

**United States Department of the Interior  
National Park Service**

**National Register of Historic Places  
Continuation Sheet**

Section number \_\_\_\_\_ Page \_\_\_\_\_

**SUPPLEMENTARY LISTING RECORD**

NRIS Reference Number: 98000374

Date Listed: 5/1/98

Property Name: Williamson School

County: Lucas

State: Iowa

none  
Multiple Name

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This property is listed in the National Register of Historic Places in accordance with the attached nomination documentation subject to the following exceptions, exclusions, or amendments, notwithstanding the National Park Service certification included in the nomination documentation.

*Ronde McAllister*  
Signature of the Keeper

May 1, 1998  
Date of Action

=====  
Amended Items in Nomination:

Section 7: Description

Architectural Style is, hereby, amended to read "Late 19th and 20th Century Revivals" to more accurately reflect the 1923 date of construction.

Section 8: Significance

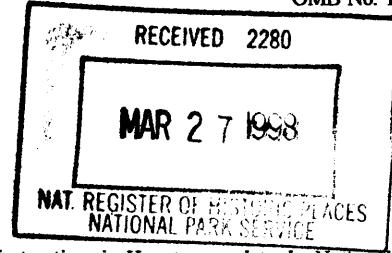
"1959" is, hereby, dropped as a Significant Date because it lies outside the period of significance.

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Beth Foster of the Iowa State Historic Preservation Office was notified of this amendment on May 1, 1998.

**DISTRIBUTION:**

- National Register property file**
- Nominating Authority (without nomination attachment)**

United States Department of the Interior  
National Park Service



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**National Register of Historic Places  
Registration Form**

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 an 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 Williamson School

other names/site number District High School

**2. Location**

Street & number 301 Williamson Ave.

N/A [ ] not for publication

city or town Williamson

N/A [ ] vicinity

state Iowa code IA county Lucas code 117 zip code 50272

**3. State/Federal Agency Certification**

As the designated authority under the National Historic preservation Act, as amended, I hereby certify that this [X] nomination \_\_\_ request for determination 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.

Patricia Churkin DSHPD 3-11-98  
Signature of certifying official/Title Date

**IOWA 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 official/Title Date

Federal agency and bureau

**4. National Park Service Certification**

I certify that the property is:

Signature of the Keeper

Date of Action

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) \_\_\_\_\_

Linda McClelland

5/11/98

Williamson School  
Name of Property

Lucas, 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)

- buildings
- district
- site
- structure
- object

**Number of Resources within Property**

(Do not include previously listed resources in the count.)

Contributing	Noncontributing	
<u>1</u>		buildings
		sites
		structures
		objects
<u>1</u>		Total

**Name of related multiple property listing**

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

N/A

**Number of contributing resources previously listed in the National Register**

0

**6. Function or Use**

**Historic Functions**

(Enter categories from instructions)

Education/ School

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**Current Functions**

(Enter categories from instructions)

Recreation & Culture/ Museum

Work in Progress

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**7. Description**

**Architectural Classification**

(Enter categories from instructions)

Late Nineteenth Century Revivals

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**Current Functions**

(Enter categories from instructions)

foundation Brick

walls Brick

roof Synthetics

other \_\_\_\_\_

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**Narrative Description**

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

Williamson School

Lucas, Iowa

Name of Property

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 the Nation Register listing.)

- A** Property is associated with events that have made a significant contribution to 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.

**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 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.

**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 # \_\_\_\_\_

**Areas of significance**

(Enter categories from instructions)

Education

**Period of Significance**

1923-1947

**Significant Dates**

1923

1959

**Significant Person**

(Complete if criterion B is marked above)

N/A

**Cultural Affiliation**

**Architect/Builder**

W. L. Perkins

D. A. Enslow & Son

**Primary location of additional data:**

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

Name of repository:

Williamson School Museum

Chariton Public Library (Microfilm)

Williamson School

Lucas, Iowa

Name of Property

County and State

**10. Geographical Data**

Acreage of Property Two

**UTM References**

(Place additional UTM references on a continuation sheet.)

1	<u>15</u>	<u>4781600</u>	<u>4548500</u>
	zone	Easting	Northing
2			

3			
	Zone	Easting	Northing
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 Mary Jo Polo

organization Williamson Historical Society date 9/15/97

street & number 301 Williamson Ave. telephone (515) 862-3628

city or town Williamson state Iowa zip code 50272

**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 SHPO or FPO.)

name Williamson Historical Society

street & number 301 Williamson Ave. telephone (515) 862-3628

city or town Williamson state Iowa zip code 50272

**Paperwork Reduction Act Statement:** This information is being collected for applications to the National register of Historic Places to nominate properties for listing or to 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 time for reviewing instructions, gathering and maintaining data, the completing and reviewing the form. Direct comments regarding this burden estimate or any aspect of this form to the Chief, Administrative Service Division, National Park Service, P.O.Box 37127, Washington, DC 20013-7127; and the Office of Management and Budget, Paperwork Reductions Projects (1024-0018), Washington, DC 20503.

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Williamson School  
Lucas County, Iowa

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**7. DESCRIPTION**

The Williamson School building was constructed in the spring and summer of 1923 by contractor Austin Enslow and son, Monte, at an approximate cost of \$16,000. The building is located in the northwest quarter of the town of Williamson and commands a pretty view of a broad stretch of level cultivated fields and at that time overlooked several farm homes. It was a fine brick structure 50 x 50 feet with two stories and a basement. The walls were built of hard brick and tile with steel frame and reinforcements and steel window sashes. It was equipped with fire escapes, electric wiring and fixtures complete throughout the building. The drainage system and disposal basin were included to make the building completely modern. The steam heating plant was furnished by G. W. Ensley, and was fired with coal from the mines nearby.

The basement was fitted with cement floors. The west half, a space 50 x 25 feet, was used for the domestic department and manual training while the other half was divided for toilets, coal storage and a furnace room. The first floor was divided into four classrooms which housed all the grades up to eight. A broad corridor ran north and south the entire length of the building allowing easy access to all four rooms. The upper story was used for the high school which at that time included the first three years of training with plans to add the fourth year later as attendance grew. In September, 1925 the fourth year was added and this class became the school's first graduates in the spring of 1926. On the north side of the building there was a large assembly room measuring 25 x 50 feet. South of the assembly room were two small rooms intended for recitation or study rooms.

The building was so planned that an addition could be made without interfering with the structure of the rest of the building. In July 1929 bids were collected to add a gymnasium and other rooms needed due to the increased attendance. This addition was also built of brick and concrete and allowed the curriculum to be extended, improved and modernized. At this time the library was updated, walls were painted, and the appearance of the building was improved.

Standing before the building today, one sees the Williamson School much as it was then. The building consists of a two-story rectangular brick edifice, constructed in 1923, and a 2-story brick addition erected on the east side of the original building in 1929. The original building featured a symmetrically placed, round arched, entry. Single windows are set in rectangular surrounds. The 1929 addition features paired windows and what appears to be symmetrically spaced wall buttresses. The building is capped with a flat roof.

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Williamson School  
Lucas County, Iowa

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As Williamson began to develop a basketball team and became a member of the Chariton Valley Conference the gymnasium was remodeled. The floor space was enlarged and balconies were built on both sides making a seating capacity of two hundred fifty.

The last graduates of Williamson District High School graduated in 1944 and the building was then used for grades through the eighth grade. In 1959 the school was transferred to Chariton Community School District and modifications were made to accommodate increased enrollment. The long corridor on the first floor was enclosed into the existing classrooms to make the rooms larger. The auditorium on top floor was remodeled creating more classrooms.

As time took its toll new windows were needed and installed in all the window openings of the building. In the last years of the life of the Williamson building as a school the balconies in the gymnasium were removed because of the danger involved in the weight limit. Attendance gradually decreased until in 1995, Williamson school was closed and students transferred to the Chariton Community School District.

A notable feature of the building as it still stands is an arched double doorway entry enclosed in attached pillars of brick with a concrete insert over the doorway with the inscription DHS (District High School). The pillars include a decorative concrete insert in the brick that extends across the top of the doorway and over the DHS insert.

The east and west sides of the building include fire escape exits as does the north side.

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Williamson School  
Lucas County, Iowa

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**8. SIGNIFICANCE**

The Williamson school is locally significant under Criterion A for its importance to educational development of the town, the part it played in the social life of the community and it also was a vital part of each family's life. The history of the school was interwoven with the activities of the entire community.

George E. Williamson, founder of the Lucas County town of Williamson, was born, December 23, 1863 near Wataga, Illinois and at the age of six years came to Lucas County with his parents. The family settled in English Township where his father, Peter, farmed. He attended Sunnyside School and helped his father on the farm as a boy. At the age of 18 he went to Wataga, Illinois, making his home with his uncle, former State Treasurer of Illinois, M.O. Williamson and learned the harness trade. A few years later he returned to Lucas County, studied under Dr. Gibbon and became a registered pharmacist. In 1898 he married Jeanette Howard (Known as Nettie to her friends). At the turn of the century George and Nettie made their home in Webster City where George traveled as a pharmacist in northern Iowa for the Des Moines Drug Co. They had two children, a baby girl who died at birth in 1901 and a son George E. Williamson, Jr., who was born in 1903. George and Nettie and their young son returned to Lucas County where he became associated with the Schriber Carriage and Wagon Co. of Chariton. By 1914, he had added acreage to his father's homestead of 80 acres and owned almost a section of land. He laid out what was the town of Gunwald. In his town plans he set aside and donated one square block of land for the city park. In the 20's and 30's it was used mostly for Labor Day celebrations with carnival rides and medicine shows. Today the park, which he set aside, is now the location of the community building and bandstand. The Des Moines/Kansas City branch of the Rock Island Railroad was built through his farm land and in 1913 he donated land for the depot and rail yards. The railroad named the station for him and in 1922 the name of the town of Gunwald was officially changed to Williamson. As the need for a church and school became apparent he donated ground for the school built in 1923 and Williamson Community Church built in 1922. In addition to his farming operations, he founded the Williamson & Son Lumber Co. with lumber yards in Williamson and Purdy. In 1918 he built a two story home for his family just north of the commercial section of the town. George Williamson, Sr. became the new postmaster of Williamson in 1922 and served the next 11 years in



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Williamson School  
Lucas County, Iowa

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that position. He also founded the Williamson Telephone Co. George died in 1934 at the age of 71. Nettie died in 1957 when she was 85.

When the coal mining town was settled about 1912 there soon arose a demand for a school. Mr. G. E. Williamson built a building and rented it to the district to be used for the first school. This school soon became overcrowded. As a result, Mr. Williamson erected two new school buildings. These buildings housed only the first eight grades with two teachers, each teaching four grades. But before two years these schools had become quite insufficient to meet the large demand for education in the new town. Realizing this fact the school board began negotiations for a new and larger school. The school was designed by W.L. Perkins, architect, from Chariton, Iowa, and the contract was let to Austin Enslow and Son, Monte Enslow, contractors, also from Chariton.

The District School opened in September, 1923 with the first eight grades and three years of high school. In 1926 District High School graduated it's first class, six in number. A new gymnasium and auditorium were added in 1929. The curriculum was extended, improved and modernized

The school became a significant part of community activities and a part of the history of mining, which had brought the town into being. School for many boys during Williamson's early years were almost an impossibility. Williamson was a mining town, aside from the few engaged in the professions or business, most Williamson men were employed in the mines. The need in many families was an extra wage earner, so as soon as sons were strong enough they went down into the mines. Few attended high school and many did not care.

But there were some who were not content, who longed for school and an education. Williamson School Superintendent Kridelbaugh devised a plan. The young men were allowed to attend classes when not employed in the mines and make up missed school work at home. This plan to allow the boys to work in the mines and go to school part time became known as the "Kridelbaugh System". Several of the boys graduated from high school and went on to successful careers.

Since many of the children rode horses to school it was decided to build a horse barn in the school yard just north of the school building. This horse barn was used regularly for many years. The barn is no longer extant.

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Williamson School  
Lucas County, Iowa

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Williamson became known as a school which produced many outstanding athletic teams, and the boys basketball team went to the state tournament in 1936. Baseball was a popular sport with two baseball diamonds on the school grounds east of the school building. The school and town produced many good baseball teams. The school was always supported by the community and had a big following in anything it undertook.

The school always tried its best to organize the school curriculum in such a way as to measure up to the standards of the best in the United States secondary school.

The Class of 1944 was the last graduating class from District High School at Williamson. The school continued with grades kindergarten through eighth grade until 1959 when the school became a part of the Chariton Community School District. It became known as Williamson Elementary with grades through sixth. In June 1995 Chariton Community School District closed the school that had been a profound influence on many lives and the area for 72 years. In the spring of 1996 the building was sold to the Williamson Historical Society.

The Williamson Historical Society plans to use the school for a museum, library, social events and the Friendship Quilting Club will occupy one room. The museum will depict the history of the school, town, mining, agriculture and any history pertaining to the surrounding area. There have already been two school reunions held in the gymnasium on Labor Day weekend in 1996 and 1997. The reunions consisted of a banquet meal served on Saturday night and a continental breakfast and lunch on Sunday, all prepared and served in the school. Several other fund raisers have been held. The Williamson Historical Society has received several donations to be used for the preservation of the school building.

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Williamson School  
Lucas County, Iowa

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**9. Bibliography**

Chariton Herald Patriot 8/23/1923 - 7/25/1929

History of Williamson High School

(Compiled in 1935 by the Williamson High School Alexandrian History Club Committee)

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Williamson School  
Lucas County, Iowa

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**Verbal Boundary Description**

Lots number seven (7), Eight (8), Nine (9), and Ten (10) in Block Number Eleven (11), Lots Number one (1), Two (2), Three (3), Four (4), Five (5), Six (6), Seven (7), Eight (8), Nine (9), and Ten (10) in Block Number Fourteen (14) all in George E. Williamson's First Addition of Town of Williamson, Lucas County, Iowa, except the mineral thereunder.

**Boundary Justification**

The boundaries of the property includes all lots in Block 14 on which the one contributing building is situated and lots 7, 8, 9, & 10 in block 11 which has always been a part of the school grounds.

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Williamson School  
Lucas County, Iowa

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The following information is common to photographs 1 through 8

Date: November, 1997 - Photographer: Mary Jo Polo

1. South and east sides of the school. (Camera facing northwest)
2. North and west sides of the school. (Camera facing southeast)
3. School's front doors on the south side of the school. (Camera facing north)
4. Interior of school - taken from the first floor down to the entry doors on the south side of school. (Camera facing south)
5. Interior of school - taken from the stair landing between the first and second floors - shows the doors on the second floor at top of stairs. (Camera facing north)
6. School Room in the northwest corner, first floor -- shows fire escapes outside, fire escape door and radiators used for heating. (Camera facing northeast)
7. School gymnasium -- shows the north end of the gym in the basement of the school. (Camera facing north)
8. School kitchen -- shows the north end of the kitchen in basement of school. (Camera facing north)
9. Quilting ladies in the quilting room on the first floor of the school. (Camera facing northwest)  
(Photo courtesy of Chariton Newspapers)
10. Aerial view of the Williamson School - taken in the early 1930s - note the horse barn on the north side of the school and the two baseball diamonds to the east.

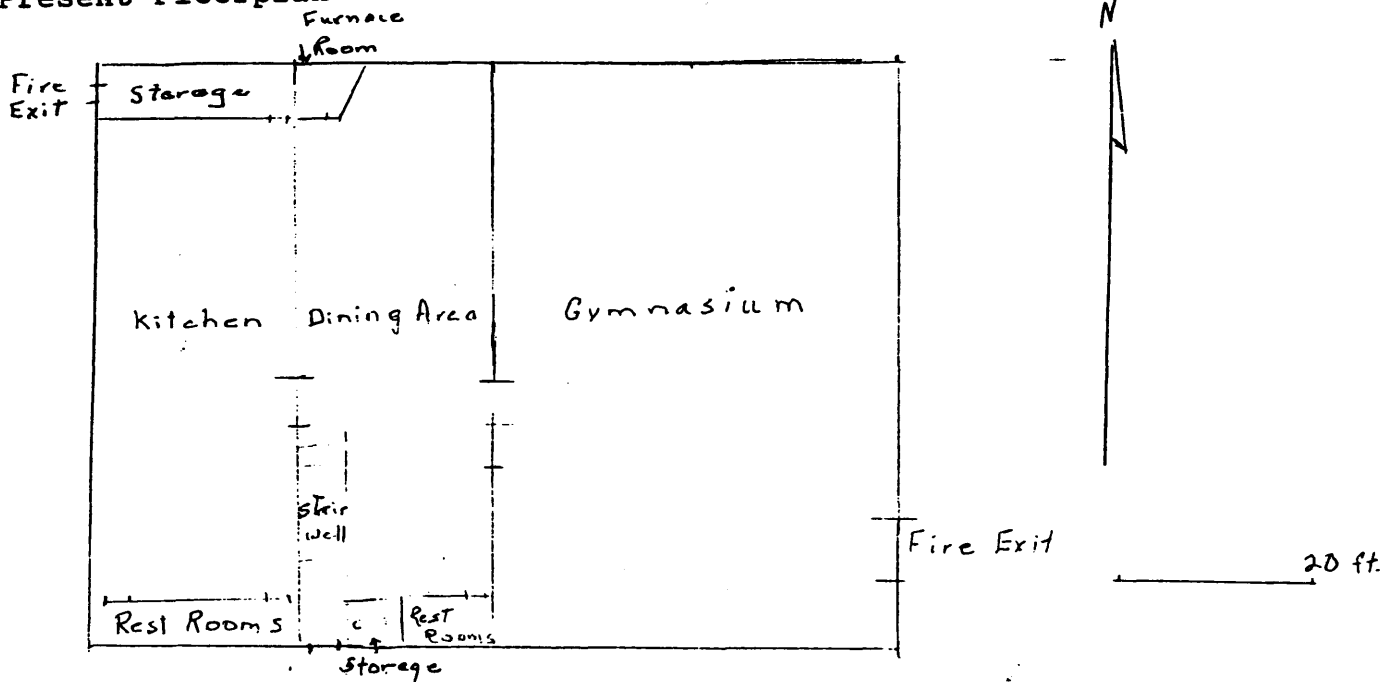
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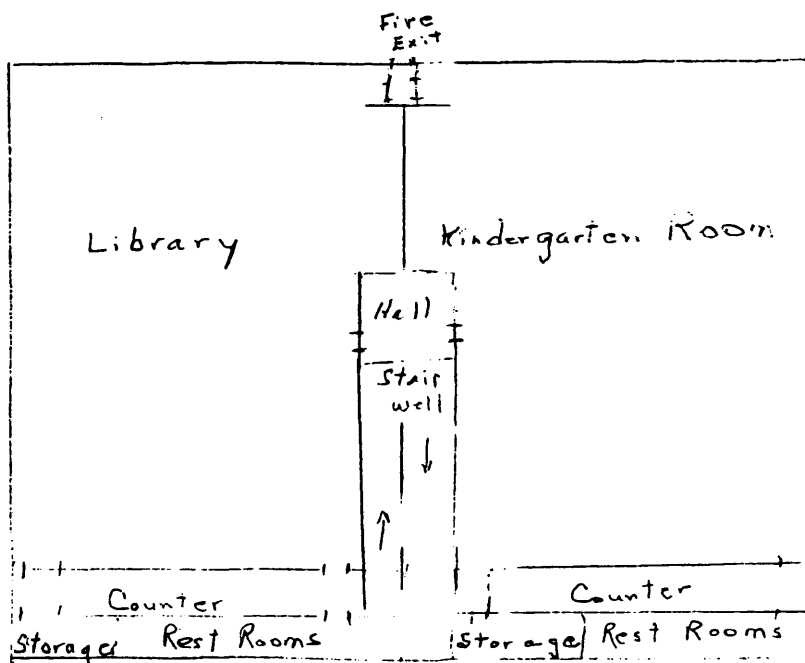
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Present Floorplan



Basement



Entry

First Floor

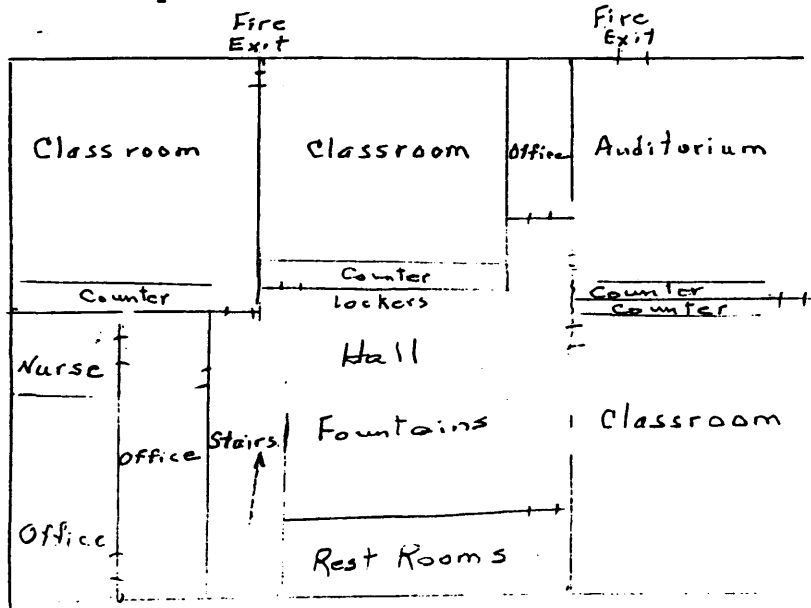
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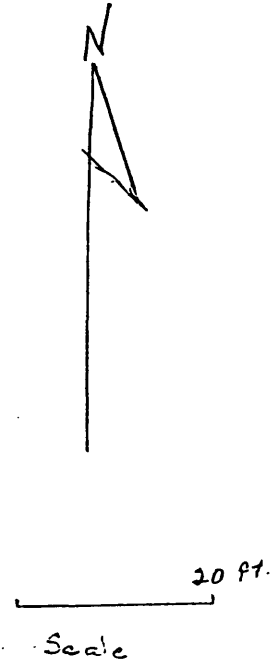
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Present Floorplan



2<sup>nd</sup> Floor

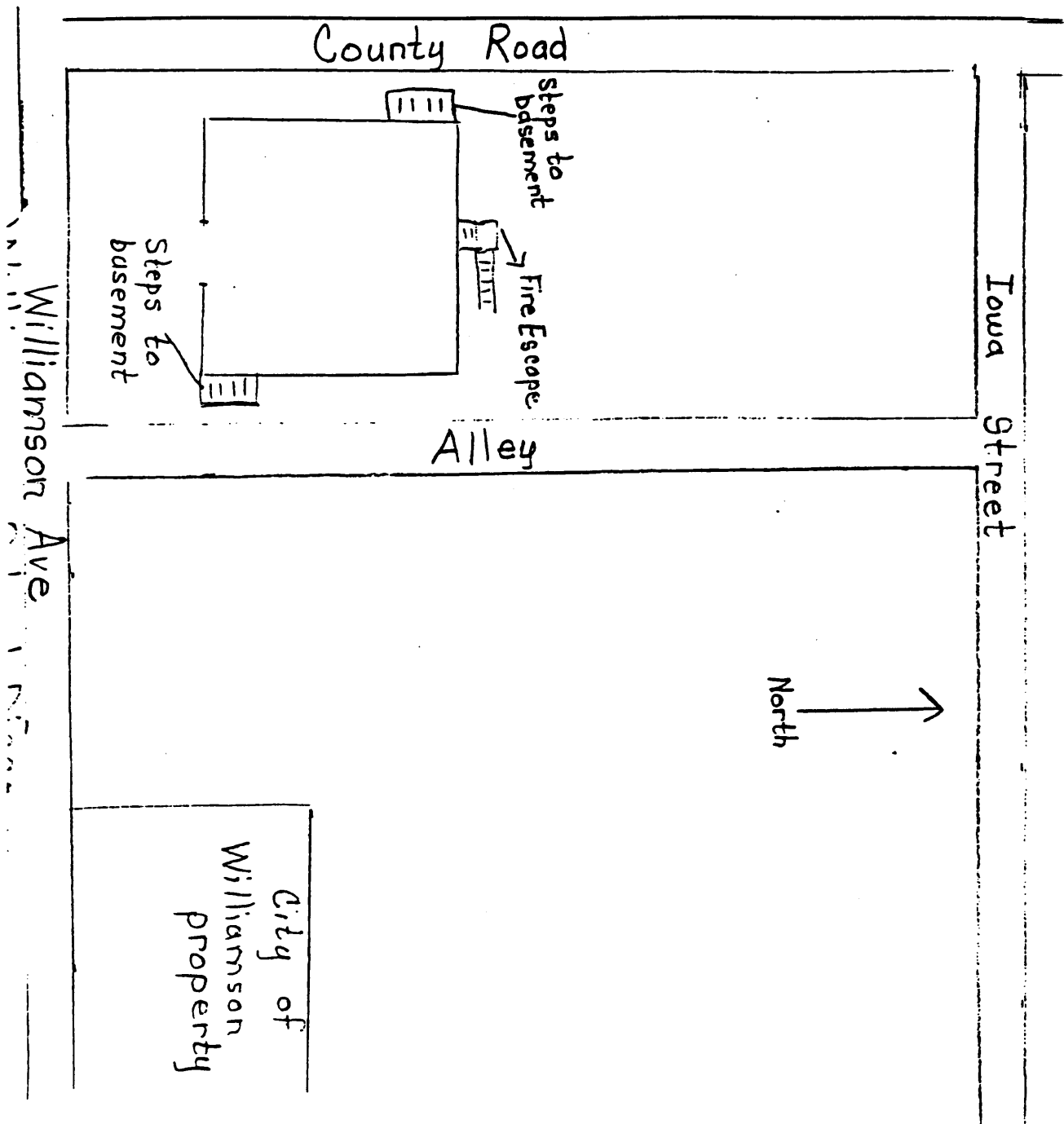


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Lucas County, Iowa

Section number      Add'l      Page 12

**Construction of the Williamson School**  
**News item from Chariton Herald Patriot, August 23, 1923**

**BUILDING NEARLY COMPLETED**

**Williamson Fine Structure Will Be Ready By September 10.**

D. A. Enslow & Son are pushing the construction work on the school building at Williamson and expect to have it ready by the time school opens on September 10. It is a fine brick structure 50x50 feet, with two stories and basement. The walls are of hard brick and tile with steel frame and reinforcements, steel window sash and is provided with fire escapes, electric wiring and fixtures complete throughout. It is a model building and will cost complete without the furniture and heating and plumbing something like \$16,000. This includes the drainage and disposal basin, for it is modern in every particular. The steam heating plant is furnished by G. W. Ensley, and W. L. Perkins draw the plans and supervised the construction. The basement is fitted with cement floors. The west half—a space 50x25 feet will be used as a domestic science department and manual training. The other half will be divided for toilets, coal storage and furnace room.

Upon the first floor are four school rooms, well ventilated and lighted, and will be fully equipped for all the grades up to the eighth. There is a broad corridor running the entire length of the building north and south and the space back of both stairways can be utilized for offices or for whatever purpose suits the convenience of the school. The upper story is to be fully given over to the high school, as they propose to give three years of high school training for the present, under the prescribed course, and may add the fourth year later, they naturally will as the attendance grows, and the building is so planned that an addition can be made without interfering with the plans of the building. On the north side there is a large assembly room 25x50 feet, and south of this are two recitation rooms, one on each side of the landing. Or one or both of these may be used for study rooms if necessary. But this will probably not be required in the high school conduct.

The building stands upon grounds in the northwest quarter of the town and commands a pretty view, not only of Williamson itself, but the broad stretch of level cultivated fields and farm homes, as well as the scenic undulations further away to the south and southwest.

It was not only a matter of civic pride which prompted the citizens of Williamson to go to the expense of this educational enterprise, but the prime necessity of meeting their obligations for the future.

Much is all this is to be commended, and nothing has been done there which will pay greater rewards. It is a home town and as such is paying attention to the mental and moral training of those whose lots have been fortunately cast there.

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**Construction of addition to the Williamson School  
News item from Chariton Herald Patriot, July 25, 1929**

**MUCH BUILDING  
AT WILLIAMSON**

**School House Addition to  
Be Ready First of  
Next Year**

Williamson, July 25—Williamson is to have a new school building. Plans and specifications have been formulated and building bids have been called for. The new building will be of brick and concrete and will contain a gymnasium and other rooms that are much needed. It is expected the building will be completed by the first of the coming year.

Other building activities are in progress here. Mr. Thomas, of Buxton, was here Monday looking after his new drug store building which is to be erected north of the bank building; and D. L. Smith started excavating work for his new dwelling Tuesday.

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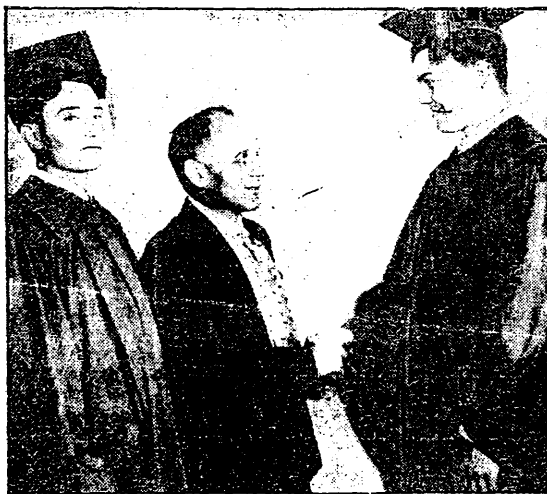
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**Williamson High School helped students continue their high school education while working in the mines.  
News item from the Des Moines Register, May, 1933**

**Williamson Youths Know Value of Education Earned**



Superintendent A. J. Kridelbaugh shakes hands with John Montgomery as he congratulates John and Ernest Braida on completing their high school work while working in the mines.

**They Won Education by Kridelbaugh System.**

(The Register's Iowa News Service.)  
WILLIAMSON, IA. — John Montgomery and Ernest Braida were graduated from Williamson High school Friday, further proof of Superintendent A. J. Kridelbaugh's belief that an "education to be really appreciated must be really earned."

Schooling for many boys in Williamson for a good many years has been almost an impossibility. If Superintendent Kridelbaugh hadn't arranged so that Williamson boys could go to school and still earn a living for themselves as well as aid their families, Montgomery and Braida would not have been graduated Friday.

**A Mining Town.**

Williamson is a mining town 10 miles northeast of Chariton, Ia. Aside from the few engaged in the professions or business, most Williamson men are employed in the mines. For several years now miners have had little more than two or three days work a week at the most. The need in many families is an extra wage earner, so as soon as sons are strong enough, they go down into the mines. Few of them attend high school. Many of them do not care.

But there are some who are not content, who go on longing for school and an education. For them, Kridelbaugh devised a plan. They are allowed to attend classes when not employed and make up missed school work at home.

**Extra Time.**

Faculty members give extra time to aid working students puzzled by some problem they have not been able to solve at home.

Bill Milledich inspired the plan back in 1930. He got a job in the mines during vacation. Fall came and he couldn't go back to school. He went to Kridelbaugh.

"Isn't there some way I can

keep going to school?" he asked.

"I told him," said the superintendent, "It's up to you, Bill. I'm willing to help, but you'll have to make the real effort." Bill worked. He went to school three days a week and worked in the mines two. He earned top grades, played basketball and football and graduated with honors.

Several other boys asked the same opportunity. It was granted them, but eight didn't want an education badly enough to really earn it. When they learned they had to make grades to take part in athletics, they dropped out of school.

**Five Have Stuck.**

Five, however, have stuck. Montgomery had completed his freshman year when he had to go to work. He drove a mule in the mine for a year, then went back to school for a couple of days a week. He studied at night or during lull moments down in the mine pit. At 19, he was graduated well up among his classmates scholastically.

Matt Radosevich had been out of school two years when he went back. He was graduated at 19, the product of mine labor and night study. Lyle Wright worked in a store for his living and attended classes an average of four days a week, but he earned his grades and was graduated.

**A "Load Dropper."**

Braida also returned to school after two years' absence. He continued to work as a "load dropper" in the bottom of the pit. He attended school about half time, but was graduated when 19.

"Boys like these five," said the superintendent, "don't have to be urged to study. They don't have to be disciplined. All of them have been good athletes as well as good students.

"They have had to spend a lot for their education. They know what it is worth."

"It was worth the effort," John Montgomery said after the graduation exercises.