beltcourse cap terminates the bumped out entryway. Both southwest and northeast entries now have modern glass and metal-frame doors and transoms, which will be replaced eventually as flood damaged. Just inside is the original red quarry tile flooring.

Northeast Side Elevation and 1944 Garage Addition

The northeast side of the main building has an addition, built in 1944, that covers the first story. The masonry coping at the roofline of that addition aligns with the lowest beltcourse of the main building. Above the addition, the main building's windows appear singly toward the front corner, and there is a large doorway on the second and third floors, with a connected metal fire escape, positioned toward the front corner as well. Behind these openings, going toward the rear alley, are three openings that are much larger. These openings have been reduced to hold smaller windows with the extra space infilled between floors with a solid brown material. Where visible to the rear of the garage addition, above and below these large

⁵ The second façade entrance glazing configuration is the same.

⁶ These headers appear to be about half the size of a regular header and are square rather than rectangular.

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

Grant Vocational High School
name of property

**NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES
CONTINUATION SHEET**

Linn County, Iowa
county and state

Section 7 Page 4

openings the walls have the same brick and masonry patterns seen on the façade. The tall, robust brick chimney stack protrudes from the main building near the alley at the northeast alley corner.

The 1944 garage addition is a single story with brick and masonry work that matches well, though not identically, to that of the main building. Masonry paneling at the foundation appears to be concrete. Windows with replacement sashes across the façade and along the northeast side wall appear singly and are similar to the replacements in the main building. The rear wall stops well short of the alley to allow for parking and this wall has three to four large openings, now largely infilled, that allowed bus access.

Northwest Rear Elevation

Along the alley, the main building's footprint becomes more irregular. Again, the interior of the basic three-story U shape is infilled by 1½ and one-story sections. Standing in the alley, from left to right as one faces this elevation (northeast to southwest), the three-story endwall (stage end of the auditorium interior) is of a different, darker brown brick laid in a common bond pattern. This wall has just two former window openings, both now infilled with a solid brown material. One is located on the upper level near the northeast side wall; the second is higher, but not perhaps at the level of the third story, and located toward the opposite side of the wall. Modern air ducts obscure part of this wall.

The next section of the rear elevation is 1½ stories tall with multiple single windows on the upper level. Above and behind this is a bumped-out area of the main 3-story building (see footprint graphics in Additional Documentation section). Small windows and doorways into the original "stock rooms" are found at grade on the alley, including a double door. The bricks here are similar dark bricks laid in a common bond pattern. Next southwest is a slightly shorter and narrower section, made of the same darker bricks in a common bond pattern. This is the outside wall of the foundry and has one pass door and one high window. These alleyway sections encompassed the three fire-prone spaces inside, including the foundry, forge, and machining shop. The highest windows illuminated a small storage mezzanine level reached by a narrow concrete circular staircase at the back of the forge and machine shop.

The final section of this alley elevation is the other end wall or wing of the main building's U shape, the gymnasium wing originally (later used as the school administration cafeteria and kitchen). The bricks here return to the type seen in the main building, but are laid in a simple common bond without protruding courses or masonry beltcourses. The only opening at grade is a door, but the brickwork suggests there once was a window and the door's area may have been a larger opening at one point. The second level has one small window and two areas that are infilled with bricks. The third story has two bands of small windows. Above the top story is a slanted, mansard-like roof structure clad in metal roofing. This third story end room originally contained a mechanical drawing room and the roof structure provided additional natural light. Though the outside of this structure is covered currently, it is going to be reopened and its glazing repaired (appears to be painted currently). A large, hooded exhaust fan, certainly a feature of the school administration's kitchen at this end of the wing, protrudes from the ground floor and electrical conduit and boxes mark this as a utilitarian wall now despite the original concern for aesthetics suggested by the use of the fancier brick and red mortar.

Southwest Side Elevation

Unlike many commercial and institutional buildings, this side elevation does not match the opposing side elevation in fenestration, although walls and masonry trim are similar. This is explained by the fact the lower two stories held the gymnasium within while the interior of the third floor contained more traditional class room spaces. This side has the same masonry foundation material, window sills, beltcourses, upended "diamond" detail, and roofline coping that is seen on both the façade and the northeast side elevation. Likewise, the red brick and mortar patterns are seen here too. Generally, on all

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

Grant Vocational High School
name of property

**NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES
CONTINUATION SHEET**

Linn County, Iowa
county and state

Section 7 Page 5

floors, there are two tall single windows toward the front corner, followed toward the northwest by a secondary entrance at grade with two large openings joined by a metal fire escape on the second and third floors. Windows from this point to the alley differ on the third level from the second and first stories. The lower two gymnasium floors have short, almost squat-looking window openings filled by two typical looking double hungs. The third story has a combination of two double-wide openings, and then two single windows (the one nearest the alley has been infilled). This endwall is an important secondary façade and appears in the traditional “portrait” photographs of the historic school building (refer back to Fig. 1).

Interior

Structurally, the school was built primarily with load-bearing brick and tile-block walls, however this basic construction was reinforced with steel I-beams of various thicknesses in a few areas.⁷ The masonry foundation walls under the central rooms along the one-story alley side portion of the building were built twice as thick as the rest of the foundation walls because they supported the heavier live loads (the equipment) of the foundry, forge, and machine shop on the first floor above. Closer to the roof, large riveted plate girders span and tie together the side walls of both the gymnasium and the auditorium wings in order to provide the needed clear span below. All these structural features are intact.

The building’s interior contained asbestos-laden plaster surfaces intended to reduce the fire hazard, no doubt both out of a general concern for the school children as was (and is still) typical, but primarily because of the increased risk of fire produced by the foundry, forge, and machining activities taking place inside.⁸ Asbestos was not commonly added to plaster until after 1920, when United State Gypsum started producing its “Red Top” line. Its most common use was during the 1940s and 1950s when asbestos fibers were also added for acoustic purposes.⁹ Because Grant’s future use will be residential, and along with it the risk of uninformed future occupants breaking the plaster surfaces and exposing asbestos fibers, for example, by nailing through the plaster or abrading it with furniture, the new owner’s abatement protocol was to remove the risk rather than encapsulate it.

With the asbestos plaster now removed, the structural walls of the building are exposed. They are common red brick laid in a common bond pattern and mixed with tile blocks in random locations with no apparent order. In some cases, the recent removal of school administration wall paneling and modern surfaces actually revealed more of the original interior, as in the case of interior corridor wall “windows” that originally provided natural daylight to the interior hallways but which later had been covered. Concrete columns in the gymnasium (the school district office’s cafeteria) held a more modern floor added between the ground and second floors, but this floor has been removed too. Removal of modern surface material in the gymnasium/cafeteria revealed the original glazed brick walls of the gymnasium. Removal of modern carpeting in the former class rooms off the main corridors revealed extant wood floors that appear to be maple. Some of the original floor plan is gone, primarily as a result of the removal of the interior class room partitions by the school district in order to create smaller offices. Most of the floor plan, however, is dictated by the load-bearing walls and, therefore, extant.

At some point after the auditorium was no longer used, the stage was removed and the open third floor at the level of the balcony was infilled by the school district to serve as offices and the Board of Education’s board room. Structural steel was installed to fill the open space and a new frame floor was constructed over it and the original balcony floor.

⁷ Steel is found in the northwest and southeast walls of the gymnasium auditorium wings. Steel is also found in the roof of the lower central rooms along the alley (foundry, forge, and machine shop), however the skylights shown in the original plans are gone. Steel location descriptions were obtained from architect Jennifer Pfab, Aspect Inc., email to author, 6/10/2014.

⁸ Later architects advised keeping these fire-prone activities in separate buildings or at least physically segregating them as dependencies apart from the main building. The Pullman Free School of Manual Training (South Chicago) was used as an example by John J. Donovan, in his 1921 book *School Architecture* (New York: Macmillan Co.) at page 188, et seq.

⁹ *Plaster*, see esp. “Plaster Products Containing Asbestos,” obtained on 3/17/2015 at <http://www.meothelioma.com/asbestos-exposure/products/plaster/>; also, see www.stucconews.net/column/asbestos.html.

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

Grant Vocational High School
name of property

**NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES
CONTINUATION SHEET**

Linn County, Iowa
county and state

Section 7 Page 6

The first floor maintains white glazed brick in some areas, especially the first floor's pump and engine rooms under the auditorium and for the original locker and rest rooms that served the gymnasium. This brick is likely the "Hytex brick, with a semi-enamel finish" used for the interior walls of the "shop rooms" in the first floor as described by the local newspaper at the time.¹⁰ According to that newspaper, "no plastering will be used in those departments, the foundry, forge rooms, wood-working rooms, and blacksmith rooms all being finished in plain brick." These rooms were all on the first floor.¹¹ The second and third floors' plastered walls (which divided the large class rooms but were later subdivided into smaller offices by the school district) have been removed leaving large, long single rooms. The asbestos content of the plaster used in the upper floors, the Hytex brick, and the lack of plaster in ground floor rooms reflects the potential for fire inside this building when it was first used and the awareness of this risk shown by the architect and school district officials.

Interior Integrity

Between the conversion of the interior spaces to office purposes after 1940 by the school district, the damage done to the first floor by the 2008 flood (water rose to 8 ft. 2 inches on this floor), and the abatement of the asbestos on the upper floors, the building has compromised interior integrity. Records to indicate the dates of interior alterations and therefore the percentages of original or altered interior finishes remaining were destroyed in the 2008 flood. However, interior features remaining extant are: the majority of the floor plan, the foundation walls that reflect the use of the building as a vocational school, interior corridor window openings, composite floor moldings, wood floors in the class room spaces, glazed brick walls, oak (?) stairwell trim (incomplete) and newel caps, riveted plate girders over the gymnasium and auditorium (originally exposed, now revealed again), some upper floor oak (?) window sills, and large areas of decorative pressed metal ceilings in many places. The window and stairway trim appear to be oak with a yellowish stain or varnish. The wood floors are narrow-plank maple.

The building's original vocational high school function did not result in construction of a significantly different floor plan than that required of a traditional high school.¹² In fact, most of the floor plan could have doubled as a traditional high school in that it consisted of typical class rooms with blackboards and desks. The gymnasium and auditorium reflected the sports teams (basketball, track, and football) and theater classes and clubs at Grant while it was *both* a vocational high school and a traditional high school. The building's specialized vocational heritage is, however, reflected in the three 1- and 1½-story rooms abutting the alley that once held machinery and equipment for the foundry, the forge, and the machine shop, and in the strengthened foundation walls beneath them.¹³ In addition to these foundation walls, there are patches in the concrete floors of these rooms marking the locations of some of the specialized equipment, presumably all removed on or about 1940 when the building was converted to school administration offices (records destroyed by flood waters). Across the hall from these rooms were two woodworking rooms (see Fig. 7 in Section 8) that do not appear to have required any special modifications that would mark them as vocational education rooms (other than a part of one end that literally had a dirt floor originally). The woodworking classes were dropped after 1922, suggesting that equipment was available for sale or relocation to other schools at that time. On the third floor, one class room-size space was used as a kitchen for the domestic classes, but this

¹⁰ *Cedar Rapids Evening Gazette*, 9/14/1914.

¹¹ References to room functions and locations are found in the architect's preliminary plans for the building as explained to the Board of Education and reported in the *Cedar Rapids Evening Gazette* on 1/21/1914. It is impossible to completely verify these functions and locations as final because of the early changes to the interior as the building's uses evolved and because the school district's archival records were lost in the 2008 floods. The gymnasium does appear to have been included in the final plans and today's extant mezzanine level is likely the upper "running track at the second floor that can also be used as a gallery during games and exhibitions" (Ibid.) References to the construction materials being installed are from the *Cedar Rapids Evening Gazette*, 9/14/1914. See also plans in Additional Documentation section.

¹² Donovan's 1921 volume, *School Architecture*, actually recommended that vocational schools be modeled after modern factory principals of the time, with supporting columns rather than load-bearing interior walls, and large expanses of windows filled with small panes held by metal sashes to let in as much natural light as possible. (at 428).

¹³ Exhaust systems, including blowers, exhausters, and fans, that would have been used in these specialized vocational rooms are gone, but likely would have been situated in close proximity to the equipment they serviced (see images in Donovan, *School Architecture*, 157-203; 224-267).

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

Grant Vocational High School
name of property

**NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES
CONTINUATION SHEET**

Linn County, Iowa
county and state

Section 7 Page 7

space also lacks any features that overtly mark it apart from a regular “domestic science” room of a traditional high school. Historic photos indicate the kitchen was more of a lecture/demonstration space for the teacher (see Additional Documentation). Kitchen equipment, carpentry machinery, and metalsmith fixtures that continued to be used after the building was converted to a traditional high school, certainly were removed when it was converted to an office building, however records of this conversion were destroyed by the flood.

Exterior Integrity

The most significant exterior alterations are the window replacements, a very common mid- to late-twentieth century change for older Iowa schools as heating and lighting systems were upgraded. In this case, the windows were replaced much later by the school district, probably in the mid-1980s.¹⁴ The impact of these windows is somewhat mitigated by keeping the same windows sizes, the continued use of dark sashes and muntins, and the avoidance of the bright colored infill panels so commonly used in the 1950s and 60s on school buildings. Nevertheless these replacement windows themselves are scheduled to be replaced with more historically appropriate windows. This includes the removal of the brick infill and small new windows over each facade entrance in order to install larger windows similar to the original. At the same time, the roofline arch over these entrances will be rebuilt. No change is planned for the northeast entrance. Its vestibule probably was removed in the late 1930s or early 1940s and it is now a historic alteration that evidences concern for preserving the building’s integrity through its use of similar or original salvaged downsized paver bricks and stone paneling. The removal was likely prompted by the school district’s adaptation of the building for office rather than school purposes, and the desire for a single primary entrance that was easily recognized by the public. Despite these alterations, the school’s substantial size, scale, and detailing, within its residential neighborhood context, mean the “overall sense of past time and place is evident” in the building (*National Register Bulletin: How to Complete the National Register Form 4*). The original interior of the building would not have been familiar to most of Cedar Rapids’ residents, and much of the surface finishes (wood paneling, carpet, mastic tile, dry wall) removed following the flood were modern and installed by the school administration for office purposes (see photographs that follow in the Additional Documentation section). Comments on specific integrity aspects are as follows:

(1) location: the building is in its original location;

(2) design: the exterior is unchanged except for the alterations noted above and 1944 garage addition, which was done by the Cedar Rapids School District in connection with the district’s school buses. The interior lacks original finishes except for central concrete corridors, class room wood floors, some wood staircase and window trim, entrance quarry floor tile, composite floor trim, and decorative metal ceilings. The amount of these materials varies by location and ranges in quantity from little remaining extant (woodwork) to fully present (wood floors). Load-bearing interior walls and plate-girders in the large open spaces of the gymnasium and auditorium wings remain;

(3) setting: the surrounding residential neighborhood is largely the way it was when the school opened in 1915, through its continued use as a general high school through the 1936 school year. The immediate surroundings – the grassy front and side yards and the alley behind the building – have been maintained. The commercial structures to the north of the alley are modern and serve the higher traffic count along 1st Avenue, but they are not out of scale for the surrounding neighborhood and are barely noticeable to the observant walker passing the school building. The gravel and paved parking lots nearby appear to be the result of flood demolitions and, before that, the need to provide parking for the school district personnel as there is none on site. The building essentially fills its entire parcel;¹⁵

¹⁴ Jo Ellen Johnson to author, 3/13/2015.

¹⁵ Donovan’s *School Architecture* (1921), in the chapter on vocational schools (157-203), recommends locating a vocational school with enough land to be able to expand in the future and add more buildings.

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

Grant Vocational High School
name of property

**NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES
CONTINUATION SHEET**

Linn County, Iowa
county and state

Section 7 Page 8

(4) materials: the exterior materials are original to both the main building (with the exception of the windows and infill brick on the third story over the entrances, both scheduled to be replaced or removed) and the 1944 garage addition; interior finishes are nonextant except as noted above and elsewhere in the text;

(5) workmanship: the workmanship employed in the building is best reflected in the skills needed to lay the brick and the decorative masonry;

(6) feeling: the overall plan, mass, and aesthetics of this school building combine to produce the clear feeling of an early twentieth century Iowa high school. The specialized vocational education function of the building was never particularly reflected in the architectural design of the school, either in the exterior appearance or the interior features. Specialized vocational spaces were confined largely to the rear of the building, in the 1- and 1 ½- story central area, and above, on the third floor where the domestic science/home economics rooms were located. The main vocational teaching was represented by the equipment installed in the building, equipment that may have been in place in 1915 but removed by 1940;

(7) association: the school's service as the one of the state's very rare vocation high schools, and later a general high school, are directly related to the building's historic significance.



Figure 3 Historic photograph of Grant Vocational High School under construction, ca. late 1914. The photo shows the classic photo angle from the south looking northeast. Collection of the Carl and Mary Koehler History Center, Cedar Rapids, Iowa.



Figure 4 Front entrance signage revealed in March, 2015 when the "Board of Education" signboard was removed. Aspect Inc.

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

Grant Vocational High School
name of property

**NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES
CONTINUATION SHEET**

Linn County, Iowa
county and state

Section 8 Page 9

8. Narrative Statement of Significance

Summary Paragraph

Grant Vocational High School, in Cedar Rapids, Iowa, is historically significant at the local level under Criterion A as a good example of a short-lived and rare type of secondary school in Iowa. It represents a road *not* taken as secondary education evolved during the Progressive Era early in the last century, even though it may not have *looked* much different than a traditional high school of the time.¹ During what turned out to be, in essence, an experimental stage of vocational high schools from about 1900 to about 1920, only a small number of these specialized high schools were built nationwide relative to the thousands of general high schools built during the same time period. In Iowa, only a handful of them were constructed, mostly in the state's larger industrializing cities, and most of these schools did not last long before they were converted to general high schools, easily possible because much of the vocational training was taught as class work in typical class rooms, and the buildings were not architecturally that different than general high schools.² Like any other high school, Grant offered sports, theater, speech and drama clubs, and other traditional student activities, but its curriculum was focused on the manual arts rather than the humanities or college preparatory courses. Construction of Grant in 1914-1915 reflects the vigorous dialogue among prominent national educators at the time, a dialogue observed intently in Iowa by school boards, civic groups, and newspaper editors as they tried to advise and guide their school districts through a dynamic and modernizing education system. At the turn of the century, the United States had found itself increasingly competing on the world stage with other industrialized nations but with a growing shortage of skilled labor. Nationally known educators advocated vocational training for boys and girls as the answer to this and other problems involving adolescents, but neither these prominent men and women nor the lay public listening to them had yet clearly decided if it was better to incorporate general vocational education classes into the normal high school curriculum or provide separate vocational high schools. The public debate played out in Iowa cities differently, with Cedar Rapids eventually landing on the side of a specialized vocational high school, but only after many years of urging by the local newspaper and women's groups. Designed by a prominent Cedar Rapids architect, William J. Brown, Grant Vocational High School was underfunded and built at a time the school board was not only trying to alleviate congestion in the growing city's only general high school, but also build additional primary schools as well as accommodate a large and growing Czech immigrant community that needed English language classes. The period of significance runs from the building's opening in 1915 until 1936 when it ceased being a school of any type. In 1940, it was converted to school district offices, which remained its function until 2008. This period is inclusive of the active years the building served as a specialized vocational high school, 1915 to 1924.

The National Debate

According to one education historian, "Progressive Era Americans placed a greater emphasis on education than at any previous time in the nation's history as the public education system swelled from urban migration, foreign immigration, and compulsory education laws."³ The modern high school, according to this historian, was the "capstone" of this new progressive system, which grew from simply an option for the children of the wealthy and aspiring middle-class workers to become the "locus for the social training of massive numbers of youth of all social classes."⁴ School districts expanded their curricula beyond the basic humanities and math courses – the Three Rs – to include more academic classes as well as

¹ In more recent years, specialized high schools in Iowa have again become popular as alternatives to traditional schools.

² In later years, school architects recommended a "modern factory" approach to designing vocational high schools, resulting in dramatically different looking buildings and school campuses. See for example, John J. Donovan's *School Architecture: Principles and Practices* (New York: Macmillan Company, 1921).

³ Iowa's compulsory education law was passed in 1902. Today it applies to children age 6 to 16. See "Do School Laws Matter?" accessed at www-personal.umich.edu on 6/3/2014.

⁴ Dale Allen Gyure, *The Chicago Schoolhouse: High School Architecture and Education Reform, 1856-2006* (Chicago: The Center for American Places at Columbia College Chicago, 2011), xxi.

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

Grant Vocational High School
name of property

**NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES
CONTINUATION SHEET**

Linn County, Iowa
county and state

Section 8 Page 10

specialized coursework that exposed all students to general skills that might be needed after graduation.⁵ At the same time, social commentators worried over increasing adolescent boredom and delinquency, finding a potential solution in the concept of vocational education. Commercial interests and industrialists, who increasingly found themselves competing in world markets without the necessary skilled labor, were interested in the development of vocational education as well. "Business leaders quickly sensed that these programs presented an opportunity to expand their labor pool and cut costs, since masses of workers could be trained without expense to them while bypassing labor unions or apprenticeship programs."⁶ The open question, however, hotly debated by professional educators and national leaders, was whether these new skills should be taught as a part of general high school where vocational courses could be offered to all students, or whether new specialized school buildings should be constructed and fitted out with the forges, stoves, machinery, kitchens, and equipment that general high schools could not afford in either physical space or tight budgets. Only general vocational courses could be taught by the former, while students in the latter could acquire more technical skills that applied directly to post-graduation jobs.

Larger cities in the East had built manual training schools as early as the 1880s. Midwest cities were not far behind. Kansas City built a manual training school before 1912 that could accommodate 1800 students.⁷ In Chicago, some existing high schools added vocational courses to their curriculum and became "comprehensive" high schools, but the city also saw a series of specialized manual training schools built starting in 1884, funded by the private Commercial Club and Marshall Field.⁸ The Chicago Commercial Club pushed the city's school board for more manual training schools and around 1910 funded a former school superintendent's trip to Germany to study that country's system, where "public school children were channeled into either academic or vocational programs depending on their abilities and interests." Despite protests by educators, Chicago was developing a "de facto dual system that forced sixth graders to choose their career path."⁹

Margaret Haley, leader of Chicago's Teacher's Federation in 1906 succinctly stated the two sides to the basic debate about how to teach vocational skills and which students should learn them, a debate that had acquired deep cultural undercurrents. "Two ideals are struggling for supremacy in American life today," Haley wrote, "one the industrial ideal, dominating thru [sic] the supremacy of commercialism, which subordinates the worker to the product and the machine; the other, the ideal of democracy, the ideal of the educators, which places humanity above all machines, and demands that all activity shall be the expression of life. If this ideal of the educators cannot be carried over into the industrial field, then the ideal of industrialism will be carried over into the school. Those two ideals can no more continue to exist in American life than our nation could have continued half slave and half free."¹⁰

Two of the clearest voices to articulate the opposing sides of the national discourse were David Snedden and John Dewey. Snedden (1868-1951) was a California native who taught in that state's school system for ten years and then at Stanford University from 1901 to 1905, and Teachers College, Columbia University in New York City from 1905 to 1909. From 1909 until 1916, Snedden was in Massachusetts serving as that state's first commissioner of education. "Snedden shared the...view that the American school system was 'unefficient' and 'undemocratic' since it answered the needs of the small band of theoretically inclined students bound for college, but neglected the interests of the great majority of practically minded youth, who in the United States – contrary to 'autocratic' Germany – had no chance of preparing themselves early and thoroughly for their life's work. To deliver industry, commerce, and agriculture the skilled and intelligent workers they needed, Snedden

⁵ The jargon used in the public discourse about this expanded educational system begins with the use of the phrase "manual training," which could refer to courses for either sex. The favored term used by educators and journalists evolved throughout the 1910s into the non-gendered phrase "vocational education." "Manual training" eventually becomes synonymous with boys' classes and "domestic science" becomes the term used for girls' classes.

⁶ Gyure, 84.

⁷ *Cedar Rapids Evening Gazette*, 11/7/1912.

⁸ Gyure, 86.

⁹ Gyure, 87.

¹⁰ Gyure, 83.

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

Grant Vocational High School
name of property

**NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES
CONTINUATION SHEET**

Linn County, Iowa
county and state

Section 8 Page 11

advocated the spread of the project method of teaching and the expansion of the common school system by establishing, besides the traditional high schools for 'officers,' *new vocational schools for the 'rank and file* (emphasis added)."¹¹

John Dewey (1859-1952) has been called the "most significant educational thinker of his era."¹² A philosopher as well as social and education reformer, Dewey's ideas about education were pioneering and "central to the Progressive Movement." Born in Vermont, Dewey taught high school for two years before graduate school at Johns Hopkins University. After teaching at the University of Michigan and the University of Chicago, Dewey spent the bulk of his professional life at Columbia University (1904-1930) in New York City, overlapping Snedden's tenure at Columbia University, Teachers College. Dewey became well known to the general public "as an important commentator on contemporary issues...due to his frequent contributions to popular magazines such as *The New Republic* and *Nation*, as well as his ongoing political involvement in a variety of causes, such as women's suffrage and the unionization of teachers. One outcome of his fame was the numerous invitations to lecture in both academic and popular venues."¹³

Snedden, who had written his dissertation on the "practical and useful education of reform schools as the model for the improvement of the public school system" was a social efficiency advocate.¹⁴ Others would cast him as a Social Darwinist.¹⁵ Snedden assumed that the majority (he estimated 80%) of students in American high schools received little benefit from traditional academic high schools. "[He] advocated a vocational training model that responded directly to the specific labor force needs identified by industry. Under his scheme, vocational education would be structured to direct non-academic students into required labor force roles for which they were deemed best suited. He argued that educators should simply accept the industrial social system and its accompanying class structure as an inevitable fact of life...According to Snedden, the primary purpose of vocational education was meeting labor force needs and preparing students with assumed limited intellectual capacities for immediate employment in industry."¹⁶ In other words, most students would have neither the interest nor the ability to appreciate the academic courses of regular high schools. As such, it was most efficient for the greater society to make early decisions for these unfortunates about their futures and train them for jobs whereby they could both support themselves and benefit the American economic system.

Free agency, on the other hand, was at the core of Dewey's views on the subject of vocational education. He was "the most vocal opponent of Snedden's social-efficiency framework" and "diametrically opposed to Snedden's view." Dewey rejected the dual assumptions that the existing industrial and world market systems were permanent and static, and that most American students were best channeled, like tools, toward the jobs that best served American industry. According to Dewey, "Any scheme of vocational education, which takes as its point of departure from the industrial regime that now exists, is likely to assume and perpetuate its divisions and weaknesses, and thus become an instrument in accomplishing the feudal dogma of social predestination."¹⁷ Dewey believed vocational education should be incorporated in general high schools so that all students could be exposed to a greater array of subjects that "expanded, rather than limited, their future occupational choices."¹⁸

¹¹ "David Snedden," accessed at <http://education.stateuniversity.com/pages2426/Snedden-David-1868-1951.html> on 5/1/2014.

¹² "PBS Online: Only a Teacher: Schoolhouse Pioneers," accessed at www.pbs.org on 6/11/2014.

¹³ "John Dewey (1859-1952), *Internet Encyclopedia of Philosophy*, accessed at <http://www.iep.utm.edu/dewey/> on 6/11/2014.

¹⁴ "David Snedden," 1.

¹⁵ Emery J. Hyslop-Margison, "An Assessment of the Historical Arguments in Vocational Education Reform," *Journal of Career and Technical Education* 17 (Fall 2000) 1: 2. Words that categorize goals and actions are important. To espouse "efficiency" in any format during the Progressive Era was consistent with one of the movement's basic tenants. To be a Social Darwinist, on the other hand, assumes a stratified and unalterable human condition that no amount of efficiency in education would change. One appears positive and affirming, the other restrictive and inevitable; the different stances potentially lead to very different education systems.

¹⁶ Hyslop-Margison, 2.

¹⁷ John Dewey, *Democracy and education* (New York: The Free Press, 1916), 318; cited in Hyslop-Margison, 5.

¹⁸ Hyslop-Margison, 2.

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

Grant Vocational High School
name of property

**NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES
CONTINUATION SHEET**

Linn County, Iowa
county and state

Section 8 Page 12

Whether or not Snedden ever visited Iowa is unknown, but he had his followers in Iowa, including Ervin E. Lewis, an Education Department Associate Professor at the University of Iowa, just 25 miles south of Cedar Rapids.¹⁹ Dewey, on the other hand, was very much a presence in Cedar Rapids in April 1914 as a speaker at the annual meeting of the Northeast Iowa Teachers Association. Additional speakers at this meeting included the United States Commissioner of Education P.P. Claxton (a fellow Johns Hopkins University graduate) and Meyer Bloomfield, director of the Vocational Bureau of Boston during Snedden's tenure as state commissioner of education.²⁰ In Dewey's address to the conference, titled "Industrial Education and Democracy," he argued that schools "should engage themselves in turning out citizens, in the true sense of the word—not merely in producing laborers for the country." According to the local newspaper's account of the speech: "That schools must of necessity turn out the workers of the country, [Dewey] acknowledged, but the plea was made that those workers be intelligent workers, not merely living mechanical contrivances. 'Let us have educated and intellectual shop hands, business men, mothers, and laborers generally,' he said."²¹ Dewey's repudiation of Snedden's approach – to segregate students into academic and non-academic high schools – probably made some of his audience squirm in their seats. As it happened, after years of planning, fundraising, and cajoling by the local newspaper, excavation work for the new Grant Vocational School began during the very same week these esteemed national educators and teachers from all over eastern Iowa converged on Cedar Rapids.²²

*Vocational Education and Manual Training in Iowa*²³

Vocational education in Iowa can be traced back as far as the private academies and seminaries of the nineteenth century, many of which were established before free public education was available. The Davenport Manual Labor College founded in 1838, for example, declared that its main purpose was to "qualify young men to engage in the several employments and professions of society, and to discharge honorably and usefully the various duties of life."²⁴ One of the more interesting academies was founded in 1855 by Caroline P. Lindsley, A.M. The "Female Eclectic Institute," also located in Davenport, was well ahead of its time in planning coursework for young women that "would instruct in the household arts as well as in the trades or professions in which women might engage." Teaching was the basic female profession contemplated by the school (teaching in common schools, teaching music, or drawing and painting, or publishing), with equally limited trade options in millinery, dress making, and tailoring.²⁵ Circulars and advertizing distributed by Lindsley suggested her mindset was atypical, if not almost radical, for its time. "Particular attention was called to the practice of English composition, since it was recognized that woman was 'to a great extent, shut out from the rostrum and confined to the parlor or school room.'" According to an early twentieth-century chronicler of Iowa education history, while there is no evidence that this institution was carried on in any scale, "one must conclude...that in the development of such an elaborate scheme [of coursework offered by Lindsley] there was a suggestion of the circumscribed schooling available [for women] at the time."²⁶ One

¹⁹ In 1914, Lewis published an article called "Vocational Guidance in Public Schools," in the University's *Bulletin of the State University of Iowa*, in which he favorably quoted Meyer Bloomfield, a Snedden colleague from Boston, saying "Mr. Bloomfield thinks that 'vocational guidance is organized to lessen *social waste*'" (emphasis added). Lewis also described another Bostonian, Frank Parsons, who in 1908 had established an "informal vocational bureau in connection with social settlement work and attempted to counsel and guide the so-called 'misfits'—men, mostly adults, who had gone into wrong occupations...over-employed, under-employed, ad mis-employed due largely to a lack of wise counsel and information at the time they left school and entered industrial life." (Series No. 70).

²⁰ *Cedar Rapids Evening Gazette*, 3/27/1914.

²¹ *Cedar Rapids Evening Gazette*, 4/3/1914.

²² A special meeting of the school board was called on March 31, 1914 to address the deep quick sand that was discovered on the Grant site.

²³ *Cedar Rapids Evening Gazette*, 4/1/1914. While agricultural classes are vocational classes, the politics and public discourse, as well as the advocates and detractors, are different enough to warrant the caveat that what follows in this section should be understood to address only vocational education in Iowa's towns and cities, not rural areas.

²⁴ Clarence R. Aurner, *History of Education in Iowa*, vol. III (Iowa City: State Historical Society of Iowa 1915), 9.

²⁵ Aurner, 55.

²⁶ Aurner, 56.

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

Grant Vocational High School
name of property

**NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES
CONTINUATION SHEET**

Linn County, Iowa
county and state

Section 8 Page 13

contemporary of Lindsley, writing in the “first year” of her institute, claimed it was “the only female seminary in the United States which, in the character and extent of its instruction, is founded upon the broad basis of a university.”²⁷

After the turn of the century, the progressive movement to reform education methods and incorporate secondary schools into the system affected Iowa as much as anywhere in the country. School boards, women’s groups, and newspaper commentators publically discussed the benefits not only of a high school education, but also of the manual training courses, typically intended for males, already taught in some high schools. The discourse included vocational training for girls too, perhaps because education for both sexes, like religion and moral training, had long been a concern of elite women’s groups. The influential *Burlington Hawk-Eye* published a long article in 1903 headlined “Technical Schools for Girls,” which promoted training in the trades for girls as a means of giving them financial independence and the refining influence and Americanizing effect that associating with educated teachers might produce. “Thus the girl herself while she learns her trade becomes a neat, gentle mannered, refined and pure minded woman. What this means to the daughters of poor Russian, Polish, and Italian immigrants may be imagined.”²⁸ A year later, the same newspaper published a long letter from a local member of the Federation of Women’s Clubs in support of manual training in high schools, stating: “A movement now under way, supported by the enthusiasm and intelligent activity of the ladies of the Federation of Women’s clubs, which proposes manual training for Burlington’s schools, deserves the active, earnest and financial support of every public spirited citizen of the town.”²⁹

Private philanthropy in Iowa education could mirror the efforts of wealthy men like Marshall Field in Chicago, or Andrew Carnegie with his free public library program. Philanthropy played a crucial role the construction of a large new building in Mt. Pleasant to serve both the Y.M.C.A. and a new manual training school for the “common boy.” Overseers of the “extensive Seeley estate” acted on the departed’s wishes by funding the construction of the Seeley Memorial Y.M.C.A. and Manual Training School (Fig. 5). Mostly, however, Iowa cities struggled with the decision whether or not to use taxpayers’ dollars to fund a specialized school or simply incorporate technical trade courses – vocational education—into the local high school’s curriculum.

²⁷ N. Howe Parker, *Iowa as it is in 1856: A Gazetteer for Citizens and a Handbook for Emmigrants* [sic], 1856), 246.

²⁸ *Burlington Hawk-Eye*, 1/11/1903.

²⁹ *Burlington Hawk-Eye*, 6/9/1904.

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

Grant Vocational High School
name of property

**NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES
CONTINUATION SHEET**

Linn County, Iowa
county and state

Section 8 Page 14

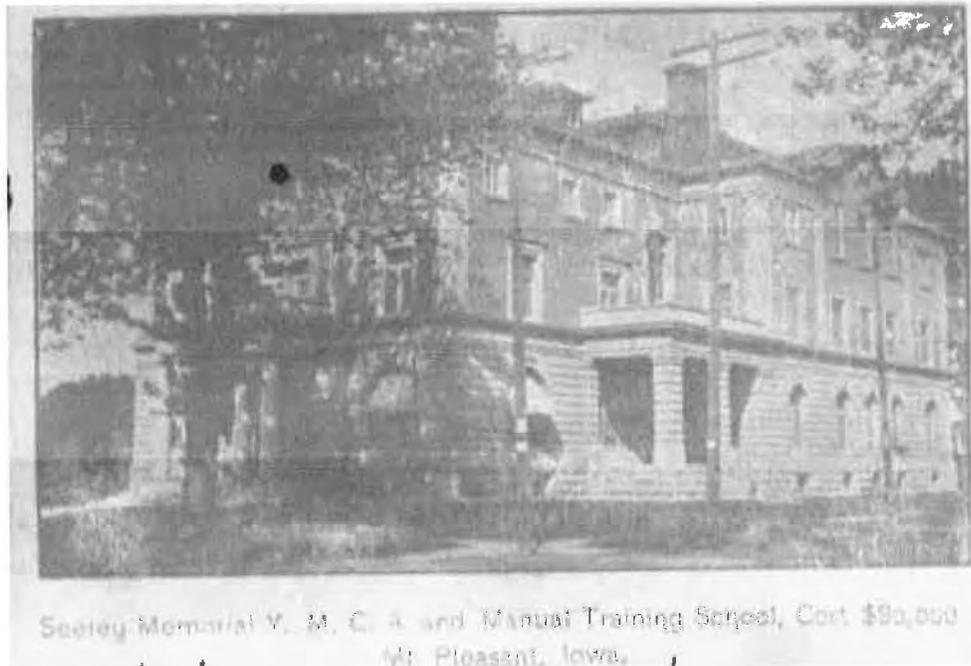


Figure 5 Historic postcard image of Seeley Memorial Manual Training School, Mt. Pleasant, Iowa. Source: Ebay.com on 6/11/2014.

Table 1 below includes brief information gleaned from a *non-exhaustive* newspaper search of the various Iowa cities and towns that considered the vocational high school debate. Online newspapers in Iowa were searched for the period 1900 to 1916. Several hundred results were returned but only a handful of Iowa communities appeared to seriously debate the issue of building a new vocational school. While admittedly an incomplete and impressionistic survey, one thing is clear from this newspaper research, that while hundreds if not thousands of new high schools were being built in the state during this period, very few towns actually decided to build a separate, specialized vocational school. Within the Iowa State Historic Preservation Office's architectural database, there are 2,425 education building entries, 1,755 of which are school buildings. Not a single school in the database is recorded as being a vocational school though there is a specific code for that function.³⁰ The cities, like Cedar Rapids, that did construct a specialized vocational high school tended to be the larger, industrializing communities with growing manufacturing bases. Cedar Rapids had Quaker Oats; Waterloo had Rath Packing and John Deere; Davenport had lumber, millwork, and ready-made-house companies like Gordon Van-Tine. These cities all likely had larger immigrant populations than the smaller, rural communities for which Iowa is well known. Certainly Cedar Rapids had its large Bohemian (Czech) neighborhoods.

Two important historical features about Cedar Rapids help to understand why it saw a vocational school built when most communities in Iowa did not. One, this town along the Cedar River focused on developing its industries almost from the beginning, which helped it to grow to Iowa's second largest city. Led by early milling companies and then by the T.M. Sinclair pork packing plant, founded in 1871, the city's industrial base expanded to eventually include well known manufacturers like Quaker Oats (started as North Star Oatmeal Mill), Cherry-Burrell Corporation (started as J.G. Cherry Company), Penick & Ford (on the Douglas Starch Works site), and LeFebure Corporation.³¹ Second, Czech immigrants

³⁰ Of course, the lack of any vocational schools in the Iowa database could be more of a surveyor problem than the historical absence of such schools.
³¹ Ernie Danek, *Tall Corn and High Technology, Cedar Rapids: A Pictorial History* (Woodland Hills, CA: Windsor Publications, 1980), 43; George T. Henry and The History Center, *Cedar Rapids, Iowa* (Images of American Series) Chicago, IL: Arcadia Publishing, 2001, 59-68.

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

Grant Vocational High School
name of property

**NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES
CONTINUATION SHEET**

Linn County, Iowa
county and state

Section 8 Page 15

(natives of Bohemia) by the hundreds or thousands swelled the ranks of workers employed by these industries. Cedar Rapids certainly had other immigrant groups, among them Irish, German, and with the closing of the Buxton coal mines, a respectable-sized African American community.³² But Czechs arrived early and quickly grew in numbers as the industries continued to provide steady employment.

The first Czechs to Cedar Rapids are thought to have arrived about 1852. By 1860, when Cedar Rapids had 1,610 residents, there were about 80 Czech families in the town and this number increased rapidly following the Civil War.³³ The opening of T.M. Sinclair's meatpacking plant in 1871 and the Stuart and Douglas oatmeal and pearl barley factory in 1874 meant an increasing number jobs for the newest arrivals. And the growing Czech neighborhoods meant there was always a need for English language courses, whether they were taught by charitable groups, Czech social groups, or school teachers.³⁴

City (Population in 1910)*	Years of Dialogue in Newspapers**	Action Taken	Outcome	Comments
Burlington (24,324)	1903-1904	Unsure; doubtful specialized school was constructed	Incorporated voc. ed. courses into general curriculum	Voc. Ed. was promoted by the Federation of Women's Club
Cedar Rapids (32,811)	1904-1916	Construction of Grant Vocational High School (1914-15)	Conversion to regular high school in 1924	Continued as high school until 1936, thereafter Board of Education offices until 2008
Davenport (43,028)	1900-1916	Manual Training school operating with c. 200 students in 1900	Unknown	Ballot initiatives to fund a new Manual Training school in 1913 defeated
Des Moines (86,368)	1900-1914	Manual Training classes given as summer school (1909); a dozen boys attended carpentry and printing classes in the "old Lincoln school" (1914)	No press coverage of a specialized school being built during this period	Man. Train. encouraged by religious leader who called for a "Phillip Armour in Des Moines" to fund a specialized school
Iowa City (10,091)	1900-1914	Existing 2 nd Ward School used in 1900; \$50,000 allocated in 1914 for a Man.Train. School and gymnasium	No evidence a specialized school was ever built	2 nd Ward parents group; women; university professors spoke in favor of new building in 1900
Iowa Falls (2,797)	1912	Manual Training "school" in operation but may be classes within normal school	Unclear whether there was ever a specialized school	Manual training in this town was reserved for boys; hoped to start "domestic science department" soon
Mt. Pleasant (3,874)	1907	Manual Training school building privately funded for the "boy not born with a silver spoon in his mouth"	Shares with the YMCA a new building built by philanthropist for the purpose	Named [George Lincoln] Seeley Manual Training School

³² For the historical background of Cedar Rapids' black community, see Jan Olive Full, "Bethel African American Methodist Episcopal Church," National Register of Historic Places Registration Form (2013).

³³ Ibid. 121-22.

³⁴ Martha Eleanor Griffith, "The Czechs in Cedar Rapids," *The Iowa Journal of History & Politics*, 42 (April 1944) 2:152.

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

Grant Vocational High School
name of property

**NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES
CONTINUATION SHEET**

Linn County, Iowa
county and state

Section 8 Page 16

Table 1. Iowa Cities in addition to Cedar Rapids that considered building specialized vocational or manual training schools

(Not an Exhaustive List - Based only on Historic Newspaper Articles Searched btwn 1900-1916)

Vinton (3,336)	1912	"citizens propose a domestic science and manual training school...to cost about \$40,000"	Unknown if built	Newspaper applauded effort as "keep[ing] up with the procession"
Waterloo (26,693)	1908-1910	Construction in 1909	Converted to junior high in 1917	Designed by architect Clinton P. Shockley in Colonial Revival style; demolished in 1950s to make way for new courthouse

*Data taken from "Total Population for Iowa's Incorporated Places: 1850-2000," accessed on 5/22/2014 at <http://data.iowadatacenter.org/>.

**SOURCES: *Burlington Hawk-Eye*, 6/9/1904, 1/11/1903; RE: Davenport, see *Cedar Rapids Republican*, 6/8/1916, *Muscatine Journal*, 7/23/1913, 3/10/1914, *Davenport Daily Republican*, 12/3/1901, *Davenport Daily Leader*, 11/16/1900, *Davenport Weekly Leader*, 10/12/1900; *Des Moines Daily News*, 4/7/1909, *Des Moines Capital*, 6/8/1901, *Des Moines Daily News*, 5/28/1900, *Des Moines Daily News*, 2/1/1914; [Iowa City] *Daily Iowa State Press*, 2/17/1900, *Cedar Rapids Evening Gazette*, 1/1/1914; RE: Iowa Falls, see *Cedar Rapids Republican*, 4/20/1912; RE: Mt. Pleasant, see *Iowa State Register and Farmer*, 2/1/1907; RE: Vinton, see *Cedar Rapids Evening Gazette*, 4/11/1912; *Waterloo Times Tribune*, 9/22/1908, *Waterloo Daily Courier*, 1/18/1909, *Waterloo Semi Weekly Courier*, 5/4/1909, *Waterloo Evening Courier*, 5/21/1910, "Waterloo Community School District," accessed at <http://www.waterloo.k12.ia.us/history/> on 6/3/2014.

The Cedar Rapids Vocational School Experience

One of the earliest indications that progressive notions about vocational training for school children had arrived in Cedar Rapids was published under the heading "Manual Training" in the August 3, 1904 *Cedar Rapids Evening Gazette*:

The school board of the independent district of Cedar Rapids is to be commended for ordering the introduction of manual training. As was to have been expected, and as an indication of care, the beginning will be small, but it will be sufficient to give the matter a trial. And while there is no doubt of success, a more general revolution in methods might not have been sanctioned...

If the experiment is as successful as there is reason to believe that it will be, there is no question that the work will be broadened in scope and that in time a manual training school, separate and apart, will contest with the high school, conducted for the literary, scientific, and other regular courses, for the chief place in the affections of the people. It is a truism that the great majority of people must use their hands as well as their heads in the effort to make a living, and the trades and occupations that require the use of the hands are and always will be the support of cities and the country at large.

Less than a year later, an article in the same newspaper indicated the apparent success of the new manual training courses even before the school year conclude, and hinted at both a growing city population and crowding in the city's only high school. The writer noted the need for a west side high school and an imminent need for a newer and larger high school on the east side. The "present high school building," the writer concluded, "could be used for a manual training building, which the people are so anxious for."³⁵ Keeping the pressure on, in 1908 the *Gazette* reported on a visitor's tongue-in-cheek comments about a Midwest manual training school funded by a lumber baron, adding: "If some wealthy Cedar Rapids man who expects to die in the near future wants to leave behind him one of the greatest monuments which it is possible for the human mind to devise, he ought to provide for the erection and maintenance in this city of such a magnificent institution as the [Charles H.] Hackley Manual Training School at Muskegon, Wis."³⁶ Indeed, when just months before, the railroad contractor and "one of Iowa's millionaires" Stephen L. Dows had died, rumors swirled about Cedar Rapids that his will might include

³⁵ *Cedar Rapids Evening Gazette*, 3/4/1905.

³⁶ *Cedar Rapids Evening Gazette*, 8/21/1908.

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

Grant Vocational High School
name of property

**NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES
CONTINUATION SHEET**

Linn County, Iowa
county and state

Section 8 Page 17

an endowment for the construction of a manual training school.³⁷ By early 1909, still with no manual training school in town and growing congestion at the city's only high school, east side Washington, the *Gazette* again waded into the debate. It frowned upon a petition then circulating that proposed the construction of a new high school on the big island in the middle of the Cedar River – a central location in town – because this proposal included selling off the old high school, which the *Gazette* had previously promoted as an excellent building for conversion to a manual training school for both boys and girls.³⁸ To alleviate congestion, the *Gazette* argued, rather than build a large new high school on the island, Washington could be expanded and used for several years before being converted to a manual training school. The next day the city's labor-affiliated newspaper, *The Tribune*, whose mast head proclaimed itself "The Official Organ of the Iowa State Federation of Labor," took the *Gazette* to serious task, in effect calling the paper's suggestion wasteful, without merit, and an attempt to "hood-wink west side voters." The *Tribune* instead advocated for the island school proposal.³⁹

This battle of editors (or publishers) served as prelude to an upcoming city-wide vote in which, as the *Gazette* put it, the "real question or controversy [sic] is, shall we have one or two high schools?" One proposition was to build a new west side high school, another was to build one on Mays island, and yet a third was to enlarge the existing high school. The paper held up as a model the Kansas City school system. That much larger city, population 163,000, had only one high school but also a separate "colored high school" and a city-wide manual training school.⁴⁰ However, Cedar Rapids voters were reluctant to authorize anything other than the addition for the existing high school, voting down the west side *and* island school propositions, as well as those for a new grade school and a land purchase needed for yet another grade school.⁴¹

Another two years would pass without progress on the manual training school, but in March, 1911, a small minority of a light voter turnout approved a \$20,000 appropriation for a new vocational school on the west side, as well as the purchase of land for a new grade school, which was "badly needed."⁴² Even without its own building, the city's manual training department, which enrolled just boys, had grown in popularity between 1909 and 1911. It used quarters in two different schools, Adams and Taylor, and the department was run by a woman, Sadie B. Warner. She summarized the situation in a report to the school board in September 1911, when there were 333 boys from the sixth to 12th grades participating. She also reported that quarters were cramped, and the program lacked space for equipment and storage. "This, however, has not lessened the interest...even though the department is confined to limited quarters." Nevertheless, Miss Warner had concluded that for lack of space, the "department is at a standstill as far as growth and advancement is concerned."⁴³ Even with the affirmative vote of the city's residents, the \$20,000 appropriation was just a start toward a new vocational school, which would take three years before any earth was moved.

Despite the construction of the large new addition to the existing high school, authorized in 1909 and completed in 1911, the city's continued growth meant congestion was again soon a problem. The Cedar Rapids population had increased by over 7,000 between 1900 and 1910 and would increase by nearly 13,000 residents during the teens.⁴⁴ The *Gazette* again started pushing citizens and the school board to take action. "When the students from the grades go into the high school in a few days, the capacity of the structure will be almost reached...The solution of the situation will, of course, be the erection of a vocational high school on the west side. When that very desirable building is secured there will probably be considerable reduction in the number who take the regular high school course."⁴⁵ The vocational school, then, was to be the answer for

³⁷ *Cedar Rapids Evening Gazette*, 3/9/1908.

³⁸ *Cedar Rapids Evening Gazette*, 2/12/1909.

³⁹ *The [Cedar Rapids] Tribune*, 2/19/1909.

⁴⁰ *Cedar Rapids Evening Gazette*, 3/6/1909.

⁴¹ *Cedar Rapids Evening Gazette*, 3/9/1909.

⁴² *Cedar Rapids Evening Tribune*, 3/17/1911.

⁴³ *Cedar Rapids Evening Gazette*, 9/8/1911.

⁴⁴ Statistics obtained at <http://data.iowadaatacenter.org/> on 5/22/2014.

⁴⁵ *Cedar Rapids Evening Gazette*, 1/25/1912.

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

Grant Vocational High School
name of property

**NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES
CONTINUATION SHEET**

Linn County, Iowa
county and state

Section 8 Page 18

American and Cedar Rapids industries, which needed skilled workers, but also the solution to the congestion suffered at the city's main high school.

Funding the new vocational school remained the issue and existing school projects were consistently going over budget in these busy school building years. The new high school addition allocation was \$60,000 but the actual cost was over \$84,000; the Polk school building's appropriation was \$15,000, but actual cost was over \$19,000; Fillmore's appropriation of \$10,000 was exceeded by \$7,500.⁴⁶ But the land for the new vocational school had been purchased and the school board continued to deposit appropriations as it could in the school's building fund. Finally, after one last distracting delay caused by the need to repair prematurely "sagging" floors in one of the new schools, the school board put before the voters a request for bonding authority to finally fund the new vocational school.⁴⁷

When the board of education met in September, 1913 to discuss the funding for the vocational school, it was estimated that \$100,000 would be needed to "erect a building which will be ample for the demands which will be made upon it and which would accommodate about 1,000 pupils."⁴⁸ Plans were made to sell the dwellings that already occupied the school's site and local architect William J. Brown was selected.⁴⁹ The local newspaper was optimistic at the start of 1914 that the city would finally see "a magnificent vocation school building and institution" constructed.⁵⁰

By the end of January, 1914, architect Brown had pencil sketches of the plans ready to show the school board, most of whom had already visited other Midwest cities' vocational schools and already were worried that the \$100,000 fund would be inadequate.⁵¹ Brown, who had compared his plans to Chicago vocational schools, sent them for comment to W.A. Richards, the Rockford, Illinois superintendent of the manual training school, who pronounced them the "very best" he'd seen for the purpose.⁵² Excavation for the new school began at the end of March. At precisely the same time, educators from all over northeast Iowa and nationally recognized speakers from Chicago, Boston, and Washington, D.C., were converging on the city for the teachers' annual meeting. Between John Dewey's powerful declaration against segregating students into vocational schools and the deep layer of "quick sand" soon uncovered at the Grant school site, the board of education must have felt a bit deflated by the end of the month.⁵³

A month later, the quick sand problem was blamed for causing all the bids on the new school to exceed the total amount appropriated for it. The school board either asked the bidders to reconsider their amounts or the board asked for additional funding because the next day contracts were awarded.⁵⁴ The six Cedar Rapids general contractors and one from nearby Iowa City were all rejected in favor of the lowest bidder at \$85,000, a contractor from Omaha, Nebraska firm - F. P. Gould and Company. The same Cedar Rapids firm then was awarded both the heating and plumbing contracts. The total of the three contracts was nearly \$110,000.⁵⁵ The building was not yet underway and was already over budget.

Toward the end of the year, with three more school buildings underway, Grant's design was receiving praise. "The best points of the principal vocational schools in the United States are incorporated in this building. The architect, Mr. Brown,

⁴⁶ *Cedar Rapids Evening Gazette*, 2/21/1912.

⁴⁷ *Cedar Rapids Evening Gazette*, 12/4/1912; 2/19/1913.

⁴⁸ *Cedar Rapids Evening Gazette*, 9/3/1913.

⁴⁹ *Cedar Rapids Evening Gazette*, 6/18/1913; 10/22/1913.

⁵⁰ *Cedar Rapids Evening Gazette*, 1/1/1914.

⁵¹ *Cedar Rapids Evening Gazette*, 1/21/1914.

⁵² *Cedar Rapids Republican*, 3/10/1914. Less than 12 months later, Richards would be named principal of the new Grant school (*Cedar Rapids Evening Gazette*, 1/15/1915). It is unknown whether Sadie B. Warner, the previous director of the vocational program when it was in borrowed space, was considered for the position.

⁵³ *Cedar Rapids Evening Gazette*, 4/1/1914. The discovery of quick sand was expected to eat up \$5,000 of the budget.

⁵⁴ *Cedar Rapids Evening Gazette*, 5/8/1914.

⁵⁵ *Cedar Rapids Evening Gazette*, 5/9/1914.

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

Grant Vocational High School
name of property

**NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES
CONTINUATION SHEET**

Linn County, Iowa
county and state

Section 8 Page 19

made several trips to other cities, notably to the biggest and best vocational schools in Chicago and at Gary, Ind., to study their points of excellence....The building is being erected of Buffalo paving brick, cut stone and steel and will present a handsome appearance...On the first floor there will be four study rooms facing Second avenue, also the forge room, the wood turning room, and the machine room [plus] the boiler room and the first floor of the gymnasium. On the second floor there will be four study rooms, the running track of the gymnasium and the first floor of the auditorium. On the third floor will be the model kitchen, the dining room, cooking and serving room, the balcony of the auditorium, and, over the gymnasium, the mechanical drawing rooms with skylights." The architect's sketch drawing of the school ran with this description in the newspaper (Fig. 6).⁵⁶

When the school year opened, in September, 1915, Grant Vocational High School was ready. According to the local paper, "many inquiries have been received by the school board from interested parents as to just what courses can be pursued there and what the work will be like, and from all expectations there will be a large enrollment."⁵⁷ Arrangements had also been made for night classes for young local workers through the extension arm of the Iowa State College's engineering department. Industrial courses through this extension service were to be given tuition free.⁵⁸ Additionally, the building was available for community group meetings. For example, the "home economics" department of the local women's club began to regularly meet at the school.⁵⁹ Despite all the activity during the school year, the formal opening of the new vocational school was put off until the next May, at which point there was a full school year of experience to crow about in the local newspaper.

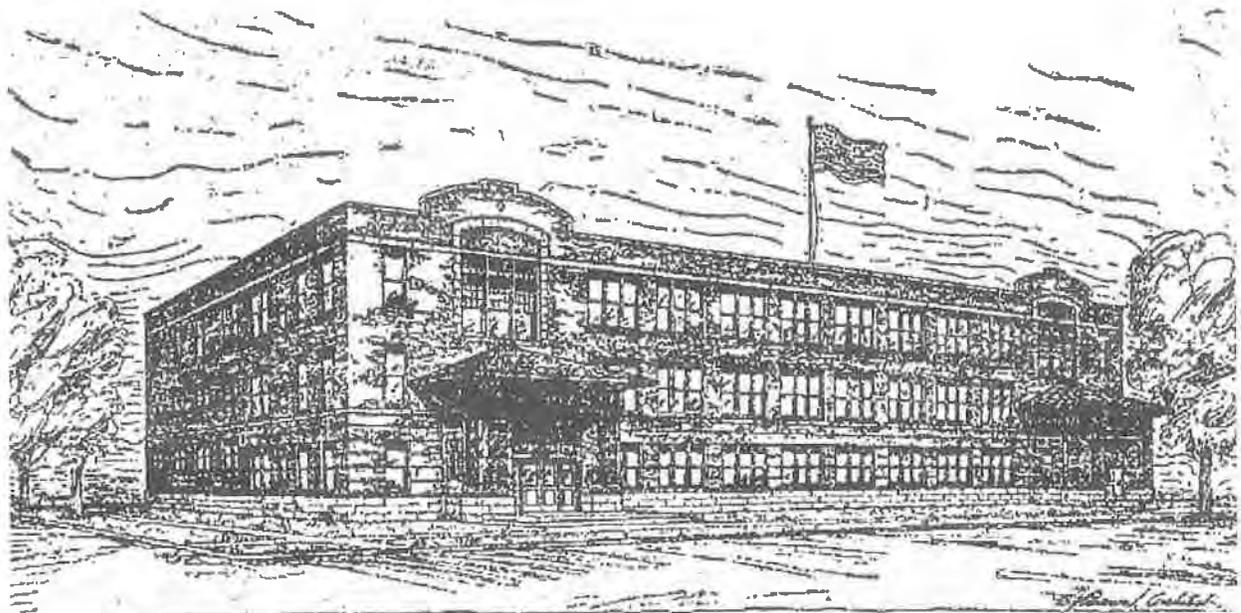


Figure 6 Architect William J. Brown's pencil sketch of the building. Source: *Cedar Rapids Republican*, 11/15/1914.

⁵⁶ *Cedar Rapids Republican*, 11/15/1914.

⁵⁷ *Cedar Rapids Republican*, 9/1/1915.

⁵⁸ *Cedar Rapids Republican*, 9/25/1915.

⁵⁹ *Cedar Rapids Republican*, 1/27/1916.

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

Grant Vocational High School
name of property

**NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES
CONTINUATION SHEET**

Linn County, Iowa
county and state

Section 8 Page 20

First year enrollment (Fig. 7) was about 450, and the night school surpassed that number, attended by mostly “young men who worked in shops, factories or other business day times and who entered the night classes to gain further knowledge and improve themselves...” The school, which was said to be architecturally modeled after the Hyde Park vocational school in Chicago and the Gary, Indiana school, taking the best features of each, was “inspected by school boards from all over Iowa and from the adjoining states, who are planning on building vocational schools...” With an open house coming up, the local paper suggested all Cedar Rapids residents should visit and inspect the building, sure to be one of the “greatest assets of the city.” The paper concluding with the thought that “while it is still in its infancy, the work accomplished has been even more than its sponsors hoped for and within a few years it should be the most noted educational institution in Cedar Rapids.”⁶⁰

As it turned out, the school quickly failed to live up to its promise, even with the financial assistance possible with the passage of the federal Smith-Hughes Act of 1917.⁶¹ The school had a new principal by 1919 and by 1923, the school board was considering converting Grant to a junior high, a type of school for which there had been “little interest” when Grant was built. In the few years Grant Vocational High School operated, the school board discovered that vocational education was



Figure 7 Students in a wood working class at Grant Vocational High School. Image published in the May 21, 1916 *Cedar Rapids Republican*. Source: Carl and Mary Koehler History Center

“unusually expensive” to operate. Further, enrollment in a number of departments, including the forge shop and the laundry room, had been lower than expected. As a result, the expensive equipment was removed and sold, and the rooms “sat idle,” sometimes for years. Perhaps the most basic problem was that attending Grant had remained voluntary. “Certainly,” the board of education wrote in a statement given to the newspapers at the end of 1923, it “had no right to force anyone to take

⁶⁰ *Cedar Rapids Republican*, 5/21/1916.

⁶¹ This federal legislation reflected the progressive popularity of vocational education generally. It “provided the first federal funding for public school programs in agriculture, trade, industrial, and home economics education.” Howard R.D. Gordon, *The History and Growth of Vocational Education in America* (Boston: Allyn and Bacon, 1999), 99. The Act provided for partial reimbursement of vocational teachers’ salaries so long as certain conditions were met.

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

Grant Vocational High School
name of property

**NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES
CONTINUATION SHEET**

Linn County, Iowa
county and state

Section 8 Page 21

any special type or types of work. The parents and children elect the course or courses that they wish to follow in the schools and if the work is not offered in the course, it is established as an experiment.” Unlike other countries, where children of this era were (and in some places continue) to be channeled at a youthful age toward their future careers and job paths, the Cedar Rapids school board appears to have aligned its philosophy, ultimately, with that of John Dewey. Grant was rededicated as a regular high school with general vocational education incorporated into the curriculum just like city’s and the state’s other high schools.⁶² Together with Washington High School, Grant operated as a “regular” academic high school until 1936, when another round of school construction and additions occurred. Grant students then were divided up and sent to new locations.⁶³

Following its service as a high school – of any kind – the building was again converted for use as school board and administrative offices. It remained in this capacity until the 2008 flood waters inundated the building and the school district moved its offices permanently out of the building.

Future Plans

The school building has not been used for school district purposes since 2008 and is currently vacant. It was recently purchased by a private company that is developing plans for its adaptive reuse. Rehabilitation plans include replacing the windows with more historically appropriate windows, rebuilding the roofline arch, and opening up the framed 3rd-story stairwell window area over both entrances. No change is planned for the southeastern entrance. These plans will return the school to close to its original appearance from 1915 until around 1940. Interior plans call for conversion of the building to residential purposes.

⁶² *Cedar Rapids Republican*, 12/23/1923.

⁶³ “Grant High School Officially Closed,” 4/5/1935. Newspaper clipping in the collections of the Koehler History Center.

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

Grant Vocational High School
name of property

**NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES
CONTINUATION SHEET**

Linn County, Iowa
county and state

Section 9 Page 22

9. Major Bibliographic References

Anderson, Harry W. "A Study of Gas Engines in High Schools." *Manual Training Magazine* 19(September, 1917)1: 13-16.

Aurner, Clarence R. *History of Education in Iowa*. Vol. III. Iowa City: State Historical Society of Iowa, 1915.

Burlington Hawk-Eye, issues as cited in footnotes.

Carl and Mary Koehler History Center. Schools collection; clipping collection.

Cedar Rapids Board of Education. "Educational Service Center [ESC]." Typescript history provided by Marcia Hughes, Community Relations Supervisor, Cedar Rapids Community School District, 6/5/2014.

Cedar Rapids Evening Gazette, issues as cited in footnotes.

Cedar Rapids Republican, issues as cited in footnotes.

The [Cedar Rapids] Tribune, issues as cited in footnotes.

Cubberley, Ellwood P. *Public Education in the United States*. Boston: Houghton Mifflin Company, 1919.

Danek, Ernie. *Tall Corn and High Technology, Cedar Rapids: A Pictorial History*. Woodland Hills, CA: Windsor Publications, 1980.

"David Snedden." Accessed at <http://education.stateuniversity.com/pages2426/Snedden-David-1868-1951.html> on 5/1/2014.

Deiber, Camilla, and Peggy Beedle. *Town Schools for Iowa*. Des Moines: State Historical Society of Iowa, 2002.

Dewey, John. *Democracy and education*. New York: The Free Press, 1916.

"Do School Laws Matter?" Accessed at www-personal.umich.edu on 6/3/2014.

Donovan, John J. *School Architecture: Principles and Practices*. New York: Macmillan Company, 1921.

Gordon, Howard R.D. *The History and Growth of Vocational Education in America*. Needham Heights, MA: Allyn & Bacon, 1999.

Griffith, Martha Eleanor. "The Czechs in Cedar Rapids." Part 1. *The Iowa Journal of History & Politics*, 42 (April 1944) 2:114-161.

Grant Vocational High School Yearbooks & Grant High School Yearbooks, including *Grant Sparks*, 1921; *Green and Gold*, 1923, 1924, 1926, 1930, 1931, 1932, 1933, 1934. Collection of the Carl and Mary Koehler History Center.

Gyure, Dale Allen. *The Chicago Schoolhouse: High School Architecture and Education Reform, 1856-2006*. Chicago: The Center for American Places at Columbia College Chicago, 2011.

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

Grant Vocational High School
name of property

**NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES
CONTINUATION SHEET**

Linn County, Iowa
county and state

Section 9 Page 23

Henry, George T., and The History Center. *Cedar Rapids, Iowa*. Images of America series. Chicago: Arcadia Publishing, 2001.

_____, and Mark W. Hunter. *Then and Now: Cedar Rapids*. Chicago: Arcadia Publishing, 2003.

Hyslop-Margison, Emery J. "An Assessment of the Historical Arguments in Vocational Education Reform," *Journal of Career and Technical Education* 17 (Fall 2000) 1: 1-6.

"John Dewey (1859-1952), *Internet Encyclopedia of Philosophy*, accessed at <http://www.iep.utm.edu/dewey/> on 6/11/2014.

Johnson, Jo Ellen, Collection. Photographs of the school just before, during, and after the 2008 flood; floor plan of school district office use at the time of the flood, misc. communications with author, March, 2015.

Lewis, Ervin E. "Vocational Guidance in High Schools." In *Bulletin of the State University of Iowa*. Bulletin No. 6, New Series No. 70, 1913-1914.

_____. "Survey of the High Schools of Des Moines." In *University of Iowa Extension Bulletin*. Bulletin No. 37, First Series No. 18, 1918.

Parker, N. Howe. *Iowa as it is in 1856: A Gazetteer for Citizens and a Handbook for Emmigrants*. 1856.

"PBS Online: Only a Teacher: Schoolhouse Pioneers." Accessed at www.pbs.org on 6/11/2014.

"Plaster: Plaster Products Containing Asbestos," obtained on 3/17/2015 at <http://www.mesothelioma.com/asbestos-exposure/products/plaster/>.

Sanborn Map Company, Fire Maps of Cedar Rapids, Iowa, 1913, 1913-updated to 1949.

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

Grant Vocational High School
name of property

**NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES
CONTINUATION SHEET**

Linn County, Iowa
county and state

Section 10 Page 24

10. Geographical Data

Verbal Boundary Description

The nomination includes the half city block bounded by First Avenue SW on the northwest, L Street SW on the northeast, 2nd Avenue SW on the southeast, and 5th Street SW on the southwest, described as Auditor's Plat #8, Lots 8 through 12, of the city of Cedar Rapids, Linn County, Iowa. The nomination does not include the public alley nor the public sidewalks.

Boundary Justification

The boundary includes the parcel historically associated with the Grant Vocational High School during the period of significance.



Source: Google.com, 2014



No Scale

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

Grant Vocational High School
name of property

**NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES
CONTINUATION SHEET**

Linn County, Iowa
county and state

Section Additional Documentation Page 25

**Cedar Rapids, Linn County, Iowa, with approximate location
of the nominated property circled.**

Source: detail obtained 6/16/2014 from U.S.G.S. 7.5' topographic map: <http://ortho.gis.iastate.edu>



United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

Grant Vocational High School
name of property

**NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES
CONTINUATION SHEET**

Linn County, Iowa
county and state

Section Additional Documentation Page 26

Site Plan showing Boundary of Nominated Property

Source Bing.com on 6/16/2014

1 100 feet 25 m



N



United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

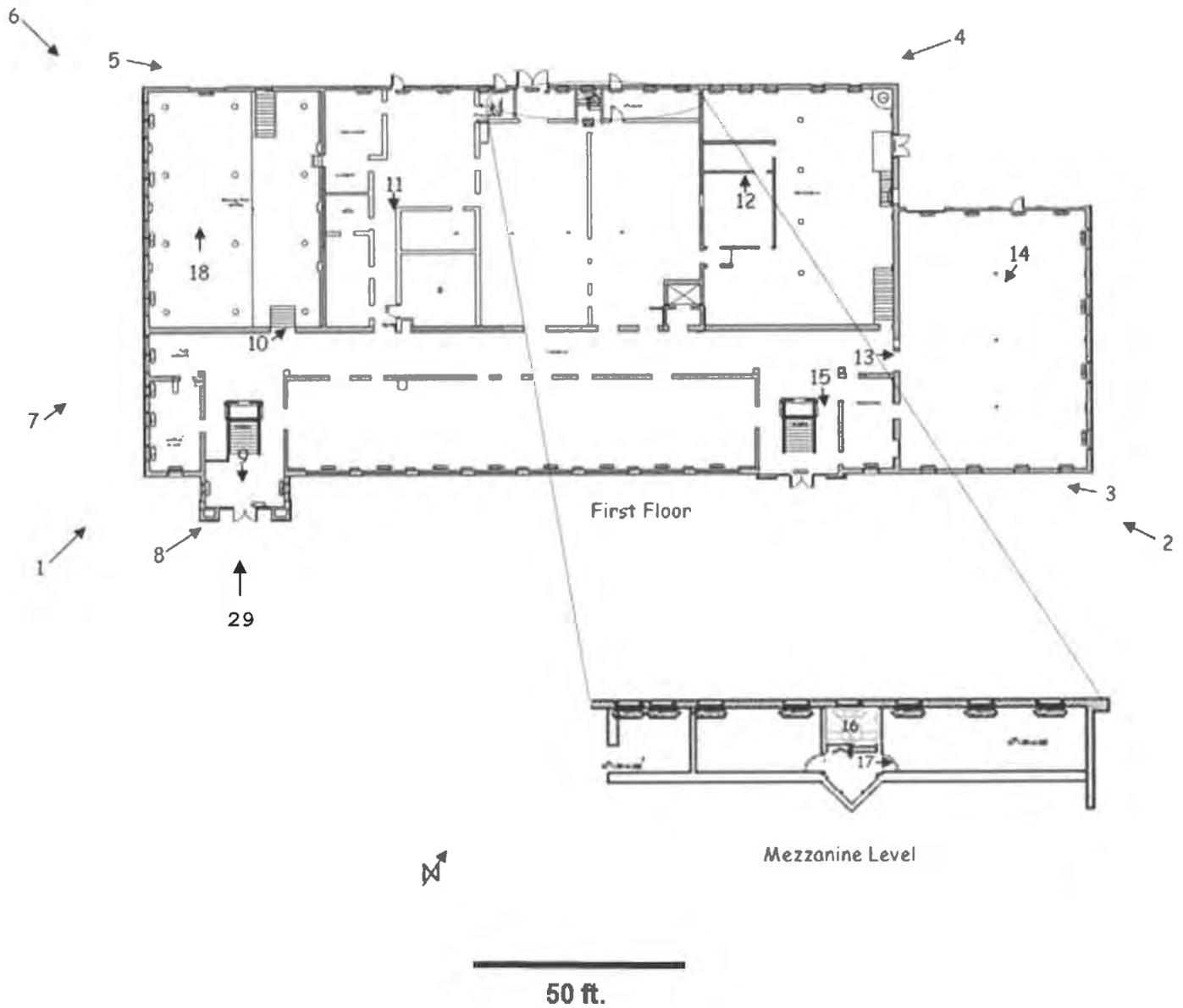
Grant Vocational High School
name of property

**NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES
CONTINUATION SHEET**

Linn County, Iowa
county and state

Section Additional Documentation Page 27

Floor Plans* & Photo Keys – Exterior views and First Floor w/ small storage mezzanine level shown at bottom (Base plan: Aspect, Inc., 2014)



*Note: Functions immediately prior to the flood reflected the Board of Education/Administrative offices. See additional "ESC Map" included herein.

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

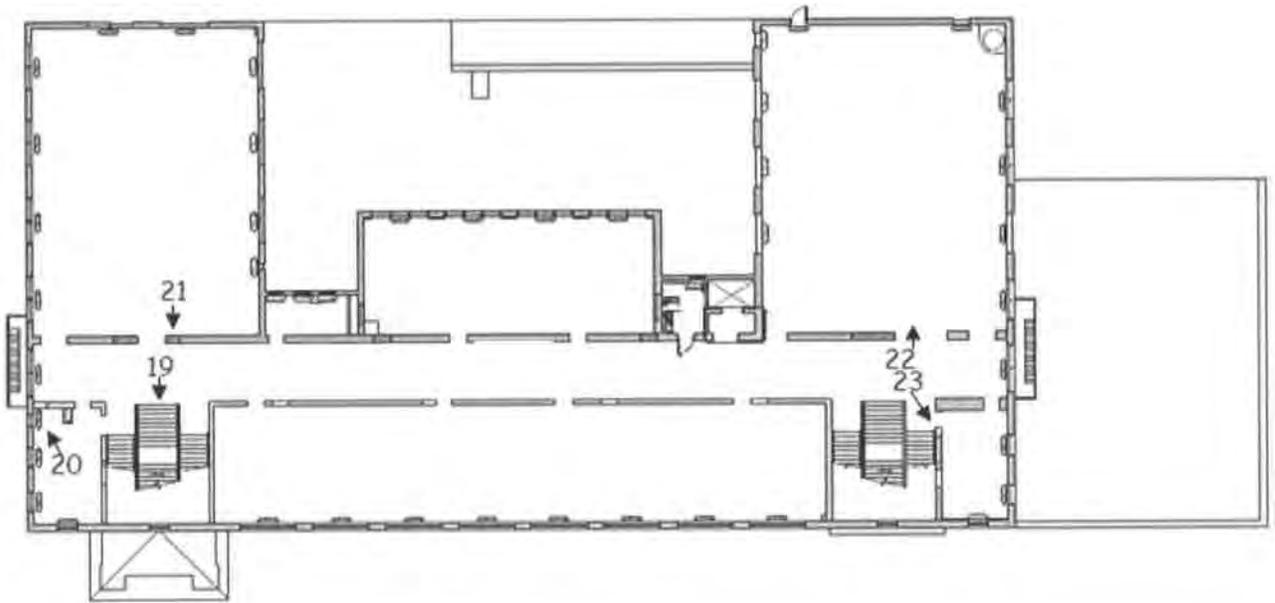
Grant Vocational High School
name of property

**NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES
CONTINUATION SHEET**

Linn County, Iowa
county and state

Section Additional Documentation Page 28

Floor Plans & Photo Keys – Second Floor (Base plan: Aspect, Inc., 2014)



50 ft.

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

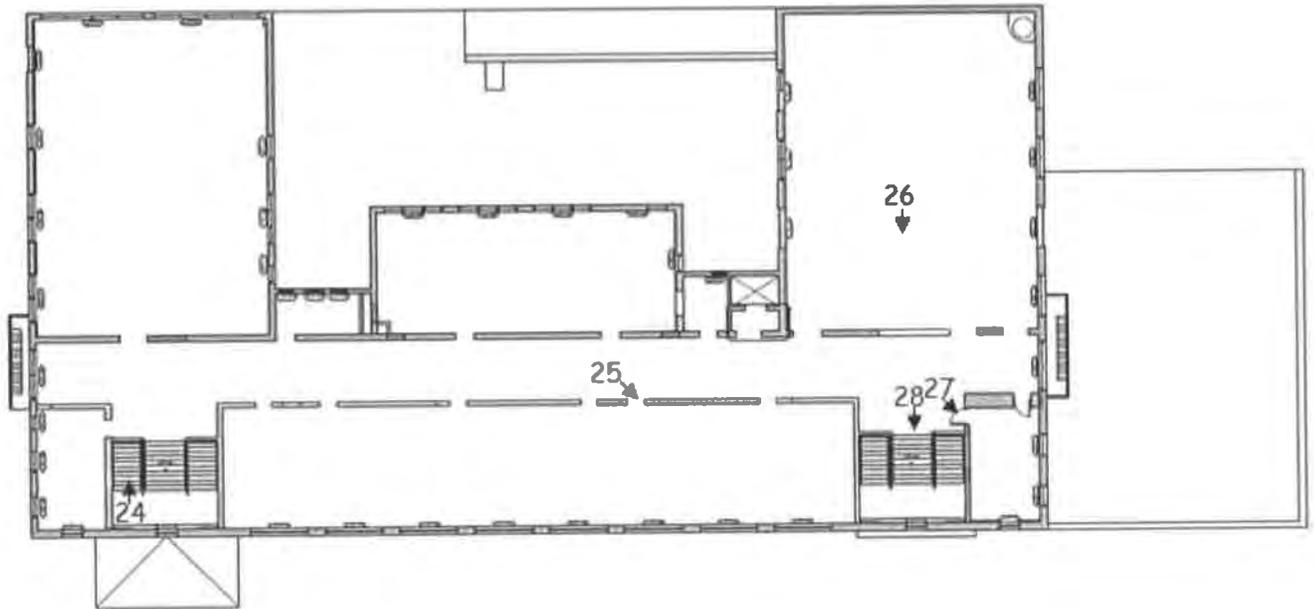
Grant Vocational High School
name of property

**NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES
CONTINUATION SHEET**

Linn County, Iowa
county and state

Section Additional Documentation Page 29

Floor Plans & Photo Keys – Third Floor (Base plan: Aspect, Inc., 2014)



50 ft.

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

Grant Vocational High School
name of property

**NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES
CONTINUATION SHEET**

Linn County, Iowa
county and state

Section Additional Documentation Page 30

Photograph Label Information

1, 2, 3, & 5 share the same information as follows:

1. Grant Vocational High School
2. Cedar Rapids, Linn County, IA
3. Aspect Architecture, Tallgrass Historians L.C.
4. January 2014, March 2014, March 2015
5. N/A (digital photographs)

6.- 7. Photo # and direction camera is facing:

1. Landscape, front of building, looking N
2. Landscape, front of building, looking W
3. Exterior, wing of building, looking W
4. Exterior, rear of the building, looking SW
5. Exterior, rear of the building, looking E
6. Exterior, northwest corner of building, looking E
7. Exterior, southwest corner of building, looking N
8. Exterior, main entrance, looking N
9. Interior, first floor, main entrance, looking S
10. Interior, first floor, from hallway into northwest room, looking N
11. Interior, first floor, northwest room, looking SE
12. Interior, first floor, northeast room, looking NW
13. Interior, first floor, hallway into northeast wing, looking NE
14. Interior, first floor, northeast wing, looking S
15. Interior, first floor, east stairs, looking SE
16. Interior, mezzanine level, stairwell, looking down
17. Interior, mezzanine level, hallway into storage area, looking NE
18. Interior, mezzanine level, office area, looking NW
19. Interior, second floor, west stairwell, looking SE
20. Interior, second floor, southwest corner room, looking W
21. Interior, second floor, northwest corner room, looking SE
22. Interior, second floor, northeast corner room, looking NW
23. Interior, second floor, west stairwell, looking E
24. Interior, third floor, west stairwell, looking NW
25. Interior, third floor, hallway into southeast room, looking E
26. Interior, third floor, northeast corner room, looking SE
27. Interior, third floor, from east stairwell into southeast room, looking E
28. Interior, third floor, east stairwell, looking SE
29. Exterior, newly revealed (March 2015) signboard over main entrance, looking N

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

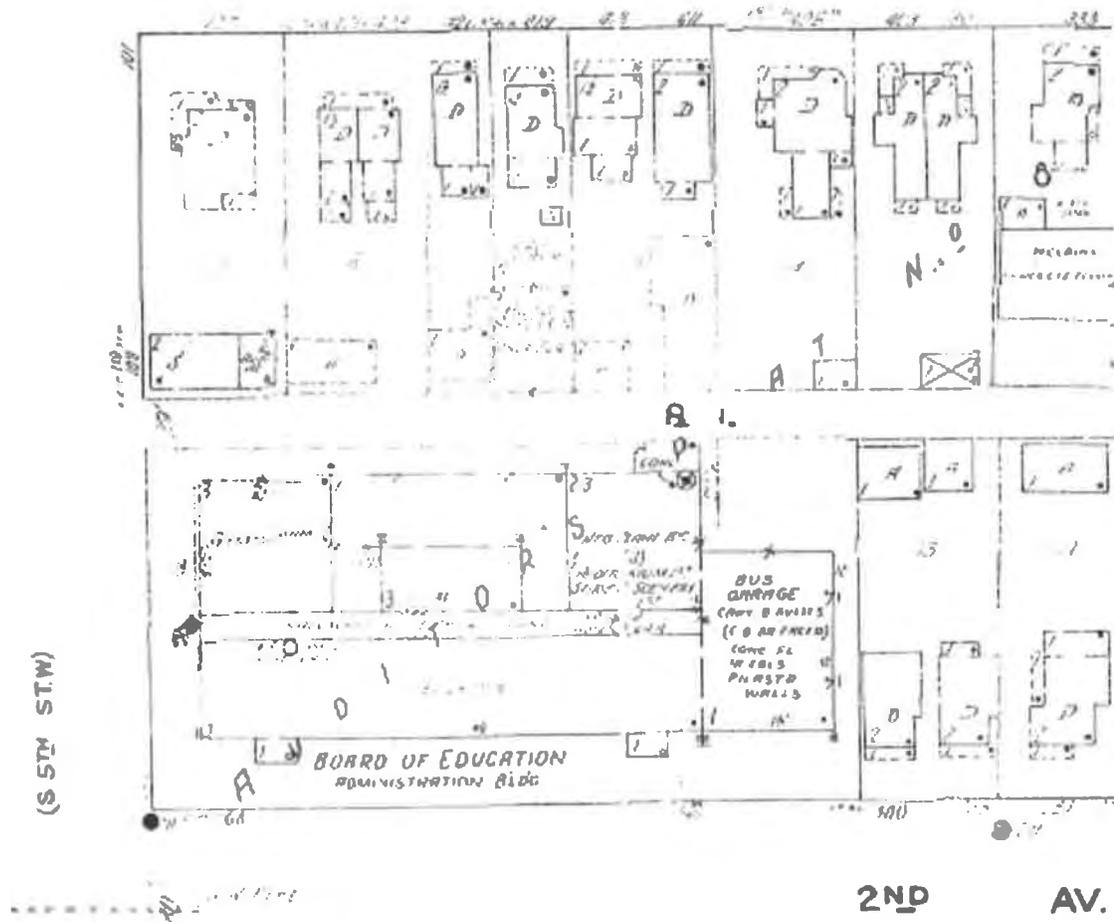
Grant Vocational High School
name of property

**NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES
CONTINUATION SHEET**

Linn County, Iowa
county and state

Section Additional Documentation Page 31

**Sanborn Map Co., fire insurance map of Cedar Rapids, Iowa, 1913, updated to 1949.
Detail showing Grant Vocational School – marked “Board of Education” at this time.**



United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

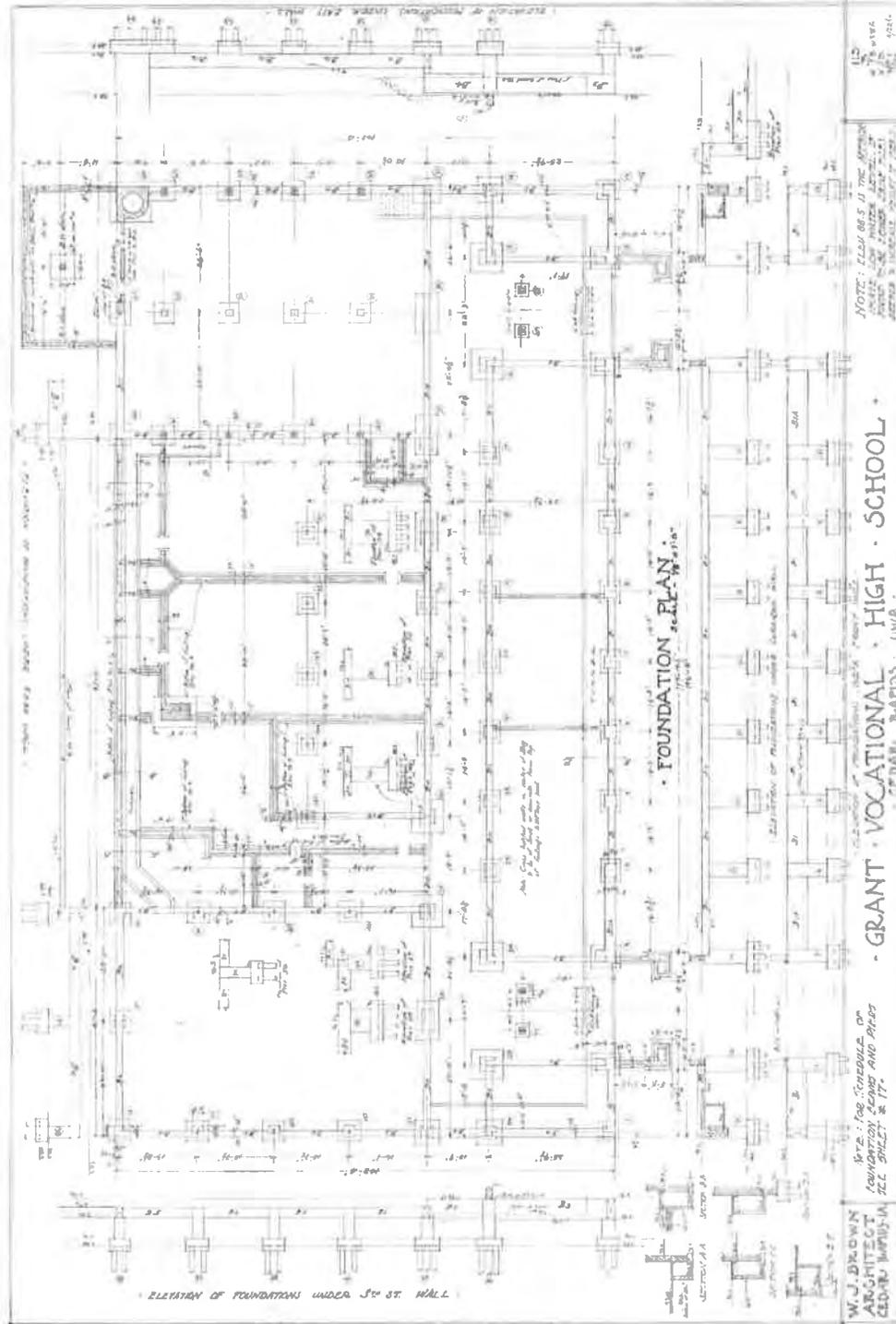
Grant Vocational High School
name of property

**NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES
CONTINUATION SHEET**

Linn County, Iowa
county and state

Section Additional Documentation Page 32

Original floor plans (located August, 2014). Collection of the owner.



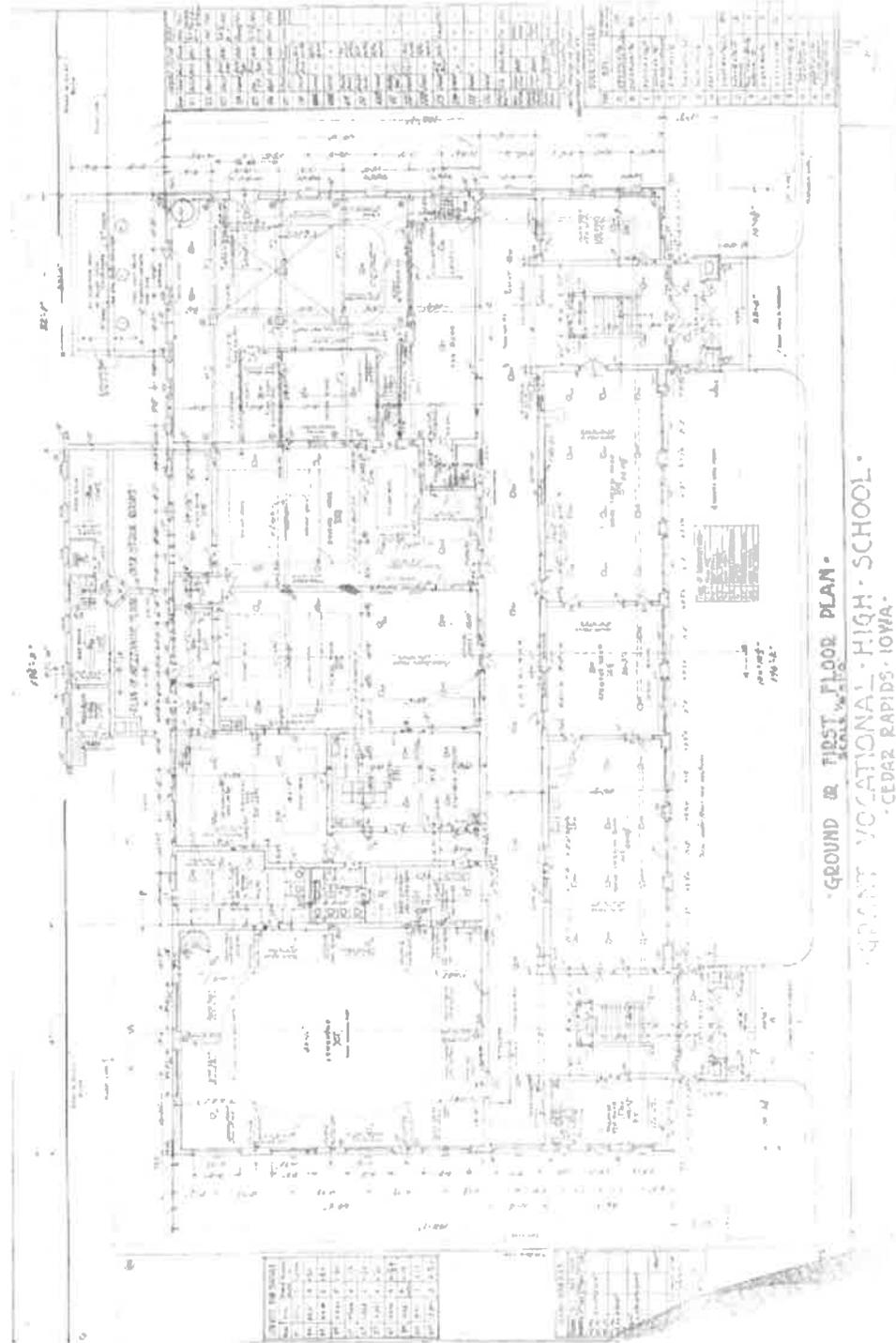
United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

Grant Vocational High School
name of property

**NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES
CONTINUATION SHEET**

Linn County, Iowa
county and state

Section Additional Documentation Page 33



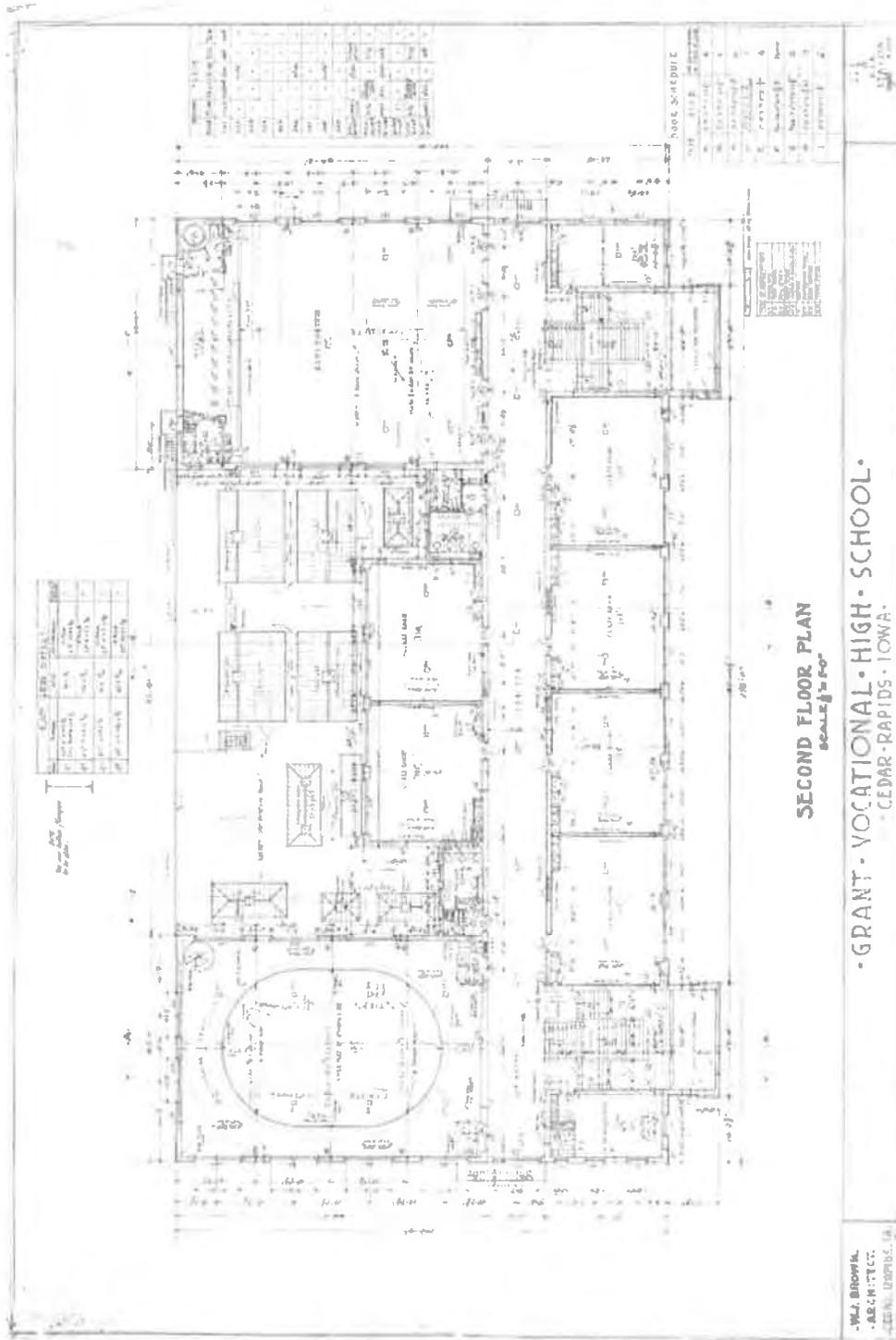
United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

Grant Vocational High School
name of property

**NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES
CONTINUATION SHEET**

Linn County, Iowa
county and state

Section Additional Documentation Page 34



W.L. BROWN,
ARCHITECT,
CEDAR RAPIDS, IOWA.

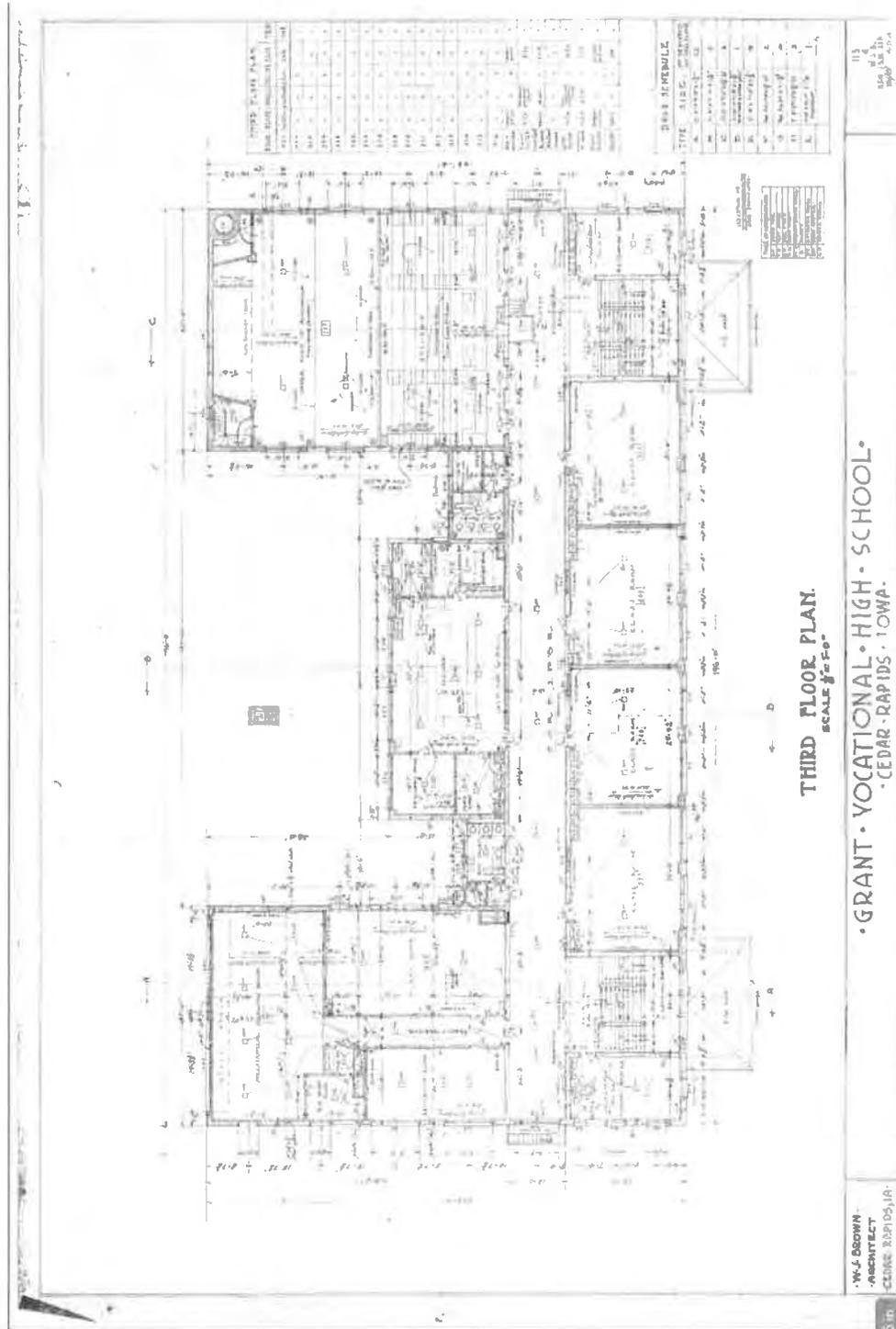
United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

Grant Vocational High School
name of property

**NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES
CONTINUATION SHEET**

Linn County, Iowa
county and state

Section Additional Documentation Page 35



United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

Grant Vocational High School
name of property

**NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES
CONTINUATION SHEET**

Linn County, Iowa
county and state

Section Additional Documentation Page 36

Additional Historic and Current Photographs

Entrance and First Floor



Looking down from the second floor at flooded northwest vestibule entrance during the 2008 flood. The doors are submerged. Only the transom over the doors is visible here (reflected in the flood waters also). The Collection of Jo Ellen Johnson.



Looking down from midway on the staircase at about the same area as the photo above, after the flood. The wooden transom, side lights, and doors are now nonextant. The original red floor tile seen here is extant however. The Collection of Jo Ellen Johnson.

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

Grant Vocational High School
name of property

**NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES
CONTINUATION SHEET**

Linn County, Iowa
county and state

Section Additional Documentation Page 37



First floor main corridor, prepping for the expected flood in June, 2008. Note the modern doors, floor tile and trim, wall and ceilings surfaces, and florescent lighting. This floor was submerged nearly to the ceiling. Collection of Jo Ellen Johnson.



First floor main corridor, after the flood. Collection of Jo Ellen Johnson.

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

Grant Vocational High School
name of property

**NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES
CONTINUATION SHEET**

Linn County, Iowa
county and state

Section Additional Documentation Page 38



Preparations underway for the expected flood, June 2008. Note the dropped ceiling, floor tile or carpet, and sheet rocked walls. This is the original, 1915, first floor woodworking class room space. Collection of Jo Ellen Johnson.



Same view as above, but after the 2008 flood. Collection of Jo Ellen Johnson.

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

Grant Vocational High School
name of property

**NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES
CONTINUATION SHEET**

Linn County, Iowa
county and state

Section Additional Documentation Page 39



Approximately the same view as above, but looking the opposite direction. View taken March, 2015. Tallgrass Historians L.C.



Approximately the same view as above, but taken about 1915 or 1916 when the space was used as the woodworking class room. The equipment is all on tables or part of furniture-like cabinets. No specialized architectural features were required for this vocational class and woodworking classes were discontinued after 1922. *Green and Gold* (1923). Photo courtesy of the current owner.

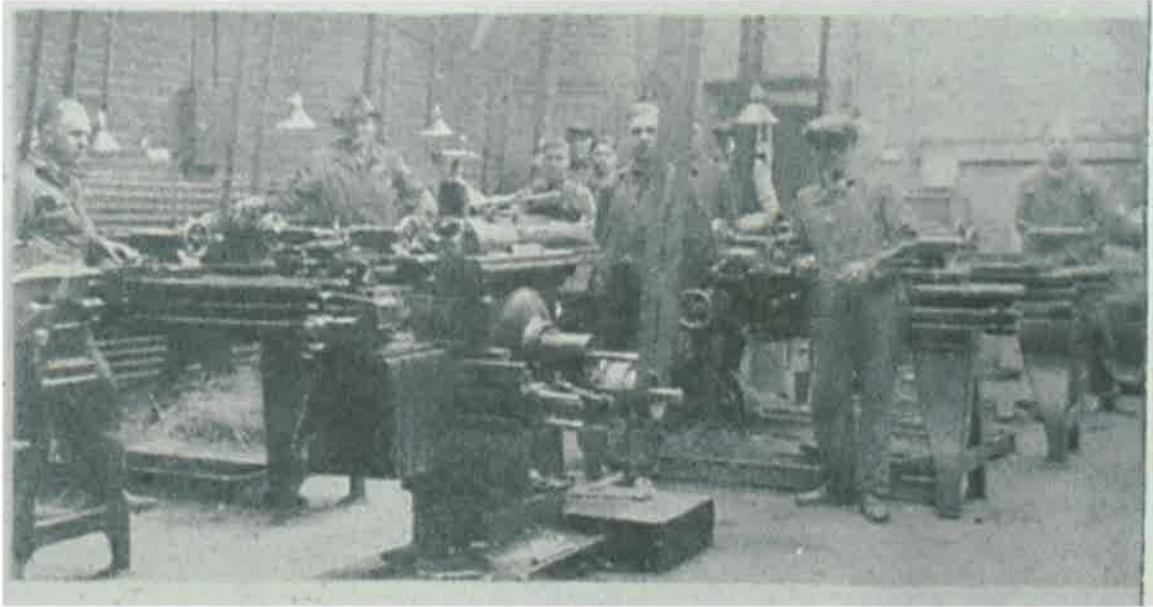
United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

Grant Vocational High School
name of property

**NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES
CONTINUATION SHEET**

Linn County, Iowa
county and state

Section Additional Documentation Page 40



This appears to be the first floor machining shop. Note the brick walls, concrete floor, and heavy machinery on the floor. Taken from *Grant Sparks* (1921), Grant Vocational High School's yearbook, later called the *Green and Gold*. Collection of Carl and Mary Koehler History Center, Cedar Rapids, Iowa. (The reference to "sparks" acknowledges the fiery sparks generated by the foundry and forge.)

Second Floor



GAS ENGINE CLASS, GRANT VOCATIONAL SCHOOL, CEDAR RAPIDS, IOWA

Second floor class room. Note the traditional early 20th century class room arrangement of blackboards and desks. Also note the students' attire of suits and ties. Taken from Harry W. Anderson, "A Study of Gas Engines in High Schools," *Manual Training Magazine* 19 (September 1917) 1: 13-16. (Located online by Paula Mohr, Iowa SHPO Architectural Historian).

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

Grant Vocational High School
name of property

**NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES
CONTINUATION SHEET**

Linn County, Iowa
county and state

Section Additional Documentation Page 41



This class room scene included both men and women students who were seated at long tables. Note the traditional long black board being used by the teacher at the front of the class room. Taken from *Grant Sparks* (1921), Grant Vocational High School's yearbook, later called the *Green and Gold*. Collection of Carl and Mary Koehler History Center, Cedar Rapids, Iowa.



Second floor class room with both original and later room partitions gone. Note the high, newly exposed corridor window openings at left and the decorative metal ceiling that spans the length of this space. The windows on the right are at the front of the building. Tallgrass Historians L.C., 2015

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

Grant Vocational High School
name of property

**NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES
CONTINUATION SHEET**

Linn County, Iowa
county and state

Section Additional Documentation Page 42



This photograph was taken on the floor of the gymnasium. No historic photo of the auditorium has been located. Taken from the 1923 *Green and Gold* yearbook. Collection of Carl and Mary Koehler History Center, Cedar Rapids, Iowa.



Gymnasium, 2nd floor level. The concrete floor is newer and was installed after the perimeter running track at this level was removed. Note the plate girders at the ceiling and the pressed-metal ceiling cladding between the girders. Tallgrass Historians L.C., March 2015.

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

Grant Vocational High School
name of property

**NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES
CONTINUATION SHEET**

Linn County, Iowa
county and state

Section Additional Documentation Page 43

Third Floor



This view appears to be of the 3rd floor kitchen in 1921, based on the sex of the students, their attire, and the placement of doorways when compared to the original plans. The aprons and individual student compartments suggest some type of hands-on activities but the central cabinet was likely for the teacher's use in demonstrations. A stove *might* be visible at the far right. Taken from *Grant Sparks* (1921), Grant Vocational High School's yearbook, later called the *Green and Gold*. Collection of Carl and Mary Koehler History Center, Cedar Rapids, Iowa.



It is unclear where this 1930 "home economics" sewing class was located in the building, but likely the 3rd floor. The high windows suggest the main corridor was just beyond. Note the pressed metal ceiling. *Green and Gold* yearbook, 1930. Collection of Carl and Mary Koehler History Center, Cedar Rapids, Iowa.

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

Grant Vocational High School
name of property

**NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES
CONTINUATION SHEET**

Linn County, Iowa
county and state

Section Additional Documentation Page 44



Third floor class room with both original and later room divider walls gone. The windows on the left overlook the alley and the lower roof of the foundry/forge/machine shop area. Tallgrass Historians L.C., 2015

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

Grant Vocational High School
name of property

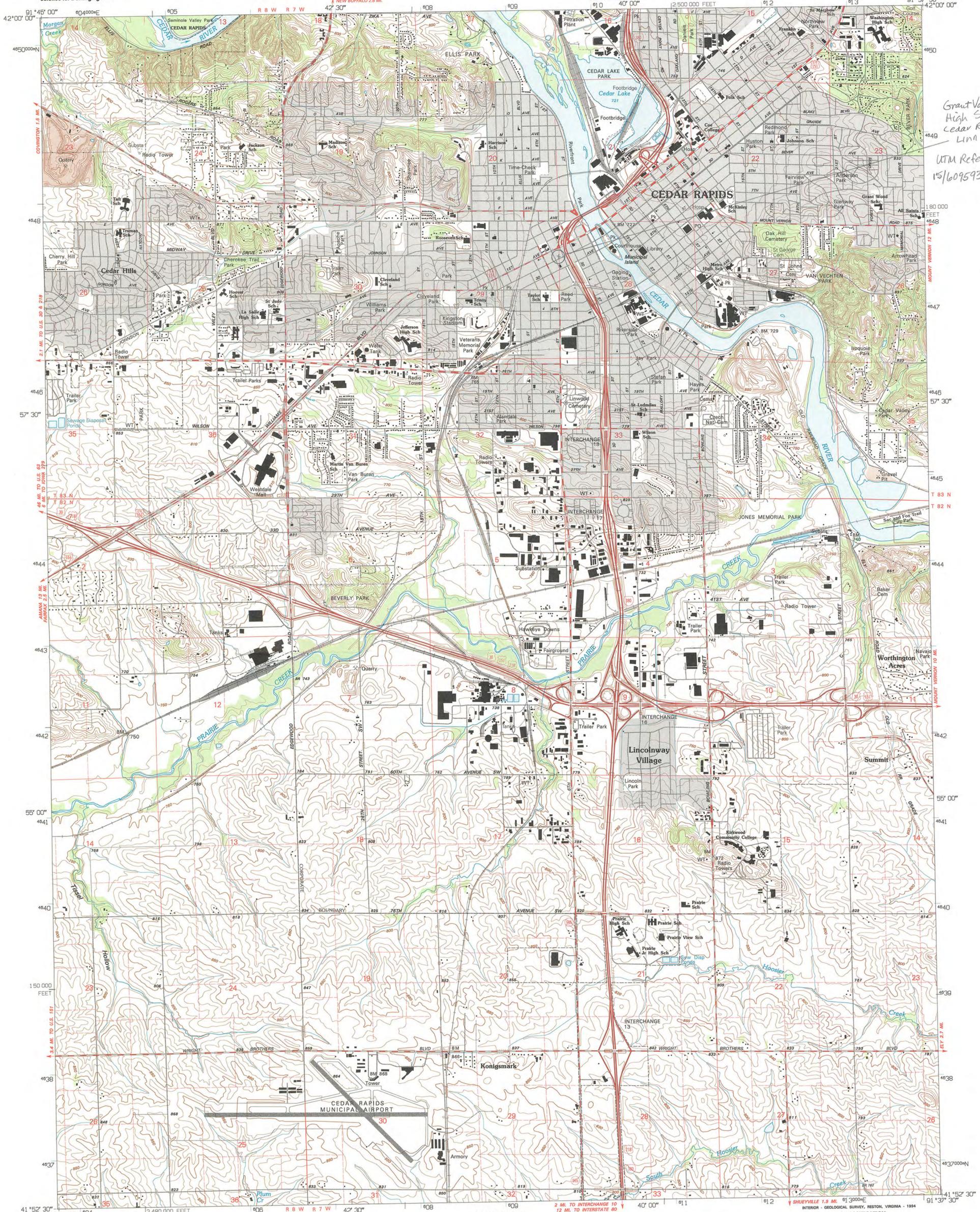
**NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES
CONTINUATION SHEET**

Linn County, Iowa
county and state

Section Additional Documentation Page 45

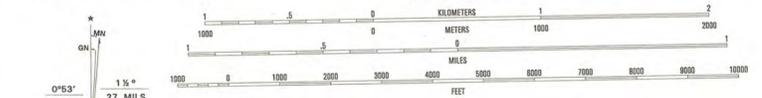


Floor plan of Grant just before the 2008 flood (color code is not known). Note that that the former class rooms located at the base of the "U" shape on either side of the central corridor have few partition walls. Where there are walls, most are not located in the same places as the original walls. Collection of Jo Ellen Johnson.



Great Vocational High School
Cedar Rapids
Linn Co., IA
UTM Reference:
15/609593/464750

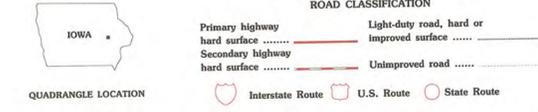
Produced by the United States Geological Survey in cooperation with State of Iowa agencies
Control by USGS and NOS/NOAA
Topography by photogrammetric methods from aerial photographs taken 1965. Field checked 1967. Revised from aerial photographs taken 1990. Field checked 1992. Map edited 1994
Universal Transverse Mercator projection
10,000-foot grid ticks: Iowa coordinate system, north zone
1000-meter Universal Transverse Mercator grid ticks, zone 15, shown in blue
1927 North American Datum (NAD 27)
North American Datum of 1983 (NAD 83) is shown by dashed corner ticks
The values of the shift between NAD 27 and NAD 83 for 7.5-minute intersections are given in USGS Bulletin 1875
Gray tint indicates areas in which only landmark buildings are shown
Fine red dashed lines indicate selected fence and field lines where generally visible on aerial photographs. This information is unchecked



CONTOUR INTERVAL 10 FEET
NATIONAL GEODETIC VERTICAL DATUM OF 1929



THIS MAP COMPLIES WITH NATIONAL MAP ACCURACY STANDARDS
FOR SALE BY U.S. GEOLOGICAL SURVEY, DENVER, COLORADO 80225 OR RESTON, VIRGINIA 22092
AND IOWA GEOLOGICAL SURVEY, IOWA CITY, IOWA 52240
A FOLDER DESCRIBING TOPOGRAPHIC MAPS AND SYMBOLS IS AVAILABLE ON REQUEST



QUADRANGLE LOCATION

1	2	3
4	5	6
7	8	

ADJOINING 7.5' QUADRANGLE NAMES

CEDAR RAPIDS SOUTH, IOWA
41091-H6-TF-024
1994
DMA 7667 I NW - SERIES 8786





BOARD OF EDUCATION

240

Michigan St

←

STOP



E-P026





MODERN PIPING INC.
MECHANICAL CONTRACTORS 364-8131
Clerk: Harold - 364-8131
AIR CONDITIONING & HEATING
INSULATION - CONTROL

ABC
395-0904
DISPOSAL
280

4012
ABC
395-0904
DISPOSAL

364-8131

NO POSTING
WITHOUT
PERMISSION

NO POSTING
WITHOUT
PERMISSION



MAIL ROOM

MAIL ROOM

MAIL TRUCKS ONLY

MAIL TRUCKS ONLY

MAIL TRUCKS ONLY



E-PO29



No Parking

BOARD OF EDUCATION

346

LEADERS IN
EDUCATIONAL EXCELLENCE

Small blue and white sign on the brick wall to the right of the entrance.





1-P010



1-P139



1-P240



1-PO22



1-P219



1-P026



1.5-P017

167

19



1.5-P018



1.5-POO1



2-PO26



2-P117



2-P114



275

2-P008



2-P037



3-P032



3-PO41



3-P017



3-P048



3-PO47

GRANT VOCATIONAL
HIGH SCHOOL