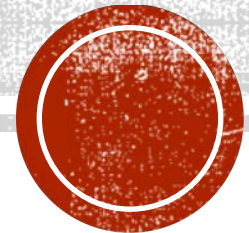
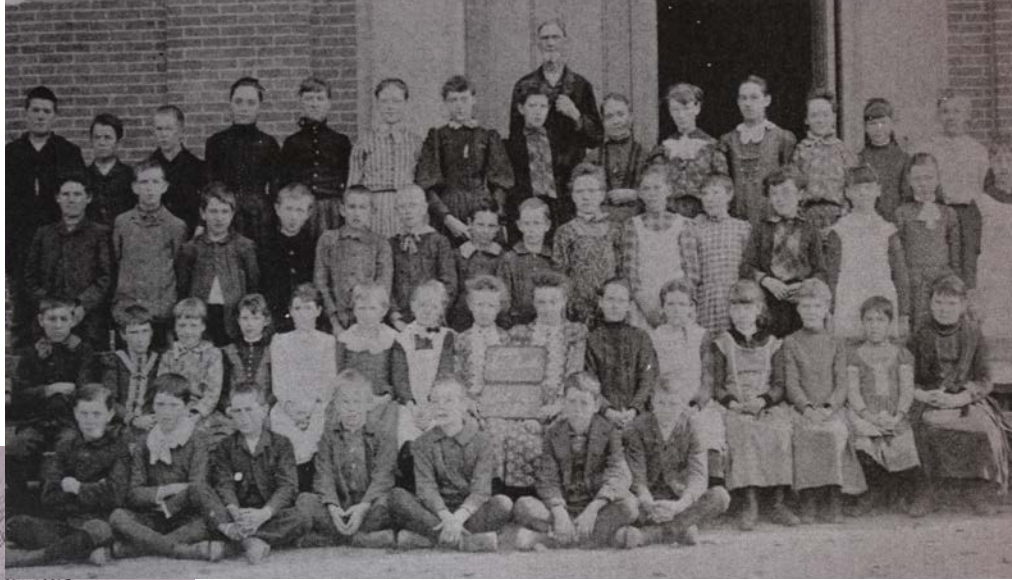


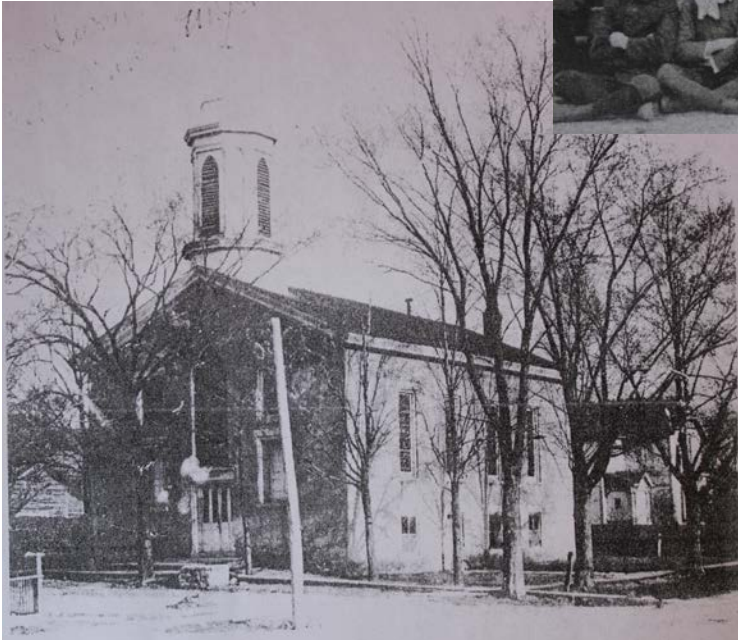
# ABRAHAM LINCOLN ELEMENTARY SCHOOL

Celebrating a  
St Charles Story





East Side School, 1889



East Side School, 1856-1927

## EAST SIDE SCHOOL

Thousands of children have walked to the hill on the corner of 6<sup>th</sup> and Illinois Ave on the East Side of St Charles for an education.

The first school house there, the East Side School, was constructed in 1856 out of red brick from a local kiln. It was the 2nd public school in Kane County. The building had previously served as the First Methodist-Episcopal Church.







# THE SCHOOL BELL

Proudly displayed near Lincoln School's entrance, this school bell originally rang from the East Side School bell tower.

During excavation for an addition to Lincoln School in 2001, the old limestone foundation was revealed. The front entrance of the East Side School would have lined up exactly with Lincoln's new entrance. The bell is a few feet away from the old bell tower's footprint.





Picture to yourself the kind of a school building you would like to attend. Think of the conditions under which you would like your children to study. And then imagine a building that will combine all the qualities wanted — proper lighting, the best in ventilating systems, the most modern in equipment, in short, everything just about perfect.

That is the kind of a school the new East Side Grade School will be.

#### Plans Finished

Plans for the new structure were finished last week by Frank Gray, the architect, and submitted to the school board.

Mr. Gray, a St. Charles man, has had wide experience in designing schools but in making the plans for the East Side Grade School, he has outdone himself, and it will stand as a monument to his creative ability.

These plans were not drawn up, however, until the school board had visited a great many schools throughout this section of the state.

J. D. Nies, chairman of the board, is responsible for a great many of the progressive ideas which have been embodied in the new school. His enthusiasm and desire to build the school right have been a source of constant inspiration in the tedious task of drawing and revising plans. Other members of the school board are Charles L. Hunt, P. C. DeBruyne, Wilfred Doherty, A. L. Maltby and Frank R. Johnson.

#### Board Works Hard

## HEADLINE:

# NEW EAST SIDE GRADE SCHOOL PLANS GIVEN: BUILDING WILL BE COMPLETED LATE IN 1928.

ST. CHARLES CHRONICLE, 12/29/1927, VOL. XLVI NO. 35

In May of 1927, a debate started about the need for a new school. Critics argued the East Side School was not up to modern standards of sanitation and safety and that the building was overcrowded. At the time 214 students were enrolled.

A petition was signed by 300 residents and presented to the Board of School District No. 87. In July a special election authorized the building of a new school.

In April of 1928, arson was blamed for a fire at the East Side School. The fire damage was significant enough to earmark the building for demolition. Had it not been for suspicious circumstances, the old school house may have stood next to Lincoln.





“Panels, mouldings, spandels, and decorative features of a similar nature should be so used as to attract the eye of the average person and especially the school child. The design of the entire treatment, including details, should be treated as to inspire the pupil’s mind. In every design, one of our needs is to care for beauty, but each building must have beauty to suit its character.”

Design for a City High School Building,  
Frank B Gray, 1911  
Photo Credit: Illio 1912, Senior Photo



## **FRANK BROWNFIELD GRAY**

**1889-1976**

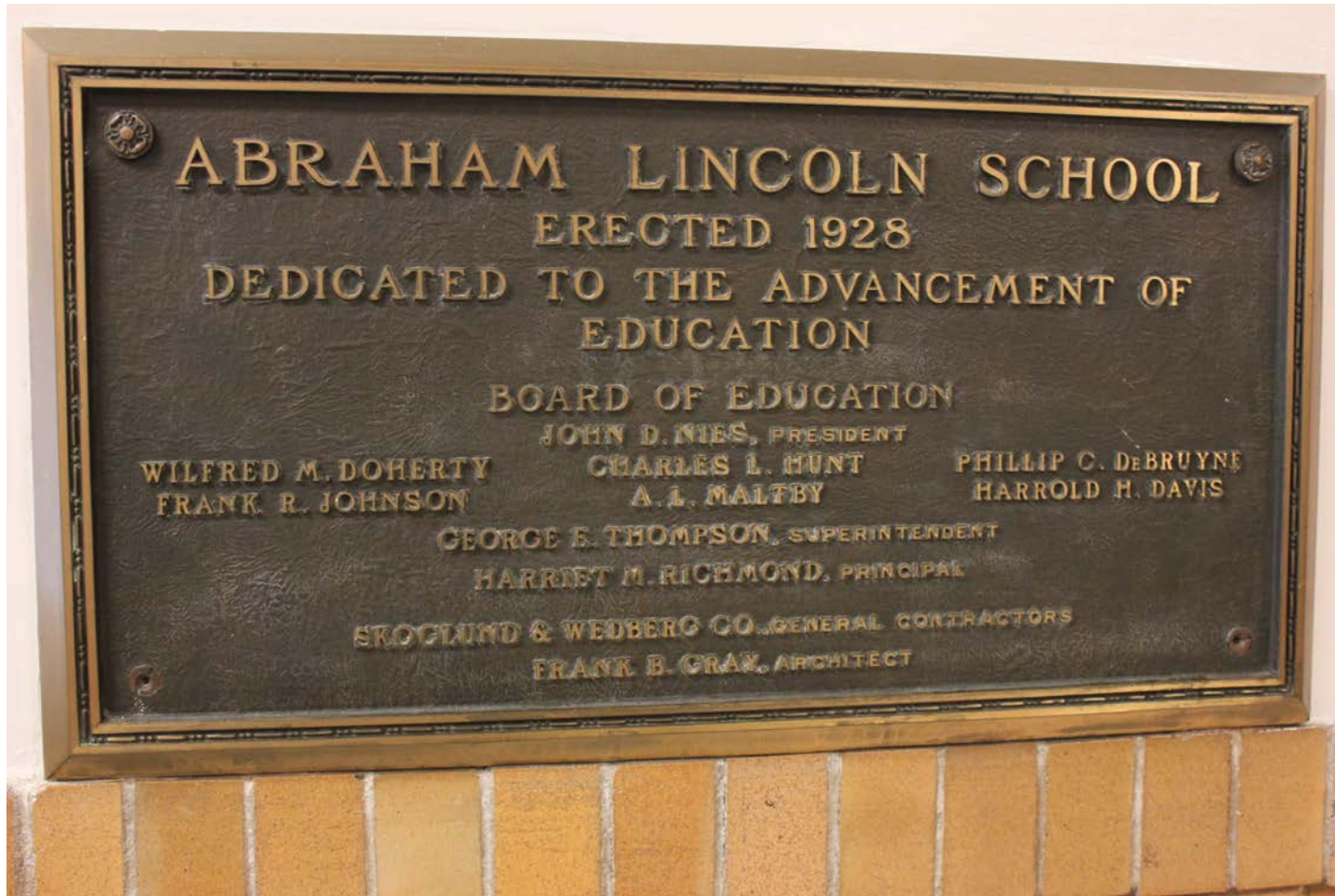
Frank B Gray was hired to be the architect. As a young child Gray lived just a few blocks away from Lincoln School at 601 South 6<sup>th</sup> Avenue in St Charles. Gray had attended East Side School.

In 1911 Gray earned his Bachelor of Science in Architecture from the College of Engineering University of Illinois.

Gray’s dissertation “Design for a City High School Building” applies well to the design of Lincoln School.







## THE NEW SCHOOL

The community was buzzing with excitement before Lincoln's doors opened.

"We want to see commercial buildings erected with an eye for the future. St Charles has a new school building, the Abraham Lincoln School that will stand and be fit for occupancy for two, three, and four hundred years. It will remain for countless generations as an example of good architecture."

-Making St Charles Beautiful, St Charles Chronicle, 11/15/28, p 6





## BOARD OF EDUCATION

John D. Nies, *President*.  
Charles L. Hunt  
Wilfred M. Doherty  
P. C. DeBruyne  
Frank R. Johnson  
A. L. Maltby  
Harrold H. Davis  
G. E. Thompson, *Superintendent of Schools*

## LIST OF TEACHERS

Harriet Richmond, *Principal*  
Corinne Paschal  
Myrtle Gustafson  
Geraldine Smith  
Janet Maltby  
Lily Peterson  
Edna Ramp  
Ruth Turner  
Mrs. Anna Thornton  
Marie Auer  
Elizabeth Anderson  
Amelia Anderson, *School Nurse*  
Dr. C. L. Smith, *School Dentist*

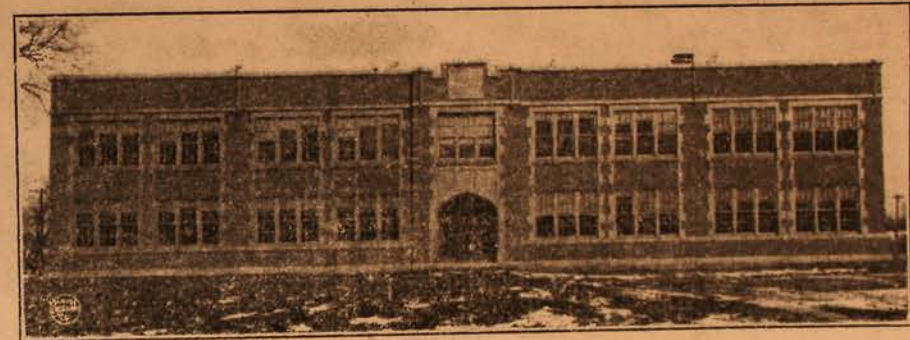
*The Health Clinic was decorated and equipped by the St. Charles  
Welfare Committee of which the following are members:*

Mrs. J. D. Nies  
Mrs. R. F. Munn  
Miss Anna Stewart  
Miss Mary E. Gorham

# ORIGINAL DEDICATION PROGRAM



East Side School constructed in 1856



Abraham Lincoln School constructed on same site as above in 1928.

## DEDICATION OF THE Abraham Lincoln Elementary School ST. CHARLES, ILLINOIS

MARCH 21, 1929

3:00 P. M.



---

# MORE FRANK B GRAY DESIGNED BUILDINGS

Aurora National Bank Building,  
Aurora, Erected 1926



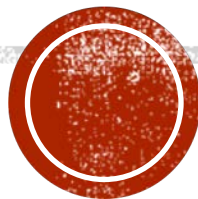
McCornack Oil Company  
Building, St Charles, Erected  
1928



Baker Memorial United  
Methodist Church, St. Charles,  
Erected 1952



Island Park Pavilion, Geneva,  
Erected 1915







Sixth Street School, before the 2015 demolition.



## SIXTH STREET SCHOOL, GENEVA IL

Frank B Gray designed the 6<sup>th</sup> Street School of Geneva, which opened in 1927. The school closed in 1977 and served as the Kane County Regional Office of Education before it was demolished in 2015.

Gray was a respected architect in the Tri-Cities and Chicagoland. He worked with the firm Gray, Laz and Mall, based out of Aurora for many years. His large Tudor home, built in 1927, still stands in Geneva at 909 South Batavia Ave. Gray's work can be found in the form of homes, churches, offices, industrial buildings, and schools. Lincoln School may be Gray's only remaining school, still in use as a school today. The Gray family is buried at Union Cemetery in St Charles.

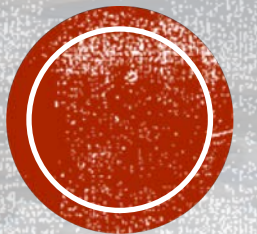






# EXPLORING THIS SPECIAL BUILDING

In 2001 an addition was built in front of the original entrance for the administration office, nurses office and library. The new building is connected with a hallway.

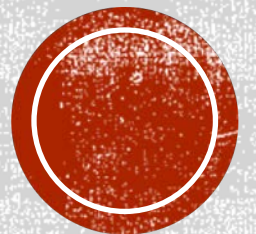






This 1942 photo from Alumna, Daphne Vanda Manuel, shows proud 6<sup>th</sup> grade graduates standing on the front lawn of the original entrance.

St Charles Heritage Center 75<sup>th</sup> Diamond Celebration Memory Book, 2008







## LINCOLN SCHOOL STUDENTS FROM YEARS AGO.

Courtesy of the St Charles History Museum





The decorative name piece above the original entrance of the building can still be seen from 6<sup>th</sup> Avenue.







Between the original front of the building and the back of the addition is a fenced courtyard which can be accessed from doors in the school hallway.





# THE JAMES L JENSEN COURTYARD

Bricks from the old East Side School are in this courtyard.







This cornerstone on the Northwest side of the building marks the year construction began.

In this photo you can see that the bricks have vertical raked grooves, which is known as striation. This style was popular in the 20s and 30s.





**THE PAVED PLAYGROUND IS BEHIND THE BUILDING ON 7<sup>TH</sup> STREET.  
THE LAND WAS PREVIOUSLY A GRASSY FIELD FOR NEIGHBORHOOD PICNICS.**







This area of colored brick by the playground is said to be President Lincoln's hat. It is actually the old site of a drinking fountain!

The name Abraham Lincoln Elementary School was selected by the Board of Education over a handful of prominent local figures. It is interesting that the surrounding neighborhood streets are named after the first ten Presidents: Washington, Adams, Jefferson, Madison, Monroe, Adams, Jackson, Van Buren, Harrison, and Tyler. The name of the school suits the neighborhood well.





**THE NORTH SIDE OF THE BUILDING, ON ILLINOIS AVE, HAS BEAUTIFUL BRICKWORK. THIS ENTRANCE IS USED TO DROP OFF AND PICK UP KIDS WHO ARE DRIVEN TO SCHOOL.**





The outside of the building is made of terracotta and warm tones of striated brick in jagged shapes and interesting patterns.







## THE SCRIBE

This gnome sits over the North entrance of the building. Perhaps he is using his quill to keep track of all the children who enter his door.

The ornamental terracotta features on the outside of the building were likely made by Batchelder-Wilson, a tile company which was based out of California.





This is a longer view of the North entrance.

The gaps on the top of the wall are called crenellation, a feature of defensive architecture. Frank Gray made the entrances of the building resemble a castle. Perhaps to spark the imaginations of the children.

Gray designed the outside of the building in neo-Gothic style inspired by the medieval architectural elements of early European buildings.





**THE SOUTH SIDE OF THE BUILDING, ON INDIANA AVE, IS USED BY NEIGHBORHOOD WALKERS AND BUS RIDERS. THE KINDERGARTEN ENTRANCE IS ON A TERRACE, WISELY SHELTERING THE YOUNGEST KIDS FROM THE SWARM OF CHILDREN WHO LEAVE FROM THE MAIN DOORS.**





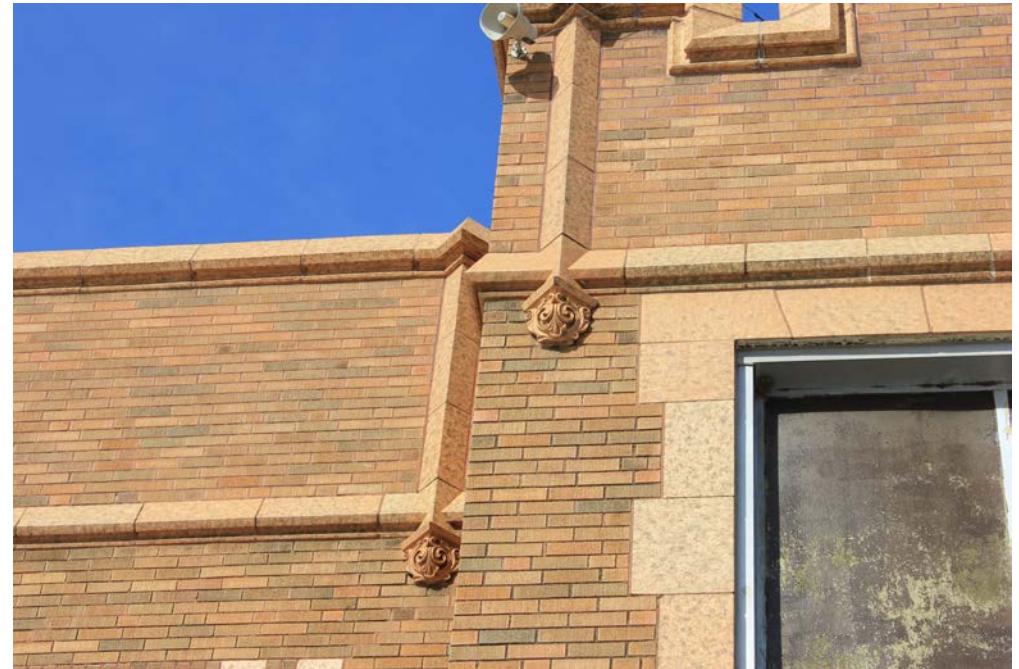


This giant square of brickwork is on both sides of the building. The diamond pattern is called diaper brickwork and is done by using the different tones of brick to make a design.





# CRENELLATION & ORNAMENTAL MOULDING







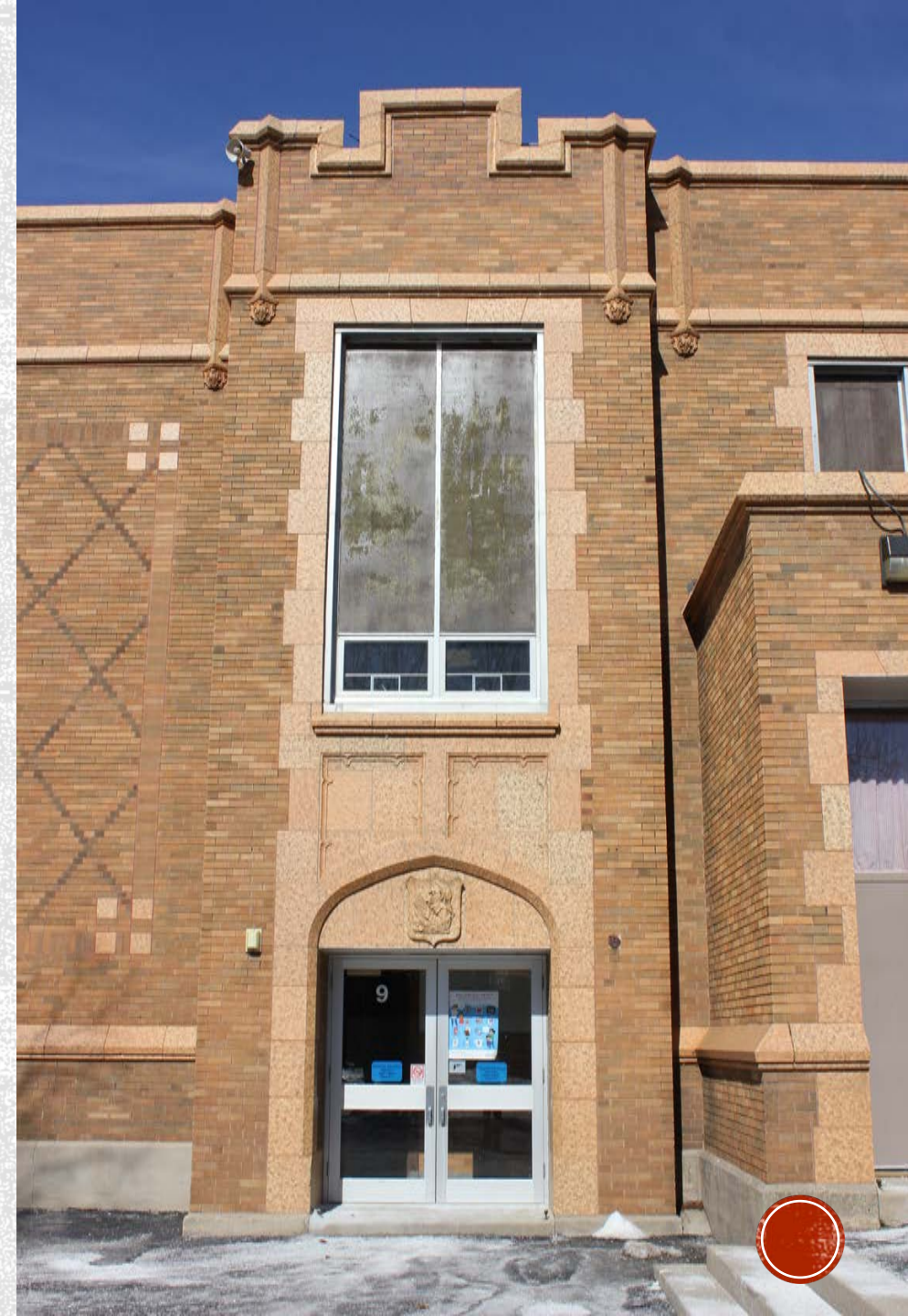
## THE READER

This gnome sits above the South entrance of the building and seems to be captivated by a book.





A longer view of the South entrance.





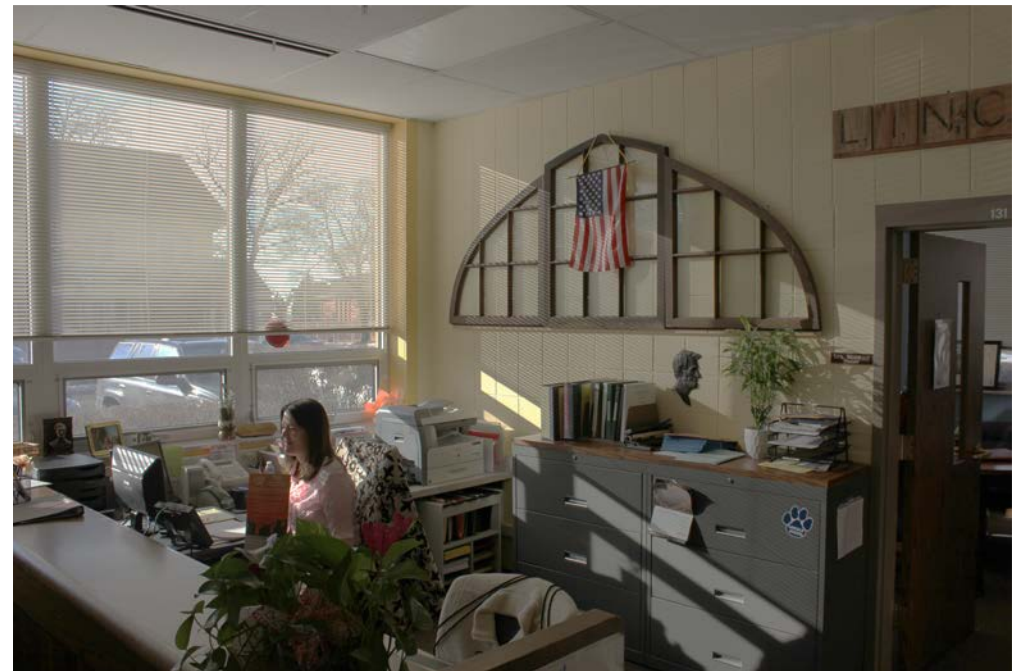


This is the terracotta arch of the original entrance on 6<sup>th</sup> Ave, where it attaches to the 2001 addition. Glass doors lead to a courtyard on each side. The arch originally had windows, characteristic of the neo-Gothic style.





**The original arch windows are displayed in the library and administration office.**



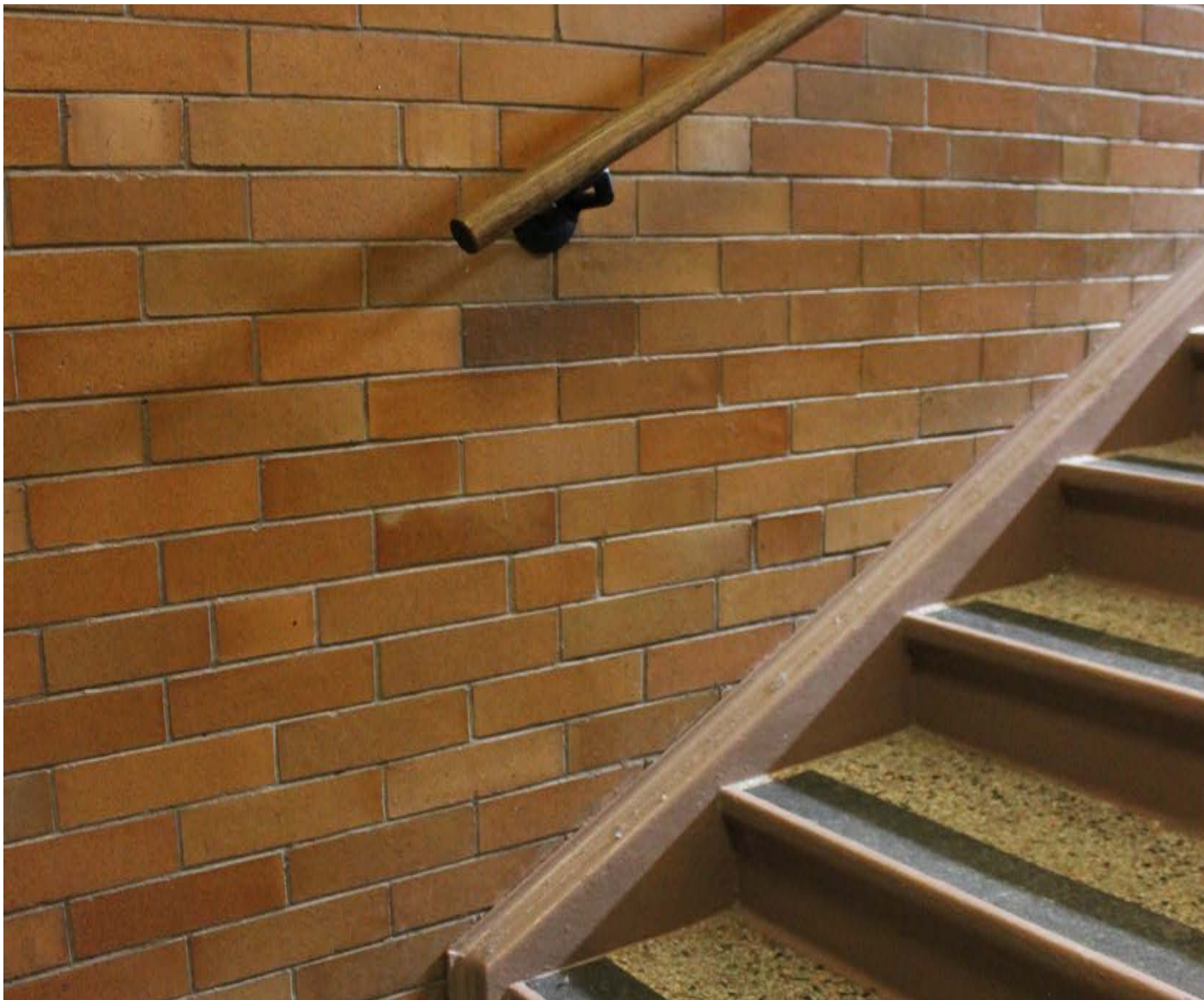




The inside walls of Lincoln School are covered in beautiful glazed brick. The original terrazzo floor is still in use throughout the building, though some areas have been covered up due to flooding damage.



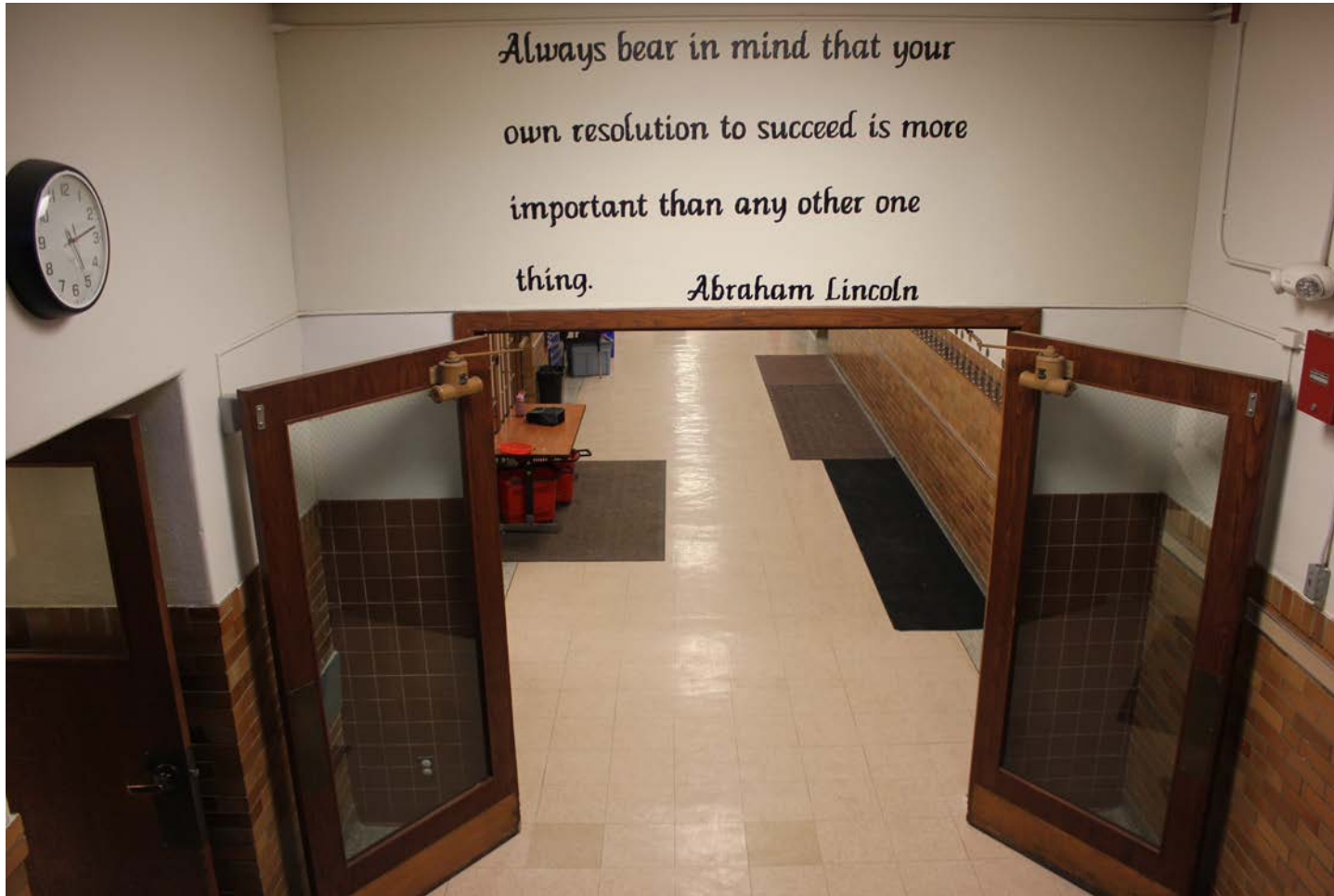




Even the stairways to the second floor are lined with the warm glazed brick and terrazzo floors.







Here's a view from the stairway of the brick lined walls and newer flooring.





A vertical shaped window in the stairwell allows plenty of natural lighting.







Built-in wooden bookcases in the hallways and classrooms are a special feature of Lincoln School. This bookcase was likely designed to be opened and closed by the students.







## THE LIBRARY

This is the door to the original library, which is on the second floor. Notice the book slot and metal library name plate.







# THE LIBRARY

This is the inside of the original library. The walls are still lined with wooden shelves.







This painting has been hanging in the library room since the 1930s. It was made by the first librarian's daughter.





## **THE LIBRARY**

In 2001, the library grew by leaps and bounds with the building of the addition. This is the school's Learning Resource Center (LRC) today.







LINCOLN SCHOOL STUDENT COUNCIL

TIME CAPSULE 2000

PLEASE OPEN FOR THE  
CENTENNIAL CELEBRATION  
MARCH 21, 2029

## THE LIBRARY

This time capsule, created in 2000, will wait in the LRC for another decade to go by.







The original principal's office is on the second floor with a waiting area and private bathroom.

The bathroom in the original principal's office has a sunroof and vintage light fixture.





**A metal door plate with a story and a firehose cabinet on the second floor.**







The smallest classroom in the school is on the second floor.

Notice the built-in wooden cabinet and coat closets.







The coat closet doors are on spindles and swing open. The doors are covered in whiteboard these days. Originally the doors had blackboard surfaces, which are now underneath.





# A COAT CLOSET







Here's a traditional blackboard covered with whiteboard (and a screen!). Notice the original wooden rails to hold the chalk.







# THE GYMNASIUM

These beautiful wooden doors slide open to a view of the whole gymnasium, which is one floor below. During a performance this area was the stage and the audience would watch from the gymnasium. Lanterns hang on either side of the doors.

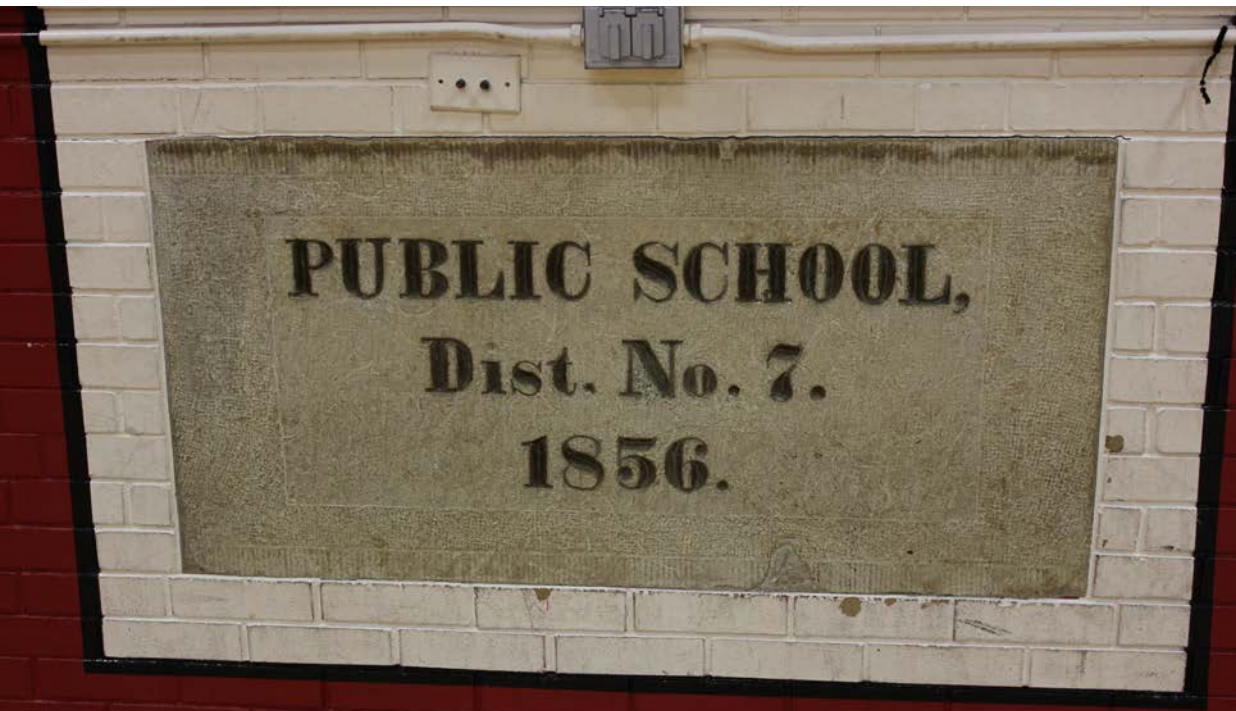






# THE GYMNASIUM

Here is a view of the sliding wooden doors from the other side. You can also see the cornerstone which was saved during demolition of the East Side School. Gray designed the cornerstone to be a focal point of the stage.







## THE GYMNASIUM

The original wooden bleachers are still in use. When the school was built, the wooden gymnasium floor had special springs under it to protect the basketball players' knees. This was a new type of luxurious flooring that most schools did not have at the time. Now, very few school gymnasiums have wooden floors.







## THE GYMNASIUM

The original wooden floor was replaced in recent years, but this section with Lincoln's profile was saved and proudly displayed on the gymnasium wall.







# THE GYMNASIUM

The gymnasium has an entrance on each side to bathrooms. The boys bathroom originally had a shower room, which has been turned into a photocopy room. The showerheads are still visible.





# INSTRUCTIONS TO JANITOR

CUSTODIAN

- 1 Before starting fire have grates clean and level. Clean ash pan each day or more often if necessary. Clean flues each day with brush.
- 2 When warming building in morning have fire so it will cover entire grate surface to a depth of from four to six inches. Keep fire clean and free from clinkers.
- 3 After building is warm check the fire by closing draft doors.
- 4 If furnaces have dampers to cut off the air from fan, they should be open on furnaces in use and closed on the furnaces not in use.
- 5 When warming building on cold days start fan after thermometer shows around 150 degrees. After building is warm have just enough fire to keep it warm and no more.
- 6 When warming up building have re-circulating damper open and roof ventilator dampers closed. After building is warm use as much fresh air as desired and keep ventilator dampers closed. If all fresh air is used open ventilator dampers.
- 7 Volume dampers are placed in ducts to regulate amount of air supplied to each room. They will not regulate temperature. If room temperatures are not automatically controlled shut off heat at register in room by pulling chain.
- 8 To shut down plant at night: Stop fan and close fresh air and ventilator dampers. Open re-circulating damper. Clean grates of clinkers and ashes. Remove ashes from ash pan. Take fire to front half of grate and cover with fine coal to a depth of about one foot. Close ash pan damper tight and open clean out doors at top.
- 9 Keep warm air chambers clean. Brush off top of furnaces. Clean out under furnaces. Clean out connection between fan and furnaces. Clean smoke pipe and bottom of chimney once each year.
- 10 Keep fan and motor bearings thoroughly lubricated. Drain all oil from bearings by removing plug at least every six months. Place plug back in position and refill with fresh oil.
- 11 Keep machinery clean. Wipe all oil from same each day.
- 12 Keep rubbish or ashes on outside of building away from fresh air intake.

## THE BASEMENT

A fun sign still left on the furnace.





# THE BASEMENT

Nothing dates a building better than old metal things in the basement, like this furnace equipment and an old scale.

During winter months when the school was still heated by a hand stoked coal furnace, the custodian would sleep in the basement to keep the school warm.







# THE KINDERGARTEN CLASSROOM

This special classroom is used by half day kindergarteners. When the school was built, kindergarten rooms were often made to feel more like home than a typical classroom. Frank Gray's kindergarten was no exception, for this room has qualities which really make it one of a kind.





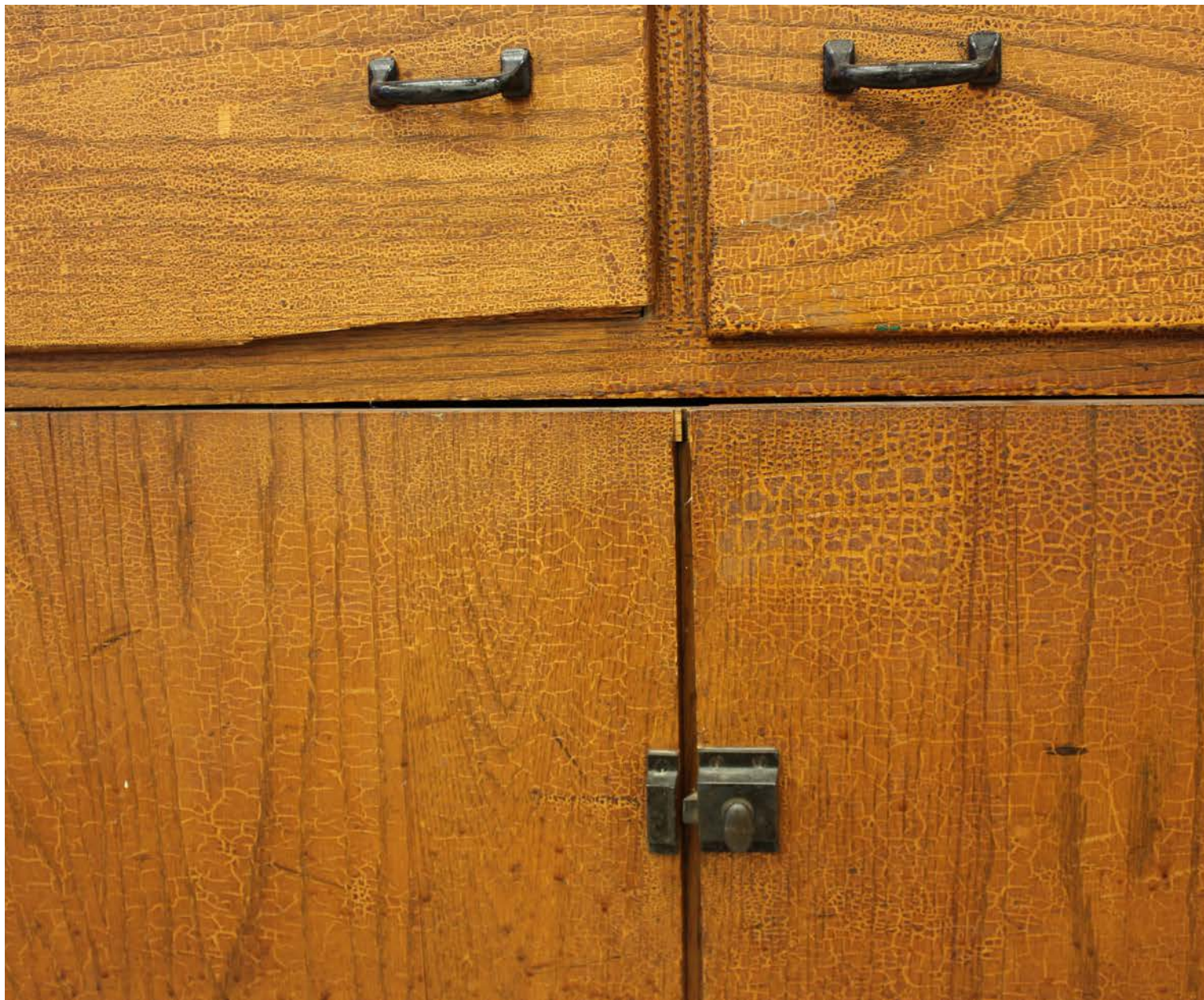


# THE KINDERGARTEN CLASSROOM

There's a beautiful wooden built-in cabinet along the entire wall.







# THE KINDERGARTEN CLASSROOM

Due to the varnish being exposed to dirt and heat, most of the cabinetry and bookshelves have an alligator finish at the school. Restoration could be done to the woodwork to bring it back to its original state, but some people like this vintage look.







# THE KINDERGARTEN CLASSROOM

The blackboards have been converted in most classrooms, but the wood frames and chalk rails remain. This chalkboard is lower to accommodate the youngest students.







# THE KINDERGARTEN CLASSROOM

This sunny reading nook with a built-in bench and shelving is such a charming feature of the room. The curved bay windows face the Kindergarten terrace on the South Side of the building.







## THE KINDERGARTEN CLASSROOM

Many of the school doors have wooden vents on the lower half for ventilation.

The Cloak Room is home to a wall of practical cubby shelves.







# THE KINDERGARTEN ROOM

This is another view of the classroom, facing the built-in fish pond. You can also see the doors of the bathroom and Cloak Room and a farm themed mural that was painted in the 70s.







# THE KINDERGARTEN CLASSROOM

This is the only built-in classroom fish pond in Kane County and perhaps the only one in Illinois.

The tile was made by Batchelder-Wilson, a company started in 1920 by Ernest Allan Batchelder (1875-1957). The manufacturing facility was located in Los Angeles. The company closed its doors in 1932 as a result of the Great Depression.







# THE KINDERGARTEN CLASSROOM

Amazingly, this pond is in operation  
and fish can live in it.







# THE KINDERGARTEN CLASSROOM

Batchelder was inspired by handcrafted Moravian tiles made by Henry Chapman Mercer of Pennsylvania.

Batchelder tiles were made of fired clay in colors that were “like those of old Persian rugs” and were described as luminous, mellow and glowing.

Flashpoint: The Quarterly Bulletin of the Tile Heritage Foundation, Oct-Dec 1992





# THE KINDERGARTEN CLASSROOM

## Fish Pond Tiles





# THE KINDERGARTEN CLASSROOM

## Fish Pond Tiles







# THE KINDERGARTEN CLASSROOM

Fish pond frog figure







# THE KINDERGARTEN CLASSROOM

The figure is missing, but the tiles  
left are beauties.







# THE KINDERGARTEN CLASSROOM

There is a fireplace behind this desk that was made with Batchelder-Wilson tiles. The fireplace was used for many years. Stories from alumni recall using the hearth to toast marshmallows and hotdogs.







# THE KINDERGARTEN CLASSROOM

This 8 ½" x 13 ½" village and forest scene is a unique tile on the fireplace.







# **THE KINDERGARTEN CLASSROOM**

This 8" x 8" farmland scene is another impressive tile on the fireplace.







Hotel Baker,  
1928

Baker Memorial  
Community Center,  
1926



Arcada Theatre,  
1926



Built in 1928, Lincoln School is the oldest elementary school in District 303. In the late twenties, some of the most beautiful buildings in downtown St Charles were built. All three of these buildings are widely enjoyed by the public today.

In 1928 the well loved fox statues of downtown came to St Charles. The four bronze fox statues were added to the Main Street Bridge and continue to overlook the Fox River after almost a century.





# **We shape our buildings; thereafter they shape us.**

Winston Churchill



Frank B Gray, Architect  
WW1 Veteran, 1918-1920

With deepest gratitude to Frank B Gray  
and the community leaders and residents  
who left St Charles this beautiful building.

Created by Cathleen Tracy,  
Lincoln School parent and neighbor

Please email [cathleen.tracy@att.net](mailto:cathleen.tracy@att.net) with comments  
and corrections.

